past decade. It should also prove instructive and is to be recommended to all who have patients with problems of this type.

A N SMITH

Acute pancreatitis Edited by H Beger and M Buchler. (Pp. 394; illustrated; DM98.) Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1987.

This is another multi-author book reviewing all aspects of acute pancreatitis. It represents the proceedings of a symposium held in Ulm in 1986. Of the 53 separate contributions, 38 are from centres in Germany with a high proportion from Ulm itself; in addition there are six presentations from the USA and two each from Italy, France, Britain, Sweden – and one from Finland. There is a considerable degree of overlap between the various sections and a further criticism must be that some of the papers present unfinished work – for instance, the paper on gabexate mesilate which merely outlines a trial which had not yet started – and in others – as in the contribution on fine needle aspiration of pancreatic exudate – the data provided are insufficient to support the conclusions which have been drawn.

In spite of these criticisms, this is a valuable book for the clinician with a particular interest in the management of this difficult condition. It provides a good review of the German experience and their contributions to our knowledge – and this is particularly useful. There are also excellent reviews from Drs Frey and Warshaw on the strategy for the surgical management of gall stone pancreatitis, and the management of pancreatic abscesses, respectively.

Regrettably, there has not been any major advance in the management of acute pancreatitis over the last 20 or 30 years – at least sufficient to cut into the established mortality for this condition – and this book follows a general trend in that it only chips away at the periphery of the problem, it does not provide any new information on a real breakthrough.

J E TRAPNELL

Liver pathology Edited by R L Peters and J R Craig. (Pp. 390; illustrated; £52.50.) New York: Churchill Livingstone, 1986.

This volume on liver pathology in the *Contemporary issues in surgical pathology* series, is a companion for volumes 2 and 4 which covered the gastrointestinal tract. There are 19 chapters reviewing nearly all the major aspects of liver disease – for example, viral disease, granulomas, biliary disease, drugs and the liver, alcoholic liver disease, tumours, paediatric problems, etc. The editors, Professors Peters and

Craig, have invited a group of international contributors who maintain a high standard throughout. As well as the pathology, each chapter has a brief review of the relevant clinical data, natural history, and ends with a good bibliography. The illustrations are of high quality, vital to a pathology text, but some suffer from being too small. The book is easy to read, however, a neat reference source and a swift up-to-date overview on the major diagnostic problems of hepatic pathology. It complements other liver pathology books currently on the market and is well worth the £52 investment. It is an excellent memorial to Professor Robert Peters.

ASHLEY B PRICE

Cancer of the liver, esophagus, and nasopharynx Edited by G Wagner and You-Hui Zhang. (Pp. 208; illustrated; DM128.) Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1987.

The connection between these three cancers is that their incidence is high in China which implies that there must be extrinsic factors responsible for the increased frequency. In all three cancers the treatment is usually non-curative so prevention is likely to make the most impact on reducing the death rate. To stimulate greater German-Chinese cooperation in the field of oncology the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) held a symposium in Heidelberg in July 1985. Springer-Verlag have, with their usual exemplary editing, produced a book with the preface written in October 1986, published in 1987 and received for review at the end of 1987.

The first presentation is on selenium as a possible chemopreventive agent against cancer. There are 10 short chapters on cancer of the liver. Ten on oesophageal cancer, ranging from epidemiology, to carcinogens of the diterpene ester type and nitrosamines, ending with treatment. China has the highest incidence of oesophageal cancer in the world in males at 250/100 000 compared with England and Wales at 8/100 000. It is still not clear from this or other data whether their good results are due to selection of early cases, a different disease process related to aetiologies other than smoking and alcohol, or actually better treatment. Finally there are eight presentations of nasopharyngeal cancer. The histopathological aspects are well covered emphasising that of the three histological types (i) squamous cell carcinoma; (ii) non-keratinising carcinoma and (iii) undifferentiated carcinoma, the latter is associated with the Epstein-Barr Virus related to Burkitt's lymphoma, generally has a better prognosis because it responds to radiotherapy and has a significantly higher incidence in China than elsewhere.

This book costs DM128 or £43. It is a pity that