

# Contents

|                                               |            |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------|
| <i>Preface</i>                                | page ix    |
| <i>List of symbols</i>                        | xi         |
| <b>1 Introduction to the cell</b>             | <b>1</b>   |
| 1.1 Designs for a cell                        | 4          |
| 1.2 Cell shapes, sizes and structures         | 9          |
| 1.3 Biomaterials: soft strings and sheets     | 15         |
| 1.4 Forces inside and outside the cell        | 19         |
| Summary                                       | 23         |
| <b>2 Soft materials and fluids</b>            | <b>25</b>  |
| 2.1 Fluctuations at the cellular scale        | 25         |
| 2.2 Movement in a viscous fluid               | 30         |
| 2.3 Random walks                              | 37         |
| 2.4 Diffusion                                 | 41         |
| 2.5 Fluctuations and correlations             | 47         |
| Summary                                       | 51         |
| Problems                                      | 54         |
| <b>Part I Rods and ropes</b>                  | <b>61</b>  |
| <b>3 Polymers</b>                             | <b>63</b>  |
| 3.1 Polymers and simple biofilaments          | 63         |
| 3.2 Mathematical description of flexible rods | 68         |
| 3.3 Sizes of polymer chains                   | 75         |
| 3.4 Entropic elasticity                       | 80         |
| 3.5 Buckling                                  | 85         |
| 3.6 Measurements of bending resistance        | 90         |
| Summary                                       | 97         |
| Problems                                      | 98         |
| <b>4 Complex filaments</b>                    | <b>105</b> |
| 4.1 The structure of complex filaments        | 106        |
| 4.2 Torsion, twist and writhe                 | 110        |
| 4.3 Measurements of torsional rigidity        | 118        |
| 4.4 Stretching of folded polymers             | 123        |

|                                             |            |
|---------------------------------------------|------------|
| 4.5 Protein and RNA folding – concepts      | 127        |
| 4.6 Models for polymer folding              | 133        |
| Summary                                     | 142        |
| Problems                                    | 144        |
| <b>5 Two-dimensional networks</b>           | <b>151</b> |
| 5.1 Soft networks in the cell               | 151        |
| 5.2 Elasticity in two dimensions            | 156        |
| 5.3 Isotropic networks                      | 163        |
| 5.4 Networks with low coordination number   | 168        |
| 5.5 Membrane-associated networks            | 173        |
| Summary                                     | 180        |
| Problems                                    | 182        |
| <b>6 Three-dimensional networks</b>         | <b>194</b> |
| 6.1 Networks of biological rods and ropes   | 194        |
| 6.2 Elasticity in three dimensions          | 199        |
| 6.3 Entropic networks                       | 205        |
| 6.4 Network percolation and failure         | 209        |
| 6.5 Semiflexible polymer solutions          | 214        |
| 6.6 Rheology of cytoskeletal components     | 221        |
| Summary                                     | 229        |
| Problems                                    | 230        |
| <b>Part II Membranes</b>                    | <b>241</b> |
| <b>7 Biomembranes</b>                       | <b>243</b> |
| 7.1 Membranes, walls and lamina             | 243        |
| 7.2 Self-assembly of amphiphiles            | 250        |
| 7.3 Bilayer compression resistance          | 257        |
| 7.4 Bilayer bending resistance              | 263        |
| 7.5 Edge energy                             | 268        |
| 7.6 Cell walls and sheaths                  | 274        |
| Summary                                     | 280        |
| Problems                                    | 282        |
| <b>8 Membrane undulations</b>               | <b>292</b> |
| 8.1 Thermal fluctuations in membrane shape  | 292        |
| 8.2 Mathematics of curvature                | 294        |
| 8.3 Membrane bending and persistence length | 299        |
| 8.4 Scaling of polymers and membranes       | 305        |
| 8.5 Measurement of membrane undulations     | 313        |
| Summary                                     | 319        |
| Problems                                    | 321        |

|                                                  |            |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>9 Intermembrane and electrostatic forces</b>  | <b>326</b> |
| 9.1 Interactions between membranes               | 326        |
| 9.2 Charged plate in an electrolyte              | 330        |
| 9.3 van der Waals and electrostatic interactions | 337        |
| 9.4 Entropic repulsion of sheets and polymers    | 346        |
| 9.5 Adhesion                                     | 352        |
| Summary                                          | 361        |
| Problems                                         | 363        |

### **Part III The whole cell 371**

|                                                |            |
|------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>10 The simplest cells</b>                   | <b>373</b> |
| 10.1 Cell shapes                               | 373        |
| 10.2 Energetics of thin shells                 | 375        |
| 10.3 Pure bilayer systems                      | 381        |
| 10.4 Vesicles and red blood cells              | 390        |
| 10.5 Bacteria                                  | 397        |
| Summary                                        | 403        |
| Problems                                       | 405        |
| <b>11 Dynamic filaments</b>                    | <b>412</b> |
| 11.1 Movement in the cell                      | 412        |
| 11.2 Polymerization of actin and tubulin       | 418        |
| 11.3 Molecular motors                          | 428        |
| 11.4 Forces from filaments                     | 435        |
| 11.5 Cell propulsion                           | 439        |
| Summary                                        | 446        |
| Problems                                       | 448        |
| <b>12 Growth and division</b>                  | <b>454</b> |
| 12.1 Overview of the division cycle            | 455        |
| 12.2 Growth of rods and cocci                  | 462        |
| 12.3 Asymmetry and asynchrony in cell division | 469        |
| 12.4 Transcription and replication             | 476        |
| 12.5 Forces arising in cell division           | 485        |
| Summary                                        | 490        |
| Problems                                       | 492        |
| <b>13 Signals and switches</b>                 | <b>496</b> |
| 13.1 Axons and the action potential            | 496        |
| 13.2 Signal propagation in nerves              | 503        |
| 13.3 Rate equations: switches and stability    | 509        |
| 13.4 Molecular basis of regulation             | 513        |

|                                                        |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Summary                                                | 520 |
| Problems                                               | 523 |
| <i>Appendix A Animal cells and tissues</i>             | 525 |
| <i>Appendix B The cell's molecular building blocks</i> | 531 |
| <i>Appendix C Elementary statistical mechanics</i>     | 539 |
| <i>Appendix D Elasticity</i>                           | 546 |
| Glossary                                               | 554 |
| References                                             | 565 |
| Index                                                  | 603 |