Only one technique is described for each procedure, and no mention is made of other equally well-known methods or media, let alone of any assessment of the relative merits of alternative techniques. For example, the *only* serological test given for syphilis is the VDRL. However, the techniques are described in generally admirable detail and are sound, if rather more extensive than those used in most countries. Although the List of Contents is extensive, there is no index and the reader wades through six pages of print before finding out that Gram's strain is described on p. 258; the media-abbreviation chart is on p. 211. There are no illustrations in the bacteriology and serology sections, but there are approximately 100 black-and-white and 12 colour illustrations of fungi; the pictures of colonies are very poor, those of stained preparations only slightly better.

This book is definitely only a bench manual; it is unlikely that other laboratories would wish to follow it in its entirety. It would be quite useful for obtaining the exact details of a technique, provided this happened to be one used by Stanford University and provided one is prepared to hunt for it through the lengthy list of contents.

E. J. SHAW

Spores VI

Edited by P. GERHARDT, R. N. COSTILOW and H. L. SARDOFF. 1975. Washington: American Society for Microbiology. Pp. xiii and 619. \$US 15.

In this volume are collected together selected papers from the Sixth International Spore Conference, held in October 1974. The papers are all of a very high standard, as expected in publications of the American Society for Microbiology. All aspects of the subject are covered, in papers dealing with actinomycetes, myxobacteria and slime moulds, as well as the fungi, yeasts and eubacteria. The bulk of the biochemical studies are concerned with the eubacteria. Molecular biology and genetics are well represented. For many, spores are important only because of the sterilisation problems associated with the medically important members of the genera *Bacillus* and *Clostridium*. Nevertheless, a knowledge of the molecular biology of the "simplest" form of biological differentiation may give an insight into the mechanisms of differentiation of more complex organisms, including man. This book provides an understanding of the current knowledge on sporulation and germination, not only for microbiologists but for all those concerned with the biological and biochemical processes of morphological differentiation.

K. A. BETTELHEIM