

Mr. President, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen:

It is a great pleasure for me to receive the SGA-Barrick award today, and I would like to thank the SGA Council and Barrick for this unexpected and prestigious honor. Special thanks also to Georges Beaudoin for his very kind words of introduction.

This award is an immense encouragement - I take it as a good sign that I am on the right path in my research; and it is certainly a huge additional motivation for my present and future research activities in the field of hydrothermal geochemistry and architecture of magmatic-hydrothermal systems.

Today, I will take the opportunity to thank the key people who have guided and influenced me during my development as a geologist. After finishing a Master's degree at the University of Sofia, I took my first steps as geologist at the Geological Institute in Sofia, where my mentor was the late Ivan Bonev. He was a particularly inspirational scientist, and I am deeply grateful to Ivan for the general vision that he was able to pass on to me about mineralogy and geologic processes.

Two years later when I started a PhD, my advisors were Claire Ramboz and Kamen Bogdanov, who introduced me to porphyry-related systems, and were constantly supportive, by providing constructive feedback and insights whenever they were needed. Beginning in 2000 I benefited greatly from the GEODE program of the European Science Foundation, part of which was the ABCD-project as an international collaboration between Western and East-European research institutions to study ore deposits and their geotectonic context and evolution in Eastern Europe. The program gave the opportunity to many young people from Bulgaria and Romania to conduct research in some top laboratories in western countries such as Austria, France, the UK, and Switzerland. For me, it was the first opportunity to work with Swiss geologists – I spent three months in Geneva at the invitation of Robert Moritz to do whole-rock analyses and radiogenic isotope geochemistry on some epithermal and porphyry systems in Bulgaria.

In the frame of the GEODE program I also met Chris Heinrich for the first time, and a year later I started a post-doc in his “Fluids and Ore Deposits” Group at ETH Zurich. Chris is an extremely enthusiastic and motivating post-doc advisor, and together with Thomas Pettke, Werner Halter, Thomas Driesner, Albrecht von Quadt, Irena Peytcheva, and a number of PhD and MSc students he created a highly stimulating environment at ETH during those years.

I next had the opportunity to move to the French-speaking part of Switzerland and joined another very active Ore Deposits group led by Lluís Fontboté at the University of Geneva as a post-doctoral researcher. In my present position I have had the chance to work closely with Lluís, Robert Moritz, Massimo Chiaradia, and the group of Urs Schaltegger on different projects in the Andes and Eastern Europe and to benefit from their large expertise in ore deposits geology and geochemistry. I was also lucky to interact with a number of excellent MSc and PhD students, most of whom are currently employed in the mining industry around the world.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Martina, for her support, patience, and most importantly – for the best achievement I have ever had in my life – our family.

Again, I sincerely thank the SGA for this award. I am indebted to Georges Beaudoin and Robert Moritz for nominating me. Many thanks to all the other people who have supported me during the years and who have provided me with knowledge, motivation, and guidance.