quality of the text is high in most areas and the illustrations are of above average quality. The sections on ERCP and its ramifications were particularly well done with the best how to do it account in words of an endoscopic technique that I have read but also backed up by marvellously erudite chapters on the anatomy and embryology of the pancreas and biliary system and on the sphincter of Oddi.

It is comprehensive as a textbook of this length should be and is generally well balanced. Minor criticisms that might be considered for correction in a future edition are two: there is no section on rigid sigmoidoscopy which seems an omission as the cheapness and convenience of this tool with the recent advent of the transparent disposable sigmoidoscope suggests that rigid sigmoidoscopes are not going to be replaced by flexible sigmoidoscopes at least for some time. There is a whole chapter on dilatation of biliary strictures but only a couple of pages on dilating the oesophagus.

This book is a considerable achievement. It enhances a view of endoscopy as a subject worthy of scientific and academic respectability and manages to be both authoritatively learned and practical as a handbook. Gastrointestinal endoscopy has come of age.

PAUL SWAIN

A colour atlas of the digestive system. By R E Pounder, M C Allison, and A P Dhillon. (Pp. 232; illustrated; £30.) London: Wolfe Medical, 1988.

The phenomenon of the 'coffee table' textbook – glossy, profusely illustrated and minimally textual – is somewhat mystifying; for whom are these books written and who buys them? The authors have aimed to provide '. . . a wealth of clear illustrations to . . . thus complement a standard textbook of gastroenterology such as *Diseases of the gut and pancreas* edited by J J Misiewicz, R E Pounder, and C W Venables (Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1987)'. Well, there's no harm in a little advertising, but one can't help wondering why the colour illustrations weren't inserted in the textbook itself; presumably, the cost of the combined volume would be about the same as these two volumes together. The book is certainly too expensive for undergraduates and, one would suspect, of limited appeal to postgraduates. Still, the publishers must know what they are about, as they have produced a profusion of similar volumes, and are still in business.

That being said, the 636 illustrations have been chosen and printed with care, and the book does provide a good overview of gastroenterology for . . . for people who like this kind of thing. Do not, however, make the mistake of leaving it on your coffee table at home; the colour is vivid, and the illustrations are not for the faint hearted.

DAVID WINGATE

An endoscopic approach to bilio-pancreatic disease. By Luigi Familiari. Translated by Antonio Borruto. (Pp. 196; illustrated; £33.) Padua, Italy: Piccin Nuova Libreria, 1988.

This Italian work in English translation gives a descriptive account of endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography and related therapeutic techniques and their application to the diagnosis and treatment of common biliary and pancreatic disorders. The foreward, by Claude Liguory, with whom the author once worked, commends the book on the basis that 'A picture is worth a thousand words', invoking an analogy between endoscopy in general and this book in particular. There are 123 figures, of which the majority are radiographs. The comment is also made that this book presents 'A complete and yet simple treatment of new knowledge in bilio-pancreatic pathology'. Unfortunately, I cannot agree that this book is complete in the comprehensive sense but do agree that this is a relatively simple view of the techniques involved and thereby suggest that this text is aimed at the novice, who has not previously been exposed to ERCP in any way. When read on this basis, the book, provides a suitable introduction to the subject although the inevitable unintended false interpretations and meanings result from the English translation of the original Italian text. The eight chapters include descriptions of basic embryology and anatomy, instrumentation, diagnostic ERCP, biliary pathology, pancreatic pathology, contra-indications and complications of the techniques, endoscopic sphincterotomy and, finally, direct choledochoscopy and pancreatoscopy. All topics, however, are dealt with in a basic way with sometimes very brief descriptions. Some of the endoscopic photographs are rather poor and radiographs would have been improved by suitable labelling, considering that many readers will not be familiar with them. Some of the line drawings of techniques are helpful and perhaps more could have been made of this in explanations of radiographs. Each chapter is reasonably well referenced, but there is a curious lack of references after 1982 which, together with some of the views expressed in the book, make one think that the text was written some years ago and perhaps has taken some considerable time to be published. In this sense therefore it is not an up-to-date work and particularly the chapter on instrumentation is extremely limited to one manufacturer and even then not all currently available instruments are included.

In conclusion this book might be a suitable introduction to the topic of ERCP but should not be regarded as comprehensive nor in any way helpful to an endoscopist already performing these procedures. It suffers slightly from having been translated and I suspect with the current availability of much more up-to-date works on the same subject that the price of £33 will be a deterrent to individual readers.

D CARR-LOCKE

Biopsy pathology of the liver. By R S Patrick and J O D
McGee. (Pp. 373; illustrated; £49·50.) London: Chapman and Hall, 1988.

This second edition released eight years after its first publication responds to the need to bring the book up-to-date with the many acquisitions which have taken place in hepatology during this period. The basic format of the book remains the same, but increased by 40 pages, partly accounted for by the addition of some 50 new photomicrographs, and several sections have been largely rewritten. A relevant cover illustration and the trimming of the microphotographs to a size allowing the legends to be printed under the figures rather than on the facing or preceding pages are most welcome. Remarkable is the excellent, modern and yet concise account of the hepatotropic viruses including non–A non–B and delta infections. Topics either overlooked in or developed after the first edition, such as liver transplantation, graft *versus* host disease, AIDS, epithelioid haemangioendothelioma have been added, others like nodular regenerative hyperplasia, drug induced injury and chronic hepatitis have been expanded. The one new chapter concerned with nutritional and digestive disorders is of lesser value. Its contents could have been included in other sections; primary sclerosing cholangitis would be better considered in the context of biliary diseases and its dogmatic sub-division in small and large duct disease is likely not to stand the test of time. Not all would agree with the use of the term 'cholangiohepatitis', the illustration of copper deposition as a pigment, the choice of 'biliary rosettes' to show pseudoacinar formation in chronic active hepatitis. Despite these reservations the second edition is much improved and I predict that this handy, richly illustrated and reasonably priced work will advantageously compete with existing books on the subject. It should prove of value to all hospital pathologists. Clinicians who want to get an insight into liver histopathology, however, might be better supported by a colour atlas.

B C PORTMANN

Comparative physiology of the vertebrate digestive system. By C E Stevens. (Pp. 300; illustrated; £35.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

This is not a book of obvious appeal to many of our readers, but there are two good reasons for drawing attention to it. First, if you have ever wondered about the morphology of the digestive systems of the creatures with whom we share this planet, you will find the information here. For example, there are illustrations of the relevant innards of the toad, turtle, red-footed tortoise, iguana, goose, platypus, sperm whale and hedgehog and many other species, and you will find diagrams of the distribution of gastric epithelium in 10 species of bat, including the vampire bat (bet you thought that all bats' stomachs look alike . . .). This may not help you in trivial pursuits, but this book could help to settle the occasional and otherwise inconclusive argument in common room or living room.

The second and more important point is made by the author. He points out that 'because of the cost and inherent dangers of conducting studies on human volunteers, much of this information (on digestive physiology) must be obtained from the examination of other animals. The majority has been derived from use of common laboratory animals, principally the dog, rabbit and four or five species of rodent'. He points out that other species have closer similarities to man, but also emphasises that '. . . the concentration on similarities as a major criterion for the choice of 'animal models' missing the point that much of the understanding of basic mechanisms has come from the study of differences rather similarities . . . Yet, if one considers the number of species of fish (21 700), amphibians (4000), reptiles (6250), birds (8600), and mammals (4150) available for study, it is apparent that most species . . . have not been studied at all'.

Pausing only to point out that the hippopotamus has one of the most complex stomachs but the simplest and shortest intestine of all the Artiodactyla, and that there are three compartments to the llama stomach, I would commend this book to any gastroenterologist with a spark of scientific curiosity and to every medical librarian.

DAVID WINGATE

Surgery of the oesophagus. By G G Jamieson. (Pp. 934; illustrated; £135.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1988.

The considerable growth of interest and developments in the fields of investigation, pathophysiology, and management of oesophageal disease have been reflected in recent years in the formation of the oesophageal section of the British Society of Gastro-