

Book reviews

The Molecular Immunology of Complex Carbohydrates: edited by ALBERT M. WU AND L. GARRY ADAMS, Plenum Press, New York, NY, and London, 1988, xiv + 853 pages + Subject Index, \$135.00 in North America (20% higher elsewhere).

This is a collection of chapters divided into four main sections: I, Antibody Specificity, Epitope and Lectinology; II, Complex Carbohydrates as Antigens; III, Glycoconjugates as Cancer/or Tumor Antigens; and IV, Structural Analysis of Hapten Moiety of Complex Carbohydrate Antigens. The contributions were originally made at an International Symposium held in College Station, Texas, in 1985.

If a reader were to spend a fairly large amount of money on a book in this rapidly moving field, he or she would hope that at least it were up to date, and not reporting data already three years old. In addition, the reader could expect that all chapters would actually convey useful information, not that *nine* chapters would consist of an abstract of one, or little more than one, page. This is particularly surprising from workers whose results would be worth disseminating in the scientific community. Because of the above, this reviewer has the suspicion that the material for this book was not refereed. Much of the writing is diffuse and less than excellent. The inclusion of chapters which are experimental papers that really belong in a scientific journal, not in a book, is remarkable. After all, here the reader somehow expects more of a cohesive view, possibly even an overview. However, there are many chapters that *do* have this property, and whose content this reviewer found enlightening; for instance, the chapters by E. A. Kabat, K. Bock *et al.*, and Z. W. Shen in Section I, A. M. Wu, A. Herp *et al.*, and H. J. Jennings in Section II, and nearly the entire Section III, which, without doubt, is the best part of the book. V. N. Reinhold *et al.*, T. A. W. Koerner *et al.*, and B. Nilsson all contributed very useful chapters to Section IV.

On balance, would this reviewer recommend purchase of this volume? Probably, if only because the appendix has a useful list of all the specificities of lectins. However, it was not an unqualified pleasure to read this Volume 228 in the series "Advances in Experimental Medicine and Biology".

National Institutes of Health
Bethesda, MD 20892
U.S.A.

CORNELIS P. J. GLAUDEMANS