

## Molecular meetings

P.F. Baker

### Molecular Physiology.

Editor R. Gilles.

*Elsevier Biomedical*. 12/yr. \$176, Fl440.

### Magnesium: Experimental and Clinical Research.

Editor-in-Chief B.M. Altura.

*Karger*. 6/yr. DM274.

WHENEVER a new journal appears, its chief editor usually feels the necessity to justify the venture. These two new offerings are no exception and I find myself in sympathy with much of the justification for *Molecular Physiology*, especially the fact that physiology and its offshoot biochemistry have tended to grow apart and both frequently ignore the power of the comparative approach.

But can a new journal, single-handedly, redress this balance especially when there are a number of excellent and well respected journals that both claim to meet the avowed aims of *Molecular Physiology* and also undoubtedly publish important new developments in the field. Nowadays, physiology contains many first class biochemists and even chemists and, perhaps, this new journal will serve as a catalyst to bring back together those physiologists and

biochemists with a common interest in what used to be called chemical physiology. This is a very laudable aim and I wish *Molecular Physiology* every success. To succeed in their aims, however, the editors must at all costs avoid their journal becoming another repository for second class biochemistry. My only regret is that the early offerings are not set in the highly successful two-column format of, for instance, *Molecular Pharmacology*.

The other journal, *Magnesium: Experimental and Clinical Research*, has the more modern two-column format and aims to bring together new data concerning the role and actions of magnesium in health and disease. It is made up of original papers and occasional mini-reviews and will, without doubt, find a following amongst those with little time to search the relevant literature. This will be a great help to those working in the field provided it does not distract their attention from other journals where important developments may be occurring in closely related fields. Perhaps *Magnesium*, like *Cell Calcium*, should provide their readers with a bibliography.

Both journals identify and set out to meet a need; but the rigours of the market place will determine this need and whether authors will choose to publish in new journals that, for lack of funds, may never appear on their libraries' shelves. □

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## Relating chemicals to life

R.P. Ambler

### Lite Chemistry Reports.

Editors A.M. Michelson and J.V. Bannister.

*Harwood*. 4-6/yr. £65, \$97.

### Journal of Protein Chemistry.

Editor M. Zouhair Atassi

*Plenum*; 6/yr. \$95, £66.50.

AT this stage, neither of these journals fills an obviously vacant niche, nor do their statements of editorial policies convince me that they will attract worthwhile manuscripts that cannot be published adequately in existing journals.

*Lite Chemistry Reports* publishes reviews on developments in chemistry as related to the life sciences. Each issue contains two or three reviews, and appears irregularly. A volume will contain about 400 pages and ten reviews. The format follows that of *Advances in Protein Chemistry*, and several of the articles are of comparable scope. However, in the third issue the page size was reduced and complex figures are now scarcely legible. A firm house style has not yet emerged (for instance *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA* has been abbreviated in eight different ways) and it is not very pleasant to read. References are listed numerically in order of occurrence which makes selective reading difficult, and last page numbers are not normally given.

But what about content? I had hoped to find heresies and advanced ideas, but instead find worthy respectability. The emphasis of most of the articles is on physical biochemistry, though biological reviews do occur, such as a lengthy one containing 600 references on macrophage biochemistry (Hume and Gordon). There was in contrast a crisp and enjoyable article by one of the editors and his associates, on oxygen radicals in biological systems. However, this was only 4½ pages long and cannot yet be considered the pattern in a viable journal.

I started reading an article on albumin and metal transport (Sarkar), hoping it would explain to me how serum albumin could be functionally important although analbuminemics who may totally lack this protein are not clinically ill. In vain; I found only an account of the coordination chemistry. I am convinced that reviews are more valuable, both to the readers and to the authors, if thought and space is given to function at the genetic and whole organism level as well as to the isolated molecules. Few of these reviews clearly relate the chemistry to the life sciences.

*The Journal of Protein Chemistry* has a

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