
Book reviews

Wolff, R.: Katzen. Stuttgart: Ulmer 1984. 288 pp., 155 photographs (62 in color), 29 drawings. Hard bound DM 38,-.

Whereas beautiful and comprehensive English books on cats exist, the German cat lover will find no equivalent in his own language. The book of Rosemarie Wolff will not change this situation because it explicitly does not pretend to be comprehensive. Nevertheless, this book gives the reader a good idea about "behaviour, care, and races", as the subtitle promises. The author is a cat breeder herself, and on every page of the text concerned with practical aspects, the reader finds her personal experiences and commitment. Following the chapters on behaviour and care, cat races are described; clear tables with an enumeration of the characters give a survey of the subject matter. In the chapter on heredity, the author undertakes the attempt to introduce and explain the principles of Mendelian inheritance; it is the weakest part of the book, difficult to understand for the layman and irritating for the insider because of some misunderstandings. In the last part of the book, however, the author returns to her field of own experience: if you like wild cats, be aware of the problems which will arise when you try to keep them in your house!

The illustrations supplement the text and tables of the book in an excellent manner. Most of the black and white photographs show cats in action: fighting, playing, hunting, mating, giving birth, etc. Most of the colour photographs, on the other hand, show cats exhibiting quietly their hereditary characters in front of studio backgrounds, which are too harshly coloured (to my taste).

Taken as a whole, the book presents original information by an knowledgeable author, and the price is not too high – I recommend it to cat lovers.

C. K. Stumm, Nijmegen

Osterman, Lev. A.: Methods of Protein and Nucleic Acid Research. 2. Immunoelectrophoresis, Application of Radioisotopes. Berlin, Heidelberg, New York, Tokyo: Springer 1984. ix+204 pp., 61 figs. Hard bound DM 98,-.

The title of this manual of research methodology is misleading in two ways. First, it suggests dealing with immunoelectrophoresis and the application of radioisotopes to it. However, the book turns out to contain two completely independent parts. The first part is a continuation of the first volume in which electrophoresis, isoelectric focusing and ultracentrifugation were discussed. The second part contains general information on isotopes, scintillators, scintillator counters, the labelling of proteins and counting of labelled samples. This part is concluded by a discussion of various radioimmune methods.

The first part of the book is named immunoelectrophoresis. This, in fact, is also misleading. Only 16 out of 61 pages are really dealing with this subject. On the other pages, the fundamentals of immunochemistry and the use of immune methods to detect protein zones following conventional electrophoresis and electrofocusing are discussed. The first of these two topics seems obligatory for any author writing on immunologic methods. However, this subject is so complex, that it should need many more pages. In fact, it would be better to refer to specialised books on immunochemistry rather than try and explain it again in too concise a form.

In general, this book renders good and basic information for anyone who is beginning to use these methods and for anyone who has used them for such a long time already that he may have forgotten their basic possibilities and problems.

J. A. W. M. v. d. Donk, Utrecht