BIOCHEMISTRY OF PARASITIC PROTOZOA

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Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 1977

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First published 1977 by
THE MACMILLAN PRESS LTD
London and Basingstoke
Associated companies in Delhi Dublin
Hong Kong Johannesburg Lagos Melbourne
New York Singapore and Tokyo

ISBN 978-0-333-22779-4 ISBN 978-1-349-15809-6 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-15809-6

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Preface

In recent years there have been several introductory texts dealing with different aspects of parasitic protozoa, but none has considered the subject biochemically. This book is an attempt to remedy the situation.

It is a résumé of our present (literature surveyed to December 1976) knowledge of the biochemistry of parasitic protozoa and the mode of action of the drugs useful in the treatment of the diseases they cause. The information is presented in a comparative manner; in each section, the protozoan metabolism is contrasted with that of the mammalian host and the differences between the two, which have been or might in future be exploited for chemotherapeutic purposes, are emphasised. Where the present situation is unclear because of the existence of conflicting information, only the conclusions from a critical appraisal are presented to avoid confusing the reader with unnecessary detail. The text makes it clear where this has been done. In addition to stating the known facts, an attempt is made also to point out the present deficiencies in our knowledge. To keep the length of the book within bounds and to reflect current research interests, only genera with species parasitic in man or domestic animals have been considered. To avoid confusing readers new to the field, no attempt has been made to credit the work described to individual scientists. We hope our colleagues will not be offended by this decision. Suggestions for further reading are included at the end of each chapter, and, where possible, these have been restricted to readily available books and review articles. Advice on how to follow the biochemical protozoology literature is given in appendix D.

The book is written in such a way that little prior knowledge of either biochemistry or protozoology is necessary and it is aimed at the final-year undergraduate, first-year postgraduate level. Thus it should be useful not only to intending protozoologists but also to students in the related fields of biochemistry, biology, medicine, microbiology, parasitology, veterinary medicine and zoology.

We are indebted to the following persons for the provision of photographs: Dr J. Alexander for figure 1.3c, Mr B. Cover for figures 1.3a, 1.3b, 1.3e, 1.3g and 1.3i; Dr V. S. Latter for figure 1.3f; Dr N. McHardy for figure 1.3j; Mr R. Newsam for figure 1.1; Professor G. Riou for figure 6.10; and Professor K. Vickerman for figure 7.5. We thank our colleagues in Canterbury and Glasgow for helpful discussions, Dr P. I. Trigg and Dr J. Williamson for reading parts of the manuscript and Mrs Sue Cover for her excellent typing of it.

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