

Evolution of the Cytochrome *b* Gene of Mammals

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Summary. With the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) and versatile primers that amplify the whole cytochrome *b* gene (~1140 bp), we obtained 17 complete gene sequences representing three orders of hoofed mammals (ungulates) and dolphins (cetaceans). The fossil record of some ungulate lineages allowed estimation of the evolutionary rates for various components of the cytochrome *b* DNA and amino acid sequences. The relative rates of substitution at first, second, and third positions within codons are in the ratio 10 to 1 to at least 33. For deep divergences (>5 million years) it appears that both replacements and silent transversions in this mitochondrial gene can be used for phylogenetic inference. Phylogenetic findings include the association of (1) cetaceans, artiodactyls, and perissodactyls to the exclusion of elephants and humans, (2) pronghorn and fallow deer to the exclusion of bovids (i.e., cow, sheep, and goat), (3) sheep and goat to the exclusion of other pecorans (i.e., cow, giraffe, deer, and pronghorn), and (4) advanced ruminants to the exclusion of the chevrotain and other artiodactyls. Comparisons of these cytochrome *b* sequences support current structure–function models for this membrane-spanning protein. That part of the outer surface which includes the Q_o redox center is more constrained than the remainder of the molecule, namely, the transmembrane segments and the surface that protrudes into the mitochondrial matrix. Many of the amino acid replacements within the transmembrane segments are exchanges between hydrophobic residues (especially leucine, isoleucine, and valine). Replacement changes at first and second positions of codons approximate a negative binomial distribution, similar to other protein-

coding sequences. At four-fold degenerate positions of codons, the nucleotide substitutions approximate a Poisson distribution, implying that the underlying mutational spectrum is random with respect to position.

Key words: Polymerase chain reaction — Direct sequencing — Mitochondrial DNA — Hoofed mammals — Cetaceans — Molecular phylogeny — Evolutionary rates — Base composition — Structure–function relationships

Introduction

Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) is a valuable molecule for understanding the evolutionary relationships among individuals, populations, and species. Until recently such understanding was achieved mainly by restriction analysis because that technique is simpler than conventional cloning and sequencing (Wilson et al. 1985, 1989; Harrison 1989). With the advent of the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) (White et al. 1989), it became possible to obtain mtDNA sequences directly from many taxa; these sequences can be aligned across greater time spans than can restriction maps (Kocher et al. 1989; Kocher and White 1989; Thomas et al. 1989; Simon et al. 1990). However, short sequences amplified in this manner could not resolve ancient evolutionary relationships (Kocher et al. 1989). Here we describe primers that amplify the whole cytochrome *b* gene from a wide variety of hoofed mammals (ungulates) as well as cetaceans (e.g., dolphins) and evaluate the utility of these sequences for resolving the phylogeny of ungulates.

The ungulates have a good fossil record and many morphological distinctions (Savage and Russell

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1983; Shoshani 1986; Carroll 1988; Janis 1988). Molecular comparisons of ungulates are available for a few proteins, including albumin (Carlson et al. 1978; Sarich 1985, and personal communications), lens crystallins (de Jong 1985), globins (Koop and Goodman 1988; Czelusniak et al. 1990; Easteal 1990), fibrinopeptides (Mross and Doolittle 1967), and ribonucleases (Beintema et al. 1988), and also for mitochondrial rDNA (Miyamoto and Boyle 1989). Nevertheless, relationships among many groups are uncertain. There has been a diversity of opinion about how elephants are related to other ungulates (Simpson 1945; Novacek 1989). Also troublesome are the relationships of true ruminants to camels and pigs (Janis 1988). Resolution of the phylogenetic relationships among these latter species may clarify the origin and evolution of ruminant stomach lysozymes (Irwin and Wilson 1989, 1990; Irwin et al. 1989; Jollès et al. 1989, 1990).

The cytochrome *b* gene was chosen as a phylogenetic probe because it may be easier to align a protein-coding sequence that has evolved over the period spanning the origin of mammalian orders than to align either mitochondrial rDNA or non-coding sequences from distant relatives. This particular gene, together with a mitochondrial rDNA, has been found valuable for addressing even deeper phylogenetic questions, such as the origin of tetrapods (Meyer and Wilson 1990). In addition, our cytochrome *b* approach complements analogous studies on the rDNAs of ungulate mitochondria (Miyamoto and Boyle 1989).

Furthermore, the protein-coding gene we have chosen has an advantage over those studied before by cloning and sequencing from a taxonomically graded series of mammalian mitochondria. We refer to the ND4 and ND5 genes, parts of which have been compared extensively in both closely and distantly related primates (Brown et al. 1982; Hayasaka et al. 1988). Relatively little is known of the structure–function relationships in the ND4 and ND5 proteins. Cytochrome *b*, by contrast, is one of the best known of the 9–10 proteins that make up complex III of the mitochondrial oxidative phosphorylation system (Hatefi 1985), and it is the only one of them encoded by the mitochondrial genome. Complex III transfers electrons from dihydroubiquinone to cytochrome *c*, and this reaction is coupled to translocation of protons across the mitochondrial inner membrane (Hatefi 1985). Cytochrome *b* is believed to contain both redox centers, Q_o and Q_i , involved in electron transfer (Hatefi 1985; Howell and Gilbert 1988). Mutational and evolutionary studies have facilitated the development of a model structure of cytochrome *b* as well as the definition of the sites of electron transfer and inhibitor action (Howell and Gilbert 1988; Howell

1989; di Rago et al. 1990). Our knowledge of structure–function relationships in this protein enhances the utility of its gene for evolutionary investigations.

The 17 complete sequences of the cytochrome *b* gene reported here, together with the published human (Anderson et al. 1981), mouse (Bibb et al. 1981), and rat (Gadaleta et al. 1989) sequences, provide a total of 20 mammalian sequences.¹ This allows comparisons of genes with a wide range of divergence times from less than 5 to more than 65 million years. These comparisons permit an assessment of the tempo and mode of the evolution of the cytochrome *b* gene as well as the phylogenetic utility of replacement, silent, transition, and transversion changes within this gene.

Materials and Methods

DNA Sources. Total genomic DNA from domestic cow (*Bos taurus*), domestic sheep (*Ovis aries*), pronghorn antelope (*Antilocapra americana californica*), giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*), fallow deer (*Dama dama*), black-tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), larger Malay chevrotain (*Tragulus napu*), dromedary camel (*Camelus dromedarius*), domestic pig (*Sus scrofa*), collared peccary (*Tayassu tajacu*), Grévy's zebra (*Equus grevyi*), and a long-beaked dolphin (1a, *Stenella longirostris*) were from a previous study (Irwin et al. 1989). Tissues for preparation of DNA as described by Irwin et al. (1989) from black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*), African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*), and another long-beaked dolphin (1b, *S. longirostris*) were provided by O.A. Ryder, San Diego Zoo. Narrow-snouted dolphin DNA (2, *Stenella attenuata*) was from A.E. Dizon (Southwest Fisheries Center, La Jolla, CA) and domestic goat (*Capra hircus*) DNA from D.E. Dobson (Boston University School of Medicine). The DNA sequences for cytochrome *b* were from published sources for human (Anderson et al. 1981), mouse (*Mus domesticus*, Bibb et al. 1981), and rat (*Rattus norvegicus*, Gadaleta et al. 1989).

Cytochrome *b* Sequences. Mitochondrial sequences containing the cytochrome *b* gene were isolated via PCR. Primers for amplification and sequencing are shown in Table 1 and were designed to correspond to conserved areas of the human, mouse, and cow (Anderson et al. 1982) sequences, as suggested by Kocher et al. (1989). Typically the entire cytochrome *b* gene was amplified with the flanking tRNA primers L14724 and H15915 (Table 1 and Fig. 1). Conditions for amplification and DNA sequencing were as described by Kocher et al. (1989). Double-stranded DNA was purified by electrophoresis in agarose of low gelling temperature (Maniatis et al. 1982) and used for single-stranded PCR or M13 cloning. Single-stranded DNA for sequencing was produced via asymmetric PCR (Gyllenstein and Erlich 1988) of the entire gene or part of it using the double-stranded product as the template. Double-stranded PCR products from the cow, camel, and pig were cloned and sequenced in M13 (Messing 1983).

Data Analysis. Parsimony trees were constructed from character-state data using PAUP (Swofford 1989). Confidence values

¹ A cow sequence has also been published before on the basis of classical cloning and sequencing methods (Anderson et al. 1982); the one we determined proved to be identical to that previously reported, although others have found small variations among the mtDNAs of domestic cattle (Watanabe et al. 1985, 1989)

Table 1. Twelve primers for amplification and sequencing of mammalian cytochrome *b* genes

Name of primer	Sequence
L14724 ^a	5'-CGAAGCTTGATATGAAAAACCATCGTTG-3'
L14724B	5'-CGAGATCTGAAAAACCATCGTTG-3'
L14841 ^b	5'-AAAAAGCTTCCATCCAACATCTCAGCATGATGAAA-3'
H14927	5'-GTGACAGAGGAGAATGCTGT-3'
L14979	5'-GACGTCAACTACGGCTGAAT-3'
H15149 ^b	5'-AAACTGCAGCCCCCAGAAATGATATTTGTCCTCA-3'
L15162 ^a	5'-GCAAGCTTCTACCATGAGGACAAATATC-3'
L15408	5'-ATAGACAAAATCCCATTCCA-3'
L15513	5'-CTAGGAGACCCTGACAACATA-3'
L15775	5'-GTAAAACGACGGCCATACATGAATTGGAGGACAACCAGTC-3'
H15915 ^a	5'-AACTGCAGTCATCTCCGGTTTACAAGAC-3'
H15915R	5'-GGAATTCATCTCTCCGGTTTACAAGAC-3'

Names identify the DNA strand (H or L) and the position of the 3' end of the oligonucleotide according to the numbering system for the human sequence (Anderson et al. 1981)

^a Primers obtained from S. Pääbo

^b Primers described by Kocher et al. (1989)

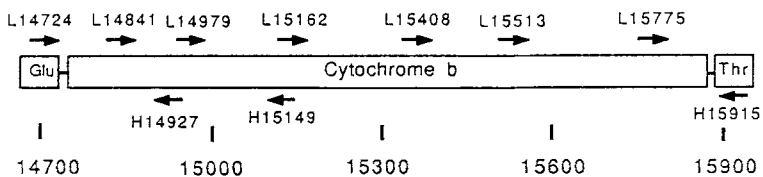


Fig. 1. Strategy for amplification and sequencing of the cytochrome *b* gene. Bars depict the cytochrome *b* gene and flanking tRNA genes and arrows denote primers (see Table 1). Numbering is according to the human mtDNA sequence (Anderson et al. 1981).

for internal lineages were assessed with the bootstrap option (Felsenstein 1985). Trees were constructed using various components of the sequences and various weighting options, as described in the Results and Discussion. In addition, trees were constructed using the number of transversion differences as a measure of distance in the neighbor-joining algorithm (Saitou and Nei 1987).

Base compositions of cytochrome *b* genes were analyzed by the method of Prager and Wilson (1988). To determine the spatial pattern of substitutions within the cytochrome *b* sequence, the number of inferred nucleotide substitutions at each codon position was compared to the number expected according to Poisson and negative binomial distributions (Holmquist et al. 1983). In order to analyze just replacement changes at first positions of codons, only those codons that did not encode leucine in a master sequence (either cow or human) were used. Similarly, at third positions of codons, only fourfold degenerate codons in the master sequence (cow or human) were analyzed when attention was being confined to silent changes.

Results and Discussion

Cytochrome *b* Sequences

The entire mitochondrial cytochrome *b* gene was amplified via the flanking tRNA primers (see Fig. 1). In all cases, a single DNA fragment of approximately 1100–1200 bp resulted, with no apparent differences in size being evident among species. The PCR products from three of the species (cow, camel, and pig) were cloned and sequenced using M13 vectors. Because cloned material amplified via PCR typically contains mutations (Saiki et al. 1988), for the species from which the cytochrome *b* gene was

cloned sequences were determined from three independent clones, as recommended by Irwin and Wilson (1990), and the consensus sequence reported (Fig. 2). The number of nucleotide differences between the clones within the same species was found to be similar to the number expected from known error rates for *Taq* polymerase (Saiki et al. 1988; Tindall and Kunkel 1988; Irwin and Wilson 1989; Keohavong and Thilly 1989). The remaining 14 sequences were determined by direct sequencing of the single-stranded PCR product (Gyllensten and Erlich 1988), in which case errors induced by *Taq* polymerase are not seen (Pääbo and Wilson 1988).

Mitochondrial DNA fragments have been found in the nuclear genome of humans (Fukuda et al. 1985; Nomiya et al. 1985; Kamimura et al. 1989). If a complete cytochrome *b* gene accompanied by the two flanking tRNA genes had been transferred to the nuclear genome, a product of indistinguishable size might be amplified via PCR. If this second product formed a significant portion (>10%) of the amplified material, the sequence determined should reveal some positions at which there were two different bases. If the nuclear sequence were the only one amplified, this sequence should show nucleotide differences from the other species analogous to those of nuclear pseudogenes, i.e., an increased number of replacement substitutions and a lower transition bias at silent sites (Li et al. 1985). Because we found neither double sequences nor any sequence appearing to behave as a pseudogene, we conclude that all

of the sequences shown in Fig. 2 are from the mitochondrial genomes of these animals.

The complete DNA sequences of 17 ungulate mitochondrial cytochrome *b* genes, together with those from human, mouse, and rat, appear in Fig. 2. The three dolphin sequences are all very similar to a partial sequence for another dolphin, *Cephalorhynchus commersonii* (Southern et al. 1988), with the *Stenella* sequences being more similar to each other than to the *Cephalorhynchus* sequence. The sequences obtained from independent *S. longirostris* samples show, in contrast to the cow situation, that considerable intraspecific differences (17 nucleotide differences, 1.5%) can exist, though less than between different *Stenella* species (5.7% observed difference, on average).

The predicted translation products of all 17 of the ungulate and dolphin cytochrome *b* genes are 379 amino acids in length, beginning with a conserved initiating methionine codon and terminating with an AGA stop codon (TAA in the elephant). In the last respect these sequences differ from the translational termination signals produced by the polyadenylation of the processed mRNA found in the human and mouse sequences. The elephant sequence differs from the other mammalian sequences in possessing a 3-bp (1 amino acid) insertion between positions 15721 and 15722 (amino acid residues 325 and 326), an insertion not found in any other characterized cytochrome *b* sequence (Howell 1989). In addition the elephant has a 3-bp (1 amino acid) deletion relative to the other ungulate sequences at the C-terminal end, a region of length variation in other mammalian cytochrome *b* sequences (see Fig. 2).

Sequence Differences in Relation to Time

Transitions and Transversions

Sequence comparison of mitochondrial rRNA genes has shown that transversions accumulate linearly with time in the rRNA gene of artiodactyls (Miyamoto and Boyle 1989). To determine if similar relationships exist in the cytochrome *b* gene, transitions and transversions at third codon positions, representing chiefly silent sites, were plotted versus divergence times based on the fossil record (Fig. 3C and Table 2). Transversions accumulate nearly linearly with time at third positions, in a fashion similar to that between rRNA genes. In contrast to the divergence rate for transversions of 0.2% per million years (Myr) observed in rDNA genes, the divergence rate at third positions of codons is approximately 2.5 times greater (0.5% per Myr), a consequence of the fact that silent transversions can occur at many of the third positions of codons.

Estimates of transition to transversion ratios for silent positions in mammalian mtDNA range from 10:1 to 20:1 (or more) (Aquadro and Greenberg 1983; Brown 1985). Use of silent transversions at the third position of codons and a transition to transversion ratio of 10:1 for divergences up to 25 Myr (Table 2) yields an estimate of a silent divergence rate of approximately 10% per Myr, which is similar to the value reported for hominoids (Brown et al. 1982).

Replacement and Silent Substitutions

Similar analyses of first and second positions of codons (Fig. 3A and B) show that both transversions and total nucleotide differences accumulate nearly linearly with time. Using the most recent well-established divergence (sheep vs goat, see Table 2) we estimate the rate of replacement substitutions at first and second positions of codons to be about 0.4% per Myr. The majority of replacement substitutions occur at the first position of codons, as observed in other mitochondrial genes (Brown et al. 1982), at a rate approximately fourfold higher than at the second position of codons. The rate for replacement substitutions at the second position of codons estimated from Fig. 3B is similar to previous estimates for the cytochrome *b* gene of vertebrates (Saccone et al. 1987). Even though most third positions of codons are silent, a few amino acid replacements do occur, at a rate similar to those of second positions of codons. The increased replacement rate at first positions appears to be due to the fact that many more replacements at this position result in conservative amino acid changes than for replacements at second or third positions of codons.

Leucine codons pose a potential problem in an evolutionary analysis because they are encoded by six triplets, some of which differ by a first position silent change (TTR \leftrightarrow CTR). Because the majority of cytochrome *b* leucine codons in mammals have purines in their third positions and the first position change is a transition, these changes will be very rapid (as many as 10% of leucine codons could change per Myr) and will obscure relationships. A typical cytochrome *b* gene has approximately 55 leucine codons, so that there could be 5.5 silent changes at first positions of codons per Myr. Because there is a large (~25-fold) difference in substitution rates at silent and replacement sites, the value of estimating an overall rate of change of the cytochrome *b* gene, or any other mitochondrial sequence, is questionable (see also Thomas and Beckenbach 1989). At silent sites, transitions saturate rapidly, within the first few million years, and subsequently the only observed changes are silent transversions and replacement substitutions. That is, after the first few million years the observed increase

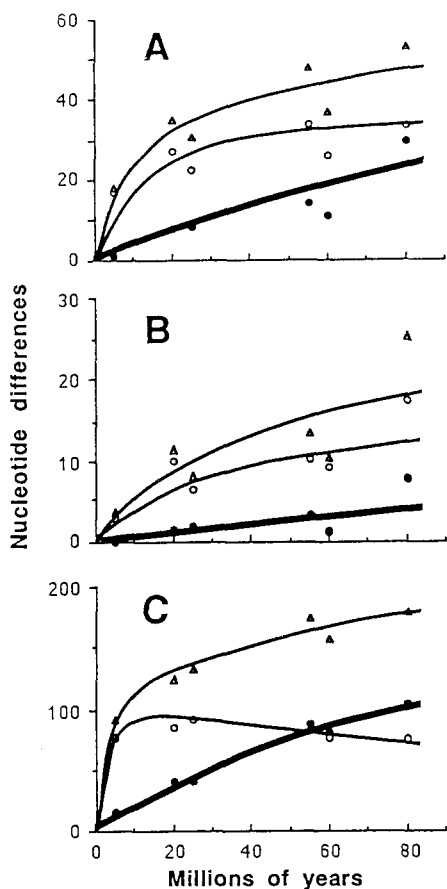


Fig. 3. Dependence of sequence difference on time of divergence for the three positions in codons. The number of nucleotide differences at first (A), second (B), and third (C) positions of codons due to transitions (○) and transversions (●) as well as the total differences (△) are plotted against time of divergence for the cytochrome *b* comparisons in Table 2. Each point shown is the average of all possible pairwise comparisons at the given divergence time.

in difference between two sequences is due to a tiny portion of the changing sites.

Base Composition

Animal mtDNA is noted for an extreme bias in base composition at silent sites, which manifests itself as strand bias, i.e., as a difference in composition between the two strands of mtDNA (Brown 1985). It is also known that different classes and phyla have different biases. Compositional bias could have two origins, selection or mutation pressure (Sueoka 1988). A consequence, independent of the origin of the bias, is that transition–transversion ratios will vary at different positions within codons due to differences in selection pressure. This consequence follows from the fact that third positions are more likely to be silent than first or second and from the likelihood that different nucleotide compositions will lead to different mutation spectra. If silent sites are to be used as phylogenetic markers, a requirement

Table 2. Approximate divergence dates, with ranges, from fossil record (Savage and Russell 1983)

Comparison	Divergence time (Myr)	
	Probable	Range
Goat versus sheep	5	4–10
Cow versus goat/sheep	20	15–25
Cow versus pronghorn	20	15–25
Bovidae versus giraffe/deer	25	20–30
Ruminantia versus Camelidae	55	35–60
Ruminantia versus Suidae	60	50–65
Artiodactyls/perissodactyls versus rodents/primates	80	60–100

is that there should be little or no change in bias between the compared species. If a similar change in bias occurs in two different species, convergence at silent sites may result; alternatively, a similar bias may be the result of a unique event and may truly reflect phylogenetic information.

The base compositions at the three positions within cytochrome *b* codons are shown in Table 3. They differ greatly from one another, third positions having very little G, second positions being rich in T, and first positions having a rather unbiased composition. As expected, second positions of codons show the least interspecific variability (mean standard deviation = 0.72), with third positions showing the greatest (mean standard deviation = 2.74). First position substitutions tend to result in more conservative amino acid replacements than do nucleotide substitutions at second positions, and therefore more changes at the former sites are expected. Because third position changes tend to be silent, they should be the most variable.

The index of compositional difference described by Prager and Wilson (1988) is for mammalian cytochrome *b* smaller at second positions of codons than at first or third positions. Moreover, the mean values of this index, obtained for all possible pairs of the 20 sequences, were as small as those among mammalian lactalbumins (Prager and Wilson 1988). Indeed, at first and second positions of codons there does not appear to be any species with a differing base composition, as expected based on their similar amino acid compositions.

Because many differences at third codon positions reflect silent nucleotide substitutions, differences in composition should be most observable at this position. Such differences were found in the human, pronghorn, and zebra sequences (Table 3), which have unique base compositions (differing not only from all the remaining species but also from one another). The human and zebra sequences are unique in preferring C over A; the opposite bias (A over C) is observed in all other species considered. The pronghorn has an unusually low proportion of

Table 3. Base composition at first, second, and third positions of codons

Species	First				Second				Third			
	G	A	T	C	G	A	T	C	G	A	T	C
1 Cow	22.9	28.7	22.4	26.0	13.7	20.5	40.5	25.3	3.7	44.5	12.6	39.2
2 Sheep	22.1	31.3	21.1	25.5	13.7	20.3	42.1	23.9	3.2	42.9	18.7	35.3
3 Goat	21.6	31.6	20.8	26.1	13.7	20.3	41.8	24.2	3.2	44.2	15.8	36.8
4 Pronghorn	22.1	30.3	21.6	26.1	13.7	20.0	42.4	23.9	2.9	47.4	10.3	39.5
5 Giraffe	21.1	30.5	21.1	27.4	13.4	20.3	43.2	23.2	4.7	43.2	16.6	35.5
6 Fallow deer	21.8	30.0	22.9	25.3	13.7	19.7	42.9	23.7	3.7	46.3	17.1	32.9
7 Black-tail deer	22.1	29.2	21.8	26.8	13.7	20.0	42.1	24.2	3.7	43.4	19.7	33.2
8 Chevrotain	23.9	27.1	22.9	26.1	13.7	20.8	41.1	24.5	7.6	40.3	17.1	35.0
9 Camel	23.7	27.9	24.2	24.2	13.9	19.5	40.8	25.8	7.1	40.8	19.2	32.9
10 Dolphin 1a	21.6	28.7	23.2	26.6	13.9	20.0	41.1	25.0	2.4	43.4	17.4	36.8
11 Dolphin 1b	21.8	28.4	23.7	26.1	13.9	20.0	40.8	25.3	2.4	43.2	17.1	37.4
12 Dolphin 2	21.8	28.4	23.4	26.3	13.7	20.0	40.8	25.5	2.6	43.7	18.2	35.5
13 Pig	22.1	30.3	23.2	24.5	13.7	20.0	42.4	23.9	3.7	44.2	14.2	37.9
14 Peccary	21.1	30.0	20.3	28.7	13.2	20.3	42.4	24.2	3.9	44.5	12.9	38.7
15 Zebra	20.0	29.5	22.9	27.6	13.9	19.7	41.6	24.7	3.2	37.4	15.3	44.2
16 Rhinoceros	20.3	29.7	21.1	28.9	13.7	19.7	41.1	25.5	2.1	41.1	15.8	41.1
17 Elephant	19.5	29.5	23.4	27.6	13.7	22.1	39.2	25.0	3.4	40.8	22.1	33.7
18 Rat	22.0	28.1	24.7	25.2	13.1	20.7	42.0	24.1	2.6	42.0	15.0	40.5
19 Mouse	21.3	30.2	25.5	23.1	12.6	20.5	42.8	24.2	2.6	44.6	19.2	33.6
20 Human	19.5	29.5	23.4	27.6	12.9	20.0	40.0	27.1	3.7	36.3	12.1	47.9
Mean	21.6	29.4	22.7	26.3	13.6	20.2	41.6	24.7	3.6	42.7	16.3	37.4
Standard deviation	1.17	1.15	1.38	1.47	0.32	0.57	1.04	0.96	1.43	2.68	2.91	3.92
Bias ^a			0.076				0.221				0.401	

^a Bias in base composition is calculated as

$$C = (\%) \sum_{i=1}^4 |c_i - 0.25|$$

where C is the compositional bias and c_i is the frequency of the i th base

Ts. Artiodactyls tend to have fewer pyrimidines in the light strand than do the nonartiodactyls, and therefore silent sites may tend to associate them to the exclusion of other species. A notable exception to this generalization is encountered with alanine codons, where GCA predominates in true ruminants, camel, and dolphins but GCC does so in the remaining species, i.e., pig, peccary, perissodactyls, rodents, elephant, and human.

Phylogenetic Analysis

Parsimony Trees

Within the 20 mammalian cytochrome *b* sequences there are 477 positions that have substitutions of any kind at first or second positions or a transversion difference at third positions; 361 of these are phylogenetically informative. Thus, about one-third of the 1140 bp of the cytochrome *b* gene may provide information on the phylogeny of these mammals. Figure 4 shows a tree built by the parsimony method, which represents the variability in the cytochrome *b* gene with the fewest events (1346). These events can be divided into the three categories, namely, 447 at first positions, 150 at second positions, and 749 at third positions.

Because the rate of nucleotide substitution at sec-

ond positions is about one-fourth the rate of first position replacements or third position transversions (see above), it might be argued that they should be weighted more than first or third position changes. Accordingly, second positions were given a weight of 4, and first and third positions, which have similar substitution rates, were given weights of 1. The most parsimonious tree built using these weights is identical to the tree in Fig. 4.

To determine if other factors were influencing sequence similarities, the two types of silent sites were removed. Third positions were first removed, as differences in base composition occur among species (Table 3). The resulting parsimony tree was similar to that in Fig. 4, suggesting that the bias at third positions does not significantly influence the phylogeny in Fig. 4. In an attempt to determine the effect of silent first position changes, these were removed, but a similar tree again resulted.

Distance Trees

In another approach to determining relationships, the numbers of transversion differences were used to construct trees using the neighbor-joining method (Saitou and Nei 1987), shown in Fig. 5. Some differences in branching order are seen between the parsimony and distance trees, though if

only first and second position transversions are used as a distance measure (Fig. 5B), fewer differences are observed. This result implies that the silent third position transversions may be confusing distance phylogenies due to convergence in base composition. Most of the differences are with respect to a series of divergences separating perissodactyls, artiodactyls, and cetaceans, as well as early artiodactyl radiations. All these common ancestral lineages are very short and thus of doubtful statistical significance. Both the distance (Fig. 5) and parsimony (Fig. 4) methods indicate that these early radiations and divergences may have occurred within a short period, and the cytochrome *b* data cannot resolve them convincingly.

Approximate Molecular Time Scale

Because several of the divergences within artiodactyls have well-established divergence dates from the fossil record (Table 2) and some of the distance measures are approximately linear with time (see above, Fig. 3A and B), we can estimate additional dates of divergences roughly. Within the advanced ruminants, which are classified as pecorans (cow, sheep, goat, pronghorn, giraffe, and deer), it appears that all the species radiated from one another 20–25 Myr ago, except the following pairs: sheep–goat (see Table 2) and pronghorn–fallow deer (~10 Myr). Earlier sets of divergences appear to have occurred 45–50 Myr ago and to include the divergence of the chevrotain from pecorans, dolphins from camel, peccary from pig, and rhinoceros from zebra. These results indicate that the species chosen for the present survey represent three major radiations within mammals: (1) initial radiation of placental mammals roughly 80 Myr ago, (2) divergence of artiodactyls, perissodactyls, and cetaceans and their initial radiations 45–60 Myr ago, and (3) the radiation within Pecora 20–25 Myr ago. Thus the majority of internodes within the tree represent short time periods within these three radiations (see also Irwin and Wilson 1991).

Bootstrap Analysis

The consensus tree constructed after 100 bootstrap replications (Fig. 4) is identical to the shortest parsimony tree, and Table 4 summarizes the relationships that are supported strongly (>95%). Three clades were identified in 100% of the bootstrap samples: those including the sheep and goat, the rat and mouse, and the three dolphin sequences. The associations of rat with mouse and of the three dolphins with each other are supported by long common lineages (pq and jk in Fig. 4). These results, together with the sheep–goat case (ab), suggest that stem lineages that are at least 15 Myr long (see asterisks in Table 4) can be identified with near cer-

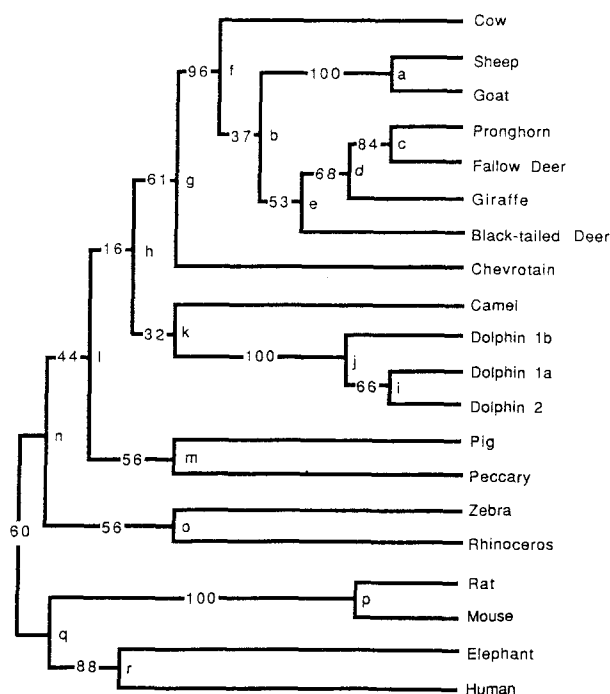


Fig. 4. Phylogenetic relationships of 20 mammalian cytochrome *b* genes. This parsimony tree is based on conservative changes, i.e., all changes at first and second positions as well as transversions at third positions. The number of mutational steps is 1346; the number of variable sites is 477, with 155, 81, and 241, respectively, at first, second, and third positions. The number of phylogenetically informative sites is 361 (115, 42, and 204, respectively, at first, second, and third positions). The consensus tree resulting from 100 bootstrap trials is identical with the parsimony tree. The value on each internal branch is the number of trials in which that branch was found. Dolphins 1a and 1b refer to the two *S. longirostris* samples, and dolphin 2 refers to *S. attenuata*. The rat, mouse, elephant, and human sequences were used to root the remainder of the tree, and the branching order of these species does not imply a rooting of the complete mammalian tree. Letters refer to each of the nodes, with the lengths of each branch following: cow—f, 34; sheep—a, 21; goat—a, 13; pronghorn—c, 22; fallow deer—c, 13; giraffe—d, 27; black-tailed deer—e, 29; chevrotain—g, 59; camel—k, 84; dolphin 1b—j, 2; dolphin 1a—i, o; dolphin 2—i, 15; pig—m, 61; peccary—m, 53; zebra—o, 54; rhinoceros—o, 52; rat—p, 55; mouse—p, 53; elephant—r, 115; human—r, 123; ab, 21; cd, 15; de, 11; eb, 12; bf, 17; fg, 31; gh, 18; ij, 8; jk, 78; kh, 26; hl, 17; ml, 20; ln, 25; on, 21; nq, 36; pq, 52; rq, 53.

tainty. One other clade was supported in a high (96%) proportion of the bootstrap samples, that including all pecorans. There is uncertainty in the date of divergence of the chevrotain based on the fossil record (Savage and Russell 1983) but, based on distance data (see above) and Fig. 3, we suggest that the divergence was approximately 45 Myr ago. This would imply that the common lineage for all pecorans (fg in Fig. 4) is approximately 20 Myr long. By contrast, as argued above, the majority of the internal lineages in Fig. 4 are probably shorter than 15 Myr.

Because the characters that support one clade

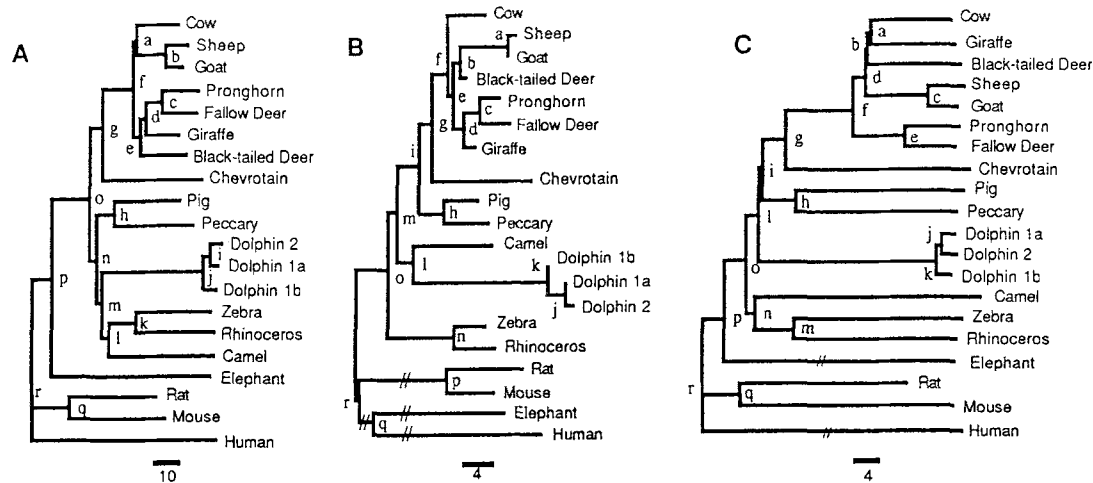


Fig. 5. Three neighbor-joining trees for 20 mammalian cytochrome *b* genes. These trees were built as described by Saitou and Nei (1987) using the number of transversion differences observed at (A) all positions, (B) first and second positions of codons, and (C) third positions of codons. As in Fig. 4, the rat, mouse, elephant, and human sequences were used to root the remaining ungulate sequences, and as such these trees do not imply a root for mammals. The small bars with each tree indicate distance in number of transversions. Branch lengths (number of transversions) for each of the trees are as follows: (A) cow—a, 21.3; sheep—b, 9.5; goat—b, 6.5; pronghorn—c, 13.4; fallow deer—c, 12.6; giraffe—d, 14.7; black-tailed deer—e, 22.0; chevrotain—g, 47.1; pig—h, 34.9; peccary—h, 39.1; dolphin 2—i, 5.1; dolphin 1a—i, 2.9; dolphin 1b—j, 4.8; zebra—k, 35.4; rhinoceros—k, 36.6; camel—l, 50.4; elephant—p, 79.2; mouse—q, 46.1; rat—q, 38.9; human—r, 89.2; ab, 16.7; cd, 10.3; de, 3.0; af, 0.3; ef, 3.0; fg, 15.7; go, 5.3; hn, 8.5; ij, 4.3; jm, 50.3; kl, 14.6; lm,

2.7; mn, 2.8; no, 2.5; op, 13.6; pr, 5.6; qr, 19.8. (B) cow—f, 3.1; sheep—a, 1.0; goat—a, 0.0; black-tailed deer—b, 0.9; pronghorn—c, 1.9; fallow deer—c, 3.1; giraffe—d, 1.3; chevrotain—g, 9.6; pig—h, 3.7; peccary—h, 4.3; camel—l, 6.8; dolphin 1b—k, 0.1; dolphin 1a—j, 0.0; dolphin 2—j, 1.0; zebra—n, 2.4; rhinoceros—n, 3.6; mouse—p, 4.9; rat—p, 8.1; elephant—q, 18.2; human—q, 24.8; ab, 5.0; be, 0.4; cd, 1.7; de, 0.9; ef, 0.7; fg, 1.4; gi, 1.0; hi, 1.6; im, 1.9; jk, 1.9; kl, 12.3; lm, 1.2; mo, 0.6; no, 5.7; or, 3.2; pr, 12.8; qr, 8.0. (C) cow—a, 17.2; giraffe—a, 15.8; black-tailed deer—b, 19.5; sheep—c, 8.7; goat—c, 6.3; pronghorn—e, 11.1; fallow deer—e, 9.9; chevrotain—g, 37.0; pig—h, 34.2; peccary—h, 31.8; dolphin 1a—j, 2.9; dolphin 2—j, 4.1; dolphin 1b—k, 4.8; camel—n, 44.0; zebra—m, 33.4; rhinoceros—m, 32.6; elephant—p, 55.8; mouse—q, 40.6; rat—q, 29.4; human—r, 57.6; ab, 1.5; bd, 0.6; cd, 11.9; df, 3.1; ef, 9.7; fg, 12.4; gi, 4.5; hi, 6.8; il, 0.1; jk, 2.2; kl, 37.4; lo, 3.4; mn, 7.0; no, 1.8; op, 8.0; pr, 4.7; qr, 7.4.

Table 4. Phylogenetic inferences based on sequences of the cytochrome *b* gene

Phylogenetic inference	Internal branch ^a	Bootstrap value
Monophyletic group		
Sheep and goat	ab*	100
Dolphins	jk*	100
Rat and mouse	pq*	100
Pecorans	fg	96
Significant internal branch^b		
Pig and peccary versus elephant and human	mlnqr	99
Chevrotain and pecorans versus elephant and human	ghlnqr	99
Pronghorn and fallow deer versus cow, sheep, and goat	cdeb	98
Zebra and rhinoceros versus elephant and human	onqr	98
Camel and dolphins versus elephant and human	khlnqr	98
Dolphins and artiodactyls versus elephant and human	hlnqr	98
Artiodactyls, perissodactyls, and dolphins versus elephant and human	nqr	95
Artiodactyls and perissodactyls versus elephant and human	nqr	95

^a Identified with respect to the branching points labeled in Fig. 4. Each internal branch unites the groups of species mentioned, to the exclusion of others. Asterisks (*) mark common ancestral lineages that are at least 15 Myr long (cf. Table 2 and Fig. 4)

^b Significant internal branches are determined with the equation

$$B = 100 \left[1 - \prod_{i=1}^n (1 - b_i) \right],$$

where *n* is the number of contiguous internal branches to be combined, *b_i* is the bootstrap value observed for a particular internal branch (Fig. 4), and \prod signifies the product. This equation should be regarded as approximate only (Irwin and Wilson 1990)

should be independent of characters that support a higher or lower level in the phylogeny, it should be possible to obtain estimates of support for combined internal lineages. As shown in Table 4, eight additional examples of significant phylogenetic resolutions were achieved by combining bootstrap values. For example, significant associations of placental mammals were obtained between two or three orders to the exclusion of two other orders of placental mammals. Specifically, the artiodactyls, perissodactyls, and cetaceans separate cleanly as a group from the primates (human) and proboscidiens (elephant). An implication is that the elephants are only distantly related to the other ungulates tested.

Comparison to Morphological and Other Molecular Data

The phylogenetic results highlighted in Table 4 are generally consistent with other morphological and molecular data (Mross and Doolittle 1967; de Jong 1985; Sarich 1985, and personal communications; Shoshani 1986; Beintema et al. 1988; Miyamoto and Boyle 1989; Novacek 1989; Czelusniak et al. 1990). The most significant difference is in the placement of the elephant. Recent morphological analysis suggested that elephants are related more closely to perissodactyls than are artiodactyls (Janis 1988; Novacek 1989). In contrast, our cytochrome *b* results implying that the elephant is only distantly related to the other ungulates (artiodactyls, perissodactyls) and cetaceans fit well with other molecular data (de Jong 1985; Shoshani 1986; Czelusniak et al. 1990) and with the classical morphological view (Simpson 1945). For a more comprehensive treatment of this point, see Irwin and Wilson (1991).

Comparisons of proteins encoded by nuclear genes (Sarich 1985, and personal communications; Shoshani 1986) also support our observation that cetaceans are closely related to artiodactyls, as do some morphological data (Novacek 1989), though other morphological traits suggest that cetaceans are distant from artiodactyls (Shoshani 1986). Although, as a general rule, the cytochrome *b* gene sequences do not resolve the radiations that occurred 45–65 Myr ago and 20–25 Myr ago, the pronghorn result is notable. Morphological data as traditionally interpreted (Janis 1988) and fibrinopeptide sequences (Mross and Doolittle 1967) suggested that the pronghorn is a bovid. By contrast, ribonuclease sequences group it weakly with the giraffe (Beintema et al. 1988), and a new view of the morphological evidence groups it with deer (Janis 1988). Our results, too, ally the pronghorn to certain deer.

A finding of methodological interest concerns the three dolphin species subjected to mtDNA sequencing. The tree in Fig. 4 implies that *S. longirostris* is a paraphyletic species, even though the two *S. lon-*

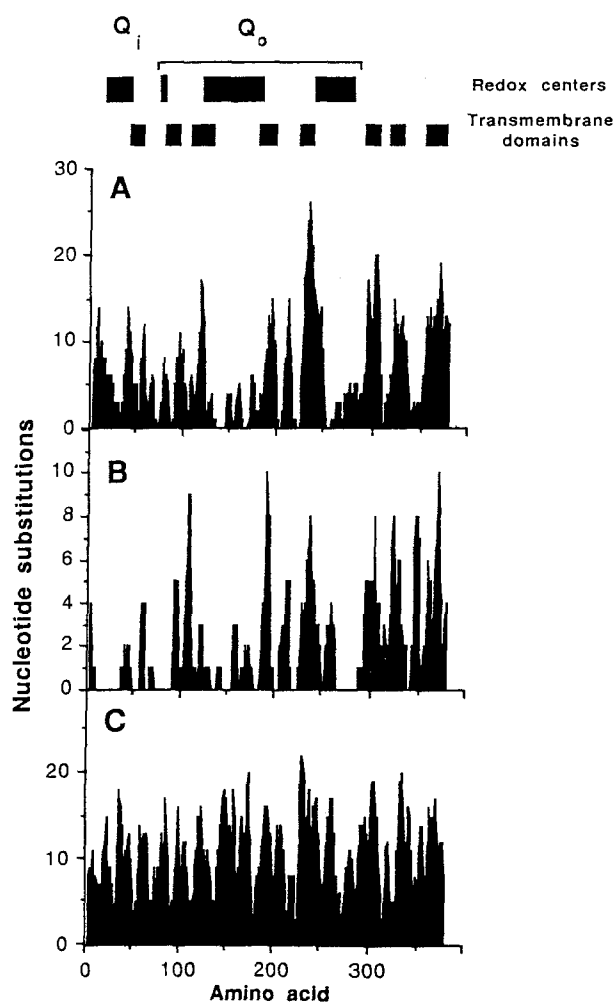


Fig. 6. Variation across the cytochrome *b* gene. Variability in the cytochrome *b* gene is illustrated by showing the sum of phylogenetically inferred nucleotide substitutions, from Fig. 4, in a moving window of five amino acid positions through the 20 cytochrome *b* sequences. (A) First positions, (B) second positions, and (C) third positions of codons. Only transversions are depicted at third positions. The locations of redox centers and transmembrane domains, based on Howell (1989), are indicated at the top of the figure.

girostris samples (dolphins 1a and 1b) are more similar to each other (1.5% different) than to *S. attenuata* (dolphin 2) (5.7% observed difference, on average). Phylogenetic analysis of the three *Stenella* sequences together with the partial *Cephalorhynchus* dolphin sequence (Southern et al. 1988), including third position transitions, reveals that the *S. longirostris* sequences are phylogenetically more related to each other (results not shown) than to a sequence from another species. Thus, exclusion of transitions at third positions can lead to misleading inferences about very closely related sequences.

Possible Limitations on Phylogenetic Resolving Power

Despite the abovementioned evidence of phylogenetic utility, the cytochrome *b* gene sequences did

Table 5. Observed and expected frequencies of nucleotide substitutions at each codon position throughout the cytochrome *b* molecule

Assigned events	First positions					
	All			Replacement		
	Observed	Poisson	Negative binomial	Observed	Poisson	Negative binomial
0	226	118	220	224	152	217
1	46	138	66	37	113	43
2	29	81	34	19	42	21
3	24	32	21	14	12.8	12
4	28	12.1	13	15		8.0
5	15		8.5	6		5.4
6	7		18.8	3		13.5
7	6		0.4	2		
8+	0			0		
k ^a			0.4			0.25
χ ²		354.8	31.5		155.6	13.1*
df ^b		3	5		2	5

At first and second positions of codons all nucleotide interconversions were counted, whereas at third positions only transversions were counted. First positions in the replacement category exclude those encoding leucine in the cow sequence. Third positions in the silent category are those with silent transversions relative to the cow sequence, including all leucine codons. The assigned events are the inferred number of nucleotide changes based on the tree in Fig. 4. Brackets in the columns listing expectations based on the Poisson and negative binomial models mark those classes that were pooled for the chi-square (χ^2) test so as to avoid small expected values. Significance levels in the chi-square test are denoted as follows: *, $P > 0.025$; **, $P > 0.05$; P is the probability that the observed distribution fits the expected distribution under one of the two models examined

^a From the negative binomial distribution, where $k = m^2/(s^2 - m)$, with m being the mean number of inferred events per position and s^2 the variance. See Larson and Wilson (1989) for further discussion

^b Degrees of freedom for the chi-square test

not affirm the monophyly of such well-recognized groups as the Bovidae (which includes the cow, sheep, and goat) and the Cervidae (which includes the two deer). (Nor did these sequences contradict the monophyly of these two families.) Although this failure could reflect the likely brevity of the periods of common ancestry for bovids and cervids,² it might instead imply that this mitochondrial gene has limited resolving power. If so, the basis for this apparently limited resolving power requires further investigation. We suspect that it may reside in the biased base composition displayed by the most conservative positions of this fast-evolving gene. Despite the low interspecific variability in base composition (see above), the overall bias at second positions (Table 3) is rather high. This bias is 0.221 on a scale where 0 means no bias and 1.0 refers to a completely biased sequence (such as one having only a single kind of base). In general, all genes for

mitochondrial proteins have a compositional bias at the second positions of codons (Gadaleta et al. 1989), with only the three cytochrome oxidase genes (COI, II, and III) exhibiting less bias than the cytochrome *b* gene (calculations not shown). At biased positions, the pattern of evolution is less random than at unbiased positions, which means that parallelisms are more likely and that the assumptions of the parsimony method about the process of molecular evolution are in danger of being violated (Sidow and Wilson 1990).

Variability Along the Cytochrome *b* Gene

Figure 6 shows the strikingly nonrandom distribution of positions at which nucleotides change in the cytochrome *b* gene—a phenomenon observed for other parts of the mtDNA genome as well (Thomas and Beckenbach 1989). The inferred number of nucleotide substitutions (based on the tree in Fig. 4) is given for first, second, and third (transversions only) positions in a moving window that is five codons long. This approach emphasizes small segments of the sequence rather than single amino acid residues. When a window of 10 codons was used, it tended to mask variable amino acids within conserved regions and conserved residues in variable regions. By contrast, a window of five residues tends to define both conserved and variable sequences, without too much sensitivity to single positions.

² The family Bovidae is traditionally divided into subfamilies, one containing the cow and another containing sheep and goats. The period of common bovid ancestry shared by these two subfamilies could be less than 5 Myr (Savage and Russell 1983). Molecular phylogenies based on stomach lysozyme cDNA sequences reinforce this possibility (Irwin and Wilson 1990). Likewise, the two deer studied here belong to distinct subfamilies (Cervinae and Odocoileinae) and could share only a brief period of common ancestry before their common ancestral lineage intersects with noncervid lineages (Carroll 1988); indeed, according to Janis (1988), the cervids may not be monophyletic

Table 5. Continued

Second positions			Third positions					
			All			Silent		
Observed	Poisson	Negative binomial	Observed	Poisson	Negative binomial	Observed	Poisson	
300	257	300	140	53	108	7	8	
45	101	46	46	105	92	24	26	
15	20	18	49	103	65	39	43	
12	2.9	8.2	48	68	43	47	47	
6		8.8	49	33	28	46	38	
3			33	13	17	31	25	
0			13	5.8	11	16.1	13	10.0
			2		2		1	
	1		1					
		0.25			1.5			
	152.5	2.29**		266.6	78.8	8.7**		
	2	3		5	6	6		

At first positions, prominent peaks of variation are associated with each of the eight proposed transmembrane domains (Howell 1989; see Fig. 6). This is due to both silent first position transitions in leucines together with frequent transversions that exchange isoleucine, valine, or methionine for leucine. There are regions of few first position changes near amino acids 140 and 260 associated with the Q_0 redox center. At second positions there are fewer nucleotide changes, and several areas exhibit no variation. Two of the latter regions include the Q_0 redox center; another highly conserved region is near position 30, which includes the Q_1 redox center. Third codon positions show high variability throughout the molecule.

Variance in Substitutions among Positions

From the tree in Fig. 4, we can count the number of changes assigned to each position in the sequence over evolutionary history. The number of sites experiencing a particular number of changes is given in Table 5 for each codon position and for amino acid substitutions. If the substitutions had occurred at random, a Poisson distribution would be observed. However, as has been frequently noted, evolutionary substitutions rarely approximate a Poisson distribution (Uzzell and Corbin 1971; Holmquist et al. 1983). The probability of substitution varies among sites, so that a negative binomial distribution

is often a better description of the data. The fit of second positions to a negative binomial is excellent (Table 5; $P > 0.50$). The fit for the first and third positions is quite poor and indicates a bimodal distribution of substitutional probabilities, i.e., there is a class of sites that is experiencing many more substitutions than expected.

At the first positions of codons, there can be silent changes in leucine codons; these would be expected to occur faster than replacement changes and may distort the distribution. To test this idea, we removed all amino acid positions that encode leucine in one sequence (e.g., cow in Table 5) and thereby removed most of these hypervariable sites. The resulting distribution of nucleotide substitutions then almost fit a negative binomial (Table 5; $P > 0.025$). [Similar results were found after removing amino acid positions with leucine in the human sequence ($\chi^2 = 12.5$, $P > 0.025$).]

Similarly, at third positions of codons, because only transversions were included, two classes of positions are expected: those where transversions are silent and those where they result in amino acid substitutions. To explore the possibility that replacement transversions are altering the random assortment of mutations, we analyzed only those sites at which silent transversions could occur (i.e., all fourfold degenerate sites and all leucine codons). In the cow there are 210 such sites, and these appear to have a Poisson distribution (Table 5; $P > 0.15$),

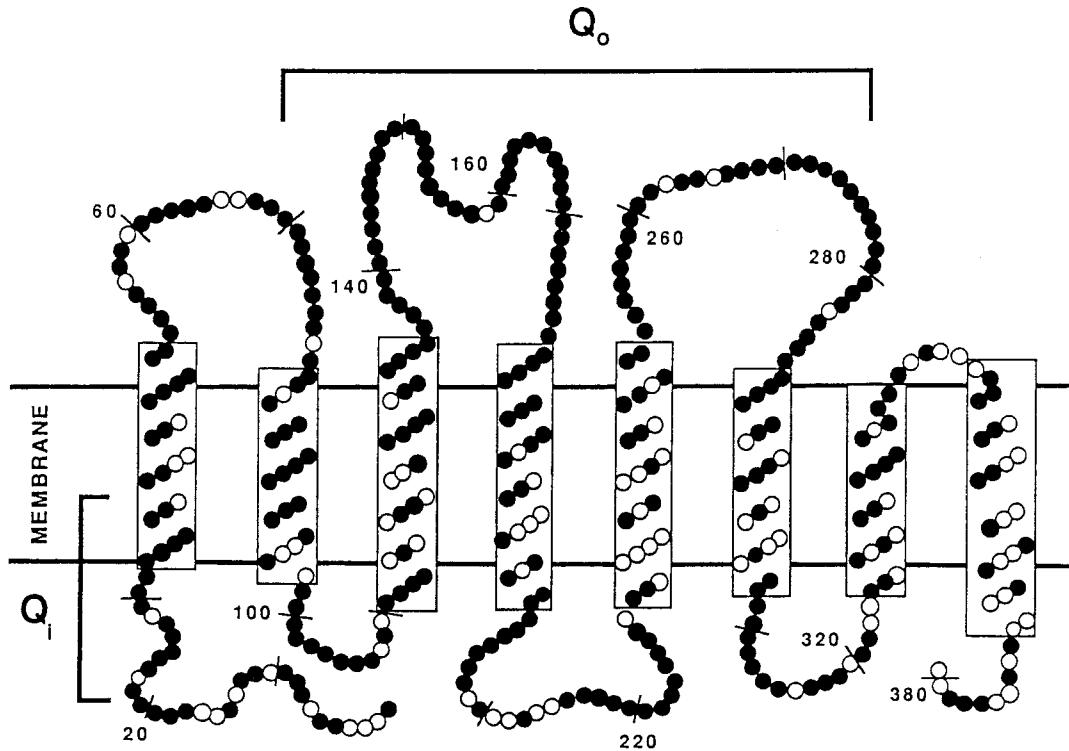


Fig. 7. Amino acid variability in mammalian cytochromes *b*. In this structural model of cytochrome *b* (adapted from Howell 1989), conservative residues are solid circles, whereas hypervariable residues are empty circles. The latter are defined as residues that exist in three or more amino acid states (see Fig. 2) or that are phylogenetically inferred to have been replaced at least twice on the lineages leading to the 20 cytochromes *b* in Fig. 4. Q_o and Q_i are the redox centers (cf. also Fig. 6). The outer and inner surfaces of the membrane correspond, respectively, to the top and bottom sections of the figure. [The amino acid inserted in the elephant sequence between residues 325 and 326 (Fig. 2) is not included in this figure.]

Table 6. Distribution of slowly and rapidly evolving amino acid positions with respect to the structural model for cytochrome *b*

Domain	Number of sites		
	Slow	Fast	Sum
Transmembrane	116	56	172
Outer surface	99	12	111
Inner surface	71	27	98
Total	286	95	381

The data tabulated came from Fig. 7

implying that there is a random distribution of transversions at these sites; using the human sequence, similar results were found ($\chi^2 = 4.48$, $P > 0.50$).

Evolution of Cytochrome *b*

Previous comparisons of cytochrome *b* used amino acid sequences that diverged relatively early in the history of life (Howell 1989). Here we compare sequences of less than 5 to about 80 Myr divergence and can observe fine-tuning of the cytochrome *b* protein. Figure 6 has already shown how sequence variability is distributed along the length of the gene. Figure 7 now shows where in the structural model

for cytochrome *b* (Howell 1989) the invariant and variable amino acid residues occur. Based on the tree in Fig. 4, it can be inferred that 225 (59.1%) residues are invariant and 61 (16.0%) change only once, whereas the remaining 95 (24.9%) change at least twice. Most of the variable positions are located within the transmembrane segments, or at the amino and carboxy ends of the protein (see Table 6 and Fig. 7). The outer surface of the protein appears to be evolving more slowly than either the transmembrane region ($\chi^2 = 17.5$, $P < 0.0001$) or the inner surface ($\chi^2 = 9.61$, $P < 0.005$). Because there is no difference in the rate of change of the transmembrane or inner surface ($\chi^2 = 0.76$, $P < 0.3$), it is the outer surface that is evolving slowly, rather than the transmembrane region evolving fast.

Most of the variable changes in the transmembrane portion are changes between hydrophobic (leucine, isoleucine, and valine) residues. Much of the inner surface is composed of the amino and carboxy terminals of the protein, and may have little functional importance (see Fig. 7). Regions that had been defined as Q_o and Q_i by mutational studies (Howell and Gilbert 1988) or by distant evolutionary comparisons (Howell 1989) are very conservative within mammals (Fig. 7). The Q_i redox center involves a short portion of the first transmembrane

segment (see Fig. 7) and therefore contributes only a small fraction of the transmembrane region. On the other hand, most of the outer surface is implicated in the Q_o redox center (Howell 1989; see Fig. 7), and this appears to be a major contributor to the reduced evolutionary rate for the outer surface (Table 6).

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