

Preface

In this third edition, we again aim to supply information needed by biochemists in a form sufficiently concise to be kept in the laboratory. No attempt is made to be comprehensive. Material has been selected under the guiding principle that it should be of potential use to a reasonably large number of readers. We try, in fact, to occupy the central ground of possible interest to all biochemists. This excludes much material of use only to specialists in individual areas, but they will have more comprehensive sources of information in their own fields. Between the extremes of obvious material for inclusion, such as buffers, and for exclusion, such as rarely encountered metabolites, there is a large grey area in which subjective decisions have had to be made. Such decisions cannot suit everyone or every situation, but we have been encouraged by the sustained interest in, and demand for, the previous edition to believe that this policy is supplying a real need in the laboratory.

Much has been deleted from earlier editions to be replaced by new material of current importance to biochemistry and molecular biology. With the increase in commercial availability of biochemicals, references to preparations have been omitted as a routine; with the development of sophisticated separative technologies there is less need for references to estimations of many compounds. References are now included in the general remarks only where they appear to be of use. Alphabetical listing has been retained but functional groupings of compounds has been emphasized so that a reader can see what is available as well as find individual compounds.

Much of the revision has been done by the authors with help from people too numerous to mention individually. Some sections however have been largely revised by specialists and these are listed overleaf. It is emphasized that the final selection and presentation of material has always been made by the authors who must therefore bear the responsibility for omissions and deficiencies. Names no longer appear at the head of sections because with revisions and reorganizations it is difficult to associate any one name with a section. Acknowledgement must be made to contributors to earlier editions on whose work the current volume is based.

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