Contents

Introduction 1

DNA Hydrolysis: Mechanism and Reactivity 3
N.H. Williams

1 Introduction 3
2 The Importance of the Background Reaction 4
3 Mechanism 7
4 Spontaneous Hydrolysis 8
5 C–O Cleavage 9
6 P–O Cleavage 10
7 Base Catalysis 12
8 Acid Catalysis 13
9 Conclusion 14
References 14

Active Site of Ribonuclease A 19
R.T. Raines

1 Introduction 19
2 Mechanism of Catalysis 20
3 Active-Site Residues 21
3.1 Histidine 12 and Histidine 119 21
3.2 Lysine 41 24
3.3 Phenylalanine 120 24
3.4 Aspartatic Acid 121 25
3.5 Glutamine 11 27
4 Catalytic Rate Enhancement 28
5 Envoi 29
References 29

Structural Considerations Concerning Cleavage of RNA 33
R. Kierzek

1 Introduction 33
2 Facts About the Influence of Oligoribonucleotide Structure on Cleavage of Phosphodiester Bonds 34
2.1 How to Cleave Oligoribonucleotides 34
2.2 Cleavage Requires a Single-Stranded Character of the Oligoribonucleotide 34
2.3 Sequence and Position of the Scissile Phosphodiester Bond Within the Oligomer is Important for Cleavage 35
2.4 Oligoribonucleotide Length Affects Cleavage of Diester Bond 36
2.5 The Functional Groups of the Pyrimidine Nucleobases Flanking the Cleaved Phosphodiester Bond Affect Cleavage 36
2.6 The Functional Groups of the Purine Nucleobases Flanking the Cleaved Phosphodiester Bond Influence Cleavage 38
2.7 The C5 Substituents of Uridine Affect the Hydrolysis Rate of the UA Phosphodiester Bond 39
2.8 Chimeric DNA/RNA Oligomers Affect the Cleavage of Phosphodiester Bonds 40
2.9 The Motives of RNA Structure are Affected by Spontaneous Cleavage 41
2.10 The Effects of Polyamines on the Cleavage of Oligoribonucleotides 43
3 Mechanism of Phosphodiester Bond Cleavage 44
4 Conclusions 46
References 46

Cleavage of RNA by Imidazole 49
V.V. Vlassov and A.V. Vlassov

1 Introduction 49
2 Imidazole as the Simplest Mimic of the Ribonuclease Catalytic Structure 50
3 Mechanism of RNA Cleavage by Imidazole 51
4 Imidazole as a Reagent for Probing RNA Structure 54
5 Conclusions 59
References 59

Principles of Nucleic Acid Cleavage by Metal Ions 61
A. Dallas, A.V. Vlassov, and S.A. Kazakov

1 Introduction 61
2 General Mechanisms for the Cleavage of Nucleic Acids . . . 62
3 Basic Properties of Metal Ions in Solution 65
4 Metal Ion Binding to Nucleic Acids 69
5 Transesterification and Hydrolytic Cleavage of Nucleic Acids Catalyzed by Metal Ions 72
5.1 Efficacy of Cleavage of Nucleic Acids by Metal Ions 72
5.2 Possible Mechanism of Metal Ion Catalysis 72
5.3 Nucleic Acid Structure and Specificity of Metal-Catalyzed Cleavage Reactions 75
6 Oxidative Cleavage of Nucleic Acids Induced by Metal Ions . 77
6.2 Cleavage Reactions Promoted by Metal Ions in High Oxidation States 77
6.3 Cleavage Reactions Involving Metal-Induced Oxygen Radicals 78
7 Probing Metal Binding Sites in RNA by Metal-Induced Cleavage 81
References 83

Allosterically Controlled Ribozymes as Artificial Ribonucleases . . . 89
M. Iyo, H. Kawasaki, M. Miyagishi, and K. Taira

1 Introduction 89
2 Maxizymes are Allosterically Controllable Ribozymes . . . 90
2.1 Expression of Ribozymes in Cells 90
2.2 The Design of Allosterically Controllable Maxizymes 91
2.3 Allosteric Control of Ribozyme Activity 94
2.4 Selection of Allosterically Controllable Ribozymes in Vitro . 95
3 Maxizymes 96
3.1 Truncated Hammerhead Ribozymes that Function as Dimers 96
3.2 General Design of an Allosterically Controllable Maxizyme 97
3.3 The Antitumor Effects of an Allosterically Controllable Maxizyme 101
3.4 General Applications of Maxizyme Technology 101
4 Conclusion 104
References 104

Small Ribonuclease Mimics 111
I.L. Kuznetsova and V.N. Sil'nikov

1 Introduction 111
2 RNA-Cleaving Compounds 112
2.1 RNA-Cleaving Compounds Mimicking Ribonucleases A and T1 112
2.2 Mimics of the Active Center of Nuclease S 113
3 Design of Active Centers of Natural Enzymes 113
3.1 Spatial Organization of RNA-Cleaving Groups in Active Centers of RNases and Nucleases S and Sm 114
3.2 RNA-Binding Groups 115
4 Design of Artificial Ribonucleases Mimicking RNase A . . . 115
4.1 Artificial Ribonucleases with Polycyclic RNA-Binding Domains 116
4.2 Polycationic RNA-Binding Groups 117
5 Specificity of RNA Cleavage 121
6 Effects of Buffer on the Cleavage 122
7 Mechanism of RNA Cleavage with the Artificial Ribonucleases ABLkCm and nLm 123
8 Potential Applications of Small Ribonuclease Mimics 125
9 Conclusions 125
References 126

Copper-Containing Nuclease Mimics: Synthetic Models and Biochemical Applications 129
S. Verma, S.G. Srivatsan, and C. Madhavaiah

1 Introduction 129
2 Model Systems 130
3 Mechanistic Pathways 130
4 Copper Complexes with Synthetic Ligands 131
4.1 Hydrolysis of Phosphate Diesters 131
4.2 Cleavage of Nucleic Acids 138
4.3 Copper Complexes of Natural Ligands 143
5 Outlook 146
References 146

RNA-Cleaving Oligonucleotide-Peptide Conjugates 151
N.L. Mironova, D.V. Pyshnyi, and E.M. Ivanova

1 Introduction 151
2 Proteins Displaying Ribonuclease Activity 151
2.1 Natural Ribonuclease 151
2.2 Small Natural Peptides 154
2.3 Synthetic Polypeptides 155
3 Conjugates of RNA-Cleaving Peptides with Constructs Capable of Binding to RNA 156
3.1 Conjugates of Enzymes and Oligonucleotides 156
3.2 Conjugates of Short Peptides and Intercalators 157
3.3 Oligonucleotide-Peptide Conjugates Displaying Ribonuclease Activity 158
3.3.1 Influence of Peptide Structure on the Efficacy of RNA Cleavage 159
3.3.2 Site-Directed RNA Hydrolysis by Peptidyloligonucleotides . 161
3.3.3 Hydrolysis of RNA by the Conjugates of Random Oligonucleotides 163
3.3.4 Influence of Oligonucleotide Sequence on the Specificity of RNA Cleavage 164
3.3.5 Cleavage of Short RNA 167
4 Discussion 168
References 170

Sequence Selective Artificial Ribonucleases Employing Metal Ions as Scissors 173
A. Kuzuya, R. Mizoguchi, and M. Komiyama

1 Introduction 173
1.1 Significance of Artificial Ribonucleases 173
1.2 Molecular Design of Artificial Ribonucleases 174
2 Metal Ion Catalysts for RNA Cleavage 175
2.1 Divalent Metal Ions and Their Complexes 175
2.2 Trivalent Lanthanide Ions and Their Complexes 177
3 Sequence-Selective Artificial Ribonucleases with Covalently Attached Catalysts 178
3.1 Attaching the Catalysts to the End of DNA Oligomers 178
3.1.1 [Lanthanide Complex]/DNA Hybrids 178
3.1.2 [Dinuclear Metal Complex]/DNA Hybrids 179

3.2 Attaching the Catalysts at an Internal Position Within DNA Oligomers 180
4 Noncovalent Systems for Sequence-Selective RNA Scission . 180
4.1 Molecular Design 181
4.2 Site-Selective RNA Scission by Lanthanide Ions 182
4.3 Requirements for the Sequence-Selective RNA Activation . 184
4.4 Site-Selective RNA Scission by Non-Lanthanide Ions 185
4.5 Mechanism of the Site-Selective Scission 185
5 Prospect 186
References 186

Site-Specific Artificial Ribonucleases: Conjugates of Oligonucleotides with Catalytic Groups 189
M.A. Zenkova and N.G. Beloglazova

1 Introduction 189
2 Oligonucleotide Conjugate-Based Artificial Ribonucleases . 190
2.1 Conjugates of Oligonucleotides and Metal Complexes 190
2.2 Conjugates of Oligonucleotides and RNA-Cleaving Molecules 197
2.3 Design of Artificial Ribonucleases for Site-Specific RNA Cleavage 202
2.3.1 Synthetic Approaches 202
2.3.2 Effect of the Catalytic Structure Location in the Conjugate Structure 203
2.3.3 RNA Sequences Optimal for Site-Specific Cleavage 206
2.4 Site-Specific Cleavage of Cellular RNA 206
3 Site-Specific RNA Cleavage by Conjugates of Oligonucleotides with Imidazole-Based Catalytic Groups 207
3.1 Mono- and Bis-Imidazole-Containing Conjugates 207
3.2 Binary Systems of Oligonucleotide Conjugates 209
3.3 Conjugates with Anthracene-Based Linkers 210
3.4 Conjugates with Multiple Imidazole Residues in the Catalytic Domain 212
4 Conclusions 216
References 216

DNA and RNA Cleavage Mediated by Phenanthroline–Cuprous Oligonucleotides: From Properties to Applications 223
J.C. Francois, M. Faria, D. Perrin, and C. Giovannangeli

1 Introduction 223
2 The 1,10-Phenanthroline-Cuprous Complex 224
2.1 Background 224
2.2 Structural Probes for Nucleic Acid-Containing Complexes . 226
3 Phenanthroline Conjugates 228
3.1 Conjugation of Biomolecules to Phenanthroline 228
3.2 Neighbourhood Sensors 230
3.3 Oligonucleotide–Phenanthroline as Site-Specific Ribonuclease 232
3.4 Oligonucleotide–Phenanthroline Targeted to Double-Stranded DNA 233
3.4.1 Artificial Endonucleases for in Vitro Applications 233
3.4.2 Biological Activities of Oligonucleotide–Phenanthroline . . 235
3.4.2.1 Phenanthroline Cleavage Activity Inside Cells 236
3.4.2.2 Modulation of DNA Metabolism Induced by Oligonucleotide–Phenanthroline 236
4 Conclusion 237
References 238

Sequence-Specific Cleavage of Double-Stranded DNA 243
A.S. Boutorine and P.B. Arimondo

1 Introduction 243
2 DNA Cleavage by Natural Enzymes and Their Conjugates . 246
2.1 Restriction Endonucleases 246
2.2 Conjugates of Nucleases with Oligonucleotides 246
2.3 The Achilles Heel Cleavage Method 247
3 Sequence-Specific Cleavage Using Conjugated Chemical Reagents 247
3.1 Direct Cleavage by Sequence-Specific Conjugates of Metal Complexes 247
3.2 Alkylating Reagents Conjugated to Sequence-Specific Molecules 250
4 DNA Photocleavage 251
4.1 Photocleavage by Blue Light-Absorbing Reagents 251
4.2 Long-Distance Electron Transfer in Photocleavage Reactions 253
4.3 Photocleavage by Red Light-Absorbing Reagents 254
5 Recruitment of Intracellular Enzymes for Sequence-Specific DNA Cleavage 255

5.1 RecA Protein 255
5.2 Recruitment of Topoisomerases by Conjugated Topoisomerase Inhibitors 255
6 Application of the Non-Specific Single-Stranded DNA Cleaving Agents for Site-Specific Scission of Double-Stranded DNA 259
7 Conclusions 260
References 261

Bleomycin–Oligonucleotide Conjugates as Site-Specific Nucleases . . 269
P.E. Vorobjev and V.F. Zarytova

1 Introduction 269
2 Structure and Properties of Bleomycins 270
3 Conjugates of Bleomycin with Oligonucleotides: Synthesis and Structure 273
4 Cleavage of Nucleic Acids by Bleomycin–Oligonucleotide Conjugates 275
4.1 Site-Specific Cleavage of Single-Stranded DNA Fragments by Bleomycin–Oligonucleotide Conjugates 275
4.2 Cleavage of RNA by Bleomycin–Oligonucleotide Conjugates 276
4.3 Cleavage of Double-Stranded DNA by Triplex-Forming Bleomycin–oligonucleotide Conjugates 278
4.4 Catalytic Degradation of DNA Target by Oligonucleotide–Bleomycin Conjugate 278
5 Bleomycin–Oligonucleotide Conjugates in Tandem Sets with Effectors as Efficient Nucleases 282
6 Conclusion 284
References 284

Subject Index 289