for student use and to answer enquiries by scientists and engineers not expert in the field.

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Carbohydrate Chemistry, Volume 9, J. S. BRIMACOMBE (Senior Reporter). A Specialist Periodical Report of the Chemical Society, London. 1977, xii+485 pages. £29.00. $58.00.

The series "Specialist Periodical Reports—Carbohydrate Chemistry" is coming towards the end of its first decade of publication, and in reviewing the latest edition, Volume 9, it is perhaps useful to comment also on the series as a whole.

Volume 9 covers the literature between mid-January 1975 and mid-January 1976. The coverage is comprehensive rather than selective. The extremely high standard of production apparent in earlier volumes is maintained: the continued, liberal use of formulae and reaction schemes is commendable.

As with all of the preceding volumes, Volume 9 comprises two parts. Part I (202 pages) covers mono-, di-, and tri-saccharides and their derivatives, and Part II (256 pages) deals with macromolecules. Each part is subdivided into chapters dealing with different classes of compounds; for example, Part I contains chapters on Free Sugars, Glycosides, Ethers and Anhydro Sugars, *etc.*, and also has chapters on such special topics as N.m.r. Spectroscopy and Conformational Features of Carbohydrates, Oxidation and Reduction, and Separatory and Analytical Methods. It is perhaps a reflection of the foresight of the reporters in Volume 1 that, during the nine years of publication, it has been necessary to add only one new chapter heading to Part I and one to Part II. The former, an addition to Volume 9, is entitled The Synthesis of Optically Active Non-Carbohydrate Compounds, and reflects the ever-increasing use by synthetic chemists of carbohydrates as sources of chirality. The addition to Part II of a chapter on Enzymes was made in Volume 3, and this chapter has undergone considerable expansion over the years; in the latest volume, it occupies 70 pages and provides 402 references towards the total of 1821 references to be found in Part II.

Volume 9 contains a total of 2759 references split between Parts I and II in the ratio of approximately 1:2. Comparing Volumes 1 and 9, the numbers of references in Parts I and II have increased by approximately 23 and 330%, respectively. Presumably, the latter figure does not represent solely the increase in research in this area, but also indicates a widening sphere of interest of the reporters. Even so, the number of Part-II references in the present volume is only three-quarters of that in Volume 6, which ranks as the largest edition so far with 591 pages and a total of 3330 references.

The Specialist Periodical Reports are intended to keep the chemist abreast of recent progress in his own specialised area and also in related fields, as well as giving him an overall view of the development of his subject. Do they fulfil this role? In the opinion of the reviewer, the answer is definitely yes, but it seems that there may be a possible danger inherent in the use of all types of abstracting services. The fact that the literature is being efficiently combed by others for all related work and that this information will be provided in a packaged form at a later date may actually discourage some research workers from consulting primary journals. A result of this would be to remove valuable opportunities for the cross-fertilisation of ideas, which is often achieved by reading papers in non-related areas of study. However, there is no doubt that this latest volume should be available to all those working in carbohydrate chemistry. Unfortunately, I suspect that the cost may tend to prohibit its purchase for personal use.

What of the future of the series? Limitation of the size of the reports would seem to be of paramount importance, in order to prevent the selling price from increasing to unacceptable levels. The possibility of separate publication for Parts I and II has been raised, and resisted so far. If the present size is not exceeded (and Volume 9 is smaller than Volumes 6 and 7), fragmentation should be avoided. The introduction of selective coverage to reduce costs should, in my opinion, be absolutely the last resort; comprehensive coverage of the literature is, perhaps, one of the most important features that has led to the success of the series.

Everyone benefiting from these volumes owes, I believe, a vote of thanks to the reporters who undertake this arduous task. To date, twelve reporters have been involved; the one who has contributed to all nine volumes surely deserves an appropriate medal for his tirelessness!

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Aldehydes—Photometric Analysis: Volume 4, Aldehyde Precursors: Formation and Analysis of Aldehydes (Part II), by EUGENE SAWICKI AND CAROLE R. SAWICKI, Academic Press, London, 1976, xiii + 285 pages, £13.00, $19.40.

This is the second of a sub-set of three volumes (Volumes 3–5 of the series Aldehydes—Photometric Analysis) which discuss (*i*) the photometric analysis of precursors through their derived aldehydes, (*ii*) the formation of aldehydes from precursors present in the environment or in living tissue, and (*iii*) the physiological importance of the precursor and/or the derived aldehyde.

The preface provides a disappointing and possibly misleading entry to the book; biochemists could easily, but incorrectly, conclude that the book is entirely for them, whilst chemists could equally easily assume, in error, that chemistry is very much given second place. Volume 4 in fact contains a wealth of information, and the three volumes may be described as covering "anything which gives an aldehyde somehow".