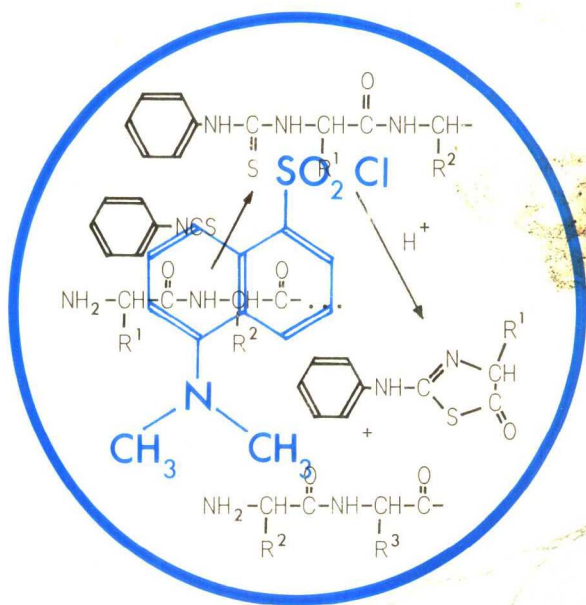




SEQUENCING OF PROTEINS AND PEPTIDES

Second revised edition

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Preface

In the preface to the first edition of this book it was suggested that the ease with which DNA sequences could now be determined could increase the demand for analysis of protein primary structure. While it is true that the large majority of new protein sequences are now deduced from nucleotide sequences of cloned cDNA (or, in the case of prokaryotic proteins, from cloned genomic DNA fragments) there is a continuing high level of activity in direct studies on protein primary structures. With the availability of efficient methods for the synthesis of oligodeoxynucleotides, the most direct route to the isolation of cDNA or genomic DNA clones, a prerequisite for DNA sequence determination, is the use of specific probes designed from partial sequences already determined by direct protein sequencing methods. This requirement for partial sequences, often obtained at high sensitivity from the amino-terminus of the protein, has provided a major impetus for the development and dissemination of highly sensitive techniques. A further part of this activity is directed at the determination of structures introduced into proteins by post-translational modifications, such as glycosylation, methylation, phosphorylation, proteolysis and disulphide bonding, among many structural features that DNA sequences alone cannot reveal. The sequence of a protein can not in general be predicted from genomic DNA, at least in higher eukaryotes, since messenger RNAs are frequently generated by splicing of longer precursors with deletion

of intervening sequences (introns); while splicing sites have some common features, the rule is not completely universal, direct protein sequencing work is also required for confirmation of sequences predicted from DNA sequences when proteins from unusual sources are being studied. A further example where deductions from DNA sequences are misleading is the occurrence of frameshifting during the translation of some mRNAs. Chemical modification studies of proteins often require partial sequencing to reveal sites of specific reaction; the structures of 'active-site' peptides may be of particular interest. Again, the DNA sequence alone cannot provide the necessary data. The requirement, not least by regulatory authorities, for complete characterisation of protein molecules intended for prophylactic or therapeutic use in humans or other animals, and available through the new technology of genetic engineering, has also led to an increased demand for protein sequencing. The recent advances in peptide synthesis methods could also be expected to generate the need for degradative work to characterise the synthetic products, although the accuracy and reliability of the synthetic approach, together with quantitative monitoring during the course of the synthesis make such sequencing work unnecessary in most cases.

In the present decade significant changes have taken place in the techniques for protein sequence determination. There has been a pronounced shift towards the use of more sophisticated automated high-performance chromatographic techniques for purification of proteins and peptides, analysis of purity, and, almost to the exclusion of other methods such as thin-layer or gas-liquid chromatography, for the analysis of phenylthiohydantoin derivatives of amino acids released during the Edman degradation. The gas-phase automated sequencer has come to dominate the field of high-sensitivity sequence determination, although significant improvements in the longer-established automated liquid and solid-phase technologies have also been made. Significant advances in mass spectrometric techniques, such as fast atom bombardment mass spectrometry, have also begun to have an impact on protein sequence determination, likely to become more widespread than the previously used tech-

niques. The shift away from the simpler manual techniques is reflected in this second edition. There is still a need for the use of inexpensive methods, but it must be recognised that for work at high sensitivities, and for speed in accumulating results, at least one HPLC instrument is essential in a protein sequencing laboratory.

Detailed descriptions of the use of automated sequencers are still not included here, however, since the information provided by the manufacturers and available in the specialist literature is far more extensive than can be presented in this volume.

As in the first edition, it is impossible to cover the field of protein sequence determination fully in a laboratory manual of this type, and a great deal of selectivity has been applied, some of it subjective. Detailed descriptions are given of techniques that have been found in many laboratories to be reliable in yielding the required sequence data, and references to many alternative techniques preferred by some authors are also provided. The choice between equivalent techniques will depend to some extent upon the equipment available and the techniques already established in the investigator's laboratory.

I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Mr. T.J. Warren of Applied Biosystems Ltd. for supplying a bibliography of the use of the gas phase sequencer.

List of abbreviations

Atz-amino acid	anilinothiazolinone derivative on an amino acid
BNPS-skatole	2-(2-nitrophenylsulfenyl)-3-methyl-3-bromoindolenine
butyl-PBD	2-(4'- <i>t</i> -butylphenyl)-5-(4''-biphenyl)-1,3,4-oxadiazole
CM-	carboxymethyl-
Dabtc	4,4-dimethylaminoazobenzene-4'-isothiocyanate
Dabtc-	4,4-dimethylaminoazobenzene-4'-thiocarbamyl-
Dabth-amino acid	4,4-dimethylaminoazobenzene-4'-thiohydantoin derivative of an amino acid
DEAE-	diethylaminoethyl-
Dnp-	2,4-dinitrophenyl-
Dns-	1-dimethylaminonaphthalene-5-sulphonyl-
Dns-Cl	1-dimethylaminonaphthalene-5-sulphonylchloride (dansyl chloride)
DTNB	5,5'-dithiobis(2-nitrobenzoic acid)
<i>E. coli</i>	<i>Escherichia coli</i>
EDTA	ethylenediamine tetraacetic acid
FABMS	fast-atom bombardment mass spectrometry

FPLC	fast protein liquid chromatography
GLC	gas-liquid chromatography
HPLC	high-performance liquid chromatograph
Pitc	phenylisothiocyanate
Ptc-	phenylthiocarbamyl-
Pth-amino acid	phenylthiohydantoin derivative of an amino acid
SDS	sodium dodecyl sulphate
TLC	thin-layer chromatography
TLCK	3-tosylamido-7-amino-1-chloroheptan-2-one
TPCK	1-chloro-3-tosylamido-4-phenylbutan-2-one
ϵ	molar extinction coefficient in litre mol ⁻¹ cm ⁻¹

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Chapter 1. Introduction</i>	<i>1</i>
1.1. Protein structure	1
1.2. Historical background	9
1.3. Outline of the strategy for sequence determination	12
<i>Chapter 2. Preliminary characterization of the protein</i>	<i>19</i>
2.1. Purification of the protein	19
2.2. Separation of the constituent polypeptide chains of heterooligomeric proteins	22
2.2.1. Separation of light and heavy chains of immunoglobulin G	23
2.2.2. Separation of α - and β -chains of haemoglobin	24
2.2.3. Separation of light and heavy chains of myosin	25
2.3. Determination of the molecular weight of the polypeptide chains	25
2.3.1. Molecular weight determination by FABMS	29
2.3.2. Plasma desorption time-of-flight mass spectrometry	31

2.4.	Removal of salts and non-covalently bound molecules	31
2.4.1.	Removal of lipids	32
2.4.2.	Removal of haem from cytochrome <i>b₅</i>	33
2.4.3.	Recovery of proteins from SDS-containing solutions	33
2.4.4.	Recovery of proteins by precipitation from dilute solution with deoxycholate	34
2.5.	Amino acid analysis	35
2.5.1.	Determination of the extinction coefficient	37
2.5.2.	Determination of phosphate	38
2.5.3.	Determination of carbohydrate in glycoproteins	39
2.5.4.	Hydrolysis of proteins in 6 M HCl	40
2.5.5.	Alternative hydrolysis methods for recovery of labile amino acids	42
2.5.5.1.	Mercaptoethanesulphonic acid	43
2.5.5.2.	Methane sulphonic acid and tryptamine	43
2.5.5.3.	Toluene sulphonic acid and tryptamine	44
2.5.5.4.	Barium hydroxide	44
2.5.6.	Enzymic hydrolysis of proteins for amino acid analysis	44
2.5.7.	Post-column derivatization for amino acid analysis	45
2.5.8.	Pre-column derivatization methods for amino acid analysis	47
2.5.8.1.	Phenylisothiocyanate	49
2.5.8.2.	<i>o</i> -Phthalaldehyde	50
2.5.8.3.	Dabsyl chloride	52
2.5.8.4.	Fluorenylmethyl chloroformate	53
2.5.9.	Spectrophotometric determination of tryptophan	54
2.6.	Chemical modification of the protein for sequence analysis	55
2.6.1.	Conversion of cysteine residues to stable derivatives	56
2.6.1.1.	Reduction and carboxymethylation	58
2.6.1.2.	Reduction and pyridylethylation	59
2.6.2.	Deletion or introduction of points of enzymic cleavage	59
2.6.3.	Introduction of labels to facilitate the detection and isolation of peptides containing specific residues	60
2.6.4.	Conversion of the protein to a soluble form, facilitating digestion and isolation of peptides	60
2.6.4.1.	Succinylation of proteins	60
2.6.4.2.	Amidation of carboxyl groups with <i>N,N</i> -dimethylethylenediamine	61
2.7.	Determination of the amino-terminal residue	61
2.7.1.	Determination of the N-terminal residue using dansyl chloride	64
2.7.2.	Determination of the N-terminal residue using 4-dimethylamino-benzene-4'-isothiocyanate (Dabitic)	66
2.8.	Determination of the carboxy-terminal residue	67
2.8.1.	Carboxypeptidase A	68
2.8.2.	Carboxypeptidase B	70
2.8.3.	Carboxypeptidase Y	70
2.8.4.	Other carboxypeptidases	71

<i>Chapter 3. Specific cleavage of the protein</i>	73
3.1. General approach to cleavage	73
3.2. Selective cleavage of the polypeptide chain to produce large fragments . .	74
3.2.1. Limited proteolysis	74
3.2.1.1. Ribonuclease A	76
3.2.1.2. Glycogen phosphorylase	77
3.2.1.3. Immunoglobulin G	77
3.2.1.4. Sarcoplasmic reticulum ATPase	78
3.2.1.5. Myosin	78
3.2.1.6. Human serum albumin	79
3.2.2. Selective chemical cleavage for the production of large frag- ments	79
3.2.2.1. Cleavage at Asn-Gly bonds with hydroxylamine	80
3.2.2.2. Cleavage at Asp-Pro bonds in dilute acid	81
3.3. Enzymic cleavage of denatured polypeptides	82
3.3.1. Preparation of the protein for digestion	84
3.3.2. Trypsin	85
3.3.2.1. Use of a pH-stat to follow tryptic digestion	86
3.3.2.2. Tryptic digestion in volatile buffers	87
3.3.3. Cleavage by trypsin at arginine residues after modification of lysine residues	88
3.3.4. Arginine-specific protease from mouse submaxillary glands . . .	89
3.3.5. Clostripain	89
3.3.6. Lysine-specific protease from <i>Lysobacter enzymogenes</i>	89
3.3.7. Staphylococcal protease (strain V8)	90
3.3.8. α -Chymotrypsin	91
3.3.9. Pepsin	92
3.3.10. Thermolysin	93
3.3.11. Subtilisin	94
3.3.12. Papain	94
3.4. Specific cleavage of proteins by chemical methods	95
3.4.1. Cleavage with cyanogen bromide	95
3.4.2. Cleavage at cysteine residues after cyanylation	99
3.4.3. Cleavage at tryptophan residues by BNPS-skatole	101
3.4.4. Cleavage at tryptophan residues with <i>o</i> -iodosobenzoic acid . . .	102
3.4.5. Cleavage at tryptophan residues with dimethylsulphoxide/HCl/HBr	103
3.4.6. Partial acid hydrolysis	104
 <i>Chapter 4. Separation and purification of peptides</i>	 105
4.1. Outline of methods used	105
4.2. Amounts of digested protein required	109

4.3.	Preliminary study of the peptides in a digest	110
4.3.1.	Polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis	111
4.3.1.1.	Analytical SDS-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis	111
4.3.1.2.	Analytical polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis in the presence of urea and SDS	114
4.3.1.3.	Polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis in tricine buffers	115
4.3.2.	Silver staining of polyacrylamide gels	116
4.3.3.	Analytical isoelectric focusing of peptides in polyacrylamide gels	116
4.3.4.	Analytical reverse-phase HPLC	117
4.3.5.	Analytical thin-layer peptide mapping	123
4.4.	Separation of peptides on the basis of solubility	125
4.5.	Gel filtration	126
4.5.1.	Low pressure chromatographic columns	127
4.5.2.	Eluents for gel filtration of peptides	129
4.5.3.	Packing of gel filtration columns	132
4.5.4.	Loading the sample, and elution	133
4.5.5.	High pressure gel filtration	134
4.5.6.	Recovery of peptides from fractions	135
4.5.7.	Examples of the separation of peptides by gel filtration	137
4.6.	Ion-exchange chromatography	138
4.6.1.	Cellulosic ion-exchangers	139
4.6.1.1.	DEAE-cellulose	140
4.6.1.2.	CM-cellulose	145
4.6.1.3.	Phosphocellulose	146
4.6.2.	Ion-exchange derivatives of cross-linked dextrans	146
4.6.3.	Ion-exchange derivatives of cross-linked polystyrene	147
4.6.3.1.	A procedure for chromatography on Dowex-50-type resins	150
4.6.3.2.	Chromatography on a strongly cationic anion-exchange residue	151
4.6.4.	High-performance ion-exchange chromatography	151
4.7.	Reverse-phase HPLC	154
4.8.	Paper electrophoresis and chromatography	157
4.9.	Thin-layer methods for the purification of peptides	157
4.9.1.	Thin-layer electrophoresis	158
4.9.2.	Thin-layer chromatography	165
4.9.3.	Preparative peptide mapping on thin layers	168
4.10.	Preparative polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis	168
4.11.	Affinity chromatography	170
4.12.	Selective isolation of peptides by covalent binding to an insoluble matrix	172
4.13.	'Diagonal' methods	172
4.14.	Selective purification of blocked N-terminal peptides	174
4.15.	Selective purification of C-terminal peptides	175

Chapter 5. Methods for the detection of peptides 179

5.1. General methods for the detection of peptides in column eluates	179
5.1.1. Low-wavelength UV absorbance	179
5.1.2. Reaction with ninhydrin in solution	181
5.1.3. Reaction with fluorescamine	184
5.1.4. Reaction with <i>o</i> -phthalaldehyde and 2-mercaptoethanol	185
5.1.5. Hydrolysis followed by amino acid analysis	186
5.1.6. Reaction with dansyl chloride	187
5.1.7. Thin-layer chromatography or electrophoresis	187
5.1.8. Polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis	188
5.1.9. Reaction with bicinchoninic acid reagent	189
5.2. General methods for the detection of peptides adsorbed to thin-layer supports	190
5.2.1. Reaction with ninhydrin	190
5.2.1.1. Ninhydrin/acetic acid reagent	191
5.2.1.2. Ninhydrin/collidine	191
5.2.1.3. Ninhydrin/cadmium reagent	192
5.2.2. Fluorescamine	192
5.2.2.1. Fluorescamine for analytical peptide maps	193
5.2.2.2. Fluorescamine for preparative peptide maps	193
5.2.3. Hydrolysis of peptides followed by reaction with ninhydrin	194
5.2.4. Chlorination	194
5.2.4.1. Reaction with chlorine	194
5.2.4.2. Reaction with <i>t</i> -butyl hypochlorite	195
5.2.4.3. Detection with <i>o</i> -tolidine	195
5.2.4.4. Detection with starch/KI	195
5.3. Detection methods specific for certain amino acid residues in column fractions	196
5.3.1. UV absorbance	196
5.3.2. Fluorescence	196
5.3.3. Liquid-scintillation counting or gamma-counting	197
5.3.4. Detection of cystine residues	198
5.3.5. Detection of glycopeptides	199
5.3.6. Detection of arginine residues	199
5.3.7. Other specific detection methods	199
5.4. Detection methods specific for certain amino acid residues, on paper or thin-layer supports	200
5.4.1. Fluorescence emission	200
5.4.2. Radioautography	200
5.4.3. Phenanthrenequinone reagent for arginine	202
5.4.4. Ehrlich test for tryptophan residues	202
5.4.5. Pauly test for histidine residues	203

5.4.6.	Nitrosonaphthol test for tyrosine residues	203
5.4.7.	Iodoplatinate test for methionine residues	204
5.4.8.	Isatin test for N-terminal proline residues	204
5.4.9.	The technique of dipping chromatograms	204
 <i>Chapter 6. Determination of peptide sequences</i>		 207
6.1.	Methods for the estimation of the purity of peptides	208
6.1.1.	Elution profiles from chromatographic columns	208
6.1.2.	Analytical chromatography or electrophoresis	209
6.1.2.1.	The use of electrophoretic mobilities of peptides	210
6.1.3.	Determination of the N-terminal residue	212
6.1.4.	Amino acid analysis	212
6.2.	Determination of the N-terminal residues of peptides	215
6.2.1.	Dansyl chloride method	215
6.2.2.	Dabitic method	221
6.3.	Determination of peptide sequences by the Edman degradation	221
6.3.1.	Chemistry of the Edman degradation	221
6.3.1.1.	Coupling	222
6.3.1.2.	Cleavage	225
6.3.1.3.	Conversion	228
6.3.2.	Some problems in the use of the Edman degradation	229
6.3.2.1.	Incomplete coupling and cleavage reactions	229
6.3.2.2.	Histidine residues	230
6.3.2.3.	Asparaginyl-glycine peptide bonds	232
6.3.2.4.	Glutamine and S-carboxymethylcysteine residues	233
6.3.2.5.	Tryptophan residues	234
6.3.2.6.	Glycosylated residues	234
6.3.2.7.	Serine and threonine residues	235
6.3.2.8.	Other blocking reactions	235
6.4.	Experimental procedures for the Edman degradation	235
6.4.1.	Manual methods and identification of phenylthiohydantoins	236
6.4.1.1.	High-performance liquid chromatography	237
6.4.1.2.	Gas-liquid chromatography	241
6.4.1.3.	Back hydrolysis and amino acid analysis	241
6.4.1.4.	Thin-layer chromatography	242
6.4.2.	Automated liquid-phase sequence determination	244
6.4.2.1.	Application to peptides	246
6.4.2.2.	High-sensitivity applications	247
6.4.3.	Gas-phase sequencing	249
6.4.4.	Solid-phase sequencing	252
6.4.4.1.	Design and construction of solid-phase automated protein sequencers	253
6.4.4.2.	Types of solid support	253

6.4.4.3.	Attachment of peptides to the solid support	256
6.4.4.4.	Edman degradation procedures	262
6.4.5.	The 'dansyl-Edman' method	264
6.4.6.	Subtractive Edman degradation	269
6.5.	Alternative isothiocyanate reagents	270
6.5.1.	Liquid-phase sequencing with Dabitec	272
6.5.2.	Manual solid-phase sequencing with Dabitec	276
6.5.3.	Automated solid-phase sequencing with Dabitec	277
6.6.	Other chemical degradation methods for peptide sequence determinations	277
6.7.	Enzymic methods for peptide sequence determination	278
6.7.1.	Carboxypeptidase A	279
6.7.2.	Leucine aminopeptidase	280
6.7.3.	Aminopeptidase M	281
6.8.	Mass spectrometry	281
6.8.1.	Mass spectrometry of volatile derivatives of peptides	282
6.8.2.	Field desorption and secondary-ion mass spectrometry	283
6.8.3.	Fast-atom bombardment mass spectrometry	284
6.8.3.1.	Tandem mass spectrometry	286
6.8.3.2.	FABMS combined with chemical or enzymic degradation	286
6.8.4.	Plasma desorption mass spectrometry	287
6.8.5.	Thermospray mass spectrometry	287
6.9.	Subfragmentation of peptides	288
6.10.	Summary of possible difficulties in peptide sequence determination	291

Chapter 7. Structures introduced by post-translational modification 295

7.1.	γ -Carboxyglutamic acid	296
7.2.	Phosphorylated amino acid residues	297
7.3.	Methylated amino acids	299
7.3.1.	Trimethylalanine and ϵ - <i>N</i> -trimethyllysine	300
7.3.2.	<i>N</i> -Methylalanine	300
7.3.3.	<i>N</i> ⁺ -Methylhistidine	301
7.3.4.	<i>N</i> ^G , <i>N</i> ^G -Dimethylarginine	301
7.3.5.	γ - <i>N</i> -Methylasparagine	301
7.4.	Identification of points of attachment of carbohydrate in glycoproteins	302
7.4.1.	Erythrocyte glycophorin	307
7.4.2.	Antifreeze glycoproteins	307
7.4.3.	Haemoglobin A _{1c}	308
7.4.4.	Immunoglobulin G	308

7.4.5.	Human chorionic gonadotropin	308
7.4.6.	Tissue plasminogen activator	308
7.4.7.	Rat Thy-1	309
7.5.	Amino-terminal acyl groups	309
7.5.1.	Acetylated N-terminal residues	310
7.5.2.	Pyrrolidone carboxylic acid residues	312
7.5.3.	Formylated N-terminal residues	313
7.6.	Examples of other modified residues	314
7.7.	Cross-linking structures	316
7.7.1.	Cystine residues	316
7.7.1.1.	Purification of cystine-containing peptides	318
7.7.1.2.	Diagonal electrophoresis	320
7.7.1.3.	FAB Mass spectrometry	322
7.7.1.4.	Examples of disulphide bond determinations	323
7.7.2.	Lysine-derived cross-links in collagen and elastin	325
7.7.3.	Identification of residues involved in chemical cross-linking	326

*Chapter 8. Deduction of the total primary structure of a protein
from the sequences of constituent peptides 327*

Chapter 9. Integral membrane proteins 335

9.1.	Purification of integral membrane proteins	337
9.2.	Specific cleavage methods	339
9.3.	Purification of peptides from integral membrane proteins	341
9.4.	Determination of the sequences of membrane peptides	345

*Chapter 10. Applications of partial sequence analysis and
relationship to DNA sequencing 349*

10.1.	Identification of positions within the sequence of selectively modified residues	349
10.2.	Comparison of related proteins by peptide mapping	349
10.2.1.	Use of methyl- $[^{14}\text{C}]$ acetimidate	355
10.2.2.	Use of radioiodination	356
10.3.	Comparison of partial sequences of apparently unrelated proteins	357
10.4.	Amino-terminal sequences	358
10.5.	Correlation with nucleotide sequences in DNA	359
10.5.1.	Identification of proteins as products of sequenced genes	361
10.5.2.	Confirmation of results obtained by DNA sequencing	361

10.5.3. Determination of N- and C-terminal sequences	362
10.5.4. Post-translational modification	365
10.5.5. Non-universality of the genetic code	365
10.5.6. Intervening non-translated regions (introns)	365
10.5.7. Identification of reading frames	366
10.5.8. Translational frame-shifting	366
10.5.9. Design of oligonucleotide probes	367
10.5.10. Confirmation of the structures of proteins produced by genetic engineering	369
 <i>Appendix I. Manufacturers and suppliers of equipment and reagents for protein sequence analysis</i>	 371
(1) Equipment	371
(2) Chromatographic materials	374
(3) Enzymes	376
(4) Other reagents	378
 <i>Appendix II. Purification of solvents and reagents</i>	 380
Solvents	380
Reagents	381
 <i>Appendix III. Safety in the protein chemistry laboratory</i>	 382
Reagents	383
Glassware	383
Other apparatus	384
Fire hazards	384
 <i>Appendix IV. Notes on work with very small amounts of proteins and peptides</i>	 384
(1) Cleanliness	384
(2) Adsorption to surfaces	384
(3) Transfer of samples	385
(4) Reactions	385
(5) Chromatography	385
(6) Radioactive proteins	386
 <i>References</i>	 387
 <i>Subject index</i>	 415