In conclusion this book might be a suitable introduction to the topic of ERCP but should not be regarded as comprehensive nor in any way helpful to an endoscopist already performing these procedures. It suffers slightly from having been translated and I suspect with the current availability of much more up-to-date works on the same subject that the price of £33 will be a deterrent to individual readers.

D CARR-LOCKE

Biopsy pathology of the liver. By R S Patrick and J O D
McGee. (Pp. 373; illustrated; £49·50.) London: Chapman and Hall, 1988.

This second edition released eight years after its first publication responds to the need to bring the book up-to-date with the many acquisitions which have taken place in hepatology during this period. The basic format of the book remains the same, but increased by 40 pages, partly accounted for by the addition of some 50 new photomicrographs, and several sections have been largely rewritten. A relevant cover illustration and the trimming of the microphotographs to a size allowing the legends to be printed under the figures rather than on the facing or preceding pages are most welcome. Remarkable is the excellent, modern and yet concise account of the hepatotropic viruses including non–A non–B and delta infections. Topics either overlooked in or developed after the first edition, such as liver transplantation, graft *versus* host disease, AIDS, epithelioid haemangioendothelioma have been added, others like nodular regenerative hyperplasia, drug induced injury and chronic hepatitis have been expanded. The one new chapter concerned with nutritional and digestive disorders is of lesser value. Its contents could have been included in other sections; primary sclerosing cholangitis would be better considered in the context of biliary diseases and its dogmatic sub-division in small and large duct disease is likely not to stand the test of time. Not all would agree with the use of the term 'cholangiohepatitis', the illustration of copper deposition as a pigment, the choice of 'biliary rosettes' to show pseudoacinar formation in chronic active hepatitis. Despite these reservations the second edition is much improved and I predict that this handy, richly illustrated and reasonably priced work will advantageously compete with existing books on the subject. It should prove of value to all hospital pathologists. Clinicians who want to get an insight into liver histopathology, however, might be better supported by a colour atlas.

B C PORTMANN

Comparative physiology of the vertebrate digestive system. By C E Stevens. (Pp. 300; illustrated; £35.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

This is not a book of obvious appeal to many of our readers, but there are two good reasons for drawing attention to it. First, if you have ever wondered about the morphology of the digestive systems of the creatures with whom we share this planet, you will find the information here. For example, there are illustrations of the relevant innards of the toad, turtle, red-footed tortoise, iguana, goose, platypus, sperm whale and hedgehog and many other species, and you will find diagrams of the distribution of gastric epithelium in 10 species of bat, including the vampire bat (bet you thought that all bats' stomachs look alike . . .). This may not help you in trivial pursuits, but this book could help to settle the occasional and otherwise inconclusive argument in common room or living room.

The second and more important point is made by the author. He points out that 'because of the cost and inherent dangers of conducting studies on human volunteers, much of this information (on digestive physiology) must be obtained from the examination of other animals. The majority has been derived from use of common laboratory animals, principally the dog, rabbit and four or five species of rodent'. He points out that other species have closer similarities to man, but also emphasises that '. . . the concentration on similarities as a major criterion for the choice of 'animal models' missing the point that much of the understanding of basic mechanisms has come from the study of differences rather similarities . . . Yet, if one considers the number of species of fish (21 700), amphibians (4000), reptiles (6250), birds (8600), and mammals (4150) available for study, it is apparent that most species . . . have not been studied at all'.

Pausing only to point out that the hippopotamus has one of the most complex stomachs but the simplest and shortest intestine of all the Artiodactyla, and that there are three compartments to the llama stomach, I would commend this book to any gastroenterologist with a spark of scientific curiosity and to every medical librarian.

DAVID WINGATE

Surgery of the oesophagus. By G G Jamieson. (Pp. 934; illustrated; £135.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1988.

The considerable growth of interest and developments in the fields of investigation, pathophysiology, and management of oesophageal disease have been reflected in recent years in the formation of the oesophageal section of the British Society of Gastro-