

Preface

A workshop on Microbiology and Biogeochemistry of Halophilic Microorganisms was held from June 22 to 26, 1997 in Jerusalem, Israel. The organizing committee consisted of Aharon Oren (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Moshe Mevarech (Tel Aviv University) and Aaron Kaplan (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem).

The meeting brought together close to 70 scientists involved in halophilic microbiology. The lectures and posters presented an up-to-date picture of all aspects of halophile science: taxonomy, ecology, biogeochemistry, biochemistry, physiology, molecular biology and genetics. Five years had passed since the previous international meeting entirely devoted to halophilic microorganisms (the ASM conference on Biology of Halophilic Bacteria: Research Priorities and Biotechnological Potential for the 1990s, Williamsburg, VA, USA in 1992). Thus, the Jerusalem workshop presented a unique opportunity to obtain an updated overview of our present understanding of microbial life at high salt concentrations. This volume is based on lectures presented at the workshop in Jerusalem, and offers a comprehensive picture of the state of research on halophilic Archaea, Bacteria, and Eukarya, and the place of these intriguing microorganisms in nature.

Dr. Oren is recipient of the Moshe Shilo prize of the Israel Academy for Microbiology (1993). He is an editor of *ASM Microbiology Letters* and a member of the editorial board of the *International Journal of Salt Lake Research*. He serves as secretary of the International Committee of Systematic Bacteriology subcommittee on the taxonomy of Halobacteriaceae and is a member of an subcommittee on the taxonomy of photosynthetic prokaryotes. In addition, he is a member of the International Committee of the International Symposium on Environmental Biogeochemistry. He has participated in the organization of international symposia and workshops on halophilic microorganisms in Jerusalem (1986) and Williamsburg, VA (1992), and was chairman of the organizing committee of the Workshop on Microbiology and Biogeochemistry of Hyper saline Environments, Jerusalem (1997).

Dr. Oren has published approximately 177 research articles and other publications, including microbiology textbooks in Hebrew for high-school and university students, and a number of review articles on halophilic microorganisms. Since 1993, Dr. Oren has been director of the Moshe Shilo Ministry Center for Marine Biogeochemistry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and in 1995 he was elected chairman of the Division of Microbial and Molecular Ecology of the Institute of Life Sciences, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.