

BOOK REVIEW

Wheater's Functional Histology. Fourth Edition, Barbara Young and John W. Heath, 2000. Churchill Livingstone, Harcourt Publishers Limited, London, UK, 413 pp., \$58.00, (paperback). ISBN 0-44305-618-8.

A histology teacher has a variety of textbooks to choose for class use. I have taught histology for many years and have used books by Hain, Ross, Gardner, Sobotta, Junquiera, di Fiore and Leeson. During all this time the first edition of Wheeler's book was regarded by me as a very good atlas with many high quality color micrographs but without much discussion of concepts. The fourth edition also appears to be an atlas at first glance. However, each chapter typically has a short introduction and the reader must become accustomed to text material in what amounts to expanded captions for figures. In professional schools the time devoted for the study of histology has been reduced, sometimes with the elimination of laboratories. This textbook is ideal to compensate for these changes.

There are 577 color light micrographs, 130 electron micrographs (that have not been colorized), 130 colored drawings, and 4 tables. Most of these study aids are high quality and make this one of the best illustrated histology textbooks. The book also feels comfortable to handle. Descriptions of structures are easy to read, but one has to expect the difference in spelling by the British authors. Each chapter can be read independently of the others, so the book is adaptable for problem based learning courses, when not every chapter is used.

The entire book emphasizes human tissues, but the authors admit that other tissues were sometimes photographed. Unfortunately, the nonhuman tissues in the figures are not identified. Two of the light micrographs of the eye appear to be from the rhesus monkey.

Another feature of Wheeler's 4th edition is that it comes with a high quality CD-ROM of 800 images, which are the same as the figures in the book. I went through four chapters on the disc and it included all of the figures that were in the book chapters. Some of the colored drawings in the book lack contrast but they are better when seen on a computer. The CD allows one to create slide presentations, export slides for PowerPoint and to add captions to slides.

The intended audience for the book is professional as well as undergraduate students. All text discussions seem to be aimed for students that have only a beginning course in biology or zoology. About the only obvious slant for the professional student is a chapter near the end of the book on sections of the central nervous system. If it is possible to get students interested in histology by having an outstanding textbook and CD-ROM, *Wheater's Functional Histology* is the obvious choice.

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