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**IMMUNOCHEMICAL TECHNIQUES  
FOR THE IDENTIFICATION AND  
ESTIMATION OF MACROMOLECULES**

---

2nd Fully Revised Edition

J. Clausen

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# IMMUNOCHEMICAL TECHNIQUES FOR THE IDENTIFICATION AND ESTIMATION OF MACROMOLECULES

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2nd Fully Revised Edition

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## Preface

The aim of this manual is to present practical advice on application of the rapidly expanding mass of data on immunochemistry, and more specifically to examine the possibilities of employing immunological microtechniques in biochemical and histochemical analyses. The terminology in immunochemistry and protein chemistry has been bewildering (Grabar 1963); however, in 1964 WHO and in 1975 The International Union of Immunological Sciences recommended rules on the nomenclature of immunoglobulins (cf. p. 9). The World Health Organization terminology has been used throughout the manual, although this terminology has not, however, been generally accepted in all laboratories working in the field of immunochemistry (WHO 1964).

It is not the object of this manual to present an entire and comprehensive work in the field of immunochemistry, competing with the classical work of Kabat and Mayer (1961), but rather to describe the practical application of immunochemical analysis for laboratory use and especially to stress for the reader the possible errors and misinterpretations.

It is a pleasure to participate in creating this series of 'Laboratory Manuals' in collaboration with Drs. T.S. and E. Work.

The rapid expansion in the field of immunochemistry has necessitated the publication of a new edition of the present manual. Several chapters i.e. those dealing with lectins, HLA-antigens and with the application of crossed immunoelectrophoresis for characterization of membrane proteins, have been extensively revised and extended. Furthermore, new chapters dealing with the complement system, enzyme immuno-assay systems, immuno-fluorescence methods and immunoabsorbent techniques have been added and the recent developments in the methodology

already presented in the first edition have been included.

Cellular immunity has been described as a basis for the use of lymphocytic systems for the tracing of antigens giving rise to delayed hypersensitivity reactions.

Gratitude is expressed to Doctors T.S. and E. Work for their critical evaluation.

JØRGEN CLAUSEN

Copenhagen 1981

The aim of this manual is to present practical advice on application of the rapidly expanding mass of data on immunochromatography, and more specifically to examine the possibilities of employing immunological methods in the laboratory. The manual is intended to be a practical guide to immunochromatography and certain chemical and physical principles of immunochromatography. It is based on the recommendations of the International Union of Immunological Sciences (IUIS) and the World Health Organization (WHO) (1963), as well as the 1964 WHO and 1972 WHO recommendations on the nomenclature of immunoglobulins (I, 2). The World Health Organization (WHO) has been used throughout the manual, although this terminology has not been used generally accepted in all laboratories. It is not the object of this manual to present an entire and complete review of the field of immunochromatography, competing with the classical work of Latou and others (1961), but rather to describe the practical application of immunochromatography for laboratory use and especially to explain for the reader the possible errors and misinterpretations.

It is a pleasure to participate in writing this book of Laboratory Manual in collaboration with Drs. T. S. and E. Work.

The rapid expansion in the field of immunochromatography, as accelerated by the publication of a new edition of the present manual, several chapters, i.e. those dealing with latex, HLA-antigens and with the application of enzyme immunoassays for the detection of antibodies of various types, have been extensively revised and extended. Furthermore, new chapters dealing with the complement system, enzyme immunoassay, systems, immunofluorescent methods and immunoelectrophoretic techniques have been added and the recent developments in the methodology

# Contents

|                                                                                 |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <i>Preface</i> . . . . .                                                        | xii |
| <i>Chapter 1. Introduction</i> . . . . .                                        | 1   |
| 1.1. The antigen-antibody reaction . . . . .                                    | 1   |
| 1.1.1. Physicochemical aspects of the antigen-antibody reaction . . . . .       | 1   |
| 1.2. Antigen-antibody reaction in gels . . . . .                                | 4   |
| 1.3. Antibodies; the immunoglobulins . . . . .                                  | 8   |
| 1.4. Antigens . . . . .                                                         | 18  |
| 1.4.1. Polysaccharide antigens . . . . .                                        | 18  |
| 1.4.2. Glycopeptide antigens . . . . .                                          | 19  |
| 1.4.3. Glycoprotein and histocompatibility antigens . . . . .                   | 21  |
| 1.4.4. Lipopolysaccharide and lipoprotein antigens . . . . .                    | 22  |
| 1.4.4.1. Bacterial cell-wall components . . . . .                               | 23  |
| 1.4.5. Protein antigens . . . . .                                               | 28  |
| 1.4.6. Virus antigens . . . . .                                                 | 29  |
| 1.5. Immune defence reactions . . . . .                                         | 29  |
| 1.6. Lectins . . . . .                                                          | 40  |
| 1.7. The complement system . . . . .                                            | 41  |
| Guide to further reading . . . . .                                              | 48  |
| <i>Chapter 2. Immunodiffusion in gels</i> . . . . .                             | 49  |
| 2.1. Diffusion in one dimension . . . . .                                       | 49  |
| 2.1.1. Single (simple) diffusion in one dimension (Oudin's technique) . . . . . | 49  |
| 2.1.2. Single radial diffusion (Petrie plate technique) . . . . .               | 50  |
| 2.2. Double diffusion . . . . .                                                 | 52  |
| 2.2.1. Double diffusion in one dimension . . . . .                              | 52  |
| 2.2.2. Double diffusion in two dimensions . . . . .                             | 53  |
| 2.3. Determination of diffusion constants . . . . .                             | 54  |

|                                                                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 2.4. Immunelectrophoresis . . . . .                                               | 59 |
| 2.4.1. General principles . . . . .                                               | 59 |
| 2.4.2. Types of supporting media . . . . .                                        | 60 |
| 2.4.2.1. Agar (agarose and agar-pectin) . . . . .                                 | 60 |
| 2.4.2.2. Cellulose acetate . . . . .                                              | 61 |
| 2.4.2.3. Starch gel . . . . .                                                     | 62 |
| 2.4.2.4. Polyacrylamide gel . . . . .                                             | 62 |
| 2.4.2.5. Fibrin-agar . . . . .                                                    | 63 |
| 2.4.3. Electrophoresis in antibody-containing media (Laurell technique) . . . . . | 63 |
| 2.4.3.1. General Aspects . . . . .                                                | 63 |
| 2.4.3.2. Crossed and rocket immunelectrophoresis and related techniques . . . . . | 65 |
| <i>Chapter 3. Antisera</i> . . . . .                                              | 72 |
| 3.1. Preparation and choice of antigen . . . . .                                  | 73 |
| 3.1.1. General principles . . . . .                                               | 73 |
| 3.1.2. Whole organ antigens . . . . .                                             | 74 |
| 3.1.3. Haptens . . . . .                                                          | 75 |
| 3.2. Preparation of antiserum . . . . .                                           | 77 |
| 3.3. Use of adjuvants . . . . .                                                   | 79 |
| 3.4. Absorption of antisera . . . . .                                             | 79 |
| 3.5. Monoclonal antibodies (the hybridoma technology) . . . . .                   | 80 |
| <i>Chapter 4. Techniques of immunodiffusion</i> . . . . .                         | 82 |
| 4.1. Choice of method and its limitations . . . . .                               | 82 |
| 4.2. Choice of antiserum . . . . .                                                | 83 |
| 4.3. Choice of amount of antigen . . . . .                                        | 83 |
| 4.4. Choice of hole patterns in double diffusion . . . . .                        | 84 |
| 4.5. Quantitative methods . . . . .                                               | 86 |
| 4.5.1. Single diffusion techniques . . . . .                                      | 86 |
| 4.5.2. (Semi-) quantitative estimation of antigens by double diffusion . . . . .  | 87 |
| <i>Chapter 5. Techniques of immunelectrophoresis</i> . . . . .                    | 89 |
| 5.1. Choice of buffers . . . . .                                                  | 89 |
| 5.2. Choice of method . . . . .                                                   | 90 |
| 5.2.1. General considerations . . . . .                                           | 90 |
| 5.2.2. Choice of type of pattern . . . . .                                        | 92 |
| 5.2.2.1. Comparison of antigenic composition of two or more samples . . . . .     | 92 |
| 5.2.2.2. Comparison of composition of antibodies in different antisera . . . . .  | 93 |
| 5.2.2.3. Comparison of one or two antigen solutions with two antisera . . . . .   | 94 |
| 5.3. Antigens . . . . .                                                           | 94 |
| 5.4. Reference markers . . . . .                                                  | 96 |

|                                                                                                             |            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 5.5. Steps in electrophoresis and diffusion . . . . .                                                       | 97         |
| 5.5.1. The electrophoretic stage. . . . .                                                                   | 97         |
| 5.5.2. Diffusion stage. . . . .                                                                             | 98         |
| 5.6. Quantitative methods . . . . .                                                                         | 99         |
| 5.6.1. Electrophoresis prior to immunoprecipitation . . . . .                                               | 99         |
| 5.6.2. Electrophoresis in a medium containing antibodies . . . . .                                          | 99         |
| 5.6.3. Crossed immuno-electrophoresis. . . . .                                                              | 100        |
| 5.6.3.1. Estimation of antigens . . . . .                                                                   | 100        |
| 5.6.3.2. Identification of soluble protein antigens . . . . .                                               | 101        |
| 5.6.3.3. Identification and characterization of membrane proteins . . . . .                                 | 102        |
| 5.6.3.3.1. Analysis of (partially) intact membrane structures . . . . .                                     | 102        |
| 5.6.3.3.2. Solubilization of membrane proteins for immunochemical analysis . . . . .                        | 104        |
| 5.6.3.3.3. Conditions for crossed immunoelectrophoretic characterization of membrane constituents . . . . . | 106        |
| <i>Chapter 6. Visualization and interpretation of precipitates in gels. . . . .</i>                         | <i>120</i> |
| 6.1. Direct identification and interpretation of immunoprecipitates . . . . .                               | 120        |
| 6.1.1. Identification by absorption of antisera . . . . .                                                   | 120        |
| 6.1.2. Morphology of precipitates. . . . .                                                                  | 121        |
| 6.1.2.1. Double diffusion . . . . .                                                                         | 121        |
| 6.1.2.2. Immuno-electrophoresis. . . . .                                                                    | 123        |
| 6.2. Staining gels for proteins, lipids and carbohydrates . . . . .                                         | 127        |
| 6.3. Enzymic reactions in gels . . . . .                                                                    | 129        |
| 6.3.1. Hydrolases (EC 3). . . . .                                                                           | 130        |
| 6.3.1.1. Carboxylic esterases (EC 3.1.1) . . . . .                                                          | 130        |
| 6.3.1.2. Phosphatases (EC 3.1.3) . . . . .                                                                  | 133        |
| 6.3.1.3. Proteolytic enzymes (EC 3.4) . . . . .                                                             | 133        |
| 6.3.1.4. Amylases (EC 3.2.1.1 and EC 3.2.1.2) and other glycoside hydrolases (EC 3.2.1.1) . . . . .         | 134        |
| 6.3.2. Oxidoreductases (EC 1). . . . .                                                                      | 134        |
| 6.3.2.1. Oxidases (EC 1.4) . . . . .                                                                        | 134        |
| 6.3.2.2. Peroxidases (EC 1.9 and EC 1.11). . . . .                                                          | 135        |
| 6.3.2.3. Dehydrogenases with NAD <sup>+</sup> and NADP <sup>+</sup> as acceptor (EC 1.1.1) . . . . .        | 135        |
| 6.4. Fluorescent techniques . . . . .                                                                       | 136        |
| 6.5. Isotopic methods . . . . .                                                                             | 136        |
| <i>Chapter 7. Immuno-adsorbent techniques. . . . .</i>                                                      | <i>139</i> |
| 7.1. General considerations . . . . .                                                                       | 139        |
| 7.2. Formation of immuno-adsorbents . . . . .                                                               | 139        |
| 7.2.1. Protein copolymers . . . . .                                                                         | 139        |

|                                                                                                              |            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 7.2.2. Matrix-bound antigens and antibodies . . . . .                                                        | 140        |
| 7.3. Evaluation of quality of immunoabsorbents . . . . .                                                     | 143        |
| 7.4. Immunoabsorption by Staphylococcus A-antigen, with binding to Fc fragments. . . . .                     | 144        |
| <i>Chapter 8. Radio-immunochemical techniques . . . . .</i>                                                  | <i>146</i> |
| 8.1. Radio-immunoassay . . . . .                                                                             | 147        |
| 8.1.1. Difficulties . . . . .                                                                                | 151        |
| 8.2. Double antibody precipitation in radioimmunoassay . . . . .                                             | 152        |
| 8.3. Radioimmunoassay of membrane-bound immunoglobulin . . . . .                                             | 153        |
| 8.4. Solid-phase radio-immunochemical techniques. . . . .                                                    | 153        |
| <i>Chapter 9. Enzyme- and metallo-immunoassays . . . . .</i>                                                 | <i>156</i> |
| 9.1. Enzyme-immunoassay (EIA) techniques . . . . .                                                           | 156        |
| 9.1.1. Histological localization . . . . .                                                                   | 157        |
| 9.1.2. Quantitative assays: General considerations . . . . .                                                 | 157        |
| 9.1.2.1. Coupling of enzymes to proteins . . . . .                                                           | 159        |
| 9.1.2.2. Coupling enzymes to haptens . . . . .                                                               | 160        |
| 9.1.2.3. Purification and properties of conjugates. . . . .                                                  | 161        |
| 9.1.2.4. Types of EIA assay . . . . .                                                                        | 161        |
| 9.1.2.4.1. Competitive assay systems. . . . .                                                                | 162        |
| 9.1.2.4.2. Non-competitive assay systems (sandwich technique) . .                                            | 163        |
| 9.1.2.4.3. Coenzyme labelling . . . . .                                                                      | 165        |
| 9.1.2.5. Choice of method of labelling . . . . .                                                             | 166        |
| 9.1.2.6. The influence of the immune reaction on the enzymic activity. . . . .                               | 166        |
| 9.1.2.7. Separation techniques . . . . .                                                                     | 167        |
| 9.1.2.8. The enzymic assay in EIA . . . . .                                                                  | 167        |
| 9.1.2.9. Artifacts in EIA . . . . .                                                                          | 168        |
| 9.1.2.10. Example of EIA: The sandwich procedure . . . . .                                                   | 168        |
| 9.2. Metallo-immunoassay (MIA) . . . . .                                                                     | 170        |
| 9.2.1. Coupling with albumin and immunization . . . . .                                                      | 171        |
| 9.2.2. Metal labelling . . . . .                                                                             | 172        |
| 9.2.3. Immunochemical procedure and chemical assay of MIA . . . . .                                          | 172        |
| 9.2.4. Precision of MIA. . . . .                                                                             | 172        |
| <i>Chapter 10. Difficulties and artifacts arising in gel diffusion and in immunoelectrophoresis. . . . .</i> | <i>173</i> |
| 10.1. The antibody-antigen ratio. . . . .                                                                    | 173        |
| 10.2. Position of immunoprecipitates . . . . .                                                               | 173        |
| 10.3. Variation in agar . . . . .                                                                            | 174        |

|                                                                       |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 10.4. Effects of molecular size on electrophoretic mobility . . . . . | 175 |
| 10.5. Antigens. . . . .                                               | 176 |
| 10.6. Antisera . . . . .                                              | 177 |
| 10.7. Various artifacts . . . . .                                     | 178 |
| 10.7.1. Interaction of antigens with non-antibody substances. . . . . | 178 |
| 10.7.2. Artifacts in double immunodiffusion techniques. . . . .       | 179 |
| 10.7.3. Abnormal binding of antigens to antibodies . . . . .          | 180 |

### *Chapter 11. Immunochemical reactions in free buffer systems. . . . .* 182

|                                                                                          |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 11.1. Qualitative and structural analysis of antigens . . . . .                          | 182 |
| 11.1.1. Analytical procedures . . . . .                                                  | 182 |
| 11.1.2. Preparative procedures . . . . .                                                 | 183 |
| 11.2. Quantitative analysis. . . . .                                                     | 184 |
| 11.2.1. Direct precipitation . . . . .                                                   | 184 |
| 11.2.2. Salting out procedures. . . . .                                                  | 185 |
| 11.2.3. The quantitative precipitin reaction combined with tracer<br>technique . . . . . | 186 |
| 11.2.4. Laser scattering immunoassay . . . . .                                           | 186 |
| 11.2.5. Free-radical immunoassay techniques . . . . .                                    | 187 |
| 11.2.6. Phage-immunoassays. . . . .                                                      | 188 |
| 11.2.7. Electro-immunoassay . . . . .                                                    | 188 |

### *Chapter 12. Immunofluorescence techniques . . . . .* 189

|                                                            |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 12.1. General principles . . . . .                         | 189 |
| 12.2. Fluorescent markers . . . . .                        | 189 |
| 12.3. Antibodies for immunofluorescence assays . . . . .   | 190 |
| 12.4. Immunofluorescence methods . . . . .                 | 192 |
| 12.5. Equipment for immunofluorescence microscopy. . . . . | 193 |
| 12.6. Artifacts (autofluorescence) . . . . .               | 196 |
| 12.7. Application of immunofluorescence methods . . . . .  | 196 |
| 12.8. Quantitative immunofluorescence . . . . .            | 198 |

### *Chapter 13. Complement fixation assays . . . . .* 201

### *Chapter 14. Application of lymphocytes for tracing antigens. . . . .* 203

|                                                            |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 14.1. General considerations. . . . .                      | 204 |
| 14.2. Methods for assay of lymphocyte activation . . . . . | 204 |
| 14.3. HL-antigens. . . . .                                 | 206 |

### *Chapter 15. Miscellaneous topics in immunochemistry . . . . .* 212

|                                                                                                                        |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 15.1. Methods for elucidation of the conformational structure of proteins<br>(inhibition assay of refolding) . . . . . | 212 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|

|                                                                                                                                                                 |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 15.2. Determination of virus and tumor antigens . . . . .                                                                                                       | 214 |
| 15.2.1. Immunoprecipitation . . . . .                                                                                                                           | 215 |
| 15.2.2. Cytotoxicity test . . . . .                                                                                                                             | 216 |
| 15.2.3. Labelled antibody binding assay . . . . .                                                                                                               | 216 |
| <i>Chapter 16. Appendices</i> . . . . .                                                                                                                         | 217 |
| I Preparation of Freund's adjuvant . . . . .                                                                                                                    | 217 |
| 2 Preparation of antisera and purification of antibodies . . . . .                                                                                              | 218 |
| 3 Concentration of protein solutions (antigens and antibodies) . . . . .                                                                                        | 222 |
| 4 Specific absorption of antisera . . . . .                                                                                                                     | 225 |
| 5 Purification of agar . . . . .                                                                                                                                | 225 |
| 6 Preparation of agarose . . . . .                                                                                                                              | 226 |
| 7 Preparation of agar gel for immunodiffusion or immunoelectrophoresis . . . . .                                                                                | 227 |
| 8 Simple linear immunodiffusion (Oudin technique) . . . . .                                                                                                     | 228 |
| 9 I Single radial immunodiffusion in agar gel . . . . .                                                                                                         | 229 |
| II Single radial immunodiffusion on cellulose acetate . . . . .                                                                                                 | 230 |
| 10 Preparation of agar slides for immunoelectrophoresis and double immunodiffusion . . . . .                                                                    | 231 |
| 11 Double immunodiffusion (Ouchterlony technique) . . . . .                                                                                                     | 233 |
| 12 Techniques for immunoelectrophoresis . . . . .                                                                                                               | 234 |
| 13 Immunoelectrophoresis in an antibody-containing medium for quantitative estimation of antigens (Laurell technique) . . . . .                                 | 235 |
| 14 Crossed immunoelectrophoresis . . . . .                                                                                                                      | 237 |
| 15 Crossed immunoelectrophoresis in a system combining thin-layer electrofocussing in polyacrylamide gel with immunoelectrophoresis in an agarose gel . . . . . | 240 |
| 16 Fibrin-agar micro electrophoresis . . . . .                                                                                                                  | 242 |
| 17 Buffers . . . . .                                                                                                                                            | 243 |
| 18 Reference markers for immunoelectrophoresis . . . . .                                                                                                        | 245 |
| 19 Washing, drying, photographing and storing of completed slides or plates . . . . .                                                                           | 246 |
| 20 Protein stains . . . . .                                                                                                                                     | 247 |
| 21 Lipid stains . . . . .                                                                                                                                       | 248 |
| 22 Double stains for protein and lipid . . . . .                                                                                                                | 249 |
| 23 Polysaccharide stains . . . . .                                                                                                                              | 250 |
| 24 Staining for oxidase activity (including ceruloplasmin) . . . . .                                                                                            | 251 |
| 25 Staining for peroxidase activity . . . . .                                                                                                                   | 252 |
| 26 Staining of lactate dehydrogenase isoenzymes and other NAD- or NADP-dependent dehydrogenases . . . . .                                                       | 253 |
| 27 Staining for esterase activity . . . . .                                                                                                                     | 253 |
| 28 Staining for phosphatase activity . . . . .                                                                                                                  | 254 |
| 29 Staining for amylase activity and glycosidase activities . . . . .                                                                                           | 255 |
| 30 Labelling of antibodies with fluorescein isocyanate . . . . .                                                                                                | 256 |

|    |                                                                                                                                         |     |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 31 | Radio-immunoassay of protein or peptide hormones . . . . .                                                                              | 257 |
| 32 | The double antibody technique for determination of insulin and other protein hormones . . . . .                                         | 259 |
| 33 | Lactoperoxidase-catalyzed iodination of proteins . . . . .                                                                              | 264 |
| 34 | 'Sandwich' solid-phase radioimmunoassay, using plastic tubes or discs, for the estimation of human immunoglobulins. . . . .             | 265 |
| 35 | Radioimmunoabsorbent assay, using antigen-conjugated paper discs to estimate allergic antibodies . . . . .                              | 268 |
| 36 | Radioimmunoabsorbent assay, using antiserum-coated plastic tubes to estimate carcinoembryonic antigen . . . . .                         | 270 |
| 37 | Immunoperoxidase histochemical technique . . . . .                                                                                      | 271 |
| 38 | Preparation and use of cross-linked protein immunoabsorbents . . . . .                                                                  | 274 |
|    | I Ethylchloroformate or glutaraldehyde as cross-linking agents . . . . .                                                                | 274 |
|    | II Isolation of antigens or antibodies . . . . .                                                                                        | 277 |
|    | III Properties of the various protein immunoabsorbents . . . . .                                                                        | 278 |
| 39 | Hapten (steroid and other hormones) conjugation to macromolecules. . . . .                                                              | 281 |
| 40 | Enzyme-linked sandwich immunoassay of macromolecular antigens. . . . .                                                                  | 284 |
|    | I Antibody-coupled glass rod immunoabsorbent . . . . .                                                                                  | 284 |
|    | II Antibody-coupled cellulose immunoabsorbent . . . . .                                                                                 | 289 |
| 41 | Use of an antigen-antibody precipitate as an intermediate in the purification of human $\alpha$ -foetoprotein. . . . .                  | 294 |
| 42 | Preparation and use of various immunoabsorbents for purification of antigens and antibodies . . . . .                                   | 295 |
|    | I Myoglobin-linked cellulose derivatives and other polymers . . . . .                                                                   | 295 |
|    | II Anti $\alpha$ -foetoprotein Sepharose immunoabsorbent . . . . .                                                                      | 298 |
| 43 | Staphylococcal protein A-antibody adsorbent in the isolation of cell membrane antigens . . . . .                                        | 301 |
| 44 | Immunochemical characterization of membrane constituents . . . . .                                                                      | 305 |
| 45 | Immunofixation . . . . .                                                                                                                | 311 |
| 46 | Quantitative micro-complement fixation and its use in the study of antigenic structure by specific antigen-antibody inhibition. . . . . | 312 |
| 47 | Isolation of lymphocytes . . . . .                                                                                                      | 318 |
| 48 | Separation of B- and T-lymphocytes by column chromatography . . . . .                                                                   | 319 |
|    | I Immunoabsorbent columns . . . . .                                                                                                     | 320 |
|    | II Lectin-affinity chromatography . . . . .                                                                                             | 323 |
| 49 | Isolation of T- and B-lymphocytes by erythrocyte adsorption . . . . .                                                                   | 324 |
| 50 | Assay of lymphocyte B- and T-cells by rosette formation . . . . .                                                                       | 326 |
| 51 | Lymphocyte reactivity assay by [ $^3\text{H}$ ] thymidine incorporation. . . . .                                                        | 328 |
| 52 | Lymphocyte reactivity assay by [ $^3\text{H}$ ] myoinositol incorporation. . . . .                                                      | 329 |
| 53 | Assay of virus and tumour antigens by $^{51}\text{Cr}$ Chromium-release. . . . .                                                        | 330 |
| 54 | Assay of virus and tumour antigens by immunoprecipitation . . . . .                                                                     | 334 |
|    | <i>References</i> . . . . .                                                                                                             | 338 |
|    | <i>Subject index</i> . . . . .                                                                                                          | 362 |

## Introduction

### 1.1. *The antigen—antibody reaction*

Since the initial discovery of infectious agents and of the acquired defense reactions towards these agents (Pasteur 1876; Von Behring and Kitasato 1890; Koch 1891; Metchnikoff 1892), followed by the demonstration of the presence of specific serum factors neutralizing the infectious agents (Ehrlich and Morgenroth 1900), immunochemistry has developed into a well-defined physicochemical discipline. This subject was initiated by the discovery of precipitating antibodies (Kraus, 1897) and greatly advanced by the discovery of the blood group antigens (Landsteiner and van Der Scheer, 1928). The discovery of the precipitin reaction arose from the demonstration of the precipitate formed when cell-free filtrates of typhoid cultures were mixed with the corresponding antiserum. This technique was made quantitative by Heidelberger and Kendall (1935), thus permitting detection of less than  $0.1 \mu\text{g}$  antigen in solution.

During recent years, precipitation reactions in which antigens and antibodies diffuse through and react in semi-solid matrices (e.g. agar gel) have become essential tools in biochemical analysis. These techniques generally fall into three distinct categories, simple diffusion, double diffusion and immunoelectrophoresis. Before describing them in detail, some understanding is required of the physicochemical factors involved.

#### 1.1.1. *Physicochemical aspects of the antigen—antibody reaction*

As early as 1902 Arrhenius and Madsen described how the antigen—antibody reaction may be treated on the basis of the law of mass action:

the combination of antibody (Ab) and antigen (Ag) was considered as a reversible bimolecular reaction:



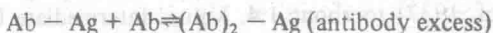
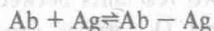
where  $k_1$  and  $k_2$  are the rate-constants of the forward and backward reactions. According to the law of mass action, the following relationship holds:

$$\frac{(\text{AbAg})}{(\text{Ab}) \times (\text{Ag})} = \frac{k_1}{k_2} = K \quad (1.2)$$

where (Ab), (Ag) and (AbAg) represent the concentration of reactants and products and  $K$  is the equilibrium or association constant. The determination of the value  $K$  for any particular antigen-antibody reaction at different temperatures is necessary for determination of thermodynamic constants. The thermodynamic data indicate the nature of the bonds established between the two reactants (see p. 4).

The quantitative nature of the antigen-antibody reaction was first exploited by Heidelberger and Kendall (1929, 1935) who found that it is possible to isolate and estimate the immunoprecipitate formed by adding increasing amounts of an antigen to a fixed amount of antibody. The amount of the precipitated complex increases with rising quantities of antigen up to a certain point. This region of increasing precipitation is referred to as the interval, or zone, of antibody excess. Above this point there is no further increase in precipitated complex as long as some degree of equivalence exists between the two reactants (zone of equivalence). With increasing quantities of added antigen, a so-called zone of inhibition of complex formation is reached (antigen excess): here, there is a progressive decrease in amount of antigen-antibody complex precipitated (fig. 1.1).

These results led to the postulate that the formation of immunoprecipitates is based on a series of bimolecular reactions following the law of mass action:



Using light-scattering and fluorescence-quenching measurements, Tengdery and Small (1966) showed that the primary Ab-Ag complex is established within 10 sec, while equilibrium-dialysis has demonstrated that the final polymerized antigen-antibody complex is formed during the first half hour (Hughes-Jones et al. 1963). Heidelberger's basic concept was further modified by Eisen and Keston (1949) who demonstrated the existence of polyvalent binding sites on the antigen. The antibody-antigen reaction may be considered similar to the binding of drugs to e.g. serum albumin (Klotz 1946; Clausen 1966b).

The antibody-antigen reaction shows temperature dependence of

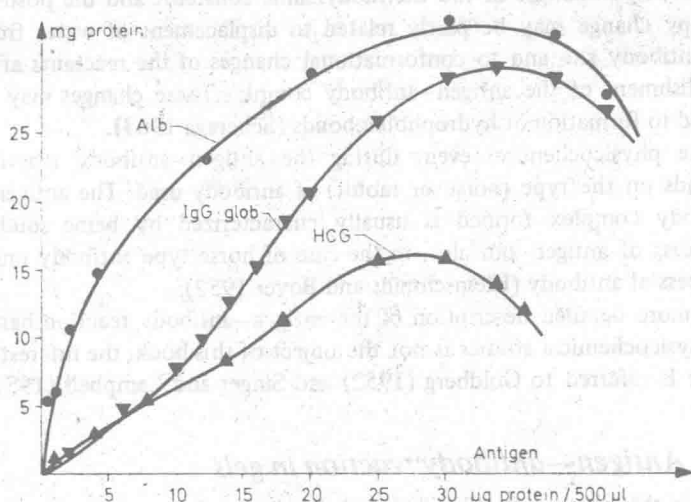


Fig. 1.1. Precipitation curves of three protein antigens. The three curves illustrate the immunoprecipitation in a free buffer solution of human albumin (Alb), IgG globulin (IgG glob) and human chorionic gonadotropin (HCG) with corresponding specific antibodies. *Abcissa*:  $\mu\text{g}$  of protein present per 500  $\mu\text{l}$  antigen solution (in 0.9% NaCl). *Ordinate*: mg protein precipitated by corresponding specific antisera per 100 ml solution.

the rate of association of the two reactants between about 0 to 40°C. Various investigators have found  $Q_{10}$  values varying from about 2 (Burnet et al. 1937) to about 1.4. Values intermediate between these extremes may be the most correct. Jerne and Skovsted (1953) demonstrated that the reaction was maximal at a low salt concentration. Finally, the antigen-antibody reaction is dependent on pH, showing an optimum at 7.0 (Kleinschmidt and Boyer 1952). The immunoprecipitate is split below pH 4.5 and above pH 10.0.

From a physicochemical point of view the antigen-antibody reaction is characterized by small changes in the thermodynamic constants. Thus, the change in Gibbs' free energy  $\Delta G^0$  seems of the order of -9 kcal/mol. The change in entropy  $\Delta S^0$  is positive and the change in enthalpy  $\Delta H^0$  is about -9 kcal/mol (Wurmser and Filitti-Wurmser 1957; Karush 1958; see also the survey by Schultze 1962). These values are of the same order as the changes in the thermodynamic constants for binding of drugs to serum albumin (Klotz 1946; Clausen 1966b).

The small changes in the thermodynamic constants and the positive entropy change may be partly related to displacement of water from the antibody site and to conformational changes of the reactants after establishment of the antigen-antibody complex. These changes may be related to formation of hydrophobic bonds (Scheraga 1963).

The physicochemical event during the antigen-antibody reaction depends on the type (horse or rabbit) of antibody used. The antigen-antibody complex formed is usually characterized by being soluble in excess of antigen and also, in the case of horse type antibody only, in excess of antibody (Kleinschmidt and Boyer 1952).

A more detailed description of the antigen-antibody reaction based on physicochemical studies is not the object of this book; the interested reader is referred to Goldberg (1952) and Singer and Campbell (1952).

## *1.2. Antigen-antibody reaction in gels*

Early in this century Bechhold (1905) discovered that immunochemical reactions could also be performed in gels. The 'gel diffusion' method was further developed by Arrhenius (1907) who showed that it could fractionate antigen mixtures such as tetanus and diphtheria toxins in complex with their corresponding antibodies. Qualitative methods for

identification of antigens and antibodies were introduced by Nicolle et al. (1920). Both Petrie (1932) and Sia and Chung (1932) further developed the gel method as a means for identification of bacterial antigens. Later, Maegraith (1933) and Hanks (1935) suggested gel diffusion as a microanalytical tool for demonstration of the antigenic composition of unknown samples.

In 1946 Oudin elaborated the physicochemical and mathematical basis for employing the diffusion in gels of a single antigen and/or antibody for quantitative purposes. The basic work of Oudin (1946; review, 1952) was extended and modified by Ouchterlony (1949) and Elek (1948). In 1953 Grabar and Williams described 'immuno-electrophoresis' which combined the electrophoretic separation of proteins in agar gel with a subsequent antigen-antibody reaction performed by immunodiffusion in the same agar gel. Although the basic principle of this method had been independently developed by Poulik (1952) who combined filter paper electrophoresis with agar gel immunodiffusion, the recent expansion in analytical immunochemistry was initiated by the work of Grabar and Williams. On the basis of their method, Scheidegger (1955) developed his micro-immuno-electrophoretic method which made it possible to separate and identify a large number of antigens in a volume of about 1.5  $\mu$ l.

Electrophoresis combined with the antigen-antibody reaction was also the basis for the development, in recent years of radio-immunochemical techniques (Berson and Yalow 1961; Berson et al. 1964). These techniques have provided the impetus for development of ultra-micro-methods for estimation of proteins and peptide hormones in biological fluids (see Chard (1978)).

Gel diffusion reactions are dependent on the high water content (often as high as 99%) of the gelatinous supporting media. This permits the antigens and antibodies to migrate through the gel by diffusion (or be accelerated by an electric field) almost independently of the supporting medium, provided that the diameter of the reactants is less than the width of the microstructure of the gels (Wieme 1957, 1959). Under these conditions the free diffusion of both antigens and antibodies conforms to laws of gaseous diffusion and thus follows Fick's law:

$$dx/dt = Dd^2c/dt^2, \quad (1.4)$$

*Subject index p.363*