

Preface

THE NEW EDITION OF *MOLECULAR BIOLOGY OF THE GENE* appears in this, its 7th edition, on the 60th anniversary of the discovery of the structure of DNA in 1953, an occasion celebrated by our cover design. The double-helical structure, held together by specific pairing between the bases on the two strands, has become one of the iconic images of science. The image of the microscope was perhaps the icon of science in the late 19th century, displaced by the mid 20th century by the graphical representation of the atom with its orbiting electrons. But by the end of the century that image had in turn given way to the double helix.

The field of molecular biology as we understand it today was born out of the discovery of the DNA structure and the agenda for research that that structure immediately provided. The paper by Watson and Crick proposing the double helix ended with a now famous sentence: "It has not escaped our notice that the specific pairing we have postulated immediately suggests a possible copying mechanism for the genetic material." The structure suggested how DNA could replicate, opening the way to investigate, in molecular terms, how genes are passed down through generations. It was also immediately apparent that the order of bases along a DNA molecule could represent a "genetic code," and so an attack on that second great mystery of genetics—how genes encode characteristics—could also be launched.

By the time the first edition of *Molecular Biology of the Gene* was published, just 12 years later in 1965, it had been confirmed that DNA replicated in the manner suggested by the model, the genetic code had all but been cracked, and the mechanism by which genes are expressed, and how that expression is regulated, had been established at least in outline. The field of molecular biology was ripe for its first textbook, defining for the first time the curriculum for undergraduate courses in this topic.

Our understanding of the mechanisms underlying these processes has hugely increased over the last 48 years since that first edition, often driven by technological advances, including DNA sequencing (another anniversary this year is the 10th anniversary of completion of the human genome project). The current edition of *Molecular Biology of the Gene* celebrates both the central intellectual framework of the field put in place in that first edition and the extraordinary mechanistic, biological, and evolutionary understanding that has since been achieved.

New to This Edition

There are a number of major changes to the new edition. As well as wide-ranging updates, these include changes in organization, addition of completely new chapters, and the addition of new topics within existing chapters.

- **New Part 2 on the Structure and Study of Macromolecules.** In this new section, each of the three major macromolecules gets its own chapter. The DNA chapter is retained from the previous edition, but what was previously just a short section at the end of that chapter is now expanded into a whole new chapter on the structure of RNA. The chapter on the structure of proteins is completely new and was written for this edition by Stephen Harrison (Harvard University).

- *Techniques chapter moved from the end of the book into Part 2.* This revised and relocated chapter introduces the important techniques that will be referred to throughout the book. In addition to many of the basic techniques of molecular biology, this chapter now includes an updated section on many genomics techniques routinely employed by molecular biologists. Techniques more specialized for particular chapters appear as boxes within those chapters.
- *Completely new chapter on The Origin and Early Evolution of Life.* This chapter shows how the techniques of molecular biology and biochemistry allow us to consider—even reconstruct—how life might have arisen and addresses the prospect of creating life in a test tube (synthetic biology). The chapter also reveals how, even at the very early stages of life, molecular processes were subject to evolution.
- *New material on many aspects of gene regulation.* Part 5 of the book is concerned with gene regulation. In this edition we have introduced significant new topics, such as quorum sensing in bacterial populations, the bacterial CRISPR defense system and piRNAs in animals, the function of Polycomb, and increased discussion of other so-called “epigenetic” mechanisms of gene regulation in higher eukaryotes. The regulation of “paused polymerase” at many genes during animal development and the critical involvement of nucleosome positioning and remodeling at promoters during gene activation are also new topics to this edition.
- *End-of-chapter questions.* Appearing for the first time in this edition, these include both short answer and data analysis questions. The answers to the even-numbered questions are included as Appendix 2 at the back of the book.
- *New experiments and experimental approaches reflecting recent advances in research.* Integrated within the text are new experimental approaches and applications that broaden the horizons of research. These include, for example, a description of how the genetic code can be experimentally expanded to generate novel proteins, creation of a synthetic genome to identify the minimal features required for life, discussion of new genome-wide analysis of nucleosome positioning, experiments on bimodal switches in bacteria, and how new antibacterial drugs are being designed that target the quorum-sensing pathways required for pathogenesis.

Supplements

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MasteringBiology is an online homework, tutorial, and assessment system that delivers self-paced tutorials that provide individualized coaching, focus on your course objectives, and are responsive to each student's progress. The Mastering system helps instructors maximize class time with customizable, easy-to-assign, and automatically graded assessments that motivate students to learn outside of class and arrive prepared for lecture. MasteringBiology includes the book's end-of-chapter problems, eighteen 3D structure tutorials, reading quizzes, animations, videos, and a wide variety of activities. The eText is also available through MasteringBiology, providing access to the complete textbook and featuring powerful interactive and customization functions.

Instructor Resource DVD 978-0-321-88342-1/0-321-88342-X

Available free to all adopters, this dual-platform DVD-ROM contains all art and tables from the book in JPEG and PowerPoint in high-resolution (150 dpi) files. The PowerPoint slides include problems formatted for use with Classroom Response Systems. This DVD-ROM also contains an answer key for all of the end-of-chapter Critical Thinking questions included in MasteringBiology.

Transparency Acetates 978-0-321-88341-4/0-321-88341-1

Features approximately 90 four-color illustrations from the text. These transparencies are free to all adopters.

Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Photographs

As in the previous edition, each part opener includes photographs, some newly added to this edition. These pictures, selected from the archives of Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, were all taken at the Lab, the great majority during the Symposia hosted there almost every summer since 1933. Captions identify who is in each picture and when it was taken. Many more examples of these historic photos can be found at the CSHL archives website (<http://archives.cshl.edu/>).

Acknowledgments

Parts of the current edition grew out of an introductory course on molecular biology taught by one of us (RL) at Harvard University, and this author is grateful to Steve Harrison and Jim Wang who contributed to this course in past years. In the case of Steve Harrison, we are additionally indebted to him for writing and illustrating a brand new chapter on protein structure especially for this new edition. No one could be better qualified for such a task, and we are the grateful beneficiaries of—and the book is immeasurably improved by—his contribution.

We are also grateful to Craig Hunter, who earlier wrote the section on the worm for Appendix 1, and to Rob Martienssen, who wrote the section on plants for that same appendix.

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New to this edition are end-of-chapter questions, provided by Mary Ellen Wilttrout, and we thank her for these efforts that have enhanced the new edition. In addition, Mary Ellen helped with revisions to the DNA repair chapter.

We are indebted to Leemor Joshua-Tor, who so beautifully rendered the majority of the structure figures throughout the book. Her skill and patience are much appreciated.

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Our art program was again executed by a team from the Dragonfly Media Group, led by Craig Durant. Denise Weiss and Mike Albano produced a beautiful cover design. We thank Clare Bunce and the CSHL Archive for providing the photos for the part openers and for much help tracking them down.

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And once again, we thank our families for putting up with this book for a third time!

JAMES D. WATSON
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¹Per Kraulis granted permission to use MolScript (Kraulis P.J. 1991. MOLSCRIPT: A program to produce both detailed and schematic plots of protein structures. *J. Appl. Cryst.* 24: 946–950). Robert Esnouf gave permission to use BobScript (Esnouf R.M. 1997. *J. Mol. Graph.* 15: 132–134). In addition, Ethan Merritt gave us use of Raster3D (Merritt E.A. and Bacon D.J. 1997. Raster3D: Photorealistic molecular graphics. *Methods Enzymol.* 277: 505–524), and Barry Honig granted permission to use GRASP (Nicolls A., Sharp K.A., and Honig B. 1991. Protein folding and association: Insights from the interfacial and thermodynamic properties of hydrocarbons. *Proteins* 11: 281–296). Warren DeLano agreed to the use of PyMOL (DeLano W.L. 2002. *The PyMOL Molecular Graphics System*. DeLano Scientific, Palo Alto, California).