

Preface to the series

The series Handbooks in Practical Animal Cell Biology was born out of a wish to provide scientists turning to cell biology, to answer specific biological questions, the same scope as those turning to molecular biology as a tool. Look on any molecular cell biology laboratory's bookshelf and you will find one or more multivolume works that provide excellent recipe books for molecular techniques. Practical cell biology normally has a much lower profile, usually with a few more theoretical books on the cell types being studied in that laboratory.

The aim of this series, then, is to provide a multivolume, recipe-book-style approach to cell biology. Individuals may wish to acquire one or more volumes for personal use. Laboratories are likely to find the whole series a valuable addition to the 'in house' technique base.

There is no doubt that a competent molecular cell biologist will need 'green fingers' and patience to succeed in the culture of many primary cell types. However, with our increasing knowledge of the molecular explanation for many complex biological processes, the need to study differentiated cell lineages *in vitro* becomes ever more fundamental to many research programmes. Many of the more tedious elements in cell biology have become less onerous due to the commercial availability of most reagents. Further, the element of 'witchcraft' involved in success in culturing particular primary cells has diminished as more individuals are successful. The chapters in each volume of the series are written by experts in the culture of each cell type. The specific aim of the series is to share that technical expertise with others. We, the editors and authors, wish you every success in achieving this.

ANN HARRIS

Oxford, July 1995, March 1997, October 1997

Preface

Culture of marrow stromal cells cannot be covered comprehensively in a single small book. Our selection of subject matter for the different chapters was biased towards the cell lines of the marrow stromal system, which are more directly concerned with osteogenic tissues. Because of space, all authors were limited in the number of references allowed. Often a relevant review or recent paper which provides access to the previous literature has been cited as a best compromise. We apologise to those whose papers have not been quoted directly and we recognise and fully appreciate the importance of their work.

This book is dedicated to Alexander Friedenstein (1924–97), of the Gamaleya Institute, Moscow, who pioneered the subject of marrow stromal cell biology and made unrivalled contributions over many decades.

The Editors