

CELL DEATH IN BIOLOGY AND PATHOLOGY.

Edited by I. D. Bowen and R. A. Lockshin. Published in association with Methuen, New York, by Chapman and Hall, London and New York. \$65.00. xviii + 493 p.; ill.; author and subject indexes. 1981.

To most investigators the significance of cell death might seem obvious, but the contributors to this volume draw together diverse forms, functions and mechanisms of cell death that clearly define its importance as a biological phenomenon. Cell death is more than a component of dying. It is involved in the early shaping of embryos and fetuses, in metamorphosis, in neural development and in selective processes associated with the development of the immune system. Cell death is defined morphologically, biochemically, and by evidence of altered physiology. The lysosomal effects of cell death are believed to be only initiated by earlier, still mysterious, processes. This mystery surrounding accidental and programmed cell death is the precise objective that led the editors to compile this collection of reviews, authored by an international panel of experts whose interests in cell death bridge many disciplines. The editors hope that their contribution represents a beginning rather than an end to a field dealing with endings. There is much yet to do in advancing knowledge of the unique mechanisms of cell death and this volume should constitute a good resource for scientists interested in joining the field.

A major strength of this book is the evidence of strong editorial control over the content of each chapter: there does not seem to be much overlap. Each author, however, goes through the same argument when introducing his subject, as if trying to overcome the stigma of death. The book is heavily referenced, with some authors referring to over 300 papers. The publisher's use of author's name vs numbered reference is detrimental to the ease of reading, since some sentences include more citations than words.

These technical criticisms aside, this volume should be a useful reference source for biologists, medical scientists and practicing pathologists, all of whom deal with cell death in its myriad forms.

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