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The Gordon Research Conference on Organic Geochemistry centers on cutting-edge research on geochemical processes, their associated organic molecular and isotopic signatures, and their implications for understanding biological, geologic, and petroleum systems. It takes place every two years, where leading scientists in the field of organic geochemistry present their work. Based on the relatively small group of ~150 participants the organizers created a stimulating atmosphere and a good opportunity to get in contact with senior scientists and other PhD-students.

Due to a travel grant prize for best talk at the ESF EuroMARC Annual Conference 2009 I got the opportunity to present results of my PhD project on terrestrial lipid biomarkers as a poster, which is done in the framework of the EuroMARC project MOCCHA. In this presentation (“A multiproxy approach to investigate the contribution of terrestrial organic matter and the hydrological cycle along the Italian shelf”) I compare different terrestrial organic matter parameters with lipid biomarker proxies and provide an overview about the potential terrestrial contribution to the southern Italian shelf on basis of surface sediments. The posters had been on display for two days, which was ideal to discuss own data and that of other presenters. During the poster session I got a general positive feedback as well as constructive comments, which will help to improve my future work on this topic.

Beside the poster presentations, several talks provided helpful insights into the field of organic geochemistry covering Astrobiology, Petroleum systems, Molecular Biogeochemistry, Deep Biosphere, Molecular and Isotopic Proxies. Additionally, young researchers were selected to present their recent work in two sessions ‘Frontiers in Biogeochemistry’ and ‘Frontiers in Energy’. Especially the session ‘Molecular and Isotopic Proxies – Paleoclimatology and Paleoceanography’ allowed me to get further insight in the application but also limitation of these proxies, which I have to consider for my on-going studies.

Overall, I appreciated the Gordon Research Conference on Organic Geochemistry 2010 and experienced it as a very inspiring and motivating platform.

Sincerely yours,

Arne Leider