

5 Organopollutant Degradation by Wood Decay Basidiomycetes

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I. Introduction

Wood decay fungi are obligate aerobes, deriving nutrients from the biological ‘combustion’ of wood, using molecular oxygen as terminal electron acceptor (Kirk and Farrell 1987; Blanchette 1991). Non-specific extracellular enzymes are generally viewed as key components in lignin depolymerization. The major enzymes implicated in lignin degradation are lignin peroxidase (LiP), manganese peroxidase (MnP), and

laccase. All three can act with low molecular weight mediators to bring about oxidation of lignin and various xenobiotics (Cullen 2002).

Saprotrophic Agaricomycotina, particularly ligninolytic ‘white-rot fungi’ have been extensively studied for their ability to degrade a wide range of organopollutants such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), pharmaceuticals, pentachlorophenol (PCP), pesticides, and explosives. The unique extracellular systems of the white-rot fungi have been repeatedly invoked to explain the extraordinary oxidation potential of these microbes, but the precise mechanisms remain elusive. In addition to secreted enzyme systems, intracellular metabolic processes are responsible for further transformation, degradation, and, often, mineralization of compounds. Cytochrome P450s have been implicated in several instances, and a hallmark of most Agaricomycotina is a large number of P450 encoding genes.

The nature and extent of white-rot genetic diversity have been more fully appreciated in recent years, with the rapid increase in genome sequencing and analysis. Among the white-rot species known to degrade recalcitrant PAHs, sequences of *Phanerochete chrysosporium* (Martinez et al. 2004), *Pleurotus ostreatus* (http://genome.jgi.doe.gov/PleosPC15_2/PleosPC15_2.info.html) (Fig. 5.1), *Ceriporiopsis subvermispora* (Fernandez-Fueyo et al. 2012), *Trametes versicolor*, and *Dichomitus squalens* (Floudas et al. 2012) are now publicly available. This review provides a critical analysis of recent advances on the genetics and physiology of wood decay fungi as they relate to organopollutant degradation, and we place particular emphasis on the model experimental systems *P. chrysosporium* and *P. ostreatus*. This is not

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Fig. 5.1. A fruiting body of *Pleurotus ostreatus*, the oyster mushroom, a commercially important edible white-rot filamentous basidiomycete cultivated on lignocellulosic waste. This is a model fungus for the study

of biochemical and molecular mechanisms involved in biodegradation of lignin and recalcitrant and toxic anthropogenic aromatic compounds. The dikaryon stage is required for the formation of the fruiting bodies

intended to be a comprehensive treatment of the voluminous physiological literature in this area. Interested readers are referred to earlier reviews (Kirk and Farrell 1987; Eriksson et al. 1990; Cullen and Kersten 2004).

II. Biochemistry of Lignin and Organopollutant Degradation

A. Lignin Peroxidase

Lignin peroxidase (LiP) will cleave α -C β bonds of lignin model compounds and partially depolymerize methylated lignin in vitro (Glenn et al. 1983; Tien and Kirk 1983, 1984; Gold et al. 1984). A variety of oxidations, all dependent on H_2O_2 , have been demonstrated (Harvey et al. 1985; Kersten et al. 1985; Shoemaker et al. 1985; Hammel et al. 1986b). In short, LiP oxidizes aromatic substrates by a single electron, and the resulting aryl cation radicals undergo spontaneous degradation, yielding many different products dependent on substrate structure. The complex reactions and the role(s) of peroxidases in ligninolysis have been reviewed (Higuchi 1990; Hammel and Cullen 2008).

Given their low specificity and high oxidation potential, it is perhaps not surprising the LiPs oxidize a remarkable array of organopollutants (reviewed in Refs. Higson 1991; Hammel 1995a, b; Pointing 2001; Cullen 2002). Among these are the PAHs, pollutants from both geochemical and anthropogenic sources. PAHs consist of three or more benzene rings fused in a linear, angular, or cluster arrangement. As their molecular weight increases, water solubility and biodegradability decrease and genotoxicity increases. The biodegradation and bioremediation of these compounds have attracted much attention in recent decades. (reviewed in Refs. Peng et al. 2008; Gan et al. 2009; Haritash and Kaushik 2009; Lu et al. 2011)

Phanerochaete chrysosporium has been the most intensively studied white-rot fungus for its extraordinary ability to oxidize and/or mineralize a broad range of PAHs. For example, *P. chrysosporium* degraded at least 22 PAHs, including all of the most abundant PAH components present in anthracene oil, and underwent 70–100 % disappearance during 27 days of incubation with nutrient nitrogen-limited cultures (Bumpus 1989). The mechanism(s) of degradation of PAHs is/are diverse, and can include those that are unique to ligninolytic fungi or exist in other microorganisms. Benzo (a) pyrene, anthracene, and pyrene have ionization potentials below 7.6 eV, and serve as substrates for LiP (Hammel et al. 1986a; Hammel 1995a). In

addition to PAHs, purified LiPs will transform chlorinated phenols (Hammel and Tardone 1988; Mileski et al. 1988; Valli and Gold 1991; Reddy and Gold 2000), tetrahydrofurans (Vazquez-Duhalt et al. 1994), dioxins (Hammel et al. 1986a; Valli et al. 1992b), methoxybenzenes (Kersten et al. 1985), and various chloro- and nitro-methoxybenzenes (Valli and Gold 1991; Valli et al. 1992a, b; Teunissen et al. 1998).

B. Manganese Peroxidase

Like LiPs, **manganese peroxidases (MnPs) exhibit a typical peroxidase catalytic cycle, but with Mn(II) as the substrate.** The Mn(II) is chelated by bidentate organic acid chelators such as glycolate or oxalate. Chelation is thought to stabilize Mn(III) and allow its diffusion at some distance from the enzyme (Glenn et al. 1986; Paszczynski et al. 1986). MnPs lack sufficient oxidative potential to cleave the major non-phenolic units of lignin, but can oxidize phenolic structures. The resulting phenoxy radicals undergo a variety of reactions including polymer cleavage within certain units, e.g., between C α and aromatic rings (Wariishi et al. 1991; Tuor et al. 1992). MnPs purified from *P. chrysosporium*, *Nematoloma frowardi*, and *Phlebia radiata* have been shown to oxidize pentachlorophenol and 2,4,6-trinitrotoluene (TNT) in a Mn-dependent manner (Scheibner and Hofrichter 1998; Van Aken et al. 1999; Reddy and Gold 2000), whereas decolorization of azo dye by *Pleurotus eryngii* and *Bjerkandera adusta* MnP isozymes is Mn-independent (Heinfling et al. 1998a).

Phanerochete chrysosporium cultures will efficiently degrade the PAHs phenanthrene and fluorine, an observation difficult to explain because neither serves as a LiP or MnP substrate (George and Neufeld 1989; Hammel et al. 1992; Vazquez-Duhalt et al. 1994; Bogan et al. 1996c). Alternative mechanisms must be operative. Among these, peroxidation of unsaturated lipids has been shown to generate transient lipoxyl radical intermediates that oxidize non-phenolic lignin model compounds. MnP/lipid peroxidation depolymerizes phenolic- and phenol-blocked (methylated) synthetic lignins (Bao et al.

1994), as well as β -O-4 linkages of lignin model compounds (Bao et al. 1994; Kapich et al. 1999). The system has also been shown to oxidize fluorine (Bogan et al. 1996a) and phenanthrene (Moen and Hammel 1994).

Certain peroxidases oxidize Mn(II) as well as non-phenolic substrates (e.g., veratryl alcohol) in the absence of manganese (Mester and Field 1998; Camarero et al. 1999). Designated '**versatile peroxidases**' (VPs), these enzymes typically feature Mn-binding residues as well as a conserved Trp involved in the electron transfer that enables oxidation of non-phenolic compounds. Recent work suggested a role for VP in the transformation of azo dyes (Salame et al. 2010, 2012) and carbamazepine (Golan-Rozen et al. 2011) (see below).

Less well-studied peroxidases, but potentially involved in degradation of lignin and organopollutants, are the **heme thiolate peroxidases (HTPs) and the dye decolorization peroxidases (DyPs)** (Hofrichter et al. 2010; Lundell et al. 2010). The HTPs include chloroperoxidases and peroxygenases which catalyze a wide range of reactions, including oxidations of various aliphatic and aromatic compounds (Ullrich and Hofrichter 2005; Gutierrez et al. 2011). DyPs and putative DYP-encoding genes have been identified in various fungi, and recent studies have attributed high redox potentials for the enzyme from the white-rot fungus *Auricularia auricula-judae* (Liers et al. 2010).

C. Laccase

Laccases catalyze the 1-electron oxidation of phenolics, aromatic amines, and other electron-rich substrates. Their oxidation of the phenolic units in lignin generates phenoxy radicals, which can lead to aryl-C α cleavage (Kawai et al. 1988). Non-phenolic lignin-related substrates are oxidized in the presence of certain auxiliary substrates such as ABTS (2,2'-azino-bis-3-ethylthiazoline-6-sulfonate) (Bourbonnais et al. 1997, 1998; Collins et al. 1999). For examples, in the presence of synthetic mediators, organophosphorous insecticides are degraded by *P. ostreatus* laccase (Amitai et al. 1998), and

high ionization potential PAHs are oxidized by *Coriopsis gallica* and *T. versicolor* laccases (Johannes et al. 1996; Pickard et al. 1999). Cultures of the white-rot fungi *Pycnoporus cinnabarinus* and *Trametes versicolor* produce small molecular weight compounds thought to act as natural intermediaries for oxidation of non-phenolic lignin substructures (Eggert et al. 1996) and PAHs (Johannes and Majcherczyk 2000). Most white-rot fungi produce multiple laccase isozymes (Fukushima and Kirk 1995; Salas et al. 1995; Perie et al. 1998) but some, notably *P. chrysosporium*, produce none. Laccases and their applications have been reviewed (Giardina et al. 2010).

Both **peroxidases and laccases can degrade pentachlorophenol (PCP)**, a restricted-use wood preservative. The first step in the oxidation of such chlorophenols, the formation of para-quinones and release of a chlorine atom, can be carried out by several white-rot fungi. When *P. chrysosporium* LiP and MnP genes were expressed in *Amylomyces rouxii*, a zygomycete producing only phenoloxidases, the transformant exhibited increased activity (95 % depletion) in comparison to the wild type grown without the inducer tyrosine (45 % removal) (Montiel-Gonzalez et al. 2009).

Another mechanism for PCP detoxification could be humification of these xenobiotics via polymerization into soil organic matter. Polymerization of PCP and ferulic acid by manganese peroxidase, lignin peroxidase, and laccase converted a significant portion of the PCP into soil-bound transformation products that are not extractable with organic solvents (Ruttimann-Johnson and Lamar 1996). Using labeled PCP, highest binding to the humic substances was obtained with *P. ostreatus*, followed by *Irpex lacteus*, *T. versicolor*, and *Bjerkandera adusta*. The highest mineralization rate of 8.8 % was demonstrated for *T. versicolor*. Remediation of PCP-contaminated soils with ligninolytic fungi has been the focus of several studies, and inoculum formulation has been a central objective. (Lamar and Dietrich 1990; Lamar et al. 1990a, b, 1994; Lestan and Lamar 1996; Ford et al. 2007a, b)

In addition to PCP, **peroxidases and laccases will degrade a wide range of aromatic dyes** that can pose severe environmental problems. Their highly variable and complex chemical structures also make them difficult to remove by using conventional wastewater treatment systems. The most frequently used

color-removal technologies are physical (adsorption, filtration, and flotation), chemical (coagulation, oxidation, reduction, and electrolysis), and biological (aerobic and anaerobic). Thus, color removal is one of the most difficult requirements to be faced by the textile finishing, dye manufacturing, pulp, and paper industries. These industries are major water consumers and are, therefore, a source of considerable pollution. Azo dyes, the largest class of synthetic dyes, are characterized by the presence of one or more azo bonds ($-N=N-$) in association with one or more aromatic systems, which may also carry sulfonic acid groups (Singh and Arora 2011).

Numerous wood-rotting fungi, including *P. chrysosporium*, *Coriolus versicolor*, *Irpex lacteus*, *P. ostreatus*, and *Ganoderma applanatum*, are able to degrade a wide range of synthetic dyes (Wesenberg et al. 2003; Kaushik and Malik 2009). Many of the decolorization studies indicate that wood degrading fungi have a potential to be developed further into industrial wastewater treatment technology. (Stolz 2001)

Dye degradation and decolorization are of particular relevance to this chapter as a result of the dual role they play in the study of ligninolytic fungi and their oxidative systems. On the one hand, dyes are targets for degradation and bioremediation as toxic pollutants, as described above. On the other hand, they have been used as model compounds to elucidate catalytic mechanisms of ligninolytic enzymes. Evidence suggests that lignin-degrading enzymes, MnP, VP, LiP, and laccases are directly involved not only in the degradation of lignin, their natural lignocellulosic substrates, but also in the degradation of dyes (Heinfling et al. 1998a, b).

Polymeric dye decolorization and ligninolytic activity of *P. chrysosporium* were correlated by comparing the effect of various physiological parameters, mutations, and inhibitors on both processes. Dye decolorization, like ligninolytic activity, appears to be a secondary metabolic process. It was repressed by nitrogen and only occurred after the nitrogen in the cultures had been consumed. Dye decolorization paralleled lignin degradation temporally. Thus it was concluded that some dyes are a good model to represent the ligninolytic system. (Glenn and Gold 1983)

Pleurotus eryngii VP-active sites were demonstrated by measuring oxidizing activity

towards high-redox-potential aromatic compounds and dyes such as Reactive Black 5 (RB5) (Camarero et al. 2005). This was later verified by site-directed mutagenesis, again using RB5 oxidation to show the importance of Trp164 in the reaction (Ruiz-Duenas et al. 2008).

Laccases are also important in dye decolorization (Giardina et al. 2010). Studies of anthraquinone and azo dye degradation by purified laccase from *Lentinus* sp., together with molecular docking of Acid Blue 80, RBBR, and Acid Red 37 onto the enzyme, confirmed the amino acid residues involved in dye oxidation (Hsu et al. 2012). The potential of *Trametes trogii* purified laccase for the decolorization of different types of recalcitrant dyes without the addition of redox mediators has been shown (Grassi et al. 2011), and random mutagenesis has been shown to improve performance of a *P. ostreatus* laccase (Miele et al. 2010).

D. Peroxide Generation

Several systems have been suggested as sources of **extracellular H_2O_2 necessary for peroxidase activity**. Considerable evidence implicates GLOX, a radical-copper oxidase (Whittaker et al. 1996) produced by *P. chrysosporium* (Kersten and Kirk 1987). GLOX utilizes a wide range of small aldehydes such as glyoxal and methylglyoxal (extracellular metabolites of *P. chrysosporium*), and transfers the electrons to O_2 , generating H_2O_2 . Glycolaldehyde, another substrate, is produced by the action of LiP on β -O-4 lignin substructures. This suggests a physiological connection between GLOX and LiP, and this is further supported by the reversible inactivation of GLOX in the absence of a peroxidase system (Kersten 1990). GLOX is reactivated, however, by reconstituting the complete peroxidase system, including both LiP and substrate. Thus, the supply of H_2O_2 by GLOX responds to the demand of the peroxidases, thereby providing an extracellular regulatory mechanism controlling the coupled enzyme systems. GLOX activity has been

detected in several lignin-degrading fungi when grown on oak sawdust (Orth et al. 1993).

Detailed comparative studies with galactose oxidase of *Dactylium dendroides* have defined GLOX as a copper radical oxidase (Kersten and Cullen 1993; Whittaker et al. 1999; Whittaker 2002). Site-specific mutagenesis have confirmed essential residues including an internal Cys-Tyr radical forming a metalloradical complex and copper ligands Tyr135 Tyr377 and His378. (reviewed by Whittaker 2002)

Six additional copper radical oxidase genes were identified by BLAST searches of the *P. chrysosporium* genome. Residues coordinating copper and forming the radical redox site are conserved (Martinez et al. 2004; Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2006b). Designated *cro1* through *cro6*, three of these genes (*cro3-5*) are predicted to encode repeats of an N-terminal WSC domains, which may be involved in carbohydrate binding (IPR002889; <http://www.ebi.ac.uk/interpro/IEntry?ac=IPR002889>). *Cro6* is most closely related to *glx* (47 % amino acid identity), but contains a ~200 amino acid N-terminal region absent from the other copper radical oxidases. The predicted *cro2* protein is only 28 % identical to GLOX but, in contrast to GLOX, the enzyme oxidized a glycolaldehyde dimer, but not methylglyoxal (Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2006b).

Also possibly important in peroxide generation are the **glucose-methanol-choline oxidases (GMCs) which include aryl alcohol oxidase (AAO), methanol oxidase, and various sugar oxidases** (reviewed in Ref. (Hernandez-Ortega et al. 2012)). AAOs oxidize benzyl alcohols to aldehydes, transferring the electrons to O_2 , producing H_2O_2 (Muheim et al. 1990; Asada et al. 1995). *P. ostreatus* secretes a mixture of benzyl alcohols that are oxidized by AAO (Sannia et al. 1991). The white-rot fungus *Bjerkandera adusta* secretes chlorinated benzyl alcohols that are substrates for AAO but not LiP. Since both LiP and AAO are produced in *B. adusta* cultures, such substrate preferences may have important physiological roles in ligninolysis.

Methanol oxidase may play an important role in generating H_2O_2 in both white-rot and brown-rot fungi. The enzyme is highly expressed and associated with hyphal cell walls in the brown-rot fungus, *Gloeophyllum trabeum* (Daniel et al. 2007). Brown-rot demethylation of lignin may provide the substrate, and the H_2O_2 produced is thought to participate in generation of highly reactive hydroxyl radical via a Fenton reaction, $H_2O_2 + Fe^{2+} + H^+ \rightarrow H_2O + Fe^{3+} + \cdot OH$. This diffusible radical will mediate the rapid depolymerization of cellulose, a central feature of brown-rot decay. High expression of methanol oxidase has also been observed in the white-rot fungus *P. chrysosporium* when grown on media containing ground wood as sole carbon source (Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2010).

Pyranose 2-oxidase oxidizes various monosaccharides at C-2, with transfer of electrons to O_2 to produce H_2O_2 . This GMC enzyme has been identified in various fungi, including *P. chrysosporium*, *T. versicolor*, *Oudemansiella mucida*, and *Agaricus bisporus* (Daniel et al. 1994; Artoloza et al. 1997), and the catalytic mechanism has received considerable attention in recent times (Tan et al. 2010; Sucharitakul et al. 2011; Tan et al. 2011; Wongnate et al. 2011). *P. chrysosporium* mycelium also exhibits glucose 1-oxidase activity (Kelley and Reddy 1986, 1988), but this enzyme appears to be less common than pyranose 2-oxidase (reviewed by Ander and Marzullo 1997).

Cellobiose dehydrogenase (CDH) is widely distributed among fungi, but its precise role in ligninolysis and/or organopollutant degradation, if any, remains uncertain (Henriksson et al. 2000; Zamocky et al. 2006). The enzyme contains a dehydrogenase domain and a heme prosthetic group (Hallberg et al. 2000). CDH oxidizes cellodextrins, mannodextrins, and lactose, and suitable electron acceptors include quinones, phenoxyradicals, and Fe^{3+} . Interestingly, recent studies have shown that CDH will enhance cellulose depolymerization by members of the glycoside hydrolase family 61 (Harris et al. 2010; Langston et al. 2011). Previously considered to be cellulases, the latter

'hydrolases' have been recently classified as copper-dependent monooxygenases (Quinlan et al. 2011; Westereng et al. 2011).

E. Other Oxidoreductases

In addition to the extracellular peroxidases and laccases, transformation and/or complete mineralization of organopollutants involve additional extracellular and intracellular processes. Examples include glycosyl conjugation of triclosan by *T. versicolor* cultures (Hundt et al. 2000), and O-methylation of PCP and triclosan by *P. chrysosporium* (Lamar et al. 1990a) and *P. cinnabarinus* (Hundt et al. 2000) cultures, respectively.

The role of **cytochrome P450s in organopollutant degradation** remains largely unexplored, but some progress has been made. The metabolic steps in PAH degradation have occurred in both N-limited and N-sufficient culture media, and are similar to those in nonligninolytic fungi, such as *Cunninghamella elegans* (Casillas et al. 1996) and N-sufficient cultures of *P. chrysosporium*. Apparently, *P. ostreatus* acts on PAHs like nonligninolytic fungi, but is also able to mineralize PAHs (Bezalel et al. 1996a, b). Since *P. ostreatus* does not contain lignin peroxidase, and since PAH metabolism did not correlate with laccase or MnP activities, it is possible that a cytochrome P450 monooxygenase is responsible for the initial step in the attack. The ligninolytic system of *P. ostreatus* may be involved in the later steps of metabolism, such as ring cleavage, which leads to CO_2 evolution. These conclusions were based on metabolite analyses, physiological and biochemical studies (Bezalel et al. 1997).

Additional investigations suggest that *P. chrysosporium* degradation of 2,4,6-trichlorophenol (Reddy et al. 1998) and PCP (Hammel and Tardone 1988; Mileski et al. 1988; Reddy and Gold 1999, 2000) involve oxidative dechlorination by extracellular peroxidases, followed by intracellular reductive dechlorination and hydroxylation reactions. White-rot cytochrome P450s reactions also include monooxygenase bioconversions of phenanthrene by *P. ostreatus* (Syed et al. 2010), benzo(a)

pyrene by *Pleurotus pulmonarius* (Masapahy et al. 1999) and by *P. chrysosporium* (Syed et al. 2011a), 4-methyldibenzothiophene by *T. versicolor* (Ichinose et al. 1999), and endosulfan and carbamazepine (CBZ) by *P. chrysosporium*. (Kullman and Matsumura 1996; Golan-Rozen et al. 2011)

Fungi are active in **biodegradation of a wide array of pharmaceuticals and hormones**. Analyses of the degradation pathways and metabolites formation was recently reviewed (Cruz-Morato et al. 2012). As mentioned above, **cytochrome P450s and MnPs** have been implicated in the transformation and metabolism of CBZ, a drug used in large quantities worldwide for the treatment of epilepsy, and increasingly used for various psychiatric treatments (Leclercq et al. 2009). Studies in Europe and North America have shown that CBZ and CBZ metabolites are among the most frequently detected pharmaceuticals in wastewater effluents, river water, and drinking water (Heberer 2002; Miao et al. 2005; Benotti et al. 2009). CBZ is an environmentally recalcitrant compound extremely stable in water and soil (Lienert et al. 2007), mainly as a result of its remarkably high stability towards bacterial degradation. Thus, because of its very slow degradation, it has been proposed as a tracer for anthropogenic activity and contamination originated from municipal waste water (Gasser et al. 2010).

Nevertheless, CBZ modification by different white-rot fungi has been reported (Kang et al. 2008). For example, the white-rot fungi *T. versicolor* and *G. lucidum* eliminated 57 % and 46 % respectively of CBZ after 7 incubation days (Marco-Urrea et al. 2009). Similar removal efficiency of CBZ was observed by *T. versicolor* in a solid-phase bioreactor containing sewage sludge and mycelium (Rodriguez-Rodriguez et al. 2010). *P. ostreatus* strains F6, N001 (dikaryons), and PC9 (monokaryon) degraded CBZ to levels ranging from 48 % to 99 % of the initial concentration. With strain PC9, CBZ concentration was reduced from 10 mg l⁻¹ to 20 µg l⁻¹ within 17 days of incubation (Golan-Rozen et al. 2011). To evaluate the potential use of *P. ostreatus* to remediate contaminated water, CBZ removal was studied at its environmental relevant concentration (~1 µg l⁻¹, 4.6 nM). When optimal conditions were obtained, CBZ concentration decreased by 97.9 % to 0.093 nM (22 ppt) within 8 days. Unlike the accumulation of the metabolite 10,11EPCBZ observed at high CBZ concentration, in this experiment 10,11EPCBZ disappeared, gradually reaching a minimal concentration of 0.1 nM. These results suggested that at environmentally

relevant concentrations *P. ostreatus* can not only transform CBZ to 10,11EPCBZ, but may also continue its metabolism. (Golan-Rozen et al. 2011)

Several enzymatic mechanisms have been suggested to be involved in the oxidation of CBZ. When a cytochrome P450 inhibitor was added to the growth medium, CBZ elimination by *T. versicolor* was inhibited by more than half, indicating the possible involvement of cytochrome P450 in the biodegradation process (Montiel-Gonzalez et al. 2009). When *P. ostreatus* was grown in media supporting high levels of both cytochrome P450 and manganese peroxidase (MnP), 99 % of the added CBZ was eliminated from the solution (Golan-Rozen et al. 2011). High removal of CBZ was also obtained when either MnP or CYP450 was active. When both CYP450 and MnP were inactivated, only 10–30 % of the added CBZ was removed.

In-vitro reaction between CBZ and crude lignin peroxidase produced by the fungus *P. chrysosporium* in the presence of H₂O₂ and veratryl alcohol resulted in only 5–9 % elimination. Repeated treatment with laccase from *T. versicolor* and 1-hydroxybenzotriazole (used as a redox mediator) resulted in the elimination of 20 % of the CBZ after 24 h (Hata et al. 2010). Increased removal of CBZ (about 80 %) was only observed when a lignin-derived quinone was added to the growth medium of *T. versicolor* together with ferrous oxalate to form a Fenton-like reaction (Marco-Urrea et al. 2010). This reaction facilitates the formation of hydroxyl radicals, which oxidize the CBZ molecule faster than the enzymatic reactions.

III. Comparative Genome Analysis

Knowledge of the genomes of wood decay fungi is rapidly advancing, in large part because of the support of the U.S. Department of Energy's Joint Genome Institute. An interactive MycoCosm web portal (<http://genome.jgi.doe.gov/programs/fungi/index.jsf>) integrates all publicly accessible fungal genomes, including those featured in this review (Grigoriev et al. 2012). Throughout the following passages, we provide protein model identification numbers that allow searches of the JGI genome portal, and thereby link to detailed protein pages, alternative models, annotation, and comparisons to other databases.

A. Gene Structure, Phylogeny, and Expression

1. Peroxidases

Based on overall sequence conservation, a **Trp active site, and the absence of Mn-binding residues**, the LiP genes identified to date are confined to lignin-degrading fungi, with ten genes present in the genomes of *P. chrysosporium* and *T. versicolor*. However, of the ten white-rot genomes analyzed and published as of July 2012, most do not have LiP genes but feature two to sixteen MnP genes. *P. chrysosporium* and *T. versicolor* contain five and thirteen MnP genes respectively (Ohm et al. 2010; Fernandez-Fueyo et al. 2012; Floudas et al. 2012; Olson et al. 2012). Genome analysis has also identified at least four, two, and three VP genes in *P. ostreatus*, *T. versicolor*, and *D. squalens* respectively. Of the eight published brown-rot genomes, none contain genes encoding LiP, MnP, or VP (Martinez et al. 2009; Eastwood et al. 2011; Floudas et al. 2012).

Early studies had also identified *P. chrysosporium* MnP genes, *mnp1*, *mnp2*, and *mnp3* (Pease et al. 1989; Pribnow et al. 1989; Orth et al. 1994; Alic et al. 1997). The draft genome revealed two new MnP genes (Martinez et al. 2004), one of which, *mnp4*, was unexpectedly localized to a region 5 kb upstream of *mnp1*. A cytochrome P450 gene lies within the *mnp4-mnp1* intergenic region. The *mnp5* predicted protein corresponds to the N-terminal amino acid sequence of a MnP long ago purified from *P. chrysosporium*-colonized wood pulp (Datta et al. 1991). Most intron positions are conserved within the MnP (Larrondo et al. 2005) and LiP (Stewart and Cullen 1999) gene families.

Deviations from these simple classifications have been noted. Certain MnPs vary in length and have been classified accordingly (Ruiz-Duenas et al. 2011; Fernandez-Fueyo et al. 2012). On the basis of homology modeling and the conservation of specific residues essential for catalysis, *C. subvermispora* protein models #118677 and #99382 were initially classified as LiP and VP genes respectively. Consistent with these designations, the corresponding proteins were capable of oxidizing nonphenolic model compounds and synthetic lignin. However, the putative VP was unable to oxidize Mn

as predicted. Moreover, both enzymes exhibited catalytic properties intermediate between conventional LiPs and MnP (Fernandez-Fueyo et al. 2012).

Clustering of *P. chrysosporium* genes, especially those encoding LiPs and MnPs, is a well-known phenomenon. Prior to genome sequencing, the ten *P. chrysosporium* LiP genes had been designated *lipA* through *lipJ* (Gaskell et al. 1994), and eight of these LiP genes were mapped within 3 % recombination (Gaskell et al. 1994; Stewart and Cullen 1999). The genome sequence confirmed the genetic multiplicity and verified the overall organization, with the eight LiP genes located within 100 Kb on scaffold 19. Genes designated *lipD* and *lipF* were localized to scaffolds 11 and 9 respectively.

Beyond *P. chrysosporium*, genome sequence analysis has revealed clustering of LiP and MnP genes in most white-rot fungi. Typically, this involves simple tandem arrangements and occasionally a third or fourth gene more distantly positioned. For examples, *T. versicolor* LiP genes encoding protein models #133326, #134250, and #52333 are located on scaffold 12, and models #43576, #43578, #114944, and #112835 lie on scaffold 2. In both instances, the genes are located within a ~15 kb region. *T. versicolor* MnP genes encoding proteins #51455, #74179, and #51457 are tightly clustered within 7 Kb on scaffold 10. The VP-encoding genes of *T. versicolor* are located on scaffold 2, but very distant from LiP genes. No remarkable linkage is observed among the nine, thirteen and five MnP genes of *D. squalens*, *C. subvermispora*, and *P. ostreatus* respectively. As in the case of *T. versicolor*, the *D. squalens* and *P. ostreatus* VPs show no significant linkage to each other or to the MnP genes. In contrast, the abovementioned intermediary LiP–MnP genes of *C. subvermispora* lie within 9 Kb on scaffold 20.

The regulation of LiP gene expression, particularly in *P. chrysosporium*, has received considerable attention. Culture conditions substantially influence *lip* transcript levels (Holzbaur and Tien 1988; Stewart et al. 1992; Reiser et al. 1993; Janse et al. 1998; Vallim et al. 1998; Stewart and Cullen 1999; Belinky et al. 2003; Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2009; Hiscox et al. 2010; Sakamoto et al. 2010). LiP genes within clusters may be differentially regulated but, to date, no clear relationship between organization and regulation has been reported (Stewart et al. 1992; Stewart and Cullen 1999; Macdonald

et al. 2011). In *P. chrysosporium* soil cultures, LiP transcript patterns shift depending upon the pollutant, e.g., anthracene versus PCP (Lamar et al. 1995; Bogan et al. 1996b).

In recent years, **LC-MS/MS and high throughput transcript analyses** have provided insight into the expression of specific LiP genes. Extracellular proteins corresponding to *lipC* were identified only in nitrogen-limited medium, whereas the *lipD* and *lipE* products were more abundant in carbon-limited cultures (Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2006a, 2009). These results were consistent with transcript levels measured by Northern blots (Holzbaur and Tien 1988), by quantitative RT-PCR (qRT-PCR) (Stewart and Cullen 1999) and, more recently, by whole-genome expression microarrays (Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2009). None of the *P. chrysosporium* LiP genes exhibited elevated transcript levels in medium containing microcrystalline cellulose (Avicel, Fluka Chemical) relative to glucose-grown cultures, but peptides corresponding to *lipD* were detected in the cellulose medium (Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2005). In submerged medium containing ball-milled aspen (BMA) as sole carbon source, transcripts of *lipA* and *lipH* accumulated relative to glucose medium, but no extracellular peroxidase was detected by LC-MS/MS (Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2010). On the other hand, significant transcript levels of *lipD*, *lipE* and *lipB* were measured in similar experiments using red oak (Sato et al. 2009). More perplexing, *lipD* and *lipE* transcript levels were lowest among all LiP genes in colonized aspen wood chips (Janse et al. 1998). Transcriptome studies of *Phanerochaete carnosus* suggest that wood species substantially influence LiP transcript levels (Macdonald et al. 2011; Macdonald and Master 2012; MacDonald et al. 2012).

As in the case of LiP-encoding genes, **media composition, especially manganese concentration, has a dramatic effect on MnP regulation** (Bonnarme and Jeffries 1990; Brown et al. 1990, 1991; Pease and Tien 1992; Lobos et al. 1994). Most studies have focused on transcriptional control, but recent results using *C. subvermispora* suggest that Mn concentration may also influence MnP secretion (Mancilla et al. 2010). Mechanisms of transcriptional regulation remain uncertain, but much attention has

focused on promoters and the putative role of metal response elements (MREs) (Godfrey et al. 1990, 1994; Alic and Gold 1991; Brown et al. 1993; Alic et al. 1997). Gettemy et al. (1998) reported that *P. chrysosporium mnp1* and *mnp2* were substantially upregulated in response to Mn^{2+} concentration, and later deletion analysis identified an upstream Mn-responsive element (Ma et al. 2004). In contrast, dramatic upregulation of *T. versicolor mnp2* by Mn appears not to involve any MREs (Johansson et al. 2002). Transcripts of *P. chrysosporium mnp1* accumulate in carbon- or nitrogen-starved defined medium relative to replete medium, and the corresponding protein has been identified by LC-MS/MS under such nutrient limitation (Ravalason et al. 2008; Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2009). Upregulation of *mnp2* transcripts has been observed in cultures that were nitrogen-starved but not carbon-starved (Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2009).

Complex patterns of *P. chrysosporium* MnP gene expression have been observed in colonized wood and soil. *mnp4* is actively transcribed when *P. chrysosporium* is grown on wood-containing soil samples (Stuardo et al. 2004), and *mnp1*, *mnp2*, and *mnp3* transcripts are easily detected in colonized aspen wood chips (Janse et al. 1998). Transcripts corresponding to *mnp1* were detected in red oak medium (Sato et al. 2009). In *P. chrysosporium* soil cultures, the depletion of fluorine roughly correlates with transcript levels of *mnp1*, *mnp2* and *mnp3* (Bogan et al. 1996c). Degradation of this high oxidation potential PAH is consistent with a mechanism involving lipid peroxidation.

Simultaneous accumulation of transcripts corresponding to *C. subvermispora* MnPs and genes putatively involved in lipid biosynthesis (Watanabe et al. 2010) also support a **role for lipid peroxidation** (Fernandez-Fueyo et al. 2012). In line with this view, recent microarray and mass spectrometry data (Fernandez-Fueyo et al. 2012) revealed simultaneous upregulation of genes encoding MnP genes as well as those involved in lipid biosynthesis after 5 days growth in medium containing BMA. Interestingly, the *C. subvermispora* MnP genes exhibiting significant accumulation of transcripts in BMA relative to glucose (models #117436 and #49863) or secreting detectable protein (models #157986, #116608, #50297) were all classified as

Table 5.1. Number of genes encoding oxidoreductases implicated in ligninolysis and degradation of various organopollutants

	White-rot fungi					Brown-rot ^a
	Phach	Pleos	Cersu	Trave	Dicsq	
LiP	10	0	0	10	0	0
MnP	5	5 ^b	13 ^c	13	9	0
VP	0	4 ^b	2	2 ^c	3	0
HTP	3	3 ^b	9	3	4	5.2 (2–6)
DYP	0	4 ^b	0	2 ^c	1 ^c	0.3 (0–2)
Laccase	0	12 ^d	7 ^c	7 ^c	11 ^c	4.5 (3–6) ^c
GLOX	1	4	0	5 ^c	5 ^c	0
CRO1	1	1	0	1	1	0.8 (0–2)
CRO2	1	2	1	1 ^c	1 ^c	1.5 (0–4) ^c
CRO3–5	3	3	1	1 ^c	1 ^c	0.7 (0–1) ^c
CRO6	1	6	1	1	1	1
CDH	1	1	1	1 ^c	1 ^c	0.7 (0–2) ^c
GH61 ^e	15 ^c	29	9	18 ^c	15 ^c	4.5 (2–10) ^c
P450s	149	141 ^f	222 ^c	190	187	196

^aThe average number and range of genes in six phylogenetically related brown-rot fungi included as point of comparison. Brown-rot genomes analyzed were: *Serpula lacrymans* (Eastwood et al. 2011), *Postia placenta* (Martinez et al. 2009), *Coniophora puteana*, *Wolfiporia cocos*, *Gloeophyllum rabeum*, and *F. pinicola* (Fernandez-Fueyo et al. 2012). White-rot abbreviations: Phach, *Phanerochaete chrysosporium* (Martinez et al. 2004); Pleos, *Pleurotus ostreatus* (http://genome.jgi.doe.gov/PleosPC15_2/PleosPC15_2.home.html); Cersu, *Ceriporiopsis subvermispora* (Fernandez-Fueyo et al. 2012); Trave, *Trametes versicolor* and Dicsq, *Dichomitus squalens* (Floudas et al. 2012)

^bSee reference (Ruiz-Duenas et al. 2011)

^cNanoLC-MS/MS unambiguously identified at least one protein in media containing ground aspen as sole carbon source. See Supplemental files in published accounts for *C. subvermispora* and *P. chrysosporium* (Fernandez-Fueyo et al. 2012), and for *T. versicolor*, *D. squalens*, and the six brown-rot fungi mentioned above (Floudas et al. 2012)

^dSee reference (Castanera et al. 2012)

^eLytic polysaccharide monooxygenase

^fEnumerated using Cytochrome P450 Database http://genome.jgi.doe.gov/PleosPC15_2/PleosPC15_2.home.html. All others derived from published accounts

‘extra long’ MnPs (Fernandez-Fueyo et al. 2012). Two ‘short’ MnP proteins were detected by LC-MS/MS in the extracellular filtrates of *T. versicolor* (Floudas et al. 2012).

VP-encoding genes have not been identified in the genomes of any brown-rot fungi, but 2–4 genes are present in *P. ostreatus* (Ruiz-Duenas et al. 2011), *C. subvermispora* (Fernandez-Fueyo et al. 2012), *T. versicolor* and *D. squalens* (Floudas et al. 2012) (Table 5.1). Global transcriptome studies have not yet been reported for these fungi, although it is clear that *P. ostreatus* VP transcription is modulated by Mn (Cohen et al. 2001, 2002a, b), and recent genetic studies persuasively show its importance in dye decolorization (below). The four *P. ostreatus* genes are not tightly linked. The abovementioned ‘transitional’ or ‘intermediary’ LiP-MnP genes of *C. subvermispora* are closely linked on scaffold 20, but regulated expression and protein secre-

tion have not been observed in a shake flask containing BMA suspensions (Fernandez-Fueyo et al. 2012). The VP genes of *T. versicolor* are unlinked, and peptides corresponding to protein model #26239 have been detected in BMA cultures. The three *D. squalens* VP genes are unlinked and LC-MS/MS failed to detect the proteins in the extracellular filtrates of the same medium (Floudas et al. 2012).

Genes encoding **putative heme-thiolate peroxidases (HTPs) are widespread** within the genomes of white-rot and brown-rot fungi (Table 5.1) although experimental affirmation of their expression is limited. *C. subvermispora*, *D. squalens*, and *T. versicolor* genomes feature nine, four, and three HTP genes respectively, but systematic studies of transcriptional regulation have not been reported, and LC-MS/MS has not detected any of the corresponding peptides in media containing BMA (Fernandez-Fueyo

et al. 2012; Floudas et al. 2012). Similarly, no extracellular protein has been observed for *P. chrysosporium* models #1710, #3274, and #34295. Transcripts corresponding to #34295 are upregulated in Avicel medium relative to glucose (Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2009). Interestingly, relative to glucose medium, transcripts encoding #34295 accumulate in BMA medium but not in ball-milled pine medium. Possibly reflecting substrate-based differential regulation, transcripts from #3274 show the opposite pattern, i.e., upregulated in pine but not aspen (Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2011). With the exception of tandemly arranged *T. versicolor* genes encoding protein models #154915 and #23785, none of the above mentioned HTP genes exhibit close linkage.

The **dye-decolorizing peroxidases (DyPs) are sporadically distributed among genomes of wood decay fungi**. With the exception of *Gloeophyllum trabeum* no DyP genes have been detected in brown-rot genomes. Among white-rot fungi, HTP genes are absent from *P. chrysosporium* and *C. subvermispora* whereas *P. ostreatus*, *T. versicolor*, and *D. squalens* contain four, two and one gene respectively. The *T. versicolor* gene encoding protein #48874 and #48870 lie within a ~15 kb region of scaffold 7. LC-MS/MS analysis of filtrates from BMA medium indicates that *D. squalens* protein #150405 and *T. versicolor* #48870 are particularly abundant, making up 1.3 % and 2.2 % of the total spectra (Fernandez-Fueyo et al. 2012).

Development of efficient systems for production of **recombinant peroxidases has been a key factor** in furthering biochemical investigations improving enzyme properties and assessing applications related to organopollutant degradation. Until relatively recently, production of active LiP in foreign hosts has been challenging. Yields were low in Baculovirus (Johnson and Li 1991; Johnson et al. 1992). Successful expression has also been reported using *Pichia* (Wang et al. 2004; Wang and Wen 2009) and *S. cerevisiae* (Ryu et al. 2008a, b) and, in the former reports, the catalytic ability using 2,4-dichlorophenol (DCP) has been examined. Although complicated by inclusion bodies, techniques for recovering fully active enzyme from *E. coli* have been developed (Doyle and Smith

1996; Nie et al. 1998), and the approach is now well-established for LiP, VP, and MnP (Miki et al. 2009; Ruiz-Duenas et al. 2009).

In addition to *E. coli*, *P. chrysosporium* MnP has been successfully produced by *A. oryzae* (Stewart et al. 1996) and *A. niger* (Conesa et al. 2000) transformants. Peroxidases from *C. subvermispora* (Larrondo et al. 2001), *P. eryngii* (Ruiz-Duenas et al. 1999), *P. eryngii* (Eibes et al. 2009) and from *Geotrichum candidum* (Sugano et al. 2000) have also been expressed in *Aspergillus*. In one case (Cortes-Espinosa et al. 2011), a MnP-expressing *A. niger* transformant exhibited enhanced phenanthrene degradation in soil relative to the parent strain.

Expression involving **native promoters has proven useful for production of peroxidases** for several white-rot fungi. For examples, significant increases in VP expression were achieved in *P. ostreatus* transformants relative to the parental strain (Tsukihara et al. 2006, 2008). A similar strategy of homologous expression was previously reported for producing *P. chrysosporium* MnP (Ma et al. 2003) and LiP (Sollewijn Gelpke et al. 1999, 2002).

2. Laccases

Among the multicopper oxidases, **multiple genes encoding laccase *sensu stricto*** (Hoegger et al. 2006) are, with the exception of *P. chrysosporium*, a common feature of white-rot genomes (Kojima et al. 1990; Saloheimo et al. 1991; Coll et al. 1993; Yaver and Golightly 1996; Yaver et al. 1996; Karahanian et al. 1998; Giardina et al. 1999; Temp et al. 1999). Laccase multiplicity is somewhat reduced in brown-rot fungi, and none have been detected in *Dacryopinax* sp. (Floudas et al. 2012). Prior to genome sequence, relatively little information was available on the organization of laccases, but *Trametes villosa* pulsed field gels suggested the possible linkage of certain laccase genes (Yaver and Golightly 1996). Seven laccase genes were identified in the *T. versicolor* genome, and close linkage was observed for those encoding proteins #47314 and #37188. Based on the percentage of total mass spectra (2.8 %), the latter protein is the most abundant

of 218 proteins identified in the extracellular filtrate of BMA medium. *D. squalens* laccases #67925, #169869 and #176907 were detected at more modest levels in the same medium, and no close linkage was observed among the 11 genes (Table 5.1). The seven genes of *C. subvermispora* are distantly linked, and transcripts corresponding to protein model #118801 were significantly upregulated in BMA medium relative to glucose. The protein was detected by LC-MS/MS analysis of BMA medium filtrates. The *P. ostreatus* strain PC15 genome contains 12 laccase genes (Castanera et al. 2012) and, with the exception of the adjacent models #1077328 and #1119530, all are distantly linked.

Laccase genes are often differentially regulated in response to culture conditions, and the patterns of regulation differ substantially between fungal species (Wahleithner et al. 1995; Yaver and Golightly 1996; Yanai et al. 1996; Smith et al. 1998; Palmieri et al. 2000). Their regulation has been recently reviewed (Piscitelli et al. 2011b). Potential ACE response elements have been identified in *C. subvermispora* and may be responsible, in part, for copper induction of genes encoding laccases and MnP. (Alvarez et al. 2009)

Several systems have proven useful for production of recombinant laccases. For example, *P. ostreatus* laccase is produced in *Kluyveromyces lactis* and *S. cerevisiae* (Piscitelli et al. 2011b), and the latter system led to improved temperature and pH stability via mutagenesis (Piscitelli et al. 2011a). *Aspergillus* systems have been used to produce laccases from *C. subvermispora* (Larrondo et al. 2003), *T. villosa* (Yaver et al. 1996), and *Coprinus cinereus* (Yaver et al. 1999). More recently, *Pichia* spp. expression has been used to investigate the potential of various white-rot laccases for dye decolorization and PAH degradation (Guo et al. 2008; Lu et al. 2009; Wong et al. 2012).

3. Peroxide-Generating Copper Radical Oxidases

Discovered in *P. chrysosporium* (Kersten and Kirk 1987; Kersten 1990), **glyoxal oxidase (GLX) is encoded by a single gene** (Kersten

and Cullen 1993; Kersten et al. 1995). Supporting an important role in ligninolysis, GLX homologs have been identified in the genomes of most white-rot fungi, but not in the brown-rotters (Fernandez-Fueyo et al. 2012; Floudas et al. 2012) (Table 5.1). In line with a physiological connection between peroxidases and GLX, coordinate increases in their transcript levels and/or protein secretion are observed under nutrient starvation (Stewart et al. 1992; Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2006a, 2009), in colonized wood (Janse et al. 1998; Sato et al. 2009), and in soil (Bogan et al. 1996b).

Little is known concerning the expression of GLX genes from other white-rot fungi. Three of the five *T. versicolor* genes are distantly linked on scaffold #3, of which peptides corresponding to GLX protein model #118266 have been identified by LC-MS/MS in BMA-containing medium. In *D. squalens*, genes encoding GLX proteins #104366 and #126455 are tandemly arranged on scaffold 10, but none of the five GLX proteins have been detected in BMA medium. No linkage has been observed among the five *P. ostreatus* GLX genes and, to date, nothing has been published regarding their expression.

Beyond GLX, a total of six CRO genes have been identified in the *P. chrysosporium* genome. Interestingly, the WSC-containing genes *cro3*, *cro4*, and *cro5* lie within the LiP gene cluster on scaffold 19 (Cullen and Kersten 2004). The clustering of *lip* and *cro* genes seems consistent with a physiological connection between peroxidases and peroxide-generating oxidases. Relatively little data is available on the expression of *P. chrysosporium* GLX genes, although transcripts of all CRO genes have been measured over time in colonized wood wafers (Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2006b), and the CRO2 protein has been shown in medium containing ball-milled pine (Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2011).

Systems for heterologous expression of CROs include *Aspergillus nidulans* and *Pichia pastoris*. These have been used to confirm catalytic residues (Kersten et al. 1995; Whittaker et al. 1999) of GLX, and *A. nidulans* production of *P. chrysosporium* *cro2* revealed differences in the substrate preferences of GLX and CRO2 (Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2006b).

This observation may explain how the highly efficient and **selective lignin degrader**, *C. subvermispora*, lacks a clear GLX homolog (Fernandez-Fueyo et al. 2012) (Table 5.1). Possibly, functionally related CROs fulfill the same role and/or are better suited for a spectrum of small molecular weight substrates unique to the ligninolytic system of *C. subvermispora*. Experimental support for this hypothesis is limited, but genome analysis has identified CROs in various fungi (Table 5.1), including at least three in the *C. subvermispora* genome. Further, transcriptome analysis showed upregulation of a *cro2*-like gene as well as several MnP genes in *C. subvermispora* cultures containing BMA as sole carbon source (Fernandez-Fueyo et al. 2012). Separate LC-MS/MS studies have identified *cro2* and WSC-containing CRO genes (*cro4*, *cro5*) in BMA culture filtrates of *T. versicolor* and *D. squalens* (Floudas et al. 2012).

4. Peroxide-Generating GMC Oxidoreductases

Genome analysis has greatly expanded knowledge of the distribution and diversity of GMC oxidases, particularly AAO-encoding genes. Based largely on recently published genomes (Fernandez-Fueyo et al. 2012; Floudas et al. 2012), Hernandez-Ortega et al. (2012) and co-workers describe relationships among 40 genes from various wood decay fungi. The AAO genes were widely distributed among white-rot and brown-rot taxa, although at least one white-rot fungus, *Auricularia delicata*, and three brown-rot fungi, *Coniophora puteana*, *Wolfiporia cocos*, and *Dacryopinax* sp. have no detectable AAO gene (Floudas et al. 2012). Transcript levels in nutrient-starved medium, Avicel medium, and BMA medium were modest for *C. subvermispora* and *P. chrysosporium* (Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2009). One of the three *P. chrysosporium* putative AAO proteins (#135972) and two of the five *C. subvermispora* proteins (#117387, #84544) were detected by LC-MS/MS in glucose-replete media, but not in BMA. On the other hand, AAO-derived peptides were unambiguously identified in BMA cultures of *T. versicolor* (#133945 and

#176148) and *D. squalens* (#160546 and #171752) (Floudas et al. 2012). Little is known regarding the expression of the *P. ostreatus* AAO genes, but sequence comparisons with other wood-decay fungi have been reported (Hernandez-Ortega et al. 2012). With the exception of the tandemly arranged *D. squalens* genes encoding proteins #102587 and #153908, close linkage has not been observed within the AAO gene families.

Recent genome analysis of **methanol oxidase (MOX), another potentially important GMC oxidase, shows a wide distribution among white and brown-rot fungi**. Among the white-rot fungi considered here (Table 5.1), *D. squalens*, *T. versicolor*, and *P. ostreatus* genomes each contained at least four unlinked genes. The *P. ostreatus* secretome has not yet been reported, and none of the *D. squalens* and *T. versicolor* MOX proteins were detected in by LC-MS/MS in BMA medium (Floudas et al. 2012). In contrast, *P. chrysosporium* MOX protein #126879 was identified in BMA culture filtrates, and the corresponding transcripts were significantly upregulated relative to glucose medium (Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2010). Surprisingly, the same medium showed decreased transcript levels of *C. subvermispora* MOX #80773, and no LC-MS/MS evidence for MOX in BMA medium (Fernandez-Fueyo et al. 2012). The apparent absence of soluble MOX protein in filtrates should be carefully interpreted, as cell-wall associations seem likely (Daniel et al. 2007).

Several studies implicate pyranose 2-oxidase in lignin degradation. The corresponding gene has been isolated from *T. versicolor* (Nishimura et al. 1996), *P. chrysosporium* (de Koker et al. 2004), and *G. trabeum* (Dietrich and Crooks 2009), and obvious homologs are absent from most of the recently sequenced genomes. In *P. chrysosporium*, transcripts are upregulated under ligninolytic conditions (de Koker et al. 2004; Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2009, 2010), and the extracellular protein has been identified in culture filtrates carbon-starved cultures (Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2010) and in BMA medium (Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2011). The *P. chrysosporium* and *G. trabeum*

pyranose 2-oxidases have been successfully expressed in *E. coli*. (Dietrich and Crooks 2009; Pisanelli et al. 2009).

Prior to the increase in genome data, genes encoding CDH were cloned from several fungi, including the white-rot fungi *P. chrysosporium* (Raices et al. 1995; Li et al. 1996), *T. versicolor* (Dumonceaux et al. 1998), and *P. cinnabarinus* (Moukha et al. 1999). All **white-rot genomes have a single CDH gene**. On the other hand, brown-rot fungal genomes have none (*P. placenta*, *F. pinicola*, *W. cocos*), one (*Coniophora puteana*, *G. trabeum*), or two (*S. lacrymans*) copies of the CDH gene. Sequences are highly conserved, and share a common architecture with separate FAD, heme, and cellulose-binding domains (CBD).

Northern blots had shown upregulation of *cdh* in cellulose-containing media (Li et al. 1996; Moukha et al. 1999), and competitive RT-PCR revealed transcripts in *P. chrysosporium* colonized wood (Vallim et al. 1998). Later microarray and LC-MS/MS investigations have shown that *P. chrysosporium* CDH transcripts accumulated in media containing Avicel relative to glucose as the sole carbon source (Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2009). Transcripts have also been detected in red oak medium (Sato et al. 2009), and upregulation observed in BMA medium relative to glucose medium (Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2010). The CDH protein has been identified in various culture filtrates, including those that are nutrient-starved (Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2009), contain microcrystalline cellulose, or contain complex lignocellulose (Sato et al. 2009; Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2011). The wood species used as substrate alters expression, with higher transcript and protein levels in mediums containing ball-milled pine relative to ball-milled aspen. (Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2011)

Irrespective of the *P. chrysosporium* culture conditions, CDH transcripts and secretion are typically mirrored by expression of aldose 1-epimerase (#138479) (Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2005; Sato et al. 2009; Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2011). This coordinate expression may indicate a physiological coupling via generation of the cellobiose β -anomer, the preferred CDH substrate (Higham et al. 1994). Co-expression of CDH and genes encoding members of the CAZy glycoside ‘hydrolase’ family GH61 has also been observed. Now classified as copper-dependent monooxygenases

(Quinlan et al. 2011; Westereng et al. 2011), GH61s will boost cellulose depolymerization by CDH (Harris et al. 2010; Langston et al. 2011). In addition to cellulose, xylan has been shown to increase secretion of CDH and GH61 (Hori et al. 2011). Further supporting these associations, of five recently sequenced wood decay fungi (*T. versicolor*, *D. squalens*, *Punctularia strigoso-zonata*, *Stereum hirsutum*, *Coniophora puteana*), all but *P. strigoso-zonata* simultaneously secreted ALE and CDH in BMA medium. Excluding the brown-rotter *C. puteana*, at least one GH61 monooxygenase was secreted by each of these same fungi (Floudas et al. 2012). The roles(s) and interaction(s) between these genes, if any, remain unclear.

Several systems are available for heterologous expression. Homologous expression of *P. chrysosporium* CDH was achieved by fusing *cdh* with the promoter of the highly expressed glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate dehydrogenase gene (Li et al. 2000). Expression in *Pichia* spp. has also been reported (Yoshida et al. 2001; Zamocky et al. 2008; Bey et al. 2011), and *E. coli* was used to isolate the flavin domain.

5. Cytochrome P450s

Prior to 2004, the involvement of cytochrome 450s in xenobiotic degradation by *P. chrysosporium* was well-established, but the extent of genetic diversity was not fully appreciated until the genome became available (reviewed by (Syed and Yadav 2012)). Approximately **150 *P. chrysosporium* P450 genes were identified**, and close linkage and tandem arrangements were observed (Martinez et al. 2004). Such organizational tendencies were subsequently shown among many of the 222 and 254 P450 genes of *C. subvermispora* (Fernandez-Fueyo et al. 2012) and *P. placenta* (Martinez et al. 2009) respectively. Most recent analyses of Agaricomycotina genomes reiterate the impressive genetic diversity and complex organization (Floudas et al. 2012). The distribution into families and clans has shown no clear trends related to phylogeny or to ecological role, i.e., brown-rot versus white-rot.

Functional analyses of P450s, especially those derived from *P. chrysosporium*, have advanced significantly in recent years. Syed and coworkers reported the identification and functional characterization of **P450 monooxygenases capable of oxidizing different ring-size PAHs using a genome-to-function strategy** (Syed et al. 2010). A P450 microarray screen (Doddapaneni and Yadav 2005), first identified six P450 genes (Pc-pah1–Pc-pah6) induced by PAHs of varying ring size. The cDNAs of the six P450 monooxygenases were cloned and co-expressed in *Pichia pastoris* along with a P450 reductase partner. Each of the six recombinant P450 monooxygenases showed PAH-oxidizing activity (Syed et al. 2010). In separate studies, the P450 monooxygenase CYP5136A3 showed common responsiveness and catalytic versatility towards endocrine-disrupting alkylphenols and PAHs. The recombinant CYP5136A3 possessed oxidation activity towards alkylphenols with varying alkyl side-chain length (C3–C9), in addition to PAHs (3–4 ring size) (Syed et al. 2011b).

A P450 monooxygenase involved in anthracene metabolism by *P. chrysosporium* was identified by a combination of functional screening and a microarray system (Chigu et al. 2010). A wide variety of compounds were screened, and resulted in characterization of novel cytochrome P450 functions and discovery of a versatile cytochrome P450 that exhibit broad substrate profiles. The authors (Hirosue et al. 2011) suggested that multifunctional properties of the versatile cytochrome P450s would play crucial roles in diversification of fungal metabolic systems involved in xenobiotic degradation.

B. Experimental Systems

Comparative analysis of the genomes of wood decay fungi has provided considerable insight into oxidative systems. Interpretations are relatively clear in some cases, such as the importance of class II ligninolytic peroxidases (LiP, MnP, VP) in white-rot, but not brown-rot, decay. Likewise, the diminished repertoire of cellulases in brown-rot relative to white-rot

genomes is consistent with a mechanism of cellulose depolymerization involving hydroxyl radicals. Nevertheless, the roles and interactions of thousands of genes remain uncertain.

High throughput transcriptome and secretome approaches rarely provide complete functional understanding. Instead, the methods allow the number of gene models to be filtered to a more manageable subset that is worthy of more detailed investigations. Whole genome microarrays and RNAseq have been used extensively to assess transcript levels and regulation, principally under conditions favoring lignocellulose degradation. Microarrays representing *P. chrysosporium* P450 genes have identified those induced by various organopollutants (Doddapaneni and Yadav 2005). Proteome analysis has involved mass spectrometry-based identification of 2DE-separated proteins (Abbas et al. 2004; Shimizu et al. 2005; Ravalaan et al. 2008; Hori et al. 2011), of peptides tagged for iTRAQ quantitation (Manavalan et al. 2011), and of concentrated total extracellular proteins (Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2005, 2006a, 2009, 2010, 2011).

A disconcerting aspect of these studies has been the imposing numbers of highly expressed and/or regulated genes encoding proteins of unknown function. Considering *P. chrysosporium* grown under nutrient starvation or in Avicel medium, 193 upregulated genes are predicted to encode 'hypothetical proteins'. Of these, 54 were unambiguously detected in extracellular filtrates by nanoLC-MS/MS (Vanden Wymelenberg et al. 2009). A total of 55, 32, and 14 'unknown proteins' were also identified in cultures of *P. chrysosporium*, *P. placenta*, and *C. subvermispora* respectively, containing complex lignocellulose substrates. Functional analysis of these hypothetical proteins represents a daunting challenge.

1. Genetic Tools

A major obstacle to research has been the lack of refined genetic tools for functional analysis and, potentially, for strain improvement. In the absence of monokaryons, genome assembly and annotation can be substantially

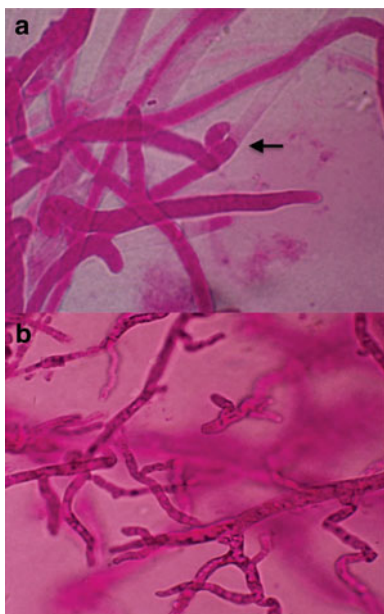


Fig. 5.2. Light microscopy of phloxine-stained *Postia placenta* hyphae. **Panel A:** sequenced parental dikaryon showing a clamp connection (arrow) that are commonly, but not always, observed in dikaryons. **Panel B:** typical of monokaryotic derivatives, no clamp connections are observed in the single basidiospore progeny

complicated by dikaryosis (Martinez et al. 2009), the typical nuclear conditions of agaricomycetes (Fig. 5.2). Genetic transformation for *P. chrysosporium* includes auxotroph complementation (Alic et al. 1989, 1990, 1991; Alic 1990; Randall et al. 1991; Akileswaran et al. 1993; Zapanta et al. 1998) and by drug resistance markers (Randall et al. 1989, 1991; Randall and Reddy 1992; Gessner and Raeder 1994). Transformation efficiencies are low, and gene targeting difficult (Alic et al. 1993). Still, reporters for studying gene expression have been described (Gettemy et al. 1997; Birch et al. 1998; Ma et al. 2001), homologous gene expression has proven useful, and RNA interference has been used to suppress Mn-dependent superoxide dismutase gene expression (Matityahu et al. 2008).

Beyond *P. chrysosporium*, *P. ostreatus* offers transformation protocols (Yanai et al. 1996; Honda et al. 2000; Irie et al. 2001; Sunagawa and Magae 2002) as well as methodology for physical (Larraya et al. 1999) and genetic

mapping (Eichlerova-Volakova and Homolka 1997; Eichlerova and Homolka 1999; Larraya et al. 2000, 2002). *Trametes versicolor* has also been transformed with drug resistance vectors (Bartholomew et al. 2001; Kim et al. 2002), and gene disruptions have been reported (Dumoncaux et al. 2001). Recently, RNAi targeting of *P. ostreatus mnp3* was shown to suppress azo dye decolorization (Salame et al. 2010, 2011). RNAi provides a powerful tool, but suppression is often incomplete and the results further confounded by ectopic integration events.

In contrast to yeasts and many ascomycetes, filamentous basidiomycetes generally give low frequencies of homologous recombination. Recent advances have been made with *C. cinereus* (Nakazawa et al. 2011) and *Schizophyllum commune* (de Jong et al. 2010) strains in which nonhomologous end joining has been impaired by Ku knockouts. This approach substantially enhances the efficiency of gene targeting, but the species are inefficient lignin degraders.

Addressing this issue, a $\Delta ku80$ strain has been constructed in *P. ostreatus* (Salame et al. 2012). The recipient strain is similar to the parent with respect to growth, ligninolytic potential, and mating ability. Gene replacement showed 100 % homologous recombination, and the transformants remained stable in the absence of drug selection (Salame et al. 2012). By inactivation of a VP (*mnp4*), the enzyme was proven to be a major component of the ligninolytic system under Mn limitation. Thus, the system facilitates the efficient gene replacement in *P. ostreatus* and complements RNAi approaches.

2. Biochemical Tools

Efficient heterologous expression systems have been key to advancing our understanding of gene function, especially those encoding low levels of closely related proteins in the native systems. In particular, *E. coli* production and activation of peroxidases have been critical for evaluating catalytic properties (Doyle and Smith 1996; Nie et al. 1998). Similarly, co-expression of membrane-bound P450 monooxygenases with a reductase partner in *Pichia* has been essential for identifying P450s with activity against PAHs and

other compounds (Syed et al. 2010). Garcia-Ruiz and co-workers demonstrated the usefulness of *S. cerevisiae* for directed evolution of *P. eryngii* VP, and achieved improvements in secretion and activity. Additional rounds of evolution have enhanced VP stability in terms of temperature-, peroxide- and alkaline pH-tolerance (Garcia-Ruiz et al. 2012). Also using *S. cerevisiae* as host, directed evolution has improved a basidiomycete laccase. Enzyme stability related to temperature, pH, and organic solvents has been enhanced through a strategy that combines directed evolution with rational approaches (Mate et al. 2010).

IV. Current Research and Future Prospects

The advances made in recent years in biochemistry, genomics, and genome function studies of white-rot fungi provide a large amount of information on the mechanisms of degradation of a wide range of natural and xenobiotic aromatic hazardous compounds.

However, the conversion of this vast theoretical knowledge into practical biotechnology is limited. It is thus challenging to bridge this gap by identifying and resolving bottlenecks. The availability of increasing numbers of fungal genomes is an important step forward, but at the same time presents new challenges related to gene modeling, annotation, and meaningful phylogenetic comparisons. **Functional analyses of the hypothetical proteins remain a particularly daunting task.** Genetic approaches and possibly biochemical analysis of purified protein might be helpful, but the latter approach generally assumes that assays are available.

In addition to new discoveries related to the pathways of xenobiotic degradation, it could be important to identify new genes with traits that can support growth and activity of the fungi under environmental stress, and provide the ability to compete with bacteria. This may help moving from controlled sterile conditions to natural environments. In this connection, metatranscriptomics offer exciting new opportunities for identifying microbes and genes in

organopollutant-contaminated soils (Damon et al. 2012; de Menezes et al. 2012).

Such investigations could lead to new strategies for improving the fitness of bioremediation strains via specialized inoculum preparation and/or genetic alterations. The latter might be augmented by altering expression of genes directly involved in xenobiotic degradation, such as specific peroxidases and CyP genes. Further strain improvements might focus on the expression of genes indirectly influencing oxidative enzyme systems. Examples include H_2O_2 -generating enzymes that could enhance peroxidase catalysis or supply reactants for Fenton chemistry.

Genome analysis of wood-decay fungi contributes to our fundamental understanding of lignin degradation, a pivotal but incompletely understood, element of the carbon cycle. Ultimately, increasing genome resources will elucidate mechanisms of ligninolysis, and simultaneously serve as a framework for development of effective bioremediation and related bioprocesses.

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