Czech Section—International Society of Protistologists 36th Annual Meeting
April 34–38 2006
Sedlice u Blatné, Czech Republic

1A
The susceptibility of suckling rabbits to infection with coccidia. M. PAKANDL and L. HLAŠKOVÁ, Biology Centre, Academy of Science of Czech Republic, Institute of Parasitology, Branišovská 31, 37005 České Budějovice, Czech Republic.

Suckling rabbits from six litters were orally inoculated at various ages with oocysts of the precoccidial lines of Eimeria flavelescens and E. intestinalis or with a mixture of these lines with wild strains of E. media and E. magna. The number of oocysts in the caeca served as the criterion of oocyst production. Rabbits younger than 23 days remained uninfected, whereas the number of oocysts in the caeca increased with the age of animals at inoculation. However, the oocyst output was markedly lower in all the animals before weaning compared with rabbits older than 6 weeks. The dependence of oocyst production on the age of inoculated rabbits was similar in all four Coccidian species.

This work was supported by a grant of the Czech Science Foundation (grant no. 524/05/2328) and the Institute of Parasitology (Z60220518).

2A
Cysteine and aspartic peptidases from the gut of the tick Ixodes ricinus. D. SOJKA, J. DVOŘÁK, M. SAJID, Z. FRANTA, O. HAJDUŠEK, C.R. CAFFREY and P. KOPAČEK. Biology Centre, Academy of Science of Czech Republic, Institute of Parasitology and Faculty of Biological Sciences, University of South Bohemia, České Budějovice.

Despite its importance, our understanding of hemoglobin digestion in ticks is still very limited and lags far behind current knowledge of this process in other hematophagous parasites. Screening of gut-specific cDNA library from the hard tick Ixodes ricinus resulted in isolation of a gene coding for an asparaginyl endopeptidase (legumain) designated as IrAE which is to our knowledge the first member of cysteine peptidase family C13 of the CD clan described among arthropods. IrAE is an ortholog of asparaginyl endopeptidase from Schistosoma mansoni, which plays a pivotal role in the hemoglobin digestion by this parasite by trans-activation of other high-performance cysteine and aspartic peptidases (Caffrey et al., Trends Parasitol. 20: 241–8, 2004). In addition, using degenerated primers we have identified other orthologs of schistosomal proteases from a gut cDNA library of I. ricinus, cysteine endopeptidases cathepsin B, L, cysteine exopeptidase cathepsin C and aspartic peptidase cathepsin D. IrAE was expressed in P. pastoris and its enzymatic properties were performed with the use of aza-epoxide inhibitors, fluorescent substrates, and activity-based probes. IrAE seems to be the first peptidase reported to date to be secreted out of the tick digestive cells or is highly enriched on the surface of gut epithelium. Genes for other found peptidases are highly and specifically expressed in adult female guts after feeding on laboratory guinea-pigs. IrAE is potent to activate schistosomal cathepsin B1 in trans and to cleave hemoglobin at pH 4.0. These new findings show similarity in digestive proteolytic systems of blood flukes and ticks. Based on our data, we suggest cysteine and aspartic peptidases to be one of the key molecules of tick gut, having roles in blood digestion, production of eggs, pathogen–vector interactions, and production of antimicrobial peptides derived from host hemoglobin.

This work was supported by Grant Agency of the Czech Republic No. 206/06/0865 and research projects Nos. Z60220518, Z40550506 and MSMT 600765801.

3A
Phlebotomine sand flies in an endemic focus of cutaneous leishmaniasis in Turkey: identification of the vector. M. SVOBODOVÁ, J. VOTYPKA, L. ZIDKOVA, J. HLAVAÆKOVÁ, A. BELEN, B. ALTEN and P. VOLF. Department of Parasitology, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic.

Sand flies (Diptera: Psychodidae) were investigated as possible vectors of cutaneous leishmaniasis (CL) in a focus near Adana, South-East Anatolia, Turkey. CDC light traps were placed in houses and animal shelters in endemic villages; of 551 females dissected and identified 77% were Phlebotomus tobbi, and 15% were P. papatasii. Other species (P. cf neglectus, P. sergenti, P. perfiliewi) each represented less than 1% of sand fly fauna. In males the relative composition of species was similar. Two dissected females of P. tobbi (0.4%) harboured promastigotes in their gut. Typing (ITS1-PCR-RFLP using HaeIII enzyme) revealed that both isolates are Leishmania infantum. Moreover, a strain isolated from a local patient with CL was identical with sand-fly isolates. P. (Larroussious) tobbi is thus considered as a vector of CL in this focus. To our knowledge, this is the first time that L. infantum was isolated in a CL focus from both, P. tobbi and human patient.

4A
A parsimonious hypothesis for the origin of the eukaryotic nucleus. M. VESTEG, J. KRAJCÍVOČ and L. EBRINGER, Institute of Cell Biology, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovakia.

The most common hypothesis for the origin of eukaryotic cell suggests a symbiosis of an α-proteobacterium in an archaeal cell. Another favorite hypothesis proposes endosymbiotic origin of the nucleus from an archaeal symbiont in a bacterium. Other hypotheses suppose a phagophoric origin of eukaryotes. The major problems of such hypotheses are e.g. the substitution of an archaeal membrane by a bacterial one, multiply symbiogenesis, and origin of eukaryotic-specific phagotrophy before the origin of eukaryotes. Our new hypothesis focusing on the origin of the nucleus resolves all these problems and tries to minimize the number of hardly explainable steps leading to the first eukaryote. In our view the host entity involved in eukaryote-creating symbiogenesis was neither an archaeal cell nor a bacterium but rather a different (pre-karyotic) lineage. The pre-karyotic cell possessed an outer and inner membrane of bacterial type (like G− bacteria), while it possessed archaeal-like informational apparatus. An α-proteobacterial-like symbiont invaded the periplasmic space between the two membranes. The host-symbiont coevolution resulted later in irreversible enclosure of the symbiont in the host periplasm and the transformation of the host periplasm to eukaryotic cytoplasm. Under this hypothesis the pre-karyote inner membrane was the ancestor of eukaryotic nuclear membrane, endoplasmic reticulum, and Golgi apparatus. These suggestions seem to be compatible with the theory of membrane heredity. The origin of the pre-karyote could be easily explained by Woese’s arguments about the communal nature of the universal ancestor. In addition, B. delnovibrio represents an example of an extant periplasmic parasite.