

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.

A further contrast is provided by Tate's article on the termination of polypeptide synthesis which is an attempt to introduce a neglected field to the reader and would be admirable for interested final-year undergraduates.

On the whole, these reviews are as timely as the exigencies of book publication will allow, most containing references up to the end of 1982. And, for a publication in which camera-ready copy has been provided by the authors, a surprisingly high level of accuracy and consistency has been obtained. Nevertheless this volume contains some strange bedfellows and it would have to be a very rich or profligate library which could afford to buy it without considerable thought.

**C. J. Skidmore**