

*Acta Cryst.* (1999). **A55**, 95

### Books Received

*The following books have been received by the Editor. Brief and generally uncritical notices are given of works of marginal crystallographic interest; occasionally, a book of fundamental interest is included under this heading because of difficulty in finding a suitable reviewer without great delay.*

#### **A practical guide to phase retrieval and the reconstruction of analytic functions from measurements of their absolute values.**

By S. RAMANATHAN. London: London Intercontinental Media Ltd, 1998. Pp. xlvii + 88 + 1.44 Mb disk. Price not given. ISBN 0-953-29700-4. A mathematical treatment by which the author claims 'it is possible to generate and study an entire class of valid solutions of any phase retrieval problem'. Although the

method is said to have applications in X-ray crystallography, the examples given are for one-dimensional functions and it is not at all clear that the method, which is based on the solution of a system of  $n$  linear equations in  $n$  unknowns, can generate and determine the unique solution for a diffraction experiment that leads to the correct atom-based model in three dimensions.

**Local structure from diffraction.** Edited by S. J. L. BILLINGE and M. F. THORPE. New York: Plenum Publishing Corp., 1998. Pp. x + 399. Price US \$120.00. ISBN 0-306-45827-6. The book contains 20 articles prepared by invited speakers at a conference on the title topic, held in Traverse City, Michigan, USA, 10–13 August 1997. The Editors hope 'that this volume fills a gap by bringing into one place descriptions of the various approaches which are used to collect, analyze and interpret diffuse scattering data'.