

counterbalance to the more molecular-orientated chapters, but the over-riding impression is that the former studies suffer greatly from the fact 'that only a minor proportion of bacteria is accessible to cultivation techniques'. As the characterization of plasmids in environmental studies frequently requires bacterial cultivation before plasmid isolation, with a consequent bias towards the analysis of plasmids from culturable bacteria, plasmid ecological and population studies seem fraught with uncertainties.

A collaborative book of this sort inevitably lacks reference to a number of interesting developments which have taken place in the last two years. As an example, no mention is made of the recent structural studies of the integrase family of site-specific recombinases. Nevertheless, this book is a mandatory addition to the bookshelves of every research group with a

strong interest in plasmid biology, and will also serve as an invaluable reference tool for every molecular microbiology laboratory for some years to come. The book's appeal to those outside these communities is less apparent, especially considering that it is not inexpensive. It is to be hoped that updated editions of the book will emerge at regular intervals.

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## Books Received

**Techniques in Quantification and Localization of Gene Expression.** Bruce K. Patterson (ed.). Birkhäuser Verlag, Basel. 2000. Pp. 150. Price DM 208.00, hardback. ISBN 0 8176 4034 7.

**Techniques in Animal Cytogenetics.** Paul Popescu, Hélène Hayes and Bernard Dutrillaux (eds). Springer Verlag,

Heidelberg. 2000. Pp. 229. Price £44.50, hardback. ISBN 3 540 66737 7.

**Genetic and Evolutionary Diversity — The Sport of Nature (2nd edn).** Laurence M. Cook and Robert S. Callow. Stanley Thornes, Cheltenham. 1999. Pp. 290. Price £22.50, paperback. ISBN 0 7487 4336 7.