THE ANTIBODY MOLECULE. By Alfred Nisonoff, John E. Hopper, and Susan B. Spring. Academic Press, New York, 1975. xiv + 542 pp. $34.50.

With the burgeoning state of research in immunology, it is becoming increasingly difficult to follow the more recent studies in immunochemistry, cellular immunity, and clinical immunology. Recent volumes that have attempted to provide summaries of these fields have been, in actuality, transcripts of symposia. Despite the pains of the editors, these tomes suffer from a lack of continuity of style and content. Often the discussion in one chapter contradicts that of another. This valuable volume, however, is the product of only three authors and it succeeds in not only summarizing a large and confusing literature but also in providing a consistent interpretation.

This book is divided into 12 chapters or reviews that discuss the antibody molecule in terms of hapten–antibody interaction, amino acid sequence, three-dimensional structure, and antigenic properties. This book’s treatment of allotypy and idiotypy is quite comprehensive and intelligible. The chapters devoted to the properties of immunoglobulins of various species can easily serve as a quick reference for understanding work performed in different animal systems. The chapter on the active site of an antibody molecule and the mechanism of antibody–hapten interaction can be criticized for spending much of the discussion on older work; however, the authors do evaluate the more recent studies.

This book serves as an excellent introduction to the field of immunochemistry for any researcher interested in understanding humoral immunity as a discipline unto itself. This book also lays to rest the claim of many cellular immunologists that the basic questions concerning the antibody molecules have been answered since the work of the mid-to-late 1960s. The strength of this volume is that it is very much up to date and displays a uniform approach to the literature. The authors are also quick to mention in their discussions the areas of our knowledge of humoral immunity that require further investigation. After reading this book, the investigator should be able to comprehend and grapple with the more intriguing problems that confront humoral immunology today. It is quite fitting that the final chapter is a discussion on the theories of genetic control of diversity of antibodies. This chapter not only highlights the major thrusts of research intended to solve this problem, but it also emphasizes how little is actually known about eukaryotic molecular genetics, the cellular interactions in immunity, and the antibody molecule.

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PERSPECTIVES IN BIOMETRICS. Vol. 1. Edited by R. M. Elashoff. Academic Press, New York, 1975. xii + 200 pp. $21.00.

This book is the first in a series of volumes intended to assist the biometrician in keeping abreast of developments in branches of his discipline other than his immediate specialty. In the preface, the reader is informed that there are to be two main types of contribution, namely, critical review articles emphasizing the state of the art in active research areas and descriptions of particular data analyses. In this first volume there are chapters on (i) interactive statistical computation with large data structures, (ii) adaptive sampling for clinical trials, (iii) computer-aided prognosis, (iv) multivariate methods in the classification of disease stages, (v) jackknife estimation techniques, and (vi) the estimation of inverse cumulative distribution func-
tions. The method of presenting the material has been left entirely to the choice of the authors of each chapter and, as a result, there is considerable spread along the spectrum of biometrical techniques, from completely applied projects to completely theoretical expositions.

There is a corresponding gradient in the amount of mathematics involved, going from the use of advanced techniques such as stepwise discriminant analysis, with only a verbal description of the procedure, to newer areas of statistics discussed at a demanding level of mathematical sophistication. For this reason, it is unlikely that the book as a whole will appeal to many readers. On the one hand, certain chapters will presumably achieve the stated objective in providing a general interest forum via the review articles in areas of current interest to statisticians. Whether this medium is preferable to the regular channels of the statistical journals is not clear, however. On the other hand, clinicians and others may be sufficiently attracted by the case study descriptions of relevant data analyses to be persuaded to improve their future usage of detailed, valid, and thorough statistical methodology. This second unstated goal will be harder to reach without careful guidance of such readers through the often daunting mathematics. Perhaps certain sections should be clearly labeled "for internal consumption (by statisticians) only" to avoid a tainted perspective of biometrics by outside viewers!

The area of collaboration between the quantitative and biological sciences provides an extensive territory fraught with difficulties for explorers from either side. Judicious editorial policy for this series in the future should attempt to strike the fine balance between an elaborate display of the mathematical niceties of biometry in an ever-widening circle of applications, with the danger of alienating the discipline of biometry from the sciences it is intended to serve.

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(Signed) Roselle Coviello, Vice President