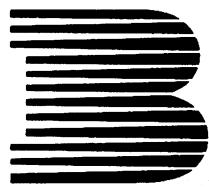


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Transport of Proteins, Ions and Electrons Through Mitochondrial Membranes

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Import of mitochondrial proteins

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Most mitochondrial proteins are encoded in the nuclear genome and are translated on the cytoplasmic ribosomes in the form of precursors (Neupert & Schatz, 1981). These precursors are synthesized mainly on free ribosomes and run off to form a cytosolic pool, from which they are transferred into the mitochondria (Zimmermann *et al.*, 1979; Freitag *et al.*, 1982a; Schatz & Butow, 1983). The pool sizes for individual precursors are characteristically very small and are quite difficult to detect. Recent studies using uncouplers have, however, made possible the demonstration of cytosolic pools for quite a number of mitochondrial proteins (Reid & Schatz, 1982; Schmidt *et al.*, 1983a). In yeast cells, in particular, it has been possible to accumulate substantial quantities of precursor (Reid & Schatz, 1982).

The overall process of import may be dissected into a number of distinct but concatenated steps: (I) mitochondrial recognition of precursors; (II) translocation of the precursor across the mitochondrial membranes; (III) processing of precursor protein; (IV) assembly to multimeric complexes.

Recognition of precursor is mediated by receptors in the mitochondrial outer surface. The recognition is specific in that it discriminates between precursor and mature forms of individual proteins. When mitochondria are treated with trypsin, they no longer bind precursors, an observation which suggests that the recognition factors are surface proteins of the outer membrane. When *Neurospora* mitochondria were incubated in the presence of apocytochrome *c* and holocytochrome *c*, the apo form was selectively imported. The presence of a large excess of the holocytochrome did not decrease the import of the apoprotein (Korb & Neupert, 1978). The binding of the precursor can only be effectively demonstrated when the further progress of the precursor is inhibited. With apocytochrome *c*, addition of deuterohaemin prevents import, but does not hinder binding (Hennig & Neupert, 1981). For the ADP/ATP carrier and subunit 9 of ATPase, depletion of the membrane potential may be used to achieve arrest at the binding stage (Schleyer *et al.*, 1982; Schmidt *et al.*, 1983a). The bound precursor can be exchanged for precursor, but not for the mature protein (Hennig & Neupert, 1981). The precursors bind in a saturable manner, and for apocytochrome *c* Scatchard plots have indicated the presence of high-affinity receptors with a frequency of 90 pmol/mg of mitochondrial protein (Hennig *et*

al., 1983). It is not known, however, whether each individual protein has a specific receptor protein. The electrophoretic profiles of the outer membrane would not support such a view, and further, there is evidence from competition studies that a number of precursors compete for both binding and import. On the other hand, the receptor for apocytochrome *c* is highly specific. A partially purified receptor has been isolated and inserted into liposomes, where it shows the same high affinity and specificity as in the intact mitochondria (H. Koehler, B. Hennig & W. Neupert, unpublished work). When inhibition of import was removed from mitochondria to which precursors had been bound, the bound precursors were directly imported without intermediate displacement (Zwizinski *et al.*, 1983). It appears that the receptors not only sort the precursors but also steer them to the next stage of the import process.

In general the transfer of precursor from the bound state, in which it is accessible to added proteinases, into the mitochondria, where it becomes inaccessible to added proteinase, requires an electrical transmembrane potential (Schleyer *et al.*, 1982). The electrical potential may be generated by the addition of ATP, but it has been convincingly demonstrated that it is the membrane potential and not the ATP, in itself, which is the requirement. The exact role of the membrane potential is unclear. It is not known whether the potential is needed to provide energy for the transport, or if it triggers the transmembrane movement with attendant conformational changes in the incoming proteins. The transport of all precursors does not require a membrane potential; notable exceptions are apocytochrome *c* and the precursor to the outer-membrane protein porin (Freitag *et al.*, 1982b; Zimmermann *et al.*, 1981). Neither of these precursors has to insert into, or cross, the inner membrane, which is the site of the membrane potential; hence they have no need of an energy source.

The transfer of many precursors is accompanied by a proteolytic processing step (Daum *et al.*, 1982). The processing is carried out by a matrix-located metalloenzyme which cleaves the precursor to the mature size. The proteinase can be inhibited by chelators without inhibiting the import process, so that one can differentiate between transport and proteolysis, although these processes are linked *in vivo* (C. Zwizinski & W. Neupert, unpublished work). A matrix-located enzyme which is not synthesized as a higher-molecular-weight precursor has recently been described, an observation which reinforces the separateness of transport and proteolytic processing (Hampsey *et al.*, 1983). This observation also is in accord with the observed behaviour of proteins such as the ADP/ATP carrier, which is not synthesized as a larger precursor, but which requires a mem-

brane potential for transfer and insertion into the inner membrane.

A few precursor proteins are processed in two steps; cytochrome c_1 is such a case (Gasser *et al.*, 1982; Teintze *et al.*, 1982). The first step is by the matrix proteinase. The second, haeme-dependent, cleavage is effected by a proteinase which is apparently independent of a membrane potential, is not inhibited by chelators, and appears to be located at or near the outer face of the inner membrane. The intermediate form can be seen in cells pulse labelled at 8°C. The conversion of the intermediate into mature form can also be followed in mitochondria from cells labelled at 8°C. The proteolytic processing and its requirements for a membrane potential in intact mitochondria can be attributed to the location of the proteinase in the mitochondrial matrix. All polypeptides requiring proteolytic cleavage must therefore traverse the inner membrane, in part at least, and thus require a membrane potential to do so.

The final step in the transport process, i.e. assembly of the imported subunits into functional complexes, and the factors controlling this step have not been extensively studied. There is evidence of an interaction between availability of subunits in mitochondria and those supplied by the cytosolic system (von Rucker & Neupert, 1976; Lustig *et al.*, 1982). On the other hand there is evidence to show the absence of a close coupling between the supply of subunits from cytosol and mitochondria in the assembly of the cytochrome bc_1 complex in *Neurospora* (Weiss & Kolb, 1979). In this context it has been shown that *in vitro* imported ADP/ATP carrier displays the characteristics of the assembled mature complex (M. Schleyer & W. Neupert, unpublished work). Import of subunit 9 of the ATPase results in incorporation of precursor into an immunoprecipitable ATPase complex (Schmidt *et al.*, 1983a). These latter two proteins may provide models to study the assembly process further.

The import mechanism is specific for recognition and import of mitochondrial precursors. When mRNA from *Neurospora crassa* is translated in rabbit reticulocyte lysates, the post-ribosomal supernatant contains a mixture of proteins. Mitochondria will selectively import mitochondrial-specific proteins from this heterogeneous protein mixture. The recognition system is, however, also capable of recognizing precursor proteins from unrelated species, as shown by import studies with subunit 9 of the ATPase. *Neurospora* subunit 9 is imported by yeast mitochondria from a reticulocyte lysate supernatant, programmed with *Neurospora* message, and furthermore is correctly processed by a matrix protease (Schmidt *et al.*, 1983b). In yeast this subunit

is coded in the mitochondrial DNA and is translated on mitochondrial ribosomes (Tzagoloff & Meagher, 1972). A similar situation has been described for mammalian tissues, where mitochondria from tissues which do not produce ornithine transcarbamoylase can nonetheless import and correctly process the precursor (Morita *et al.*, 1982). It appears therefore that the recognition, translocation and proteolytic processing mechanisms are highly conserved during eukaryotic evolution.

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