M.A. Meyers: Dynamic Radiology of the Abdomen. Normal and Pathological Anatomy. Springer, Berlin 1976. LVI + 351 pp., 638 fig., 14 cpl.; DM 72.80. ISBN 3-540-90178-7. Although written by a roentgenologist it is not a purely roentgenological book, but rather a topographic anatomy of the abdomen as well as general pathology of abdominal infections and tumours. The main task has been to show topographic relations of the organs and to explain the directions and ways of extension of infections and neoplasms. For this purpose the author uses not only the roentgenological method – there are few conventional X-ray pictures – but also ultrasonography, computer transaxial tomography and especially study of frozen sections in cadavers. The concept, therefore, is quite original; it is not just another good monograph, it is a very new look at the problems of the human abdomen, using an unusual combination of methods in order to establish facts which have not attracted appropriate interest so far. The iconography also testifies the author’s originality: dominant are whole-page coloured reproductions of sections through the abdomen and schematic drawings explaining the topic relations. Most roentgen pictures point to discrete changes caused by environmental influences. The recensent cannot dare to evaluate the whole significance of this new concept, a deeper study would be necessary to understand all perspectives that emerge from this approach. This book will capture and fascinate everybody who is interested in the physiology and pathology of the human abdomen.

Z. Mafatka, Prague

G. Paumgartner (ed.): Bile acids. Clinics in Gastroenterology, vol. 6, No. 1. Saunders, London 1977. 250 p., figures; £ 7.50. Bile acid metabolism has become a focus of present interest especially following introduction of radiolabelled compounds and sophisticated methods of chromatography and spectrometry. Nowhere else has the practical application of basic research been so quick and efficient as in the therapy of the gall stones by chenic acid. In this volume the emphasis is put on the main physiological mechanism and its disturbances – the enterohepatic circulation and its two transport systems in the terminal ileum and in the liver. 13 chapters written by 25 authors deal with disturbances of bile acid metabolism in parenchymal liver disease, in cholestasis, in intestinal diseases, in hyperlipoproteinaemia, furthermore with inborn errors of bile acid synthesis, mechanism of cholesterol stone formation and their dissolution by chenic acid, significance of bile reflux and diet, disturbances in infants and children, diagnostic value of serum bile acids and ‘breath test’.

The editor was successful in making a fine selection of topics and authors. All chapters are comprehensive and exhaustive, provided by adequate documentation and extensive literature. This volume represents an important survey of this rapidly expanding area. It may be recommended as source of information and for reference.

Z. Mafatka, Prague

Book Reviews

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This volume presents the Proceedings of the First International Symposium on Hormonal Receptors in Digestive Tract Physiology, held in Abbaye de Royaumont (France), in September, 1976. Contributions to the symposium reflect the current views of the world’s leading authorities on the subject. The book is divided into five parts including chemical and analytical aspects of hormone-receptor interaction in general; hormonal receptors and microtubular system in liver; hormonal receptors in pancreas and salivary glands; in stomach, as well as in bowel and gall bladder. To the total of 47 original papers a number of free communications, as one page of abstracts concerning the different topics, have been added. Thus, a great deal of information is given comprehensively in the volume. Receptor problems are discussed in more detail referring to the gastrointestinal hormones gastrin, CCK-pancreozymin, secretin, vasoactive intestinal peptide (VIP) acting separately or in combination on the various targets. Other articles are dedicated to the involvement of cholinergic and adrenergic receptors into secretory processes of the stomach, salivary glands and pancreas as well as to the possible roles of the adenylcyclase system and of calcium in the ‘stimulus secretion coupling’ in stomach, pancreas, small bowel and liver. The elucidation of the mechanism of cholera toxin working on enterocytes is a good example that basic research can be of help in the understanding of pathophysiological and clinical problems.

Most of the authors do not give a general review of the various topics but present their own fresh data including numerous excellent illustrations and comprehensive bibliographies. Therefore, the majority of articles are dedicated more to readers directly involved into this subject. Nevertheless, since approaches to the fundamental understanding of the transfer of information within a living organism are made in this book, it is recommended not only to scientists working in the special field of gastrointestinal endocrinology but also of interest, generally, for physiologists, biochemists and clinical investigators.

J. Hotz, Essen