Preface

Cell biology relies upon an integrated understanding of how molecules within cells interact to carry out and regulate the processes required for life. Obtaining such an integrated understanding imposes great demands on today's investigators. Being an expert in a relatively narrow area is no longer sufficient and researchers need to be able to call upon a battery of techniques in their quest for information. Unfortunately, a lack of familiarity with the experimental possibilities can often discourage diversification. This two-volume set is designed to try to help overcome some of these problems. With the help of experienced researchers, we have been able to gather together a compendium of protocols that covers most of the approaches available for studying cell biology. Inevitably in a project of this size it has not been possible to include every technique but with Volume 1 focusing on the techniques for studying cell structure and Volume 2 concentrating on understanding how the cell functions, we believe that all of the essential protocols are included. Both traditional and more modern techniques are covered and the theory and principles of each are described, together with detailed protocols and advice on trouble shooting. Directions to more specialized developments are also included. Although written by experts, each section is accessible to those new to science. We hope the result inspires readers to experience the challenges and rewards of entering a new area of cell biology for themselves.

We thank all of the authors for agreeing to undertake the time-consuming job of preparing their chapters, and the staff at Oxford University Press for their help at all stages of preparation and production. Finally, we would appreciate receiving any comments on the text and the correction of any errors that might have been missed.

Warwick — J. D.
November 2002 — J. M. L.