

## Preface

Time flies.... Life, including research, is becoming ever faster. Papers are published online long before they appear in print. So, why such an “old-fashioned” book? Ralph Steinman and Jacques Banchereau gave a good answer to this concern in the “predecessor book” to this volume: the first edition of the Dendritic Cell book edited by Michael Lotze and Angus Thomson in 1999 [1]. Books may serve as a comprehensive historical record of the state-of-the-art at a given time. Even books published as long ago as 1991, such as Gerold Schuler’s volume on Langerhans Cells [2], still provide a valuable source of knowledge, not only for novices to the field. For these reasons we felt that our attempt to assemble yet another such book was justified and would provide a useful service to the scientific community.

Five years have elapsed since the second edition of above-mentioned dendritic cell book. Dendritic cell research has proceeded tremendously during this period, and has increasingly been linked with clinical research. Clearly, the time is ripe to have another such reference volume on our shelves and desks to browse through, search, find and sometimes perhaps even remember. We have encouraged the contributors to also look back in time and to try and put recent data into a wider perspective.

Most of the relevant issues in dendritic cell biology have been covered in this book. Of course, nothing is perfect, and some interesting and important areas have not been discussed. To obtain a critical synopsis of the scope of this volume we recommend the reader to enjoy Ralph Steinman’s introductory chapter as an “apéritif”.

We thank all contributors to this book for their great efforts and for their time. All of us have multiple commitments, and “besides this”, many of us have children who’d often like to do something else than just watch their mothers or fathers writing papers.... Therefore, we appreciate these efforts even more, and we express our thanks to all those who encouraged us to undertake this endeavour. We also thank our editorial partner, Dr. Andreas Sendtko from Wiley-VCH and Brigitte Wölfel from Erlangen, who managed the transformation of a pile of individual manuscripts into a nice book smoothly and efficiently.

Finally, we are indebted to our teachers and mentors, above all Ralph Steinman and Gerold Schuler, who made it possible that we are now in the position to edit such a book.

Enjoy the book, and enjoy dendritic cell research!

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### References

- 1 Lotze, M.T. and Thomson, A.W. (Eds.), *Dendritic Cells: Biology and Clinical Applications*. Academic Press, San Diego, London, 1999 (1st edn) and 2001 (2nd edn).
- 2 Schuler, G. (Ed.), *Epidermal Langerhans Cells*. CRC Press, Inc., Boca Raton, Florida, 1991.