

Book Review

H. KUHLENBECK: *The Central Nervous System of Vertebrates*, vol. 3, part II: Overall Morphologic Pattern. Karger, Basel 1973. XVI + 950 pp., 472 fig.; sFr. 340.-/US \$ 105.40/DM 323.-/£ 43.15. ISBN 3-8055-1393-3.

This volume, the final portion of the first part of the *Central Nervous System of Vertebrates*, is concerned with general issues in comparative neurology as contrasted with future volumes which promise to deal with regional and systematic comparisons between vertebrate groups. The present volume is composed of two chapters; the first, and longer of the two, is entitled 'Morphological Patterns of the Vertebrate Neuroaxis'. This chapter is divided into several sections and subsections dealing with morphogenesis, congenital anomalies, subdivision of the neuroaxis into longitudinal zones and neuromery among other issues. In addition, sections are devoted to the development and comparative morphology of the telencephalon, diencephalon and deuteroencephalon (mesencephalon and rhombencephalon), meninges and blood vessels. A last section dealing with brain weights and cerebralization offers some interesting data in the form of tables and figures.

The first chapter constitutes in many ways a very personal view of the morphologic pattern of the central nervous system. Of course, as one would expect from Dr. KUHLENBECK, a major emphasis is on the universality of the Bauplan. It is this emphasis with extensive illustrations, evidence and cogent arguments wherein lies the strength of the volume. Unfortunately, Dr. KUHLENBECK has liberally sprinkled this otherwise scholarly work with personal views of the scientific establishment, e.g. 'It thus bears the stamp of official approval by the strict anonymous censorship arbitrarily yielded, in order to rule and to protect their respective domains, by influential coopting groups, representing self-appointed power elites within the scientific establishment' (p. 5) or 'This compilation, prepared by "committees" and so-called "panels" with numerous participants belonging to a self-appointed official "elite" sets forth the "ultimate" orthodox views of the "establishment" on the significant problems in the entire domain of biology as conceived by these gentlemen' (pp. 42, 43).

The second chapter of the present volume deals with the peripheral nervous system of vertebrates. The presentation is clear, well organized and well illustrated. The section on electric organs and bioluminescence is especially interesting.

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