

format is an innovative, useful solution. In addition, the quality and breadth of the journal seem assured by the help of a truly first-rate editorial board, and the personal subscription rate is reasonable enough for many workers to be able to have their own copy. Perhaps in time, *Frontiers in Neuroendocrinology* may assume a stature comparable to that of the venerable *Physiological Reviews*, though on a more limited scale. □

Larry W. Swanson is in the Department of Biological Sciences, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California 90089-2520, USA.

## Blood relation

Stan Heptinstall

**Blood Coagulation and Fibrinolysis: An International Journal in Haemostasis and Thrombosis.** Editors J. L. Francis and S. G. Gordon. *Rapid Communications of Oxford*. 6/yr. £240, \$456 (institutional).

THE cover of this journal — glossy black background overlaid by yellow lines (symbolic of fibrin, the end product of the coagulation cascade), red dots (red cells) and white letters (depicting some of the factors involved in coagulation and fibrinolysis) — is, at first sight, striking. But like a necktie (of similar colours) that I bought to make an impact, it soon loses its initial effect. The

initial impression of the journal's contents, though, should prove to be much longer lasting.

The stated aim of the journal is to provide "a fast new medium in haemostasis and thrombosis". For the non-specialist this can be interpreted as 'fast publication in a new journal of information on clinical, laboratory and experimental aspects of bleeding and clotting'. 'Fast' was to be within 30–60 days of a paper's acceptance. The information was to be in the form of original research articles, state-of-the-art reviews, short reports, technical notes, case reports, reports of meetings and letters to the editors. Book and computer-software reviews and a meetings diary section were also to be included. Proceedings of meetings were to be reproduced either in the journal itself or in special supplements. To what extent has the journal succeeded in these aims?

Publication within 30–60 days from acceptance has not yet been achieved, but in 1991 (volume 2) the average time was only 72 days and it seems that the times are getting shorter. Perhaps more importantly, in 1991 the average time for a decision to publish was only 33 days — surely time to publication does not really matter to most of us as much as publishers think. Is it not more important to get feedback from the editors and referees so that their comments and criticisms can be considered and papers amended accordingly?

The editors have succeeded in publishing the full range of contributions planned for and the quality has mainly

been good. The number of book and software reviews has been phenomenal. The journal has appeared regularly at bimonthly intervals and one additional supplement has been produced. Although there are other journals concerned with haemostasis and thrombosis, this new one does provide an alternative home for what is an expanding area of research.

The editors are to be congratulated on their efforts so far. But I do urge the publisher to consider a change in cover design, to use lighter paper and to reduce the size of some of the figures and tables. This would bring a sigh of relief from those of us who take our reading home. □

Stan Heptinstall is in the Division of Cardiovascular Medicine, Department of Medicine, University of Nottingham, Nottingham NG7 2UH, UK.

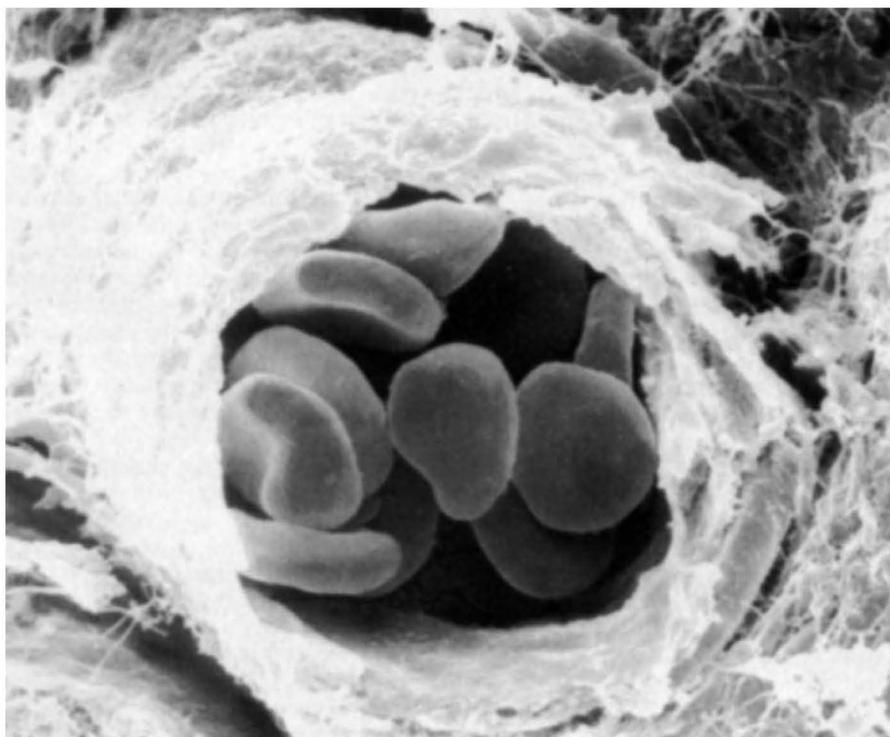
## Beauty and the bible

Gobinda Sarkar

**PCR: Methods and Applications.** Editor Judy Cuddihy. Associate editors D. Bentley, R. Gibbs, E. Green and R. Myers. *Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press*. 4/yr. US and Canada \$170, elsewhere \$180 (institutional); US and Canada \$55, elsewhere \$65 (personal).

"THE philosophy of a scientist is to make the world a simpler place." I once tried to impress this upon my mother after returning from a late-night liaison with a log-phase bacterial culture. She responded with a queer look of unconcealed scepticism. Then I told her about Kary Mullis and his polymerase chain reaction (PCR). I explained that PCR is so simple and powerful that it can perform many tasks faster and more efficiently than bacteria and that it has made possible things that were unthinkable even a few years ago. She held my hand and almost implored, "I know you are not Kary Mullis, but you sure should use his 'chain reactor'. That way you'd not have to spend late hours in the lab." Although my mother was born at a time when female education was discouraged, she could understand the very essence of PCR. PCR is that simple.

PCR is so simple that it is beautiful. No wonder everybody turned into admirers in no time. But there is always a risk of a beauty being maligned by over-adulation. Fortunately, before this could happen, *PCR: Methods and Applications* came up with all the care and protection that this awesome beauty



Going by tube — scanning electron micrograph of erythrocytes in an arteriole ( $\times 3,245$ ).