(gla). These residues in turn bind calcium ions. In view of the proliferation of roles attributed to calcium binding, vitamin K metabolism and vitamin K-dependent carboxylation should be of interest to almost everyone studying biological control mechanisms. Calcium binding serves in blood-clotting enzymes to enable interaction with phospholipids, activating prothrombin and other clotting proteins. A bone protein containing gla residues may control bone mineralization. Gla-containing proteins have been discovered in the kidney, lung, various pathological calcifications, and, intriguingly, in ribosomes.

It should be no surprise then that the symposium brought together workers in many diverse, yet convergent, lines of research. The book covers crystallographic and structural studies on K-dependent plasma proteins and studies of calcium binding and the chemistry of and detection of minute amounts of gamma-carboxyglutamate. There are sections on the metabolism of the vitamin and its antagonists in microorganisms and in mammals. There are the latest, hotly debated results in enzymatic studies on the carboxylase. Included also are studies on non-plasma vitamin K-dependent proteins, and, of course, a major section on prothrombin, the place where it all started.

The book's superficial quality of presenting a cross-section of all available typefaces is easily overlooked in favor of the speed with which the volume appeared. With the literature growing exponentially, this type of publication is sorely needed, and gladly welcomed.

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**Compendium of Immunology.** Second Ed. By Lazar M. Schwartz. New York, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1980. 515 pp. $32.50.

This rather unconventional book could well have been titled “The Whole Immunology Catalog.” It is an attempt to organize, summarize, and paraphrase the entire field and its literature through 1978. The author, a clinical pathologist who refers to himself as a “reader” and not a researcher, has tackled an ambitious range of subjects, including clinical syndromes involving immune reactions and immunologic methods in the clinical laboratory, as well as recent experimental work in the frontiers of cellular and humoral immunology, immune regulation, transplantation, and tumor immunology. The most similar book that comes to mind is the immunology text in the Lange series; by comparison, this book gives much more emphasis to research, including diagrams and descriptions of experimental procedures. On the other hand, there is little or no attempt made to provide the kind of step-by-step exposition one expects in a textbook.

The idea of creating a handy sourcebook of this nature for workers in immunology and related fields is a good one. Unfortunately the book has several major deficiencies. The index, absolutely crucial in a book of this kind, is not nearly complete enough. Many terms (“lymphokine,” “theta conversion”) are not explained when first used—the explanations are found elsewhere in the book, but not referred to in the index, and there is no glossary. The writing is generally good, but the organization is not: the same subject turns up in widely scattered places without cross-references.
BOOK REVIEWS

The literature references are not grouped but appear at the end of each of the 384 sections.

The book abounds with useful summaries and tables. While certain subjects, such as antibody-dependent cell-mediated cytotoxicity, are explained in great detail, others (suppressor T-cells, for example) receive comparatively short shrift. And although much of the material is timely, the section on drug-induced hemolytic anemias is more than ten years out of date.

While the *Compendium of Immunology* appears to be a useful book for researchers and students interested in immunology, it would benefit greatly from a thorough editing job.

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**Principal Drugs. An Alphabetical Guide.** 6th Ed. By S.J. Hopkins. Salem, New Hampshire, and London, Faber & Faber, 1980. 164 pp. $4.50. Paperbound.

The British have the great gift of synopsis. Another example of this skill is this small, pocket-sized dictionary of drugs by S.J. Hopkins. First published in 1958, this sixth edition describes itself as a "concise guide to most of the drugs in current use." It is targeted to nurses and other professionals deluged by redundant proprietary and chemical descriptors of new therapeutic agents. The subtitle reveals the organization of its corpus, but in addition a second section provides the proprietary synonyms of 1,100 drug names as well as their "main action." A typical item reads: "Doxepin: An antidepressant of the imipramine type, but with additional tranquillising properties. Used in the treatment of depression accompanied by anxiety. Dose 30 to 300 mg daily."

In the United States the *Physician's Desk Reference* (Medical Economics Co.) has become the premier reference for practical therapeutic information. Its prolix and seemingly redundant detail about drug indications, contraindications, adverse reactions, dose, etc., are contained in some 2,000 pages of microprint. In contrast, Hopkins' dictionary is a clear but exceedingly terse lexicon of drug nomenclature. However, one does not master a language simply by resort to a pocket conversational phrase book. The pithiness of the definitions, while providing conciseness, leaves much to the imagination. Such Spartan clarity unfortunately connotes that most drugs do few things and at fixed doses. Therefore, the question arises: Of what use is this little dictionary? It must have two uses: (1) as a rapid translator of trade names; (2) as an indicator of the principal action of unfamiliar compounds. Any more serious inquiries require a good pharmacology text, or perhaps the "PDR," as a resource. Perhaps this guide might bail out student doctors and nurses drowning in a sea of jargon. One last admonition is that this is a British publication and, as such, trade names and phrasing indigenous to Britain weaken its utility in American hospitals. I could find few genuine errors, except the feeling that a Latin master would not translate *pro re nata* as "occasionally." Yet as a small portable "crib" on the panoply of modern drugs this book is useful.

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