

Carbohydrate Analysis: A Practical Approach. Edited by M. F. Chaplin and J. F. Kennedy. IRL Press, Oxford, 1987. xvi+228 pp., ISBN 0-947946-44-6 (softback); 0-947946-68-3 (hardback). Price: £16/\$29 (softback); £26/\$47 (hardback).

The recognition that carbohydrates play an important role in biological processes has resulted in an enormous amount of literature on the subject of carbohydrate analysis, covering methods for structural elucidation, qualitative/quantitative analysis, isolation/separation and identification of carbohydrates. This book sets out to provide analysts with a practical handbook which would guide and help them select the most appropriate analytical method or methods by which they can study and understand their particular 'carbohydrate problem'. In this, the editors have succeeded remarkably well.

The book, which is arranged according to carbohydrate moieties, consists of six chapters dealing respectively with the analysis of monosaccharides, oligosaccharides, neutral polysaccharides, proteoglycans, glycoproteins and glycolipids. Each chapter is well-written, clearly organised, easily comprehensible, direct and to the point, with no overlaps of subject area with the other chapters and is concluded by an up-to-date bibliography covering the most relevant literature references. The authors, who are all recognised experts in their fields, have only discussed those methods they know to be the most useful. These range from classical methods (colorimetric, thin layer and paper chromatography) for qualitative analysis to the more sophisticated ones (gas chromatography, liquid chromatography, mass spectrometry, nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy, immunological methods etc.) for separation, quantification, identification and structural elucidation analysis. Information on the underlying principles of each method, plus the accompanying commentary which covers advantages, disadvantages, applications, etc. make the book very useful to the practising analyst.

As a result, we can wholeheartedly recommend this comprehensive, well-written, up-to-date, yet economically priced book, as an essential laboratory tool for all analysts from chemistry, biochemistry, biology, food technology and biotechnology laboratories. It will also serve as a useful text for postgraduate students and researchers.

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