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Preface

As we enter the new millennium, the demand will be accelerating for analysis of compounds present in lower and lower concentration in the presence of large amounts of interfering substances. New techniques and different approaches for sample pretreatment and enrichment become more crucial for successful analysis of such compounds.

Advanced real-world analytical techniques require frequently appropriate sample pretreatment. This is necessary mainly for the two reasons: (1) to adjust the concentration of the analytes followed to a level which allows reliable analysis (both qualitative and quantitative) and (2) to remove interferences stemming from the matrix components. It has to be borne in mind that e.g. in capillary electrophoretic techniques using UV detection admittedly the sample volume can be quite small (a few nanoliters), however, the concentration of analytes followed should be quite high (tens of micrograms per ml in most cases). Because this category of analyses is usually carried out at a wavelength that is non-selective for the analytes followed (typically around 200 nm), the interfering (contaminating) compounds from the matrix should be removed as well. If these two goals

can be done in a single on-line step, it is better. Chromatographic procedures, carried out both in the liquid and gas phase, possess similar requirements. Environmental samples, analysis of drugs and toxicants in natural material, analysis of complex peptide/protein profiles, all of these tasks put similar demands upon the analyst. Being aware of this situation we have attempted to assemble overviews covering this area and present them in a comprehensive way. In the present volume emphasis is put upon techniques with limited attention paid to applications.

It is the hope that this volume will help to exchange new information and to stimulate further research into this important area.

Readers of this volume, depending on the field they are involved in, may prefer different approaches, and, perhaps different profiling of the volume. In this respect the editors would appreciate any comments that may arise.

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