

**THE UTILIZATION OF THE *HMG2* INDUCIBLE PROMOTER TO  
GENETICALLY ENGINEER PARASITE RESISTANCE  
IN TOBACCO**

by  
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Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and  
State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

in Plant Pathology, Physiology, and Weed Science

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April, 2003

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**Key Words:** *Hmg2* promoter, proteinase inhibitors, cyst nematode, tobacco N  
gene, *Orobanche aegyptiaca*

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## ABSTRACT

The cyst nematode, *Globodera tabacum tabacum* Behrens, and the parasitic angiosperm, Egyptian broomrape, *Orobanche aegyptiaca* Pers., are obligate root parasites that cause severe yield and quality loss of many important crop hosts. Although these represent two diverse classes of parasites, they have significant similarities in the modes of parasitism and complex interactions with their hosts. Conventional control methods have had limited success in controlling these parasites. The overall objective of this research was to engineer resistance to the cyst nematode and Egyptian broomrape by expressing genes encoding parasite specific toxins under the control of parasite-responsive promoters using tobacco (*Nicotiana tabacum* L. cv. Xanthi). For nematode resistance, an anti-feeding strategy was employed utilizing the tomato proteinase inhibitor I (PI-I) gene as a nematode specific toxin. Transgenic tobacco plants were generated that expressed genes encoding an intracellularly retained or secreted form of tomato PI-I under the control of the nematode-inducible promoter, derived from tomato (*Lycopersicon esculentum* L.) *Hmg2* gene. Our goals were to determine the effectiveness of local PI-I expression on nematode resistance and to determine if intracellular or extracellular PI-I deposition enhances resistance. Two constructs were generated that contained either the coding region of the tomato PI-I gene, lacking the signal sequence (EM1), or the coding region of PI-I including the signal sequence (EM2), fused to the nematode-responsive *Hmg2* promoter. Transgenic PI-I plants were inoculated with *G. t. tabacum* cysts and evaluated for nematode interactions. Our results suggest that local expression of intercellular PI-I significantly reduced cyst production when compared to the nontransformed controls. For broomrape resistance, a well characterized *R/avr* gene pair, the tobacco N resistance gene and the tobacco mosaic virus replicase (TMV) gene, was utilized to create novel gene-for-gene resistance via a N gene-mediated hypersensitive response (HR) to limit broomrape parasitism. The bean (*Phaseolus vulgaris* L.) chalcone synthase 8 (CHS8) promoter has been characterized as a broomrape-responsive promoter. We introduced the CHS8:TMV replicase gene

construct into tobacco plants that contains an endogenous N gene. Transgenic tobacco plants were inoculated with *O. aegyptiaca* seeds and monitored for parasite attachment and development. The expression of the TMV replicase leads to a significant reduction in broomrape parasitism. These genetic engineering strategies show promise in enhancing resistance to these destructive parasites.

## Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to thank my major advisor, Dr. Carole Cramer, for providing so much more than just a the normal professor-graduate student relationship. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to work in your lab and teaching me what it truly means to be a great scientist who has passion for their work. Thank you for always being there and encouraging me to persevere - you are truly a “superwoman”.

I would like thank the other members of my committee, Dr. James Westwood, Dr.Elizabeth Grabau, Dr.George Lacy, and Dr. Carole Wilkinson for their support and guidance.

I would also wish to thank the MAOP program for providing financial support.

The Cramer lab for always supporting my every effort and helping me throughout my graduate career. It was wonderful to be a part of such a fun-loving lab. Thank you for always keeping the atmosphere light and full of laughter. I would especially like to thank Dr. Cynthia Denbow and Dr. Maureen Dolan for always giving great advice and being such remarkable examples of strong women in science. I could not have put all the pieces together without the help everyone including a phenomenal undergraduate student, Ms. Kristin Reedy. Thank you for being so dedicated and hard-working.

I want to thank the Westwood and Eisenback labs for their expertise and help with my research projects.

I want to thank all of my close friends Kimberly Smith, Amer Fayad, Amanda Griffiths, Bakhitah Abdul-Rauf, and Ann Michaels for lending you ears and words of encouragement.

I would like to thank my brother, Anthony Williamson, for being here with me through thick and thin. I love you dearly.

Finally, I wish to offer a sincere thanks to Dr. Selester Bennett, who has surpassed being just a friend, you are like a brother to me. Thank you for taking me under your wing and always having my back no matter what. I will always look up to you and hope that I can positively impact other lives the way that you have mine.

## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of grandparents,  
Willie and Dorothy Winston.

## Table of Contents

Title Page.....	i
Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Dedication.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
List of Figures.....	ix
List of Abbreviations.....	xi
<b>Chapter I Literature Review.....</b>	<b>1</b>
I.1 INTRODUCTION.....	2
I.1 CYST NEMATODE PLANT DISEASE.....	2
I.1.1 Economic Importance.....	2
I.1.2 The <i>Globodera tabacum</i> Complex.....	3
I.1.3 Morphological Characteristics of <i>Globodera</i> spp.....	4
I.1.4 Sedentary Endoparasitic Nematode Life Cycle.....	5
I.1.5 Elucidation of Molecular Mechanisms Involved in Nematode Pathogenesis.....	6
I.1.6 Distribution and Host Range.....	8
I.1.7 Symptoms caused by <i>Globodera</i> spp.....	8
I.2 <i>GLOBODERA</i> CONTROL METHODS.....	9
I.2.1 Resistant cultivars.....	9
I.2.2 Chemical methods of nematode control.....	12
I.2.3 Cultural methods.....	13
I.2.4 Biological control of sedentary endoparasitic nematodes.....	15
I.3 PLANT DEFENSE MECHANISMS.....	16
I.3.1 Host Resistance Responses to Nematode Infection.....	16
I.3.2 Pathogenesis-related genes.....	18
I.3.3 Isoprenoid biosynthetic pathway in plants.....	20
I.3.4 3-hydroxy-3-methylglutaryl-CoA-reductase (HMGR).....	22
I.3.5 <i>Hmg2</i> promoter expression.....	23
I.4 ENGINEERING RESISTANCE TO <i>GLOBODERA</i> .....	25
I.4.1 General.....	25
I.4.2 Plant proteinases.....	25
I.4.3 Plant proteinase inhibitors (PI's).....	26
I.4.4 Physiological role of proteinase inhibitors in plants.....	26
I.4.5 Role of proteinase inhibitors in defense mechanisms.....	27
I.4.6 Effects of proteinase inhibitors on insect feeding.....	28
I.4.7 Effects of proteinase inhibitors on plant parasitic nematode feeding.....	30

I.5 SIGNIFICANCE AND OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH.....	33
I.6 <i>OROBANCHE</i> PLANT DISEASE.....	34
I.6.1 Economic Importance, Distribution, and Host Range.....	34
I.6.2 <i>Orobanche</i> Life Cycle.....	35
I.7 <i>OROBANCHE</i> CONTROL METHODS.....	36
I.7.1 Mechanical Methods.....	36
I.7.2 Cultural Methods.....	36
I.7.3 Biological Control Methods.....	37
I.7.4 Chemical Methods.....	37
I.7.5 Herbicide Resistant Crops.....	39
I.7.6 <i>Orobanche</i> - Resistant Cultivars.....	39
I.8 ENGINEERING RESISTANCE TO <i>OROBANCHE</i> .....	40
I.8.1 General.....	40
I.8.2 <i>Orobanche</i> -responsive Promoters.....	41
I.9 GENE FOR GENE RESISTANCE.....	42
I.9.1. General.....	42
I.9.2 Plant Disease Resistance Genes.....	43
I.9.3 Tobacco N Gene.....	43
I.9.4 N-gene Mediated Resistance to Tobacco Mosaic Virus (TMV).....	45
I.10 SIGNIFICANCE AND OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH.....	47
I.11 REFERENCES.....	49

**Chapter II ENGINEERING NOVEL GENE-FOR-GENE RESISTANCE TO THE PARASITIC ANGIOSPERM *OROBANCHE*.....66**

II.1 INTRODUCTION.....	67
II.2 MATERIALS AND METHODS.....	69
II.2.1 Assay of tobacco seeds for GUS expression.....	69
II.2.2 Plant growth.....	70
II.2.3 Generation of CHS8:TMV replicase construct.....	70
II.2.4 Generation of <i>Hmg2</i> : N gene construct.....	71
II.2.5 CHS8:TMV induction by wounding.....	73
II.2.6 RNA isolation and northern hybridization.....	73
II.2.7 <i>O. aegyptiaca</i> inoculation.....	73
II.2.8 Statistics.....	74
II.3 RESULTS.....	74
II.3.1 Promoter expression studies.....	74
II.3.2 Production of tobacco expressing CHS8: TMV replicase.....	76
II.3.3 Construction of <i>Hmg2</i> : N gene vectors.....	79
II.3.4 CHS8: TMV replicase expression.....	82
II.3.5 Impact of R-gene mediated resistance on <i>O. aegyptiaca</i> parasitism.....	84

II.4 DISCUSSION.....	87
II.5 REFERENCES.....	89

**Chapter III THE EFFECT OF INDUCIBLE PROTEINASE INHIBITOR  
EXPRESSION ON *GLOBODERA TABACUM* DEVELOPMENT AND  
DISEASE.....** 93

III.1 INTRODUCTION.....	94
III.2 MATERIALS AND METHODS.....	96
III. 2.1 <i>HMG2</i> induction by cyst nematode.....	96
III. 2.2 Construction of <i>Hmg2</i> promoter: PI-I vectors.....	96
III. 2.3 Genomic extractions .....	97
III. 2.4 RNA isolation and RT-PCR.....	97
III. 2.5 Protein extraction and western analysis.....	98
III. 2.6 Nematode interactions.....	99
III. 2.7 Statistics.....	99
III.3 RESULTS.....	99
III. 3.1 <i>HMG2</i> induction by cyst nematode infection.....	99
III. 3.2 Production of tobacco expressing <i>Hmg2</i> promoter: PI-I gene constructs.....	102
III. 3.3 Expression analysis of PI in transgenic plants.....	106
III. 3.4 Impact of transgenic on cyst nematode interaction.....	109
III.4 DISCUSSION.....	112
III.5 REFERENCES.....	115

<b>Chapter IV CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS .....</b>	<b>118</b>
IV. 1. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS.....	119
IV. 2 REFERENCES.....	124

**APPENDIX**

**VITA**

## List of Figures

<b>Figure I.1</b>	Simplified version of the isoprenoid pathway.....	21
<b>Figure I.2</b>	Schematic representation of the location and structure of the five main classes of plant resistance (R) gene products.....	44
<b>Figure II.1</b>	Assay of tobacco seeds for promoter GUS expression.....	75
<b>Figure II.2</b>	pCHS8:TMV with a histidine tag .....	77
<b>Figure II.3</b>	Map of T-DNA from <i>Agrobacterium tumefaciens</i> plant transformation vector pBIB-kan displaying CHS8:TMV transgene insertion.....	78
<b>Figure II. 4</b>	Construction of <i>Hmg2: N</i> gene and introduction into the <i>Agrobacterium</i> plant transformation vector, pBIB-hyg to yield pNGFL .....	80
<b>Figure II.5</b>	Construction of <i>Hmg2:N</i> .....	81
<b>Figure II.6</b>	Expression of transgenic CHS8:TMV .....	83
<b>Figure II.7</b>	Early interactions of <i>O. aegyptiaca</i> grown on non-transformed <i>Nicotiana tabacum</i> cv. Xanthi and CHS8:TMV transgenic lines .....	85
<b>Figure II.8</b>	Observations of <i>Orobancha aegyptiaca</i> growth on CHS8: TMV in Xanthi .....	86
<b>Figure III.1</b>	Induction of tomato <i>Hmg2</i> in response to parasitism by the cyst nematode, <i>Globodera tabacum</i> .....	101
<b>Figure III.2</b>	Electrophoresis of PCR amplification products of tomato proteinase inhibitor (PI-I) genes .....	103
<b>Figure III.3</b>	<i>Hmg2</i> promoter:PI-I gene constructs EM1 and EM2 displaying gene specific primers as described.....	104
<b>Figure III.4</b>	Construction of <i>Hmg2:PI-I Agrobacterium tumefaciens</i> plant transformation vector, by insertion into pBIBkan NPTII gene specific primers shown as P6 and P7.....	105
<b>Figure III.5</b>	Reverse transcriptase-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) with promoter and PI-I gene-specific primers .....	107
<b>Figure III.6</b>	Western analyses of EM1 and EM2 transgenic plants .....	108

**Figure III.7** Cyst nematode production on PI-I tobacco roots .....110

**Figure III.8** Cyst nematode disease on nontransformed *Nicotiana tabacum* cv. Xanthi and *Hmg2*:PI-I transgenic lines 7 wk after inoculation.....111

## List of Abbreviations

TCN	tobacco cyst nematode
UPGMA	unweighted pair group method
SCN	soybean cyst nematode
HR	hypersensitive response
<i>Avr</i>	avirulence gene
LRR	leucine rich repeat
NBS	nucleotide binding site
TIR	<i>Drosophila</i> Toll and mammalian interleukin-1 receptor
ARF 18	Arkansas Fungus 18
PR	pathogenesis-related proteins
HRGP	hydroxyproline-rich glycoproteins
SAR	systemic acquired resistance
SA	salicylic acid
INA	2,6-dichloroisonicotinic acid
BTH	benzothiadiazole
TMV	tobacco mosaic virus
DAI	days after inoculation
SDS-PAGE	SDS-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis
HMG CoA	3-hydroxy-3-methylglutaryl-CoA
HMGR	HMG CoA reductase
IPP	isopentyl pyrophosphate
GUS	$\beta$ -glucuronidase reporter gene
PIs	Proteinase inhibitors
PIIF	protease inhibitor-inducing factor
CpTI	cowpea trypsin inhibitor
CaMV	cauliflower mosaic virus
Oc-I	oryzacystatin
Oc-I $\Delta$ 86	engineered oryzacystatin
GO	galactose oxidase
PsMTa	plant metallothionin-like protein
Ha	hectares
PME	pectin methylesterase
PGA	polygacturonase
a.i.	active ingredient
R	resistance genes
CHS	Chalcone synthase
RT-PCR	reverse-transcriptase polymerase chain reaction
AE	alternative exon
MS	Mushige and Skoog
MVA	Mevalonic Acid
PP	Pyrophosphate
IPP	Isopentyl diphosphate, isopentyl pyrophosphate
NAPDH	$\beta$ -nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide phosphate, reduced form