

# Opening Address President of IATUL

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*President of IATUL*

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## OPENING ADDRESS FROM THE PRESIDENT OF IATUL

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The Technical University of Crete, in Chania, provides a particularly appropriate setting for the 1999 IATUL Conference - the last IATUL Conference of the millennium. Chania has a rich historical heritage. The earliest settlements were Neolithic and Minoan dating back to 2500 BC. The ancient city of Kydonia became part of the Roman Empire in 69 BC and part of the Byzantine Empire in 325 AD. In 1252 Chania was occupied by the Venetians, until the seventeenth century and the coming of the Turks. Crete remained part of the Ottoman Empire until 1897, and was finally united with the rest of Greece in 1913. The architecture of Chania shows a fascinating blend of styles from all these periods. What could be more appropriate for an international gathering?

The Technological University of Crete is a new university with a modern campus in a beautiful setting, which you are invited to visit this afternoon. This is the first conference that the International Association of Technological University Libraries has held in the Mediterranean region. We hope that this will encourage new members to join IATUL, and provide the opportunity for establishing new and lasting contacts. I would like to thank Anthi Katsirikou and all the members of the Local Organising Committee for their excellent work in preparing for this 1999 Conference. I am sure that you will all have a wonderful time in Crete, with many opportunities to interact and discuss strategies and plan for the future.

In recent years there has been considerable focus on the provision of networked resources on a campus wide network to our university students and staff. Many databases are now made available over the network, and there is an ever-growing number of full-text journals. You will have the opportunity to see and hear presentations about these during this week. Libraries are forming consortia for purchasing resources. There is an increase in co-operation between libraries and information suppliers. Some of our users are beginning to say that they are quite bewildered by the wealth of resources available. So it is not surprising to see efforts being devoted to the provision of a common interface to access these resources, and for programs for networked support and education available at the user's own computer. Examples of these will also be shown during this meeting.

I would, however, like us also to remember another important function of the academic library - as a store of knowledge. Recently at Chalmers University, we have been working on a Web-based resource program for the History of Science and Technology, and we have realised that many people are not aware of the resources that are stored in many of our older university libraries. The eighteenth century saw

the establishment of the earliest European institutes for technical education, for example in France with military schools from the 1720s onwards, the Ecole des Ponts et Chaussées(1747) Ecole des Mines (1769) and the Ecole Polytechnique (1794), Mining academies were founded at Freiberg (1765) and Clausthal (1765) in Germany and at Scemnitz (1770) in Hungary. The first half of the nineteenth century was a period of considerable economic growth and development, and technical institutes were established in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands and in Denmark and Sweden. Many of these older institutions have valuable collections of literature which are not available in web-based catalogues over the internet. Few libraries in Europe have had resources for extensive retrospective cataloguing. The *IATUL Quarterly* Volume 1 from 1987, contains a number of articles about these types of resources. I would like to make an appeal to all of you here and to all IATUL libraries, to let me have details of any valuable collections that you may have for scholars of the history of science and technology, so that we can publish these on the Web. This is rather similar to the project carried out by a former IATUL President - Dr. Dennis Shaw - on the availability of doctoral dissertations. I also hope to see how we can facilitate links to libraries in the USA who have extensive collections and are involved in retrospective cataloguing. I look forward to help from you in this work. It seems particularly relevant to make this appeal in Chania with its modern university and rich historical past.

Finally I would like to wish you a happy and successful 1999 IATUL Conference at the Technical University of Crete, in Chania.