Muscle and Motility
Volume 2

Proceedings of the XIXth European Conference in Brussels

Edited by

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Preface

Twenty years have passed since Prof. Hamoir organized the first Meeting of European Muscle scientists in Liège (Belgium); there the European Muscle Club was informally founded as a genuinely friendly and interactive research association. The Club has since grown into the European Conference on Muscle and Motility, which, over the years, has covered all major achievements in research on striated muscle, smooth muscle and cell motility.

This year the XIXth Conference was held in Brussels from September 10 to 13th. The conference programme was mainly devoted to muscle physiology, although cell biology of myogenesis was well represented, with many outstanding contributions to the field of muscle development and regeneration; equally largely present were molecular approaches, as in the sessions on 'New muscle proteins and their possible function' or 'Genetics and structure of myosins and actins'. As usual, under the light hand of Marcus Schaub, the background of the Local Organizer appeared, without overwhelming the interests of other Muscle Club members.

The excellence of the speakers made the conference up to date and interesting even to non-subspecialists, a rare event in these days of femto-specialization. A pinch of perspectives in Applied Myology attracted physicians and surgeons to the conference. It is a really exciting fact that less than ten years after Dirk Pette edited *Muscle Plasticity* (one of the best editorial products of European muscle research), this basic concept is close to being implemented as essential in biochemical devices, inspiring major breakthroughs in the clinical management of heart diseases, just as successful as the cardiac pacemaker. The rapid development of clinical applications and the accumulation of new results in experimental research were reasons for inviting outstanding specialists in basic research in this field and in that of cellular therapies of muscle dystrophies.

The success of the conference was guaranteed by the contribution of all participants. Thanks are due to all who came to Brussels and contributed to such a friendly and constructive atmosphere.

The XVIIth Conference held in Padova in 1988 also met with great success and the book published then by U. Cararro was named '*Sarcomeric and Non-sarcomeric Muscles: Basic and Applied Research Prospects for the 90s*' (Unipress, Padova). The success of this book prompted us to propose to our colleagues a successor, which, accordingly, has been referred to as 'Volume 2'. Some of the papers presented at the conference and some additional relevant material is published in these Proceedings. This was made possible by funds granted to cover the publishing expenses of the papers presented by workers from Eastern Europe. We thank here the Belgian Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique and Unipress Padova. It has been the aim of the editors to avoid long delays and to publish the proceedings within six months of the conference. All authors, who handed in manuscripts in time and made the plan feasible, are warmly acknowledged. We are most indebted to all the contributors who represent those in the front line of muscle research in both the most traditional and the very young but exciting new fields. The papers have been reviewed by several of our colleagues during and after the Conference. We want to pay special homage to our colleague, Dr Anne Godfraind-De Becker who checked all the manuscripts and made many important suggestions and improvements. However good the help of these colleagues, the final acceptance and editing of the papers published in this book remain our responsibility.

Dr A. Berquin, Mrs G. Beckers-Bleukx and all the collaborators of the Local Organizer are to be acknowledged by all participants for the valuable help they gave in organizing the XIXth European Conference on Muscle and Motility, which provided the foundation for compiling this book. Thanks are due for her very efficient secretarial assistance to Mrs A. Mollet.

It is our hope that this book will summarize and further stimulate research in free, basic biological science and in object-oriented, applied medical knowledge, so that both of them ultimately will bring benefit to many of the patients with disorders of sarcomeric and non-sarcomeric muscles.

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Abbreviations: MHC, myosin heavy chain; MLC, myosin light chain