

Contents

Preface — v

List of contributing authors — vii

Contents — xiii

1 Optical spectroscopy and calorimetry — 1

- 1.1 Introduction — 1
- 1.2 Absorption spectroscopy — 1
- 1.3 Fluorescence — 8
- 1.4 Circular dichroism — 8
- 1.5 Transient electric birefringence — 13
- 1.6 Calorimetry — 17
 - 1.6.1 Isothermal titration calorimetry — 18
 - 1.6.2 Differential scanning calorimetry — 21
- 1.7 Acknowledgments — 24
- References — 24

2 Footprinting methods for mapping RNA-protein and RNA-RNA interactions — 29

- 2.1 Introduction — 29
- 2.2 Principles and applications of footprinting — 30
- 2.3 Tools for footprinting: what should we know about probes? — 32
 - 2.3.1 RNases — 32
 - 2.3.2 Chemicals — 35
 - 2.3.2.1 Base-specific reagents — 35
 - 2.3.2.2 Ribose-phosphate backbone-specific reagents — 35
- 2.4 Examples of RNP or RNA-RNA complexes analyzed by footprinting — 37
 - 2.4.1 Determination of the mRNA-binding site of Crc by SHAPE footprinting — 37
 - 2.4.2 Footprinting mapping of sRNA-mRNA interaction — 39
 - 2.4.3 Footprinting reveals mimicry of mRNA and tRNA for regulation — 41
 - 2.4.4 Difficulties in probing transient interactions by footprinting: the case of ribosomal protein S1-RNA complex — 43
- 2.5 Concluding remarks — 45
- 2.6 Acknowledgments — 46
- References — 46

3 Chemical approaches to the structural investigation of RNA in solution — 51

- 3.1 Introduction — 51
- 3.2 Similar chemistry in different concepts: sequencing, probing, and interference — 52
- 3.3 Sequencing and probing by Maxam and Gilbert chemistry — 53
- 3.4 Application of Sanger sequencing to probing — 57
- 3.5 Further electrophilic small molecule probes — 58
- 3.6 Probing agents with nuclease activity — 59
- 3.7 Probing agents involving radical chemistry — 61
- 3.8 Matching suitable probes to structural features — 61
- 3.9 Chemical modification interference — 62
- 3.10 Nucleotide analog interference mapping — 63
- 3.11 Combination and interplay with other methods — 65
- 3.12 Application to an artificial ribozyme — 66
- 3.13 Conclusion and outlook — 69
- References — 69

4 Bioorthogonal modifications and cycloaddition reactions for RNA chemical biology — 75

- 4.1 Introduction — 75
- 4.2 Bioorthogonal conjugation strategies — 76
 - 4.2.1 1,3-dipolar cycloaddition reactions ([3+2] cycloaddition) — 76
 - 4.2.1.1 Copper-catalyzed azide-alkyne cycloaddition — 76
 - 4.2.1.2 Strain-promoted azide-alkyne cycloaddition — 77
 - 4.2.1.3 Nitrile oxides as 1,3-dipoles for metal-free cycloadditions — 78
 - 4.2.1.4 Photoactivated 1,3-dipolar cycloadditions — 80
 - 4.2.2 Inverse electron demand Diels-Alder reaction ([4+2] cycloaddition) — 80
 - 4.2.3 Staudinger reaction of azides and phosphines — 81
- 4.3 Synthetic strategies for RNA functionalization: installation of reactive groups for cycloadditions — 81
 - 4.3.1 Chemical synthesis of modified RNA — 82
 - 4.3.1.1 Alkyne-containing phosphoramidites for solid-phase synthesis — 82
 - 4.3.1.2 Solid-phase synthesis of azide-containing RNA — 83
 - 4.3.1.3 Postsynthetic modification of RNA with azides and alkynes — 83
 - 4.3.1.4 Functionality transfer reaction using s^6G -modified DNA — 84
 - 4.3.2 Enzymatic incorporation of functional groups for click chemistry — 85
 - 4.3.2.1 In vitro transcription using modified nucleotides — 86
 - 4.3.2.2 Enzymatic posttranscriptional modification — 86
- 4.4 Case studies for applications of click chemistry in RNA chemical biology — 88

4.4.1	Synthesis of chemically modified ribozymes — 88
4.4.2	Monitoring RNA synthesis and turnover by metabolic labeling and click chemistry — 90
4.4.3	Bioorthogonal modification of siRNAs for detection, improved stability, and delivery — 91
4.5	Summary and conclusions — 93
4.6	Acknowledgments — 93
	References — 94
5	Analysis of RNA conformation using comparative gel electrophoresis — 101
5.1	The principle behind the analysis of the structure of branched nucleic acids by gel electrophoresis — 101
5.2	Helical discontinuities in duplex RNA — 103
5.3	The direction of a helical bend — 104
5.4	Comparative gel electrophoresis of branched nucleic acids — 104
5.5	Comparative gel electrophoresis of four-way DNA junctions — 108
5.6	Analysis of the structure of four-way RNA junctions — 111
5.7	The 4H junctions of the U1 snRNA and the hairpin ribozyme — 112
5.8	A more complex junction found in the HCV IRES — 112
5.9	Analysis of the structure of three-way RNA junctions — 115
5.9.1	A three-way junction of the HCV IRES element — 115
5.9.2	Three-way junctions are the key architectural elements of the VS ribozyme — 116
5.9.3	The hammerhead ribozyme is a complex three-way helical junction — 118
5.10	Some final thoughts — 118
5.11	Acknowledgments — 120
	References — 120
6	Virus RNA structure deduced by combining X-ray diffraction and atomic force microscopy — 125
6.1	Introduction — 125
6.2	Why don't we learn more about RNA from X-ray crystallography? — 125
6.3	X-ray studies revealing RNA — 126
6.4	Secondary structure prediction — 128
6.5	Generalized ssRNA secondary structural motifs — 129
6.6	The folding of RNA in STMV — 131
6.7	Atomic force microscopy — 133
6.8	Preparation of viral RNA samples for AFM — 136
6.9	Atomic force microscopy of viral ssRNAs — 137

6.10	AFM results for extended STMV RNA — 140
6.11	ssRNA in T = 3 icosahedral viruses — 144
6.12	A model for assembly of STMV inspired by crystallography and AFM — 147
6.13	AFM of large ssRNA viruses — 150
	References — 152
7	Investigating RNA structure and folding with optical tweezers — 157
7.1	Introduction — 157
7.2	Single-RNA force measurements with optical tweezers — 158
7.3	Probing RNA and RNA-protein interactions: selected examples — 160
7.3.1	Probing the structure and the folding dynamics of RNA hairpins — 160
7.3.2	Exploring the folding dynamics of complex RNA structures in presence of proteins — 172
7.4	Conclusion — 178
7.5	Acknowledgments — 178
	References — 178
8	Fluorescence resonance energy transfer as a tool to investigate RNA structure and folding — 181
8.1	An introduction to fluorescence resonance energy transfer — 181
8.2	Introduction of donor and acceptor fluorophores into RNAs and RNA/protein complexes — 183
8.3	Ensemble FRET — 184
8.3.1	Steady-state FRET — 184
8.3.2	Time-resolved FRET — 186
8.4	Single-molecule FRET — 189
8.4.1	Instrumentation and experimental procedure — 191
8.4.2	Data analysis — 193
8.4.2.1	Identifying single-molecule events — 193
8.4.2.2	Correction for instrument nonideality — 193
8.4.2.3	The Förster distance R_0 — 195
8.4.2.4	The orientation factor κ^2 — 196
8.4.2.5	Analysis of FRET histograms — 197
8.4.3	FRET data and RNA folding — 198
8.4.4	From FRET data to structural models of RNA and RNA/protein complexes — 198
8.5	Selected examples — 199
8.5.1	Steady-state FRET: ribozymes, rRNA, and RNA polymerase transcription complexes — 199
8.5.2	Time-resolved FRET: the hairpin ribozyme — 204

8.5.3	Single-molecule FRET: folding of large ribozymes and transcription by RNA polymerases — 206
8.5.4	Single-molecule FRET and modeling of complex structures — 207
8.6	Perspectives — 208
8.7	Acknowledgments — 209
	References — 209
9	RNA studies by small angle X-ray scattering in solution — 215
9.1	Introduction to SAXS — 215
9.2	SAXS experiment — 216
9.2.1	Sample preparation — 216
9.2.2	Form and structure factor: particle interactions — 217
9.3	Methods — 219
9.3.1	Distance distribution function — 219
9.3.2	Overall parameters: radius of gyration, molecular mass, and volume — 219
9.4	Modeling — 221
9.4.1	Ab initio modeling — 221
9.4.1.1	Bead models — 221
9.4.1.2	Dummy residue models — 222
9.4.1.3	Multiphase models — 222
9.4.1.4	Comparison of multiple models — 223
9.4.2	SAXS and complementary methods — 223
9.4.2.1	High-resolution models — 223
9.4.2.2	Rigid body modeling — 224
9.4.3	Flexible systems — 225
9.4.4	Mixtures — 225
9.5	Resolution and ambiguity of SAXS data interpretation — 226
9.6	Practical applications — 227
9.6.1	Ab initio shape determination — 227
9.6.2	Analysis of RNA flexibility — 229
9.6.3	Nonstoichiometric RNA-protein mixtures and complex formation — 231
9.6.4	Structural studies of spliceosome function assisted by SAXS measurements — 232
9.6.5	How SAXS helps elucidate riboswitch structure-function relationships — 233
9.6.6	Use of SAXS and ASAXS to study the influences of counterions on RNA folding — 236
9.6.7	Quantitation of free-energy changes estimated from SAXS 3-D reconstructions — 236
9.7	Conclusions and outlook — 237

9.8	Acknowledgments — 238
	References — 238
10	Integrative structure-function analysis of large nucleoprotein complexes — 243
10.1	Summary — 243
10.2	Integrative structure-function analysis of nucleoprotein complexes, example 1: translation complexes — 250
10.3	Integrative structure-function analysis of nucleoprotein complexes, example 2: transcription complexes — 253
10.4	Outlook — 255
10.5	Acknowledgments — 256
	References — 257
11	Structure and conformational dynamics of RNA determined by pulsed EPR — 261
11.1	Introduction — 261
11.2	Pulse EPR spectroscopy on RNA — 264
11.2.1	Spin labeling of nucleic acids — 264
11.2.2	Theoretical description of the PELDOR experiment — 266
11.2.3	Practical aspects of the PELDOR experiment — 270
11.2.4	PELDOR experiments with rigid spin labels — 271
11.2.5	Data analysis and interpretation — 274
11.3	Application examples — 276
11.3.1	Applications on dsRNA and DNA — 277
11.3.2	Application on RNA with more complex structure — 277
11.3.3	Applications on DNA with rigid spin labels — 279
11.4	Outlook and summary — 280
11.5	Acknowledgments — 281
	References — 282
12	NMR-based characterization of RNA structure and dynamics — 287
12.1	Introduction — 287
12.2	Part I: RNA structure — 288
12.2.1	Primary structure — 288
12.2.1.1	RNA sequence determinants on structure — 288
12.2.1.2	Unusual nucleotides — 288
12.2.1.3	Torsion angles in the polynucleotide sequence — 288
12.2.2	Secondary structure: base pairing and helices — 289
12.2.2.1	Regular structure and base pairing — 289
12.2.2.2	Helical secondary structure — 291

12.3	Part II: NMR studies of RNA — 291
12.3.1	NMR sample preparation and labeling — 291
12.3.1.1	Sample preparation — 291
12.3.1.2	Labeling schemes — 292
12.3.1.3	RNA purification — 292
12.3.2	NMR parameters to characterize RNA structure — 293
12.3.2.1	Sequence-specific assignment of NMR resonances — 293
12.3.2.2	NMR measurements for torsion angle restraints — 297
12.3.2.3	NMR measurements for distance restraints — 298
12.3.2.4	Scalar couplings across hydrogen bonds — 298
12.3.2.5	Residual dipolar couplings — 299
12.3.2.6	NMR-based structure calculation — 301
12.3.3	NMR parameters to characterize RNA dynamics — 301
12.3.3.1	NMR measurements for RNA dynamics — 302
12.3.3.2	Dynamics probed by relaxation parameters — 303
12.3.3.3	Dynamics probed by residual dipolar couplings — 303
12.4	Part III: examples of RNA tertiary structure — 304
12.4.1	Helix-helix interactions — 304
12.4.1.1	Coaxial stacking — 304
12.4.1.2	A-platform and A-C platform — 305
12.4.2	Helix-strand interactions — 305
12.4.2.1	Base triples and A-minor motifs — 305
12.4.2.2	Tetraloops — 306
12.4.3	Loop-loop interactions — 307
12.4.3.1	Kissing loop — 307
12.4.3.2	Pseudoknot — 307
12.5	Conclusion — 308
12.6	Acknowledgments — 308
	References — 308
13	Crystallization of RNA for structure determination by X-ray crystallography — 319
13.1	Introduction — 319
13.2	General strategy for crystallization — 319
13.2.1	Oligonucleotides and duplex termini — 320
13.2.2	Loop engineering and RNP formation and topological permutation — 322
13.2.3	An example of success through construct engineering — 323
13.3	Purity and monodispersity — 325
13.4	Postcrystallization treatments — 326
13.5	Construct design and structure determination — 328

13.6	Conclusion — 329
13.7	Acknowledgments — 330
	References — 330
14	RNA structure prediction — 335
14.1	The thermodynamic model of RNA folding — 336
14.1.1	Free energy and partition function — 336
14.1.2	Abstract shapes — 337
14.1.3	Free-energy computation of an RNA structure — 338
14.1.4	Influence of solvent — 340
14.2	MFE structure — 340
14.3	Partition folding — 341
14.3.1	Suboptimal structures — 343
14.3.2	Mean and sampled structures — 344
14.3.3	Shape representative structures and shape probabilities — 345
14.4	Structure prediction and multiple alignment — 345
14.5	Beyond secondary structure prediction — 349
14.5.1	Pseudoknots — 349
14.5.2	RNA-RNA hybridization — 353
14.6	Acknowledgments — 357
	References — 357
15	Analyzing, searching, and annotating recurrent RNA three-dimensional motifs — 363
15.1	Characteristics of structured RNAs — 363
15.1.1	RNA molecules are structurally diverse — 363
15.1.2	“Loops” in RNA secondary structures and RNA 3D motifs — 364
15.1.3	The 3D motifs and hierarchical organization of RNA — 366
15.1.4	Linker regions and 3D motifs — 366
15.2	Structural diversity of RNA 3D motifs — 368
15.2.1	Contribution of RNA chain flexibility to motif diversity — 368
15.2.2	Contribution of internucleotide interactions to motif diversity — 369
15.3	Pairwise nucleotide interactions that stabilize RNA 3D motifs — 370
15.3.1	Base-pairing interactions and 3D motifs — 370
15.3.1.1	Occurrence frequencies of base pairs is context dependent — 370
15.3.1.2	Base-pair isostericity and structure conservation during evolution — 371
15.3.2	Base-stacking interactions and 3D motifs — 372
15.3.3	Base-phosphate interactions and 3D motifs — 372
15.4	Defining RNA 3D motifs — 373
15.4.1	Role of induced fit in RNA motif structure — 373

15.4.2	Definition of “classic” RNA 3D motifs —	374
15.4.2.1	Definition of modular motifs —	374
15.4.2.2	Conservation of motif sequence and structure —	375
15.4.3	Recurrent RNA 3D motifs —	375
15.5	Tools for searching for RNA 3D motifs in atomic-resolution RNA structures —	375
15.5.1	MC-Search —	376
15.5.2	NASSAM —	376
15.5.3	PRIMOS —	376
15.5.4	FR3D and WebFR3D —	378
15.5.5	Apostolico et al., 2009 —	378
15.5.6	RNAMotifScan —	378
15.5.7	FRMF —	379
15.5.8	RNA FRABASE 2.0 —	379
15.5.9	FASTR3D —	379
15.5.10	FRASS —	380
15.5.11	R3D-BLAST —	380
15.5.12	Comparison of 3D search methods —	380
15.6	Classifying RNA 3D motifs —	381
15.6.1	Why classify RNA 3D motifs? —	381
15.6.2	How to classify RNA 3D motifs? —	381
15.6.3	Criteria for grouping motif instances in the same recurrent family —	382
15.6.4	Evaluating 3D motif similarity —	383
15.6.5	Application of motif classification criteria —	383
15.6.6	Automatic classification of RNA 3D motifs —	384
15.7	RNA 3D motif collections —	384
15.7.1	Motif-oriented collections —	384
15.7.1.1	SCOR —	384
15.7.1.2	Comparative RNA Web Site —	386
15.7.1.3	K-turn database —	386
15.7.1.4	RNAMotifScan —	386
15.7.1.5	FRMF —	386
15.7.1.6	RNA 3D Motif Atlas —	387
15.7.2	Loop-oriented collections —	387
15.7.2.1	RNAJunction —	387
15.7.2.2	RNA STRAND —	387
15.7.2.3	RLooM —	388
15.7.2.4	RNA CoSSMos —	388
15.7.3	Comparing RNA 3D motif collections —	388
15.8	RNA 3D motifs that “break the rules” —	390

15.8.1	The 3D motifs that contain isolated cWW base pairs —	390
15.8.2	Composite 3D motifs: 3D motifs composed of more than one loop —	392
15.8.3	Motifs comprising linker strands —	393
15.8.4	Motifs interacting with adjacent helices —	394
15.9	Conclusions —	395
15.10	Acknowledgments —	395
	References —	396
	Index —	399