

Book Reviews

Works intended for notice in this column should be sent direct to the Editor (A.J.C. Wilson, Department of Physics, The University, Birmingham 15, England). As far as practicable books will be reviewed in a country different from that of publication.

Crystallographic book list. Edited by HELEN D. MEGAW with the assistance of H. CURIEN, E. G. STEWARD, M. M. UMANSKIJ and J. ZEMANN. Published for the International Union of Crystallography by N.V. A. Oosthoek's Uitgevers Mij, Domstraat 11-13, Utrecht, The Netherlands, 1965. Price *f.* 10 (U.S. \$3.00, £1) post free. Obtainable also from the Polycrystal Book Service, P.O. Box 11567, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15238, U.S.A.

The *Crystallographic Book List* published by the International Union of Crystallography's Commission on Crystallographic Teaching, has a number of features which will be found useful by all crystallographers and indeed by many others.

The 'list' comprises five lists: the *Main List*, alphabetical by author or editor; the *Conferences List*, chronological by year of occurrence; a list of *Serial Publications*, a term somewhat loosely interpreted; and a list of books from the first three lists, rearranged according to subject. The fifth list is for leftovers, those books for which the information was received too late for inclusion in the earlier lists and those which the editor frankly admits were left out by accident.

The lists are preceded by a useful key to transliteration of Russian and a *General Preface* in which the editor discusses some of the problems encountered and decisions made in compiling the lists. With the characteristic missionary zeal of a true teacher she has included a *Syllabus for Crystallography*, presumably with the hope of strengthening future courses in the subject. From the point of view of this teacher, the reviewer, it looks like a fine syllabus for a five-year course.

'The underlying aim of this book list', as the editor sets it forth in the *General Preface*, 'is to make it as easy as possible for users to trace the books...' To this end, the lists are fully cross-referenced. The subject list, with twenty-one main subject headings, refers to the first three lists. The main, conference, and leftover lists carry subject-number designations.

An especially valuable feature of the lists is that many of the items carry a reference to a review in *Acta Crystallographica*. For a number of the books in the *Main List* an indication of the appropriate teaching level is also given.

The *Serial Publications* list includes multi-volume works, but not journals appearing at regular intervals in parts, like *Acta Crystallographica*, which the editor considers to

be outside the scope of the Book List. Such items as the *Barker Index* and *Landolt-Börnstein* appear here. Donnay's *Crystal Data* and Wyckoff's *Crystal Structures* are listed, but the reader is referred to the *Main List* for full information.

The decisions made in the subject list will not satisfy those who hope to use it for compiling a bibliography on a narrowly defined subject. The problem of the right size of scope of a subject division is not an easy one. Too broad a scope weakens the usefulness of the list. On the other hand, if a classifier defines the subject class of a book narrowly, in the light of his experience, the searcher may not define it in just the same way and so may miss the book altogether. The editor of the *Crystallographic Book List* has chosen broader classifications (e.g. 'metals, crystal physics, diffraction techniques and applications') rather than hazard the 'altogether miss' due to the narrower category.

The broad classifications of the subject list do not help the outsider, however, or the new teacher or the librarian. Suppose one such wants to find something on small-angle scattering. It is not one of the twenty-one main subject headings. Heading 5 (*Diffraction techniques and applications*) has its items marked with eight different key letters, for which a key gives the additional information, such as 'neutron diffraction', 'application to imperfect and non-crystal line materials', etc., but small-angle scattering is not among these. Since this reviewer knew about the Guinier and Fournet book, she cheated and looked for it by name. It was there, all right, marked with a key letter which designated it as 'application to imperfect and non-crystalline materials'.

The non-crystallographer would not have found that book, but most of the people using the list will not be non-crystallographers. Most of them will at least have a partial knowledge of what they seek and will recognize it by glancing down the list. For these the list will prove valuable, increasingly so as they become familiar with using it in the way the editor intended it to be used.

There is no effortless path to information retrieval, but the *Crystallographic Book List* will help. A title printed along its black inconspicuous spine would have been an aid to the retrieval of the *Crystallographic Book List* itself.

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