

## Book Review

Hans G. Fassbender:

Pathology and Pathobiology of rheumatic diseases. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition

Springer, Heidelberg, New York, 2001, ISBN 3-540-62942-4; 125 US\$

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Rheumatic diseases include a broad variety of chronic (mainly systemic) tissue alterations which do not share a common underlying cause or even presentation. On the other hand, the patients and clinicians stick to the term rheuma mainly associated with chronic pain of the joints and skeletal system. Having this historical contrast in mind, the aim of the textbook is to describe the understanding, manifestation, associated tissue changes, and underlying causes of those diseases which are commonly classified as rheuma. The textbook follows the scheme of a "classical" presentation, namely to start with the definition and explanation of rheuma or its basic appearance (inflammation). The morphologic manifestation of humoral and cellular reactions, the tissue reactions, exudation and cellular infiltration are presented in detail with numerous significant figures and schemes. Having this excellent basic knowledge in mind, it is really a "pleasure" to follow the author through the specific diseases which include rheumatic fever, rheumatoid arthritis, Sjögren's syndrome, Behcet's syndrome, Lyme disease, lupus erythematosus, inflammatory myopathies, to name only part of them. These chapters provide the reader with a modern definition, epidemiology, pathology, pathogenesis as well as clinical and pathological manifestations. They include several black and white illustrations, usually light microscopic photographs. It is in favor to the textbook that some chapters describe differential diagnoses to a certain detail, such as tuberculosis or sarcoidosis. An extensive list of references can be found at the end of the textbook. The textbook can be recommended to pathologists, rheumatologists, students, and colleagues who are interested in a modern description of an old – fashion, however, really important disease.

Klaus Kayser