Book Review

Continuous-Flow Fast Atom Bombardment Mass Spectrometry
Edited by Richard M. Caprioli. Pp. x+189. Wiley. 1990. Price £27.50. ISBN 0 471 92863 1.

This book is based on a workshop entitled Continuous-Flow FABMS, held in November 1989 at Annapolis, MD, USA, and is aimed primarily at workers new to the technique and requiring sufficient detail to be able to use and apply the procedure. Of necessity it is restricted to topics presented at the workshop but these appear to have been well chosen for they cover a wide range of applications. The authors generally present their own experience of the technique with the result that coverage is not necessarily comprehensive. This approach has considerable value, however, as it is less formal and introduces the reader to the problems actually encountered and the means of overcoming them.

Some seven authors plus additional contributors have written eight chapters each of which covers the operational aspects, applications and specific experiences in application to particular analytical tasks. The whole book is based on examples and each chapter gives details of instrumenta-

tion and analytical methodology relevant to a particular application. Of particular importance is that difficulties and disadvantages have not been overlooked.

The first chapter introduces the reader to aspects of design and operation and gives details of individual designs of probe. Special attention is given to the need to achieve a stable operation, and a comparison is made with the standard FAB technique. The next two chapters cover aspects relevant to trace analysis and quantitative analysis of polar organic compounds, the latter tending to concentrate on solutions adopted by the authors in order to overcome particular problems encountered.

The remaining chapters are orientated more to applications of the technique and cover direct analysis of biological processes, LC–MS, CZE–MS, analysis of low-polarity substances and various other applications.

Information on instrumentation and probe design is included in each chapter, in particular those on LC–MS and CZE–MS, which consider the interface between separation system and MS. In general the applications are to the determination of large biomolecules but they cover a wide range including the on-line measurement of drug levels in live animals and applications of tandem MS.

In most respects this is an attractive book. It is of manageable size yet is full of valuable and relevant information laid out in a well-ordered style. It is a book that could be read cover-to-cover or used as a reference to a particular application. Although the information is over 18 months old, this book can be recommended especially considering the reasonable cost.

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