

Book Review

Journal of planar chromatography — modern TLC, Editors: Sz. Nyiredy (Editor-in-chief), H. Jork, C. F. Poole and B. De Spiegeleer, First issue: February 1988, Dr. Alfred Hüthig Verlag, Heidelberg.

The editorial of the first number states:

we can state that the number of TLC publications has varied between 600 and 800 in recent years. This means that more than 20% of all publications on separation techniques are in planar chromatography. We are introducing "Journal of Planar Chromatography — Modern TLC" as a forum for rapid communication of recent developments in instrumentation, new applications, and improved methods, to present this information to the reader in a clear, concise format, and to open a new channel of communication between scientists from all countries. The Journal should revive discussion in planar chromatography and encourage scientists to pursue new ideas in this field.

Aside of the fact that it is not clear what "a forum for rapid publication" and "a new channel of communication" are, one would question also the wisdom in fractionating the field of chromatography at a moment when many problems are solved by using several techniques together. This is already illustrated in this issue by the fact that one paper deals with electrophoresis, as well as chromatography.

The quality and usefulness of any journal depends, of course, entirely on its editor. So let us examine what he has to offer in this first issue:

On page 29 there is a paper on the "Differentiation and evaluation of Ginsengs and their preparations by means of HPTLC fingerprint analysis". A good photo of the chromatogram is shown in Fig. 5 (p. 33) which however is not better than that obtained in classical TLC, by Wagner *et al.* (*Plant Drug Analysis*, Springer, 1984, p. 239). Furthermore this work is not quoted and, according to the "Guidelines" published some years ago in *Anal. Chem.*, previous work must be mentioned!?!

On pp. 76 and 77 there is a paper on "Imaging analysis of thin layer chromatograms by secondary ion mass spectrometry: analysis of neostigmine and pyridostigmine bromides". In this paper there is a chromatogram, shown in Fig. 3, mentioning as solvent butanol-acetic acid-water while the text says butanol-methanol-water. So here the editorial slip is showing: either the editor or the publisher is careless. But the chromatogram poses another more important problem too: quaternary ammonium bromides travel usually as ion pairs and thus in a real analysis in presence of other anions often yield multispots. This is not discussed in this paper, which makes its usefulness in real analyses questionable, limiting the information of value to acrobatics with the mass spectrometer.

The editorial team is weak in English speaking members (five out of thirty) so the editor will indeed fight a lone and uphill battle if he wants to edit a serious journal. We wish him luck and success for his venture.