

Contents

Back to Basics: Structure, Function, Evolution and Application of Homing Endonucleases and Inteins	1
MARLENE BELFORT	

1	Introduction: Back to Basics	1
2	What Is a Homing Endonuclease?	2
3	What Is an Intein?	4
4	Inteins and Homing Endonucleases as Molecular Mosaics .	4
5	Applications: "Turning Junk into Gold"	6
5.1	Site-Specific Group I Intron and Intein Endonucleases . . .	6
5.2	Gene Targeting by a Group II Intron RNP Complex.	6
5.3	"Inteins ... Nature's Gift to the Protein Chemist"	8
6	The Message	9
	References	10

Homing Endonucleases and the Yeast Mitochondrial ω Locus – A Historical Perspective	11
BERNARD DUJON	

1	The First Years of Yeast Mitochondrial Genetics	11
2	Genetic and Molecular Characterization of the ω Locus . .	13
3	The Problems of Mitochondrial Intronic Reading Frames and Their Products.	17
4	Group I and Group II Introns, and RNA Splicing	18
5	First Clues to the Function of the Translation Product of the ω Intronic Reading Frame . . .	19
6	Expressing the ω Intron-Encoded Protein in a Heterologous System	21
7	The Unusual Enzymatic Properties of the Group I Intron-Encoded Homing Endonuclease I-SceI . . .	22

8	The First Additional Homing Endonucleases Discovered after I-SceI	23
9	Use of the I-SceI Endonuclease in Heterologous Systems	24
10	Epilogue	26
	References	26

The LAGLIDADG Homing Endonuclease Family 33

BRETT CHEVALIER, RAYMOND J. MONNAT, JR., BARRY L. STODDARD

1	Introduction	33
2	Structures of LAGLIDADG Homing Endonucleases.	35
3	Mechanisms of DNA Target Site Recognition and Specificity	38
4	Mechanism of DNA Cleavage.	41
	References	45

HNH Endonucleases 49

ANTHONY H. KEEBLE, MARÍA J. MATÉ, COLIN KLEANTHOUS

1	Introduction	49
2	The HNH Family – A Tree of Three Branches	50
2.1	The HNH Consensus Sequence.	50
2.2	The Cysteine-Containing HNH Motif (cysHNH)	51
2.3	The HNN Variant.	52
2.4	The HNH Motif Is Part of the Wider $\beta\beta\alpha$ -Me Superfamily of Endonucleases	52
3	Enzymology of HNH/ $\beta\beta\alpha$ -Me Motif Endonucleases	54
3.1	The HNH/ $\beta\beta\alpha$ -Me Motif Is Functionally Adaptable.	54
3.2	Biochemical Properties	56
3.3	HNH/ $\beta\beta\alpha$ -Me Enzymes Require Single Divalent Cations for Activity	57
4	Structural Analysis of HNH Endonuclease Mediated dsDNA Cleavage.	58
4.1	Relaxation of Substrate Strain is Conserved in the Cleavage Mechanisms of HNH/ $\beta\beta\alpha$ -Me Enzymes	58
4.2	Metal Ion Coordination in the DNA-Bound Complex.	59
4.3	Mechanism of Mg^{2+} -Dependent Cleavage by HNH Endonucleases and Why Zn^{2+} Does Not Support Catalytic Activity.	60

5	Conclusions	62
	References	63

GIY-YIG Homing Endonucleases – Beads on a String. 67

PATRICK VAN ROEY, VICTORIA DERBYSHIRE

1	Introduction	67
2	Occurrence and Functions of GIY-YIG Enzymes	69
3	I-TevI as the Model GIY-YIG Enzyme: Structure and Function	70
3.1	Catalytic Domain.	71
3.2	DNA-Binding Domain.	74
3.3	Flexible Linker and Distance Determination	75
3.4	I-TevI Endonuclease Is Bifunctional, Also Serving As a Transcriptional Autorepressor	77
4	DNA-Binding Domain Diversity and Conserved Modules	79
	References	81

His-Cys Box Homing Endonucleases 85

ERIC A. GALBURT, MELISSA S. JURICA

1	The His-Cys Box Family of Homing Endonucleases.	86
2	Expression of His-Cys Box Homing Endonucleases from Nuclear rDNA Transcripts	89
3	Structure, DNA Binding, and Catalytic Mechanism	91
3.1	Structure of a His-Cys Box Endonuclease: I-PpoI	91
3.2	DNA Binding and Recognition	93
3.3	Catalytic Mechanism	96
3.3.1	Catalytic Metal Coordination.	96
3.3.2	Alignment and Activation of the Hydrolytic Water	97
3.3.3	Conformational Changes and Transition State Stabilization	98
4	HNH and His-Cys Box Homing Endonucleases	99
	References	100