

test available it is not foolproof and a further two sections deal with the monitoring of SCE levels in human populations as a possible indicator of exposure to hazardous chemicals.

However, the remaining two sections are of wider interest. One deals with the studies of SCE levels in certain human genetic diseases, Bloom Syndrome figuring prominently as would be expected, whilst the other section details changes in SCE responses in patients suffering from various neoplasias. These sections demonstrate that SCE studies can be of considerable value in the diagnosis and treatment of numerous human diseases, both inherited and acquired.

As with other conference proceedings this book would have benefited from an attempt by the editors to produce both an introduction and a synthetic overview of the symposium. Alas, their omission renders the book even less suitable for anyone unfamiliar with the field of SCE research. To the initiated however this volume represents a valuable source of material which could save them many an hour of hunting through the journals—and that surely is a prime function of publishing a symposium proceedings.

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Methods in virology, Volumes VII and VIII, K. Maramorosch and H. Koprowski (eds). Academic Press, Orlando, Florida. 1984. Pp. xvi+332 (Vol. VII): xvi + 396 (Vol. VIII). Price, Vol. VII, £38.50, \$55.00 US; Vol. VIII, £41.50, \$55.00 US.

The preface indicates that the early volumes of this series were published at the “dawn” of molecular virology some 17 years ago and these volumes represent “new fabric”. This reviewer has had some difficulty in assessing such a wide range of techniques; in the 18 chapters the coverage varies from superficial to over-detailed. Highlights include competition radioimmunoassays for characterisation of antibody reaction to viral antigens, the use of mosquitos to detect and propagate viruses, and methods for assay, purification and characterisation of the controversial prions. I also enjoyed exploring gene organisation of baculoviruses. There are several comprehensive chapters on plant viruses which include enzyme immunosorbent assays, detection and characterisation of subgenomic RNAs and spot hybridisation tests for viroids and viruses. I was surprised that the detailed chapter on electron microscopy for the identification of plant viruses from *in vitro* preparations included no electron micrographs. Other chapters include hybridisation methods for viral nucleic acids, applications of oligonucleotide fingerprinting to virus identification as well as monoclonal antibody techniques. These days, the methods employed by many virologists tend to be used throughout wide areas of biology; this is the era of the soft cover laboratory manual containing diverse recipes. I looked in vain for chapters on the synthesis and uses of oligopeptides and oligonucleotides and on immunogold. One wonders about the continued usefulness of this series. For me, there is something reassuring about these familiar blue volumes, but are they approached for the acquisition of new techniques?

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