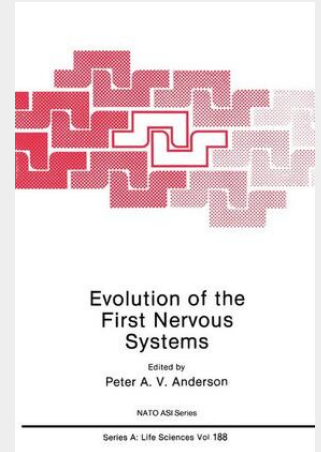


Anderson

## Evolution of the First Nervous Systems

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This book represents the proceedings of a NATO Advanced Research Workshop of the same name, held at St. Andrews University, Scotland in July of 1989. It was the first meeting of its kind and was convened as a forum to review and discuss the phylogeny of some of the cell biological functions that underlie nervous system function, such matters as intercellular communication in diverse, lower organisms, and the electrical excitability of protozoans and cnidarians, to mention but two. The rationale behind such work has not necessarily been to understand how the first nervous systems evolved; many of the animals in question provide excellent opportunities for examining general questions that are unapproachable in the more complex nervous systems of higher animals. Nevertheless, a curiosity about nervous system evolution has invariably pervaded much of the work. The return on this effort has been mixed, depending to a large extent on the usefulness of the preparation under examination. For example, work on cnidarians, to many the keystone phylum in nervous system evolution simply because they possess the "first" nervous systems, lagged behind that carried out on protozoans, because the latter are large, single cells and, thus, far more amenable to microelectrode-based recording techniques. Furthermore, protozoans can be cultured easily and are more amenable to genetic and molecular analyses.



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