

BOOK REVIEWS

"Comparative Primate Pathology" by G.B.D. Scott.

Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, Tokyo, 1992 ISBN 0-19-857640-4. 288 pages

Professor G.B.D. Scott was Professor (later Emeritus Professor) of Histopathology at the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine in London. Although primarily a human pathologist, Professor Scott had a deep interest in comparative medicine and an absorbing fascination in the similarities and differences shown in the responses of human and non-human primates to infectious and non-infectious insults.

The book describes lesions in simian and prosimian non-human primates, based on the author's examination of material and supporting records in zoos and research centres in Britain and USA. It consists of 19 chapters and six pages of index. The first eight chapters discuss respectively, comparative pathology, the biology of the primates, growth and development, ageing and a range of topics relating to "general pathology" such as degenerations, infiltrations, thrombosis, inflammation and oncology. The remaining chapters encompass the "special pathology" of organ systems. Each chapter is illustrated with black-and-white photographs, mainly histological, and has its own references, autopsy reports and unpublished material.

There are many criticisms that could be leveled at this book. It is far from comprehensive and, despite ample space on the last page of most chapters, lacks several pertinent references. There are no pictures in colour and many of the photomicrographs are small and thus difficult to interpret. The terminology and interpretation of lesions have a strong "human medical" orientation: often one feels that the text might have benefited from the input of a veterinary pathologist. These and other quibbles, however, must be put in context and assessed against the milieu in which this book was produced. Professor Scott started his researches in the late 1960s; twenty years were to elapse before the results were ready

for publication. He died before the book could be printed: that it ultimately appeared is largely attributed to the industry and dedication of Mrs Barbara Urban, his research assistant. The orientation and scope of the book are best delineated in Professor Scott's own words, in his Preface:- "I do not regard this as being a textbook in the accepted sense of the word, a comprehensive and descriptive catalogue of definite and separate diseases. I hope that it forms a comprehensive, balance review of the pathology of simian primates, an account of experiences of the pathological processes in primates and a review of the relevant literature seen through the eyes of a human pathologist..."

This publication should therefore be considered as a "thesis", the written results of Professor Scott's meticulous studies, over two decades, of an extensive but not necessarily truly representative sample of captive primates. The book cannot compete on equal terms with such tomes as Ruch's (1959) "Diseases of Laboratory Primates", Fiennes' (1972) "Pathology of Simian Primates" or Jones *et al's* (1994) "Animal Pathology: Non-Human Primates". It is, however, complementary to these and other works and has the added bonus that the specimens it describes are numbered so that the interested reader can locate them and carry out further investigations if necessary. Professor Scott's books is a fitting epitaph to a man who was a pioneer of comparative medicine in Britain during the 70s and 80s and who is remembered with affection by many of us from different disciplines, who were influenced by his writing and his thoughts. His posthumous treatise is a significant contribution to primate pathology and is important to those interested in causes of morbidity and mortality of monkeys and apes, in the wild and in captivity.

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