

Book Reviews

Methods of Enzymatic Analysis. Volume II: Samples, Reagents, Assessment of Results. Hans Ulrich Bergmeyer. Verlag Chemie, Weinheim, 1983. xvi + 539 pp. Subscription price DM 180, post subscription price DM 215. (Subscription prices apply, when all 10 volumes are ordered.) Individual volume price DM 245.

Volume II of Bergmeyer's *Methods of Enzymatic Analysis* covers what the editors rightly call 'the transition from theory to practice'. The book is subdivided into three main sections. The first section deals with the preparation of samples for enzyme analysis. Methods by which mammalian, plant and microbial specimens may be taken, homogenised, fractionated and characterised are described and summarised. There is also a brief appreciation of the particular problems associated with the use of enzymes for analysis in food chemistry. The second section is concerned with the properties of and problems associated with reagents used in enzymatic analysis. Finally, the book also considers the evaluation and quality of experimental results.

In my opinion, Volume II of *Methods of Enzymatic Analysis* is the most useful of the series so far published. I would recommend it in particular to students and those not familiar with the pitfalls awaiting the unwary in biological systems. Nothing in the volume should be surprising to the experienced scientist, yet I suspect many of us have had to learn the book's lessons through bitter experience.

One minor area where I feel the book could be improved is by cutting

down the large number of German language references. I appreciate that the editors and many of the authors are German. However, this is the English edition and it is unfortunate that some of the review chapters have either no English references or only one or two.

The book is well turned out with few typographical errors and I would recommend it for any collection. However, the price is such that few individuals will be able to afford it. This is a pity because of the book's potential as a teaching aid.

F. F. Morpeth

Peptide and Protein Reviews, Volume 2. Edited by M. T. W. Hearn. Marcel Dekker Inc., New York and Basel, 1984. 312 pp. ISBN 0-8247-7135-4. Price: SFr 146.00.

'Of making many books there is no end' runs the text, and affairs have not improved in the post-biblical millenia. In fact the comment seems peculiarly relevant to scientific publishing today and, in particular, to volumes such as that under consideration—a multiauthored collection of reviews. It would be quite difficult to define the individuals who would be prepared to spend nearly £50 on this book. The four reviews it contains cover a very wide area and indeed the series has the eclectic aim of 'the further advancement in our understanding of the role of peptides and proteins in the life sciences'. So it is clear that we have here a reference book, published for the library market.

Should we encourage our library to buy this volume? The reviews it contains—on tubulins, neurotensin, parathyroid hormone and termination of protein synthesis—represent no unity of subject matter, nor even are they all areas at the forefront of current research. How then does each review stand on its own? A review of this kind should not be content to garner the available information, it should be more than an annotated bibliography—timely, constructive and above all critical. There are some successes here. Both Ponstingl *et al.* with the tubulins and St.-Pierre and his colleagues on neurotensin provide thorough wide-ranging reviews of the literature which are based on a firm view of what is important in their respective fields. Yet even these two papers sit uneasily together for one is written largely from a structural molecular standpoint and the other, as befits a contribution from a medical faculty, concentrates on peptide distribution and function.