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HANDBOOK OF PHYCOLOGICAL METHODS

DEVELOPMENTAL AND CYTOLOGICAL METHODS

EDITED BY
ELISABETH GANTT

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EDITED BY

ELISABETH GANTT

SENIOR RESEARCH BIOLOGIST
RADIATION BIOLOGY LABORATORY,
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

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Contributors

Adamich, Marina, Department of Biological Sciences, University of California, Santa Barbara, California 93106 (Chapter 13)

Adshad, Patricia C., Department of Biology, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada (Chapter 22)

Berger, Sigrid, Rosenhof, D6802 Ladenburg bei Heidelberg, Federal Republic of Germany (Chapter 5)

Duke, Eleanor L., Department of Biological Sciences, The University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, Texas 79968 (Chapter 23)

Fagerberg, Wayne R., Department of Biology, The University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, Texas 76019 (Chapter 32)

Floyd, Gary L., Department of Botany, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio 43210 (Chapter 23)

Gantt, Elisabeth, Radiation Biology Laboratory, Smithsonian Institution, Rockville, Maryland 20852 (Chapter 30)

Goff, Lynda J., Center for Coastal Marine Studies, University of California, Santa Cruz, California 95064 (Chapter 22)

Gordon-Mills, Elizabeth, Department of Botany, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, South Australia 5001, Australia (Chapter 27)

Green, Paul B., Department of Biological Sciences, Stanford University, Stanford, California 94305 (Chapter 21)

Haupt, Wolfgang, University of Erlangen-Nürnberg, D-8520 Erlangen, Federal Republic of Germany (Chapter 16)

Haury, John F., Biological Laboratories, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02137 (Chapter 18)

Hemmingsen, Barbara B., Department of Microbiology, San Diego State University, San Diego, California 92182 (Chapter 13)

Hill, Gerry J. C., Department of Biology, Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota 55057 (Chapter 3)

Kataoka, Hironao, Institute for Agricultural Research, Tohoku University, Sendai 980, Japan (Chapter 17)

Kemp, C. Lindley, Department of Biological Sciences, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, Canada V5A 1S6 (Chapter 25)

Kersey, Yolande, Department of Biological Sciences, Stanford University, Stanford, California 94305 (Chapter 14)

Kiermayer, Oswald, Botanical Institute, University of Salzburg, Salzburg, Austria (Chapter 1)

- Lyman, Harvard, Biology Department, State University of New York at Stony Brook, Stony Brook, New York 11790 (Chapter 11)
- McCandless, Esther L., Department of Biology, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada (Chapter 27)
- McCully, Margaret E., Department of Biology, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada (Chapter 22)
- Moestrup, Øjvind, Institut for Sporeplanter, Ø. Farimagsgade 2D, 1353 Copenhagen K., Denmark (Chapter 31)
- Nair, K. K., Department of Biological Sciences, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, Canada V5A 1S6 (Chapter 25)
- Neushul, Michael, Department of Biological Sciences and Marine Science Institute, University of California, Santa Barbara, California 93017 (Chapter 7)
- Pickett-Heaps, Jeremy D., Department of Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado 80309 (Chapter 29)
- Polanshek, Alan R., Department of Biological Sciences, San Jose State University, San Jose, California 95192 (Chapter 8)
- Quatrano, Ralph S., Department of Botany and Plant Pathology, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon 97331 (Chapter 6)
- Reimann, Bernhard E. F., Department of Biology, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003 (Chapter 23)
- Sanbonsuga, Yoshiaki, Department of Biological Sciences and Marine Science Institute, University of California, Santa Barbara, California 93017 (Chapter 7)
- Schmitter, Ruth E., Biology Department, University of Massachusetts at Boston, Boston, Massachusetts 02125 (Chapter 26)
- Schweiger, Hans-Georg, Rosenhof, D6802 Ladenburg bei Heidelberg, Federal Republic of Germany (Chapter 5)
- Snell, William J., Department of Biology and the McCollum-Pratt Institute, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland 21218 (Chapter 4)
- Stachelin, L. Andrew, Department of Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado 80309 (Chapter 28)
- Stevens, Catherine L. R., Department of Microbiology and Cell Biology, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania 16802 (Chapter 10)
- Stevens, S. Edward Jr., Department of Microbiology and Cell Biology, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania 16802 (Chapter 10)
- Sweeney, Beatrice M., Department of Biological Sciences, University of California, Santa Barbara, California 93106 (Chapter 19)
- Tazawa, Masashi, Department of Botany, Faculty of Science, University of Tokyo, Hongo, Tokyo 113, Japan (Chapter 15)
- Thomsen, Helge A., Institut for Sporeplanter, Ø. Farimagsgade 2D, 1353 Copenhagen K., Denmark (Chapter 31)
- Trainor, Francis R., BSG, Botany Section, University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut 06268 (Chapter 2)

Traverse, Karen, Biology Department, State University of New York at Stony Brook, Stony Brook, New York 11790 (Chapter 11)

Trelease, Richard N., Department of Botany and Microbiology, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona 85281 (Chapter 24)

Tuttle, Robert C., Department of Biology, University of California at San Diego, La Jolla, California 92093 (Chapter 12)

Vreeland, Valerie, Department of Botany, University of California, Berkeley, California 94720 (Chapter 27)

Waaland, J. Robert, Department of Botany, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington 98195 (Chapter 20)

Waaland, Susan D., Department of Botany, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington 98195 (Chapter 9)

West, John A., Department of Botany, University of California, Berkeley, California 94720 (Chapter 8)

Editor's preface

This handbook on *Developmental and Cytological Methods* is the third of a series sponsored by the Phycological Society of America. It follows the original intention of the first P.S.A. editorial committee constituted in 1967. The first volume, edited by Janet R. Stein, set the standards and general format for the subsequent volumes. It is hoped that this volume has not deviated too far from the high standard set by Professor Stein. Her advice and guidance in the preparation of this volume are greatly valued and appreciated. This volume, along with the first by Stein and the second by Hellebust and Craigie are complementary volumes, ranging from methods for culturing algae, techniques for studying their subcellular components, to new techniques for exploring their development and structure as whole cells.

Contributions were requested from a number of investigators of algal systems. Many others were considered, but it was not possible to ask for their contributions, because almost everyone who was asked agreed cheerfully and some limit had to be imposed on the length of the volume. The interest of the members of the Phycological Society of America and the offers of many to help have been particularly gratifying.

Production of a multi-author effort such as this, with its 32 chapters and 46 contributors, is subject to certain causes of delay, a major one being the editor's optimism and unfamiliarity with the process of publication. I am extremely grateful for the cooperation of the contributors and for the quality of the chapters that they have produced. It is after all their volume; my job as editor was chiefly to strive for as much uniformity and clarity as possible.

My experience with the editorial committee completely belies the old adage about the ineffectiveness of a committee. The advice of the committee members was invaluable. Their suggestions of topics and contributors broadened the coverage of the volume considerably, and they generously shared in the review of the submitted manuscripts.

Grateful acknowledgment is made of the help of the many phycologists who reviewed the various chapters, and my thanks go to Claudia A. Lipschultz, Karen Applestein, and Joan HajShafi of the Smithsonian-

ian Institution for their daily involvement and cheerful help in preparing the manuscripts for publication.

Elisabeth Gantt

*Radiation Biology Laboratory
Smithsonian Institution
Rockville*

Editorial Committee

Elisabeth Gantt, Smithsonian Institution, 12441 Parklawn Drive,
Rockville, MD 20852

Paul B. Green, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305

Janet R. Stein, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. Canada

Beatrice M. Sweeney, University of California, Santa Barbara, CA
93106

J. Robert Waaland, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195

Patricia L. Walne, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN 37916

Contents

Contributors *page* viii Editor ~~preface~~ *page* xi

Introduction *page* 1

I EXPERIMENTAL ALGAL SYSTEMS AND TECHNIQUES

- 1 Control of morphogenesis in *Micrasterias* 5
Oswald Kiermayer
- 2 Control of development in *Scenedesmus* 15
Francis R. Trainor
- 3 Mating induction in *Oedogonium* 25
Gerry J. C. Hill
- 4 Gamete induction and flagellar adhesion in
Chlamydomonas reinhardtii 37
William J. Snell
- 5 *Acetabularia*: techniques for study of
nucleo-cytoplasmic interrelationships 47
Sigrid Berger and Hans-Georg Schweiger
- 6 Gamete release, fertilization, and embryogenesis
in the Fucales 59
Ralph S. Quatrano
- 7 Hybridization and genetics of brown algae 69
Yoshiaki Sanbonsuga and Michael Neushul
- 8 Hybridization of marine red algae 77
Alan R. Polanshek and John A. West
- 9 Development in red algae: elongation and cell
fusion 85
Susan D. Waaland
- 10 Production and selection of mutants in blue-green
algae 95
Catherine L. R. Stevens and S. Edward Stevens, Jr.
- 11 *Euglena*: mutations, chloroplast "bleaching," and
differentiation 107
Harvard Lyman and Karen Traverse

12	<i>Crypthecodinium</i> : sexual reproduction and mutagenesis <i>Robert C. Tuttle</i>	143
13	Protoplast and spheroplast production <i>Marina Adamich and Barbara B. Hemmingsen</i>	153
14	Cytoplasts from coenocytic algal cells <i>Yolande Kersey</i>	171
15	Cytoplasmic streaming and membrane phenomena in cells of Characeae <i>Masashi Tazawa</i>	179
16	Microbeam irradiation in <i>Mougeotia</i> <i>Wolfgang Haupt</i>	195
17	Phototropism: determination of an action spectrum in a tip-growing cell <i>Hironao Kataoka</i>	205
18	Chromatic adaptation in <i>Fremyella diplosiphon</i> and morphogenetic changes <i>John F. Haury</i>	219
19	How to detect the presence of a circadian rhythm <i>Beatrice M. Sweeney</i>	231

II LIGHT AND ELECTRON MICROSCOPY: PREPARATIVE METHODS

20	Photomicrography and special microscopic techniques <i>J. Robert Waaland</i>	241
21	Polarized light, interference, and differential interference (Nomarski) optics <i>Paul B. Green</i>	255
22	Preparation of algae for light microscopy <i>Margaret E. McCully, Lynda J. Goff, and Patricia C. Adshead</i>	263
23	Fixation, embedding, sectioning, and staining of algae for electron microscopy <i>Bernhard E. F. Reimann, Eleanor L. Duke, and Gary L. Floyd</i>	285
24	Cytochemical localization <i>Richard N. Trelease</i>	305
25	Quantitative cytochemical measurement of DNA in <i>Eudorina</i> (Chlorophyceae) <i>C. Lindley Kemp and K. K. Nair</i>	319

26	Autoradiography for light and electron microscopy	329
	<i>Ruth E. Schmitter</i>	
27	Immunochemistry: labeled antibodies	341
	<i>Esther L. McCandless, Elizabeth Gordon-Mills, and Valerie Vreeland</i>	
28	Freeze-fracture and freeze-etch techniques	355
	<i>L. Andrew Staehelin</i>	
29	Preparation of algae for scanning electron microscopy	367
	<i>Jeremy D. Pickett-Heaps</i>	
30	Replica production and negative staining	377
	<i>Elisabeth Gantt</i>	
31	Preparation of shadow-cast whole mounts	385
	<i>Øjvind Moestrup and Helge A. Thomsen</i>	
32	Stereology: quantitative electron microscopic analysis	391
	<i>Wayne R. Fagerberg</i>	

III APPENDIXES

<i>Culture collections</i>	403
<i>List of suppliers</i>	405

IV INDEXES

<i>Subject</i>	409
<i>Author</i>	415
<i>Taxonomic</i>	424

Introduction

The general intent of this collection of chapters is to stimulate the investigation of algae and to recommend them as uniquely suitable experimental systems. It is hoped that the volume will aid students of phycology in applying new techniques and will entice experimentalists to explore algal material. It is an introduction to systems and methods from which the investigator can begin.

Chapters are grouped into two general categories. One deals with algae as developmental organisms. The second primarily covers microscopic tools for the study of living cells and the preparation and staining of fixed cells. Generally, the chapters reflect the present state of the art and thus are of necessity variable in content and format. Some will be adaptable for classroom exercises, whereas others require considerable sophistication in application. As introductory chapters they are not intended to be comprehensive. References to more advanced methods are given in most chapters, and a few additional references are included below.

In the chapters, a single species, or a group of species, are used as examples to which the methods have been successfully applied. The species, when appropriate, are identified with a source number of a culture collection listed in the Culture Collections appendix.

Sources of materials and equipment included in the chapters and appendix are for reference only and should not be construed as endorsements. Lists of suppliers are published annually in the United States in *Science* (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1515 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005); in Canada in *Research and Development* (MacLean Hunter, 418 University Ave., Toronto 101, Ontario) and *Laboratory Products News* (Southam Business Publications, Ltd., 1450 Don Mills Rd., Don Mills, Ontario).

General references

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Section I

Experimental algal systems and techniques

1: Control of morphogenesis in *Micrasterias*

OSWALD KIERMAYER

*Botanical Institute,
University of Salzburg, Salzburg, Austria*

CONTENTS

I Objective	<i>page</i> 6
II Test organism	6
A. Cytomorphology	6
B. Cytodifferentiation	6
III Culture methods	8
A. Growth conditions	8
B. Induction of cell division	9
IV Experimental procedures	9
A. Microscopic observation of developmental stages	9
B. Hanging-drop method	10
C. Other variations	12
D. Summary of studies	12
V Acknowledgment	12
VI References	12

I. Objective

Micrasterias, a unicellular green alga, is an ideal choice for experiments in cell biology and development because of its relatively large size, distinctive shape, and the ease with which it can be cultured and experimentally manipulated. Apart from the opportunity it offers to study cytomorphogenesis, the differentiating cell may be used as a test object for detailed examination of such organelle systems as the Golgi complex and the diverse microtubule systems and their relation to cell function and development. Physiological and ultrastructural studies of the different stages in cell development (nuclear division, septum formation, cell wall growth, etc.) are possible because these developmental events occur consecutively in the cell cycle.

II. Test organism

A. Cytomorphology

The genus *Micrasterias* is classified in the family of Desmidiaceae. In the system of Fritsch (1961), Desmidiaceae are considered a suborder—Desmidioidae (placoderm Desmids)—of the Conjugales. Our test object, *Micrasterias denticulata* Bréb, a medium-sized species, will typically be 180–300 μm long, 165–300 μm wide, and 55–62 μm deep (Krieger 1937). The cell is organized in two semicells with a connecting region known as the isthmus. Both semicells are divided into one polar lobe and several lateral lobes. The nucleus, having a diameter of ca. 30 μm , is located in the isthmus.

B. Cytodifferentiation

1. *Nuclear division.* Algae ready for cell division are easily detected by their unusually dark, green chloroplast that tends to retract from the isthmus region, their expanded nucleus, and the changed appearance of the nucleoli. The changes seen in the nucleus upon division are described in detail by Waris (1950).

2. *Septum growth.* The septum grows centripetally so as to divide the two semicells. Cessation of free movement of crystals between the