Book Reviews

Weiss, R.A.; Teich, N.M.; Varmus, H.E.; Coffin, J.M. (eds): RNA Tumor Viruses. Monograph Series, vol. 10c. Molecular Biology of Tumor Viruses, 2nd ed. Cold Spring Harbor: Cold Spring Harbor Lab. 1982. 1396 pp., several figs., several tabs. Hard bound $ 132.00.

In the last decade, few fields of molecular biology have had so impetuous a development as tumor virology, especially the RNA tumor virology. This is demonstrated by the second edition of "The Molecular Biology of Tumor Viruses" published nearly 10 years after the first edition which soon became a "bible" of tumor virologists – a high claim to quality. Whereas in the first edition the RNA tumor viruses were reviewed in about 200 pages of 750 in the entire volume, this second edition concerns only the molecular biology of RNA tumor viruses making it a massive but sometimes an unwieldy work.

The textbook is divided into 11 chapters each with a single monograph and 6 appendices. Described in detail are the major biochemical and genetic features of RNA tumor viruses, the organization of viral RNA and proviral DNA; the strategies for viral replication and gene expression; the nature and origin of viral transforming genes; the structure and function of endogenous viral genomes; problems of the search for human RNA tumor viruses; as well as taxonomic analysis of retrovirus group. The rapid expansion of our information about RNA tumor viruses were due to the use of methods of DNA recombination and DNA sequencing. In appendices information is compiled on the nomenclature; restriction maps of retroviral proviruses and corresponding cellular oncogenes; tRNA primers; sequences of retrovirus LTRs; complete nucleotide sequences of Rous sarcoma virus strain Pr-C, Moloney murine leukemia virus and its clone 124, a cellular *onc* gene; and amino acid sequences of retroviral structural proteins. Although the problem of induction of human malignancy associated with retroviruses has not been solved, there are many attempts to use retrovirus research for investigation of the organization and expression of human genes active in malignant cells.

This monograph contains much factual information and demonstrates the enormous growth of our knowledge in this special field. The chapters include both instructive figures and tables as well as excellent bibliographies. The authors attempted successfully to form the text, figures, and tables with an understanding of the needs both of students and beginners in tumor virology as well as experienced working scientists. With certainty this edition will become a valuable standard work, and not only for RNA tumor virologists.

H. Stäber, Berlin