This conference in Cadiz marks the 50th anniversary of the publication of the inaugural volume of our Society’s *Acta*, in which we published the papers given the previous year at the very first meeting of the Society, held in Switzerland at Baden and Vindonissa in September 1957. The second volume published in 1959, comprised papers from the second RCRF Congress held at Arezzo and Pompeii in 1958. Congresses have since been held every other year, apart from three-year gaps between numbers 3 and 4, from 1958 to 1961, and 11 and 12, from 1977 and 1980. The *Acta* have for the most part been linked to the Congresses (see table 1). I was informally a pupil of the founders almost at the beginning of the Society, I have now been President for the last six years, and the end of this Congress marks the end of my term of office. What follows is a personal retrospective of the Fautores’ first fifty years.

The founders of the Society were Howard Comfort, sometime President of the American Philological Association, who spent his career teaching Classics and coaching cricket at Haverford College, Pennsylvania, and Elisabeth Ettlinger, who lived almost all her life in Zurich and taught at the University of Bern. Both were great authorities on terra sigillata (TS). Howard was the editor of the *Oxford Comfort Catalogue of TS Stamps* and author of many articles, and Elisabeth was responsible for the TS from several sites along the Rhine. When I first visited her house in Witikonerstrasse she had all the Neuss pottery in boxes around the walls, and I remember a fellow-archaeologist saying that every sherd unearthed at Neuss came to the surface crying out, “Take me to Dr. Ettlinger.” Physically they were a great contrast, Elisabeth rather small and quick in her movements, Howard very tall and spare, slow of speech and movement, who thee’d and thou’d in Quaker fashion and looked very like a poster image of Yankee Doodle.

Both were immensely kind to me when I was writing my D.Phil. thesis for Oxford University in the early 60s and when subsequently I was turning most of it into what became *The German Policy of Augustus* (Oxford, 1972). I spent the summer of 1963 travelling up the Rhine from Holland to Switzerland, visiting museums and excavations and ending up in Munich, working in the Institut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, and on the way my thesis supervisor, Prof. Sir Ian Richmond, sent me to see Elisabeth for tutorials on Augustan TS.

The following year I returned to my position at the University of Ottawa, where I taught for 27 years, and it was Elisabeth who suggested that I make contact with Howard Comfort, whom I recognised when we met by the (MCC) cricket club tie he was wearing. The following summer I drove down from Ottawa with my wife Kate and two children to camp in the garden of the Comforts’ summer cottage in Maine, until it rained so hard that the Comforts invited us to move inside. Howard gave me good advice and free access to the proofs of the precious catalogue, while his wife showed my family the local sights. Both Elisabeth and Howard were prodigal of their time and their knowledge. Anything I have ever understood about TS I owe to their initial stimulus.

Howard appears to have been the driving force behind the first volume of the *Acta*, which was cyclostyled and printed at the expense of Haverford College, with a preface in Howard’s elegant Latin. The volume had only 37 pages and contained four articles on individual sites (Magdalensberg, Sabratha, Mittelbronn, and Arezzo), seven national or regional reports, one article of just over a page in length on *sigillata estampada paleocristiana*, and four brief notices of less than a page each. The contributors included several of the leading pottery specialists of the day, and the international character of the Fautores was emphasised by the fact that six languages were used, including Latin. It was a private publication: “hic noster libellus non per librairos sed tantum inter socios nostros divulgabitur.” It took the Ashmolean Library in Oxford six years to acquire a copy, which bears the acquisition stamp dated 6 May 1964.

Volume 2 followed in 1959 and was typeset but still somewhat amateur in appearance and proof-reading. Another Latin preface records the decision to meet every two or three years in future rather than annually. It is followed by 15 further articles, of which 9 deal with TS and thin-walled Aco-type beakers, and there are 3 national bibliographies, a proposal for standardising the reporting of pottery inventories, an article by Graham Webster on Castor Ware, and the equivalent of a *Communicationes* section, which records the death of Felix Oswald at the age of 92. Of the five languages used the most frequent is German, which was to remain the language most used in Congresses and *Acta* for many years.

Volumes 3 through 8, which appeared from 1961 to 1966, were all edited by Michel Vanderhoeven at Tongres (Tongeren), and start to be strikingly more professional. None was specifically linked to a given Congress, and conversely none of the three Congresses that took place in these years, at Klagenfurt in 1961, Strasbourg in 1963, and on Mallorca in 1965, had its own volume. Despite important articles in vol...
We do not hear a great deal more about the implications of the Lyon discoveries in the Acta. Much of the discussion that they stimulated appeared instead in local French journals, in Figlina or elsewhere. TS in general however continued to be well represented in the Acta, including in volume 16 (1976) an amusing palinode by Howard Comfort, retracting false provenances that he had unwittingly promulgated for TS from Lake Nemi and London: “Most of the evidence hitherto accepted as having London … as provenance has, as we say, a fishy smell” (p. 159).

Volume 17/18 (1977) was devoted to the 1975 Augst Congress, which I remember for its magnificent TS display, and included Siegmar von Schnurbein on pottery from the workshops at Haltern, and my own paper on the dating of Augustan TS, arguing that in the light of Lyon and other recent discoveries we need “a radical reexamination of accepted concepts and cherished terminology” (p. 132). I was in part recanting my acceptance of attempts to date TS too precisely in my book, The German Policy of Augustus (Oxford, 1972, but essentially completed in 1969, before I knew about the Lyon discoveries), though I was careful to say, “I still stand by the main lines of my argument and the conclusions reached” (p. 132, n.2). The book includes an appendix on “The Dating Value of TS” that cost me a lot of pain. Has anyone today ever read it?

On the way home from the Augst Congress, I called in at Lyon to see for myself the finds from the Lyon workshops at Loyasse and La Muette, and Jean Lasfargues at the Musée de Civilisation Gallo-Romaine hospitably gave me the run of the storerooms. Excited by what I saw, I phoned to Elisabeth Ettlinger in Zurich that evening and said she must come over right away, which she did, I think the next Sunday, driven by her husband Leopold, and we spent several hours together with Lasfargues in the unheated storeroom (it was cold in mid-September). It had once been almost an article of faith that Italian and Gaulish TS could always be told apart just from looking at them. No longer! I vividly remember Elisabeth picking up these Ateius and other sherds made in Lyon and saying, wonderfully, “but you wouldn’t know the difference, you just wouldn’t know the difference!”

Another personal recollection from the same year reflects once again the predominance of TS and other fine wares, not only in the Acta, but in the approach of many pottery specialists and dig directors. It was in 1976 that I began excavating at Carthage as Director of the 2nd Canadian Team under the auspices of the UNESCO “Save Carthage” project, in which nearly a dozen countries took part. On some sites, not of course all, if pottery in those first years was considered to have any importance at all, it was only fine wares that were studied, while amphora sherds and the like went straight onto the spoil heap. But it was Carthage that first opened my own eyes to the interest, the importance, and the potential of amphora studies. They have since come into their own, but where in 1976 did one go for a basic guide to Roman amphorae? Callender’s Roman Amphorae (London, 1965) was still in effect the last word.

The next two Congresses were held in notable centres of TS production, so that it is not surprising if Acta 19/20...
Table 1. Table of concordances between Acta volumes and congresses.

Volumes 3–8 are annual issues (1961–66) not specifically linked to a Congress. During these years however three Congresses were held, but their proceedings were not separately published. These were nos. 3 (Klagenfurt, 1961), 4 (Strasbourg, 1963), and 5 (Mallorca, 1965). Volume 13 similarly is not linked to a specific Congress, whereas volume 14/15, although it does not say so, from internal evidence clearly contains papers from the 1971 Congress at Nijmegen.

(1979), from the 11th Congress at Metz and Nancy in 1977, and 21/22 (1982), from the 12th at Millau in 1980, still show themselves predominantly interested in TS. The Congress at Metz and Nancy, organised by Marcel Lutz, sticks in my memory as being gastronomically the finest I ever attended. Lutz had excellent local connections, and the local museums and mayors excelled themselves in hospitality. Nowhere however have I seen so much ugly grotty pottery as the local productions in the local museum storerooms. Even in volume 23/24 (1984), from the 13th Congress at Munich in 1982, 12 out of 15 articles are on TS, although Paul Burgin on “Figuli im römischen Recht” opens wider perspectives, and in a sign of things to come Kevin Greene in “A spatial analysis of pottery in the Neronian legionary fortress at Usk, Gwent”, rather daringly admits to using a computer.

With volume 25/26, from the 14th Congress, held in Oxford and London in 1984 and organised by Grace Simpson together with our incoming President, Philip Kenrick, the tide begins to turn. Among its 34 articles are discussions of amphoras and of bricks and tile, while a significant number deal with distribution and trade, like Elisabeth Ettlinger asking “How was Arretine Ware sold?” and Elizabeth Lyding...
Succeeding volumes from 35 onwards reinforce this new pattern. Volume 35 for instance, from the 20th Congress at York and Newcastle, contains 35 articles divided into five sections: pottery and the Roman army (9 articles), cooking ware (8), pottery manufacturing sites (6), sigillata and fine wares (8), and various (4). The first three of these were defined as the principal themes of the Congress. There were another 27 papers or poster sessions not published. The long reign of TS appears to be over, and a detailed analysis of the contents of the subsequent Acta would confirm it. Of particular interest is the 21st Congress at Ephesus and Pergamum, the only one so far held outside Europe, which emphasised the Eastern provinces and East-West exchanges, a total of 39 articles, with a further 11 on the Danube and the Balkans, whereas there were only 5 on Italian TS. I still deeply regret having had to miss this Congress because it clashed with my teaching duties in Texas. Fautores teaching in North America, where the university year generally starts in August or September, often have this problem.

Two years later, for the 22nd Congress at Lyon, as one might expect, the West comes back to prominence. A dozen articles on Gaulish sites or productions include an invaluable mise-au-point by Armand Desbat on the Lyon workshops, culminating in a bibliography of 79 items. The 23rd Congress at Rome produced, naturally enough, 20 papers on Rome and Italy. The 24th at Namur and Louvain had as its major theme Late Antiquity and the 25th at Dürres the pottery of the Via Egnatia. Dürres was notable for the magnificent job of organisation that our Albanian colleagues did in sometimes difficult circumstances, and for the number of younger scholars participating.

It now seems to be accepted that an emphasis on the pottery of the region where the Congress is being held is natural and appropriate, and what is to be seen in local sites and museums may suggest other specific themes, just as the present Congress at Cadiz has for its main theme kiln sites and pottery manufacture, a topic that, as far as my memory goes, has not had much prominence since the 1977 Congress at Metz and Nancy, when we visited Rheinzabern. The next Congress will be in Belgrade, and provisional invitations for subsequent years look like taking us to other countries where we have never met before. We cannot however go anywhere unless invited, and there is no immediate prospect of meeting again outside Europe, where we have met only once in a half century. It is particularly regrettable that we have never met in North Africa, despite the role that that area played in the ceramic history of the Roman Empire. One would scarcely think that Africa produced any pottery, to judge the pitiful scarcity of papers in the Acta on sites and productions in Africa on the years.