

Guest editorial note

Special issue in honour of Rainer Jaenicke

Ein Kranz ist gar viel leichter binden, als ihm ein würdig'
Haupt zu finden.

Making up a garland is much easier than finding the head
worthy to wear it.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832).



It has been a great privilege and pleasure handling the editorial responsibilities for this Festschrift in honour of Rainer Jaenicke's contributions to science over the past 45 years. The wide variety and high quality of science reflected in the papers of this special issue are representative of the high standards Professor Jaenicke has applied rigorously to his own work.

To characterise him as a scientist is easy, because many of the positive attributes apply to him. He is driven by an inexhaustible curiosity coupled with an outstanding sense for 'hot topics'. This can even be taken literally, as he was one of the first to recognise the potential of K.O. Stetters' research on thermophiles, which resulted in a fruitful co-operation and numerous studies on the subject. Professor Jaenicke has always impressed people by his exceptional level of literature knowledge and his fast familiarity with the topical ideas. His exemplary Prussian working moral is heaven for editors of journals who choose him as a referee, while it might have been sometimes a burden for the less gifted graduate student. However, there were not too many of these, as you can see from the names appearing in the publication list. Many of them made their own scientific career after having had the opportunity to work in his group. He has an admirable talent for bringing out the best in young scientists by letting them work in maximal freedom, yet providing gentle guidance when required. By following this philosophy he has achieved optimal performance for his own research lab, and cultivated responsible working habits in many of his now renowned collaborators.

It is impossible to provide an adequate appreciation of his numerous unique and stimulating contributions to protein science in this brief preface. However, you get a flavour of the staggering breadths of topics and methods he has been treating and applying when looking through his list of publications. They reflect the range of his interest and expertise in science.

It would be inadequate to finish this preface without referring to a second activity that he has devoted himself to and that is appropriately addressed in the dedication of John Schellman. Rainer Jaenicke has been 'a central harmonising and organising spirit for all workers in the field'. Not forgotten to the participants are the various

congresses organised by him and his co-workers, as well as the numerous invited guests to his institute who were without exception pioneering scientists and pleasant individuals to work and discuss with.

Getting back to Goethe, I am convinced that we find in Rainer Jaenicke a scientist who deserves to be celebrated by this Festschrift edition of Biophysical Chemistry.

The Guest Editor:

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