

**Markers of colonic cell differentiation. Progress in cancer research and therapy, vol. 29** Edited by S R Wolman and A J Mastromarino. (Pp. 431; illustrated; \$72.00.) New York: Raven Press, 1984. In contrast to the large volume of information about differentiation in certain epithelia, there is little information regarding markers of colonic cell differentiation. Hopefully this book will be the first of many on this subject. The book is composed of individual contributions covering a broad range of topics. These are somewhat arbitrarily grouped as morphological markers, immunological markers, metabolic and histochemical markers, transport, hormones and receptor functions, and genotypic markers. Various chapters concerning other systems are included where they are applicable to colon studies. The publication of this book comes at a time when there is increasing interest in growing colonic epithelium *in vitro*. The importance of full characterisation of cells before investigation cannot be overemphasised.

This book deals with morphological markers of differentiation including light and electron microscopic methods. Lectin and mucin histochemistry are also discussed. The section on immunological markers includes chapters on the usefulness of monoclonal antibodies both as cell markers and as reagents for clinical use. Some aspects of colonic transport function and control of cell proliferation are also covered.

In addition to differentiation markers of normal colon, frequent reference is made to differences observed in premalignant or malignant epithelium. This book will make interesting reading for both scientists involved in large bowel cancer research and for those involved in defining markers for normal and malignant cells of other systems.

R P H THOMPSON

**Current hepatology volume 4** Edited by G Gitnick. (Pp. 490; illustrated; price not stated.) Chichester, Sussex: Wiley, 1984.

The extraordinary frequency of liver meetings this September gives one, with all the travelling involved, a chance to catch up on reading of volumes such as this. It is also very easy to check whether the material is as up to date as it should be. This fourth volume of *Current hepatology* has the advantage that the data are not simply presented as staccato fact but are properly dissected and reviewed by the chapter editor. This comes over best in Hal Conn's 32 pages on the complications of portal hypertension. In dealing with the new pharmacological agents propranolol and somatostatin that have been introduced in the past three years, one is left at the

end with a very clear picture of what is now established to be certain, that requires further study or confirmation. It is of interest how differences between the various studies on propranolol remain unexplained. The compass of the book is wide with the other chapters on hepatitis, serology of liver disease, alcoholic liver disease, cirrhosis, drug metabolism, hepatobiliary surgery, liver tumours, cholestasis, hepatobiliary imaging gallstones, and bilirubin metabolism. All the chapters are up to date and this is an excellent review book for the practicing clinical hepatologist, as well as for the primarily research orientated worker.

ROGER WILLIAMS

**Mechanisms of hepatocyte injury and death** Edited by D Keppler, H Popper, L Bianchi, and W Reutter. (Pp. 409; illustrated; £45.00.) Lancaster: MTP Press, 1984.

This volume (no 38 in the series of Falk Symposia) is the proceedings of a meeting held during the Basel Liver Week in October, 1983. It deals with a variety of aspects of hepatocyte injury. It is difficult to imagine a better list of contributors – Desmet and De Vos on the morphology of acute liver injury; Arias on hepatic ion transport; Rasmussen, McLean *et al*, Farber, and Orrenius and his colleagues all on the role of calcium in cell injury – almost all are worthy of mention. Hans Popper has written a masterly introduction and a summary of the meeting. Virtually all the contributors are worth reading, and as the book has come out so quickly they are all reasonably up to date. The only problem with this book is that it costs £45 – but a must for your library!

NEIL MCINTYRE

**Transphincteric surgery of the rectum** By A Huber, A H Cv Hochester, and M Allgower. (Pp. 83; illustrated; \$46.30.) Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1984.

This is a well produced and beautifully illustrated monograph with coloured plates of an uncommon approach to the rectum which has been popularised in recent years by Aubrey York-Mason. It is arranged in four sections, the first an introduction with a short note on physiological testing of the anal sphincter mechanism. The second section consists of an anatomical description of the rectum with dissections and diagrams to explain the transphincteric approach. This is rather laboured as the male and female pelvis are described separately with considerable repetition. The third section is a step by step description of the operation with the variations of laying open the rectum with or without sphincter