

almost the whole of cell biology. Some advances have clearly been made and some interesting and testable concepts are emerging but as a cry for increasing investment in this important area of tumour biology the progress so far from 'phenomenology' towards a more molecular

understanding of these cell interactions has been disturbingly slow, as represented by the work presented in this volume.

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Histological and Histochemical Methods: Theory and Practice

by J.A. Kiernan

Pergamon Press; Oxford, 1981

344 pages. £29.00 (hardback), £10.50 (paperback)

This book describes in twenty chapters the basic staining and other histochemical reactions commonly used when preparing biological material for light microscopy. It is assumed by the author that the reader has a knowledge of chemistry and biology, a little higher than that found in the last year University courses of North America, and the work appears to be written for those about to embark on a career in a histological laboratory, but this is not stated by publisher or author. The earlier part of the book deals with the fixation of tissue and the processing and mounting of sections, and does not discuss in any detail the techniques of embedding and section cutting. The longest chapter deals with the classification and chemical reactions of dyes and indicates their uses in histochemistry. Subsequent chapters deal with methods designed to demonstrate particular structures or substances. In each the basic chemistry is discussed and details of the individual methods described. Each chapter ends with a brief set of theoretical and practical exercises. Neurohistological techniques are considered separately and a

final chapter discusses basic immunochemistry.

Throughout this book the main concern of the author is with the basic chemistry of the techniques described. Little guidance is given in the choice of method for any particular purposes, and there is minimal concern with pathological conditions. Amyloid, for example, is only briefly mentioned in the section on glycoproteins and the reader referred to a standard work for details of the various staining techniques. However, for the student looking for insight into the chemistry behind many standard staining techniques, this work should prove valuable. It may also prove of use to the worker with little histochemical background who needs to use an histological technique as part of his researches. Both will find the bibliography referring to standard texts as well as a wide variety of original papers and review articles useful. To the beginner, the simple approach to complex chemistry will be welcome.

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