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On February 6, 2009, a symposium entitled 'Frontiers in Bioinorganic Chemistry' was held in honour of Prof. Dr. Daniel Bellus at the University of Basel. On that occasion the idea of a special issue of CHIMIA was conceived, with contributions from scientists who collaborated with Prof. Bellus during some point in their careers. The articles cover a wide range of research areas with the common denominator being chemistry. The title page shows an illustration from Robert Häner's article 'Nucleic Acids – Genes, Drugs, Molecular Lego and More' on chemically modified nucleic acids which find widespread use as tools in research, as diagnostic reagents and even as pharmaceutical compounds (page 14).