

## Book reviews

**Catalog of the Bernard Becker, MD, Collection in Ophthalmology.** Pp. 102. \$12.50. Washington University: St. Louis. 1979.

This is a catalogue of over 600 volumes on historical ophthalmology from the unique collection which Bernard Becker has presented to the Washington University Medical School Library. It includes a note of all the pre-1850 books and important historical texts from after that date, with collations, references, a brief evaluation of the book, and microfiches of all the title pages. The presentation is superb. The type face, paper, decorative illustrations (also from the Becker collection), and general lay-out are exemplary. The book is a pleasure to handle, which will be an added reward for those specialist libraries (and the even more select band of cognoscenti) for whom it is written. P. D. TREVOR-ROPER

**Current Research in Ophthalmic Electron Microscopy.** Vol. 2. Ed. MANFRED SPITZNAS. Pp. 216. DM48. Springer-Verlag: Berlin. 1978.

The contents of this book represent the proceedings of the second meeting of the European Club for Ophthalmic Fine Structure held in Paris in the spring of 1978. Individual papers range from comparative anatomy to pathology, the latter including aspects of both experimentally induced and naturally occurring ocular disease.

As with the proceedings of most meetings, many of the topics have been or can be expected to be presented elsewhere in the body of ophthalmic literature, but it is useful to have so many papers with a common theme drawn together in this way, especially as they generally observe a high standard of scientific validity and clinical relevance. There can be no hesitation in recommending this book to all who are involved in the morphological study of the eye and its diseases.

Having declared my enthusiasm for this publication I do, nevertheless, have reservations as to the value of research which is artificially limited to a single technique. It is by study based on scientific disciplines, and that often multidisciplinary, rather than isolated methods that progress is fastest. An apposite example occurs in an otherwise excellent article on peripheral subretinal neovascularisation: filaments are described in Bruch's membrane with ultrastructural features consistent with elastic-related oxytalan, but because of technical limitations imposed by themselves or the conference the authors cannot do more than speculate. The application of histochemical methods would almost certainly have clinched the matter.

The standard of publication is good, with mostly adequate reproduction of electron micrographs, though here and there it is evident that English is not the first language of either author or editor. Thus on page 178 we gather that specimens of extraocular muscle were obtained from people who had been sacrific(ed).

A. GARNER

**Atlas der Kontaktlinsen-anpassung.** By VON WULF EHRICH. Pp. 169. DM168. Ferdinand Enke Verlag: Stuttgart. 1978.

This atlas on contact lens practice is written in German and contains sections on material, hygiene, fitting of various types of lenses, keratoconus, irregular astigmatism, and the various medical uses of the appliance. The illustrations are excellent and the legends are explicit. While the whole range of contact lens practice is not covered, it may be argued that there are several technical aspects which do not lend themselves to illustrations. The atlas should be used therefore only as a supplement to a contact lens textbook or by practitioners wishing to study illustrations and who are not necessarily directly involved in this speciality.

MONTAGUE RUBEN

**Springer Series in Optical Sciences: Frontiers in Visual Science.** Eds. S. J. COOL and E. L. SMITH. Pp. 798. \$41.80. Springer-Verlag: New York. 1978.

It is not clear why this collection, which includes some excellent papers, is entitled as above. Some of the work forms the backbone, of current research (for example, papers on the corneal environment, on photoreceptor shedding, on retinotopic organisation, on stereopsis, on cortical edge detectors, on visual experience, etc). Some papers are old hat and have been published before (for example, analysis of colour vision by exchange thresholds, and microspectrophotometry of outer limbs). And some, such as papers on education and health care, have nothing to do with the topic. This means that one has to rummage for the nuggets of gold. Perhaps this explains the word 'frontiers' after all.

As happens so often in such volumes, editing appears in name only. Cross-references, which might help the reader, are omitted, and the standard of the volume is high only because some of the component contributions are good. No reason is given why only some of the discussions are reproduced: all of them were taped. Since no proper editing is undertaken, the reader would benefit if an author's paper were accompanied by the comments of his peers. This said, the book can be recommended as a representative cross-section of current fundamental research in the major fields covering ocular and visual mechanisms and the relevant anatomy.

ROBERT WEALE

**Die Glaukome in der Praxis.** By W. LEYDHECKER. Pp. 216. DM19.80. Springer-Verlag: Berlin. 1979.

This small handbook is designed to provide the ophthalmologist with guidelines on the diagnosis and management of glaucoma in all its various forms. The author has combined a review of contemporary investigations and therapy with an assessment of some of the less modern techniques, many of which are now passing into ophthalmic history. It is interesting, for instance, that tonography still merits a whole chapter. The book