Perspectives

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The Emergence of Hymenopteran Genetics

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HYMENOPTERAN geneticists converged on the demonstrating that eggs destined to be drones contained 42nd Annual Drosophila Research Conference 16 chromosomes, whereas those of workers contained 32. held in Washington, DC, March 21–25, 2001, to partici-
Gregor Mendel wanted to be a honeybee geneticist, pate in a workshop on the genetics of non-drosophilid but failed because he could not control the matings of insects and for a special satellite symposium on Hyme- queens and drones (ILTIS 1924; OREL 1996). Mendel noptera. These were a result of a growing interest in wanted to breed bees belonging to different races and the genetics of Hymenoptera, recognition of the need take advantage of the effects of hybrid vigor for producto integrate with Drosophila geneticists, and the desire ing a better honey producer, a common theme throughto share information and methodology. It was clear from out the history of bee breeding. Apparently he also both meetings that the honeybee (*Apis mellifera*) and wanted to use Dzierzon's discovery of haplodiploidy and both meetings that the honeybee (*Apis mellifera*) and wanted to use Dzierzon's discovery of haplodiploidy and the parasitic wasp (*Nasonia vitripennis*) and its closely look for segregation of color variants in the drones the parasitic wasp (*Nasonia vitripennis*) and its closely look for segregation of color variants in the drones of related congeners are emerging as important experi-
hybrid queens derived from crosses of different races. related congeners are emerging as important experi-
mental organisms for genetics. In this article we show This would have confirmed his theories of inheritance mental organisms for genetics. In this article we show This would have confirmed his theories of inheritance that there is a rich history in hymenopteran genetics with an animal model. However, honeybee queens and that there is a rich history in hymenopteran genetics
spanning more than 150 years, with sex determination
a common thread that has sometimes been intertwined
with Drosophila. We also provide an overview of recent
advances

Hymenopteran genetics began with Johann Dzierzon,

a parish priest from the Prussian province of Silesia, now

a part of Poland. In 1845, he published his hypothesis

that male honeybees (drones) are derived from unfer-

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view). Near the end of the 18th century, the blind Swiss THE ORIGINS OF HYMENOPTERAN GENETICS naturalist François Huber and his assistant François Bur-

breeders wanted to take advantage of the inbred-hybrid ¹ Corresponding author: Department of Entomology, University of Cali-

fornia, Davis, California 95616. E-mail: repage@ucdavis.edu hybrid corn production (PAGE and LAIDLAW 1992; CROW hybrid corn production (Page and Laidlaw 1992; Crow

1998). However, it became immediately apparent with at the sex locus, resulting in the nonhatching of eggs inbreeding that something was seriously wrong with the destined to be diploid males. Jerzy Woyke (1963), howhoneybee genome, which resulted in high mortality of ever, demonstrated that the death occurred during the larvae and severely diminished the viabililty and produc- first hours after hatching and that it was the result of tivity of inbred colonies. The answer came from the the larvae being eaten by the adult worker honeybees, studies of P. W. Whiting on sex determination in the para- not lethal genes. Woyke developed a method to raise sitic wasp, *Bracon hebetor.* diploid male larvae and protect them from cannibalism

P. W. Whiting wrote, "The problem with sex determina- tence of diploid males in honeybees. tion is nowhere of greater interest than in the Hymenop- Mackensen (1955), Laidlaw *et al.* (1956), and Adams tera" (P. Whiting 1918, p. 250). In 1922, C. B. Bridges *et al.* (1977) estimated that 11 to 17 different sex alleles published his theory of genic balance for Drosophila were segregating in the populations they studied. Dipsex determination (BRIDGES 1922) and soon after pro- loid males have subsequently been found in many speclaimed, "To me sex determination in the bee is the cies of Hymenoptera (Cook 1993) and have been taken outstanding unsolved puzzle . . ." (BRIDGES 1925). The as evidence for the widespread occurrence of this problem was obvious: if the sex of an animal was the method of sex determination. However, it was not until result of a balance of male- and female-determining a linkage map of the honeybee was constructed and the genes on the sex chromosomes and autosomes, how sex locus was mapped by Hunt and Page (1994) and could haploidy give rise to males? Whiting decided to Beye *et al.* (1994) that the single-locus CSD of Bracon tackle the problem and chose to work on the small was confirmed in another species. Recently, the sexparasitic wasp *Bracon hebetor* (then called *Habrobracon* determination locus was also mapped for a European *juglandis* or *Habrobracon brevicornis*), rather than the hon-
bumblebee, *Bombus terrestris* (GADAU *et al.* 2001). eybee. This was a wise decision at the time because it is much more easily cultured, has a much shorter genera-
tion time, and has fewer chromosomes (10 *vs*. 16), mak-
All proper chromosomes (10 *vs*. 16), making the genetics more tractable. In addition, Bracon, HUNT and PAGE (1994, 1995) completed the first com-

determination (CSD) hypothesis on the basis of his ex- single-locus CSD. The map was based on the colony periments with *Bracon hebetor* (P. WHITING 1921, 1933). level phenotype, shot brood. Honeybees raise their lar-His theory was based on the regular occurrence of dip- vae and pupae in individual cells on wax combs. The loid males (then called biparental males) when *B. hebetor* larvae are covered with a wax capping just prior to pupatwas inbred. Whiting summarized his model in the fol- ing. Colonies that produce diploid males, owing to lowing way: "There are different males similar in appear- shared sex alleles between the diploid queen and one ance but containing different sex factors and that the or more of her haploid drone mates, have irregular diploid complex of the female represents the heterozy- patterns of capped brood resulting from the removal gous double dominant combination of two different by the workers of the diploid male larvae. When a queen male complexes" (P. WHITING 1943, p. 365). Subse- mates just one time and shares a sex allele in common quently, he demonstrated that multiple alleles exist at with her haploid mate, half of the diploid offspring are a single sex locus and segregate in populations. Females male and are removed, leaving a distinct pattern of open are always heterozygous, while individuals that are hap- brood cells. Hunt and Page produced drones from a

(see Woyke 1986 for review). Larvae protected from EX DETERMINATION IN PARASITIC WASPS cannibalism during the first 72 hr were able to complete development and became viable, but sterile, adults. His-In the first sentence of an article published in 1918, tological and cytological studies confirmed the exis-

unlike honeybees, were easily mated in captivity. prehensive hymenopteran genome mapping study when In 1933, Whiting first proposed the complementary sex they mapped in honeybees the gene responsible for loid or homozygous for the sex locus are males. queen (the drone mother) that were used to instrumentally inseminate sister queens of the drone mother. Ap-SEX DETERMINATION IN BEES proximately 25% of the sister test queens shared a sex
allele in common with the drones, resulting in the pro-Early genetic studies of honeybees by using artificial duction of shot brood. A genomic map was constructed insemination strongly suggested that they too, like Bra- by using the drones that, being haploid, represented con, had a single locus system of sex determination. individual meioses in the queen, and colony phenotypes Otto Mackensen (1951), a research scientist for the were assigned to them. The map consisted of 365 ran-U. S. Department of Agriculture, mated virgin queens dom amplified polymorphic DNA (RAPD) markers disto drones derived from their mother and found that tributed on 26 linkage groups spanning more than 3450 half of the colonies had what was called "shot brood" centimorgans (cM). Linkage analysis with the shot resulting from the inviability of about half of the young brood phenotype revealed a single genomic region relarvae. He suspected it was the result of homozygosity sponsible for this phenotype. This region was independently confirmed with segregation of diploid males and LINKAGE MAPS AND COMPARATIVE GENOME SIZES

With flanking markers, HASSELMANN *et al.* (2001) be

gan to isolate the CSD gene by fine-scale mapping. Different doning attention available at that time and presented

imagn containing 38 mutant markers, and the sex loc gested that some of these exons are coding for a single the availability of numerous inbred and mutant strains,
gene about 1.5 kb in length (M. Beye, M. Hasselmann, and the production of viable and fertile hybrids. Soon
M. Sequence comparisons suggest that the gene is a novel a linkage map for a second hymenopteran species, *N*. member of protein/RNA binding proteins, with weak *vitripennis*, which contained 14 mutant markers (SAUL homology to protein/RNA binding proteins in Dromand KAYHART 1956). In 1993 Saul summarized all linkhomology to protein/RNA binding proteins in Dro-
sophila that are involved in splicing regulation. These age information and published a N. vitribennis map conpreliminary data suggest that sex determination in the taining 47 mutant markers (SAUL 1993). This map com-
Hymenoptera may be regulated at the level of differen-
prised five linkage groups and spanned 264 cM, close tial splicing events as found for Drosophila.
A comparative analysis of genes involved in sex deter-
HUNT and PAGE (1995) pro

mination in a genic balance system like Drosophila and linkage map for an insect other than Drosophila with and homozygous combinations. The map of the honeybee was followed by those of the

Workers by using a marker, the Q locus, that was closely

linked at about 1.6 cM. This map not only revealed the

map location of the CSD gene; it also demonstrated

that the honeybee has an extremely large amount of

the CSD. They designated their marker the Z locus. The two
research groups joined forces, and it was subsequently
found (BEYE *et al.* 1999) that the Z and Q marker loci
flanked the sex gene. Physical mapping of this region
f Figure 1.1 The Text general studies that similar studies should be done with *B. hebtor*
also confirmed the high recombination rate reported
by HUNT *et al.* (1995), with an estimate of 44 kb/cM in
this region (BEYE *et a* 1929). These radiation studies led in turn to a linkage map for *B. hebetor* that contained 35 genes and the sex IDENTIFYING THE SEX LOCUS locus (Anderson and Whiting 1939). In 1961, Anna

> of its short generation time, few chromosomes $(n = 5)$, after switching to Nasonia, Whiting's group published age information and published a *N. vitripennis* map conprised five linkage groups and spanned 264 cM, close

HUNT and PAGE (1995) published the first detailed a haplodiploid system like Apis will provide new insight RAPD markers. The use of DNA markers greatly accelerinto the selective forces that both drive and constrain ated the construction of maps and resulted in higher the evolution of sex-determining hierarchies. One of levels of marker saturation than were possible with visithe most fascinating tasks remaining will be to deter- ble mutant markers. The new relative ease of constructmine how intracellular processes are affected by the ing linkage maps resulted in several new maps and the large number of different sex alleles and their hetero- ability to conduct comparative studies of recombination. of five species of parasitic hymenoptera: *Bracon hebetor* data from Drosophila are being used to isolate homolo- (Antolin *et al.* 1996), *Bracon* near *hebetor* (Holloway gous honeybee genes from these libraries. This has proven *et al.* 2000), *N. vitripennis* \times *N. giraulti* (GADAU *et al.* especially useful in honeybee neurobiology for studying 1999), and *Trichogramma brassicae* (Laurent *et al.* 1998). signal transduction pathways (see Blenau *et al.* 2000) and The linkage map of the honeybee was huge—more than diurnal rhythms correlated with *period* (Toma *et al.* 2000). 3450 cM—when compared with all of these (GADAU *et* Expressed sequence tags (ESTs) are being developed in *al.* 2000). Gadau *et al.* (2001) also introduced a new several labs (Whitfield *et al.* 2002; see http://keck1. method for constructing maps from haploid male prog- biotec.uiuc.edu/bee/honeybee_project.htm) and have eny derived from females without knowing the parental been used in studies of honeybee caste determination and linkage phase of the markers. This technique provides development (Evans and WHEELER 2000). the opportunity to construct maps for species where The biology of the honeybee remains the biggest im-

map? HUNT and PAGE (1995) hypothesized that this animal. Generation times are long, culturing of reprohigh recombination frequency might be related to male ductives is labor intensive, breeding populations are haploidy and/or small chromosome size. However, rela- small, and the effects of inbreeding are severe, precludtive genome sizes of male haploid parasitic Hymenop- ing the development of isogenic lines of bees. However, tera range from 829 to 1330 cM, making that an unlikely there is no doubt that the rich behavioral repertoire of explanation (Gadau *et al.* 2000). *Bombus terrestris*, like honeybees will continue to excite biologists and motihoneybees, has many small chromosomes $(n = 18)$. However, *B. terrestris* has a relative small recombinational stand their social behavior. genome of 1091 cM. An alternative hypothesis is that Nasonia is most like Drosophila with respect to its high levels of recombination result from social life his-
genetics and culturing methods and, therefore, the most tories. Again, a comparison with the highly social bum- likely hymenopteran genetic-model organism. It has just blebee invalidates this argument. So, for now the high five chromosomes and the generation times are short,

offered opportunities to map quantitative trait loci (QTL) one species has been introgressed into the cytoplasm associated with naturally occurring traits of Hymenop- of another, and recombinant inbred lines have been tera. To date, QTL have been found in honeybees for developed from hybrid crosses of *N. vitripennis*, *N. longi*several traits relating to foraging behavior (HUNT *et al. cornis*, and *N. giraulti*. These are powerful tools for study-1995; PAGE *et al.* 2001), colony defense (HUNT *et al.* ing development, behavior, and morphology among 1998), and learning (CHANDRA *et al.* 2001), demonstra- these species. ting the role of major genes in naturally occurring be- Bracon was the model for single-locus CSD. However, havioral variation. Morphological traits have been the honeybee is leading the way in the quest for "the sex mapped for honeybees (Hunt and Page 1995; Hunt *et* gene." Soon the honeybee sex-determining gene will be *al.* 1998, 1999), *Bombus terrestris* (J. Gadau, unpublished completely characterized. When finished, this will be a results), and an interspecific hybrid of *Nasonia vitri-* rare example of going from a naturally occurring pheno*pennis* and *N. giraulti* (J. Gadau, R. E. Page and J. H. typic trait (in this case the colony phenotype of shot WERREN, unpublished results). Maps of the Nasonia brood) to the gene by fine-scale mapping. Bracon, howinterspecific cross have also revealed the role of epistasis ever, should still be very useful for comparative studies in shaping adaptive differences in morphology (GADAU of complementary sex determination and other sex*et al.*, unpublished results) and the role of epistasis in determining factors that work together with CSD (Holhybrid breakdown (GADAU *et al.* 1999). LOWAY *et al.* 2000).

HYMENOPTERA AS GENETIC MODELS

Drosophila genetics has provided many tools and con-
cepts that are applicable to hymenopteran genetic re-
mation of the number of sex alleles and queen matings from today. Many of the new genomic tools available for Dro-
sophila are now becoming available for honeybees. For ANDERSON, R. C., and P. W. WHITING, 1939 Present status of linkage
groups in *Habrobracon*. Genetics 24: 65. example, the honeybee community shares cDNA, plas- ANTOLIN, M. F., C. F. Bosio, J. Cotton, W. Sweeney, M. R. Strand

bumblebee, *Bombus terrestris* (Gadau *et al.* 2001), and mid, phage, cosmid, and BAC libraries. DNA sequence

controlled mating is not possible. pediment to the application of many genetic techniques Why do honeybees have such a large recombinational developed with model organisms; it is not a laboratory vate them to apply genetic techniques to better under-

recombination rate of the honeybee remains an enigma. about 15 days. A single female can produce more than 200 reproductive offspring. They can be cultured in the laboratory in small containers. Isogenic lines are QUANTITATIVE GENETICS OF HYMENOPTERA available for three species: *N. vitripennis*, *N. giraulti*, and The ability to rapidly construct linkage maps has also *N. longicornis.* Lines exist where the nuclear genome of

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