Book Reviews


In his Preface the Editor states that ‘Cellular reactions characterized by stimulation and death, respectively, of the interacting components are readily acceptable as immune phenomena stemming from the immunological competence of one cell population and the antigenic disparity of the other. Of considerably more biological interest, but as yet less readily acceptable, is the premise that such interactions may also reflect antigen-dependent, non-immune mechanisms, with significance for the processes of tissue differentiation and maintenance of homeostasis. Concurrent with reports of cellular interactions of an apparently non-immune nature has been the development of an increasingly detailed characterization of species isoantigens with respect to genetic determinants, chemical properties, cellular and tissue specificities, and somatic variation.’ The Symposium attempted to co-ordinate and discuss facts and ideas in this new area of research. The Symposium was introduced by R. Owen. The following topics were discussed: Immunogenetics of mouse cellular isoantigens (introductory lecture by J. H. Stimpeling); The Ss system of the mouse (D. C. Sghreffler); Tissue distribution and intracellular sites of some mouse isoantigens (J. Palm and L. A. Manson); The immunogenetic basis of hybrid resistance to parental marrow grafts (G. Cudkowicz); Lymphocyte interaction in vitro (L. Hirschhorn and C. S. Ripps); The cytotoxic effect of antigenic and/or structural incompatibility in vitro (G. Möller and E. Möller); Serological analysis of isoantigenic variants from mouse tumors heterozygous at the H-2 locus (H. L. Ozer, G. Klein and J. H. Ozer) and finally, Syngeneic preference and allogeneic inhibition (K. E. Hellström and I. Hellström). In his concluding remarks, G. Klein emphasized the important role of isoantigens as ‘part of an organization involved in a basically non immunological surveillance function,’ which possesses great homeostatic value. This concept is perhaps not yet generally accepted. The present volume bears witness of the extensive and ingenious research work in this emerging field. It is of great importance that the results available at present, have been summarized by the most active and outstanding workers in this field. We have all reason to await further developments with great interest.  

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In the wake of the discoveries of the paramount importance of the thymus and the bursa of Fabricius for the development and maintenance of adaptive immunity, an upsurge of interest in the phylogeny of the immunologic faculties arose. It is nearly incredible that a few years after the first papers by John Miller et al. and by Robert Good and his associates on the role of the thymus in immunobiology, ‘developmental
immunology’ could be established as a new and fascinating field of research at this workshop. Immunological processes have, undoubtedly, great survival value. Therefore, the search in vertebrates from the ‘lower or primitive’ forms amongst fishes through birds to mammals, for immunologic functions, such as antibody formation and the different manifestations of delayed allergic reactivity, is of great importance. It is the first time that comparative immunology has been thoroughly discussed and the contributions of specialists from different areas of developmental biology and immunology, will certainly form, the basis for research work for years to come. At least one vertebrate form, the hagfish, has been found, which is obviously neither capable of producing antibody globulins or analogous proteins, nor of rejecting allogeneic grafts. It does contain ‘cells of lymphoid morphology’, but is lacking an organized lymphoreticular system and thymus- or bursa-like organs. The representative of the next recognisable evolutionary stage, the lamprey, seems to have a lymphoreticular system, which resembles that of birds or mammals, and can produce antibodies and reject homografts. Of course, one must remember, that the species hagfish has survived several million years. It must have defense mechanisms which are different from, but perhaps as sophisticated as the immunological properties of ‘higher’ organisms. Be this as it may, comparative studies have come to stay and this first collection of papers is most interesting ad truly admirable. Such studies will inevitably deepen our understanding of immunological phenomena and of the phylo- and ontogenesis of immunity. The book is a gold-mine of knowledge and new ideas. It will certainly be given the attention and appreciation, which it so well deserves. P. Kallós, Helsingborg

Immunopathology. IVth International Symposium. Edited by P. Grabar and P. A. Miescher. Schwabe, Basel/Stuttgart 1966. 467 pages, illustr. Price: sFr 80.-. The IVth Symposium on Immunopathology was held at Monte Carlo in 1965. The Proceedings are now available in a well edited and beautifully produced volume. The main topics were: (1) Tumor specific antigens; (2) Histocompatibility antigens; (3) Multiple myeloma and amyloidosis; (4) Immunopathology of various organs, and (5) Mechanisms of immune vasculitis. All subjects are well covered, the introductory lectures and the enlightening discussions give a wealth of information and of stimulating ideas. The Editors, who are also organizers of these important symposia, succeeded in gathering many of the most eminent experts in this field of ever growing importance and complexity. The book is highly recommended for thorough study. P. Kallós, Helsingborg