

VOLUME 500

The fifties and sixties were heady days in the history of publishing. In the fifties, post-war reconstruction was in full swing and it seemed as if there were no limits to growth. Even in the sixties, with occasional fits and starts, science seemed set to expand almost indefinitely — it seems now almost incredible that each new graduate in chemistry or chemical engineering was offered any number of jobs, and was enticed to join this or that company by guided laboratory tours, lunches, and other innocent entertainments.

These circumstances led to a concomitant hunger for scientific literature. This hunger, combined with the birth and development of the publish or perish syndrome, provided remarkable opportunities for publishers active in all fields of science at that time, particularly in those areas at the forefront of post-war growth.

Even before the war, Elsevier had begun to be active, in a comparatively small way, in scientific publishing. After the war's end, some visionary publishers in the company foresaw not only the growth potential of science, but also, and more remarkably for a Continental publisher, concluded that English was going to be the scientific language of the future.

These, then, were the days when the foundations of the journal list were laid. The 1948 catalogue of publications lists only two journals, both of which commenced publication in 1947: *Biochimica et Biophysica Acta*, and *Analytica Chimica Acta* (both US\$ 9.00 per year, post free). By 1959 the number had grown to 10 and by the early seventies to about 200 (including the North-Holland and *Excerpta Medica* journals which had been added to Elsevier in 1970).

The decade 1960–1970 was one of increasing specialisation in the journal field, but even this trend had been foreshadowed earlier because by 1959 Elsevier was publishing both the *Journal of Chromatography* and the *Journal of Electroanalytical Chemistry* alongside *Analytica Chimica Acta*, the scope of which in fact included both of them. Other publishers were of course also actively pursuing specializations and the journals produced often in due course outstripped the more general ones both in size and in subscription levels.

In general one can say that the earlier the journals commenced, the more influential they have become. Several of them have grown to a phenomenal size — *Biochimica et Biophysica Acta* has for example already passed the Vol. 1000 mark. Several others are well into the hundreds of volumes, including the present one.

The growth of the *Journal of Chromatography* has not, however, by any means been automatic. Journals only become successful if they are created in response to the needs of the world of science in general and are edited and published in such a way that the continuing and constantly developing requirements of individual scientists are met. These requirements are concerned not only with the correct and prompt treatment of papers that have been submitted, but also careful adjustment of the scope of the journal to ensure that the coverage is sufficiently wide to take account of new developments in the field without straying too far into topics better dealt with elsewhere. It has always been the aim of the *Journal of Chromatography* to satisfy these demands, and its success indicates that its performance is regarded as satisfactory.

Clearly, however, the main credit must go to the thousands of authors who have entrusted their work to the journal over the last thirty-two years and all those scientists (also, of course, the selfsame authors) who have, by commenting and refereeing, ensured that standards have been maintained. The authors *are* in fact the journal. Modesty forbids us to mention the desk-editorial staffs who have done their best to keep them all happy.

Which brings us to the authors in Volume 500. The attentive reader will observe that all the original papers in this volume bear the name of at least one member of the new editorial boards. We thank them for having created such a worthy volume. Not all members could be represented as the lead time was rather short and, moreover, many had sent their papers to other special issues that were being prepared concurrently. We are also especially pleased to publish the historical series of photographs contributed by Michael Lederer, whose editorship of the journal for so very many years provided ample opportunity for the gathering of formal and informal shots of prominent chromatographers.

We hope that this collection of papers will long stand as a fitting commemoration of this milestone in the history of the journal, and as a tribute to the vast efforts of authors, and all others involved in the publication process, that have made possible the publication of 500 volumes since 1958.

Perhaps I may be permitted to conclude on a personal note. I have been involved with the *Journal of Chromatography* as a shadowy background figure for some 450 of the 500 volumes, and from this position have come greatly to value and appreciate the friendship of very many chromatographers, both personally and by correspondence. I am deeply grateful for their regard and willing support. It seems fitting that I should retire on a note as auspicious as this volume. Under the capable hands of the editors and with the continued support of our authors and editorial boards I am confident that the journal will continue to thrive — but will electronics permit it to reach Volume 1000?



*Elsevier Science Publishers,
Amsterdam (The Netherlands)*

MARC ATKINS