The Hansenula polymorpha PER8 Gene Encodes a Novel Peroxisomal Integral Membrane Protein Involved in Proliferation

Xuqiu Tan, Hans R. Waterham,* Marten Veenhuis,* and James M. Cregg

Department of Chemistry, Biochemistry, and Molecular Biology, Oregon Graduate Institute of Science & Technology, Portland, Oregon 97291-1000; * Laboratory for Electron Microscopy, Biological Center, University of Groningen, 9751 NN Haren, The Netherlands

Abstract. We previously described the isolation of mutants of the methylotrophic yeast Hansenula polymorpha that are defective in peroxisome biogenesis. Here, we describe the characterization of one of these mutants, per8, and the cloning of the PER8 gene. In either methanol or methylamine medium, conditions that normally induce the organelles, per8 cells contain no peroxisome-like structures and peroxisomal enzymes are located in the cytosol. The sequence of PER8 predicts that its product (Per8p) is a novel polypeptide of 34 kD, and antibodies against Per8p recognize a protein of 31 kD. Analysis of the primary sequence of Per8p revealed a 39-amino-acid cysteine-rich segment with similarity to the C3HC4 family of zinc-finger motifs. Overexpression of PER8 results in a markedly enhanced increase in peroxisome numbers. We show that Per8p is an integral membrane protein of the peroxisome and that it is concentrated in the membranes of newly formed organelles. We propose that Per8p is a component of the molecular machinery that controls the proliferation of this organelle.

Eukaryotic cells are divided into a variety of membrane-bound compartments or organelles, each responsible for performing specific metabolic functions. To maintain each organelle, the cell must correctly direct specific sets of proteins to their proper subcellular locations and, as the cell grows and divides, the organelles must be duplicated. For some organelles, such as the endoplasmic reticulum, mitochondrion, and peroxisome, the cell can also increase organelle numbers in response to certain environmental stimuli (Bolender et al., 1973; Attardi et al., 1988; Braunbeck and Völikl, 1991; Dreyer et al., 1992; Luiken et al., 1992). Of these organelle biogenesis tasks, significant progress has been made in elucidating the molecular mechanisms responsible for protein sorting, whereas little is known regarding the mechanisms responsible for organelle duplication/proliferation.

We are interested in understanding biogenesis in peroxisomes (glyoxysomes, glycosomes), a class of single membrane-bound organelles that exists in virtually all cells and is the site of a number of important oxidative reactions (Borst, 1989; Veenhuis and Harder, 1991; van den Bosch, 1992; Subramani, 1993). An unusual characteristic of peroxisomes relative to other organelles is their functional diversity; that is, the specific metabolic pathways found in the organelle vary depending upon the organism, the tissue, and its environment. The importance of peroxisomes to humans is dramatically demonstrated by a family of lethal genetic diseases called Zellweger syndrome in which peroxisomes appear to be absent from or deficient in patient cells (Lazarow and Moser, 1989). Thus, peroxisomes are clearly essential for human survival.

In recent years, basic features of peroxisome biogenesis have emerged. Proteins destined for the peroxisome are synthesized on free ribosomes, usually at their mature sizes, and posttranslationally imported into the organelle (Roa and Blobel, 1983; Fujiki et al., 1986). For import of peroxisomal matrix enzymes, two distinct peroxisomal targeting signals (PTSs)1 have been defined (for review see de Hoop and AB, 1992). The most common signal, PTS1, is a carboxy-terminal tripeptide that is typically SKL or a conservative variant (Gould et al., 1987, 1990; Aitchison et al., 1991; Keller et al., 1991). The second, PTS2, is found on only a few peroxisomal enzymes such as mammalian and yeast 3-ketoacyl-CoA thiolases and yeast amine oxidase (Osumi et al., 1991; Swinkels et al., 1991; Glover et al., 1994; Faber et al., 1995). PTS2 is located near the amino terminus and...

1. Abbreviations used in this paper: AMO, amine oxidase; AOX, alcohol oxidase; CAT, catalase; DHAS, dihydroxyacetone synthase; EM, electron microscopic; MAL, maltose binding protein; MOX, methanol oxidase; Mut+, methanol-utilizing; Mut-, methanol-utilization-defective; ORF, open reading frame; PMox, alcohol oxidase promoter; PTS, peroxisomal targeting signal.
is cleaved in some instances (rat thiolase) but not in others (yeast thiolase). Peroxisomal membrane proteins and some matrix enzymes do not appear to have either PTS; therefore, it is likely that one or more additional PTSs exist. Aside from targeting signals, import machinery components remain largely unidentified with the exception of the Pichia pastoris PAS8 gene product which may be a receptor for proteins bearing PTS1 (McCollum et al., 1993).

Less is known regarding the cell's ability to control peroxisome volume and number. Like mitochondria, peroxisomes are thought to duplicate by fission from preexisting organelles and to actively migrate into daughter cells (Veenhuis et al., 1979; Attardi and Schatz, 1988). The number of peroxisomes per cell can increase dramatically in response to metabolic needs. For example, certain hypolipidemic drugs such as clofibrate induce peroxisomes to proliferate in rat liver cells (Lock et al., 1989). However, the most extreme example of a proliferative response is observed in methylotrophic yeasts such as 

Hansenula polymorpha

where methanol induces a massive increase in peroxisome size and number (Veenhuis et al., 1979). In glucose-grown cells of this yeast, only one or a few small peroxisomes are present, whereas in methanol, peroxisomes can account for as much as 80% of total cell volume. Interestingly, when peroxisomal enzymes are expressed at high levels in glucose-grown cells, the organelles increase in size but not number (Gödecke et al., 1989; Roggenkamp et al., 1989). Thus, it appears that peroxisome size may be a reflection of the amount of matrix protein, while proliferation is controlled by a separate mechanism.

H. polymorpha is an attractive model system for genetic studies on peroxisome biogenesis (Veenhuis et al., 1992). In this organism, detailed physiological, biochemical, and ultrastructural information exists on the role of peroxisomes in the metabolism of a variety of unusual carbon and nitrogen sources (Veenhuis and Harder, 1987, 1991). In addition, methods for classical- and molecular-genetic manipulation of the organism are well developed (Cregg, 1987; Gleeson and Sudbery, 1988; Faber et al., 1992; Titorenko et al., 1993). In previous reports, we have described the isolation of 

H. polymorpha

mutants that are defective in peroxisome biogenesis (per mutants) (Cregg et al., 1990; Waterham et al., 1992; Titorenko et al., 1993). In this report, we describe the characterization of one mutant, per8, and the molecular cloning and characterization of the 

PER8

gene and its product. We show that 

PER8

encodes a 34-kD peroxisomal integral membrane protein that appears to play a role in peroxisome proliferation.

Materials and Methods

Strains, Media, and Microbial Techniques

H. polymorpha strains used in this study are listed in Table I. H. polymorpha cultures were grown at 37°C in a complex medium (YPD) composed of 1% yeast extract, 2% peptone, and 2% dextrose, or in one of the following minimal media: YNB medium (0.17% yeast nitrogen base without amino acids and ammonium sulfate, 0.25% methanol, and 0.05% yeast extract; MAD medium (0.17% yeast nitrogen base without amino acids and ammonium sulfate, 0.25% methanol, and 0.05% yeast extract; MAD medium (0.17% yeast nitrogen base without amino acids and ammonium sulfate, 0.25% methanol, and 0.05% yeast extract; MAD medium (0.17% yeast nitrogen base without amino acids and ammonium sulfate, 0.25% methanol, and 0.05% yeast extract; MAD medium (0.17% yeast nitrogen base without amino acids and ammonium sulfate, 0.25% methanol, and 0.05% yeast extract; MAD medium (0.17% yeast nitrogen base without amino acids and ammonium sulfate, 0.25% methanol, and 0.05% yeast extract; MAD medium (0.17% yeast nitrogen base without amino acids and ammonium sulfate, 0.25% methanol, and 0.05% yeast extract; MAD medium (0.17% yeast nitrogen base without amino acids and ammonium sulfate, 0.25% methanol, and 0.05% yeast extract; MAD medium (0.17% yeast nitrogen base without amino acids and ammonium sulfate, 0.25% methanol, and 0.05% yeast extract). Nutritional supplements for growth of auxotrophic strains were added to 50 µg/ml as required. Sporulation (matting) medium was composed of 2% malt extract.

Table I. H. polymorpha Strains Used in This Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strain</th>
<th>Genotype</th>
<th>Source or reference</th>
</tr>
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<td>wild type</td>
<td>CBS4732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A16</td>
<td>leu1</td>
<td>Veale et al. (1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C76</td>
<td>per8-1</td>
<td>This study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C76</td>
<td>per8-1 leu1</td>
<td>This study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT100</td>
<td>per8A::SLEU2</td>
<td>This study</td>
</tr>
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<td>This study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT103</td>
<td>per8-1 leu1 PdeoPER8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT104</td>
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<td>This study</td>
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Genetic manipulations of 

H. polymorpha

have been described (Gleeson and Sudbery, 1988; Cregg et al., 1990; Faber et al., 1992). Yeast transformations were performed by the Klebe procedure (Klebe et al., 1983). Cultivation of 

Escherichia coli

strains and recombinant DNA techniques were performed as described (Sambrook et al., 1989).

Cell Fractionation

Methanol-utilizing (Mut+) strains were precultured in YPD medium to an OD600 of ~0.75 and then shifted by centrifugation into one liter of YNB methanol medium at a starting OD600 of 0.005. Methanol-utilization-defective (Mut-) strains were precultured in one liter of YPD medium and the entire culture was shifted at an OD600 of ~0.75 into one liter of methanol medium. Cultures were incubated for 16 h and harvested by centrifugation.

For growth on methylamine, cultures were precultured in YNB dextrose and shifted by centrifugation into MAD medium at a starting density of 0.1 OD600 units and harvested at an OD600 of ~1.0. Cells were washed three times with 10 ml of distilled water and resuspended in 4 ml of digestion buffer (5 mM K-3-[N-morpholino]propanesulfonate [pH 7.2], 0.5 M KCl, 10 mM Na2SO4) per gram of cells. Cells were then converted to protoplasts by the addition of Zymolyase 100T (ICN Biomedicals, Costa Mesa, CA) to 0.25 mg/ml and incubated at 37°C for 30 to 40 min with occasional shaking. All subsequent steps were carried out at 4°C. Protoplasts were diluted with 10 vol of ice-cold 1 M sorbitol and centrifuged at 4,000 g for 10 min. The resulting pellets were gently resuspended in sorbitol-MES buffer (1 M sorbitol, 5 mM K-2-[N-morpholino]ethanesulfonic acid, pH 5.5) at 1 ml/gram of cells. An equal volume of 0.25 M sorbitol, 5 mM MES (pH 5.5) was then added to the suspension while gently shaking and the mixtures were placed on ice for 10 min. A volume of 1.75 M sorbitol, 5 mM MES (pH 5.5) was then added sufficient to bring the solution back to 1 M sorbitol and samples were centrifuged at 1,000 g for 20 min to remove unbroken cells and other debris. The supernatants were subjected to centrifugation at 25,000 g for 25 min and the resulting pellets were resuspended in 100 µl of sorbitol-MES buffer and, along with supernatant fractions, were examined for enzyme activities. For purification of peroxisomes, pellets resulting from the differential centrifugation procedure described above were layered over a discontinuous sucrose gradient, centrifuged, and fractions collected as described previously (Douma et al., 1985).

Extraction of peroxisomes with triethanolamine and carbonate were performed as described in Waterham et al. (1994). Triton X-114 extractions were done as previously described (Bordier, 1981). Urea extractions were performed as described (Cunningham et al., 1989) except that the 6 M urea solution was in 10 mM Tris-HCl, pH 7.4, 150 mM NaCl.

Genomic DNA Library Construction

The 

H. polymorpha

genomic DNA library used to clone 

PER8

was constructed by inserting total DNA from wild-type 

H. polymorpha

strain CBS4732 into the 

H. polymorpha-E. coli

shuttle plasmid pT3. This plasmid was constructed by inserting the Sau3AI gene into the Sall-Xhol fragment into the Sall site of pUC19. pSLEU2 serves as a selectable marker for transformation into 

leu1

strains of 

H. polymorpha

(Gleeson et al., 1986). pT3 also contains an 

H. polymorpha

nucl-PFwd DNA fragment of 2.5 kb that contains autonomous replication sequences (HARS) activity in 

H. polymorpha

inserted into the Smal site of pUC19. To construct the library, total DNA from 

H. polymorpha

was extracted and partially digested with Sau3AI. Fragments of 5 to 10 kb were pooled and further size selected by sucrose density gradient centrifugation. To receive the DNA fragments, pT3 was digested with BamH1 and treated with calf intestine alkaline phosphatase. Approximately equal molar amounts of fragments were ligated into pT3, transformed into 

E. coli

strain H111B, and selected on 5-bromo-4-chloro-3-indolyl-β-D-galactoside plates.
amounts of fragmented DNA and vector were mixed and ligated with T4 DNA ligase. Ligation products were transformed into E. coli strain DH5α and approximately 29,000 colonies were collected. Plasmid DNA was extracted from these cells and purified as described (Sambrook et al., 1989). The library was stored as plasmid DNA in 10 mM Tris-HCl, pH 7.4, 1 mM EDTA at −20°C.

Isolation and Characterization of the PER8 Gene

Cells of H. polymorpha strain CT100 (per8-1 leu1) were transformed with the H. polymorpha DNA library and Leu+ colonies were selected on YNB glucose medium agar plates. Approximately 2,000 Leu+ transformants were washed from the plates and inoculated into liquid YNB methanol medium. Samples of the liquid culture were periodically spread onto the plates and the culture was harvested. Total DNA was extracted from these cells and plasmids were recovered by transforming the DNA into E. coli. Plasmid DNA was isolated from 10 E. coli transformants and all were found to contain pYT3 with an insert of 5.8 kb. One of these plasmids, pYT7 (shown in Fig. 4) was retransformed into CT10 by selection for Leu+. The resulting Leu+ transformants were then replica plated on methanol medium agar plates and all were observed to also be Mut+. To further define the location of PER8 sequences, selected subfragments from pYT7 were subcloned into pYT3 and tested for Mut+ complementation of CT100. An EcoRI-NruI fragment of 1.6 kb was identified and inserted into pBluescript II SK+ (Stratagene Corp., La Jolla, CA) in both orientations and a series of subclones containing deletions of the fragment were generated by limited digestion with exonuclease III (Henikoff, 1987). The DNA sequence of both strands of the insert was then determined by the dideoxy chain-termination method (Sanger and Coulson, 1975). DNA and predicted protein sequences were analyzed using MacVector software (IBI, New Haven, CT) and compared with the GenBank data base.

Construction of PER8 Disruption Strain

A vector designed to delete all but the first 68 amino acids of the predicted PER8 product (pET13a) was constructed in five steps. In the first, the pBluescript II SK+ fragment was digested with EcoRI and KpnI and an adaptor oligonucleotide (AATTAGTCGACGAATTCAGTACTCd3TAC and CAGTACTAGCCGCTAAAAAAACC~GT and 3' primer GGGTCGAC~CAGTACTAGCCGCTAAAAAAACC~GT) was inserted into pBluescript II SK+. The resulting vector was named pET2. In the second step, a 520-bp fragment composed of sequences flanking the 5' end of PER8 plus sequences encoding the first 68 amino acids of the gene was amplified by the PCR method from plasmid pYT7 using the 5' primer TTGGTACCGATCCCTTGG and AGCTCTAGCTAGCCGCTAAAAAAACC~GT and 3' primer GGGTCGAC~CAGTACTAGCCGCTAAAAAAACC~GT) was inserted into pBluescript II SK+ using the T4 DNA ligase. The resulting vector was named pET3. The 5' HindHi site of PERS; and (d) addition of an NruI site. Finally, a 1.3 kb HindHi-NruI fragment encoding all but the first two amino acids of the PER8 gene product was inserted into HindHi-digested pET3. The resulting plasmid pET4 contained the per8 gene product in the proper reading frame by digesting the vector with EcoRI and HindIII, and an adaptor oligonucleotide (AATTAACGTCGACCTCTCCCTTGG and AGCTCTAGCTAGCCGCTAAAAAAACC~GT) to make pET4. Insertion of this adaptor resulted in the following changes in order: (a) destruction of the HindIII site at the junction of the adaptor and pET3; (b) addition of sequences encoding the methionine initiator ATG and the second amino acid of Per8p; (c) addition of a new HindIII site in frame with the third amino acid of Per8p; and (d) addition of a new NruI site in frame with the fourth amino acid of Per8p. The resulting plasmid pET4 contains the per8 gene under methanol oxidase (MOX) promoter control and was digested with StuI prior to transformation into CT100 to direct the plasmid to integrate at the Pmox locus. Proper integration of pET4 was confirmed by Southern blot analysis.

Miscellaneous Methods

Total protein in samples was measured by the method of Bradford with bovine serum albumin as a standard (Bradford, 1976). Alcohol oxidase (Aox) (van der Klei et al., 1990), catalase (Ueda et al., 1990), AMO (Zwart et al., 1980), and fumarase (Tolbert, 1974) activities were measured according to published procedures. Northern and Southern procedures were as described (Sambrook et al., 1989). Immunoblotting was performed using either the Protoblot system of Promega (Madison, WI) or the ECL system of Amersham Corp. (Arlington Heights, IL) as directed by the suppliers. Electrophoresis and immunogold-electron microscopy with anti-Per8p rabbit antibodies were performed as described (Waterham et al., 1992).

Results

per8 Cells Lack Morphologically Recognizable Peroxisomes

H. polymorpha strain C76 (per8-1) was one of a number of mutants isolated by screening a collection of Mut+ strains
for ones in which intact peroxisomes were absent (Cregg et al., 1990; Waterham et al., 1992; Titorenko et al., 1993). In methanol-grown wild-type \textit{H. polymorpha}, peroxisomes are abundant (Fig. 1 A). In contrast, an exhaustive electron microscopic (EM) search of serially sectioned cells of the \textit{per8-1} strain induced on methanol failed to reveal any peroxisome-like structures (Fig. 1 B). Thus, in \textit{per8-1} cells, either peroxisomes were not present, or were morphologically unrecognizable, a phenotype we refer to as Per- (Titorenko et al., 1993). A striking feature of methanol-induced \textit{per8-1} cells was the presence of a single large cytosolic crystalloid that was readily observed by phase contrast light microscopy as a bright yellow cubic structure tumbling within each cell (Fig. 1 B, inset). This crystalloid structure was primarily composed of AOX (Fig. 1 C) and is a common characteristic of most \textit{H. polymorpha} \textit{per} mutants examined to date (van der Klei et al., 1991).

Additional evidence for the absence of peroxisomes in \textit{per8-1} was obtained from biochemical experiments designed to determine the location of peroxisomal enzymes. Enzyme activity measurements of extracts prepared from methanol-induced \textit{per8-1} cells indicated that catalase (CAT) and AOX were present at substantial levels (Fig. 2 A). The third peroxisomal methanol-pathway enzyme, dihydroxyacetone synthase (DHAS), was also present as demonstrated by immunoblotting using antibodies against DHAS (data not shown). The location of these enzymes was investigated by subcellular fractionation of homogenized \textit{per8-1} spheroplasts. After low-speed centrifugation to remove remaining whole cells, protoplasts, and nuclei, small organelles (primarily peroxisomes and mitochondria) were sedimented by centrifugation at 25,000 g. At this force, a major portion of the activity for peroxisomal enzymes in wild-type cells was present in the organelle pellet (Fig. 2 B). However, a significant amount of

\begin{figure}
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\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure1.png}
\caption{Electron micrographs showing subcellular morphology of selected \textit{H. polymorpha} strains. (A) Methanol-grown wild-type cells contain numerous large peroxisomes (P); mitochondrion (M); nucleus (N). (B) Methanol-induced \textit{per8-1} cells contain a large cytosolic AOX crystalloid (*) but no peroxisomes; (inset, B) phase-contrast light micrograph of \textit{per8-1}. (C) Immuno-gold labeling of a methanol-induced \textit{per8-1} cell with anti-AOX antibodies showing the presence of AOX in the cytosolic crystalloid. A second small crystalloid is also present in the nucleus of this cell, a common occurrence in \textit{per8-1} and other \textit{per} cells. (D) \textit{per8-1} cells transformed with a complementing DNA fragment grow on methanol and contain normal peroxisomes. Bar, 1.0 \mu m.}
\end{figure}
activity was also present in the supernatant due to enzyme leakage or organelle breakage or both. In contrast, after centrifugation of per8-1 preparations, almost all AOX and CAT activity and DHAS protein were located in the supernatant, indicating that these enzymes were located in the cytosol (Fig. 2 B). These results could not be due to unequal handling of per8 cells during the fractionation procedures since fumarase, a mitochondrial marker enzyme, remained primarily in the pellet.

In _H. polymorpha_, the utilization of methyamine as a nitrogen source requires the peroxisomal enzyme amine oxidase (AMO) (Zwart et al., 1980; Sulter et al., 1990). AMO has recently been shown to be directed to peroxisomes via a PTS2 sequence (Faber et al., 1995), whereas AOX, CAT, and DHAS each contain a PTS1 sequence (Didion and Roggenkamp, 1992; Hansen et al., 1992). Thus, the fate of AMO is an indicator of PTS2 system function. In methyamine-grown per8-1 cells, AMO and CAT activity levels were greater than twice those in wild-type cells (Fig. 2 A). After differential centrifugation, AMO activity was present primarily in the pellet fraction while CAT was mostly in the supernatant fraction (Fig 2 B). These results suggested that AMO may be in peroxisomes and therefore, that per8-1 cells may be specifically defective in the import of PTS1-containing enzymes. On the other hand, AMO has been shown to form cytosolic aggregates in methyamine-grown cells of some per mutants (Sulter et al., 1990). Therefore, it was possible that in per8-1 cells, AMO also formed aggregates and that these aggregates sedimented during differential centrifugation. To differentiate between these explanations, the pellet fractions resulting from differential centrifugation were subjected to sucrose density gradient centrifugation. As shown in Fig. 3 A, AMO from per8-1 cells sedimented to a significantly higher density than peroxisome-enclosed AMO from wild-type cells, suggesting that, in per8-1, AMO was in a structure with little or no associated membrane such as a protein aggregate. Methylamine-grown per8-1 cells were also examined by EM for peroxisomes. As with methanol-induced cells, no peroxisome-like structures could be found (data not shown). In addition, immunocytochemical results using antibodies against AMO showed that AMO was indeed located primarily in aggregates (Fig. 3 B). We concluded that AMO, like the other peroxisomal enzymes, was not in peroxisomes and that the absence of peroxisomes in per8-1 cells was not a methanol- or PTS1-specific defect but a general impairment in peroxisome biogenesis.

**Isolation and Characterization of the PER8 Gene**

The _PER8_ gene was isolated from an _H. polymorpha_ genomic DNA library by functional complementation of per8 strain CT100 (per8-1 leu1). Library transformants were initially selected for leucine prototrophy (Leu+) on glucose medium and subsequently selected for growth on methanol (Mut+). Total DNA was extracted from a pool of Leu+ Mut+ transforms and plasmids were recovered by transforming the DNA into _E. coli_. A plasmid, designated pYT7 (Fig. 4), was isolated that co-transformed the per8-1 leu1 strain to both Leu+ and Mut+ simultaneously. per8-1 cells transformed with pYT7 contained normal-appearing peroxisomes (Fig. 1 D) and sedimentable activity for AOX, CAT, and AMO (Fig. 2 B). Restriction mapping of pYT7 revealed an _H. polymorpha_ DNA insert of 5.8 kb. By subcloning selected sub-fragments from pYT7, the complementing activity was located within a 1.6-kb EcoRI-NruI fragment. In northern blots, the 1.6-kb fragment hybridized to a single transcript of 1.4 kb that was present at low levels in glucose-grown wild-type _H. polymorpha_ and induced approximately five-fold in methanol-grown cells (Fig. 5, lanes 4 and 5). Since methanol induces peroxisome proliferation, the higher level of this transcript in methanol-grown cells was consistent with it being the product of a peroxisomal gene.

The DNA sequence of the 1.6-kb fragment from pYT7 revealed a single long open reading frame (ORF) of 885 bp with the potential of encoding a polypeptide of 295 amino acids (~34 kD) (Fig. 6 A). Several results indicated that this ORF encoded the _PER8_ gene product. First, as described in the next section, an _H. polymorpha_ strain in which most of the ORF was deleted had the same phenotype as the per8-1 strain and was an allele of _per8-1_. Second, antibodies prepared against the product of the ORF specifically reacted with a protein of 31 kD (see Fig. 11 A), a mass that was in approximate agreement with the mass predicted from the ORF. Translation of Per8p most likely begins at the assigned ATG since initiation at the next ATG in the ORF was predicted to generate a protein of only ~19 kD. However, since the apparent mass was less than the predicted mass,
it was conceivable that Per8p may be posttranslationally processed. Third, as described below, the product of the ORF is a peroxisomal protein. Hydropathy analysis indicated that Per8p was of average overall hydrophobicity with no apparent α-helical transmembrane domains (Fig. 6B). Database searches revealed no other proteins with overall sequence similarity to Per8p. The only identifiable feature of the predicted Per8p sequence was a segment of 39 amino acids near its carboxy-terminus that was a perfect match to the C3HC4 motif (C__X2C__Xlt_30C___XL-~IX2CX2C_Xl0-18CPXC~, a subgroup within the cysteine-rich zinc-finger domain family (Fig. 6, A and C) (Freemont et al., 1991). Outside the C3HC4 region, the Per8p sequence displayed no further similarity to any of these proteins.

A PER8-deleted Strain Is Peroxisome Deficient

An H. polymorpha strain in which most of PER8 was deleted was created by the gene replacement method (Rothstein, 1983). For the replacement, a plasmid was constructed in which 700 bp of PER8 coding sequence (nucleotides 206 to 906 encoding amino acids 69 to 295 in Fig. 6A) was removed and replaced with a fragment containing the S. cerevisiae LEU2 gene. This plasmid was then digested with a restriction enzyme to release the PER8-deletion allele (per8Δ) on the linear DNA fragment shown in Fig. 7A, and introduced into H. polymorpha strain A16 (leu1). Transformants in which the fragment had deleted the PER8 locus were isolated by selecting for Leu+ colonies and then screening for ones which were also Mut−. Proper targeting of the fragment was confirmed by Southern blot analysis (Fig. 7B). For example, P2, a labeled probe composed of sequences located entirely within the deleted region, hybridized to a 8.5-kb fragment from wild-type H. polymorpha but did not hybridize with DNAs from per8A strains (Fig. 7B, P2 lanes 2 and 3). Furthermore, northern blots showed that methanol-induced cells of per8Δ strains no longer produced the 1.4-kb PER8 message (Fig. 5B, lane 2). One per8Δ-derived
strain, CT102 (per8Δ::SLEU2 leu1 ade11), was crossed with CT100 (per8-1 leu1) by selection for growth on minimal glucose plates. The resulting diploids were then tested for methanol growth and were Mut-. In contrast, diploids from a glucose plates. The resulting diploids were then tested for methanol growth. All spore progeny were Mut-, indicating that that per8Δ and per8A were tightly linked. The failure of per8-1/per8Δ diploids or their progeny to grow on methanol demonstrated that per8-1 and per8Δ were likely to be mutant alleles of the same gene and therefore, that the cloned DNA fragment under investigation contained the same gene that was defective in per8-1 and not a suppressor gene.

**Figure 4.** Restriction endonuclease cleavage site map of PER8-containing plasmid pYT7.

**Figure 5.** Northern blot showing induction of PER8 message levels by methanol. All lanes contain 6 µg of total RNA. Methanol-grown wild-type cells contain a 1.4-kb PER8 message (lane 1) that is not present in methanol-induced per8Δ cells (lane 2) but is present at a high level in methanol-grown cells of a strain that expresses PER8 under control of Pmax (lane 3). (lanes 4 and 5) PER8 message level in glucose- and methanol-grown wild-type *H. polymorpha* cells, respectively. As a control, filters were hybridized with a labeled DNA fragment encoding the *S. cerevisiae* actin gene (ACT). ACT message levels in methanol-grown cells are approximately threefold lower than in glucose-grown cells.

**Figure 6.** (A) Nucleotide and predicted amino acid sequences of PER8. The cysteine-rich motif is located from residue 245 through 282 in Per8p and is underlined. (B) Hydrophilicity plot of Per8p-predicted primary structure shows that the peptide is of average hydrophobicity and lacks potential α-helical membrane-spanning domains. (C) Alignment of C3HC4 motifs in selected proteins. Postsynaptic 43K protein (PS 43K). These sequence data are available from EMBL/GenBank/DDJB under accession number Z38001.
Figure 7. Deletion of the PER8 gene. (A) PER8 DNA sequences encoding Per8p amino acids 69 through 295 were replaced with a DNA fragment containing the S. cerevisiae LEU2 gene and inserted into the H. polymorpha genome by homologous recombination. (B) Correct targeting of the per8A fragment was demonstrated by Southern blotting of genomic DNAs cut with NruI and hybridizing with labeled fragments P1 and P2 indicated in A. (lanes 1) 2 μg of wild-type genomic DNA; (lanes 2 and 3) 2 μg of DNA from each of two per8Δ strains; (lanes 4) 2 ng of linear DNA from per8Δ plasmid pDT6; (lanes 5) 2 ng of linear DNA from PER8 plasmid pBS1.

Phenotypically, the per8Δ strain was indistinguishable from per8-1. In addition to being Mut-, EM examination of methanol-induced per8Δ cells showed that they were devoid of peroxisomes and contained the cytosolic AOX crystalloid that is typical of H. polymorpha per mutants (not shown). In addition, peroxisomal enzymes in per8Δ cells were induced to normal levels but were mislocalized to the cytosol as judged by subcellular fractionation results (Fig. 2).

Per8p Overexpression Leads to Enhanced Peroxisome Proliferation

To gain insight into Per8p function, the effect of overexpression of PER8 on the cell's morphology was examined. For these experiments, an H. polymorpha strain was constructed that expressed PER8 under the transcriptional control of the methanol-regulated and highly efficient Pmox. In methanol-grown cells of this strain (CT103; leul per8-1 Pmox-PER8), the level of PER8 message was approximately 10 times higher than in wild-type cells (Fig. 5, lanes 1 and 3). As described in the following section, immunoblots showed a similar increase in the level of Per8p as well. Expression from Pmox is highly repressed by glucose; therefore, as expected, most glucose-grown CT103 cells contained only a single small peroxisome (Figs. 8 A and 9), similar to that in wild-type cells.

Detailed EM examination of Pmox-PER8 cells harvested at selected times after methanol induction revealed an interesting temporal series of events. Within the first few hours after shift, the single peroxisome enlarged severalfold (Figs. 8 B and 9), a phenomenon also observed in wild-type cells.

Figure 8. Electron micrographs showing enhanced peroxisome proliferation in Pmox-PER8 strain. (A) Single small peroxisome in glucose-grown Pmox-PER8 cell. (B) 3 h after shift to methanol medium peroxisome has grown but not proliferated. (C) Enhanced proliferation in cells after 6 h in methanol. (D) Segregation of peroxisomes to bud at 6 h. Bar, 1.0 μm.
and due to the import of newly synthesized AOX, CAT, and DHAS (Veenhuis and Harder, 1991). Between 4 to 6 h post-shift, an enhanced rate of peroxisome proliferation was observed, resulting in the development of 5 to 10 new organelles (Figs. 8 C and 9), where, in wild-type cells, on average two new ones were formed. The newly formed peroxisomes consistently appeared at a single location on the parent organelle and often in close association with endoplasmic reticulum (Fig. 10 A). Over the next several hours, the small newly formed organelles increased in size and some appeared to migrate into newly formed cell buds (Figs. 8 D and 9). However, the number of peroxisomes migrating into buds of the Per8p overexpression cells was not significantly greater than that observed in wild-type cell buds. Between 8 and 10 h postshift, a second proliferation round was observed that appeared to originate from one or two of the organelles that had been generated during the first round. This led to a further increase in peroxisome numbers (Figs. 9 and 10 C). Thus, the increased proliferation of peroxisomes in response to Per8p overexpression indicated that Per8p plays an important role in regulating the number of peroxisomes generated during proliferation. That proliferation did not occur continuously suggested that other factors determine the timing of these events.

**Figure 9. Diagram of peroxisome proliferation events in P<sub>nor</sub>-PER8 overexpression strain and wild-type *H. polymorpha* after shift to methanol medium.**

**Per8p Is a Peroxisomal Integral Membrane Protein**

Per8p was characterized through rabbit polyclonal antibodies raised against Per8p expressed in *E. coli* as a fusion with maltose-binding protein. The crude anti-Per8p antibody serum recognized a 31-kD polypeptide in immunoblots prepared from methanol-grown wild-type *H. polymorpha* where peroxisomes are prominent (Fig. 1 A). The putative Per8p band was difficult to detect, suggesting that Per8p is a low abundance protein even in methanol-grown *H. polymorpha* where peroxisomes are prominent (Fig. 1 A). To confirm the identity of the 31-kD species as Per8p, extracts prepared from methanol-grown cells of the *P<sub>nor</sub>-PER8* strain were examined and showed a very prominent band at 31 kD (Fig. 11 A, lane 3). Subsequent affinity purification of the serum resulted in a preparation that reacted specifically with Per8p (Fig. 11 A, lanes 5 and 6).

To determine the subcellular location of Per8p, immunocytochemical experiments were performed on sections from methanol-grown cells of wild-type and *P<sub>nor</sub>-PER8* strains. In both, specific labeling was found almost exclusively on or near the peroxisomal membranes (Fig. 10, B and D). Moreover, the gold particles appeared to be concentrated on the membranes of small (presumably newly formed) organelles, a feature that was particularly evident in *P<sub>nor</sub>-PER8* cells (Fig. 10 D).

The location of Per8p on or near peroxisomal membranes was characterized biochemically. Peroxisomes from methanol-grown wild-type cells that had been purified by sucrose density gradient centrifugation were examined by immunoblotting and were found to contain Per8p. Samples of these purified peroxisomes were extracted with either triethanolamine or sodium carbonate. Following triethanolamine treatment and centrifugation at 30,000 g, AOX and CAT were located mostly in the supernatant, whereas Per8p was found in the membrane pellet (Fig. 11 B, lanes 1 and 2), suggesting that Per8p was associated with the peroxisomal membrane. After carbonate extraction and centrifugation at 100,000 g, Per8p remained in the membrane pellet (Fig. 11 B, lanes 3 and 4), suggesting that Per8p was an integral peroxisomal
membrane protein. To further support this conclusion, samples of pellet fractions resulting from differential centrifugation of methanol-grown 
P_{\text{PER8}}
 cells were subjected to extraction with urea or Triton X-114. After Triton X-114 extraction and centrifugation at 300 g, Per8p partitioned from the aqueous phase to the detergent phase as expected for a membrane protein (Fig. 11 B, lanes 7 and 8). After urea extraction and centrifugation at 250,000 g, Per8p was mostly in the membrane pellet (Fig. 11 B, lanes 5 and 6).

**Discussion**

Previously, we described the isolation and preliminary characterization of the chemically induced per8-1 strain as one of a large number of 

H. polymorpha
 mutants affected in peroxisome biogenesis (Cregg et al., 1990; Waterham et al., 1992; Titorenko et al., 1993). In this report, we describe the further characterization of the per8-1 strain and its comparison to an in vitro-constructed per8Δ null mutant. Both per8-1 and per8Δ alleles result in 

H. polymorpha
 strains without any peroxisome-like structures, a phenotype we have named Per−. Their apparent total absence contrasts with some mammalian peroxisome-deficient mutants where small abnormal vesicular structures, believed to be peroxisomal remnants, are observed (Santos et al., 1988). Consistent with the lack of peroxisomes in per8 mutants, all peroxisomal matrix enzymes that we examined (AOX, CAT, DHAS, and AMO) are located in the cytosol. To date, two peroxisomal targeting signals, PTS1 and PTS2, have been defined (de Hoop and AB, 1992; Subramani, 1993). The three methanol-pathway enzymes, AOX, CAT, and DHAS, are believed to be imported via a PTS1-type system since each ends in a tripeptide with similarity to the prototypical PTS1, SKL (Dodon and Roggenkamp, 1992; Hansen et al., 1992). Specifically, the carboxy-terminal amino acids are ARF for AOX, SKI for CAT, and NKL for DHAS. For each of these enzymes, it has been shown that deletion of the three terminal residues results in a mutant enzyme that is cytosolic. In
purified anti-Per8p antisera react with a 31-kD protein species in Figure 11. (A) PER8 extracts prepared from methanol-induced cells. Lanes 2) or 0.1 M sodium carbonate, pH 11, (lanes 3 and 4). In lanes 5-8, 30 μg of protein extract from the following methanol-grown 28 μg of postdifferential centrifugation pellet fraction from were extracted with 20 mM triethanolamine, pH 7.8, (lanes I and Puox-PER8 strains: (lanes 5 and 6) Pmax-Per8 strain; (lanes 4 and 6) per8Δ strain. (B) Distribution of Per8p after extraction of peroxisomes. In lanes 1–4, 30 μg of purified peroxisomes isolated from methanol-grown wild-type cells were extracted with 20 mM triethanolamine, pH 7.8, (lanes 1 and 2) or 0.1 M sodium carbonate, pH 11, (lanes 3 and 4). In lanes 5–8, 28 μg of postdifferential centrifugation pellet fraction from methanol-grown Pmax-Per8 cells were extracted with 0.5% Triton X-114 (lanes 5 and 6) or 6 M urea (lanes 7 and 8). After extraction, samples were centrifuged, and supernatant (odd numbered lanes) and pellet (even numbered lanes) fractions (for Triton extractions, aqueous and detergent phase fractions) were immunoblotted with anti-Per8p antibodies.

addition, the carboxy termini of AOX and DHAS were demonstrated to be sufficient for peroxisomal targeting when appended to a non-peroxisomal protein (Hansen et al., 1992). Thus, it appears that per8 mutants cannot import PTS1-type enzymes. AMO is required for utilization of methanol as a nitrogen source and has recently been shown to be imported via an amino terminal PTS2 sequence (Faber et al., 1995). Thus, the failure of per8 mutants to import AMO suggests that PTS2-containing proteins are also not imported. Furthermore, the fact that methylene-grown per8 cells are also peroxisome-deficient indicates that this defect is not limited to the organelles of cells in methanol, but is a general one affecting peroxisome biogenesis under all conditions. Overall, our studies of per8 mutants demonstrate that they are profoundly and specifically affected in peroxi-
some biogenesis and therefore, that the PER8 gene is essential for this process.

To gain insight into the structure of the PER8 gene product, the PER8 locus was cloned. The sequence of Per8p predicts a novel polypeptide of 295 amino acids (~34 kD) with no overall sequence similarity to any other protein in the data bases. (However, the S. cerevisiae peroxisome biogenesis protein Pas4p shows strong similarity to Per8p over its entire length [38% identity and 50% similarity] suggesting it may be the functional homologue of Per8p [Kunau, W.-H., personal communication].) The carboxy-terminal region of Per8p contains a segment of 39 residues that is a perfect match to the C3HC4 motif, a subgroup within the cysteine-rich zinc-finger domain family (Freemont et al., 1991; Coleman, 1992). For most of the approximately 30 proteins in this group, the C3HC4 region is thought to be involved in nucleic acid binding. However, in no case has the binding of zinc by a C3HC4 motif actually been demonstrated, and DNA binding by the motif is only surmised from the protein's function, such as DNA repair (Radl8p; Jones et al., 1988), transcriptional regulation (PML; Kakizuka et al., 1991), or DNA binding (MEL-18; Tagawa et al., 1990). Per8p belongs to a subset of proteins within the C3HC4 subgroup whose members are not located in the nucleus and therefore, probably do not interact with DNA. These proteins include: the S. cerevisiae vacuolar membrane-associated proteins Vps1p/Pep5p/Endlp (Dulic and Riezman, 1989) and Vps18p/Pep3p (Robinson et al., 1991); the mammalian peroxisomal integral membrane protein PAFlp (Shimozawa et al., 1992); and the mouse peripheral membrane postsynaptic 43-kD protein (Froehner, 1989). These proteins are further distinguished from other C3HC4 subgroup members by the carboxy-terminal location of the motif. It has been suggested that the C3HC4 motif in these non-nuclear proteins is involved in protein–protein interactions (Freemont et al., 1991; Kunau et al., 1993). With regard to Per8p, this hypothesis is consistent with recent genetic evidence that the PER8 gene product interacts with at least three other PER products (Titorenko et al., 1993).

Per8p behaves in biochemical experiments as a peroxi-
somal integral membrane protein. After discontinuous sucrose centrifugation of crude organelle preparations, Per8p is present in peroxisomal fractions. Furthermore, after extraction with sodium carbonate, urea or Triton X-114, Per8p remained associated with the membrane fraction, indicating that Per8p is an integral membrane protein. These results were further supported by immunocytochemical experiments which showed that Per8p is exclusively located on the peroxi-
some membrane.

The failure of per8 mutants to import peroxisomal en-
zymes might be taken as evidence that Per8p is a component of the peroxisome protein import machinery. However, defects in other peroxisome functions such as the duplication, proliferation or segregation should also result in the absence of peroxisomes and, as a consequence, a cytosolic location for peroxisomal enzymes. An important clue to the possible function of Per8p comes from ultrastructural studies of an H. polymorpha strain that overexpresses PER8 under control of the alcohol oxidase promoter Pmox. Upon shift of this strain from glucose to methanol, a greatly enhanced proliferation of peroxisomes occurs. The extent of this proliferation is not seen in wild-type cells and thus, ap-

Tan et al. Role of H. polymorpha PER8 in Peroxisome Proliferation 317
pears to be a response to the increased amount of Per8p. The proliferation events in the overexpression strain take place in bursts at approximately 5 and 10 h after shift. Such synchronous bursts are not observed in wild-type cells and are not readily explained. Perhaps in wild-type cells, the concentration of Per8p is normally the limiting factor controlling the initiation of proliferation. When Per8p is overexpressed, another factor becomes limiting and thereby, determines the timing of proliferation events. One possibility for a factor that might synchronize proliferation is suggested by the observation that peroxisomes appear to need to reach a critical volume or mature size before budding begins (Veenhuis and Harder, 1991). Thus, a factor that senses peroxisome volume may be limiting. A second possibility is suggested by the time between proliferation cycles which is approximately the same as the generation rate of the strain in methanol medium. Thus, a factor that links proliferation to the cell cycle may be limiting initiation events in the Per8p overexpression strain. Most importantly, the hyperproliferative response of peroxisomes to high levels of Per8p indicates that the protein is a component of the machinery that controls peroxisome proliferation in this yeast.

A role for Per8p in proliferation is also supported by our observation that the protein is concentrated in the membranes of small and presumably newly formed peroxisomes. Peroxisome budding is similar in overall appearance to the formation of vesicles during endocytosis and secretion. During the latter vesicle formation events, components of the fission machinery are known to concentrate in or around the membranes of emerging vesicles (Pryer et al., 1992). Although the mechanisms driving peroxisome and secretory-vesicle budding may be very different at the molecular level, it is likely that both involve the presence of specific machinery components at the site of the emerging vesicle. Therefore, the presence of Per8p predominantly in newly formed peroxisomes relative to larger older organelles is consistent with the involvement of the protein in peroxisome proliferation.

Several considerations lead us to suspect that Per8p may be involved in at least one other aspect of peroxisome biogenesis. If Per8p was solely involved in the proliferative response to environmental changes but not in the peroxisome duplication or segregation processes responsible for maintaining the organelle through cell division cycles, per8 cells would be predicted to continue to contain at least one small peroxisome. Upon methanol induction, one would expect the small organelle to increase in size through import of matrix proteins. This expectation comes from studies on the effect of expressing AOX and DHAS in glucose-grown H. polymorpha. When either of these enzymes are expressed at a high level in glucose medium, the one or two small peroxisomes that normally exist in these cells are observed to increase in volume but not number (Distel et al., 1988; Gödecke et al., 1989; Roggenkamp et al., 1989). The same effect, peroxisome growth without proliferation, would also be expected of a mutant that is specifically defective in proliferation. In contrast, per8 cells appear to have no peroxisomes and, upon methanol induction, peroxisomal enzymes are located in the cytosol. This suggests that, in addition to environmentally induced proliferation, Per8p is also required for some other aspect of peroxisome biogenesis.

In conclusion, the hyperproliferative response of peroxisomes to PER8 overexpression and the concentrated presence of Per8p in the membrane of newly formed organelles indicate that Per8p is part of the machinery controlling peroxisome proliferation in H. polymorpha. The similarity of Per8p to Pas4p, a protein required for peroxisome biogenesis and oleate growth in S. cerevisiae (W.-H. Kunau, personal communication), strongly suggests that these proteins are not pathway- or organism-specific products, but are a universal component of the organelle's proliferative machinery.

We are grateful to Ineke Keizer-Gunnink and Klaas Sjojema for technical assistance with the electron microscopy experiments, and James F. Cregg for computer graphics. We thank Drs. C. Raymond and T. Stevens for help with the antibody purification.

H. Waterham was supported by the Netherlands Technology Foundation which is subsidized by the Netherlands Organization for the Advancement of Pure Research (NWO). This research was supported by grants from the National Institutes of Health (DK-43698) and the National Science Foundation (MCB-9118062) to J. M. Cregg.

Received for publication 19 July 1994 and in revised form 4 November 1994.

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Tan et al. Role of H. polymorpha PER8 in Peroxisome Proliferation