

developments in virus diagnosis and strategies for the design of antiviral drugs. For the clinician an organ-system-classified overview of viral diseases is given. The book is well illustrated, concisely but clearly written and extensively referenced. As such, it is a useful textbook and a standard work.

G. OPDENAKKER

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The Microbe 1984 – I Viruses

36th Symposium of the Society for General Microbiology

ed. by B.W.J. Mahy and J.R. Pattison

Cambridge University Press, London, 1984

344 pages, £30.00, US \$ 59.50

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Contents – Peter Wildy: An analysis of virology; Stephen C. Harrison: The structure of viruses; Duncan J. McGeoch: The nature of animal virus genetic material; David Baltimore: The vagaries of viral evolution: the example of poliovirus replication initiation; J. Michael Bishop: Exploring carcinogenesis with retroviruses; Neville Symonds: The role of recombination in the life of bacterial viruses; Darryl Reaney: The molecular evolution of viruses; Bernard N. Fields: Mechanisms of virus-host interactions; Robin A. Weiss: Viruses and human cancer; J.R. Pattison, F. Brown and A.A. Brunt: New virus disease syndromes; D.A.J. Tyrrell: The eradication of virus infections; H.L. Sanger: Minimal infectious agents: the viroids.

The text on the cover flap reads as follows: "To celebrate the hundredth meeting of the Society for General Microbiology some eminent microbiologists have been invited to review the present state of knowledge of microbiology and to look ahead at what the future might hold beyond 1984. Their contributions are published in two volumes: Part I on Viruses and Part II on Prokaryotes and Eukaryotes.

This volume on viruses provides an up-to-date account of our knowledge concerning the viruses of animals, plants and humans, and the diseases which they cause. It is written from a philosophical point of view and discusses both the origins of viruses and possible future developments in virus research, including the possibility of the development of new virus diseases. An extensive account of the role of viruses in the aetiology of cancer is included, as well as the possible uses of virus research in understanding and treating cancer in humans."

I agree with the editors that the book will be read with pleasure by postgraduates in virology and experimental oncology. To the other possible categories of readers, especially undergraduates, I would advise the book as supplementary reading to basic texts only.

A. BILLIAU

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