Genome Evolution in an Insect Cell: Distinct Features of an Ant-Bacterial Partnership

JENNIFER J. WERNEGREEN,* PATRICK H. DEGNAN, ADAM B. LAZARUS, CARMEN PALACIOS, AND SETH R. BORDENSTEIN

Josephine Bay Paul Center for Comparative Molecular Biology and Evolution, Marine Biological Laboratory, 7 MBL Street, Woods Hole, Massachusetts 02543

Bacteria that live exclusively within eukaryotic host cells include not only well-known pathogens, but also obligate mutualists, many of which occur in diverse insect groups such as aphids, psyllids, tsetse flies, and the ant genus Camponotus (Buchner, 1965; Douglas, 1998; Moran and Telang, 1998; Baumann et al., 2000; Moran and Baumann, 2000). In contrast to intracellular pathogens, these primary (P) endosymbionts of insects are required for the survival and reproduction of the host, exist within specialized host cells called bacteriocytes, and undergo stable maternal transmission through host lineages (Buchner, 1965; McLean and Houk, 1973). Due to their long-term host associations and close phylogenetic relationship with well-characterized enterobacteria (Fig. 1), P-endosymbionts of insects are ideal model systems to examine changes in genome content and architecture that occur in the context of beneficial, intracellular associations. Since these bacteria have not been cultured outside of the host cell, they are difficult to study with traditional genetic or physiological approaches. However, in recent years, molecular and computational approaches have provided important insights into their genetic diversity and ecological significance. This review describes some recent insights into the evolutionary genetics of obligate insect-bacteria symbioses, with a particular focus on an intriguing association between the bacterial endosymbiont Blochmannia and its ant hosts.

* To whom correspondence should be addressed. E-mail: jwernegreen@mbl.edu

The paper was originally presented at a workshop titled Outcomes of Genome-Genome Interactions. The workshop, which was held at the J. Erik Jonsson Center of the National Academy of Sciences, Woods Hole, Massachusetts, from 1–3 May 2002, was sponsored by the Center for Advanced Studies in the Space Life Sciences at the Marine Biological Laboratory, and funded by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration under Cooperative Agreement NCC 2-1266

The specific functions of most insect P-endosymbionts remain unknown. However, the typically unbalanced diets of their hosts suggest these bacteria play a nutritional role. In fact, nutritional functions are well documented in certain P-endosymbionts such as Buchnera aphidicola, which provides essential amino acids that are lacking in the plant sap diet of its aphid host (Sandstrom et al., 2000), and Wigglesworthia glossinidia, which provisions its tsetse fly host with B-complex vitamins lacking in vertebrate blood (Nogge, 1981; Aksoy, 2000). The bacterium SOPE (Sitophilus oryzae primary endosymbiont) oxidizes excess methionine consumed by the weevil (Gasnier-Fauchet and Nardon, 1986) and increases mitochondrial enzymatic activity of the host by providing vitamins such as panthothenic acid and riboflavin (Wicker and Nardon, 1982; Heddi et al., 1991, 1999). Blattobacterium, a symbiont that lives within fat bodies of cockroaches, may be involved in tyrosine biosynthesis (Goldberg and Pierre, 1969) and apparently recycles uric acid of the host, as evidenced by elevated uric acid levels in hosts from which the bacteria have been eliminated (Cochoran, 1985). The biosynthetic abilities of these bacteria allow hosts to exploit food sources and habitats that would otherwise be inadequate; therefore, symbiont acquisition can be viewed as a key innovation in the evolution of these insect lineages (Moran and Telang, 1998). Indeed, sister genera lacking P-endosymbionts typically utilize a different, more nutrient-rich dietary resource (Nardon and Grenier, 1991). These insect-bacteria relationships are reciprocally beneficial, as the highly specialized bacteria rely on the host cellular environment for their survival.

We are studying the evolutionary outcome of an obligate association between ants and a bacterial endosymbiont recently designated Candidatus Blochmannia gen. nov. (Blochmannia) (Sauer et al., 2000). This bacterium lives...
within host cells that are typically adjacent to or within the midgut epithelium, and forms an obligate association with at least three closely related genera in the ant subfamily Formicinae: Polyrhachis, Colobopsis, and Camponotus (Dasch et al., 1984; Schroder et al., 1996; Sameshima et al., 1999). Camponotus is the second largest ant genus; it includes 931 species and is found in almost every biogeographic region (Bolton, 1995). Although Blochmannia is the best characterized ant endosymbiont, we know little about its gene content and nothing about its functional role. Building upon relatively rich molecular datasets currently available for Buchnera and Wigglesworthia, we are using comparative approaches to explore the impact of endosymbiosis on sequence and genome evolution in Blochmannia, including rates and patterns of DNA and protein sequence evolution and changes in genome size and content. In future work, genomic comparisons and experimental approaches promise to shed light on the physiological and ecological roles of this bacterium.

**Forces Shaping Sequence Evolution in Endosymbionts**

*Phylogenetic analysis of insect mutualists*

Analyses of 16S rDNA genes show that many insect endosymbionts group with the γ-3 subdivision of Proteobacteria, along with Escherichia coli and related enterobacteria (Fig. 1) (Munson et al., 1991; Schroder et al., 1996; Sameshima et al., 1999). Furthermore, many previous studies suggest that Buchnera, Wigglesworthia, and Blochmannia share a very close phylogenetic relationship and may be monophyletic (e.g., Schroder et al., 1996; Spaulding and von Dohlen, 1998; Sauer et al., 2000). However, these phylogenies were often estimated using maximum parsimony or distance approaches, which may be highly biased by the fast evolutionary rates and strong AT bias of endosymbiont sequences. In contrast, maximum likelihood analysis (Fig. 1) strongly suggests that Buchnera is phylogenetically distinct from Wigglesworthia and Blochmannia, but that the last two are closely related to each other. This aspect of the phylogeny agrees with that proposed by Charles et al. (2001). Multiple, independent origins of endosymbiotic lifestyles are not entirely surprising, since endosymbiotic bacteria have arisen in many classes of bacteria, including α-Proteobacteria, β-Proteobacteria, and flavobacteria (Douglas, 1989; Moran and Telang, 1998).

Indeed, multiple origins of endosymbiosis within the γ-Proteobacteria makes this group an ideal model to explore (i) phylogenetically independent transitions to an endosymbiotic lifestyle (e.g., Buchnera versus Wigglesworthia and Blochmannia), and (ii) adaptation of closely related bacterial species to quite different host associations (Wigglesworthia versus Blochmannia).

The phylogenies of P-endosymbionts within a single host system are generally congruent with their hosts’ species, indicating that the symbiont origin traces back to a single, often ancient, infection event within each host group. This pattern of host-symbiont cospeciation has been demonstrated for the aphid-Buchnera symbiosis (Munson et al., 1991; Clark et al., 2000; Funk et al., 2000), the tsetse fly-Wigglesworthia symbiosis (Chen et al., 1999), and the psyllid-Carsonella symbiosis (Thao et al., 2000). Thus, in contrast to facultative symbions or pathogens that can transfer horizontally to new hosts, P-endosymbionts have been vertically inherited over long evolutionary timescales. These ancient insect-bacterial associations date back as far as 150-200 MYA for the aphid-Buchnera association (Munson et al., 1991) and about 50-100 MYA for tsetse fly-Wigglesworthia (Moran and Wernegreen, 2000). Phylogenetic congruence between Camponotus and Blochmannia also holds true across a large number of host species (Sameshima et al., 1999; Sauer et al., 2000; P. H. Degnan et al., unpubl. data) as well as within a single Camponotus species (A. B. Lazarus et al., unpubl. data), indicating the ant-bacterial association is evolutionarily stable and at least as old as the genus Camponotus (>20 MY; Wilson, 1985) if not even older.

**Population bottlenecks and genetic drift**

Maternal transmission of P-endosymbionts is thought to impose a population bottleneck that reduces the number of bacteria passed on from mother to offspring (Mira and Moran, 2002). Successive bottlenecks throughout the evolution of these ancient associations are expected to reduce the effective population size ($N_e$) of the bacterial partner. Consequently, endosymbiont population sizes may be determined by insect host population sizes, which are orders of magnitude smaller than the extremely large populations of free-living bacteria ($N_e \sim 10^9$ for species of enterobacteria; Selander et al., 1987). Models of nearly neutral evolution predict that reduced $N_e$ will lower the efficacy of natural selection and will elevate rates of fixation of deleterious mutations through random genetic drift (Ohta, 1973). Over time, the accumulation of deleterious mutations may negatively affect the fitness of the symbiont and host (Rispe and Moran, 2000; Wernegreen and Moran, 2000). Exacerbating the effect of genetic drift in P-endosymbionts is their apparent lack of recombination among genetically distinct lineages (Funk et al., 2000; Wernegreen and Moran, 2001). This strict asexuality contrasts with recombination in free-living bacterial strains, and may produce an effect known as Muller’s ratchet (Muller, 1964, Moran, 1996) in which genetic drift in small populations is increased because wild-type genotypes cannot be introduced through recombination.

Several studies show that the repair of slightly deleterious mutations is important in shaping sequence evolution of P-endosymbionts. Evidence for drift includes fast rates of
sequence evolution, changes that destabilize the 16S rRNA secondary structure, elevated rates of amino acid substitutions, and higher ratio of nonsynonymous to synonymous substitutions (dN/dS) compared to free-living bacteria (Moran, 1996; Brynnel et al., 1998; Lambert and Moran, 1998; Wernegreen and Moran, 1999; Clark et al., 1999). Similarly, protein-coding genes of Blochmannia show accelerated rates of evolution and elevated dN/dS, suggesting this ant symbiont may also experience strong genetic drift (unpubl. data). Pervasive acceleration of protein evolution across the genome is not easily explained by relaxed or positive selection, which is expected to act at individual genes. Nor can elevated mutation alone explain the observed rate increase, since mutation would affect dN and dS equally, with no expected change in dN/dS. Finally, population genetic analyses of Buchnera associated with two aphid species show low levels of sequence polymorphism consistent with population bottlenecks, and an excess of rare alleles and nonsynonymous polymorphisms that suggest strong effects of genetic drift (Funk et al., 2001; Abbot and Moran, 2002). In total, the pervasive rate elevation across genes, elevated dN/dS, and intraspecific polymorphism data are most consistent with reduced efficacy of selection across the genome due to genetic drift in small populations. Intra-cellular pathogens also show elevated rates of protein evolution that suggest genome degradation through genetic drift (Andersson and Andersson, 1999).

On a related note, a recent study attributed accelerated protein evolution in Buchnera to mutational bias alone (Itoh et al., 2002). The authors argued against any role of genetic drift, on the basis that Buchnera presumably did not show an increase in dN/dS. However, the dN and dS values used to calculate this ratio were derived from different studies of different Buchnera loci. Thus, the apparent lack of elevated dN/dS must be weighed against the results of several studies that show a significant elevation of this ratio when dN and dS are calculated from the same dataset (Moran, 1996; Brynnel et al., 1998; Wernegreen and Moran, 1999; Clark et al., 1999). Itoh et al. (2002) also raise the intriguing suggestion that if slightly deleterious mutations are fixed in populations over time, these mutations will eventually render all genes functionless. However, mutations that severely impair or eliminate functions of necessary genes are not slightly deleterious; rather, these mutations would have high selective coefficients and would be eliminated even from small endosymbiont populations. For example, in the AT-rich Buchnera genome, high-expression genes (e.g., chaperonins and ribosomal proteins) have distinct amino acid usage patterns compared to genes with putatively low expression levels (Palacios and Wernegreen, 2002). High-expression genes tend to use amino acids that are less aromatic and are encoded by relatively GC-rich codons, suggesting strong selection against aromatic amino acids and against amino acids with AT-rich codons. Thus, while AT mutational bias and genetic drift influence amino acid usage in Buchnera, selection at high-expression genes is sufficiently strong to attenuate the effects of mutational bias on amino acid content. We could generalize that, despite strong effects of genetic drift, selection still constrains deleterious amino acid changes in Buchnera, especially at high-expression loci.

Mutational bias in endosymbionts: random or adaptive?

Along with genetic drift, intracellular mutualists and pathogens also experience strong mutational pressure that, over time, can severely alter the base composition of their genomes. In contrast to the moderate base compositions of the enterics, sequences of intracellular bacteria are characterized by extremely low percentage content of GC (Fig. 2). A 37-kb fragment of the Carsonella ruddii genome was recently found to be just 19.9% GC, making this psyllid symbiont the most AT-rich bacterial genome yet characterized (Clark et al., 2001). Analysis of six kilobases of Blochmannia sequences (unpubl. data) corroborates earlier evidence of low GC content for this bacterial genome (~30% GC; Dasch, 1975). This AT bias has a strong impact on the amino acid composition of Buchnera, Carsonella, and Wigglesworthia proteins, which are highly biased toward amino acids encoded by AT-rich codons (Clark et al., 1999, 2001; Akman et al., 2002; Palacios and Wernegreen, 2002).

Two main hypotheses have been proposed to explain base compositional biases observed in most obligately intracellular mutualists and pathogens. First, AT richness may reflect strong mutational bias resulting from the loss of DNA repair genes by random genetic drift (Eisen and Hanawalt, 1999; Moran and Wernegreen, 2000). According to this hypothesis, an underlying AT mutational bias is repaired less efficiently in small intracellular genomes that lack certain repair functions. Second, AT bias may be an adaptive feature of an intracellular lifestyle, explained by the high energetic cost and lower accessibility of GTP and CTP compared to ATP and UTP (Rocha and Danchin, 2002). ATP, for example, plays a significant role in cellular metabolism and is the most abundant nucleotide. Under this hypothesis, a nucleotide pool biased toward UTP and ATP and a corresponding AT mutational bias would be more efficient and thus would allow intracellular bacteria to exploit the host cell more effectively. Selection on each GC→AT mutation would be miniscule, but selection might favor larger changes (such as gene loss) that contribute to an overall mutation bias. Consistent with this adaptive hypothesis, the AT contents of other intracellular elements (e.g., plasmids, phage, and insertion sequences) are also generally higher than those of their hosts, and base composition of phage corresponds to infection type, as virulent phages are more AT-rich than temperate ones (Rocha and Danchin, 2002).
Figure 1. Phylogenetic relationships among insect endosymbionts (boldface) and related γ-Proteobacteria, estimated from the 16S rDNA gene. Both maximum likelihood (ML) and Bayesian analyses give the tree topology presented. Values above nodes (in boldface) are bootstrap values for maximum likelihood analysis, and values below nodes are posterior probability values generated by the Bayesian analysis. Branch lengths reflect genetic distance under the maximum likelihood model used. This phylogeny strongly supports the following hypotheses: (i) a single origin of endosymbionts in the ancestor of the ant genera Camponotus, Colobopsis, and Polyrhachis, (ii) independent origins of symbiosis in the ants Formica and Plageolepis, and (iii), that Buchnera is a phylogenetically distinct lineage from Wigglesworthia and Blochmannia, which are closely related.

16S rDNA sequence data: Most 16S rDNA sequences were obtained from GenBank (with the exception new Blochmannia, obtained as described below). Nucleotide sequence accession numbers for other 16S rDNA sequences used in phylogenetic analysis are as follows: Antonina crawii S-endosymbiont AB030020; Buchnera-Acrythosiphon pisum (P-endosymbiont) NC002528; Arsenophonus-Triatoma infestans (S-endosymbiont) U91786; Colobopsis nipponicus endosymbiont AB018676; Dymicoccus neobrevipes S-endosymbiont AF476104; Enterobacter asburiae AB004744; Escherichia coli AB004757; Formica fusca endosymbiont AB018684; Wigglesworthia-Glossinia austeni (P-endosymbiont) AF022879; Wigglesworthia-Glossinia brevipalpis (P-endosymbiont) L37341; Glossinia pallidipes S-endosymbiont M99060; Haemophilus influenzae NC000907; Klebsiella pneumoniae NC000913; Erwinia herbicola AB004757; Proteus vulgaris J01874; Buchnera-Schiza-phis graminum (P-endosymbiont) L18297; Sitophilus oryzae S-endosymbiont AF005235; Salmonella typhi-murium NC003197; Uroleucon austraeus S-endosymbiont (U type) AF293623; Yersinia pestis NC003143; Yamatocallis tokyoensis S-endosymbiont AB064515.

Obtaining Blochmannia 16S rDNA data: Genomic DNA was extracted from individual Camponotus festinatus and C. pennsylvanicus workers using the DNeasy tissue kit (Qiagen) according to the manufacturer’s instructions. This DNA was used as template for PCR reaction using SL and SR universal eubacterial 16S rDNA primers (Schroder et al., 1996). The single 1.6-kb band PCR product was then cleaned up using a column purification kit (Qiagen) and sequenced on an ABI 3700 automated sequencer. SL, SR, and two internal primers were used to sequence the PCR product. The resulting sequences were assembled and edited using PHRED,
Notable exceptions to the link between an intracellular lifestyle and AT bias include the relatively GC-rich genomes of the pathogen *Mycobacterium leprae* (57.8% GC; Cole et al., 2001); the weevil endosymbiont, SOPE (54% GC; Heddi et al., 1998); and the β-Proteobacterial subdivision endosymbiont of mealybugs, *Tremblaya* (57.1% GC across a 35-kb region; Baumann et al., 2002). Interestingly, both SOPE and *M. leprae* also differ from most other obligately intracellular bacteria in having relatively large genome sizes (~3 Mb and 3.27 Mb, respectively) (Fig. 2). The genome size of *Tremblaya* is unknown, but its close relative *Burkholderia pseudomallei* has a very large genome (7.25 Mb; unpubl. data of the *B. pseudomallei* Sequencing Group at the Sanger Institute; http://www.sanger.ac.uk/Projects/B_pseudomallei/). These larger genomes may retain DNA repair functions that are missing from small, AT-rich genomes of most intracellular bacteria. Understanding the physiology of *M. leprae*, in particular, may help to distinguish whether the AT mutual bias of most intracellular bacteria is due to a loss of DNA repair functions by genetic drift or to selection for energetic efficiency. This pathogen experiences elevated mutation rates that drive genome deterioration, yet is relatively GC-rich. The hypothesis of adaptive mutual bias would predict that *M. leprae* has access to more energetic resources and competes less severely with its host for nutrients.

### Genome Evolution in Endosymbionts: Size Matters

Full genome sequences of endosymbionts have provided new insights into the mechanisms and consequences of genome reduction. Recently published endosymbiont genomes include those of *Buchnera aphidicola* associated with the pea aphid *Acyrthosiphon pisum* (Ap) (Shigenobu et al., 2000), the greenbug *Schizaphis graminum* (Sg) (Tamas et al., 2002), and the gall-forming aphid *Baizongia pictacea* (van Ham et al., 2003); and *Wigglesworthia glossinidia* of the tsetse fly *Glossina brevipalpis* (Akman et al., 2002). Additional endosymbiont genomes, including that of *Blochmannia*, are being sequenced.

Comparative genome analyses illustrate striking parallels between P-endosymbionts of insects and intracellular pathogens. As described previously, pathogens and insect mutualists are characterized by reductive genome evolution, a syndrome that includes severely reduced genome size compared to free-living bacterial relatives, elevated rates of sequence evolution, and low genomic GC contents (Andersson and Kurland, 1998) (Fig. 1). The small chromosome sizes of *Buchnera* (450-650 kb; Charles and Ishikawa, 1999; Wernegreen et al., 2000; Gil et al., 2002) and *Wigglesworthia* (698 kb; Akman et al., 2002) imply substantial gene loss since their divergence from the enteric bacteria (4.5-5.5 Mb genome size range for *E. coli*; Bergthorsson and Ochman, 1995). Because most bacterial genomes contain primarily coding DNA, genome reduction in endosymbionts

---

**PHRAP, and CONSED.** These 16S rDNA genes of *Blochmannia-C*, *pennsylvaniae* and *Blochmannia-C festinatus* are assigned GenBank accession numbers AY196850 and AY196851, respectively.

**Phylogenetic analysis methods:** Alignments were created using the Ribosomal Database Project II sequence aligner (Maidak et al., 2001), then manually edited in MacClade v. 4.05 (Maddison and Maddison, 2002). Maximum likelihood parameters were identified according to the Akaike information criterion (AIC) of Modeltest v. 3.06 (Posada and Crandall, 1998). The most likely model was a general time reversible (GTR) model in which invariant sites and the gamma distribution were estimated from the data. The optimized parameters (Rmat = 0.8676 4.6744 2.0447 1.0516 7.4521), shape of gamma distribution = 0.5300, and proportion of invariant sites = 0.5115 were used for all ML searches. The tree topology presented is the consensus of 100 separate heuristic ML searches, each starting from random trees, using PAUP v. 4.0b10; (Swofford, 2002). ML bootstrap values were determined from 100 bootstrap replicates, with each replicate starting from 10 random trees. Replicates were performed in parallel on a Beowulf cluster using the clusterpaup program (A.G. McArthur, http://jbpc.mbl.edu/mcarthur). Bayesian analysis was performed on the same data matrix (MrBayes ver. 2.01; Huelsenbeck and Ronquist, 2001) by running four simultaneous chains for 300,000 generations, sampling every 100 generations. Stationarity in likelihood scores was determined by plotting the lnL against the generation. All trees below the observed stationarity level were discarded, resulting in a “burn in” of 5000 generations. The 50% majority-rule consensus tree was determined to calculate the posterior probabilities for each node. The selected model for Bayesian analysis was the GTR, using empirical base frequencies, and estimating the shape of the gamma distribution and proportion of invariant sites from the data. The Bayesian tree with the best likelihood score was identical to the ML tree presented, and the parameter values across this tree were virtually identical to those obtained in the ML analysis.

Limited sequence data (<570 bp of 16S rDNA gene) were available for four taxa included in the phylogeny (*Formica fusca, Plagiolepis pigmaea, Polyrhachis lamellidens* and *Colobopsis nipponicus*), compared to >1202 bp available for the rest of the taxa. Removal of these four taxa from ML, or Bayesian analysis did not affect the overall tree topology; however, their removal greatly increased the statistical confidence in the node marked with the open circle. Comparisons of these analyses indicate that including *Plagiolepis pigmaea* drives down the confidence in that node, and suggest ambiguity in its position on the tree. However, given the incomplete sequence for that endosymbiont, this topology is the best estimate of its phylogenetic placement.
must involve the loss of metabolic functions and may have important, irreversible phenotypic implications (Moran and Wernegreen, 2000; Ochman and Moran, 2001). Strong genetic drift may contribute to this observed genome reduction by increasing the selective coefficient required to maintain a given gene in the genome (Lawrence and Roth, 1999).

Full genome sequences have taught us that obligate pathogens and mutualists retain a disproportionate number of essential genes (e.g., those for cellular processes, translation, and protein fate and transcription), and have lost many genes for metabolic diversity that may be redundant in a nutrient-rich, relatively constant intracellular environment. As described above, the loss of DNA repair functions in these small genomes may contribute to elevated mutation
rates and AT mutational biases in pathogens and mutualists alike (Andersson and Andersson, 1999). The depletion of metabolic capabilities accounts for the inability to culture P-endosymbionts and obligate pathogens apart from a eukaryotic cell, and may constrain the ability of these bacteria to switch among lifestyles (Tamas et al., 2002). For example, a lack of gene acquisition in Buchnera implies that this small genome cannot regain critical metabolic functions required for extracellular existence, nor can it acquire virulence loci or novel biosynthetic functions that could mediate new host associations.

In contrast to intracellular pathogens, the fitness of obligate mutualists depends not just upon their own replication and transmission but also on the success of their host. Not surprisingly, despite severe gene loss in most functional categories, endosymbiont genomes show conspicuous signatures of host-level selection and retain specific functions that are important for survival and reproduction of the insect (Zientz et al., 2001). For example, Wigglesworthia retains genes encoding the biosynthesis of cofactors, prosthetic groups, and carriers, which is consistent with its known nutritional function for the host (Akman et al., 2002). Likewise, Buchnera retains the genetic potential to synthesize practically all essential amino acids (Shigenobu et al., 2000; Tamas et al., 2002; van Ham et al., 2003), as expected from its primary role to supplement the plant sap diet of the host (Sandström et al., 2000). Nutrient exchange between Buchnera and its aphid host is complementary and mutually dependent (Shigenobu et al., 2000); because it lacks the genes to synthesize them, the symbiont must import nonessential amino acids from the cytoplasm of its host. Another example of genome interdependence is that Buchnera can perform the pantothenate-to-pyruvate reaction, but only the host can convert pyruvate to CoA. Thus, while genomes of P-endosymbionts and pathogens show striking parallels, mutualists show reciprocally beneficial integration with host metabolism that is lacking in chronic pathogens.

**Bacterial Associates of Ants: Distribution and Possible Functions**

*Independent origins of symbiosis in the Formicinae*

Ants have evolved a wide range of interactions with other species, including plants, fungi, other insects, and as discovered more recently, associations with diverse bacteria (e.g., Dasch et al., 1984; Boursaux-Eude and Gross, 2000; Currie, 2001). These bacterial associates include intracellular endosymbionts, like Blochmannia, that live exclusively within ant cells. In contrast to the bacteriocytes of aphids and many other insects, ant cells that house beneficial bacteria are typically located beside or within the midgut epithelium (Dasch et al., 1984). For example, *in situ* analysis shows that Blochmannia of Camponotus occurs exclusively in ant ovaries, consistent with its maternal transmission, and within bacteriocytes that are intercalated among enterocytes of the ant midgut (Sauer et al., 2002). Phylogenetic analysis (Fig. 1) and a previous study (Sameshima et al., 1999) suggest a single infection of Blochmannia prior to the divergence of Camponotus, Colobopsis, and Polyrhachis.

Bacteria related to Blochmannia infect the formicid genera Formica, in which the presence of symbionts varies among species, and Plagiolepis, which is poorly studied to date (reviewed in Dasch et al., 1984). These bacteria can vary in their location within the ant host. In contrast to the endosymbionts of Blochmannia, those of Formica and Plagiolepis are not intercalated among midgut cells, but form symmetrical unicellular layers of bacteriocytes on either side of the midgut epithelium. Unlike the straight rods (1 μM by 5-15 μM) of Blochmannia, the Formica and Plagiolepis endosymbionts are shorter (3-4 μM) and crescent-shaped (Dasch et al., 1984). Consistent with observed differences in bacterial morphologies and location in the host, the Formica and Plagiolepis endosymbionts are probably the results of independent infections (Fig. 1). The actual abundance, diversity, and origins of endosymbionts in ants remain unknown, since most ant taxa have not been tested for bacterial associates.

**Possible functions of endosymbionts in ants: food and pheromones?**

The function of even the best-studied ant endosymbiont, Blochmannia, remains a mystery. In a thorough study of the distribution of Blochmannia within host tissues, Camponotus workers were cured of their endosymbionts with no obvious harmful effects to laboratory reared animals (Sauer et al., 2002). The ants’ apparent ability to exist without Blochmannia raises the question of whether these endosymbionts are required for survival, or whether the presence of the bacteria is a relict from a past mutualism. However, the presence of Blochmannia in all Camponotus species sampled thus far and the long-term maintenance of this symbiosis suggest an important benefit to the host.

Whether Blochmannia plays a dietary role in ants is difficult to answer. It is clear that selection has favored mutualistic endosymbionts in specialized feeders, but Camponotus spp. are usually considered omnivorous and are thought to consume a wide assortment of arthropods and plant matter, in addition to homopteran secretions (Dasch et al., 1984; Hölldobler and Wilson, 1990). Certain Camponotus species clearly have an unbalanced diet, particularly those species that live in the canopy of tropical rain forests and feed primarily on extrafloral nectar and insect exudates. Stable isotope technologies have determined the nitrogen (N) sources for several ant species in field populations (Davidson, 1997, 1998). Isotope profiles of many arboreal ants, including certain species of Camponotus and Polyrhachis, resemble those of herbivores (i.e., low delta N) and
may even resemble those of sap-feeding insects (with still lower delta N values) (Davidson, 1997, 1998). The ancestral host of *Blochmannia* might have fed on a similarly restricted diet. However, given the current habitat diversity of its hosts (including live and dead trees and soil, across temperate, desert, and tropical regions), it seems unlikely that diets of all extant *Camponotus, Polyrhachis*, and *Colobopsis* are lacking any single nutrient that *Blochmannia* could provide.

Ant endosymbionts might also play a secondary nutritional role by augmenting an existing metabolic process in the host. For example, SOPE (the aforementioned weevil symbiont and a close relative of *Blochmannia*) has a positive effect on weevil mitochondrial enzymatic activity that results in increased female fertility, decreased larval development time, and longer flight distances (Heddi et al., 1999). If *Blochmannia* had similar effects in ants, these traits would be especially advantageous to young ant queens starting new colonies. Any symbiont-induced increase in energetic efficiency would provide an important selective advantage during colony founding (Dasch, 1975). This stage of the colony life cycle imposes severe intra- and interspecific competition, when the queen must find an appropriate nesting site, raise a small worker force entirely from her own energy reserves, and then rely on this first generation of daughters to establish a viable colony (Hölldobler and Wilson, 1990). The gradual loss of bacteria from older queens (Sauer et al., 2002) suggests that the significance of *Blochmannia* may lie in colony founding and growth rather than in adult maintenance. The fact that *Blochmannia* has been found only in formicine genera with relatively large body sizes (Dasch et al., 1984; Samek et al., 1999) deserves further investigation. The larger body size of these genera might reflect a longstanding relationship with a bacterium that increases metabolic efficiency.

In addition, pheromones and hydrocarbons mediate important behaviors ranging from kin recognition to suppression of non-queen egg-laying (Hölldobler and Wilson, 1990). It is possible that *Blochmannia* manufactures a component of these complex organic molecules. Unlike other P-endosymbionts that are sequestered within discrete bacteriocytes in the host body cavity, *Blochmannia* might be able to mediate precursors that it requires directly from the lumen of the gut. The proximity of *Blochmannia* to raw materials could augment pheromone production to any number of the ant’s excretory glands. For example, it has been suggested that *Blochmannia* may play some role in producing the pheromones that *Camponotus* uses for food recruitment (Sauer, 2000).

In addition, a potential role of *Blochmannia* in ant reproduction is intriguing, and may involve genetic conflicts in the colony. Research on other maternally transmitted bacteria of insects (e.g., *Wolbachia*) has also illustrated that some endosymbionts can dramatically affect host reproduction, through feminization, male-killing, parthenogenesis, and cytoplasmic incompatibility (O’Neill et al., 1998). All these effects impart a fitness advantage to the bacteria by increasing the number of transmitting hosts (e.g., females) in a population. If *Blochmannia* is similarly involved in manipulating ant reproduction and sex ratios toward females, it would in part share this “preference” with colony workers, who are also favored to manipulate sex ratios owing to relatedness asymmetries under haplodiploid genetics. In a haplodiploid genetic system (diploid females produced from fertilized eggs and haploid males produced from unfertilized eggs), workers are more closely related to their sisters (3/4) than to either their brothers (1/4) or mothers (1/2) (Hölldobler and Wilson, 1990). Workers can therefore increase their inclusive fitness by preferentially caring for sisters or killing male larvae, resulting in an increase in the number of females produced (Sundstrom et al., 1996; Chapuisat et al., 1997; Passera et al., 2001; Hammond et al., 2002). With similar interests in increased female production, *Blochmannia* and workers could be considered allies in their respective genetic conflicts. However, this is speculative, and further research is needed to explore potential links among *Blochmannia*, pheromone production, and sex ratios of the host.

### Genome evolution in *Blochmannia*

To further explore the effects of symbiosis on bacterial genome size and architecture, the genome size of *Blochmannia* was estimated using pulsed-field gel electrophoresis (Wernegreen et al., 2002). Like other P-endosymbionts, *Blochmannia* has a very small genome (~809 kb) that contrasts with the much larger genomes of related enterobacteria. Clearly, *Blochmannia* has deleted most of the genetic machinery of free-living and commensal bacterial species, and consequently depends entirely upon its eukaryotic host. Since *Blochmannia* and other obligate endosymbionts experience restricted gene exchange, this severe gene loss may reflect irreversible specialization to the host cellular environment.

It is difficult to predict the gene content of *Blochmannia* when its functional role in the ant symbiosis is so unclear. However, the gene complements of fully sequenced insect mutualists such as *Wigglesworthia* might provide some hints (Akman et al., 2002). Like *Wigglesworthia*, *Blochmannia* is probably a relatively young symbiont (~30–40 MY old), has a slightly larger genome size than *Buchnera*, and lives directly within cytoplasm rather than host-derived membranes (Sauer et al., 2000). Therefore, *Blochmannia* may retain certain characteristics of free-living bacteria that have been found in *Wigglesworthia*, such as a robust cell membrane and perhaps a flagellar apparatus (Akman et al., 2002). The strong AT bias of this symbiont might reflect the depletion of DNA repair pathways (Andersson and Anders-
Insects with bacteriocyte-associated symbionts (Andersson and Kurland, 1990) contrasts with the strict, unbalanced diets of other sucking insects and suggests that this bacteria has an alternative role. Future blood diet of tsetse flies, the grain diet of certain weevils) and evidence for mutational bias and genetic drift. How- ever, Blochmannia also shows important differences, including its distinct location among midgut-associated cells, and its slightly larger genome size compared to many other P-endosymbionts. The proximity of Blochmannia to the ant midgut suggests that the bacteria may provide the host with essential nutrients. However, the relatively complex and diverse diet of Camponotus hosts (Hölldobler and Wilson, 1990) contrasts with the strict, unbalanced diets of other insects with bacteriocyte-associated symbionts (e.g., the phloem diet of aphids and other sap-sucking insects, the blood diet of tsetse flies, the grain diet of certain weevils) and suggests that this bacteria has an alternative role. Future genomic studies of Blochmannia may inform our understanding of its physiological and ecological significance for the host, which is currently unknown. Genes that are specifically retained in Blochmannia will provide promising candidates for host-specific, functionally important loci in this bacterial-ant association and will be the subject of further study.

Conclusions and Prospects

Among obligate endosymbionts of insects, independent transitions to an intracellular lifestyle have been coupled with elevated rates of evolution, strong AT base compositional bias, and extreme genome reduction. This syndrome of reductive genome evolution parallels the patterns observed in chronic bacterial pathogens, and suggests that similar evolutionary forces operate across intracellular bacteria generally. Full genome sequences of Buchnera and Wigglesworthia have provided important insights into the evolutionary forces shaping mutualist genomes, including strong effects of mutational bias and genetic drift, but also host-level selection for beneficial traits. Determining the gene inventories of additional endosymbionts will allow comparisons among the diverse strategies by which mutualists specialize to their hosts, and the extent to which mutational pressure and genetic drift may limit their evolutionary potential.

Blochmannia, an obligate bacterial symbiont of ants, shows striking parallels with P-endosymbionts characterized to date, including close specialization with its insect host, reduced genome size compared to free-living relatives, and evidence for mutational bias and genetic drift. However, Blochmannia also shows important differences, including its distinct location among midgut-associated cells, and its slightly larger genome size compared to many other P-endosymbionts. The similarity of Blochmannia to the ant midgut suggests that the bacteria may provide the host with essential nutrients. However, the relatively complex and diverse diet of Camponotus hosts (Hölldobler and Wilson, 1990) contrasts with the strict, unbalanced diets of other insects with bacteriocyte-associated symbionts (e.g., the phloem diet of aphids and other sap-sucking insects, the blood diet of tsetse flies, the grain diet of certain weevils) and suggests that this bacteria has an alternative role. Future genomic studies of Blochmannia may inform our understanding of its physiological and ecological significance for the host, which is currently unknown. Genes that are specifically retained in Blochmannia will provide promising candidates for host-specific, functionally important loci in this bacterial-ant association and will be the subject of further study.

Acknowledgments

The authors thank Nancy Moran, Jennifer Wilcox, Serap Aksoy, Rita Rio, and Claude Rispe for helpful discussions about endosymbiont evolution and genomics. We are grateful to Diana Davidson, Dan Hahn, and Stefan Cover for sharing their expertise in the nutritional physiology and ecology of ants. We also thank the OGGI Workshop organizers Mitchell Sogin and Diana Jennings, and two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on the manuscript. This work was made possible by support to J.J.W. from the NIH (R01 GM62626-01), NSF (DEB 0089455), the Josephine Bay Paul and C. Michael Paul Foundation. C.P. received support from the NASA Astrobiology Institute (NCC2-1054). S.R.B. was supported by a National Research Council Associateship Award.

Literature Cited

Abbot, P., and N. A. Moran. 2002. Extremely low levels of genetic polymorphism in endosymbionts (Buchnera) of aphids (Pemphigus). Mol. Ecol. 11: 2649–2660.
Akman, L., A. Yamashita, H. Watanabe, K. Oshima, T. Shiiba, M. Hattori, and S. Aksoy. 2002. Genome sequence of the endocellular obligate symbiont of tsetse flies, Wigglesworthia glossinidia. Nat. Genet. 32: 402–407.
Aksoy, S. 2000. Tsetse—A haven for microorganisms. Parasitol. Today 16: 114–118.
Andersson, J. O., and S. G. Andersson. 1999. Insights into the evolutionary process of genome degradation. Curr. Opin. Genet. Dev. 9: 664–671.
Andersson, S. G., and C. G. Kurland. 1998. Reductive evolution of resident genomes. Trends Microbiol. 6: 263–268.
Baumann, L., M. L. Thao, J. M. Hess, M. W. Johnson, and P. Baumann. 2002. The genetic properties of the primary endosymbionts of mealybugs differ from those of other endosymbionts of plant sap-sucking insects. Appl. Environ. Microbiol. 68: 3198–3205.
Baumann, P., N. A. Moran, and L. Baumann. 2000. Bacteriocyte-associated endosymbionts of insects. In The Prokaryotes: An Evolving Electronic Resource for the Microbiological Community, 3rd edition, release 3.1, January 20, 2000. M. Dworkin et al., eds. [www.prokaryotes.com] Springer-Verlag, New York.
Bergthorson, U., and H. Ochman. 1995. Heterogeneity of genome sizes among natural isolates of Escherichia coli. J. Bacteriol. 177: 5784–5789.
Bolton, B. 1995. Identification Guide to the Ant Genera of the World. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.
Boursaux-Eude, C., and R. Gross. 2000. New insights into symbiotic associations between ants and bacteria. Res. Microbiol. 151: 513–519.
Brynnel, E. U., C. G. Kurland, N. A. Moran, and S. G. Andersson. 1998. Evolutionary rates for tuf genes in endosymbionts of aphids. Mol. Biol. Evol. 15: 574–582.
Buchner, P. 1965. Endosymbiosis of Animals With Plant Microorganisms. Interscience Publishers, Inc, New York.
Chapuisat, M., L. Sundstrom, and L. Keller. 1997. Sex-ratio regulation: the economics of fratricide in ants. Proc. Soc. Lond. B Biol. Sci. 264: 1255–1260.
Charles, H., and H. Ishikawa. 1999. Physical and genetic map of the genome of Buchnera, the primary endosymbiont of the pea aphid Acyrthosiphon pisum. J. Mol. Evol. 48: 142–150.
Charles, H., G. Condemine, C. Nardon, and P. Nardon. 1997. Genome size characterization of the endocellular symbiotic bacteria of the...
weevil *Sitophilus oryzae*, using pulse field gel electrophoresis. *Insect Biochem. Mol. Biol.* 27: 345–350.

Charles, H., A. Heddi, and Y. Rahbe. 2001. A putative insect intracellular endosymbiont stem clade, within the Enterobacteriaceae, inferred from phylogenetic analysis based on a heterogenous model of DNA evolution. *C.R. Acad. Sci. Ser. III* 324: 489–494.

Chen, X., S. Li, and S. Aksoy. 1999. Concordant evolution of a symbiont with its host insect species: molecular phylogeny of genus *Glossina* and its bacteriome-associated endosymbiont, *Wigglesworthia glossinidisa*. *J. Mol. Evol.* 48: 49–58.

Clark, M. A., N. A. Moran, and P. Baumann. 1999. Sequence evolution in bacterial endosymbionts having extreme base compositions. *Mol. Biol. Evol.* 16: 1586–1598.

Clark, M. A., N. A. Moran, P. Baumann, and J. J. Wernegreen. 2000. Co-speciation between bacterial endosymbionts (*Buchnera*) and a recent radiation of aphids (*Uroleucon*) and pitfalls of testing for phylogenetic congruence. *Evolution* 54: 517–525.

Clark, M. A., L. Baumann, M. L. Thao, N. A. Moran, and P. Baumann. 2001. Degenerative minimalism in the genome of a psyllid endosymbiont. *J. Bacteriol.* 183: 1853–1861.

Cochoran, D. 1985. Nitrogen excretion in cockroaches. *Annu. Rev. Entomol.* 30: 29–49.

Cole, S. T., K. Eglemeier, J. Parkhill, K. D. James, N. R. Thomson, P. R. Wheeler, N. Honore, T. Garnier, C. Churcher, D. Harris, K. Mungall, D. Basham, D. Brown, T. Chillingworth, R. Connor, R. M. Davies, K. Devlin, S. Duthoy, T. Feltwell, A. Fraser, N. Hamlin, S. Holroyd, T. Hornsby, K. Jagels, C. Lacroix, J. Maclean, S. Moule, L. Murphy, K. Oliver, M. A. Quail, M. A. Rajandream, K. M. Rutherford, S. Rutter, K. Seeger, S. Simon, M. Simmonds, J. Skelton, R. Squires, S. Squires, K. Stevens, K. Taylor, S. Whitehead, J. R. Woodward, and B. G. Barrell. 2001. Massive gene decay in the leprosy bacillus. *Nature* 409: 1007–1011.

Currie, C. R. 2001. A community of ants, fungi, and bacteria: a multilateral approach to studying symbiosis. *Annu. Rev. Microbiol.* 55: 357–380.

Dasch, G., E. Weiss, and K. Chang. 1984. Endosymbionts of insects. *Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 68:—.

Dasch, G. A. 1975. Morphological and molecular studies on intracellular bacterial symbiotes of insects. Ph.D. thesis, Yale University, New Haven, CT. 329 pp.

Davidson, D. 1997. The role of resource imbalances in the evolutionary ecology of tropical arboreal ants. *Biol. J. Linn. Soc.* 61: 153–181.

Davidson, D. 1997. Resource discovery versus resource domination in ants: a functional mechanism for breaking the trade-off. *Ecol. Entomol.* 23: 484–490.

Douglas, A. 1998. Nutritional interactions in insect-microbial symbioses: aphids and their symbiotic bacteria *Buchnera*. *Annu. Rev. Entomol.* 43: 17–37.

Douglas, A. E. 1989. Mycetocyte symbiosis in insects. *Biol. Rev. Camb. Philos. Soc.* 64: 409–434.

Eisen, J. A., and P. C. Hanawalt. 1999. A phylogenomic study of DNA repair genes, proteins, and processes. *Mutat. Res.* 435: 171–213.

Funk, D. J., L. Helbling, J. J. Wernegreen, and N. A. Moran. 2000. Intraspecific phylogenetic congruence among multiple symbiont genomes. *Proc. R. Soc. Lond. B* 267: 2517–2521.

Funk, D. J., J. J. Wernegreen, and N. A. Moran. 2001. Intraspecific variation in symbiont genomes: bottlenecks and the aphid-*Buchnera* association. *Genetics* 157: 477–489.

Gascier-Fauchet, F., and P. Nardon. 1986. Comparison of methionine metabolism in symbiotic and aposymbiotic larvae of *Sitophilus oryzae* L. (*Coleoptera, Curculionidae*) II. Involvement of the symbiotic bacteria in the oxidation of methionine. *Comp. Biochem. Physiol.* 85B: 251–254.

Gil, R., B. Sabater-Munoz, A. Latorre, F. J. Silva, and A. Moya. 2002. Extreme genome reduction in *Buchnera* spp.: toward the minimal genome needed for symbiotic life. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 99: 4454–4458.

Goldberg, C., and L. L. Pierre. 1969. Tyrosinase activity of the symbionts and fat bodies of the cockroach, *Leucophaea maderae*. *Can. J. Microbiol.* 15: 253–255.

Hammond, R. L., M. W. Bruford, and A. F. Bourke. 2002. Ant workers selfishly bias sex ratios by manipulating female development. *Proc. R. Soc. Lond. B Biol. Sci.* 269: 173–178.

Heddi, A., F. Lefevre, and P. Nardon. 1991. The influence of symbiosis on the respiratory control ratio (RCR) and the ADP/O ratio in the adult weevil—*Sitophilus oryzae* (*Coleoptera, Curculionidae*). *Endocytoobiosis Cell. Res.* 8: 61–73.

Heddi, A., H. Charles, C. Khatchadourian, G. Bonnot, and P. Nardon. 1998. Molecular characterization of the principal symbiotic bacteria of the weevil *Sitophilus oryzae*: a peculiar G + C content of an endocytoobiotic DNA. *J. Mol. Evol.* 47: 52–61.

Heddi, A., A. M. Grenier, C. Khatchadourian, H. Charles, and P. Nardon. 1999. Four intracellular genomes direct weevil biology: nuclear, mitochondrial, principal endosymbiont, and Wolbachia. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 96: 6814–6819.

Hölldobler, B., and E. O. Wilson. 1990. *The Ants*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Hueslenbeck, J. P., and F. Ronquist. 2001. MrBAYES: Bayesian inference of phylogenetic trees. *Bioinformatics* 17: 754–755.

Itoh, T., W. Martin, and M. Nei. 2002. Acceleration of genomic evolution caused by enhanced mutation rate in endocellular symbions. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 99: 12944–12948.

Lambert, J. D., and N. A. Moran. 1998. Deleterious mutations destabilize ribosomal RNA in endosymbiotic bacteria. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 95: 4458–4462.

Lawrence, J., and J. Roth. 1999. Genomic flux: genome evolution by gene loss and acquisition. Pp. 263–289 in *Organization of the Prokaryotic Genome*, R. Charlesbois, ed. ASM Press, Washington, DC.

Maddison, D. R., and W. P. Maddison. 2002. *MacClade 4: Analysis of Phylogeny and Character Evolution*. Sinauer Associates, Sunderland, MA.

Maidak, B. L., J. R. Cole, T. G. Lilburn, C. T. Parker, Jr., P. R. Saxman, R. J. Farris, G. M. Garrity, G. J. Olsen, T. M. Schmidt, and J. M. Tiedje. 2001. The RDP-II (Ribosomal Database Project). *Nucleic Acids Res.* 29: 173–174.

McLean, D., and E. Houk. 1973. Phase contrast and electron microscopy of the mycetocytes and symbionts of the pea aphid *Acyrthosiphon pisum*. *J. Insect Physiol.* 17: 625–633.

Mira, A., and N. A. Moran. 2002. Estimating population size and transmission bottlenecks in maternally transmitted endosymbiotic bacteria. *Microb. Ecol.* 44: 137–143.

Moran, N., and A. Telang. 1998. Bacteriocyte-associated symbionts of insects. *Bioscience* 48: 295–304.

Moran, N. A. 1996. Accelerated evolution and Muller’s ratchet in endosymbiotic bacteria. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 93: 2873–2878.

Moran, N. A., and P. Baumann. 2000. Bacterial endosymbions in animals. *Curr. Opin. Microbiol.* 3: 270–275.

Moran, N. A., and J. J. Wernegreen. 2000. Lifestyle evolution in symbiotic bacteria: insights from genomics. *Trends Ecol. Evol.* 15: 321–326.

Muller, J. 1964. The relation of recombination to mutational advance. *Mutat. Res.* 1: 2–9.

Munson, M. A., P. Baumann, M. A. Clark, L. Baumann, N. A. Moran, D. J. Vogtlin, and B. C. Campbell. 1991. Evidence for the establishment of aphid-ebacterium endosymbiosis in an ancestor of four aphid families. *J. Bacteriol.* 173: 6321–6324.

Nardon, P., and A. Grenier. 1991. Serial endosymbiosis theory and
weevil evolution: the role of symbiosis. Pp. 154–169 in Symbiosis as a Source of Evolutionary Innovation, L. Margulis, and R. Fester, eds. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.

Nogge, G. 1981. Significance of symbionts for the maintenance of an optimal nutritional state for successful reproduction in hematophagous arthropods. Parasitology 82: 299–304.

O’Neill, S., A. Hoffman, and J. Werren. 1998. Inherited Passengers: Inherited Microorganisms and Arthropod Reproduction. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Ochman, H., and N. A. Moran. 2001. Genes lost and genes found: evolution of bacterial pathogenesis and symbiosis. Science 292: 1096–1099.

Oht, T. 1973. Slightly deleterious mutant substitutions in evolution. Nature 246: 96–98.

Palacios, C., and J. J. Wernegreen. 2002. A strong effect of AT mutational bias on amino acid usage in Buchnera is mitigated at high expression genes. Mol. Biol. Evol. 19: 1575–1584.

Passera, L., S. Aron, E. L. Vargo, and L. Keller. 2001. Queen control of sex ratio in fire ants. Science 293: 1308–1310.

Posada, D., and K. A. Crandall. 1998. MODELTEST: testing the model of DNA substitution. Bioinformatics 14: 817-818.

Rispe, C., and N. A. Moran. 2000. Accumulation of deleterious mutations in endosymbionts: Muller’s ratchet with two levels of selection. Am. Nat. 156: 424–441.

Rocha, E. P., and A. Danchin. 2002. Base composition bias might result from competition for metabolic resources. Trends Genet. 18: 291–294.

Sameshima, S., E. Hasegawa, O. Kitade, N. Minaka, and T. Matsunoto. 1999. Phylogenetic comparison of endosymbionts with their host ants based on molecular evidence. Zool. Sci. 16: 993–1000.

Sandstrom, J., A. Telang, and N. A. Moran. 2000. Nutritional enhancement of host plants by aphids—a comparison of three aphid species on grasses. J. Insect Physiol. 46: 33–40.

Sauer, C. 2000. Charakterisierung intrazellulärer, bakterieller Endosymbionten im Mitteldarm von Ameisen der Gattung Camponotus. Ph. D. thesis, Universität Würzburg, Würzburg, Germany. 112 pp.

Sauer, C., E. Stackebrandt, J. Gadau, B. Hölldobler, and R. Gross. 2000. Systematic relationships and cospeciation of bacterial endosymbionts and their carpenter ant host species: proposal of the new taxon Candidatus Blochmannia gen. nov. Int. J. Syst. Evol. Microbiol. 50 Pt 5: 1877–1886.

Sauer, C., D. Dudaczek, B. Hölldobler, and R. Gross. 2002. Tissue localization of the endosymbiotic bacterium “Candidatus Blochmannia floridanus” in adults and larvae of the carpenter ant Camponotus floridanus. Appl. Environ. Microbiol. 68: 4187–4193.

Schröder, D., H. Deppisch, M. Obermayer, G. Krohne, E. Stackebrandt, B. Hölldobler, W. Goebel, and R. Gross. 1996. Intracellular endosymbiotic bacteria of Camponotus species (carpenter ants): systematics, evolution and ultrastructural characterization. Mol. Microbiol. 21: 479–489.

Selander, R. K., D. A. Caugant, and T. S. Whitman. 1987. Genetic structure and variation in natural populations of Escherichia coli. Pp. 1625–1648 in Escherichia coli and Salmonella typhimurium: Cellular and Molecular Biology, F. Neidhardt, ed. American Society for Microbiology, Washington, DC.

Shigenobu, S., H. Watanabe, M. Hattori, Y. Sakaki, and H. Ishikawa. 2000. Genome sequence of the endocellular bacterial symbiont of aphids Buchnera sp. APS. Nature 407: 81–86.

Spaulding, A., and C. D. von Dohlen. 1998. Phylogenetic characterization and molecular evolution of bacterial endosymbionts in psyllids (Hemiptera:Sternorrhyncha). Mol. Biol. Evol. 15: 1506–1513.

Sundström, L., M. Chapuisat, and L. Keller. 1996. Conditional manipulation of sex ratios by ant workers: a test of kin selection theory. Science 274: 993–995.

Swofford, D. L. 2002. PAUP*: Phylogenetic Analysis Using Parsimony (*and Other Methods); Version 4. Sinauer Associates, Sunderland, MA.

Tamas, I., L. Klasson, B. Canback, A. K. Naslund, A. S. Eriksson, J. J. Wernegreen, J. P. Sandstrom, N. A. Moran, and S. G. Andersson. 2002. 50 million years of genomic stasis in endosymbiotic bacteria. Science 296: 2376-2379.

Thao, M. L., N. A. Moran, P. Abbot, E. B. Brennan, D. H. Burckhardt, and P. Baumann. 2000. Cospeciation of psyllids and their primary prokaryotic endosymbionts. Appl. Environ. Microbiol. 66: 2898–2905.

van Ham, R. C., J. Kamerbeek, C. Palacios, C. Rausell, F. Abascal, U. Bastolla, J. M. Fernandez, I. Jimenez, M. Postigo, F. J. Silva, J. Tamames, E. Viguera, A. Latorre, A. Valencia, F. Moran, and A. Moya. 2003. Reductive genome evolution in Buchnera aphidicola. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 100: 581–586.

Wernegreen, J. J., and N. A. Moran. 1999. Evidence for genetic drift in endosymbionts (Buchnera): analyses of protein-coding genes. Mol. Biol. Evol. 16: 83–97.

Wernegreen, J. J., and N. A. Moran. 2000. Decay of mutualistic potential in aphid endosymbionts through silencing of biosynthetic loci: Buchnera of Diuraphis. Proc. R. Soc. Lond. B Biol. Sci. 267: 1423–1431.

Wernegreen, J. J., and N. A. Moran. 2001. Vertical transmission of biosynthetic plasmids in aphid endosymbionts (Buchnera). J. Bacteriol. 183: 785–790.

Wernegreen, J. J., H. Ochman, I. B. Jones, and N. A. Moran. 2000. Decoupling of genome size and sequence divergence in a symbiotic bacterium. J. Bacteriol. 182: 3867–3869.

Wernegreen, J. J., A. B. Lazarus, and P. H. Degnan. 2002. Small genome of Candidatus Blochmannia, the bacterial endosymbiont of Camponotus, implies irreversible specialization to an intracellular lifestyle. Microbiology 148: 2551–2556.

Wicker, C., and P. Nardon. 1982. Development responses of symbiotic and aposymbiotic weevils Sitophilus oryzae L. (Coleoptera, Curculionidae) to a diet supplemented with aromatic amino acids. J. Insect Physiol. 28: 1021–1024.

Wilson, E. O. 1985. Invasion and extinction in the west Indian ant fauna: evidence from the Dominican Amber. Science 229: 265–267.

Zientz, E., F. J. Silva, and R. Gross. 2001. Genome interdependence in insect-symbiont symbioses. Genome Biol. 2: Reviews 1032.