

PREFACE

Twenty-five years ago Francois Jacob and Jacques Monod and their colleagues developed the operon concept of coordinate gene expression. Their pioneering work on negative regulation of the lac operon stimulated many imaginative studies of gene expression in laboratories across the world. In consequence, we have a detailed understanding of many of the subtle mechanisms which have evolved to control gene expression. The anniversary of Jacob and Monod's proposals stimulated an examination of the advances made in the time which has elapsed and this symposium stands as a celebration of the pioneering work which has inspired so many other workers.

The chapters in this volume illustrate the rapid advances made in the past 25 years and, in particular, reflect the growing importance of positive regulation as a mechanism of coordinate control. In addition, many of the intricacies of promoter, operator and terminator function are discussed at the molecular level. Descriptions of several novel and intriguing regulatory mechanisms serve to remind us that our understanding is still advancing. Several areas which await detailed investigation, and which promise much for the future, are examined in the final chapters. We await the developments of the next 25 years with great interest.