

## THE BIBLIOTHECA PALATINA EXHIBITION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HEIDELBERG

To commemorate the 600th anniversary of the University of Heidelberg, the Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana loaned the collection of the Bibliotheca Palatina for a major exhibition. The Bibliotheca Palatina was founded in 1421 by the "elector" Ludwig III and kept by the Stift zum Heiligen Geist (Foundation of the Holy Ghost), where it was accessible to the scholars and students of the university. The collection was enlarged in 1556 when Offhenrich entrusted his private library to the foundation. In the course of the next decades the library was further increased through significant gifts, notably the Fuggers of Augsburg. During the Thirty Years War the books were integrated into the Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, where they were preserved in their original condition, safe from further plundering and wars.

The exhibition at the University of Heidelberg, open from July 8 - November 30, 1986, encompassed over 500 manuscripts and bindings, including the Falcon book of Frederick II, the Vergilius Palatinus, and the Lorscher Codex, which was a product of the Hof Schule (court school) of Charlemagne. The original location of the library was on the mezzanine of the church, and it was this site which was chosen for the exhibition.

The exhibition was designed to show the diversity of a full-fledged library during the period between the Renaissance and Humanism. This picture of the world was presented to the viewer through the writings of the "electors" who endowed and enlarged the collection and through the literature of the greatest minds known up to that time. Linguistically the spectrum ranged from Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic to name a few. The exhibition was composed of 10 sections, each highlighting a different aspect of life at the time, such as the nobility, the Church, the "liberal arts," and the life of the common man. The exhibited works included illuminated and simple manuscripts, early printed books, maps, engravings, etc. The majority of the works were text, while the remaining were devoted to bindings.

The bindings presented gave a good impression of what was produced at the time. Most of the bindings had been commissioned by the benefactors of the library, notably Ludwig and Offhenrich, who went throughout Europe to have the books bound. Stylistically there was an even division between traditional German binding and those influenced by the French and Italian styles. The German bindings were characterized by the predominant use of white alum-tawed pigskin with relatively simple decoration and an all around solid appearance. Those with Italian and French influences revealed much more ornate decoration with liberal gold and blind tooling and onlay-like coloring of the leather. These bindings also had a more elegant and technically advanced feel. The materials used were, for the most part, calf and pigskin. Although many styles were represented, one common element united them: the initials, the date of binding, and the coat of arms or a stamped portrait of the patron decorated the cover with few exceptions. Another highlight found on a few of the bindings were the gauffered edges depicting religious scenes, coats of arms, or simple patterns. The base for these was a gilded gold edge which was then additionally colored.

The final part of the exhibition included a depiction of how manuscripts were illuminated; how pigments and inks were produced with samples of the ingredients, covering the full range of organic and inorganic substances, some going into what we would now call bizarre; how vellum was prepared; and how books were bound in the 15th and 16th centuries.

All in all this was an exhibition which definitely had to be seen. A magnificent catalog of 850 pages with 350 in color was also published and is absolutely worth the price.

Peter Verheyen

## REPORT ON THE IPC CONFERENCE

The 10th anniversary conference of the Institute of Paper Conservation, appropriately titled "New Directions in Paper Conservation," was held in Oxford, England from April 14-18, 1986. Over 500 delegates from all parts of the world were in attendance, with the largest percentage from the United States and the United Kingdom. Oxford University hosted the conference and provided lodging and meals for the delegates and classroom space for the lectures and workshops.

The conference opened with a very pleasant reception at the University Museum, which was followed by an entertaining lecture on "A History of the Bodleian Library" by its head of conservation, Christopher Clarkson. The following 4 days were organized around a variety of concurrent lectures and seminars having to do with paper and book conservation. Some examples of the papers presented during the week include: "Alternative Approaches to the Treatment of Mould," "Computer Applications and Information Sources in Paper Conservation," "Freeze Drying," "The Conservation of Tracings," and "The Manufacture of Medieval Vellum." In conjunction with the lectures, a trade fair was held during the 4 days of the conference, allowing delegates to examine and purchase materials, tools, and equipment from the various suppliers who were there. A group of special tours was organized for the few days following the conference. The first tour consisted of visits to 3 private conservation workshops located in East Anglia; the second tour was of the Hayle Mill and Leeds Castle in Kent; and the third was of the National Maritime Museum and Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts in the London area. Although the preprints for the conference were made available only to delegates, the final papers will be published as Volume 10 of *The Paper Conservator* and, therefore, will be made available to the general public.

Abigail B. Quandt

## NEW PUBLICATION...

**THE NEW BOOKBINDER:** Journal of Designer Bookbinders, published once a year in November on behalf of Designer Bookbinders, London. \$38, institutions; \$19, individuals at a private address.

The *New Bookbinder* informs the hand bookbinder and all those interested in hand bookbinding of the new approaches, techniques, materials, equipment, and influences in these fields. Its readers and contributors include professional hand bookbinders, conservationists, librarians with collections of fine bindings, collectors, and all others interested in the art of the book.

**Volume 6, 1986** will include: "Visible Structure" by Betty Lou Chaika, "Bound to Please: A Lecture" by Colin Franklin, "A Bookbinding Discussed with Jeff Clements" by Ivor Robinson, "The Keatley Trust Collection of Modern Bindings" by Dorothy Harrop, "Rough Edge Gilding" by Jen Lindsay, "Setting Up and Running a Bindery: Results of a Questionnaire" by Emma Bulley, "Single Hinge Binding" by James Brockman, and "Vellum Manufacture at William Cowley & Son" by Wim Visscher. Book reviews by Mirjam Foot (British Library), Marianne Tidcombe, and William Bull (India Office, London); conference and exhibition reviews; and illustrations of recent bindings are also included.