



ISPP INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY
FOR PLANT PATHOLOGY

PROMOTING WORLD-WIDE PLANT HEALTH AND FOOD SECURITY

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR PLANT PATHOLOGY

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INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR PLANT PATHOLOGY (ISPP)

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REPORT ON THE 14TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PLANT PATHOGENIC BACTERIA (14TH ICPPB) AND 4TH INTERNATIONAL ERWINIA WORKSHOP (4TH IEW), ASSISI (ITALY) JULY, 2022

ROBERTO BUONAURIO AND IAN TOTH

The 14th International Conference on Plant Pathogenic Bacteria ([14th ICPPB 2022](#)) entitled “The Impact of Plant Pathogenic Bacteria on Global Plant Health” was held from 3rd to 8th July, 2022 at Assisi in the city of peace and dialogue between different cultures and religions, located in the Umbrian region: the Green Heart of Italy. The conference, whose programme was arranged by the [organising](#) and [scientific](#) committees, was hosted at [Hotel Valle di Assisi](#) located in a typical Umbrian landscape. The event attracted 196 delegates (including 52 early career scientists) from 37 countries across most continents.

The 14th ICPPB was opened by the chairperson Prof. Roberto Buonauro, professor at the University of Perugia ([Department of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences-DSA3](#)), who on behalf of the organising committee dedicates the conference to the co-chairman Prof. Nicola Sante Iacobellis, who prematurely passed away on 22nd May 2022. Prof. Iacobellis had the merit of having brought the conference to Italy, which he strongly desired with all his heart.

During the opening, the delegates were welcomed by Prof. Engineer Stefania Proietti, President of Perugia Province and Mayor of Assisi, Prof. Roberto Rettori, delegate of the Perugia University Rector, and Prof. Gaetano Martino Dean of DSA3.

The principal sponsors of the conference were Agdia-Emea and Diachem, while the Federation of European Microbiological Societies (FEMS) provided an important contribution to support the participation of early career researchers. Other sponsors were the Italian Phytopathological Society, the open access journal Microorganisms by MDPI, Itaka Crop Solution, ISI Sementi S.p.A., Agritest (Plant Health Management) and Sicer (Italian Ceramic Surfaces).

The scientific program of the conference was opened by Sheng-Yang He, the Benjamin E. Powell distinguished Professor of Biology at Duke University and an Investigator at Howard Hughes Medical institute (Durham, North Carolina-USA), with the talk ‘Climate impact on plant-bacterial interactions’, in which he gave an example of interplay between disease, environment and microbiota during *Pseudomonas syringae* infection of host plants. Prof. He concluded his talk by pointing out that future studies should increasingly consider the multi-dimensional nature of “disease-environment-microbiome” interactions, which are likely more reflective of what occurs in natural ecosystems.



Prof. Roberto Buonauro chair of the 14th ICPPB.



Prof. Sheng-Yang He presented his opening talk ‘Climate impact on plant-bacterial interactions’.



Participants at the 14th International Conference on Plant Pathogenic Bacteria, Assisi (Italy)-4-8 July, 2022.

Spread over four intense days of work (4, 5, 7 and 8 July), the scientific program was organised in 7 sessions: 1. Molecular Plant - Bacteria (and Insect) Interactions, 2. New Tools in Disease Diagnostics and Pathogen Identification, 3. Disease Epidemiology and Pathogen Ecology, 4. Bacterial Pathogens and the Phytobiome, 5. Disease Emergence and Pathogen Evolution, 6. Disease Control and Prevention, and 7. Natural and Engineered Plant Disease Resistance. In addition, two special sessions were also included: A) Nanotechnology in Disease Control and B) New insights on *Xylella fastidiosa*. In total, 15 keynotes (25 min) and 70 oral talks (15 min) were presented. The poster sessions were vibrant, well attended and informative. In total, 135 posters were exhibited, 63 of which were introduced at the conference with 2-minute oral presentations. The 221 abstracts that had been received were collected in a book of abstracts, kindly printed by “Centro Stampa-Giunta Regionale-Regione Umbria”.

During the conclusion of the conference, Prof. Nicole Cotte-Pattat and Prof. Roberto Buonauro awarded six prizes of € 200 (gross) each for the best posters. The winners were: 1) Dr. Lavado-Benito Carla of the Malaga University (Spain) with the poster “Characterization of the GacS/GacA system in the virulence regulation of *Pseudomonas savastanoi*” presented in the session Molecular Plant - Bacteria (and Insect); 2) Dr. Siri Maria Ines of the University of Montevideo (Uruguay) with the poster “Phylogeny and identification of pathogenic *Pantoea* species associated with bulb rots and leaf blight of onion crops in Uruguay” presented in the session New Tools in Disease Diagnostics and Pathogen Identification; 3) Dr. Zeng Quan of the Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven (USA) with the poster “Glandular and non-glandular trichomes are colonization sites and host entry points of the fire blight pathogen on apple leaves” presented in the session Disease Epidemiology and Pathogen Ecology; 4) Dr. Herold Laura of the University of Zürich (Switzerland) with the

poster “Investigating the targets of conserved essential bacterial effectors” presented in the session Bacterial Pathogens and the Phytobiome; 5) Dr. Gueguen Erwan of the University of Lyon (France) with the poster “*Dickeya solani* D s0432-1 produces an arsenal of secondary metabolites with anti-prokaryotic and anti-eukaryotic activities against a wide range of organisms” presented in the session Disease Emergence and Pathogen Evolution; 6) Dr. Nanami Sakata of the University of Tsukuba (Japan) with the poster “Exploring amino acids for controlling bacterial blight on cabbage” presented in the session Disease Control and Prevention. The awards were sponsored by ISI Sementi Spa (1 and 2), Microorganisms (3 and 6) and Italian Ceramic Surfaces (4 and 5), and we would like to thank the winners, and indeed all those who presented posters, for the presentation of their work.

This superbly organised conference, with its outstanding talks and lively discussions, closed with the election of the venue for the 15th ICPPB. The proposal by Prof. Boris Vinatzer to hold the meeting in Blacksburg (Virginia-USA) was warmly welcomed by all the delegates. Between the two options 2026 and 2025, the overwhelming majority of delegates voted to plan the 15th ICPPB for 2025. Prof. Buonauro therefore passed on the baton to Prof. Vinatzer as chair of the 15th ICPPB.

The social program of the 14th ICPPB included three convivial moments: the welcome party, the excursion to Gubbio and the gala dinner on July 3, 6 and 7, respectively. The welcome party occurred near the swimming pool of the Hotel Valle di Assisi with a backdrop of a sunset behind the beautiful scenery of Assisi, which was an opportunity to meet old and new friends and to taste Italian food and wines.

During the excursion to Gubbio, one of the best-preserved medieval cities in Italy, the delegates visited many sites located along alleyways between typical medieval houses. “Palazzo dei Consoli” stood out as one of the most majestic and audacious building projects carried out in the middle ages bearing witness to the ambitious nature of Gubbio’s political and institutional objectives at the beginning of the 14th century. Inside the palace, seat of the civic museum, the delegates had the opportunity to see the “Tavole Eugubine” seven bronze tablets, dating back to the 3rd-1st century BC, describing ceremonial rituals, daily life and prescriptions on the legal status of the city-state in the dual languages of Umbrian and Latin. The visit continued with the Diocesan museum, the Cathedral



The lunch at Gubbio (Ristorante Parco Coppo).



Excursion to the medieval city of Gubbio (some delegates on the steps of “Palazzo dei Consoli”).

and the Saint Ubaldo church on the Ingino Mount, where there is the mummy of Saint Ubaldo, the patron of Gubbio, and the 3 tall heavy wooden pedestals (*ceri*) which are preserved for the race of the candles, an ancient feast celebrated each year on 15th May. In a restaurant on the Ingino Mount, the delegates tasted typical Umbrian food and wines.

The gala dinner took place in the star cloister of the Abbey of Saint Peter in Perugia, where the Department of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences of the University of Perugia is based. The dinner was preceded by a well-appreciated concert of the [Coro Santo Spirito Volumnia](#) and accompanied by the Tenor Carlo Montanari, a flutist and a keyboard player. Prof. Buonauro, who performs with the group, added a personal touch to a warm and friendly evening. At the end of the dinner, a rainstorm occurred but still delegates danced and sang in the rain.

The 14th ICCPB was preceded by a satellite event, the 4th International Erwinia Workshop ([4th IEW](#)), which was organised on 2 and 3 July by Ian Toth and Sonia Humphris of the James Hutton Institute, Scotland, UK in collaboration with Roberto Buonauro and Chiaraluce Moretti of the DSA3. The event was a success also due to the high number of participants: 61. During the scientific program, organised in 5 sessions, 24 oral talks and 13 posters were presented. Each session began with a keynote presentation, followed by a series of short talk across a range of pathogens, including *Erwinia*, *Pectobacterium*, *Dickeya* and *Pantoea*, to allow everyone the chance to present their work after several years without a meeting. Due to COVID-19, it was 8 years since the group last met so there were some exciting updates and a nice buzz, as people met old friends and many new ones; our next generation of scientists in this area of research.

The 4th IEW workshop dinner took place on Saturday night at the Hotel Giotto in the medieval town of Assisi on a terrace with wonderful views over the olive trees and countryside. We also had the opportunity to stroll through the streets of Assisi and walk up to Basilica di San Francesco, one of the 54 UNESCO World Heritage sites in Italy, and the final resting place of St. Francis of Assisi. Our next venue is still to be decided but we will let people know in plenty of time and hope to see you there!



Participants at the 4th International Erwinia Workshop, Assisi (Italy)-2-3 July, 2022.