METAL IONS IN LIFE SCIENCES

edited by

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VOLUME 3

The Ubiquitous Roles of Cytochrome P450 Proteins



John Wiley & Sons, Ltd

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Historical Development and Perspectives of the Series

Metal Ions in Life Sciences

It is an old wisdom that metals are indispensable for life. Indeed, several of them, like sodium, potassium, and calcium, are easily discovered in living matter. However, the role of metals and their impact on life remained largely hidden until inorganic chemistry and coordination chemistry experienced a pronounced revival in the 1950s. The experimental and theoretical tools created in this period and their application to biochemical problems led to the development of the field or discipline now known as *Bioinorganic Chemistry, Inorganic Biochemistry*, or more recently also often addressed as *Biological Inorganic Chemistry*.

By 1970 *Bioinorganic Chemistry* was established and further promoted by the book series *Metal Ions in Biological Systems* founded in 1973 (edited by H.S., who was soon joined by A.S.) and published by Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York, for more than 30 years. After this company ceased to be a family endeavor and its acquisition by another company, we decided, after having edited 44 volumes of the *MIBS* series (the last two together with R.K.O.S.) to launch a new and broader minded series to cover today's needs in the *Life Sciences*. Therefore, the Sigels' new series is entitled

Metal Ions in Life Sciences

and we are happy to join forces in this new endeavor with a most experienced Publisher in the *Sciences*, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, Chichester, UK.

The development of *Biological Inorganic Chemistry* during the past 40 years was and still is driven by several factors; among these are (i) the attempts to reveal the interplay between metal ions and peptides, nucleotides, hormones or vitamins, etc.; (ii) the efforts regarding the understanding of accumulation, transport, metabolism and toxicity of metal ions; (iii) the development and application of metal-based drugs; (iv) biomimetic syntheses with the aim to understand biological processes as well as to create efficient catalysts; (v) the determination of high-resolution structures of proteins, nucleic acids, and other biomolecules; (vi) the utilization of powerful spectroscopic tools allowing studies of structures and dynamics; and (vii), more recently, the widespread use of

macromolecular engineering to create new biologically relevant structures at will. All this and more is and will be reflected in the volumes of the series *Metal Ions in Life Sciences*.

The importance of metal ions to the vital functions of living organisms, hence, to their health and well-being, is nowadays well accepted. However, in spite of all the progress made, we are still only at the brink of understanding these processes. Therefore, the series *Metal Ions in Life Sciences* will endeavor to link coordination chemistry and biochemistry in their widest sense. Despite the evident expectation that a great deal of future outstanding discoveries will be made in the interdisciplinary areas of science, there are still 'language' barriers between the historically separate spheres of chemistry, biology, medicine, and physics. Thus, it is one of the aims of this series to catalyze mutual 'understanding'.

It is our hope that *Metal Ions in Life Sciences* proves a stimulus for new activities in the fascinating 'field' of *Biological Inorganic Chemistry*. If so, it will well serve its purpose and be a rewarding result for the efforts spent by the authors.

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October 2005

Preface to Volume 3 The Ubiquitous Roles of Cytochrome P450 Proteins

Cytochrome P450 monooxygenases (P450s) own a dual functionality and are often referred to as 'mixed-function oxidases' because they possess both 'oxygenase' and 'oxidase' reactivities, meaning that they incorporate an oxygen atom from atmospheric dioxygen into a substrate molecule oxidizing it. The electron transfer functionalities of P450s also earned them the label of 'cytochrome'. The signature of all P450s is the heme Soret band at about 450 nm in the absorption spectrum of the Fe(II)-CO complex; this spectroscopic feature is diagnostic of a cysteinate residue bound *trans* to the carbon monoxide ligand.

This volume encompasses the breadth of research efforts focused on P450s from structure to function, including an appreciation of the diversity and complexity of the biotransformations they catalyze. The introductory Chapter 1, setting the scene, explores the many different levels at which these P450 enzymes (and their respective genes) have diverged in the process of evolution to yield the plethora of enzymes that are now termed 'P450 monooxygenases'. This broad and unprecedented reactivity of P450 enzymes which contain a heme iron center (most commonly iron(III)protoporphyrin IX) with a deprotonated cysteine side chain providing the fifth ligand to iron, has challenged the 'biomimetic community'. Indeed, much has been accomplished over the past five decades, e.g., regarding the understanding of the unusual activation of paramagnetic dioxygen by reductive oxygen cleavage, as is evident from Chapter 2 which provides an in-depth overview of structural and functional mimics of P450s.

The structures of P450 proteins and their molecular phylogeny are detailed in Chapter 3, together with the P450 nomenclature and classification. It is made clear in this account that the P450 protein fold is unique and highly conserved independent of the organism; astonishingly, the same fold is also used by some enzymes that catalyze non-P450 redox transformations. It is worthwhile to note that some P450s function at extremes of pH and heat, as was recently discovered with archaeans. The diversity of P450s is also reflected in aquatic species as outlined in Chapter 4 where expecially P450 activities in invertebrates are in the focus.

Chapter 5 examines the ability of electrochemical techniques to unravel fundamental aspects of the electron transfer process of P450 enzymes. This process is central to P450 catalysis and thus, in Chapter 6 extensive studies are summarized which have shown that interprotein electron transfer is facilitated by proper positioning, e.g., of the flavin mononucleotide- and heme-containing domains. Clearly, generation of a truly catalytic system that utilizes non-native redox cofactors in place of the reductase proteins is a 'holy grail' of P450 research.

The next four chapters center on mechanistic considerations. At first leakage reactions are considered which occur during the P450 catalytic cycle, followed by detailed evaluations of the structural basis for substrate recognition and catalysis, including the architecture of the active site. Roles of the secondary coordination sphere, i.e., at the proximal (thiolate) and the distal side (where activation of dioxygen and substrate binding occurs) are described next, as is the coordination to the heme iron of several small-molecule inhibitors, such as nitrogen monoxide (nitric oxide), carbon monoxide, cyanide, and imidazole.

P450-catalyzed hydroxylations and epoxidations, the biosynthesis of steroid hormones, and the catalyzed carbon–carbon bond cleavage are discussed in Chapters 11–13. The design and engineering of cytochrome P450 systems is detailed in Chapter 14 regarding the oxidation of non-natural substrates. Evidently, potential applications of altered P450s in the environmentally benign synthesis of chemical products and intermediates are expected in this research area.

In the terminating three chapters of *The Ubiquitous Roles of Cytochrome P450 Proteins* first the biotransformation of xenobiotics is comprehensively dealt with, i.e., the 'chemical defense' or response of an organism to foreign chemicals. Thereafter the metabolism of drugs by human P450 systems is described, an area of particular significance for drug development and finally also for daily life in the clinic, as is emphasized by a clinical pharmacist.

> Astrid Sigel Helmut Sigel Roland K. O. Sigel

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Comments and suggestions with regard to contents, topics, and the like for future volumes of the series are welcome.

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Diversities and Similarities in P450 Systems: An Introduction

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1. OXYGENASES: MEDIATORS OF BIOCHEMICAL DIVERSITY

The introduction of oxygen into biochemical processes has had a profound effect on the evolution of life. An appreciation for this traumatic event was presented in a beautiful recent review on the linkages of gene development that occurred at this juncture [1]. Although the first important utilization of atmospheric dioxygen was perhaps through its use as a terminal electron acceptor in metabolic energy conversion, an equally important leap in complexity and diversity was appreciated when, in the mid-1950s, Osamu Hayaishi and Howard Mason discovered the oxygenases [2,3]. This advance changed the simplistic view of how Nature uses atmospheric dioxygen from that of a simple electron acceptor and pointed to the rich metabolic diversity allowed by the incorporation of atmospheric dioxygen into substrate molecules. The discovery, naming and mechanistic understanding of the first 'oxygenase' enzymes have provided wonderful opportunities and scientific impetus to understand the great diversity of these systems in the synthesis and catabolism of organic molecules.

Before describing their various levels of diversity, one must consider the prime biochemical similarity that categorizes nearly all of them within the class of 'oxidases' that use atmospheric dioxygen as a terminal electron acceptor and, hence, yield an oxidized substrate molecule. In technical terms, the 'oxygenases' that exist within this broader oxidase category are classed as 'mono-' or 'di-', depending on whether one or both atoms of atmospheric dioxygen are incorporated into their respective substrates. In their reaction cycles, the classic stoichiometry of monooxygenases represents a sort of 'half-way' point on the pathway for the full four-electron reduction of dioxygen to generate two molecules of water as is typical of the redox counting of cytochrome 'oxidases'. Positioned midstream in this pathway, monooxygenases require only two electrons and two protons to reductively cleave atmospheric dioxygen, producing only a single water molecule in the process while saving the second atom for the incorporation and formal oxidation of the organic substrate molecule. As a result of their dual functionality, cytochrome P450 monooxygenases (P450s) are often referred to as 'mixed-function oxidases' since they possess both 'oxygenase' and 'oxidase' reactivities. The electron transfer functionalities of P450s also earned them the label of 'cytochrome'.