

Book review:

M. Rizzotti: Early evolution: from the appearance of the first cell to the first modern organisms.

Birkhäuser Verlag AG, Basel, Berlin, Boston, 2000, 68 CHF, ISBN: 3-7643-6191-3

This is really a nice and wonderful-to-read textbook. The introduction gives an overview on the hypothesis to derive evolution from morphological and biochemical data. The properties of the “first cell” include reproduction, descendents from precellular aggregates, and a detailed and founded hypothesis how a first cell could look like. The modern cells are then divided into prokaryotic and eukaryotic descents. The flagellum serves as specific model. The next derivatives comprise the development of a cellular membrane, the appearance of a nucleus and mitochondria, the generation of cilia, and finally the composition of cellular agglutinations and organs. The textbook is written in a clear language and includes several drawings which explain the used theory and allow an easy understanding of the basic theory. It can be recommended to all colleagues who are interested in the history of living beings, and who want to understand the evolution from a more basic point of view compared to the well known evolution strategies of complex organisms.

Klaus Kayser