

# Bacterial Oxidases of the Cytochrome *bd* Family: Redox Enzymes of Unique Structure, Function, and Utility As Drug Targets

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## Abstract

**Significance:** Cytochrome *bd* is a ubiquinol:oxygen oxidoreductase of many prokaryotic respiratory chains with a unique structure and functional characteristics. Its primary role is to couple the reduction of molecular oxygen, even at submicromolar concentrations, to water with the generation of a proton motive force used for adenosine triphosphate production. Cytochrome *bd* is found in many bacterial pathogens and, surprisingly, in bacteria formally denoted as anaerobes. It endows bacteria with resistance to various stressors and is a potential drug target.

**Recent Advances:** We summarize recent advances in the biochemistry, structure, and physiological functions of cytochrome *bd* in the light of exciting new three-dimensional structures of the oxidase. The newly discovered roles of cytochrome *bd* in contributing to bacterial protection against hydrogen peroxide, nitric oxide, peroxynitrite, and hydrogen sulfide are assessed.

**Critical Issues:** Fundamental questions remain regarding the precise delineation of electron flow within this multihaem oxidase and how the extraordinarily high affinity for oxygen is accomplished, while endowing bacteria with resistance to other small ligands.

**Future Directions:** It is clear that cytochrome *bd* is unique in its ability to confer resistance to toxic small molecules, a property that is significant for understanding the propensity of pathogens to possess this oxidase. Since cytochrome *bd* is a uniquely bacterial enzyme, future research should focus on harnessing fundamental knowledge of its structure and function to the development of novel and effective antibacterial agents. *Antioxid. Redox Signal.* 00, 000–000.

**Keywords:** respiratory chain, terminal oxidase, cytochrome *bd*, bacterial cytochromes

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## I. Introduction

CYTOCHROME *BD*, FIRST described in 1928 [(345), see also Cook and Poole (75) and references therein], is a respiratory terminal oxidase thus far uniquely identified in the electron transport chain of prokaryotic organisms (36, 48, 151, 163, 252). As it promotes virulence in a number of pathogenic bacteria, it is currently recognized as a prospective drug target for the development of new antibacterial drugs.

Phylogenetically unrelated to the more extensively investigated haem/copper oxidases, such as mitochondrial cytochrome *aa<sub>3</sub>* (53, 58, 59, 243, 274, 301, 336), cytochrome *bd* catalyzes the reduction of O<sub>2</sub> to H<sub>2</sub>O with remarkably high affinity, using quinols as physiological reducing substrates (55, 163). The reaction, although not associated with a proton pumping activity (267), is electrogenic (19, 20, 38, 51, 155, 267) and thus contributes to generating a proton motive force (PMF) and sustaining bacterial energy conservation.

Cytochrome *bd* displays distinct biochemical features with respect to haem/copper oxidases, including a *d*-type O<sub>2</sub>-reactive haem and no copper atoms, which, on the contrary, are invariantly present in haem/copper oxidases (see Fig. 1 for haem types). The three-dimensional structure of cytochrome *bd* has remained a mystery for a long time, but it was recently solved for two members of this protein family, the enzymes from *Geobacillus thermodenitrificans* (281) and, more recently, from *Escherichia coli* (280, 317), re-

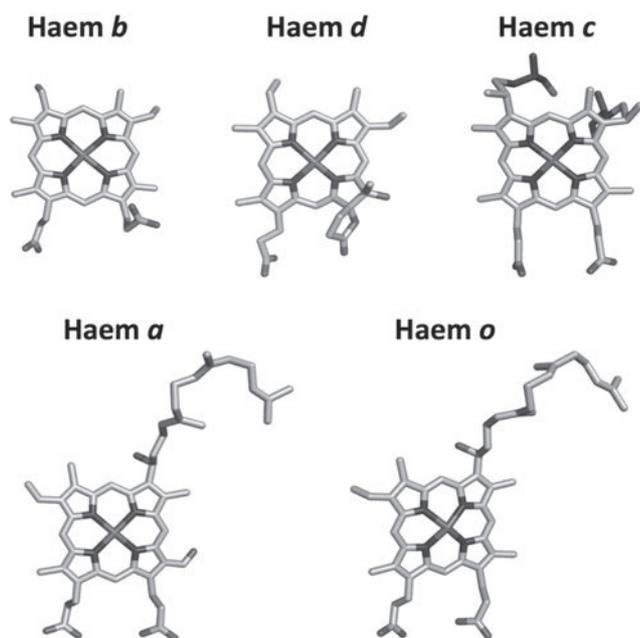
vealing unexpected structural differences between the two proteins, most likely of evolutionary significance.

A large body of evidence suggests that cytochrome *bd* enables bacterial O<sub>2</sub> consumption, either for bioenergetic purposes, to drive specific metabolic pathways and/or to afford protection from O<sub>2</sub> toxicity and a variety of stress conditions, including hypoxia, medium alkalization, high temperature, and exposure to toxic compounds, such as uncouplers, antibiotics, or classical respiratory inhibitors, for example, nitric oxide (NO), cyanide, and hydrogen sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S) [see Borisov *et al.* (46), Borisov *et al.* (48), Forte *et al.* (115), Giuffrè *et al.* (124), Giuffrè *et al.* (125), Korshunov *et al.* (192), Poole and Cook (252) and references therein].

Furthermore, cytochrome *bd* was shown to facilitate degradation of harmful reactive oxygen and nitrogen species (ROS and RNS), such as hydrogen peroxide (H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>) or peroxynitrite (ONOO<sup>-</sup>) [reviewed in Forte *et al.* (117)], produced by the host immune system to control microbial infections.

The growing attention that is being paid by the scientific community toward *bd*-type bacterial terminal oxidases as potential drug targets prompted us to present here a comprehensive update on the information currently available about these enzymes and their impact on bacterial physiology.

A prelude on nomenclature is in order. The accepted name for the subject of this review is “quinol oxidase (electrogenic, proton-motive force generating), EC 7.1.1.7’, product of the *cydAB* (and other) genes.” It is generally called cytochrome



**FIG. 1. Haem types in respiratory oxidases.** Haem *b* (haem  $b_{595}$  of *Geobacillus thermodenitrificans* cytochrome *bd*, PDB entry 5DOQ); haem *d* (from *G. thermodenitrificans* cytochrome *bd*, PDB entry 5DOQ); haem *c* (from mitochondrial cytochrome *c* in complex with bovine cytochrome *c* oxidase, PDB entry 5IY5); haem *a* (haem  $a_3$  of bovine cytochrome *c* oxidase, PDB entry 5B1A); haem *o* (from *Escherichia coli* cytochrome  $bo_3$ , PDB entry 1FFT). PDB, Protein Data Bank. Reprinted by permission from Forte *et al.* (117).

*bd* and, less logically, “cytochrome *bd* oxidase.” The latter is unfortunate because the complex does not oxidize cytochrome *bd* but *is* cytochrome *bd*! However, there have been more uncertainty and debate on the correct nomenclature of the other major oxidase in *E. coli* and many other bacteria, to which we refer, namely cytochrome  $bo_3$ , *bo* oxidase, or *bo'*. The last name was proposed (251) because some years ago the IUB Enzyme Nomenclature “rules” proposed that ligand-binding haems should be designated with the suffix '. Hence *aa'* (for cytochrome  $aa_3$ ) and *bo'* appeared correct.

The term cytochrome  $bo_3$ , emphasising the correlation with  $aa_3$  did not, and still does not, appear logical, because there is, and never was, a  $bo_1$  or  $bo_2$ , whereas the names  $a_1$  and  $a_2$  were both once common currency (for cytochromes  $b_{595}$  and *d*, respectively). However,  $bo_3$  has been so widely adopted to describe EC 7.1.1.3 ubiquinol oxidase ( $H^+$ -transporting), product of *cyoABCD* in *E. coli* (219), that we have adopted it here.

## II. Distribution, Evolution, and Regulation of Gene Expression

### A. Distribution

Cytochrome *bd* is a membrane-integrated complex comprising two to four subunits (see later, sections II.B and II.C). The two largest and omnipresent subunits are subunits I and II, which are encoded by the chromosomal *cydA* and *cydB* genes. In *E. coli*, two different cytochrome *bd*-type oxidases have been described, the best studied cytochrome *bd*-I

and the more recently discovered cytochrome *bd*-II (93). Whereas *bd*-I is encoded by the *cydAB* operon, *bd*-II is encoded by the *cyxAB* operon (55). The *bd*-family of oxygen reductases has a very broad taxonomic distribution with orthologs found in various bacterial phyla. These include diverse groups of Eubacteria, from gram-positive Firmicutes and Actinomycetes to the whole phylum of Proteobacteria.

A number of Archaea also encode *bd*-family homologues, with members of the family found in Crenarchaeota (*Thermoproeus tenax*, *Pyrobaculum neutrophilum*, *Vulcanisaeta moutnovskia*), Euryarchaeota (*Methanosarcina barkeri*, *Archaeoglobus sulfaticallidus*) (57), and Korarchaeota (*Korarchaeum cryptofilum*) (96). Cytochrome *bd*-type oxygen reductases are very common in some phyla, such as the Proteobacteria and Actinobacteria, and sporadically distributed in others. Intriguingly, homologues of cytochrome *bd* have been detected in many species described as strict anaerobes such as *Methanosarcina barkeri*, *Methanosarcina acetivorans* (57), *Bacteroides fragilis* (13), *Desulfovibrio gigas* (202), *Desulfovibrio vulgaris* Hildenborough (288), *Geobacter metallireducens* (141), *Moorella thermoacetica* (92), and *Chlorobaculum tepidum* (204).

A more recent survey of cytochrome *bd* sequences highlighted the diversity of molecular forms of cytochrome *bd* (96). Although no clear pattern could be discerned in the distribution of the two types of cytochrome *bd* among the classes of Alpha-, Beta-, and Gammaproteobacteria, Epsilonproteobacteria possess only the *bd*-I type. In contrast, the majority of Deltaproteobacteria has short *CydA* and *CydB* proteins that are evidently related to the catalytic subunits of ancestral cytochromes *bd* of *Bacillus subtilis* (337).

In addition, a phylogenetically isolated group of Deltaproteobacteria such as *Desulfobulbus propionicus* contains *cydA* sequences that are longer than those of the rest of the class, due to Q loop extensions similar to those of *bd*-I type oxidases. Furthermore, the genomes of over 50 Deltaproteobacteria contain atypical chimeric forms of *cydA* that are fused with genes encoding multiple *c*-type cytochromes but not associated with a *cydB* gene.

The recent discovery of the small subunit *CydX* (68, 102, 144, 145, 314, 324) provided the opportunity for multiple taxonomic coverage studies. Using the previously characterized *E. coli* *CydX* protein as a query sequence, Allen *et al.* conducted a survey for orthologs using multiple homology-based *in silico* tools in completed genomes from 1095 taxa spanning the major Eubacterial divisions (111). Their comprehensive approach resulted in the identification of over 300 *CydX* homologues that are restricted to the phylum of Proteobacteria and more specifically to its Alpha, Beta, and Gamma classes (3). Only two orthologs were identified using refined methods in the species *Leptospirillum ferrooxidans* C2-3 and *Leptospirillum ferriphilum* ML-04, both members of the *Nitrospiraceae* family in the phylum *Nitrospirae*. A more recent analysis (96) identified a class of remote orthologs of *CydX*, termed *CydX*-like proteins. Their function remains currently unknown.

### B. Phylogeny

Previous studies suggested that the *bd*-family of oxygen reductases is an ancient innovation, already present in the ancestor of both Bacteria and Archaea (63). However, it has

been reported that the family may have originated in Bacteria and was later acquired by Archaea *via* lateral gene transfer (57, 135). Phylogenetic reconstructions of the *bd*-family showed that lateral gene transfer plays a substantial role in the distribution of the family, with many phyla acquiring cytochrome *bd* genes multiple times independently. A representative phylogenetic tree is shown in Figure 2. Sequence analysis has demonstrated that CydA and CydB have different rates of evolution, with CydB evolving 1.2 times faster than CydA (135). The biological relevance of this asymmetrical evolution remains essentially unknown.

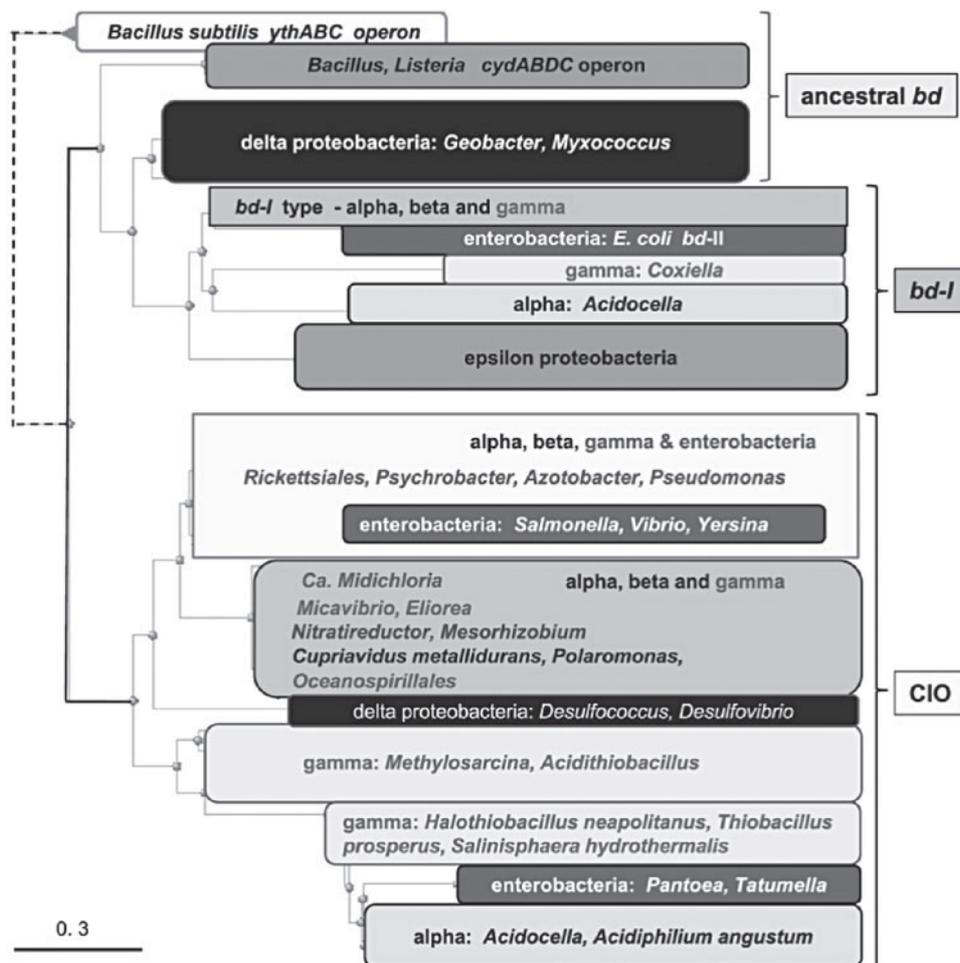
More recently, Degli Esposti *et al.* specifically studied proteobacterial cytochromes *bd* using integrated approaches of genomic and protein analysis (96). Their work generated a molecular classification of diverse types of cytochrome *bd*, allowing reinterpretation of their evolution and substantiating the occurrence of multiple lateral gene transfer events. Specifically, their findings provided insights on basal taxa of Alphaproteobacteria from which the Gammaproteobacterial lineage probably emerged. A duplication of the original gene cluster of a cytochrome *bd* might have occurred in the ancestors of extant Alphaproteobacteria of the *Rhodospirillales* order, such as *Acidocella*, from which the *bd*-I type of oxidase might have diffused to other proteobacterial lineages.

This conclusion derives from the robust clustering of the Gammaproteobacterium *Salinisphaera hydrothermalis* with

*Acidocella sp. MX-AZ02 and Acidocella facilis*. As *Acidocella* lives in strongly acidic environments of wetlands and lakes, a transfer of the cytochrome *bd* operon from *Acidocella* to the halophilic *Salinisphaera* must have occurred in ancient evolutionary times, when both organisms shared common marine environments, or ancestors. The cyanide-insensitive oxidase type, on the contrary, may have differentiated into recognizable subtypes after another gene cluster duplication. These subtypes are widespread in the genomes of Alpha-, Beta-, and Gammaproteobacteria, with occasional instances of lateral gene transfer.

The small size of CydX proteins makes it difficult to robustly resolve phylogenetic inferences and requires critical interpretation. Similar challenges have been encountered with relatively small globin proteins, particularly in invertebrates (147) and simpler species (325). The comparative bioinformatic approaches by Allen *et al.* (3) to examine the distribution of the CydX protein across bacterial species resulted in a predominant association with the Proteobacter phylum and identified two orthologs in the *Nitrospiraceae* family. Given the phylogenetic distance between these *Leptospirillum* species and the other CydX-containing species, of which all are contained in the Proteobacter phylum, it is likely that these bacteria gained the *cydABX* operon through horizontal gene transfer.

Furthermore, in contrast to the CydA and CydB genes, with orthologs in a broad range of phyla, the CydX-containing



**FIG. 2. Representative phylogenetic tree of 5000 cytochrome *bd* sequences.** The neighbor-joining tree was obtained with all the results of a broad DELTA-BLAST search using *cydA* of *Bacillus subtilis* as a query against 5000 species of proteobacteria excluding most  $\delta$ -proteobacteria and all  $\epsilon$ -proteobacteria, as well as Enterobacteriales. Potential lateral gene transfers are indicated. COI sequences are defined in subtypes A, B, and C according to the classification proposed by Degli Esposti *et al.* (96) with subtype A indicating their likely ancestral nature, subtype B for the predominance of betaproteobacteria, and subtype C for the inclusion of *bona fide* CIO oxidases. CIO, cyanide-insensitive oxidase. Reprinted by permission from Degli Esposti *et al.* (96).

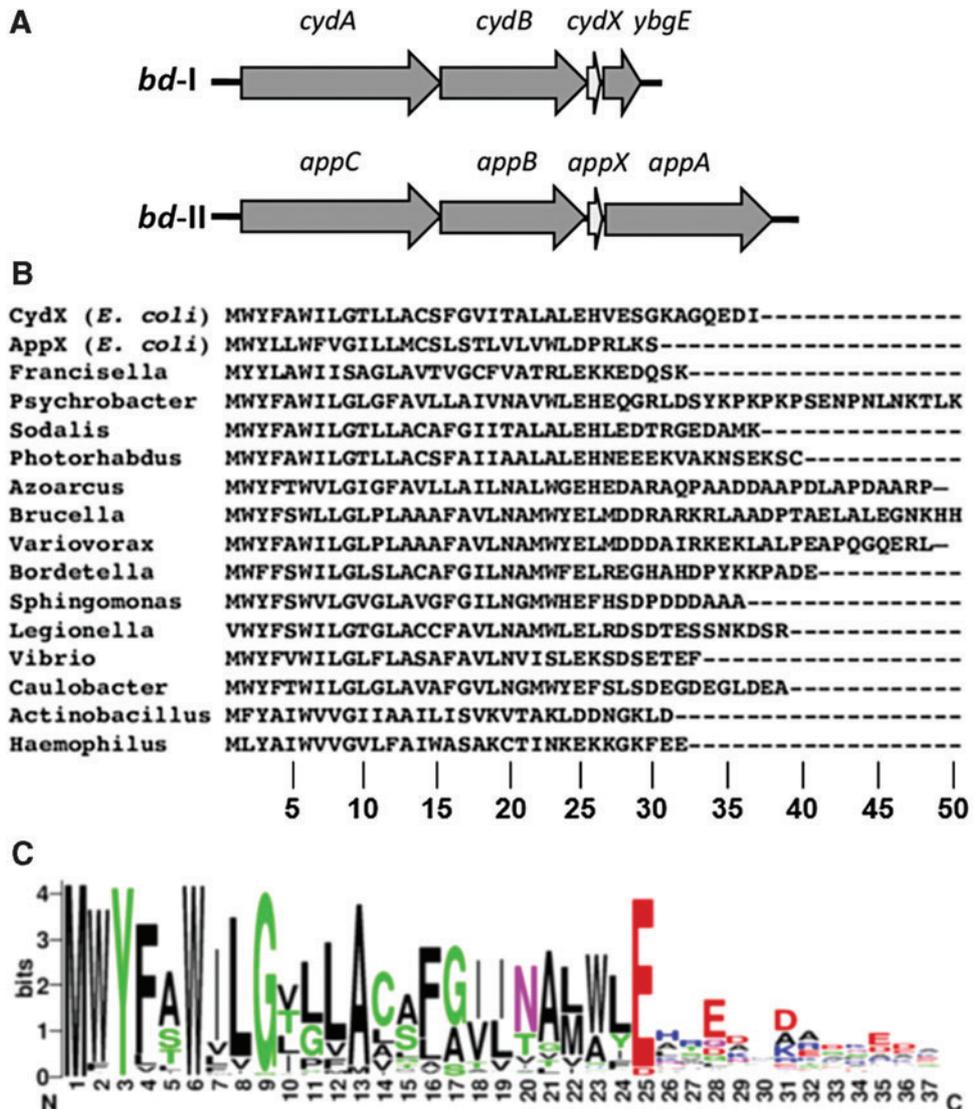
species were found to be members of the Alpha, Beta, and Gamma classes of the Proteobacteria. This distribution difference is consistent with a model in which CydA and CydB evolved earlier than the CydX small subunit. Since the Alpha, Beta, and Gamma classes have been suggested to be diverged after the earlier branching of Delta- and Epsilon-proteobacteria (70), the distribution of CydX suggests that it may have evolved in association with the *cydAB* operon in a progenitor of the Alpha-, Beta-, and Gammaproteobacteria clades (3).

Intriguingly, the early diverging group, lacking CydX orthologs, contains anaerobic organisms, whereas the other includes predominantly aerobic and facultative anaerobic organisms. Additional evidence for horizontal gene transfer of CydX genes was found by superimposing a phylogenetic tree based on CydX on a reference phylogenetic tree of all investigated taxa, suggesting that *Rhodospirillum photometricum* DSM 122 gained its *cydABX* operon through horizontal gene transfer (3). It is very likely that the *cydABX* operon has been transferred numerous times between closely related and divergent bacterial species.

### C. CydX and CydH subunits

1. CydX. Until recently, it was generally accepted that cytochrome *bd* consists of two subunits. These are CydA (~52–57 kDa) and CydB (~40–43 kDa) encoded by *cydA* and *cydB* genes, respectively (131, 183, 222, 283). CydA carries the quinol oxidation site and all haems, *b*<sub>558</sub>, *b*<sub>595</sub>, and *d* (see section III). However, recent studies (68, 102, 144, 145, 314, 324) showed that in Proteobacteria, including *E. coli*, *Brucella abortus*, *Shewanella oneidensis*, and *Salmonella enterica* serovar *Typhimurium*, there is a short gene, *cydX*, located at the 3'-end of the *cydAB* operons that encodes a small protein essential for the function of the oxidase (Fig. 3A).

The CydX protein appeared to be a third subunit of cytochrome *bd*. Deletion of *cydX* in *B. abortus* leads to impaired intracellular growth, loss of viability in stationary phase, increased sensitivity to H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>, and to the combination of the respiratory chain inhibitor sodium azide and the uncoupling agent nickel sulfate (314). Accordingly,  $\Delta$ *cydX* *E. coli* mutants also reveal phenotypes associated with reduced cytochrome *bd*-I



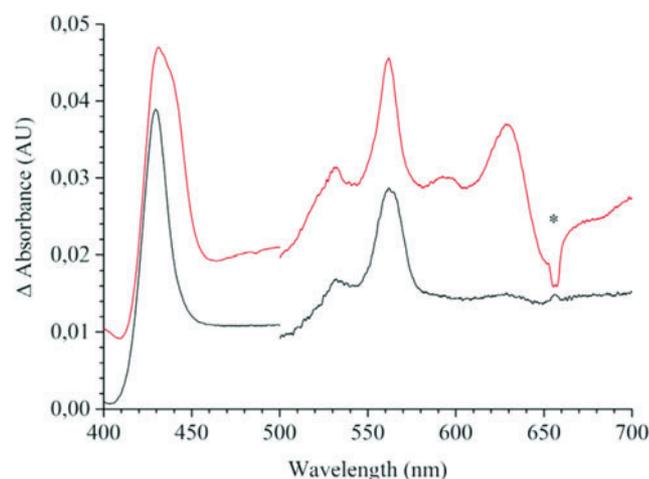
**FIG. 3. Cytochrome *bd* operons in *E. coli* and conservation of CydX throughout Eubacteria.** (A) Diagram of operons of cytochrome *bd*-I and cytochrome *bd*-II in *E. coli*. Note, that gene *ynhF* encoding the fourth CydH subunit of cytochrome *bd*-I is not part of the operon (280). (B) Alignment of selected CydX homologues with indication of amino acid position. The alignment was produced by MUSCLE (105). (C) Alignment of 294 CydX homologues in which amino acid size correlates with degree of conservation. The sequence logo was generated by WebLogo. Reprinted from Hobson *et al.* (144) under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License. Color images are available online.

activity (324). Phenotypes of  $\Delta cydX$  *E. coli* cells show slow growth in liquid culture, mixed-colony formation, and sensitivity to  $\beta$ -mercaptoethanol. Membrane extracts from  $\Delta cydX$  *E. coli* cells have reduced *N,N,N',N'*-tetramethyl-*p*-phenylenediamine oxidase activity. Interestingly, overexpression of *appX*, paralog of *cydX*, compensates the *cydX* deletion in *E. coli* (324). Upon isolation of *E. coli* cytochrome *bd*-I, CydX copurifies with CydAB (145).

The lack of CydX correlates with the absence of the high-spin haems *b*<sub>595</sub> and *d*, while the low-spin haem *b*<sub>558</sub> is retained (Fig. 4). The loss of the high-spin haems results in the loss of enzymatic activity. Hooser *et al.* (145) suggested that CydX is essential for the assembly and/or the stability of the high-spin haem site. In contrast to CydX in *E. coli*, its counterpart in *S. oneidensis* does not seem to be essential to the oxidase activity (68). Although markedly impaired in function, CydX-lacking cytochrome *bd* from *S. oneidensis* can still confer a high level of resistance to nitrite.

This suggests that a functional protein complex can be assembled by the two large subunits only. Chen *et al.* (68) concluded that complexation of CydA and CydB is independent of CydX. Furthermore, CydX does not rely on the CydA-CydB complex for its translocation and integration into the membrane. Nonetheless, as in *E. coli*, CydX in *S. oneidensis* is apparently critical to positioning and stabilization of the haems, especially haem *d*.

CydX is conserved in over 200 species of Proteobacteria (3, 96, 144) (Fig. 3B) (see also sections II.A and II.B). There are *cydAB* operons that encode CydX-like proteins denoted CydY and CydZ, possibly performing similar functions (3).



**FIG. 4. Different absorption spectra (dithionite-reduced minus air-oxidized) of purified *E. coli* cytochrome *bd*-I containing (red) or lacking (black) CydX.** The absorbance difference between 400 and 500 nm is scaled down to one-fifth of intensity. The black spectrum shows the peaks at 429.5, 531, and 562 nm corresponding to haem *b*<sub>558</sub>. The signals from haem *b*<sub>558</sub> are also present in the red spectrum. In addition, the red spectrum displays a shoulder at about 440 nm and a peak at 594 nm corresponding to haem *b*<sub>595</sub>, and a peak at 629 nm corresponding to haem *d*. The Soret signal from haem *d* in the red spectrum is superimposed with that of haem *b*<sub>558</sub> at 430 nm. The 655-nm signal (\*) is an artifact of the spectrometer. Reprinted by permission from Hooser *et al.* (145). Color images are available online.

CydX is a 30- to 50-amino-acid protein containing a single hydrophobic  $\alpha$ -helix. The protein has the conserved N-terminal region and the less conserved C-terminal region (3, 68, 144) (Fig. 3C). The N-terminal region contains the completely conserved W6, and the highly conserved Y3 (all but one homologue), G9 (all but seven homologues), and E/D25 (all but one homologue). The analysis predicts that Y3, W6, and G9 are part of the transmembrane  $\alpha$ -helix (3). The N-terminal region of CydX is probably important for function (68). Interaction of CydX with the cytochrome complex may be coordinated through a combination of interactions between multiple residues rather than being dependent on individual residues (144).

A third subunit, denoted CydS, was identified in the structure of cytochrome *bd* from *G. thermodenitrificans* K1041 and is thought to stabilize haem *b*<sub>558</sub> (281) (see section III). CydS is conserved in Bacillales but shows no sequence similarity to its proteobacterial counterparts. Surprisingly, although the solved structure of the *E. coli* cytochrome *bd*-I shows the similar location of CydX (280), the CydX-lacking *bd*-I protein still retains haem *b*<sub>558</sub> (145) (Fig. 4).

In summary, it seems likely that all cytochromes *bd* possess a third, small subunit. The CydX or CydX-like component could be overlooked in cytochrome *bd* of some microbes using standard biochemical and genomic methods. It is indeed difficult to identify such a small-size protein in cytochrome *bd* complex preparations, as well as the corresponding short gene out of many short open reading frames. One more possible reason for the apparent absence of *cydX* in some *cydAB* operons is that the gene could have migrated to another part of the genome. For instance, 4 of 20 CydS in Bacillales are encoded at gene loci far apart from their *cydAB* operons (281).

**2. CydH.** The structure of the *E. coli* cytochrome *bd*-I reveals a fourth, previously unknown subunit called CydH (280) [or CydY (317)]. Like CydX, CydH is a small non-catalytic accessory single transmembrane subunit (see section III). The subunit is encoded by the orphan gene *ynhF*, which is not part of the *cydAB* operon. Only members of the proteobacterial clade with cytochromes *bd* belonging to subfamily L (one of the two subfamilies of the *bd* enzymes, see section III) seem to have CydH homologues (280). The role of CydH appears to be more than just “structural.” The subunit blocks the O<sub>2</sub> entry route to haem *b*<sub>595</sub> in the *E. coli* cytochrome *bd*-I (317). In the *G. thermodenitrificans* enzyme, CydH is absent, and therefore, this channel is open and provides O<sub>2</sub> access to haem *d* located in place of haem *b*<sub>595</sub> at this site (281) (see also section III).

#### D. Regulation of expression

Regulatory mechanisms underpinning the expression of cytochrome *bd* have long been the subject of intense study, driven by the extraordinary features of this oxidase and its physiological significance. For example, the earliest studies on bacterial respiration revealed that cytochrome *bd*, recognizable initially by its distinctive optical properties, was maximally expressed in *E. coli* under conditions of low oxygen supply (252, 272). This is now considered to be a reflection of the very high oxygen affinity of this oxidase (88). Expression is also increased in the presence of cyanide (8),

NO (217), carbon monoxide (CO) (332), and Ru- and Mn-containing CO-releasing molecules (CORMs) (94, 333).

By far, the best-studied systems are in *E. coli*, where regulation has proven to be extremely complex, intricate, and responsive. Although we focus on the mechanisms in *E. coli*, which involve multiple promoters and at least three classes of transcriptional regulators, the identity of the regulators and their modes of action differ among genera, but are outside the scope of the present review. For example, in *Shewanella*, the two cytochrome *bd* subunit genes are cotranscribed with a third gene, *cydE*, that encodes a GbsR regulator that represses *cydAB* expression (340).

In several gram-positive genera, the transcription factor Rex is implicated in the regulation of genes important for fermentation and growth at low oxygen tensions, sensing the cellular redox poise in the form of NADH/NAD<sup>+</sup> ratios. Examples of the role of Rex in regulating cytochrome *bd* expression are found in *Streptomyces* (56, 207), *Saccharopolyspora spinosa* (348), and *Bacillus subtilis* (200, 266, 291, 331).

In *Rickettsia conorii*, a small regulatory RNA is implicated as a potential regulator of *cydA* (234). OxyR is a master regulator in a wide range of bacteria, but its role in regulating cytochrome *bd* appears limited: an OxyR binding site has been identified in the promoter region of *cydA* in *Corynebacterium glutamicum* (225, 316) and it plays a role in regulating electron flux to cytochrome *bd* in *S. oneidensis* (330).

Here we focus on the complex systems involved in regulating cytochrome *bd*-I of *E. coli*. Control of cytochrome *bd* expression in *E. coli* is achieved primarily through the combined and complex actions of “fumarate nitrate reduction” regulator (FNR) and the ArcB/ArcA two-component system. A regulatory complex of five promoters initiates the transcription of *cydAB*: four of them (P1–P4) are coordinately regulated by oxygen (*via* ArcA and FNR). ArcA binds at three sites at this promoter (214), but only one is essential for transcriptional activation (82). Also, two distinct sites for binding FNR are discernable (82): the downstream FNR-2 site is critical for FNR-mediated repression *in vivo*, whereas the upstream site (FNR-1) plays an ancillary role in regulation of the *cydAB* operon by oxygen (129). Detailed discussion of the biochemistry of these oxygen-sensing global regulators is beyond the scope of this review but a summary follows.

FNR is a protein of the CPR-FNR superfamily of transcription factors, which all possess an N-terminal sensory domain and a C-terminal DNA-binding domain (132). FNR regulates transcription of target genes (its regulon) under anaerobic conditions by assembly of an oxygen-labile [4Fe-4S] cluster into the N-terminus. Assembly of this cluster facilitates formation of an FNR dimer with enhanced DNA-binding activity. It targets specific nucleotide sequences in selected promoters, where it acts as an activator of “anaerobic genes” and a repressor of “aerobic genes.” As oxygen availability increases, the [4Fe-4S] cluster is degraded to a [2Fe-2S] cluster so that site-specific inhibition is inhibited. The details of how O<sub>2</sub> interacts with FNR are described elsewhere (83) and the effects of NO on the cluster are given in Crack *et al.* (84) and Cruz-Ramos *et al.* (87).

In *Azotobacter vinelandii*, CydR is an FNR-like protein, encoded adjacent to *cydAB* (180), that represses *cydAB* expression (339). Interestingly, FNR is structurally and func-

tionally related to the cAMP receptor protein (CRP) [for a review see Green *et al.* (132)]. In *Mycobacterium smegmatis*, CRP directly regulates the expression of *cydAB* in response to hypoxia (9). No CRP site is present in the *M. smegmatis* *cydDC* promoter.

While FNR is a direct sensor of oxygen (and NO), ArcBA is a representative of the two-component regulators and is an indirect oxygen sensor. The ArcB protein is a membrane-integral sensor kinase and ArcA is its cognate response regulator. Two key cysteine residues in the cytosolic domain of ArcB must be reduced for the protein to be functional. It is generally accepted that it is the redox poise of respiratory chain quinones, such as those transferring electrons to the oxidase itself that is key to Arc function. Both the ubiquinone and menaquinone (MQ) pools are thought to be involved in regulating ArcBA (15). Fermentation products act as allosteric effectors (121, 122).

When oxygen is available, ArcB transits from being an autokinase to a phosphatase, *via* formation of two intermolecular disulfide bonds, resulting in the formation of a covalently linked ArcB dimer. Ultimately [for references see Bettenbrock *et al.* (30)], a phosphate group is transferred to ArcA, which assumes the role of a sequence-specific DNA-binding protein. In this form, it controls expression of several target promoters including *cydAB* (284). The system is switched off by the phosphatase activity of the oxidized (disulfide) form of ArcB, *via* dephosphorylation of ArcA (120).

When the oxygen tension drops, ArcA is phosphorylated by ArcB and activates *cydAB* transcription (81, 153). In early experiments, cytochrome *bd* expression was shown to reach a maximum at <2% oxygen tension (320) but more deliberate control of oxygen availability (2) questions this. When oxygen is decreased further, FNR becomes active and represses *cydAB* transcription (82, 320). A unique feature of the *cydAB* operon is the fact that FNR repression requires the presence of a functional ArcA protein (81, 82, 130). FNR has been proposed to act as an antiactivator by counteracting ArcA-mediated activation rather than directly repressing transcription (82, 130).

A role for the histone-like protein H-NS has also been reported (130). H-NS binds to an extended region within the *cydAB* promoter element, including sequences upstream from, and overlapping, the four regulated promoters. Oxygen control of *cydAB* transcription is thought to be mediated by three alternative protein-DNA complexes that are assembled sequentially on the promoter region as the cells are shifted from aerobic to microaerobic and to anaerobic conditions.

A recent systems approach to the oxygen response of cytochrome *bd*-I and the two other oxidases of *E. coli* (30, 104) has adopted a rigorous chemostat methodology, transcriptome profiling, and powerful mathematical modeling tools (287). In chemostats poised at quantified and constant oxygen provision rates, 89 genes exhibited expression changes when oxygen availability was modulated experimentally (276). O<sub>2</sub> availability in the chemostats was expressed as “% aerobiosis” (2), defined by the converse relationship between declining *q*<sub>acetate</sub> (a measure of “overflow” metabolism) and increasing oxygen transfer rate. Steady-state simulation results of the three oxidase activities in comparison with measurement data showed good correlations with measured oxidase levels (104).

Cytochrome *bd-I* levels were very low at the highest and lowest rates of O<sub>2</sub> transport and highest at 56% aerobiosis. Expression of this operon was 6.4-fold enhanced compared with anoxia (where acetate flux is maximal).

The expression of the second cytochrome *bd*-type oxidase of *E. coli*, cytochrome *bd-II*, is subject to less extreme regulation and has been studied less intensively; the function of this oxidase is unclear. Our current knowledge of the structures of cytochromes *bd-I* and *bd-II* suggests that their functions should be similar and perhaps interchangeable, yet they appear to be differentially regulated. Whereas *cydAB* is maximally expressed at O<sub>2</sub> tensions between microaerobic and oxygen-rich conditions (320), *appCB*, encoding cytochrome *bd-II*, is maximally expressed at 0% aerobiosis (using the acetate criterion). Spectroscopic assays of oxidase levels confirm these conclusions (276, 319). In contrast, the *cyoABCDE* operon, encoding cytochrome *bo*<sub>3</sub>, was maximally induced under fully aerobic conditions.

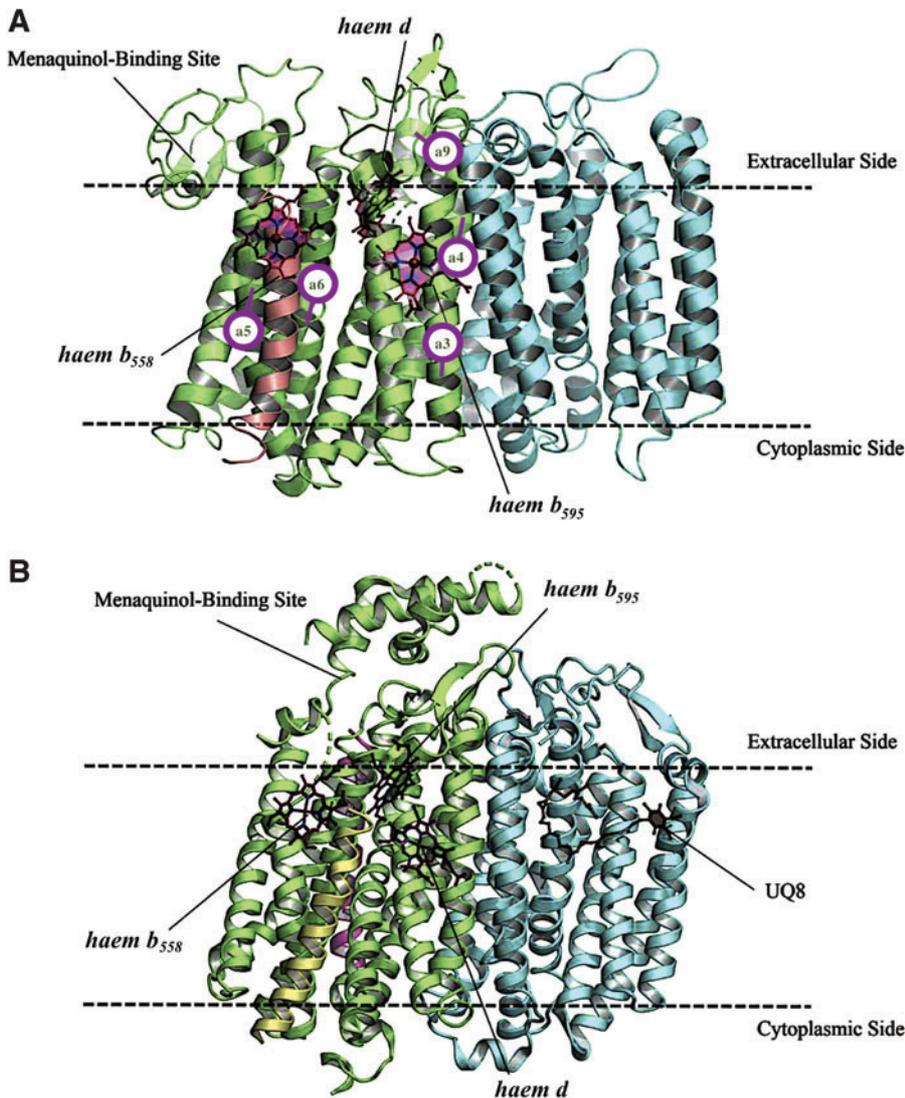
Thus, shifts in oxidase expression are consistent with a progressive switch from fermentation to microaerobic respiration (where cytochrome *bd-I* acts as the dominant oxidase) and then to aerobic respiration (where cytochrome *bo*<sub>3</sub>

is the prevailing terminal oxidase. Posttranscriptional regulation appears not to play a major role in oxidase expression.

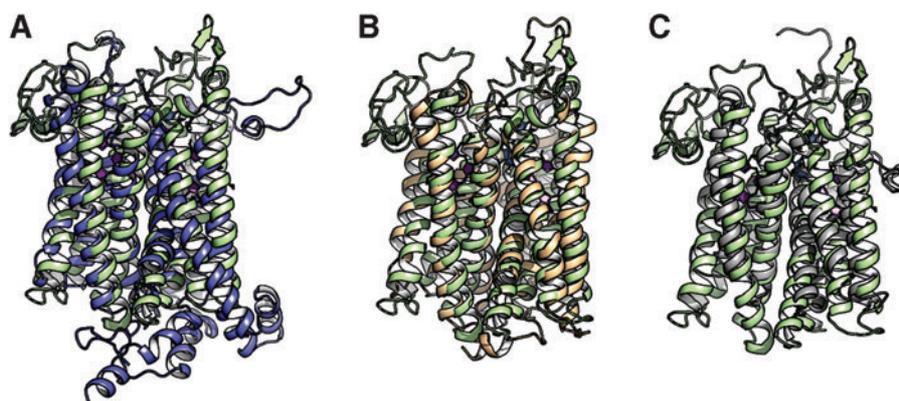
### III. Structure and Assembly

#### A. Structure

To date, cytochrome *bd* structures from two bacteria have been reported. In 2016, the first crystal structure of cytochrome *bd*, from the thermophile *G. thermodenitrificans* K1041, was determined at 3.1 Å (Protein Data Bank [PDB]: 5DOQ) and 3.80 Å (PDB: 5IR6) resolutions (281). The structure shows that this is a three-subunit enzyme. Both main subunits, CydA (~52 kDa) and CydB (~40 kDa) (283), are integral membrane proteins, each consisting of nine transmembrane helices, with the N-terminus and the C-terminus in the periplasmic and cytoplasmic sites, respectively (Fig. 5A). CydA and CydB are encoded by paralogous genes, which resulted from a duplication of a single ancestral unit codifying for a homodimeric oxidase (75). The heterodimeric structure is stabilized by hydrophobic interactions involving residues coming from the paired  $\alpha$ 3,  $\alpha$ 4, and  $\alpha$ 9 of CydA and CydB. The CydA and CydB subunits are structurally similar (root mean



**FIG. 5.** (A) Ribbon model of the *bd* oxidase from *G. thermodenitrificans*. The subunits CydA (green), CydB (cyan), and CydS (brown) are shown. The haem groups *b*<sub>558</sub>, *b*<sub>595</sub>, and *d* are represented by stick models (pink). Helices  $\alpha$ 3,  $\alpha$ 4,  $\alpha$ 5,  $\alpha$ 6, and  $\alpha$ 9 reported in the main text are labeled. (B) Ribbon model of the *bd-I* oxidase from *E. coli*. The subunits CydA (green), CydB (cyan), CydX (yellow), and CydH (magenta) are shown. The haem groups *b*<sub>558</sub>, *b*<sub>595</sub>, and *d* are represented by stick models (pink). UQ8, ubiquinone-8. Color images are available online.



**FIG. 6. Structurally similar subunits of *G. thermodenitrificans* *bd* oxidase.** Structural superposition of *G. thermodenitrificans* *bd* oxidase (green) with (A) Complex III (Cytochrome *bc*<sub>1</sub>) from *Flavobacterium johnsoniae* (blue; PDB:6BTM; RMSD: 3.4 Å); (B) Complex III (Cytochrome *bc*<sub>1</sub>) from *Rhodothermus marinus* (orange; PDB:6F0K; RMSD: 3.4 Å); and (C) polysulfide reductase from *Thermus thermophilus* (gray; PDB:2VPX; RMSD: 3.2 Å). Superposition was carried out using PyMOL (Version 2.0; Schrödinger, LLC). RMSD, root mean square deviation. Color images are available online.

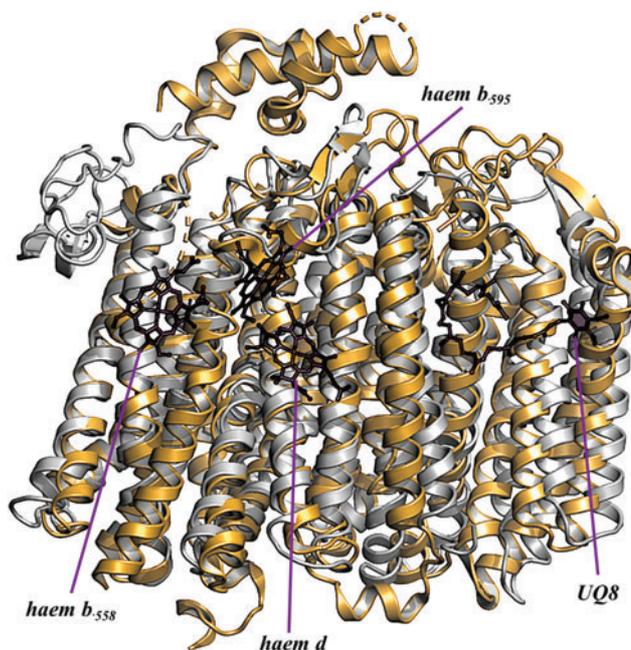
square deviation [RMSD]: 3.1 Å). A search for structurally similar subunits in PDB yielded a relatively low similarity with Complex III (cytochrome *bc*<sub>1</sub>) from *Flavobacterium johnsoniae* (PDB:6BTM; RMSD: 3.4 Å; Fig. 6A) (311) and *Rhodothermus marinus* (PDB:6F0K; RMSD: 3.4 Å; Fig. 6B) (307), and polysulfide reductase from *Thermus thermophilus* (PDB:2VPX; RMSD: 3.2 Å; Fig. 6C) (162). CydS, in turn, is a single transmembrane helix of 33 amino acid residues (~4 kDa), which is positioned at the peripheral interface formed by helices  $\alpha$ 5 and  $\alpha$ 6 of CydA. CydS is proposed to stabilize haem *b*<sub>558</sub> during potential structural rearrangements of the CydA upon binding and oxidation of quinol (281).

In 2019, using single-particle cryoelectron microscopy (cryo-EM), two structures of the *E. coli* cytochrome *bd*-I, in lipid nanodiscs with a bound Fab fragment (280) and in the presence of aurachin C (317), were determined at 2.68 Å (PDB: 6RKO) and 3.3 Å (PDB: 6RX4) resolutions, respectively. The results of the two articles (280, 317) are consistent. It turns out that cytochrome *bd*-I is a four-subunit enzyme (Fig. 5B). The arrangement and architectures of subunits CydA, CydB, and CydX are similar to the overall structure of the cytochrome *bd* from *G. thermodenitrificans* *K1041* (Fig. 7). A fourth, previously unknown, subunit, absent in the *G. thermodenitrificans* oxidase, was named CydH (280) [or CydY (317)]. CydH appears to be a single transmembrane subunit that binds in the cleft between transmembrane helices  $\alpha$ 1 and  $\alpha$ 9 of CydA.

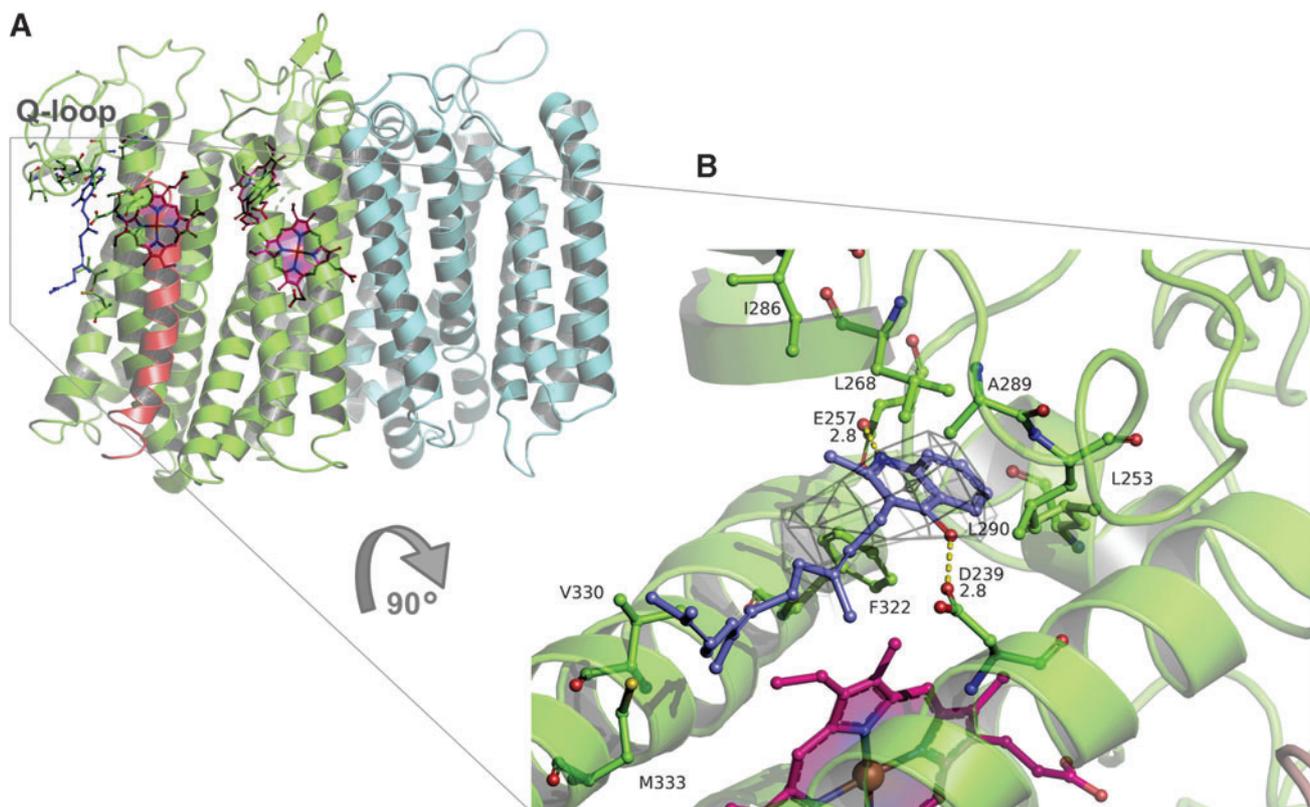
Cytochrome *bd* displays a unique binding domain for the oxidation of quinol called the Q-loop (218, 226). This is the loop connecting the  $\alpha$ 6 and  $\alpha$ 7 helices of CydA, facing the outside of the prokaryotic cell (Fig. 8A). The Q-loop is of variable length within the family (239, 282). Based on its size, the *bd*-type oxidases are divided into two subfamilies: L (long Q-loop) and S (short Q-loop) (7, 48). Cytochromes *bd* from *G. thermodenitrificans* and *E. coli* belong to S and L subfamilies, respectively. The quinone-analogue aurachin D is a powerful and relatively selective inhibitor of the *E. coli* cytochrome *bd*-I (221). Duroquinol:O<sub>2</sub> oxidoreductase activity of the isolated *bd*-I oxidase is inhibited by aurachin D with *IC*<sub>50</sub> of 35 nM (317). In accord with

these data, aurachin D inhibits O<sub>2</sub> consumption of cytochrome *bd* in inverted membrane vesicles of *M. smegmatis* with an *IC*<sub>50</sub> of ~400 nM (212).

An *in silico* docking model of the complex between aurachin D and cytochrome *bd* (Paiardini, unpublished data) suggests that indeed aurachin D binds at the cytochrome *bd* quinol oxidation site (Fig. 8B), in close proximity to the Q-loop. The docking data (Fig. 8B; Paiardini, unpublished data) are consistent with the fact that, in the structure reported by Theßeling *et al.* (317), there is a small but significantly



**FIG. 7. Superposition of *G. thermodenitrificans* *bd* oxidase (PDB:5DOQ; silver) and *E. coli* *bd*-I oxidase (PDB:6RKO; gold).** The positions of haems *b*<sub>558</sub>, *b*<sub>595</sub>, *d*, and UQ8 in 6RKO are shown as reference. The measured RMSD is 4.7 Å. Superposition was carried out using PyMOL (Version 2.0; Schrödinger, LLC). Color images are available online.



**FIG. 8. Cytochrome *bd* displays a unique binding domain for the oxidation of quinol.** (A) Ribbon model of *G. thermodenitrificans* *bd* oxidase with aurachin D bound (slate sticks). (B) Detailed representation of the interaction between aurachin D and *G. thermodenitrificans* *bd* oxidase. The residues at less than 4 Å from aurachin D are represented as sticks, and labeled according to the crystal structure of *bd* oxidase from *G. thermodenitrificans* (PDB 5DOQ). Haem *b*<sub>558</sub> is represented as purple sticks. The key polar interactions of aurachin D with residues E257 and D239 are represented as yellow dashed lines, and the distance between the involved atoms is reported (Å). The approximate position of the density of aurachin C as found in *bd* oxidase from *E. coli* (PDB: 6RX4) is reported as mesh. Docking was done using MVD (CLC Bio©) starting from the energy minimized structure of aurachin D and PDB file 5DOQ and considering search space a sphere of 12 Å centered on the Fe atom of haem *b*<sub>558</sub>. The best docked pose, as assessed by the energy of interaction score (-128.2), is shown. MVD, Molegro Virtual Docker. Color images are available online.

unexplained electron density in a pocket comprising E257 and K252, possibly due to a bound aurachin C. The role of the Q-loop in the as-isolated cytochrome *bd* from *E. coli* without substrate, in the presence of ubiquinone-1 (substrate analogue), and a quinolone-type inhibitor AD3-11 was investigated (280). The Q loop is divided into two domains: a flexible, disordered Q<sub>N</sub> (N-terminal part) and a rigid, well-ordered Q<sub>C</sub> (C-terminal part). The Q<sub>C</sub> domain that defines the L-subfamily does not appear to be involved in substrate binding.

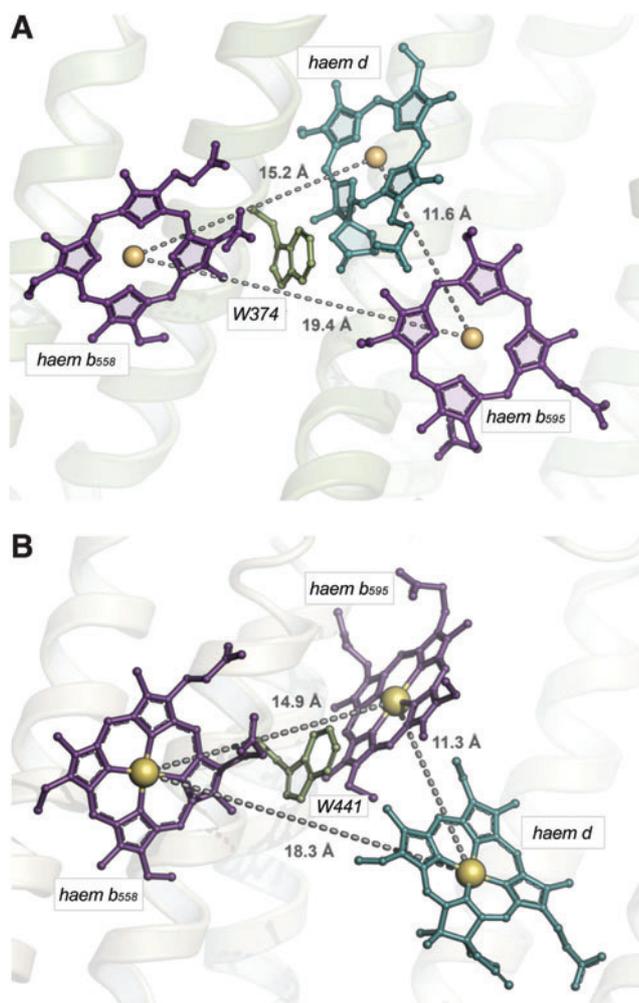
A feature that emerged from the crystal structure of the cytochrome *bd* from *G. thermodenitrificans* was the unexpected triangular arrangement of the three haems located on CydA. This suggests a direct electron transfer from haem *b*<sub>558</sub> to haem *d*, followed by equilibration with haem *b*<sub>595</sub> (Fig. 9A and section V). The evolutionarily conserved W374 could participate in the electron transfer between haem *b*<sub>558</sub> and haem *d* (281).

The *E. coli* cytochrome *bd*-I preserves triangular organization of the haems (Fig. 9B). The location and coordination of haem *b*<sub>558</sub> are equivalent in both enzymes. It is coordinated by H186 and M325 (M393 in *E. coli*). Surprisingly, however, haem *b*<sub>595</sub> and haem *d* in the *E. coli* structure are interchanged with respect to the *G. thermodenitrificans* enzyme (Figs. 5 and 9). In the latter structure, haem *b*<sub>595</sub> is hexacoordinate

having H21 and E101 (H19 and E99 in *E. coli*) as axial ligands. It is buried in the protein interior deeper than haem *d*. Haem *d* has E378 (E445 in *E. coli*) as the axial ligand. In the *E. coli* structure, conversely, haem *b*<sub>595</sub> is pentacoordinate with E445 as the axial ligand. Furthermore, haem *b*<sub>595</sub>, rather than haem *d*, is located near the periplasmic surface.

There is a discrepancy in the nature of the axial ligand to haem *d* between the two *E. coli* *bd*-I structures. Safarian *et al.* (280) claim that this is H19, whereas Theßeling *et al.* (317) report that the ligand is E99. The difference in the haem *d* axial ligand observed in the two static structures may indicate flexibility in the haem iron/ligand coordination bond, assuming that the haem *d* iron may coordinate no more than one protein axial ligand at a time. In line with this suggestion, lability (transient formation/breaking) of the haem *d* iron bond to a protein ligand in one of the states of the catalytic cycle (the one-electron reduced “mixed-valence” state) was noted earlier in time-resolved experiments (304). This implies the possible functional significance of the intraprotein axial ligand exchange in the haem *d* coordination sphere during catalysis.

The short edge-to-edge distance (6.7 Å) between haem *b*<sub>558</sub> and haem *b*<sub>595</sub> and the interchanged positions of the high-spin haems suggest a sequential interhaem electron



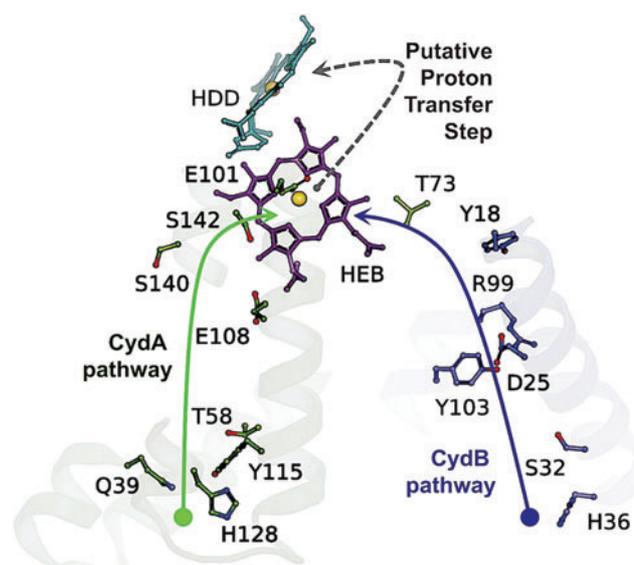
**FIG. 9. Representation of the triangular arrangement of the three haems, in stick models, bound to CydA in (A) *G. thermodenitrificans* *bd* oxidase and (B) *E. coli* *bd-I* oxidase.** Haems *b*<sub>558</sub> and *b*<sub>595</sub> are depicted in violet and haem *d* in cyan. The distance between Fe atoms is represented as dashed gray lines and labeled. In *G. thermodenitrificans* *bd* oxidase, this arrangement suggests a direct electron transfer from haem *b*<sub>558</sub> to haem *d*, followed by equilibration with haem *b*<sub>595</sub>. The evolutionarily conserved W374 (W441 in *E. coli* *bd-I* oxidase) could mediate electron transfer between haem *b*<sub>558</sub> and haem *d*. Surprisingly, haem *b*<sub>595</sub> and haem *d* in the *E. coli* *bd-I* oxidase structure are interchanged with respect to the *G. thermodenitrificans* enzyme. Adapted from Safarian *et al.* (280, 281). Color images are available online.

transfer in the *E. coli* oxidase, *b*<sub>558</sub> → *b*<sub>595</sub> → *d*, as proposed earlier (48, 258) (Fig. 9B and section V). The totally conserved W441 possibly mediates electron transfer between *b*<sub>558</sub> and *b*<sub>595</sub>. It is worth noting that the plane of haem *b*<sub>558</sub> is organized more-or-less at right angles to the membrane plane in both the *E. coli* and *G. thermodenitrificans* oxidases, whereas either *d* or *b*<sub>595</sub> is oriented at about 45° to the membrane plane in the two oxidases; these two high-spin haems are interchanged in the two species (280, 281, 317). Such an arrangement was predicted by electron paramagnetic resonance analyses of membrane multilayers rotated within the instrument cavity in 1980 before any structural data were available (250).

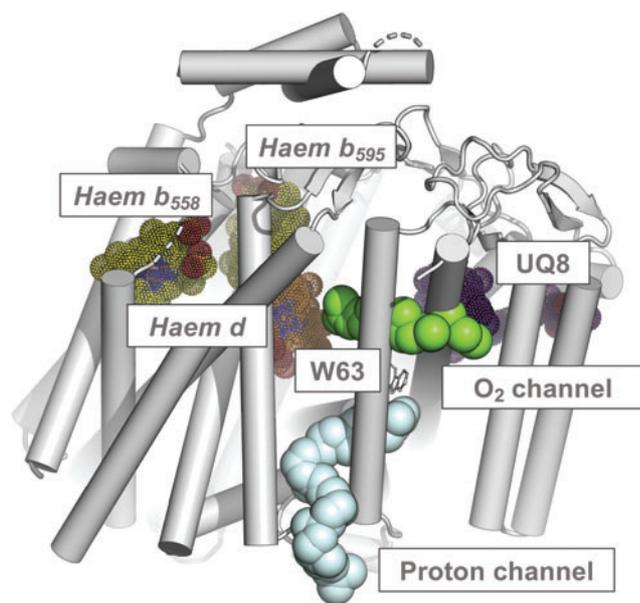
CydB contains a tightly bound ubiquinone-8 (UQ8; Fig. 5B). The molecule is located at a hydrophobic pocket, about 3.5 nm from haem *d*, in a near-symmetric conformation relative to haems *b*<sub>558</sub> and *b*<sub>595</sub>. The significant distance from the haems makes its direct participation in electron transfer to/from the haems or oxygen reduction unlikely. The bound UQ8 possibly plays a structural role (280, 317).

Cytochrome *bd* is not active as a transmembrane pump, but a net proton flux results from quinol oxidation and consequent proton ejection at the periplasmic side of the membrane and uptake of cytoplasmic protons during oxygen reduction. Two alternative proton pathways in the *G. thermodenitrificans* structure have been indicated, one in CydA and the other in CydB, which converge on haem *b*<sub>595</sub> (Fig. 10) (281). In the *E. coli* enzyme, there is a hydrophilic, water-filled H-channel that connects the cytoplasm to haem *d* by the CydA pathway (Fig. 11). A chain of water molecules runs until D58 of CydB, and then, the conserved S108, E107, and S140 of CydA continue the pathway to haem *d*. Near D58, the H-channel branches and runs along the WDNQ motif of CydB forming the CydB pathway branch (not shown). Surprisingly, in the center of CydB at W63, the hydrophilic branch merges with the hydrophobic oxygen-conducting channel (O<sub>2</sub> channel, Fig. 11).

The O<sub>2</sub> channel that goes parallel to the membrane plane connects the lipid interface to haem *d* (280, 317). In the *G. thermodenitrificans* structure, due to the lack of voluminous pathways there, O<sub>2</sub> may gain access to haem *d* via a potential O<sub>2</sub> entry site located laterally at a short distance from haem *d*.



**FIG. 10. Potential proton transfer pathways in the *bd* oxidase from *G. thermodenitrificans* (PDB 5DOQ).** The side chains of the residues that are involved in CydA and Cyd B proton transfer pathway are shown. Proton transfer pathways are crucial for protons to gain access to the oxygen-binding site. Two potential proton transfer routes, named the CydA pathway and CydB pathway respectively, have been identified: the former is located inside of the four-helix bundle  $\alpha$ 1–4 of CydA and the latter in the symmetry-related  $\alpha$ 1–4 four-helix bundle of CydB. HDD, haem *d*; HEB, haem *b*<sub>595</sub>. Adapted from Safarian *et al.* (281). Color images are available online.



**FIG. 11. Oxygen and proton channels in *E. coli* cytochrome *bd*-I (PDB: 6RKO).** Adapted from Safarian *et al.* (280). The proton channel (cyan spheres) connects haem *d* directly to the cytoplasm via the CydA pathway. The oxygen channel (O<sub>2</sub> channel, green spheres) connects the UQ8 interface with heme *d*. Color images are available online.

Thus, for the *G. thermodenitrificans* cytochrome *bd*, O<sub>2</sub> present within the membrane could bind to haem *d* without the need for any functionally conserved protein cavity (281). The *E. coli* CydH occupies the O<sub>2</sub> entry site in the *G. thermodenitrificans* enzyme, where CydH is absent, thereby preventing access of O<sub>2</sub> to haem *b*<sub>595</sub> from the hydrophobic lipid bilayer (280, 317).

### B. Assembly—the role of *CydDC*

Understandably, when molecular genetic tools were brought to bear on cytochrome *bd*, the structural genes (*i.e.*, encoding the oxidase subunits) were the earliest focus. Mutants lacking the oxidase could be isolated and the encoding genes were cloned, sequenced, and analyzed, thus laying the foundations for studies on oxidase organization and function. However, other genes, involved in assembly of the oxidase complex in *E. coli*, were quickly found and these too have generated new information and hypotheses.

In *E. coli*, the *cydDC* genes are distant from the structural genes on the chromosomal map (123), but in certain bacteria they occur in a single operon with *cydAB* thus being expressed on one continuous transcript, as occurs in *Bacillus subtilis* (337). Other bacteria have oxidases that resemble cytochrome *bd*-I, yet have no spectrally detectable high-spin haems (*b*<sub>595</sub> and the *d*-type haem) as in *Campylobacter jejuni*; nevertheless, two genes (cj0081, cj0082) that encode proteins similar to the CydAB proteins in *E. coli* were identified from genome sequences (241). These issues are discussed in Poole *et al.* (253).

Neither *cydD* nor *cydC* is an essential gene in *E. coli*, as evidenced by the strategies that identified *cydC* and *cydD* mutants. However, Eng *et al.* (108) describe *E. coli cydC* as an essential gene and suggest that cytochrome *bd*-I (*i.e.*,

CydABX) and *CydDC* do not always co-occur: among the 1965 genomes analyzed, 407 species exhibited highly conserved *cydC* genes, but only 53 showed a *cydB* homologue. It is puzzling that *cydDC* genes appear to be found in so many genomes that do not encode cytochrome *bd*-I; Kranz *et al.*, in the 33 bacterial genomes analyzed, found none (197), although six species encode the oxidase but not *CydDC*, namely *Rickettsia prowazekii*, *Chlamydia tracomatis*, *C. jejuni*, *Porphyromonas ginigivalis*, *Aquifex aeolicus*, and *Thermotoga maritima*. All were claimed to lack both *CydDC* and cytochrome *bd*-I by Eng *et al.* (108).

Furthermore, neither *Geobacillus* nor *Mycobacterium* species were found by Eng *et al.* to encode cytochrome *bd*-I, despite the fact that other authors report functional or structural studies on cytochrome *bd*-I from these bacteria (23, 114, 281). Caution is urged when deducing the apparent absence of genes from a genome, particularly genes such as *cydDC* that are members of a very large and diverse family—the adenosine triphosphate (ATP)-binding cassette (ABC)-type transporters.

1. The *cydDC* genes. In addition to the structural genes that encode the cytochrome *bd* complex, detailed above, it is now clear that, in many bacteria, two additional genes function in proper assembly of the oxidase. In *E. coli*, where information is most comprehensive, and most bacteria, they are named *cydC* and *cydD*. These genes encode a transport system in the ABC class and are widely thought to be the sole two components of a membrane-integrated export system.

By the early 1990s, *cydA* and *cydB* encoding the cytochrome *bd*-type terminal oxidase (*bd*-I) (61) were mapped to an operon at 16.6 min (188) on the chromosomal map. Remote from the *cydAB* locus and located at 19.2 min (123), a further gene, implicated in “cytochrome *d* assembly,” was also identified. Mutants in this gene (named *cydC*) were devoid of absorbance bands in the visible spectrum that could be attributed to cytochrome *bd*-I; however, the spectrum was returned to wild-type (WT) characteristics by introducing the cloned *cydC*<sup>+</sup> gene on an episome.

Transcription/translation experiments and Western immunoblotting of membranes from a *cydC* strain showed that the CydA and CydB subunits were present but diminished in membranes from a *cydC* strain relative to the isogenic *cydC*<sup>+</sup> strain (123). Expression of the oxidase subunits in a *cydC* strain demonstrated that the *b*<sub>595</sub> and *b*<sub>558</sub> haems were overproduced, but the haem *d* component was absent. Thus, a plausible hypothesis was that CydC is involved in biosynthesis of haem *d*; in the absence of this haem, the oxidase subunits are largely absent and destabilized (123). Note that Siegele *et al.* independently described the *cydC* gene but named it *surB*, because its gene product was required for *E. coli* cells to exit (*i.e.*, survive) in a stationary phase aerobically (299).

In 1989, we identified a fourth *cyd* locus by adopting a markedly different strategy (260): survivors of a classical nitrosoguanidine mutagenesis were screened using a hand spectroscope (on samples held at 77 K) for loss of the characteristic absorbance at 630 nm of reduced cytochrome *bd*. The mutant gene in one such isolate was mapped to 19.3 min (260). Furthermore, a gene implicated in the ability to survive at elevated temperatures, *htrD*, was shown, after correcting a missing G in the earlier sequence, to be identical to *cydD* (98).

Cloning of the *cydC* and *cydD* genes (255) resulted in a fragment of chromosome originating in the 19-min region of the Kohara map, and thus consistent with earlier P1 mapping data (260). When such plasmids were used as templates for *in vivo* protein synthesis, two proteins identified as CydD (61 kDa), calculated to be 63 kDa, and CydC (59 vs. 63 kDa) (255) were generated. CydD and CydC were similar: the deduced amino acid sequences revealed 50% similarity and 27% identity. Hydropathy profiles predicted that the CydDC complex comprises two similar membrane proteins, and it was identified as the first documented example of a bacterial heterodimeric ABC transporter, probably an exporter, by comparison with known ABC family members.

2. The CydDC proteins: structure and function. Based on analysis of hydrophobicity of CydD and CydC, it was predicted that both subunits would have six transmembrane helices, the C-terminal portion of each polypeptide being hydrophilic and containing an ATP-binding site (255). A membrane topology model for CydDC predicted both subunits to have six transmembrane regions separated by two major cytoplasmic loops; both ends of each polypeptide chain were predicted to be located in the cytoplasm (86). Subsequent modeling of topography (253) was consistent with those models, and used to highlight the Walker A motif (which binds ATP), the Walker B motif (which interacts with Mg(II)), and conserved amino acids (histidine, glutamate, aspartic acid) that are part of the H-, Q-, and D-loops, respectively.

The periplasm of an *E. coli cydDC* knockout mutant is “overoxidizing” (126) indicating that CydDC may catalyze cell export of reductant(s). Indeed, loss of CydDC diminishes the level of reduced thiol detected in the extracytoplasmic compartment, while overexpression of CydDC decreases the cytoplasmic reduced thiol pool (146). These observations are consistent with *in vitro* studies that measured import of <sup>35</sup>S-labeled cysteine into everted membrane vesicles and demonstrated that, *in vivo*, CydDC mediates energy-linked export of cysteine (247).

CydC also transports outward, and thus presumably into the periplasm, the tripeptide glutathione (L- $\gamma$ -glutamyl-cysteinylglycine [GSH]), a major regulator of cellular redox poise (248). The transport rate for GSH by CydDC was fivefold higher than for cysteine; therefore, given the abundance of GSH in the bacterial cytoplasm (248), GSH is likely to be a major substrate for CydDC. Addition of GSH and cysteine both stimulated the ATPase activity of purified CydDC (342), supporting an enzymic role in the export of reductant. The complexity of the process is probably not fully understood: Eser *et al.* (110) studied the effects of mutating three genes (*cydD*, *ggt*—encoding periplasmic  $\gamma$ -glutamyl transpeptidase—and *mdhA*—encoding a multidrug-resistant-like ABC transporter) that might influence periplasmic GSH pools, but none affected the ability of glutaredoxin-3 (GrxCp) to catalyze the formation of disulfide bonds, suggesting the existence of other routes for GSH export in *E. coli*.

Because CydDC is an exporter and is required for haem assembly into the oxidase, it was hypothesized that CydDC might export haem, a proposal tested experimentally. However, use of everted vesicles and radiolabeled haem *in vitro* failed to demonstrate this function for CydDC (74). Later work exploited a purified form of CydDC with an absorption peak at

410–412 nm; pyridine haemochrome analyses indicated the presence of a bound *b*-type haem with a CydDC:haem ratio of 5:1 (342). This bound haem was reducible and oxidizable, and bound CO. Haemin and GSH/cysteine had synergistic and stimulatory effects on the ATPase activity of the complex. This suggests that the haem cofactor has a significant but obscure role in CydDC function.

Certain other reduced thiols (including homocysteine and methionine) also activated CydDC. Control experiments with *S*-substituted/nonthiol analogues and haem lacking the central iron (protoporphyrin) did not stimulate rates of ATPase activity, and inclusion of nonthiol reductants decreased the ATPase rate. These experiments suggest the need for either thiols or an iron-containing tetrapyrrole in CydDC function. Histidine was an intriguing exception: it gave a twofold increase in ATPase activity, which increased to eightfold on additional inclusion of 1  $\mu$ M haemin. Since axial ligands to haem include both histidine and reduced thiol compounds, this suggests that the haem-ligating capacity of reduced thiols contributes to the enhancements in ATPase activity observed for GSH and cysteine (342).

3. Structural investigations into the CydDC complex. Two-dimensional crystals have been obtained by incorporating purified CydDC into *E. coli* lipids, thus permitting cryo-EM (342). The electron densities reveal arrays of dimeric units in “up” and “down” orientations, indicating CydDC heterodimers in the crystal lattice. Although no three-dimensional crystal structure has been reported, Shepherd and colleagues used a structural modeling approach to study the roles of individual residues in catalysis and cofactor binding (253).

The two-point mutations in the earliest *cydD1* allele are G319D and G429E (86). Based on homology modeling, the G429 residue is close to a conserved aspartate residue; it is postulated that substitution for a glutamate (also negatively charged) could disrupt the Walker A motif and abolish function. Mutation of G319, which was found to be buried at the bottom of the hydrophobic pocket, may also impact upon conformational changes during the catalytic cycle [see Poole *et al.* (253)].

4. Physiological impacts of CydDC function. Based on the above data on the effects of CydDC on periplasmic physiology, the pleiotropic phenotype of *cydDC* strains may result predominantly from the disruption of disulfide folding in that compartment (248). Indeed, sensitivity of the *cydDC* mutant to benzylpenicillin was attributed to misfolding of the disulfide-containing penicillin-binding protein 4. The observed loss of cell motility in *cydDC* strains may result, for example, from a defective P-ring motor protein (247), since exogenous cysteine (*i.e.*, oxidized cysteine) corrects a motility defect in a *dsbB* mutant (89). Complementation of *cydDC* strains with exogenous reductant largely complemented the phenotypes associated with defective disulfide folding (248).

It is important to differentiate between deficiencies of oxidase *per se* and the additional defects in *cydDC* mutants, which do not assemble cytochrome *bd*. This distinction is difficult because both *cydDC* and *cydAB* mutants display diverse and sometimes overlapping phenotypes (252). All *cydAB* mutants (i) appear to lack spectroscopically detectable cytochrome *bd*, (ii) fail to survive as robustly as WT cells in

stationary phase (299), (iii) are sensitive to inhibitors (cyanide, azide, Zn(II) ions) (260), and (iv) intolerant of oxidative and nitrosative stresses (117, 124, 146, 295). *cydDC* mutants also exhibit low levels of other cytochromes, particularly those haemproteins in the periplasm (254), and have a more oxidized periplasm. The failure of *cydDC* mutants to export to the periplasm GSH and cysteine results in a more oxidized periplasm. However, we do not understand why *bd*-type oxidase assembly is inhibited by these defects. Among plausible hypotheses are the following:

- The haems exported by CydDC to the periplasm (74) may be assembled onto outward-facing domains of the oxidase subunits. The finding that haem stimulates the ATPase activity of purified CydDC is intriguing (Section III.B.2).
- The haems exported by CydDC to the periplasm CydDC occupy there critical sites such as on chaperones required for oxidase assembly.
- The processing and assembling processes of the periplasm are intolerant of the oxidized nature of the periplasm in *cydDC* mutants.
- In addition to GSH and cysteine, which were identified as substrates for CydDC in transport studies, CydDC may export other thus-far unidentified metabolites.

We discuss the implications of cytochrome *bd* deficiency (and by extension of *cydDC* mutations) in Sections VI to VIII and in Poole *et al.* (253).

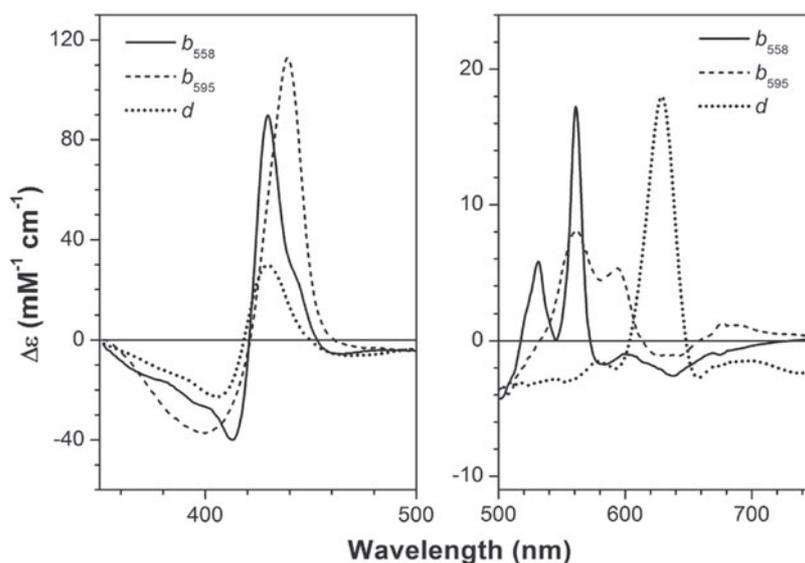
5. Conclusions. CydDC is of great interest for its profound impact on oxidase assembly and also because it was the first heterodimeric ABC-type exporter to be described in prokaryotes. The genes may or may not be found in an operon with the structural oxidase genes. The loss of *bd*-type oxidase

assembly and function in *cydDC* mutants reveals CydDC to be crucial for this respiratory complex. The CydDC system transports to the periplasm reducing molecules, notably GSH and cysteine, which stimulate the ATPase activity of the isolated CydDC complex. We lack information on other potential substrates for CydDC and unambiguous evidence that haem is transported outward to the periplasm where it may be assembled into the oxidase. A direct involvement of haem with CydDC function is, however, suggested by studies *in vitro* of the ATPase activity of CydDC.

#### IV. Spectral and Redox Properties

The absorption spectra of the three haems, *b*<sub>558</sub> and *b*<sub>595</sub> (which are protohaems IX) and *d* (which is a *cis*-haem *d* hydroxychlorin  $\gamma$ -spirolactone) constitute the overall absorption spectrum of cytochrome *bd*. To date, the *E. coli* cytochrome *bd*-I is the only cytochrome *bd* for which, by means of spectroelectrochemical redox titrations, the difference (reduced minus oxidized) in spectra of all three haems in the  $\alpha$ -,  $\beta$ - (32, 185, 210), and Soret (32) regions was resolved (Fig. 12). The position of the Soret band maximum for haem *b*<sub>595</sub> is consistent with that unveiled before by femtosecond spectroscopy (50, 328) and by investigations on the E445A mutant (6, 269). The spectral contribution of haem *d* to the aggregated Soret band is much smaller than those of either *b*-type haems.

Upper asymptotic redox potentials of haems *b*<sub>558</sub>, *b*<sub>595</sub>, and *d* in the *E. coli* cytochrome *bd*-I in sucrose monolaurate at pH 7.0 are +172, +182, and +256 mV, respectively (32). These values are consistent with those for apparent redox potentials of the haems in *bd*-type oxidases from *E. coli* and *A. vine-landii* reported earlier (17, 169, 185, 211, 220, 264, 277). The detergent's nature affects the apparent redox potentials for haems *b*, particularly haem *b*<sub>558</sub>, but has virtually no effect on the haem *d* potential (32, 211). In the absence of haem *d*



**FIG. 12.** Resolved different absorption spectra (reduced minus oxidized) of haems *b*<sub>558</sub>, *b*<sub>595</sub>, and *d* in the WT *E. coli* cytochrome *bd*-I in the presence of 50 mM *n*-octyl- $\beta$ -D-glucoside at pH 7.0. Haem *b*<sub>558</sub> has an  $\alpha$ -band at 531.5 nm,  $\beta$ -band at 561.5 nm, and the Soret band with  $\lambda_{\text{max}}=429.5$  nm and  $\lambda_{\text{min}}=413$  nm. Haem *b*<sub>595</sub> shows an  $\alpha$ -band at 594 nm,  $\beta$ -band at 561.5 nm, a trough at 643 nm reflecting its MLCT band, and the Soret band with  $\lambda_{\text{max}}=439$  nm and  $\lambda_{\text{min}}=400$  nm. Haem *d* displays an  $\alpha$ -band at 629 nm, a trough at 740 nm (its MLCT band), and the Soret band with  $\lambda_{\text{max}}=430$  nm and  $\lambda_{\text{min}}=405$  nm. MLCT, metal-to-ligand charge transfer. Modified from Bloch *et al.* (32).

(in the E99L mutant), a large interaction potential (about  $-90$  mV) between haem  $b_{558}$  and haem  $b_{595}$  is observed (32). The presence of haem  $d$  reduces the redox interaction between the two haems  $b$  by ca. three times.

In contrast, redox interaction between haem  $d$  and either  $b$ -type haems is weak. The latter apparently contradicts the fact that the distance between haems  $b_{558}$  and  $b_{595}$  is longer than that between haems  $d$  and  $b_{595}$  (281). However, a strong redox interaction between redox-active metal sites does not always mean a short distance between them. Lack of significant electrostatic interaction at short distance may be due to screening of the electron charge by the proton taken up on reduction (32). For instance, in cytochrome  $c$  oxidase, the distance between haem  $a_3$  and  $\text{Cu}_B$  is much shorter than that between haem  $a_3$  and haem  $a$  (154, 322). At the same time, redox interaction between haem  $a_3$  and  $\text{Cu}_B$  was not reported, whereas the redox interaction between haems  $a$  and  $a_3$  is significant (236). Notably, the redox interaction between haems  $a$  and  $a_3$  in cytochrome  $c$  oxidase ( $-115$  mV at pH 8.0) (128) is significantly larger than that in cytochrome  $bd$ -I.

This may be relevant to the proton pumping mechanism in cytochrome  $c$  oxidase (10, 196), although transient states occurring during the enzyme's catalytic cycle may not be accessible in equilibrium redox titrations (300). A possible redox interaction between semiquinone and the haems in cytochrome  $bd$  remains to be examined, although the midpoint potential of the bound quinone in cytochrome  $bd$ -I was reported (139).

Being high-spin pentacoordinate, haem  $d$  can bind not only the  $\text{O}_2$  enzyme natural substrate but also exogenous ligands, such as CO (7, 34, 37, 38, 44, 50, 52, 54, 142, 143, 165–167, 169, 210, 232, 269, 302–304, 328), NO (34, 41–44, 148, 163, 167, 168), cyanide (34, 167, 177–179, 181, 198, 249, 262, 263, 277, 312, 313, 321), and  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  (35, 43, 49, 116, 155, 172, 209, 259). A marginal ligand reactivity of the haems  $b$  was also observed (34, 37, 52, 54, 143, 302). Detailed discussion of the reactions of cytochrome  $bd$  with the exogenous ligands is beyond the scope of this review but can be found in Borisov *et al.* (48) and Junemann (163).

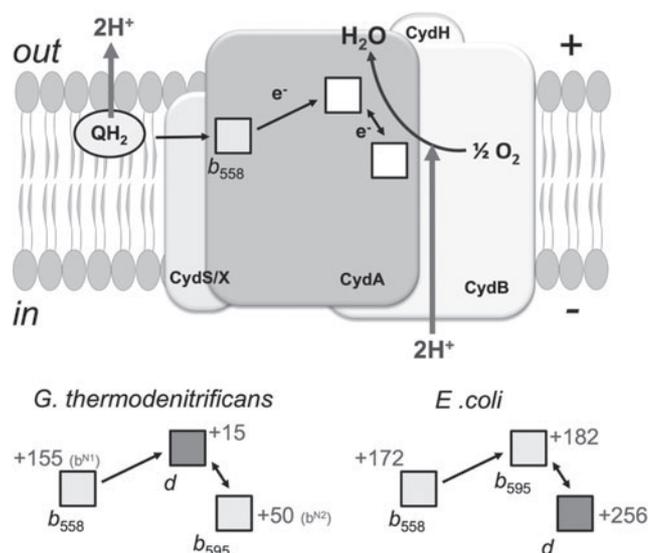
## V. Catalytic Cycle

Whereas the superfamily of haem/copper oxidases comprises both quinol and cytochrome  $c$  oxidases, the  $bd$ -type oxidases characterized thus far are all quinol oxidases. Unlike cytochromes  $c$ , quinols are two-electron-donating substrates. Yet, they are oxidized by cytochrome  $bd$  through sequential one-electron transfer steps, with  $\text{O}_2$  acting as the electron acceptor (36, 48, 163). Three quinol types with distinct structural differences can act as physiological substrates for cytochrome  $bd$ : ubiquinol ( $\text{UQH}_2$ ), menaquinol ( $\text{MQH}_2$ ), and plastoquinol.

The nature of the quinol substrate can be species-specific or dependent on growth conditions. For instance, mycobacterial and cyanobacterial  $bd$  enzymes utilize  $\text{MQH}_2$  and plastoquinol, respectively (24, 25, 73, 246), while *E. coli* cytochrome  $bd$  can use  $\text{UQH}_2$  or  $\text{MQH}_2$  depending on  $\text{O}_2$  availability (24, 25, 246, 323). Interestingly, some cytochromes  $bd$  were found to copurify with tightly bound quinols (19, 20), and a structural role in dimer stabilization was proposed for the  $\text{UQ8}$  molecule detected in the recently solved structure of *E. coli* cytochrome  $bd$ -I (280).

The primary acceptor of electrons donated by the quinol substrate is haem  $b_{558}$  (Fig. 13). From there, electrons are transferred intramolecularly to the haems  $b_{595}$  and  $d$ , but it is unclear which of the two other haems is reduced first upon oxidation of haem  $b_{558}$ . The structure of the *G. thermodenitrificans* enzyme (281), with the haems  $b_{558}$  and  $d$  significantly closer to each other than the two  $b$ -type haems (edge-to-edge distance of  $5.9$  vs.  $8.5$  Å, and Fe-Fe distance of  $15.2$  vs.  $19.4$  Å), points to a direct electron transfer from haem  $b_{558}$  to haem  $d$ .

Conversely, the recently solved structure of *E. coli*  $bd$ -I enzyme (280) with the same triangular arrangement of co-factors and similar interhaem distances, but interchanged haems  $b_{595}$  and  $d$ , suggests that electron transfer proceeds along the pathway haem  $b_{558}$   $\rightarrow$  haem  $b_{595}$   $\rightarrow$  haem  $d$  (Fig. 13). Despite this uncertainty, in both structures the haems  $b_{595}$  and  $d$ , without forming a binuclear site with their Fe atoms, are in van der Waals contact (edge-to-edge distances of  $3.5$  and  $3.8$  Å in the *G. thermodenitrificans* and *E. coli* enzyme, respectively). Therefore, regardless of which haem acts as the primary acceptor for electrons donated by



**FIG. 13. Overview of electrogenic pathways in cytochrome  $bd$ .** The oxidase comprises two major subunits (CydA, CydB) and a smaller subunit (CydS in *G. thermodenitrificans*, CydX in *E. coli*). An additional previously unknown accessory subunit (CydH) was recently revealed in the *E. coli* enzyme (280). Electrons donated by the quinol substrate ( $\text{QH}_2$ ) are transferred to haem  $b_{558}$  and from there to the haems  $b_{595}$  and  $d$ , which are in fast redox equilibrium. Midpoint potentials of the haems of cytochrome  $bd$  from *E. coli* (32) and *G. thermodenitrificans* (280) are reported in mV near the haems. In Safarian *et al.* (280), the  $b$  haems of the enzyme from *G. thermodenitrificans* are not assigned but termed haem  $b^{\text{N}1}$  ( $+50$  mV) and haem  $b^{\text{N}2}$  ( $+155$  mV) here, respectively, assigned to haem  $b_{558}$  and haem  $b_{595}$ . The electron pathway may vary between the *G. thermodenitrificans* and the *E. coli* enzyme, as they display a similar haem arrangement, but with exchanged haems  $b_{595}$  and  $d$  (280, 281). The  $\text{O}_2$  reduction to  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  takes place at haem  $d$ . The reaction is electrogenic because protons deriving from quinol oxidation are released into the periplasm, whereas protons required for the  $\text{O}_2$  chemistry are taken up from the cytoplasm.

haem  $b_{558}$ , electron equilibration between the haems  $b_{595}$  and  $d$  is expected to be very rapid.

The intramolecular electron transfer processes taking place inside cytochrome  $bd$  are not coupled to a proton pumping activity (267). Nevertheless (see section III.A), electron transfer is electrogenic and leads to generation of a transmembrane electric potential; its existence has been demonstrated for the enzymes from *E. coli* and *A. vinelandii* with diverse experimental approaches (19, 20, 26, 38, 51, 155, 183, 186, 187, 223, 224, 267). Generation of the transmembrane electric potential occurs as the electrons are transferred from haem  $b_{558}$  to the haems  $b_{595}$  and  $d$  (19, 20, 38, 155).

The potential arises from uptake and release of protons during electron transfer, but not from the electron transfer itself, in line with the information that the three haems are located at relatively similar depths inside the membrane. Experimental evidence suggests that the transmembrane electric potential results from the combined release into the periplasmic space and uptake from the cytoplasmic space of protons, respectively, associated with quinol oxidation and intramolecular reduction of haems  $b_{595}$  and  $d$  (19, 20, 38, 155) (Fig. 13). Thus, in the absence of a true redox-coupled proton pumping activity, combination of these events accounts for a vectorial proton transfer across the membrane, thereby contributing to the electric potential buildup.

Cytochrome  $bd$  in turnover conditions processes  $O_2$  to  $H_2O$  with a very high affinity for  $O_2$ . For the *E. coli*  $bd$ -I and  $bd$ -II oxidases, low  $K_{m(O_2)}$  values were determined, respectively, in the 0.003–0.3 and 0.24–2.0  $\mu M$  range, depending on the experimental approach used (16, 88, 156, 217). An usual feature of cytochrome  $bd$  among terminal oxidases is that in the single-electron reduced state ( $R^{1,\dagger}$ ), it can bind  $O_2$  at reduced haem  $d$  to give a stable and spectroscopically distinct globin-like ferrous-oxy adduct ( $A^1$ ), first identified by Poole *et al.* (257).  $O_2$  binds reduced haem  $d$  in the  $R^1$  state with high affinity [ $O_2$  dissociation constant  $K_{d(O_2)}$  of 0.28 and 0.5  $\mu M$  for the *E. coli* and *A. vinelandii* enzyme, respectively (17, 18)], accounting, at least in part, for the low  $K_{m(O_2)}$  values displayed by cytochrome  $bd$  in turnover [see Junemann *et al.* (164) and reference therein].

Interestingly, the single-electron ( $R^1$ ) and three-electron ( $R^3$ ) reduced states of the enzyme were found to bind  $O_2$  at reduced haem  $d$  with remarkably different kinetics (17). Whereas  $O_2$  binding to the  $R^3$  enzyme occurs with rates proportional to  $[O_2]$ , in the case of  $R^1$ , a hyperbolic dependence of  $O_2$  binding rates on  $[O_2]$  was documented and proposed to result from an equilibrium between two conformations (called “open” and “closed”) with different accessibility of  $O_2$  to reduced haem  $d$  (17). This finding suggests that the reactivity of reduced haem  $d$  toward gaseous ligands is modulated by the redox state of haem  $b_{558}$  and/or haem  $b_{595}$ . Consistently, CO was found to bind and dissociate from haem  $d$  in the  $R^1$  enzyme more slowly than in the  $R^3$  enzyme, and a higher  $k_{off}$  of NO was reported for the  $R^3$  enzyme compared with the  $R^1$  enzyme (44, 142, 169, 269).

Binding of  $O_2$  to the fully reduced enzyme leads to the four-electron reduction of  $O_2$  to  $2H_2O$  via several catalytic intermediates, which are similar in nature to those populated

in the  $O_2$  reaction with haem/copper oxidases. A scheme of the catalytic cycle is presented in Figure 14. In flow-flash experiments coupled with spectroscopic or electrometric measurements, it was found that haem  $d$  in the  $R^3$  enzyme binds  $O_2$  very rapidly [ $k_{on} \sim 2 \times 10^9 M^{-1} s^{-1}$  (17, 19, 142)] and forms a ferrous-oxy species ( $A^3$ ) without generating electric potential (19, 155). The same species can be observed immediately after photolysis of the CO-ligated ferrous species at temperatures below  $-100^\circ C$  (257). At room temperatures, this is followed by a rapid ( $\tau = 4.5 \mu s$ ) nonelectrogenic transfer of three or four electrons to the bound  $O_2$ , respectively, resulting in the formation of either a true peroxy intermediate [ $‘P,’$  (19, 38)] or a ferryl species with a radical on an amino acid or the haem porphyrin [ $F^*$ , (242)].

Although the detailed chemical nature of this intermediate remains uncertain, it was noted that the recently solved structure of the *E. coli* enzyme does not rule out the occurrence of a true  $P$  intermediate (280). Regardless of its chemical identity, this intermediate (whether  $P$  or  $F^*$ ) is rapidly ( $\tau = 47 \mu s$ ) and electrogenically converted into a nonradical ferryl  $F$  intermediate upon transfer of an additional electron from haem  $b_{558}$  (19, 20, 38, 155). In the presence of quinol(s) tightly bound to the enzyme, one or two electrons can be further transferred rapidly ( $\tau = 0.6$ – $1.1$  ms) to the  $O_2$  binding site, respectively, converting the  $F$  intermediate into either a fully oxidized ( $O$ ) or a single-electron reduced oxygenated species ( $A^1$ ), further contributing to generation of the electric potential (19, 20).

In stopped-flow multiwavelength spectrophotometric experiments, the steady-state level of the catalytic  $O_2$  intermediates of cytochrome  $bd$  was measured in turnover conditions sustained with excess dithiothreitol and  $Q_1$ . Under these conditions, at steady state, the mostly populated intermediates proved to be the ferryl ( $F$ ) and oxy-ferrous ( $A$ ) species, whereas only a minor portion of the enzyme was found to be in the  $O^1$  state with the electron residing on haem  $b_{558}$  (45), in accordance with the proposal that the fully oxidized  $O$  species does not take part in the catalytic mechanism (233, 343).

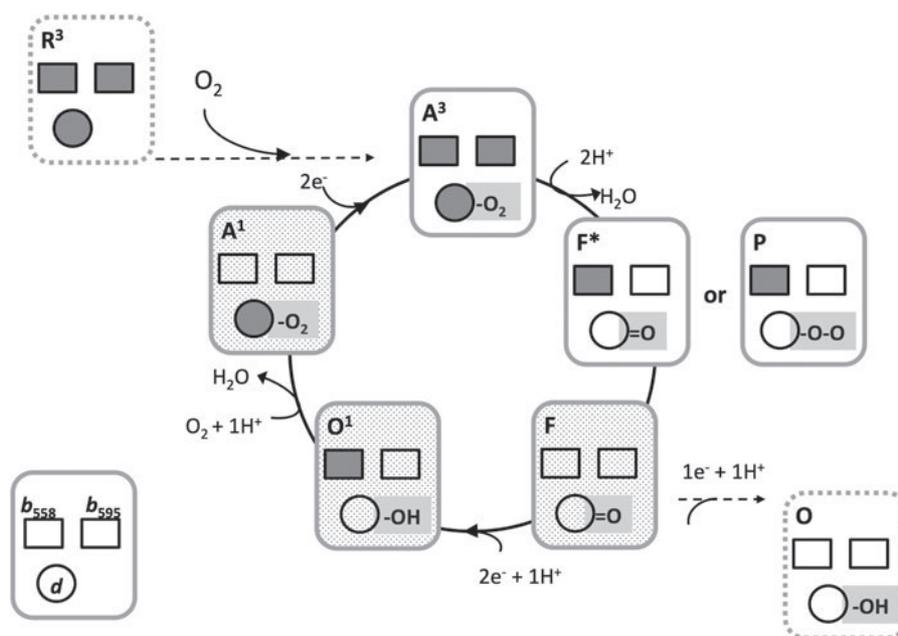
## VI. Physiological Functions

The core functions of terminal oxidases are oxygen reduction, generally to water, reductant consumption (in this case ubiquinol), and proton movements across the membrane, either by proton pumping mechanisms (as in the case of the haem/copper superfamily) or balanced proton extrusion to the outside (periplasm) and uptake from the inside (cytoplasm), as in the case of cytochrome  $bd$  (Fig. 15). However, in the case of cytochrome  $bd$ , we can discern extra physiological functions or attributes of great interest. These are summarized at the foot of Figure 15 and described in detail in the following sections.

### A. Respiratory protection of nitrogenase

In addition to its unique structure, characteristic modes of expression, oxygen kinetics, and resistance to inhibitors (sections C and VII), cytochrome  $bd$  is unusual in being implicated in a physiological mechanism termed respiratory protection. This is the maintenance of function of bacterial nitrogenase, an oxygen-labile enzyme, even under aerobic

<sup>†</sup>The superscript number denotes the total number of electrons in the enzyme species.



**FIG. 14. Intermediates generated in the catalytic cycle of cytochrome *bd*.** For each intermediate, the superscript number indicates the total number of electrons in the enzyme. Oxidized and reduced haems are, respectively, in white and gray. Bound  $O_2$  and its derivatives are in yellow. The intermediates are denoted as follows:  $R^3$ , fully (three-electron) reduced;  $A^3$ , fully reduced with  $O_2$  bound at ferrous haem *d*;  $A^1$ , single-electron reduced with  $O_2$  bound at ferrous haem *d*;  $O^1$ , single-electron reduced with ferrous haem  $b_{558}$ ;  $O$ , fully oxidized;  $P$ , peroxy.  $F$  and  $F^*$  are both ferryl intermediates, the asterisk denoting a radical on the haem *d* porphyrin ring. The shadowed intermediates are those detected at steady state in Borisov *et al.* (45).

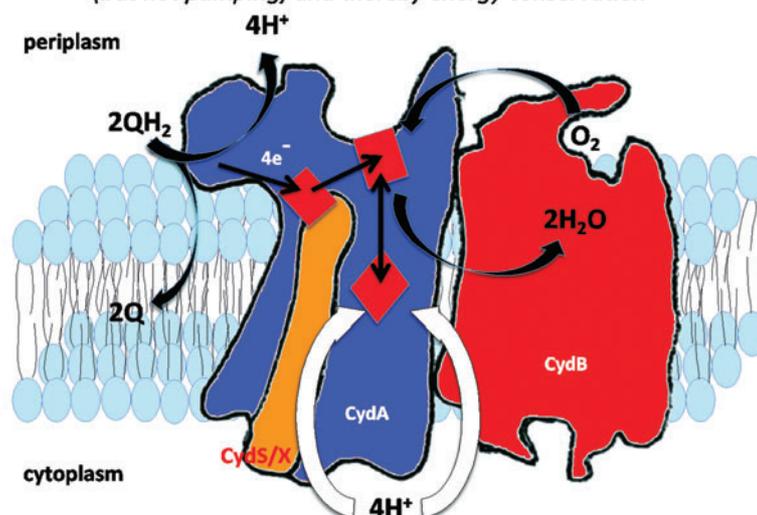
conditions, this being attributed to the phenomenal capacity of cytochrome *bd* for rapid oxygen consumption.

The free-living obligate aerobic *Azotobacter* can fix dinitrogen over a wide range of oxygen concentrations, despite the notoriously oxygen-sensitive activity of its nitrogenase.

*Azotobacter* adapts its respiratory rate in response to changing oxygen tensions (101) and, when fixing nitrogen, has one of the highest rates of respiration known (256). Dalton and Postgate proposed that “uncoupled” respiratory activity might prevent oxygen inhibition of nitrogenase activity (90).

**FIG. 15. Overview of the structure and functions of the cytochrome *bd* class of terminal oxidases.** The simplified structure of a three-subunit, three-haem complex in the membrane bilayer is drawn schematically, showing ubiquinol oxidation, electron transfers, oxygen reduction, and proton translocation. Key functions are shown above the scheme. Below the scheme are three major classes of additional attributes that, collectively, render cytochrome *bd* an important target for therapeutic interventions against bacteria. The fourth small subunit CydH/Y discovered in the *E. coli* cytochrome *bd*-I (280, 317) is not shown for simplicity. Color images are available online.

**Cytochrome *bd* key functions: oxygen reduction and scavenging, proton translocation (but not pumping) and thereby energy conservation**



<b>Stress resistance:</b> Peroxide NO and ONOO- Sulfide chromate	+	<b>Conferral of resistance to antimicrobial agents:</b> Cationic amphiphiles Gramicidin S Cathelicidin microcins	+	<b>Conferral of resistance to respiratory inhibitors:</b> Bedaquiline Clofazimine Isoniazid Others (e.g. CN <sup>-</sup> , N <sub>3</sub> <sup>-</sup> )	→	<b>Drug target</b>
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The evidence that this involves cytochrome *bd* is manifold: (i) the level of the oxidase increases when oxygen supply increases (e.g., Moshiri *et al.* (230), but not in *E. coli*, where *cydAB* is expressed maximally at low O<sub>2</sub> tensions; see section II.D); (ii) consumption of carbon and energy sources is partially uncoupled from anabolism, specifically *via* cytochrome *bd*; and (iii) critically, Cyd<sup>-</sup> mutants cannot fix nitrogen in air (180). However, a cytochrome *bo*<sub>3</sub> mutant is aerotolerant during nitrogen fixation (203). The Fnr-like transcription factor CydR (338, 339) controls the expression of both cytochrome *bd* and the uncoupled NADH-ubiquinol dehydrogenase (Ndh) (27), which is thought to supply electrons to cytochrome *bd*-I and is also essential for aerotolerant nitrogen fixation (28).

The conclusion that cytochrome *bd* affords respiratory protection is supported by genetic studies of other bacteria. In *Azorhizobium caulinodans*, both cytochrome *bd* and cytochrome *ccb*<sub>3</sub> contribute equally to nitrogen fixation in root nodule symbiosis; the double mutant totally lacked symbiotic N<sub>2</sub> fixation (175). In *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, N<sub>2</sub>-fixing ability was severely impaired in a *cyd* mutant even at low oxygen concentrations (170).

The hypothesis of respiratory protection, specifically by cytochrome *bd*, is widely accepted and the genetic evidence (i.e., that Cyd<sup>-</sup> mutants cannot fix nitrogen in air) is viewed as the most convincing (238). Nevertheless, objections have been raised. One of these is that *total* respiratory oxygen consumption is not elevated above 70 μM O<sub>2</sub>, where protection should be most important. However, *A. vinelandii* possesses, based on genome interrogation (293), five terminal oxidases: cytochrome *c* oxidase (Cdt), cytochrome *o* (Cox), cytochrome *bd* copy I (CydAB I), cytochrome *bd* copy II (CydAB II), and cytochrome *ccb*<sub>3</sub> (Cco).

Note that the mutagenesis approach in Kelly *et al.* (180), which is taken as the best evidence for respiratory protection, was targeted at cytochrome *bd*-I. The presence of multiple oxidases allows flux through different branches, only one of which terminates in cytochrome *bd*-I, to be redistributed during protection of nitrogenase without elevation of total respiratory rates. A second concern is that the efficiency of respiration in protection may be insignificant because the rate of consumption is too low to prevent diffusion of O<sub>2</sub> into cells. However, the location of the O<sub>2</sub>-reducing site deep within the oxidase structure may block O<sub>2</sub> access to the cytoplasm.

Clearly though, unanswered questions remain regarding the details of the mechanisms, and other factors (intracellular redox state, ATP provision for nitrogenase, and O<sub>2</sub> control of nitrogenase) might be important. Note, however, that “uncoupled” respiration (i.e., respiration that is not coupled to PMF generation) is not an essential requirement of the proposed mechanism, which is only that cytochrome *bd*-supported oxygen uptake uniquely provides the protection. Other mechanisms probably play roles: thus, the alginate capsule of *A. vinelandii* is affected by oxygen tension and could create a barrier to the entry of oxygen (279). However, the genetic data do appear to provide the evidence required by Oelze (238) for the hypothesis of respiratory protection.

#### B. An oxygen-reactive oxidase in anaerobes?

Anaerobic microbes are sometimes defined as those that cannot grow at dissolved oxygen concentrations greater than

5 μM; however, many “anaerobes” survive at such levels. *B. fragilis* colonizes the colon, even in the absence of facultative anaerobes that could maintain low oxygen concentrations, and grows at oxygen concentrations around 300 nM. *B. fragilis* encodes a cytochrome *bd*-type oxidase and consumes oxygen at appreciable rates, but a  $\Delta$ *cydAB* mutant was defective in oxygen uptake (13). In this organism, and in many prokaryotes that have been classified as strict anaerobes, *cyd* genes are widely distributed; these bacteria include *Methanosarcina*, *Archaeoglobus*, *Moorella*, and *Geobacter* species (13, 92, 205). The term “nanaerobes” has been coined to describe such bacteria that can benefit from, but do not require, oxygen for growth (13).

In the case of facultative anaerobes such as *E. coli*, survival in low-oxygen environments, such as the mammalian intestine, depends on the organism’s respiratory flexibility and in particular the presence of cytochrome *bd*. Mutants lacking cytochrome *bd* fail to colonize (159, 160). Expression of genes in *E. coli* that encode the oxidases and other respiratory chain complexes has been widely studied, and recently in the context of systems biology [for reviews see Bettenbrock *et al.* (30) and Ederer *et al.* (104)].

In brief, there occurs a progressive switch to aerobic respiratory metabolism and a remodeling of the cell envelope as oxygen availability increases (276, 319). Maximal levels of cytochrome *bd* occur at intermediate levels of oxygen supply, that is, at a point approximately midway between anaerobiosis and the onset of aerobic metabolism as inferred from acetate excretion during glucose metabolism (276). In contrast, the *cyoABCDE* operon was maximally expressed under fully aerobic conditions: changes in abundance of the *cydAB* and *cyoA–E* transcripts were reflected cellular contents of cytochrome *bd* and cytochrome *bo*<sub>3</sub>, respectively, consistent with the previously measured oxygen affinities. Cytochrome *bd*-II is also operative under limiting oxygen conditions (309).

Oxygen reduction is widespread in sulfur-reducing bacteria including some *Desulfovibrio* species (91) and supports chemiosmotic energy conservation (100). Although classified as an anaerobe, *D. gigas* contains a functional membrane-bound respiratory chain, including a canonical cytochrome *bd* quinol oxidase as its terminal enzyme (202, 215). Lemos *et al.* (202) demonstrated that membranes from *D. gigas* reduce oxygen to water and isolated a two-subunit oxidase of the cytochrome *bd* family, with spectral properties similar to other such oxidases. With NADH or succinate as electron donors, specific oxygen uptake activities were comparable with those of aerobes. Surprisingly, the expression levels of the oxidase were unaffected by 60 μM O<sub>2</sub>, but modest upregulation was noted in the presence of 150 μM NO (215).

Other established anaerobes such as *D. vulgaris* respond to 0.1% oxygen exposure at the transcriptomic and proteomic levels (231). The genome sequence (140) indicates the presence of two oxidases: a cytochrome *c* oxidase and cytochrome *bd*. Both were confirmed by hybridization experiments with CoxA and CydA probes and further sequence analysis (288). The presence of *cydAB* genes in *D. vulgaris* was later confirmed and this oxidase shown to be more highly expressed than the *cox* operon encoding a *cc(olb)o*<sub>3</sub>-type oxidase (199). The oxygen affinity of the *bd*-type oxidase ( $K_m=600$  nM) was measured polarographically (268); however, such measurements probably overestimate the  $K_m$  value (88).

What are the roles of such oxidases in “anaerobes”? Plausible hypotheses include the following: (i) scavenging of  $O_2$  for protection against the damaging effects of oxygen, (ii) ATP gain for survival aerobically in changeable habitats, and (iii) catalyzing a rapid, “uncoupled” electron transfer and burning excess reducing substrates. These functions may have long histories: phylogenetic analyses suggest that the Aquificae phylum is one of the earliest diverging phyla of Eubacteria for which sequence data are available and indicate that cytochrome *bd* was present in the most ancient Eubacteria (13). This is consistent with the view that sufficient oxygen to support respiration predated the photosynthesis-derived appearance of abundant oxygen on Earth.

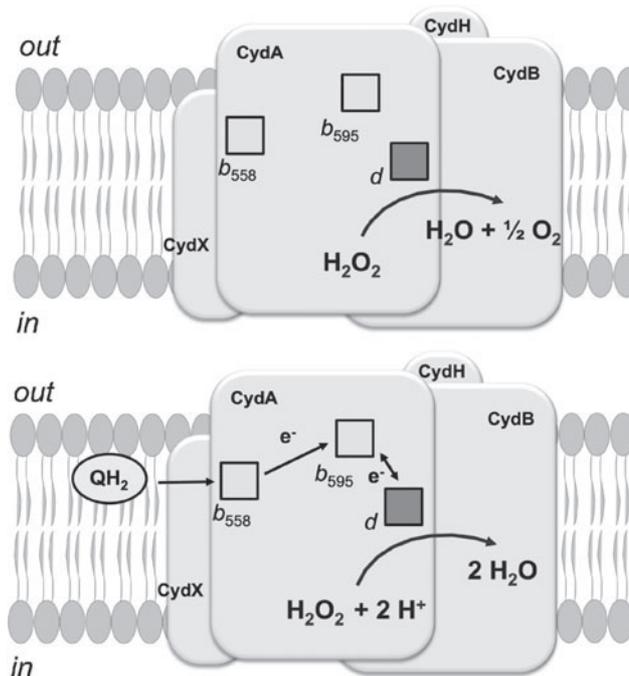
### C. Environmental stressors and their relationships with cytochrome *bd*

1. Peroxide. Cytochrome *bd* may contribute to protection against  $H_2O_2$ -induced stress. Mutant *E. coli* cells lacking cytochrome *bd* (126, 206, 329) showed high susceptibility to  $H_2O_2$ , and the same was shown for some pathogenic bacteria (14, 295). Consistently, addition of exogenous  $H_2O_2$  (206) or endogenous production of ROS increased cytochrome *bd* expression (67). This protective role of cytochrome *bd* is not exclusive to *E. coli* [see Giuffrè *et al.* (124) and references therein]. Hypersensitivity to  $H_2O_2$  or enhanced ROS production has been described also for other bacteria deficient in this oxidase (106, 340), including bacterial pathogens that inhabit microaerobic environments and are exposed to the ROS produced by the host immune system (107, 201, 212) or as a result of antibiotic treatments (212).

Accordingly, upon exposure to  $H_2O_2$ , an upregulation of cytochrome *bd* was documented in *Staphylococcus aureus* (66) and in *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, where a catalase-independent hyper-resistance to  $H_2O_2$  was also observed (305). When anaerobic cultures of an *E. coli* strain devoid of the antioxidant enzymes KatG, KatE, and Ahp are abruptly aerated, cytochrome *bd* is able to reduce intracellular  $H_2O_2$  production (191), suggesting that the oxidase serves as an electron sink by diverting electrons from a fumarate reductase, a major  $H_2O_2$ -generator.

Moreover, *E. coli* cytochrome *bd*-I was shown to be capable of detoxifying  $H_2O_2$  directly (Fig. 16). A high catalase activity was observed in both the isolated untagged *bd*-I enzyme and in catalase-deficient cells overexpressing cytochrome *bd*-I (40, 114). Cytochrome *bd*-I also shows peroxidase activity (1, 39, 182), particularly in the His-tagged enzyme with decyl-ubiquinol as the electron donor (1). The latter preparation, however, displays no catalase activity (1). The issue is discussed in Forte *et al.* (117). It remains to be established whether the  $H_2O_2$ -metabolizing ability is unique to the *E. coli* enzyme or is a common property of *bd*-type oxidases.

2. NO and ONOO<sup>-</sup>. NO and the product of its reaction with superoxide radical ( $O_2^{\bullet-}$ ), ONOO<sup>-</sup>, are produced by the host as part of the immune response to kill invading microbes. Cytochrome *bd* is involved in protection of bacteria against stress caused by these RNS. Transcriptional upregulation of genes encoding cytochrome *bd* has been observed in response to NO exposure in *E. coli* (150, 265) and in other bacteria (215, 229, 273, 296). NO induces greater growth inhibition in cytochrome *bd*-deficient *E. coli* strains, compared with cy-



**FIG. 16.** *E. coli* cytochrome *bd*-I is proposed to have catalase [(40), top] or quinol peroxidase activity [(1), bottom].

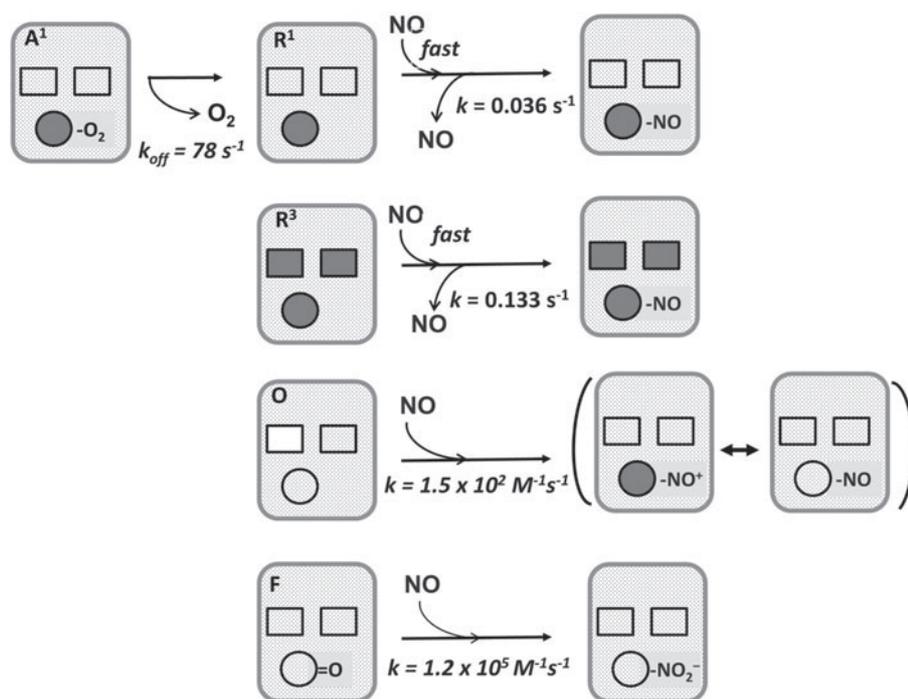
tochrome *bo*<sub>3</sub>-deleted mutants (217). The effect is observed in mutants of both the cytochrome *bd*-encoding *cydAB* genes and the *cydDC* genes (146).

Similar observations were made in cytochrome *bd* mutants of uropathogenic *E. coli* (14, 295). Cytochrome *bd* also protects *Salmonella enterica* against NO toxicity thereby enhancing its virulence (161). Like cytochrome *c* oxidase (289, 290), cytochrome *bd* is potently but reversibly inhibited by NO [ $IC_{50} \sim 0.1 \mu M$  NO at  $70 \mu M O_2$  (42)]. Such inhibition was shown both with *E. coli* cells (217, 310) and with cytochrome *bd* isolated from *E. coli* or *A. vinelandii* (42). NO reacts with haem *d*: when haem *d* is ferrous, oxy-ferrous, or ferric, the end-product is nitrosyl (41, 42, 44), whereas reaction of the ferryl haem *d* with NO yields nitrite (43) (Fig. 17). Due to an unprecedentedly high off-rate of NO from the ferrous haem *d*, reversal of cytochrome *bd* inhibition is much faster than with cytochrome *c* oxidase (42, 44, 217), explaining why cytochrome *bd* confers NO resistance to bacteria.

A further reason could be that ferryl cytochrome *bd*, a highly populated intermediate in turnover (45), converts NO into less toxic nitrite at a rate  $\sim 10$  times higher than that of the analogous reaction of the ferryl cytochrome *c* oxidase (43).

ONOO<sup>-</sup> was reported to irreversibly inhibit cytochrome *c* oxidase (294), whereas *E. coli* cytochrome *bd*-I is highly resistant to inhibition (47). Furthermore, cytochrome *bd*-I can metabolize this harmful RNS with an apparent turnover rate of  $\sim 10 \text{ mol ONOO}^- (\text{mol enzyme})^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$ , thereby playing a protective role against ONOO<sup>-</sup> damage.

3. Sulfide. Sulfide potently inhibits cytochrome *c* oxidase, leading to energy depletion and cell death (76, 235, 244, 315). As many bacteria synthesize  $H_2S$  and inhabit sulfide-rich environments, such as the human colon, they may be endowed with a sulfide-insensitive oxidase, other than



**FIG. 17. Reactions of cytochrome *bd* species with NO.**  $A^1$  reacts with NO after  $O_2$  displacement yielding the single-electron reduced species ( $R^1$ ). The reaction with the  $A^1$  intermediate is thus rate limited by  $O_2$  dissociation. The  $R^1$  and  $R^3$  species react with NO quickly, yielding a nitrosyl ferrous ( $Fe^{2+}-NO$ ) adduct. NO dissociates from  $R^3$  species fourfold faster than from  $R^1$ . The  $O$  species reacts with NO, yielding a nitrosyl ferric ( $Fe^{3+}-NO \leftrightarrow Fe^{2+}-NO^+$ ) adduct. The reaction of  $F$  with NO yields a nitrite-ferric ( $Fe^{3+}-NO_2^-$ ) derivative. NO, nitric oxide.

cytochrome *c* oxidase. This hypothesis was tested on *E. coli* reaching the conclusion that such an oxidase is cytochrome *bd* (115, 192). Forte *et al.* found that whereas sulfide is a potent inhibitor of cytochrome  $bo_3$  ( $IC_{50} \sim 1.1 \mu M$ ), both cytochrome *bd*-I and cytochrome *bd*-II of *E. coli* are insensitive to sulfide up to  $58 \mu M$  (115).

Furthermore, in *E. coli* mutants,  $O_2$  respiration and growth are impaired by sulfide when respiration is sustained by cytochrome  $bo_3$  alone, but unaffected by up to  $200 \mu M$  sulfide when *bd*-I or *bd*-II acts as the only terminal oxidase. Similarly, Korshunov *et al.* reported that in a cytochrome *bd*-deficient mutant, both  $O_2$  respiration and growth are inhibited by sulfide, exogenously administered or endogenously generated from cysteine (192). The sulfide insensitivity of cytochrome *bd* is possibly due to the lack of a copper site, since inhibition of cytochrome *c* oxidase by sulfide is thought to involve a transient binding of  $H_2S$  to  $Cu_B$  (235).

Based on these data, it was postulated that the sulfide tolerance provided by cytochrome *bd* can play a role in shaping the composition of human intestinal microbiota, thus impacting human physiology and pathophysiology (62). Interestingly, upregulation of the cytochrome *bd*-I and *bd*-II genes was observed in *E. coli* cells following addition of an  $H_2S$  donor, alone or in combination with the antibiotic ampicillin, indicating that expression of the sulfide-insensitive oxidases enables bacterial respiration under antibiotic-induced oxidative stress (298). Indeed, *E. coli* mutant strains lacking *bd*-type oxidase fail to colonize the mouse intestine, contrary to those lacking  $bo_3$ -type oxidase (159).

4. Chromate. Cytochrome *bd* has been recently shown to contribute to chromate resistance in *Alishewanella* sp. WH16-1 (340), a facultative anaerobic bacterium isolated from the soil of a copper and iron mine. This strain efficiently reduces sulfate to sulfide and the toxic hexavalent chromate Cr(VI) to the much less toxic Cr(III), thus showing a great potential for chromate bioremediation. Cr(VI), mainly pro-

duced by human activities, is considered a severe pollutant and a serious threat to human health, being mutagenic and carcinogenic. The high toxicity of Cr(VI) is linked to its ability to enter the cells and exert a strong oxidizing power. The structural similarity with sulfate allows Cr(VI) to cross the cellular membrane *via* sulfate transporters (80, 326) and, once in the cell, to generate ROS (306, 326).

Cytochrome *bd* confers bacterial resistance to chromate by decreasing chromate-induced cellular oxidative stress and allowing sulfide-dependent chromate reduction (340). In *Alishewanella* sp. WH16 WT and cytochrome *bd* mutant strains, the addition of millimolar  $K_2CrO_4$  resulted in a higher  $H_2O_2$  production in cytochrome *bd*-deficient cells compared with the WT or the cytochrome *bd*-complemented strain, suggesting a role for *Alishewanella* cytochrome *bd* in  $H_2O_2$  detoxification, as also shown for the *E. coli* oxidase (1, 40).

Furthermore, in  $H_2O_2$  inhibition zone tests, the mutant strain was more sensitive to exogenous  $H_2O_2$  than was the WT. Since sulfide can be used as a reductant to reduce chromate to less toxic forms, the effect of  $Na_2S$  on cell growth was also investigated. Whereas growth of the WT cells was unaffected by the presence of  $200 \mu M$  sulfide in the culture medium, the cytochrome *bd*-deficient strain was completely inhibited under these conditions. Thus, the cytochromes *bd* of both *Alishewanella* Sp. WH16-1 and *E. coli* (115) contribute to resistance to sulfide and, indirectly, also to chromate. Summing up, cytochrome *bd* contributes to the remarkably lower minimum inhibition concentration (MIC) for chromate, as well as the ability of WT strains to reduce chromate to less poisonous forms (340).

## VII. Antibiotics and Antimicrobial Agents

### A. Cationic amphiphilic peptides with antimicrobial activities

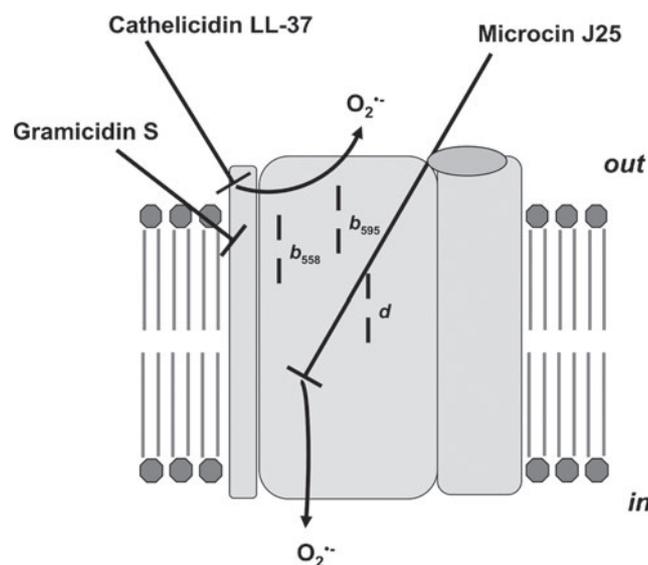
Cationic amphiphilic peptides with antimicrobial activities can be divided into two major classes: nonribosomally and

ribosomally synthesized peptides (134, 237). Both classes typically further undergo maturation and chemical modifications. Nonribosomally synthesized peptides are produced only in bacteria and fungi. The biosynthesis of these peptides proceeds on multifunctional peptide synthetases in an RNA-independent manner following the multiple carrier thiotemplate mechanism (308). The synthetases have a modular organization, and these modules interact in an ordered manner to produce the peptide product (327). Gene-encoded ribosomally synthesized peptides are produced by all species and can be further subdivided into bacteriocins (produced by bacteria), archaeocins (produced by Archaea), and antimicrobial peptides (produced by eukaryotes) (216, 237).

Bacteria use cationic amphiphilic peptides to kill or limit the growth of competitors that occupy the same ecological niche. In higher organisms, antimicrobial peptides are part of the innate immune response. The peptides are thought to kill bacteria primarily due to their interaction with bacterial membranes or cell walls. Permeabilization of the microbial membrane lipid bilayer is a commonly accepted mechanism of their action, since the peptides usually have a net positive charge and a high ratio of hydrophobic amino acids. These properties enable the peptides to selectively bind to negatively charged bacterial membranes leading to nonenzymatic membrane disruption (347).

However, a growing body of evidence suggests that cationic amphiphilic peptides can have other molecular targets. One such target could be a *bd*-type terminal oxidase. Indeed, *E. coli* cytochrome *bd-I* is targeted by several peptides tested, such as gramicidin S, cathelicidin LL-37, and microcin J25 (McCJ25) (Fig. 18). Thus, cytochrome *bd-I* would hardly contribute to bacterial defense against these peptides but rather serves as a mediator of their action.

1. Gramicidin S. Gramicidin S (“Soviet”) is non-ribosomally produced by the gram-positive soil bacterium *An-*



**FIG. 18. Possible effects of cationic amphiphilic peptides with antimicrobial activities on *E. coli* cytochrome *bd-I*.** Gramicidin S, microcin J25, and possibly cathelicidin LL-37 inhibit cytochrome *bd-I*. In addition, microcin J25 and cathelicidin LL-37 make cytochrome *bd-I* a site of superoxide ( $O_2^{\bullet-}$ ) production (69, 118, 119, 228).

*eurinibacillus migulanus*. This is a cationic cyclic decapeptide made up of two identical pentapeptides joined head-to-tail with the primary structure [cyclo-(Val-Orn-Leu-D-Phe-Pro)<sub>2</sub>]. The peptide has an antiparallel  $\beta$ -sheet arrangement stabilized by two type II'  $\beta$ -turns and four intramolecular hydrogen bonds (149). Such a secondary structure makes the molecule amphiphilic that is probably essential for bioactivity. Gramicidin S at  $\mu M$  concentrations is active against gram-negative and gram-positive bacteria, fungi, viruses, and single-cell pathogenic eukaryotes (189). While the mechanism of cytotoxic activity of gramicidin S is still a matter of debate, the primary mode of its action is thought to be disruption of the integrity of the plasma membrane phospholipid bilayer. This leads to the increase in membrane permeability, dissipation of the membrane potential, and cell death (109).

It was shown recently that gramicidin S is a potent inhibitor of both membrane-bound and purified *E. coli* cytochrome *bd-I* (228). On the contrary, the naturally produced mixture of gramicidins A, B, and C, denoted collectively as gramicidin D, which are linear pentadecapeptides forming dimeric cationic channels, does not inhibit cytochrome *bd-I*. *E. coli* cytochrome *bo3* and cyanide-insensitive quinol oxidase (CioAB) from *Gluconobacter oxydans* appeared to be one-order of magnitude less sensitive to gramicidin S. Although submicromolar concentrations of gramicidin S moderately stimulate the ubiquinol-1 oxidase activity of cytochrome *bd-I*, at higher peptide concentrations, cytochrome *bd-I* is inhibited. Upon preincubation of cytochrome *bd-I* with gramicidin S,  $IC_{50}$  values are in the range of 2.6–5.4  $\mu M$ .

These values are consistent with the minimum inhibitory concentration (MIC) of *E. coli* cells (4–16  $\mu M$ ) (190), as well as  $IC_{50}$  values for 2-heptyl-4-hydroxyquinoline *N*-oxide (1  $\mu M$ ), antimycin A (5  $\mu M$ ), and piericidin A (10  $\mu M$ ), quinol oxidation site inhibitors (227, 228). This is thought to be mixed-type inhibition, decreasing the apparent  $V_{max}$  and the affinity for substrates (228). Gramicidin S does not affect the spectral properties of cytochrome *bd-I* in the air-oxidized and fully reduced states. The authors conclude that the *E. coli* cytochrome *bd-I* is a bacterial membrane target for the peptide, whereas according to current thinking, the principal target of gramicidin S is the lipid bilayer rather than any membrane protein. The underlying mechanism of inhibition may be an alteration of the cytochrome *bd-I* structure via binding to its hydrophobic surface.

2. Cathelicidin LL-37. Cathelicidins, along with defensins, are the two main families of ribosomally synthesized antimicrobial peptides, effector molecules of the innate immunity of mammals (318). Cathelicidins have a highly conserved N-terminal cathelin domain and a variable C-terminal antimicrobial domain. The latter can be released from the precursor peptide after protease cleavage. LL-37 is an active 37-residue  $\alpha$ -helical C-terminal domain of the only human cathelicidin identified to date. The primary structure of LL-37 is LLGDFFRKSKEKIGKEFKRIVQRIKDFLRNLPVPTES (158). This 18-kDa propeptide is denoted as hCAP-18 (human cationic antimicrobial protein).

Recently, it was reported that cathelicidin LL-37 shows a fourfold lower MIC against *E. coli* in aerobic growth compared with under anaerobic or fermentation conditions (4 vs. 16  $\mu M$ ) (69). Thus, the MIC data suggest that the inhibition of *E. coli* growth by LL-37 is mediated by oxygen. In aerobic

growth conditions, LL-37 induces oxidative stress within seconds of contact with *E. coli*. To monitor oxidative stress, real-time, single-cell fluorescence imaging with the dyes CellROX Green and Amplex Red was used. ROS formation occurs after entry of LL-37 into the periplasm, but before permeabilization of the cytoplasmic membrane. Entry of the peptide into the periplasm gives it access to the outer leaflet of the cytoplasmic membrane and to external surfaces of cytoplasmic membrane proteins. Strong oxidative signals require a robust transmembrane potential and correlates with the lower MIC in aerobic, compared with anaerobic, growth conditions.

These observations imply that LL-37 affects the aerobic respiratory chain, disrupting electron flow. In aerobic *E. coli* cultures, the peptide-induced oxidative signals are attenuated in the cytochrome *bd-I* mutant but not in a cytochrome *bo<sub>3</sub>* mutant (69). This suggests that LL-37 targets cytochrome *bd-I*, but not cytochrome *bo<sub>3</sub>*, leading to release of ROS, most likely  $O_2^{\bullet-}$ , into the periplasmic space. The LL-37 action may be based on its direct interaction with cytochrome *bd-I*, for instance, due to electrostatic binding. Alternatively, being polycationic (net charge +6), LL-37 may impair cytochrome *bd-I* function indirectly by perturbation of the lipid environment, for example, *via* strong interaction with the annular anionic phospholipids such as cardiolipin or phosphatidylglycerol. The authors (69) propose that the host can use the degree of tissue aeration for selective control of the potency of LL-37 and possibly other antimicrobial peptides.

3. Microcin J25. Microcins are ribosomally synthesized bacteriocins produced by *E. coli* and related enterobacteria. MccJ25 belongs to class I microcins. This is a plasmid-encoded, posttranslationally modified, 21-residue lasso-peptide. The peptide is composed of the N-terminal macrolactam ring and the C-terminal tail. The ring consisting of eight amino acid residues is formed by a lactam bond between the first and eighth amino acids. The ring is threaded and trapped by the C-terminal tail of 13 residues forming a lasso (271). MccJ25 targets essentially foodborne pathogens, such as *E. coli*, *Shigella flexneri*, and *Salmonella enterica* serotypes Newport, Enteritidis, Heidelberg, and Paratyphi B (118).

To cross the outer membrane of a sensitive bacterium, MccJ25 uses the Trojan horse strategy. The peptide is thought to hijack FhuA, an outer-membrane transporter for  $Fe^{3+}$  chelated to the siderophore ferrichrome (285). The process requires a PMF that is transduced to FhuA by the inner membrane-anchored TonB–ExbB–ExbD complex. When in the periplasmic space, MccJ25 is proposed to interact with the inner membrane protein SbmA to cross the inner membrane (286). Once in the cytoplasm, MccJ25 inhibits bacterial transcription *via* interaction with RNA polymerase (RNAP). The peptide binds to the RNAP secondary channel that directs ribonucleotide precursors toward the active site, thereby blocking its operation in a cork-in-the-bottle manner (271).

The other targets of MccJ25 are respiratory chains of sensitive bacteria. Although the inhibition mechanism is not yet completely clear, it was reported that the peptide can inhibit the activity of respiratory chain complexes and enhance  $O_2^{\bullet-}$  production (21).

Recently, Galvan *et al.* examined the effect of MccJ25 on the properties of the *E. coli* terminal oxidases using bacterial cells, membranes (119), and the isolated enzymes (118). It was shown that *E. coli* mutant strains lacking cytochrome

*bd-I* or cytochrome *bo<sub>3</sub>*, in which the entry of MccJ25 is facilitated by overexpressing FhuA, are less sensitive to MccJ25 than the WT (119). The MIC of MccJ25-GA (a variant of MccJ25 in which the C-terminal carboxyl group is blocked with an L-glycine methyl ester that leads to the loss of its ability to interact with RNAP) for an *E. coli* cytochrome *bd-I* mutant increases 16-fold compared with WT. In the presence of MccJ25, membranes of the *E. coli* mutant expressing cytochrome *bd-I* as the only respiratory oxidase show significant ROS overproduction. The ROS overproduction observed with the membranes, however, is not seen with whole cells, possibly because detoxifying enzymes in the cytosol rapidly quench the ROS produced.

Membranes of the *E. coli* mutant expressing cytochrome *bo<sub>3</sub>* as the only respiratory oxidase show no ROS overproduction in the presence of MccJ25. Galvan *et al.* concluded that MccJ25 affects *E. coli* cytochrome *bd-I* making it a major site of  $O_2^{\bullet-}$  production. Interestingly, while the  $\Delta bo_3$  and  $\Delta bd-I$  mutants become less sensitive to the peptide compared with the WT, in the  $\Delta bo_3/\Delta bd-II$  and  $\Delta bd-I/\Delta bd-II$  double mutants, recovery of the original, WT-like sensitivity to MccJ25 and MccJ25-GA is observed. This observation allowed the authors to suggest that *E. coli* cytochrome *bd-II* may protect the cell from the deleterious effects of MccJ25 and MccJ25-GA (119). The protection could be achieved by ROS detoxification, but further investigation is required.

The inhibitory action of MccJ25 on enzymatic oxygen consumption was studied in detail with the isolated *E. coli* quinol oxidases, *bd-I* and *bo<sub>3</sub>* (118). MccJ25 was found to inhibit the ubiquinol-1 oxidase activity of cytochrome *bd-I* with an  $IC_{50}$  of  $76 \mu M$ . This is accompanied by a decrease in  $V_{max}$ , but  $K_m$  for ubiquinol-1 does not change significantly. Based on these effects of the peptide on the kinetic parameters, the authors proposed that MccJ25 inhibits cytochrome *bd-I* in a noncompetitive way (118). The influence of MccJ25-GA on the cytochrome *bd-I* activity appears to be similar to that of MccJ25. In contrast, the cytochrome *bo<sub>3</sub>* activity is not affected by MccJ25, and  $V_{max}$  and  $K_m$  for ubiquinol-1 with and without peptide are not significantly different. When the isolated cytochrome *bd-I* is treated with MccJ25 or MccJ25-GA, ROS generation initiated by the addition of ubiquinol-1 increases by 39% or 31%, respectively.

Since superoxide dismutase suppresses ROS production, it was concluded that the generated species is  $O_2^{\bullet-}$ . Neither MccJ25 nor MccJ25-GA increases ROS production by the isolated cytochrome *bo<sub>3</sub>*. The addition of MccJ25 to the air-oxidized cytochrome *bd-I* in the presence of 6 mM KCN induces absorption changes corresponding to the reduction of haem *b<sub>558</sub>* and the displacement of bound  $O_2$  from haem *d<sup>2+</sup>*. Treatment of cytochrome *bo<sub>3</sub>* with MccJ25 and cyanide causes no spectral change. Thus, the peptide can reduce cytochrome *bd-I*. This is consistent with the fact that MccJ25 is a redox-active peptide capable of forming a long-lived tyrosyl (Tyr9) radical (64).

However, it is still not clear whether the peptide-induced change in the oxidation state of cytochrome *bd-I* is related to its inhibitory action. It is possible that the binding of MccJ25 to the *bd-I* oxidase slows the rate of intraprotein electron transfer, for instance, by affecting quinol oxidation *via* conformational change in the protein. This could lead to the release of  $O_2^{\bullet-}$ , fast enough to compete with electron transfer to the oxygen-reducing site to form  $H_2O$ . It is clear, however,

that to have a significant inhibitory effect on both RNAP and the respiratory chain, the peptide should accumulate to high levels in the sensitive bacterial cell.

### B. Other antimicrobial compounds

Cytochrome *bd* appears to be involved in the defense of mycobacteria against antibiotic-induced stress. Targeting the respiratory chain enzymes is now considered a new promising strategy for fighting multidrug-resistant, extensively drug-resistant, and totally drug-resistant strains of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (11, 72, 136). As for most bacteria, *M. tuberculosis* has a branched respiratory chain (71, 73). Electrons are transferred from the type II NDH or other dehydrogenases to the MQ pool, and then to O<sub>2</sub> through either the *bcc-aa*<sub>3</sub> supercomplex, formed by cytochrome *bcc* (a variant of the *bc*<sub>1</sub> complex) and cytochrome *aa*<sub>3</sub>, or cytochrome *bd* (11, 72, 136, 152). The PMF thus generated powers of ATP synthesis by the ATP synthase.

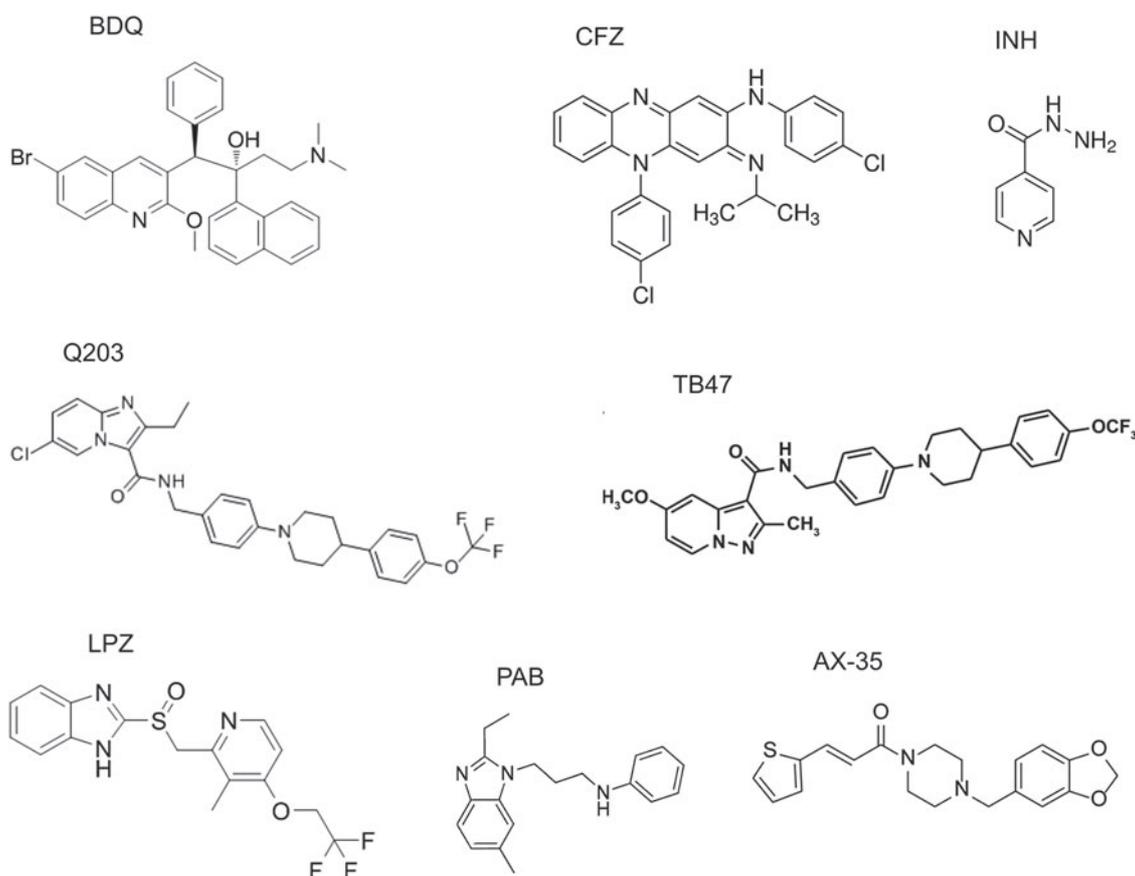
1. Bedaquiline. Bedaquiline (BDQ; Sirturo™), a diarylquinoline compound (Fig. 19), was the first drug approved by the FDA and EMA that targets *M. tuberculosis* energy metabolism. It selectively inhibits the *M. tuberculosis* ATP synthase by binding to the c-ring rotor of its F<sub>o</sub> subcomplex (4, 193, 261). As a result, ATP synthesis is inhibited and intracellular ATP levels decrease significantly (193, 194).

The inhibition mechanism is possibly based on the ability of BDQ, upon its localization at the ATP synthase, to create an uncoupled microenvironment by acting as an H<sup>+</sup>/K<sup>+</sup> ionophore that causes dissipation of transmembrane pH and potassium gradients (137). The activity of BDQ appears to be specific for mycobacteria and is not observed with non-mycobacterial strains (4).

In mammalian cells, the compound affects neither the mitochondrial ATP synthase (133) nor the membrane potential (112). Killing of *M. tuberculosis* by BDQ is not concentration- but time-dependent, its bactericidal activity showing a delayed onset (195). The rate of *M. tuberculosis* H37Rv killing, however, is increased by 55% if cytochrome *bd* is mutated by replacing the *cydA* gene with a hygromycin cassette *via* specialized transduction (23).

While BDQ is bactericidal against *M. tuberculosis*, it is bacteriostatic against the nonpathogenic *M. smegmatis* (4). If the *cydA* gene is disrupted, susceptibility of *M. smegmatis* to BDQ increases (138) and the drug becomes bactericidal (212). Accordingly, both *M. tuberculosis* and *M. smegmatis* WT cells treated with BDQ show a marked increase in cytochrome *bd* expression levels (138, 195).

2. Clofazimine. Figure 19 shows the riminophenazine derivative clofazimine (CFZ) (12), a well-known antileprosy drug. The drug can also undergo reduction with NADH



**FIG. 19. Structures of antimicrobial compounds reported in section VII.B. Shown are BDQ (4), CFZ (12), INH (270), telacebec (Q203) (245), TB47 (213), LPZ (278), PAB compound 54 (65), and arylvinylpiperazine amide compound AX-35 (113). BDQ, bedaquiline; CFZ, clofazimine; INH, isoniazid; LPZ, lansoprazole; PAB, phenoxyalkylbenzimidazole; TB47, pyrazolo[1,5-*a*]pyridine-3-carboxamide.**

catalyzed by NDH-2. Reduced CFZ is unstable and spontaneously oxidized by O<sub>2</sub>, producing ROS (344). As NADH is continually produced in the Krebs cycle and fatty acid β-oxidation, the redox cycling of CFZ will continually run. The viability of the *M. smegmatis* *cydA* mutant is strongly reduced in response to CFZ compared with WT strains (212).

3. Isoniazid. Isoniazid (INH) (Fig. 19) is a first-line bactericidal antituberculosis drug that inhibits the biosynthesis of mycolic acids, the core components of the mycobacterial cell wall (270). Its activity, however, is reduced significantly under stress conditions, such as low aeration (335) and nutrient starvation (31). This indicates that the bactericidal effects of INH may not be due only to inhibition of the known target. INH rapidly increases ATP levels and oxygen consumption, and dissipates membrane potential in *Mycobacterium bovis* BCG. The fact that Q203 and BDQ compromise INH-mediated ATP increase and bactericidal activity suggests that a killing mechanism of INH involves perturbation of the mycobacterial respiratory chain (346). Indeed, *M. tuberculosis* mutants defective in *cydC* essential for cytochrome *bd* assembly appeared to be more susceptible to INH in mice (99).

Accordingly, inhibition of cytochrome *bd* by aurachin D significantly reduces cell recovery in a culture settling model (346). This points to a contribution of cytochrome *bd* in protection against INH stresses such as hypoxia (346). Interestingly, the rate of ROS production increases in INH-treated mycobacterial cell extracts (297), and disruption of superoxide dismutase A increases INH sensitivity (103). If INH induces ROS by interacting with the respiratory chain, cytochrome *bd* could protect mycobacterial cells against the drug *via* ROS detoxification.

Thus, protection against CFZ, BDQ, and INH provided by cytochrome *bd* may be related to the ability of the oxidase to scavenge and/or prevent generation of ROS [e.g., see Al-Attar *et al.* (1), Borisov *et al.* (39), Borisov *et al.* (40), Forte *et al.* (114)] induced by the drugs (Fig. 20).

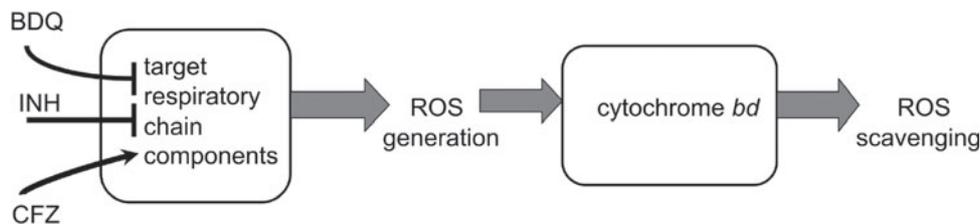
4. Cytochrome *bd* protection of mycobacteria from compounds targeting cytochrome *bcc*. Another drug targeting the *M. tuberculosis* respiratory chain is Q203 (Fig. 19), now designated telacebec by its developer, Qurient Co., Ltd. This imidazopyridine amide (IPA) compound and a clinical-stage drug candidate inhibit cytochrome *bcc* by binding to the quinol oxidation site (Q<sub>p</sub>) in the cytochrome *b* (QcrB) subunit (245). However, Q203 is only bacteriostatic and does not kill the drug-tolerant persisters because, following *bcc* inhibition, electron flow rerouting to cytochrome *bd* is sufficient to

support sufficiently high oxidative phosphorylation and prevent Q203-induced death (173). Accordingly, while the growth of most *M. tuberculosis* clinical strains is fully inhibited by IPAs, the laboratory-adapted strains H37Rv, CDC1551, and Erdman can overcome this growth inhibition by upregulating the *cydA* gene, whose deletion makes the H37Rv strain highly susceptible to IPAs (5). The potency of Q203 is modulated by carbon catabolism and the composition of the culture broth medium (174). It is alleviated by glycerol supplementation that correlates with the overexpression of the *cydABDC* operon. The *cydAB* deletion annuls the detrimental effect of glycerol on the efficacy of Q203.

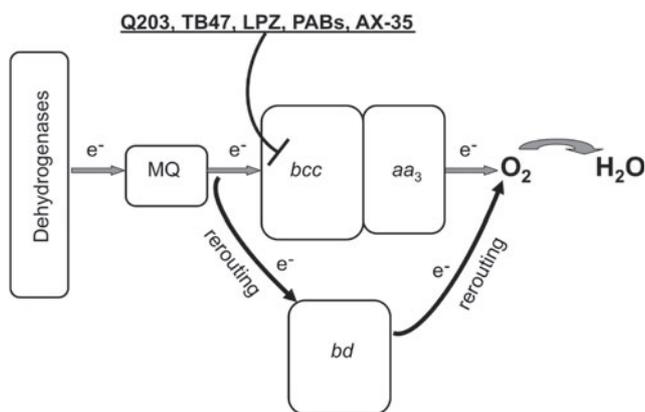
A study in a mouse model of tuberculosis reveals a powerful synthetic lethal interaction between cytochrome *bcc* and cytochrome *bd* (173). A synthetic lethal interaction refers to a type of genetic interaction where the single inactivation of two genes affects cell viability only slightly, whereas their simultaneous inactivation causes lethality (349). This also includes the case when the combination of a mutation and treatment with a chemical compound results in cell death, while the mutation or compound treatment alone is nonlethal. Simultaneous inactivation of both mycobacterial respiratory oxidase complexes (*via* genetic deletion of the *cydAB* genes and chemical inhibition of cytochrome *bcc* by Q203) results in complete inhibition of respiration, killing of phenotypic drug-tolerant persisters, and rapid eradication of *M. tuberculosis* infection *in vivo* (173). Thus, at least in the mouse lung microenvironment, the ability of *M. tuberculosis* to multiply and persist is dependent on oxygen respiration.

*Mycobacterium ulcerans* is known to be the causative agent of Buruli ulcer, a chronic, necrotizing disease that affects the skin and sometimes bone leading to permanent disfigurement and long-term disability. Due to a nonsense mutation in the *cydA* gene, cytochrome *bd* is inactive in all classical *M. ulcerans* strains. This makes cytochrome *bcc* the only functional terminal electron acceptor in their respiratory chain. As a result, Q203 becomes bactericidal at low dose against these strains both *in vitro* and in a mouse model. The drug could thus simplify and shorten Buruli ulcer treatment (292).

Figure 19 also shows other compounds targeting QcrB of the *M. tuberculosis* cytochrome *bcc*. These are pyrazolo[1,5-*a*]pyridine-3-carboxamide (TB47) (213), lansoprazole (278), phenoxyalkylbenzimidazoles (29, 65), and the arylvinylpiperazine amide (AX) series AX-35 and four related analogues (AX-36 to AX-39) (113). The compounds are bacteriostatic rather than bactericidal in their action. This is probably due to switching mycobacterial respiration to cytochrome *bd* that can be upregulated upon compound



**FIG. 20. Possible contribution of cytochrome *bd* to the defense of mycobacteria against antibiotic-induced stress *via* ROS detoxification.** Protection of mycobacterial cells against CFZ, BDQ, and INH provided by the *bd* oxidase could be due to its ability to scavenge and/or prevent generation of ROS induced by the antimicrobial compounds. ROS, reactive oxygen species.



**FIG. 21. Possible contribution of cytochrome *bd* to the protection of mycobacteria against cytochrome *bcc* inhibitors.** The *bd* oxidase may provide an alternate respiratory route for electrons transferring from MQ to O<sub>2</sub> if cytochrome *bcc* is inhibited by telacebec (Q203), TB47, LPZ, PABs, and arylvinylpiperazine amide (AX-35). MQ, menaquinone.

treatment (113, 278). Accordingly, when cytochrome *bd* is disrupted, the compounds become bactericidal (29, 113, 213).

Thus, cytochrome *bd* seems to protect mycobacteria against cytochrome *bcc* inhibitors by providing an efficient alternative respiratory route (Fig. 21).

### VIII. Cytochrome *bd* As a Potential Therapeutic Target

During host colonization, pathogenic bacteria face hostile environments, often characterized by harsh conditions, including severe O<sub>2</sub> limitation and abundance of harmful species, such as ROS and RNS produced by the host immune system, or high levels of H<sub>2</sub>S produced by coexisting bacteria. Under these conditions, expression of cytochrome *bd* is potentially beneficial for pathogens, owing to the ability of this enzyme to function even under O<sub>2</sub>-limiting conditions, due to its high O<sub>2</sub> affinity and resistance to cytotoxic species, such as H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>, ONOO<sup>-</sup>, NO, and H<sub>2</sub>S. Therefore, it is not surprising that, as summarized below, cytochrome *bd* promotes virulence in several pathogenic bacteria.

In the case of *Shigella* sp., a well-known foodborne enteric pathogen, a markedly attenuated virulence was observed in mice models when CydAB expression was impaired by mutation of the *cydC* gene in the same operon. On the contrary, overexpression of CydAB in response to impaired synthesis of ubiquinone or riboflavin resulted in significantly higher bacterial virulence (334).

The role of cytochrome *bd* in bacterial virulence was also investigated in Group B *Streptococcus*, a common constituent of the vaginal microflora whose transmission to newborns during delivery can result in life-threatening sepsis. This pathogen, commonly assumed to have a strictly fermentative metabolism, was shown to adopt a quinone- and haem-dependent respiration-based metabolism requiring cytochrome *bd* (341). Inactivation of *cydA* in this pathogen was reported to result in reduced growth in human blood and, importantly, attenuated virulence in a neonatal rat sepsis model (341).

Another interesting case is represented by *S. Typhimurium*, a well-known foodborne pathogen responsible for a broad disease spectrum, ranging from self-limiting gastroenteritis to

acute systemic infection in susceptible patients. As in *E. coli*, this enteric pathogen encodes two *bd*-type oxidases: cytochrome *bd*-I and cytochrome *bd*-II, respectively, encoded by *cydAB* and *cyxAB*. Whereas cytochrome *bd*-II was found to be essential for intestinal colonization following antibiotic treatments depleting the gut of *Clostridia* species (275), cytochrome *bd*-I appears indispensable for sustaining tissue infection in mice models (85). Interestingly, the role of cytochrome *bd*-I in *S. Typhimurium* virulence was related to the ability of this oxidase to sustain bacterial energy metabolism under O<sub>2</sub>-limiting conditions and to play a key role in the defence against nitrosative stress together with the NO-detoxifier flavohemoglobin (Hmp) (161).

The importance of cytochrome *bd* in affording NO-resistant respiration during the infection process was also demonstrated by Shepherd *et al.* (295) for uropathogenic *E. coli* (UPEC), a major cause of urinary tract infections, which are the most common nosocomial infections in developed countries. In this study, the relative contribution of the NO-detoxifying systems (Hmp, NorVW, NrfA), the iron/sulfur cluster repair protein YtfE, and the NO-tolerant cytochrome *bd*-I to UPEC growth and survival during infection was investigated. Cytochrome *bd*-I was shown not only to confer the highest resistance (together with Hmp) to an NO releaser but also to contribute to resistance to neutrophil-mediated killing and enable survival within macrophages. In addition, unlike the other defence systems (NorVW, Hmp, and YtfE), cytochrome *bd*-I was found to enhance UPEC survival in a mouse model after two days. On this basis, it was concluded that in UPEC, cytochrome *bd*-I is the main contributor to NO tolerance and host colonization under microaerobic conditions.

Cytochrome *bd* was also shown to play a role in the virulence of *Listeria monocytogenes* (77), another foodborne pathogen responsible for a number of life-threatening infections. This pathogen requires a special ability to adapt to varying O<sub>2</sub> levels. It encodes two respiratory terminal oxidases, a cytochrome *bd*-type (CydAB) and a cytochrome *aa*<sub>3</sub>-type MQH<sub>2</sub> (QoxAB) oxidase. Both are used for respiration at different O<sub>2</sub> tensions and, importantly, have a role during infection, as mutation of either oxidase results in attenuated infection in mice. However, only the cytochrome *bd*-type oxidase is essential for aerobic respiration and bacterial replication in HeLa cells.

Less clear is the role played by cytochrome *bd* during the infection of *Brucella* spp., the pathogens responsible for brucellosis, a disease characterized by protracted recurrent fever in humans and abortion in ruminants. As a strategy to evade the host defence mechanisms, the *Brucella* spp. undergoes replication inside host macrophages, facing O<sub>2</sub>-limiting and hyperoxidative conditions. In an early study on *B. abortus*, *cydB* mutants were found to display higher sensitivity to killing in murine macrophages and attenuated virulence in a mouse model, reverted by genes encoding superoxide dismutase or catalase (107). In a later report on *Brucella suis*, cytochrome *bd* was found to be the preferentially used terminal oxidase inside macrophages and to contribute to intracellular replication (208). However, in a subsequent study by the same group, lack of cytochrome *bd* was found to lead to bacterial hypervirulence (not attenuation) in a mouse model (157).

The role of cytochrome *bd* in microbial virulence was thoroughly investigated also in mycobacteria. *M. tuberculosis*

can survive, but not proliferate, under O<sub>2</sub>-limiting conditions. As reviewed in Cook *et al.* (73), this pathogen has a versatile respiratory metabolism enabling bacterial survival at the significantly varying O<sub>2</sub> tensions encountered during host infection. The respiratory electron transfer chain is branched and terminates with two terminal oxidases: a *bd*-type oxidase (CydAB) and an *aa<sub>3</sub>*-type cytochrome *c* oxidase that form a supercomplex with *bc<sub>1</sub>* (denoted as *bc<sub>1</sub>-aa<sub>3</sub>*). As revealed by investigating both *M. tuberculosis* (23) and the closely related nonpathogenic *M. smegmatis* (176), in the absence of stress factors, cytochrome *bd* is dispensable for growth in a rich medium. However, it appears to have a role in mycobacterial virulence, particularly at the transition between acute and chronic infection, when cytochrome *bd* and a nitrate transporter were shown to be transiently upregulated in a transcriptomic study on a murine infection model (296).

Mutation of *cydC* resulted in a lower bacterial burden in this transition phase, but not in the acute phase of infection, as observed in the same animal model (296). Although this observation was not reproduced in a later study (173), it is conceivable that cytochrome *bd* has a role during infection, when *M. tuberculosis* is expected to encounter several stresses, including limiting O<sub>2</sub> tensions, NO, and ROS/RNS produced by the host immune system. In line with this view, NO and hypoxic conditions were reported to enhance *cydAB* expression in *M. tuberculosis* and other mycobacteria (22, 33, 79, 127, 176, 296), and knockout of cytochrome *bd* was found to impair mycobacterial growth at low O<sub>2</sub> tensions (176, 296) and in the presence of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> (212). Conversely, compared with the WT, a higher resistance to H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> was observed in an *M. tuberculosis* mutant strain with enhanced expression of cytochrome *bd* (305).

Altogether, the evidence reviewed above points to cytochrome *bd* as a prospective target for the development of next-generation antibiotics. However, a thorny path may await us. The flexibility of the Q-loop poses a problem to structure-driven design of quinone substrate-like inhibitors (280). For *bd*-type oxidases structurally similar to the *E. coli* *bd*-I, one could try to design hydrophobic compounds that would block the oxygen channel functioning. One more option is to develop quinol-like inhibitors that would compete with ubiquinol-8 for the CydB binding site, thereby preventing correct assembly of a CydAB core dimer (280).

## IX. Possible Biotechnological Applications

Oxidases of the *bd* type have a broad potential application for biotechnology. This may relate to (i) the monitoring of parameters in biotechnological production processes, (ii) the creation of microbial fuel cells, (iii) the selection of industrial strains of microorganisms resistant to toxins and copper deprivation, (iv) various issues of bioremediation and wastewater treatment, and (v) the creation of conductive systems based on immobilized biofilms on the electrode. Some real and potential applications of cytochromes *bd* in industrial and medical biotechnology are illustrated by the following examples.

Forced aeration is one of the major energy consumption factors of bioleaching processes. The ability of cytochrome *bd* to be expressed under low oxygen conditions has been used for the identification and validation of genetic markers

associated with oxygen availability in low-grade copper bioleaching systems (78).

Strains of *C. glutamicum* are used in the biotechnology industry for production of million tons of amino acids, mainly L-glutamate and L-lysine (95). In *C. glutamicum*, the respiratory chain, which includes cytochrome *bd*, was shown to be a target for improving amino acid production (171). These processes depend on aspects of respiration and how a cell responds to altered gene expression, including those encoding cytochrome *bd* (95, 184).

Extracellular electron transfer (EET), that is, electron movements outside the envelope of microbial cells, is highly relevant to the design of electrochemical systems, construction of fuel cells and biosensors, and understanding the physiology of the gut microbiota. Cytochrome *bd* activity was shown to attenuate EET in the gram-positive lactic acid bacterium *Enterococcus faecalis* through its effects on the redox status of the MQ pool. Wiring respiratory electron transfer from a bacterium such as *E. faecalis* to an electrode could be used as a sensor in screens for antimicrobial compounds acting by inhibition of cytochrome *bd* (240).

Mining, jewelry, and metal-processing industries use cyanide for extracting gold and other valuable metals, generating large amounts of highly toxic wastewater. There are microorganisms (*e.g.*, *Pseudomonas pseudoalcaligenes* CECT5344) that can grow under alkaline conditions using cyanide, cyanate, or different nitriles as the sole nitrogen source, and are able to remove cyanide from a jewelry industry wastewater. These bacteria will enable the development and optimization of improved strategies for biodegradation and bioremediation of industrial cyanide- and metal-containing effluents. As cyanide generally inhibits cellular aerobic respiration, bacteria possessing an alternative oxidase insensitive to cyanide, such as the quinol oxidase encoded by the *cioAB* genes, which belongs to the cytochrome *bd* family (60).

The study of *bd*-type oxidases also contributes to the development of means to combat biofilms in food and medical biotechnology. Cytochrome *bd*, a high-affinity quinol oxidase required for aerobic respiration under hypoxic conditions, is the most abundantly expressed respiratory complex in the biofilm community. It was shown recently that the cytochrome *bd*-expressing subpopulation is critical for biofilm development (14).

## X. Conclusions

Cytochrome *bd* is found only in bacteria but is widely distributed among taxa and physiological types. However, its current importance and high profile were slow to be recognized: since its discovery by Keilin, Warburg and pioneers in respiratory metabolism in the 1930s (when it was named cytochrome *a<sub>2</sub>*), publications on this oxidase accrued very slowly. Based on the Web of Science Core Collection, the number of articles has grown rapidly: in 1990, there was one article (searching for “cytochrome AND *bd*”), but now that number is ~1500 per annum. The explosion of interest is a result of the recognition that cytochrome *bd* represents a novel class of oxidase and that its unique structure, catalytic capabilities, tolerance of stress, and importance to pathogens are worthy of detailed study.

Despite impressive advances, significant challenges remain. From the point of view of fundamental understanding of redox and antioxidant biology, the most pressing are a full description of electron flux through the three haems and the mechanisms of oxygen reduction. Since cytochrome *bd* is not a proton pump, although contributing to creation of a proton-motive force, accompanying proton movements are less problematic. However, the novel features of cytochrome *bd* pose additional challenges, particularly its ability to confer upon bacterial resistance to oxidative stress, NO and a number of important antimicrobial compounds. Its unique structure and function make it a profitable area of study for developing novel therapeutics, thereby contributing to overcoming the global scourge of resistance to established, and overused, antibiotics.

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#### Abbreviations Used

$\tau$  = time constant, reciprocal of rate constant  
A = cytochrome *bd* species with ferrous-oxy haem *d*  
ABC = ATP-binding cassette  
ATP = adenosine triphosphate  
AX = arylvinylpiperazine amide  
BDQ = bedaquiline  
CFZ = clofazimine  
CIO = cyanide-insensitive oxidase  
CO = carbon monoxide  
CORM = CO-releasing molecule  
CRP = cAMP receptor protein  
Cryo-EM = single-particle cryoelectron microscopy  
DNA = deoxyribonucleic acid  
EET = extracellular electron transfer  
F = cytochrome *bd* species with ferryl haem *d*  
FNR = "fumarate nitrate reduction" regulator  
GSH = glutathione (L- $\gamma$ -glutamylcysteinylglycine)  
H<sub>2</sub>O = water  
H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> = hydrogen peroxide  
H<sub>2</sub>S = hydrogen sulfide  
hCAP-18 = human cationic antimicrobial protein  
Hmp = flavohemoglobin  
IC<sub>50</sub> = the half maximal inhibitory concentration

INH = isoniazid  
IPA = imidazopyridine amide  
K<sub>d</sub> = dissociation constant  
K<sub>m</sub> = Michaelis/Menten constant  
k<sub>off</sub> = dissociation rate constant  
k<sub>on</sub> = binding rate constant  
LPZ = lansoprazole  
MccJ25 = microcin J25  
MIC = minimum inhibition concentration  
MLCT = metal-to-ligand charge transfer  
MQ = menaquinone  
MQH<sub>2</sub> = menaquinol  
NADH = nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide  
(reduced form)  
NO = nitric oxide  
O = cytochrome *bd* species with ferric haem *d*  
O<sub>2</sub> = dioxygen  
O<sub>2</sub><sup>•-</sup> = superoxide  
ONOO<sup>-</sup> = peroxynitrite  
P = cytochrome *bd* species with peroxy complex  
of haem *d*  
PAB = phenoxyalkylbenzimidazole  
PDB = Protein Data Bank  
PMF = proton motive force  
Q<sub>1</sub> = 2,3-dimethoxy-5-methyl-6-(3-methyl-2-  
butenyl)-1,4-benzoquinone  
Q203 = telacebec  
QH<sub>2</sub> = quinol  
R = cytochrome *bd* species with ferrous  
uncomplexed haem *d*  
RMSD = root mean square deviation  
RNA = ribonucleic acid  
RNAP = RNA polymerase  
RNS = reactive nitrogen species  
ROS = reactive oxygen species  
TB47 = pyrazolo[1,5-*a*]pyridine-3-carboxamide  
UPEC = uropathogenic *Escherichia coli*  
UQ8 = ubiquinone-8  
UQH<sub>2</sub> = ubiquinol  
V<sub>max</sub> = maximum rate  
WT = wild type