PREFACE TO THE HISTORICAL SPECIAL ISSUE

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The international year of Statistics 2013, proclaimed by the international statistical institute (ISI) in order to emphasize the high importance of statistics for the modern information society, is drawing to a close. We, as the editors of Statistics, want to take this opportunity and thank our authors, reviewers, readers and everybody else who is or should be interested in statistics (according to the ISI this refers to the whole society) for their ongoing and continuously increasing interest and contribution.

Our journal started in 1970 as a part of the German Zeitschrift für Mathematische Operationsforschung und Statistik. Soon the former editors noticed how important statistics is and how large the need for it. Therefore, they established an independent journal and started making it more international, encouraging authors to submit in English and attracting more and more papers from all over the world.

In Germany it has a long tradition that in December people give a gift to their beloved ones every day until Christmas, the so-called Advent calendar. We want to take up this custom in order to reflect the German roots of our journal and have collected these 25 papers from all its epochs, starting from Mathematische Operationsforschung und Statistik (1970-1976), followed by Series Statistics (1977-1984) up to Statistics: A Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics, as it is called from 1985 on.

Those being familiar with the German Advent calendar might wonder why there are 25 instead of the usual 24 gifts, and why we publish the whole collection simultaneously instead of issuing one paper a day. There are several possible answers, one of them being that Statistics wants to remember approved traditions but is not restricted by them.

Let us also mention that we took over editorship from Olaf Bunke only less than two years ago, so we felt it hardly possible to make a selection of the best papers published in Statistics. This is a matter of personal preference and taste anyway and we do not yet know all the papers published in Statistics, etc.

So here it is, a small subset of the many wonderful papers published in Statistics, covering many different topics like experimental design, regression, distribution theory, survival analysis, time series, stochastic processes, model choice, nonparametrics, and other fields where important contributions to statistical practice based on a sound and profound mathematical background have been made.

Last but not least we want to thank all members of our editorial board, our managing editor Thorsten Dickhaus, and Mrs. Bergmann and Mrs. Fiebig from our editorial office, whose unfatiguing dedication guarantees that Statistics will prosper and further increase its relevance. We have been successful in attracting a couple of prestigious new experts for our editorial board and will continue doing so. Thus, we are confident that Statistics will effectively move to further modern fields without losing its historical roots.

We are very curious about getting to know how a continuation of this selection of papers might look like in a few years, when Statistics: A Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics celebrates its 50th birthday, but we do not want to speculate here. Every reader will certainly learn from the history and may then try to predict the future. And now enjoy reading.

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