

ISR 11/2 *600 Years Heidelberg University* Title 347

The Special Issue on 'Heavy Ion Research', ISR 9/4, which at the time was under the direction of Professor Gisbert zu Putlitz [see Title 329], was highly successful. When Putlitz became the Rector of the University of Heidelberg, and it was about to celebrate its 600th Anniversary, he asked me again to prepare a Special Issue of my Journal for this event. I was glad to undertake this task, as it was to be sent to old alumni of Heidelberg all over the world, and 15000 copies were printed. It meant several visits to Heidelberg to organise the contents and many interesting discussions with the authors at the oldest University in Germany, founded in 1386. A splendid cover was designed for this Issue by Osswald, the crest of the University, surrounded by a multicoloured pattern, many vertical lines and two rings. It was published in June 1986.

As a motto for its celebrations, the University had chosen 'From Tradition into the Future' and this was also the title of the first comment in the issue by the Rector, Professor zu Putlitz. He emphasised that the contributions by senior Professors were not only commemorating the great traditions of the past, but were also pointing to an even greater future. He stressed the University's wide spectrum of disciplines, the interdisciplinary nature of its research, the stronghold of freedom for its academic staff and the proven stability over 600 years in overcoming the many challenges which had occurred during its history.

It was a large issue of 123 pages (96 pages normally) and contained 24 contributions. I began with my usual Editorial which I called *Gaudeamus igitur* 'Let us then rejoice', the title of the old academic drinking song. I rejoiced that the great old European Universities, like Heidelberg, had made almost all the important contributions to our Western Culture. I rejoiced that they were quickly imitated in Non-European countries when conditions became propitious and that they had guarded the traditions of freedom of research and teaching. Herr Lothar Späth, Prime Minister of Baden-Württemberg, the Land in which Heidelberg is situated, also contributed a Comment on the subject of "University and Society" sketching the political history which led the Duke-Elector Ruprecht I. to found the University and how it had served Society, time and again, by grooming individuals for leadership.

A further Comment was written by Professor Eugen Seibold, a Member of our Editorial Board, on "An international Network for the Universities", in which he pleaded for partnerships between Heidelberg and other Universities. He made the interesting point that the mediaeval language of scholars, Latin, had been replaced today by the English language, and that Heidelberg was the German city in which English can be heard most often.