## **Structural biology**

Studies of the shape and architecture of biological macromolecules, including in particular proteins and nucleic acids



Proper functioning of macromolecules (RNA) requires that they adopt the correct spatial structure

Macromolecules are able to perform their functions due to the precise arrangement of chemical groups in their structure



Nanometers



Micrometers



Millimeters



Meters



(a)









#### 20 000 km

5 cm







### 14 podjednostek, ~50000 atomów



# chemical structures of DNA and RNA: similar or different?



forming... what exactly?

## RNA can form canonical A-U & C-G pairs and fold into helical regions divided by loops





## RNA can form non-canonical A-U & C-G pairs



PDB ID 6PQ7

## Canonical and non-canonical pairs and other interactions lead to complex 3D motifs



# RNA molecules can form alternative, different structures

5'-GGCGUUUUCGCCUUCGGGCGAUUUUUUAUCGCU-3'



## RNA molecules can form alternative, different structures



Thoughts on how to think (and talk) about RNA structure Quentin Vicens, Jeffrey S Kieft, Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A, 2022 Apr 26;119(17):e2112677119.

## Functional RNAs have undergone evolutionary selection to form a restricted number of relatively stable structures



Cordero P, Das R Rich RNA structure landscapes revealed by mutate-and-map analysis PLoS Comput Biol 11(11): e1004473.

# Dynamic RNA structures play important roles in biological processes



Ganser LR, Kelly ML, Herschlag D, Al-Hashimi HM The roles of structural dynamics in the cellular functions of RNAs Nature Rev Mol Cell Biol 2019, 20, 474–489 RNA structure is stabilized mainly by stacking interactions

Structured RNA is not static

RNA is often compact

Watson-Crick pairing is important, but not the only one

Non-canonical base pairs play a key role

Simple diagrams based on W-C pairs - treat with care

Thoughts on how to think (and talk) about RNA structure Quentin Vicens, Jeffrey S Kieft, Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A, 2022 Apr 26;119(17):e2112677119.

### Rybozym



### Rybozym





#### Podstawy struktury RNA



RNase P



RNA secondary structure can be predicted relatively accurately by sequence comparison or thermodynamic methods



Chemical methods

Small angle X-ray scattering (SAXS)

Electron microscopy (EM)

Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR).

Crystallography

Computational methods

Specialized methods (e.g., FRET)



#### David Baker, Demis Hassabis and John M Jumper

# Alphafold2



Jumper, J., et al. Highly accurate protein structure prediction with AlphaFold. Nature 596, 583-589 (2021)

# Alphafold2



#### Struktura Model AF2

#### **RNA production:**

Synthesis (up to a few ten nucleotides) *In vitro* transcription Natural sources

#### **Purification under denaturing conditions:**

HPLC Sequential gels

#### **Purification under native conditions:**

Chromatographic methods (gel filtration)

Chemical methods

Small angle X-ray scattering (SAXS)

Electron microscopy (EM)

Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR).

Crystallography

Computational methods

Specialized methods (e.g., FRET)

#### Chemical methods for RNA testing (chemical probing)

#### **Enzymes**

Nuclease S1 available nucleotides in single-stranded regions

Ribonuclease V1 nucleotides in forming stacking or paired interactions

- T1 ribonuclease available (unpaired) guanines, sequencing for guanines (under denaturing conditions)
- U2 ribonuclease Available (unpaired) adenines, sequencing for adenines (under denturating conditions)

#### **Chemical reagents**

Imidazole Single-stranded regions available Lead Single-stranded regions available Ethylnitrosourea ENU Ethylates available phosphates Hydroxyl radicals (reaction of Fe(II)-EDTA with NaOH or synchortron radiation) - cut the main chain of RNA where C1' or C4' ribose is available Dimethylsulfate DMS Methylates available N1 adenine, N3 cytosine, N7 guanine CMCT Modifies available N3 uridine, N1 guanine DEPC Available N7 adenine Kethoxal Available N1 and N2 guanines

## SHAPE



1-methyl-7-nitroisatoic anhydride

Reactivity independent of the type of base, but strongly dependent on the mobility/availability of the nucleotide.

The formation of the reaction product is detected by stopping the DNA primer elongation reaction using reverse transcriptase and comparing with the unmodified control



https://www.nature.com/articles/s41576-022-00546-w



https://www.nature.com/arti cles/s41576-022-00546-w



Chemical methods are used to confirm the correctness of crystallographic structures

They have the advantage of being used in solution under physiological conditions

These methods have been applied to whole cells (mapping the structure of 16S rRNA and RNase P in bacteria (Adilkshmi, NAR, 2006)
#### Nuclear magnetic resonance







# SAXS

## SAXS

Provides low-resolution structural information

Advantages: in solution, simple measurement, measurements possibly from a dozen kDa to a few Mda.



Possible types of analysis:

Comparison of the theoretical SAXS curve with the experimental curve

Calculating the shape of a molecule

Docking the RNA model into shape

Determination of shape ab initio

A given volume is filled with spheres.

Each sphere can be assigned to a molecule or solution.

The initial assignments are random.

The assignments are randomly shifted until a shape corresponding to the experimental curve is obtained.

Conditions can be imposed that ensure the compactness of the molecule



# CRYSTALLOGRAPHY

























## Kryształy dużej podjednostki rybosomu



# Crystals







# Crystallization



Precipitants: salts PEGs organic solvents





















Screen







# Crystallography





## Rozdzielczość: 1,5 Å



Garland Science ©





#### Biomolecular Crystallography: Principles, Practice, and Application to Structural Biology Bernhard Rupp







## **RNA crystallography**

The first structure - tRNA (1974)

After 2000 - ribosomes, group I introns, P ribonuclease

A limitation of crystallography is the heterogeneity of RNA conformations, which often makes it impossible to obtain crystals

RNA crystallization difficult - out of about 80000 structures solved, about 1000 RNA alone and 1000 RNA-protein complexes

Dedicated Nucleic Acid Structure Database (ndbserver.rutgers.edu) Allows identification of recurring motifs

# EXAMPLES

## Ribosome

In prokaryotes there are 70S ribosomes

The large subunit (50S) contains 34 proteins and two rRNA molecules (5S rRNA and 23S rRNA),

The small subunit (30S) contains 21 proteins and one rRNA molecule (16S rRNA).



## Ribosome

Bacterial ribosome composed of 30S and 50S subunits

A flexible nanomachine that adopts multiple conformations during the peptide bond synthesis cycle

First reconstructions of ribosome structure based on EM in 1970s, first detailed ones around 1995 (Joachim Frank, Holger Stark)

EM has provided a wealth of information about ribosome complexes with tRNA, mRNA elongation factors, and conformational changes of the ribosome during its cycle

EM structures are now available for, among others, bacterial, yeast, and mammalian ribosomes

The first X-ray-scattering bacterial ribosome crystals were obtained in the late 1980s (Ada Yonath)

In 1991, 50S crystals were presented that scattered up to about 3 Å.

In 2000, the first structure of a large subunit from *H. marismortui* was published (T. Steitz)

In 2001, the structure of the entire ribosome from *T. thermophilus* (H. Noller)

Currently available multiple complex structures with tRNAs, accessory factors and antibiotics

Nobel Prize 2009 - Steitz, Yonath, Ramakrishnan

2010 - Structures of eukaryotic ribosomes

2014 - Structures of mitochondrial ribosomes





Atomic structure of the 30S Subunit from <u>Thermus thermophilus</u>. Proteins are shown in blue and the single RNA strand in orange.It is found by MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge, England.

Atomic structure of the 50S Subunit from *Haloarcula marismortui*. Proteins are shown in blue and the two RNA strands in orange and yellow.<sup>[13]</sup> The small patch of green in the center of the subunit is the active site.

# THE RACE TO DECIPHER THE SECRETS OF THE REBOSONE **GENE** MACHINE

## RAMAKRISHNAN

WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE IN CHEMISTRY

Remakrishmen's writing is so honesil, tecid, and engaging that I could not put this book down until Thid read to the very end." —SIDDHARTHA MUKHERIBE

# Electron microscopy

EM's main strength is its ability to visualize large, mobile complexes - there is no upper size limit

Analysis of mobile complexes is possible - classifying different conformations of molecules

For cryo-EM, resolutions of up to 1.0 Å are achieved

EM has proven to be a very useful tool for studying ribosomes, especially their movements in the peptide bond synthesis cycle

Hybrid methods - a combination of low-resolution EM and highresolution crystallographic structures - can be particularly useful

**EM revolution since 2012**
### **2017 Nobel Prize in Chemistry**



**Richard Henderson** 

Joachim Frank

Jacques Dubochet









Transmission Electron Microscope

TEM microscope at 300 kV – corresponding wavelength 0.2 Å

#### EM lenses are poor

### TEM vs SEM

Pollen grain under SEM and TEM



Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) vs Transmission Electron Microscope (TEM)

SEM (Scanning Electron Microscope):
Based on scattered electrons
surface and composition
3D shape
Lower resolution

TEM (Transmission Electron Microscope): •Based on transmitted electrons

- .Internal structure/composition
- .2D projection
- .Higher resolution

### Electrons vs matter

X-rays electron backscattered Coulombic interactions beam EDXS electrons with electrons AND nucleus SEM: secondary electrons secondary Auger electrons electrons TEM: electrons scattered: – elastically  $\rightarrow$  image formation specimen inelastically  $\rightarrow$  radiation damage Sources of contrast in TEM: Amplitude contrast Phase contrast direct inelastically elastically scattered scattered beam electrons electrons

> source: Frank Krumeich; Properties of Electrons, their Interactions with Matter and Applications in Electron Microscopy; www.microscopy.ethz.ch

incident

### Contrast – summary

- Amplitude contrast (=mass/scattering contrast)
  - deflected electrons lead to regions of reduced amplitude
  - applicable to strongly scattering and thick samples
- Phase contrast
  - changes in the wavefront phases
- Detectors can only record amplitudes
  - in a in focus and perfect (aberration free) optical system phase objects are invisible to detectors
  - amplitude contrast can be achieved by introducing interferences in the wavefront
  - $\rightarrow defocus!!!$





Negative stain



Negative stain



Cryo-EM





### **Preparation of cryo-EM specimen**





### **Cryo-EM specimen preparation**



Ania Piasecka

## SPR – principles

- TEM images: projections of particles
- What kind of projections do we need?
  - many projections of identical particles with different, known orientations





### SPR – size limits



source: Cryo-EM17 Lecture 01 Past Present Future; Richard Henderson, MRC Lab, 2017

#### PROBLEMS:

- Low contrast of biological samples
- Radiation damage
- Sample vibrations

### Resolution



### Resolution



### **Direct detectors**



#### **PROBLEMS**:

- Radiation damage
- Sample vibrations



### MOVIES

## Software packages

- CryoSPARC (very fast commercial software)
- cisTEM (Computational Imaging System for Transmission Electron Microscopy)
- SIMPLE (Single-particle IMage Processing Linux Engine)
- RELION REgularized LIkelihood OptimizatioN



Basil J. Greber, et al. The complete structure of the large subunit of the mammalian mitochondrial ribosome Nature 515, 283–286 (13 November 2014)

### SPR – progress



source: Cryo-EM17 Lecture 01 Past Present Future; Richard Henderson, MRC Lab, 2017



Article Published: 21 October 2020

## Atomic-resolution protein structure determination by cryo-EM

Ka Man Yip, Niels Fischer, Elham Paknia, Ashwin Chari & Holger Stark

Nature 587, 157–161 (2020) Cite this article



#### Title: Translation dynamics in human cells visualized at high-resolution reveal

#### cancer drug action

Authors: Huaipeng Xing<sup>1,2</sup>, Reiya Taniguchi<sup>1</sup>, Iskander Khusainov<sup>1</sup>, Jan Philipp Kreysing<sup>1,3</sup>,

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### Translation cycle





Methodology

cryo-focused ion beam (cryo-FIB) milling



35 cells --- 358 tomograms

#### Overall ribosome structure



OInitial ribosomal candidates (1080 particles)





### Peptidyl transferase center (PTC)



- HHT (homoharringtonine) natural compound that binds to the ribosome and inhibits protein synthesis
  - drug for chronic myeloid leukemia
  - the exact mechanism of inhibition of protein synthesis not known

### Translation elongation landscape in human cells



### Translation elongation landscape in human cells



### HHT modifies the translation elongation landscape



HHT treatment results in the accumulation of ribosome hibernation, which may be representative of the mechanism of the drug action in cancer therapy.

### Cryo-EM









### **Protein Data Bank**

www.pdb.org

### PyMOL

http:// pymol.org

http://www.imb-jena.de/www\_bioc/

# RNAs form complex 3D structures that govern their mechanisms of action





Serganov A, Patel DJ Ribozymes, riboswitches and beyond: regulation of gene expression without proteins Nature Rev Genet 2007, 8, 776–790
Niektóre jądra atomowe posiadają moment magnetyczny:

- Ten moment jest równoległy i proporcjonalny do spinu jądra
- Dla spinu ½ możliwe są dwa stany energetyczne równoległy i antyrównoległy do zewnętrznego pola magnetycznego
- Przejścia między tymi dwoma stanami są obserwowane z NMR
- częstotliwość odpowiadająca przechodzeniu między tymi dwoma stanami jest nazwana częstotliwością Larmora

### Przesunięcia chemiczne

Prądy generowane przez chmury elektronowe osłaniają jądro od zewnętrznego pola magnetycznego modyfikując częstotliwości Larmora o milionowe części.

Jedynie <sup>1</sup>H, <sup>13</sup>C, <sup>15</sup>N, oraz <sup>31</sup>P mogą być zastosowane w NMR

	1 −С
11 <b>)</b> €	Ĭ †H



# Stałe sprzężenia

W najprostszym przypadku oczekujemy pojedynczych sygnałów od poszczególnych protonów w cząsteczce.

Proton, który obserwujemy ( $H_A$ ) znajduje się w pobliżu innego protonu ( $H_B$ ). Moment magnetyczny HB jest również ułożony równolegle lub antyrównolegle ułożony względem pola zewnętrznego. Połowa  $H_A$  będzie się znajdować obok  $H_B$  ułożonego równolegle do pola i "odczuwa" nieco większe pole, a połowa obok  $H_B$  ułożonego antyrównolegle i "odczuwa" nieco mniejsze pole.

Stała sprzężenia (coupling constant) mierzona w Hz opisuje oddzielenie składników multipletu

**Pośrednie sprzężenia spinowo-spinowe** w NMR są przenoszone wiązania między atomami (dwa lub trzy; sprzężenia przez cztery wiązania są często poniżej poziomu detekcji).

Obserwowane rezonanse występują w multipletach - singlet, dublet, kwartet itd.



Duże znaczenie dla określania struktury przestrzennej cząsteczek mają też stałe sprzężenia wicynalne (przez trzy wiązania), których pomiar pozwala na określanie kątów dwuściennych w cząsteczkach poprzez tzw. równanie Karplusa Innym mechanizmem sprzężenia pomiędzy momentami magnetycznymi jąder jest **bezpośrednie sprzężenie spinowo-spinowe** lub dipolowe (stała tego sprzężenia jest oznaczana D), która zachodzi przez przestrzeń. W cieczy, ruchy cząsteczki powodują, że sprzężenie bezpośrednie ulega uśrednieniu do zera

Zależne od odległości jąder - ~ 1/r6

Można ja jednak mierzyć jako tzw. resztkowe sprzężenie dipolowe w częściowo zorientowanych cieczach (np. zawierających polimery, wirusy etc.)

Sprzężenia dipolowe prowadzą również do zmian intensywności sygnałów NMR – jądrowy efekt Overhausera, którego wielkość jest odwrotnie proporcjonalna do odległości dwóch protonów (<6 Å)

Nagroda Nobla - Kurt Wutrich 2002

Doświadczenia rozpoczynają się od przygotowania cząsteczek wyznakowanych izotopami <sup>13</sup>C and <sup>15</sup>N.

Widma dwu- i trójwymiarowe są rejestrowane, aby zidentyfikować systemy spinowe i przypisać sygnały do poszczególnych reszt

Informacja strukturalna jest uzyskana przez pomiar tzw. efektu jądrowego Overhausera (NOESY)

Pomiary stałych sprzężeń pozwalają zmierzyć kąty w szkielecie fosforanowym RNA

Zmierzone więzy są następnie użyte w protokole minimalizacji struktury dynamiki molekularnej z simulated annealing Wygenerowana zostaje grupa struktur (ensemble), która spełnia założone więzy



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"Klasyczny" NMR dla RNA – ograniczenie do ok. 15 kDa Ostatnie udoskonalenia NMR dla RNA to zastosowanie resztkowych sprzężeń dipolowych oraz selektywne izotopowe znakowanie RNA – obecny limit to 30 kDa (ok. 100 nukleotydów)

Zaletą NMR jest badanie cząsteczek w roztworze oraz możliwość badania ich dynamiki

Pierwsze struktury RNA rozwiązane NMRem - 1991

W ogromnej większości dostępne struktury RNA NMRowe to krótkie fragmenty (dupleksy itp.)







JEOL CRYO ARM 300

#### FEI TALOS ARCTICA

TITAN KRIOS

# **Time-consuming steps**

- Data transfer :)
- Motion correction
- CTF
- Particle picking
- . Manual inspection
- 2D classification
- 3D classification
- 3D refinement
  - Up to 100 000 CPU hours!

many hours

GPU: few hours

GPU: few hours

GPU: few hours

hours-days

GPU: few hours

GPU: few hours (or more)

GPU: hours/days (or more)

# Challenges

- Improve the contrast phase plates
- Reduce sample movements
- Quality cirterion (equivalent of R<sub>free</sub>)
- Further development of cryo-EM tomography

## pre-mRNA splicing



Will and Lührmann (2011)





Year 2014



Year 2018







Galej W, Nature, 2016









Golas MM, Mol Cell, 2010

Galej W, Nature, 2016

https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/suppl/10.1146/annurev-biochem-091719-064225