



REVIEW PAPER

Jasmonates: biosynthesis, metabolism, and signaling by proteins activating and repressing transcription

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Abstract

The lipid-derived phytohormone jasmonate (JA) regulates plant growth, development, secondary metabolism, defense against insect attack and pathogen infection, and tolerance to abiotic stresses such as wounding, UV light, salt, and drought. JA was first identified in 1962, and since the 1980s many studies have analyzed the physiological functions, biosynthesis, distribution, metabolism, perception, signaling, and crosstalk of JA, greatly expanding our knowledge of the hormone's action. In response to fluctuating environmental cues and transient endogenous signals, the occurrence of multilayered organization of biosynthesis and inactivation of JA, and activation and repression of the COI1–JAZ-based perception and signaling contributes to the fine-tuning of JA responses. This review describes the JA biosynthetic enzymes in terms of gene families, enzymatic activity, location and regulation, substrate specificity and products, the metabolic pathways in converting JA to activate or inactivate compounds, JA signaling in perception, and the co-existence of signaling activators and repressors.

Key words: Activators, amino acid conjugates, biosynthesis, jasmonic acid, metabolism, perception, repressors, SCF^{COI1}–JAZ co-receptor complex, signaling.

Introduction

Plants have to adapt permanently to an altered environment due to their sessile lifestyle. Adaptation to abiotic factors such as light, salt, nutrient deficiency, cold, or water deficit, and biotic interactions such as responses to pathogens, herbivores, nematodes, or mutualistic symbiotic microorganisms such as mycorrhizal fungi are mediated by plant hormones. Among the most prominent plant hormones active in stress responses is jasmonic acid (JA). Additionally, JA is a signal in numerous

developmental processes such as seed germination, growth of roots and whole plants, stamen development, and senescence. JA and its derivatives, collectively called jasmonates (JAs), are lipid-derived signaling compounds. JAs are formed from α -linolenic acid (α -LeA) of chloroplast membranes by oxidative processes occurring in different branches of the lipoxygenase pathway. Consequently, JAs are members of the family of oxylipins.

One of the first isolated JA compounds was the methyl ester of JA (MeJA) which was detected as an odorant of *Jasminum grandiflorum* flowers (Demole *et al.*, 1962). Only two decades later, however, the first physiological processes caused by JA or MeJA were described, such as senescence promotion and growth inhibition (Ueda and Kato, 1980; Dathe *et al.*, 1981). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the first indication for altered gene expression by JA was described by four groups: (i) so-called JA-induced proteins (JIPs) which accumulated abundantly upon degradation of housekeeping proteins were detected in JA-treated barley leaves (Weidhase *et al.*, 1987; Müller-Urri *et al.*, 1988); (ii) induction of vegetative storage proteins (VSPs) was found upon wounding of soybean leaves (Staswick, 1990); (iii) rapid accumulation of alkaloids was detected upon elicitation of plant cell cultures leading to an increase in endogenous JA (Gundlach *et al.*, 1992); and (iv) accumulation of proteinase inhibitors (PIs) in tomato plants upon wounding by herbivores accompanied by interplant communication by MeJA became the most prominent example of JA-mediated alteration of gene expression (Farmer and Ryan, 1990). These historical aspects of JA research and new findings of the last two decades have been reviewed (Wasternack, 2015).

Jasmonates are signals in plant stress responses and development

Since the early 1990s, a tremendous increase in our knowledge of JA biosynthesis, its mode of action in numerous stress responses and developmental processes, its perception, and its local and systemic signaling has occurred. These aspects have been reviewed (Kazan and Manners, 2011, 2013; Kombrink, 2012; Pieterse *et al.*, 2012; Wasternack and Hause, 2013; Campos *et al.*, 2014; Kazan and Lyons, 2014; Song *et al.*, 2014b; Wasternack, 2015; Yan and Xie, 2015; Schuman and Baldwin, 2016; Zhou and Memelink, 2016). Here, we will provide an overview on new aspects of the last few years on JA biosynthesis, metabolism, perception, transcription factors (TFs), as well as repressors and activators in JA-induced gene expression. The balance in activity of TFs, repressors, and activators will be a focus. We apologize for references not cited due to space limitation.

Occurrence and biosynthesis

After initial identification of MeJA as an odor of flowering plants (Demole *et al.*, 1962) and of JA in the culture medium of the fungus *Lasiodiplodia theobromae* (Aldrige *et al.*, 1971), several JA compounds were detected ubiquitously in land plants (Meyer *et al.*, 1984). High levels were found in fruits. Subsequent screening revealed occurrence in all organs carrying plastids. Such a basal level was found to increase rapidly upon wounding or other environmental cues. Recently, 12-oxo-phytodienoic acid (OPDA) but not JA has been identified in *Marchantia polymorpha*, the most basal lineage of extant land plants (Yamamoto *et al.*, 2015). OPDA but not JA was also detected in *Physcomitrella patens* (Stumpe *et al.*, 2010).

In one of the oldest vascular plants, the spikemoss *Selaginella martensii*, OPDA has been detected abundantly (Ogorodnikova *et al.*, 2015). The green and brown algae contain numerous lipoxygenase (LOX) pathway intermediates including JAs.

The biosynthetic pathway of JA from α -LeA esterified in chloroplast membranes was established in the 1980s. Initially, a sequence of a LOX, a hydroperoxide cyclase, a reductase, and β -oxidation of the carboxylic acid side chain was proposed (Vick and Zimmerman, 1983). Later on, the single step of hydroperoxide cyclase was shown to be a two-step reaction of membrane-associated allene oxide synthase (AOS), whose highly unstable product is cyclized by an allene oxide cyclase (AOC) to OPDA. Beside the enzymatic reactions, spontaneous hydrolysis takes place of the unstable epoxide to α - and γ -ketols and non-enzymatic cyclization to racemic OPDA (Brash *et al.*, 1988). This has to be taken into account in enzyme assays as well as JA and OPDA quantification.

All enzymes of OPDA formation are located in chloroplasts (Fig. 1). The second half of JA biosynthesis occurs in peroxisomes. Here, OPDA is reduced by an OPDA reductase followed by enzymes of β -oxidation, the acyl-CoA-oxidase (ACX), the multifunctional proteins (MFPs), and the L-3-ketoacyl-CoA-thiolase (KAT) upon activation to co-esters by fatty acid CoA-synthetases and 4-coumaroyl:CoA-ligases (Fig. 1).

An important determinant in JA biosynthesis is the stereochemistry of intermediates and products. In the AOC-catalyzed step, the enantiomeric form (7*R*, 7*S*) is established which occurs in the naturally occurring *cis*-(+)-7-*iso*-JA. Initially, epimerization to the more stable (-)-JA was assumed. Since identification of the most bioactive JA compound, however, it is clear that (+)-7-*iso*-JA-Ile, an isoleucine conjugate of JA carrying the (7*R*, 7*S*) configuration, is required for JA perception and signaling (Fonseca *et al.*, 2009).

JA biosynthesis has frequently been reviewed (Browse, 2009a, b; Schaller and Stintzi, 2009; Acosta and Farmer, 2010; Wasternack and Kombrink, 2010; Kombrink, 2012; Wasternack and Hause, 2013) including mechanistic explanations upon enzyme crystallization (Lee *et al.*, 2005). Here, we will focus on new aspects of the last few years.

Galactolipases involved in JA biosynthesis

JA biosynthesis is initiated by release of α -LeA from galactolipids of chloroplast membranes by phospholipase A1 (PLA₁) which hydrolyzes with *sn*-1 specificity. The flower-specific protein DEFECTIVE IN ANther DEHISCENCE 1 (DAD1), a PLA₁, is absolutely required for JA formation (Ishiguro *et al.*, 2001). DAD1 is a target of the homeotic protein AGAMOUS, thereby affecting late stamen development (Ito *et al.*, 2007). DAD1 expression is positively controlled by DAF (DAD1-ACTIVATING FACTOR) which is a RING type E3 ubiquitin ligase (Peng *et al.*, 2013). Furthermore, DAD1 and most of the subsequently acting genes involved in JA biosynthesis [AOS, AOC, and 12-oxo-phytodienoic acid reductase3 (OPR3)] are repressed by the NAC-like gene ANther INDEHISCENCE FACTOR (AIF) (Shih *et al.*, 2014).

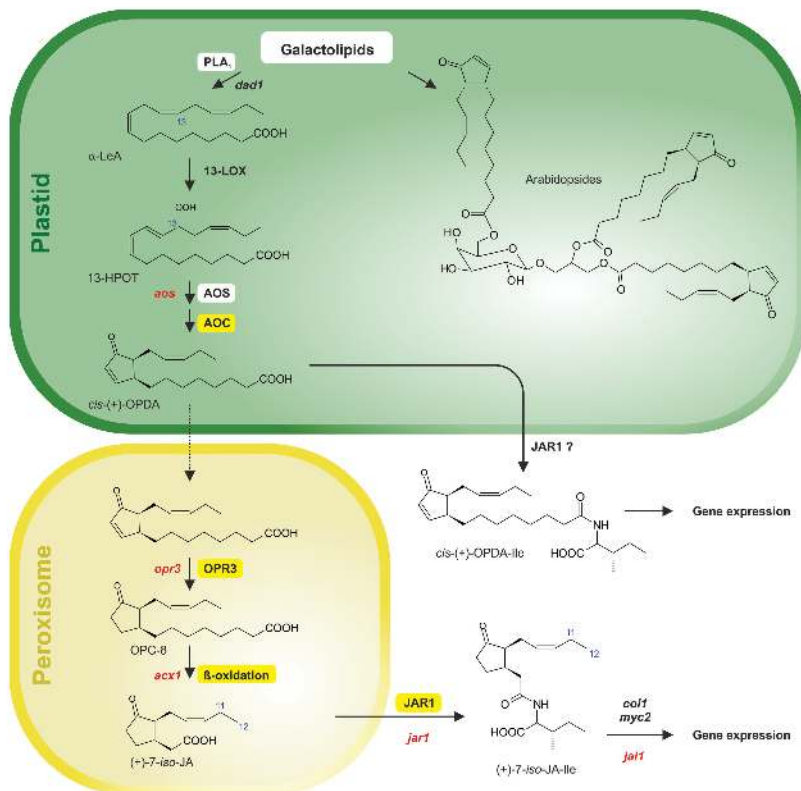


Fig. 1. Synthesis of JA/JA-Ile from α -linolenic acid generated from galactolipids. Enzymes which have been crystallized are given in yellow boxes. Steps which are affected in mutants of *Arabidopsis* (green) or tomato (red) are indicated. Abbreviations for compounds: α -LeA, α -linolenic acid; 13-HPOT, (13S)-hydroperoxyoctadecatrienoic acid; *cis*-(+)-OPDA, *cis*-(+)-12-oxophytodienoic acid; OPC-8, 3-oxo-2-(2-pentenyl)-cyclopentane-1-octanoic acid. Abbreviations for enzymes/proteins: *acx1*, acyl CoA-oxidase1; AOC, allene oxide cyclase; AOS, allene oxide synthase; *coi1*, coronatine insensitive1; *dad1*, delayed anther dehiscence1, *jai1*, jasmonic acid insensitive1; JAR1, JA-amino acid synthetase; 13-LOX, 13-lipoxygenase; *myc2*, bHLHZip transcription factor MYC2; OPR3, OPDA reductase3; PLA₁, phospholipase A1. [Redrawn based on Wasternack and Hause (2013). Jasmonates: biosynthesis, perception, signal transduction and action in plant stress response, growth and development. An update to the 2007 review in *Annals of Botany*. *Annals of Botany* 111, 1021–1058, by permission of Oxford University Press.]

Altogether, anther dehiscence is absolutely dependent on intact JA biosynthesis and is regulated positively by AGAMOUS and DAF and negatively by AIF.

Beside these clear data on involvement of DAD1 in JA formation of anthers, there were controversial data on PLA₁s in JA formation of leaves. Here, DAD1 and six homologs such as DONGLE (DGL) and DAD1-like LIPASES (DALL) were found to be expressed upon wounding in a CORONATINE INSENSITIVE1 (COI1)-dependent and COI1-independent manner (Ruduś *et al.*, 2014). DGL was thought to be involved in wound-induced JA formation (Hyun *et al.*, 2008), whereas a PLA₁ is an acylhydrolase rather than a specific phospholipase A and is involved in the basal level of JA (Yang *et al.*, 2007). However, detailed studies on DGL location, numerous lipase mutants, and PLA₁ RNAi lines excluded involvement of DAD1 and DGL in wound-induced JA formation in *Arabidopsis* leaves (Ellinger *et al.*, 2010). A galactolipase A1 (GLA1) of *Nicotiana attenuata* is involved in JA formation in leaves and roots but not during infection with *Phytophthora parasitica* (Bonaventure *et al.*, 2011). Further studies revealed that upon *Phytophthora* infection, the GLA1 lipase is involved in generation of 9-OH-18:2 and other C₁₈ and C₁₉ oxylipins (Schuck *et al.*, 2014). The numerous data on involvement of lipases in JA formation suggest their pathway- and stimulus-specific action.

An interesting link between biosynthesis of the lipid digalactosyldiacylglycerol (DGDG) and JA biosynthesis was described recently (Lin *et al.*, 2016). The DGDG synthase1 (DGD1) mutant *dgd1* showed a short inflorescence stem, accompanied by lignified phloem cap cells, following up-regulation of JA-responsive genes including JA biosynthesis genes and a PLA₁ γ 3 as well as elevation of levels of JA, JA-Ile, OPDA, and arabidopsides.

13-Lipoxygenase (LOX)

The occurrence and mechanism of lipoxygenase have been repeatedly reviewed (e.g. Andreou and Feussner, 2009; Andreou *et al.*, 2009). Among the seven different branches of the LOX pathway, only the AOS branch leads to JA formation (Feussner and Wasternack, 2002). Oxygen insertion in position C-13 of α -LeA is the ultimate reaction in JA formation (Fig. 1). In *Arabidopsis*, four of the six-member gene family are 13-LOXs (LOX2, LOX3, LOX4, and LOX6), whereas LOX1 and LOX5 are 9-LOXs, obviously involved in cell death processes by formation of phytoalexins such as death acids (Christensen *et al.*, 2015).

All 13-LOXs are involved in wound-induced JA formation with partially specific activity: (i) a dominant role in wounding (LOX2); (ii) lipid peroxidation (LOX2); (iii) early wound

response of xylem cells (LOX6); (iv) wound response in vascular tissue (LOX3, LOX4); (v) natural and dark-induced senescence (LOX2); and (vi) fertility and flower development (LOX3, LOX4). These aspects including transcriptional and translational control as well as regulation by a vacuolar Ca²⁺ channel have already been reviewed (Wasternack and Hause, 2013).

Meanwhile, some new data on 13-LOXs of *Arabidopsis* accumulated. AtLOX6 was shown to be exclusively required for JA accumulation in roots upon abiotic and biotic stress and generation of the basal level of OPDA (Grebner *et al.*, 2013). Involvement of AtLOX3 in the salinity stress response has been detected (Ding *et al.*, 2016). Different activities of AtLOX3 and AtLOX4 with a major role of AtLOX4 in defense control against a root-knot nematode and a cyst nematode were identified (Ozalvo *et al.*, 2014). The four 13-LOXs of *Arabidopsis* seem to act in a paired hierarchical organization, where LOX2 and LOX6 are linked upstream of the LOX3 and LOX4 pair in different responses and in a defined time sequence. These aspects have been discussed and documented recently (Chauvin *et al.*, 2016).

Generation of various 13-LOX mutants carrying a JA reporter system improved our knowledge on intercellular JA transport in the axial (root to shoot) and radial (cell to cell) direction (Gasparini *et al.*, 2015a). This biosensor for JA was designed with a specific Jas motif of JA ZIM-domain9 (JAZ9) (see below) and the VENUS variant of the yellow fluorescent protein carrying a nuclear localization signal (NLS) and the *Cauliflower mosaic virus* (CaMV) 35S promoter (Larrieu *et al.*, 2015). It is necessary to mention here that a breakthrough in wounding being behind 13-LOX-generated JA was found by surface potential measurements and transcriptomic analysis. This led to identification of glutamate receptor-like genes (GLRs) known from synaptic activity of animal cells (Mousavi *et al.*, 2013). GLRs mediate organ to organ wound signaling via alteration of surface potentials.

13-LOXs of many other species have been cloned and characterized, but only a few examples can be given here. Among the six tomato LOXs (TomloxA–F), TomloxC and TomloxD are chloroplast-localized 13-LOX enzymes. TomloxC is essential for C5 flavor volatiles without any important defensive function (Shen *et al.*, 2014). Genetic and biochemical evidence obtained by characterizing wound response *spr8* mutants showed that TomloxD is involved in JA generation and consequently linked to all defense reactions against herbivores (Yan *et al.*, 2013). This mutant carries a point mutation in the catalytic domain of TomloxD. The poplar LOX gene family consisting of 20 members was characterized comprehensively (Chen *et al.*, 2015).

In rice, crosstalk between a 13-LOX and 9-LOX1 was observed. Antisense lines of *r9-LOX1* exhibited increased JA levels and JA-mediated responses against chewing and phloem-feeding herbivores (Zhou *et al.*, 2014). Another interesting 13-LOX property was found in the fungus *Fusarium oxysporum*. This species can form and release numerous JA compounds (Miersch *et al.*, 1999). Now, one of the two predicted LOXs of *F. oxysporum* has been cloned (Brodhun *et al.*, 2013). The recombinant protein exhibited a multifunctional activity towards four different branches of the LOX pathway.

13-LOXs are located within plastids, as shown for the first time for barley using an immunological approach (Feussner *et al.*, 1995), as well as by immunogold labeling (Bachmann *et al.*, 2002). The recent localization of a 13-LOX of barley lacks novelty and sufficient quality in the activity data (Springer *et al.*, 2016).

Several crystal structures of LOXs allowed an improved mechanistic explanation of its catalysis (Newcomer and Brash, 2015; Newie *et al.*, 2016). A highly conserved Fe-coordination is in a helical core, and the fatty acid substrate lies near the active site in a hydrophobic U-shaped channel. Alternative orientation for substrates is allowed by the conserved core leading to different products (Newcomer and Brash, 2015). In contrast to plant LOXs, the LOX1 of the cyanobacterium *Cyanothece* sp. PCC 8801 differs in the N-terminal domain and has an α -helical extension which is active in substrate acquisition directly from the membrane (Newie *et al.*, 2016).

Allene oxide synthase (AOS)

AOS is a member of the CYP74 gene family, together with hydroperoxide lyase (HPL) and divinylether synthase (DES) (Feussner and Wasternack, 2002; Hughes *et al.*, 2009). The cloning, characterization, mechanism, and function of AOS in stress responses and development have been reviewed (Brash, 2009; Schaller and Stintzi, 2009; Kombrink, 2012). In many plants, AOSs occur in gene families, except *Arabidopsis*, where a single-copy gene allowed generation of JA- and OPDA-deficient mutant plants (Park *et al.*, 2002). AOS was crystallized from guayule (Li *et al.*, 2008). Crystallization of AOS from *Arabidopsis* led to a discussion on its evolutionary origin (Lee *et al.*, 2008).

Upon characterization of two AOSs from *M. polymorpha* combined with phylogenetic analysis, two evolutionarily distinct clusters were discussed, suggesting that CYP74 enzymes have arisen multiple times prior to divergence of the flowering plants (Koeduka *et al.*, 2015). This is supported by data for AOS1 and AOS2 of *P. patens*, where the PpAOS1 could be converted by a single amino acid change to a PpHPL (Scholz *et al.*, 2012). Correspondingly, mutation of the tobacco DES led to AOS activity (Toporkova *et al.*, 2013). Like LOX enzymes with 9- and 13-positional specificity, AOSs prefer 9- or 13-hydroperoxide derivatives. However, dual positional substrate specificity was also found, for example, for rice AOS1 (Yoeun *et al.*, 2013) and barley AOS1 (Maucher *et al.*, 2000). The rice AOS1 has a chloroplast targeting sequence (Haga and Ino, 2004), and the enzyme has been successfully used without a chloroplast target signal in a combined AOS/AOC enzymatic assay as a functional AOS (Riemann *et al.*, 2013). In rice, mutant analysis revealed an interesting crosstalk between the AOS and the HPL branch. Screening of a library on constitutive AOS expression led to the isolation of the mutant *cea62* affected in OsHPL3 but exhibiting a dramatic overproduction of JA (Liu *et al.*, 2012). Another interesting rice mutant was identified recently with the recessive *precious* (*pre*) mutant which has a low level of JA and a long leaf phenotype (Hibara *et al.*, 2016). The mutated gene codes

for an OsAOS1, indicating that JA is a negative regulator of vegetative phase transition.

Allene oxide cyclase (AOC)

AOCs which occur in small gene families have been cloned and characterized, including mechanistic studies from numerous plant species (see reviews by Hofmann and Pollmann, 2008; Schaller and Stintzi, 2009; Kombrink, 2012), and crystal structures are available for AtAOC2 (Hofmann *et al.*, 2006) and PpAOC1 and PpAOC2 (Neumann *et al.*, 2012).

Recently, an AOC of the liverwort *M. polymorpha* was cloned (Yamamoto *et al.*, 2015). The recombinant enzyme has similar properties to that of flowering plants. *Marchantia polymorpha* accumulates OPDA, but no JA, suggesting signaling properties of OPDA (Yamamoto *et al.*, 2015). Generally, overexpression of a JA biosynthesis gene such as AOS or AOC did not lead to elevated JA levels due to lack of the substrate α -LeA which is generated only upon external stimuli such as wounding (Laudert *et al.*, 2000; Stenzel *et al.*, 2003). Constitutive overexpression of the AOC of *Salvia miltiorrhiza* and of wheat, however, led to elevated JA levels and JA responses in the corresponding plants (Gu *et al.*, 2012; Zhao *et al.*, 2014). The wheat studies also showed involvement of JA in the salinity response. AOC mutants of rice (*cpm2*, *hebiba*) showed roles of JA in defense against the blast fungus *Magnaporthe oryzae* (Riemann *et al.*, 2013). Both mutants are impaired in the AOC function and exhibited deficiency in OPDA accompanied by increased salt tolerance and reactive species (ROS)-scavenging activity (Hazman *et al.*, 2015). In Arabidopsis, the four members of the AOC gene family have tissue- and organ-specific promoter activities including *in vivo* heteromerization (Stenzel *et al.*, 2012). Further inspection of heteromeric pairs of AOCs are in line with enzyme activity control via heteromerization (Otto *et al.*, 2016). Functional proof by site-directed mutagenesis of AtAOC2 showed its trimeric structure, salt bridges, and a hydrophobic core (Otto *et al.*, 2016), which corresponds to the previously discussed crystal structure (Hofmann *et al.*, 2006).

OPDA reductase (OPR3)

The following steps in JA biosynthesis take place in peroxisomes (Fig. 1). OPDA, formed within the chloroplast, has to be transported across two membranes. While no transporter of the inner and outer envelope of the chloroplast has been identified so far, the import into peroxisomes seems to occur by COMATOSE exhibiting PXA1 activity or by anion trapping (Theodoulou *et al.*, 2005). The OPRs occur in small gene families where only the OPR3 of Arabidopsis and its homologs are involved in JA biosynthesis. In rice, the homolog of AtOPR3 is OsOPR7 (Tani *et al.*, 2008). OPRs have been cloned, localized, biochemically characterized, and functionally analyzed from different plant species including mechanistic studies upon crystallization. These aspects have been reviewed (Schaller and Stintzi, 2009; Kombrink, 2012; Wasternack and Hause, 2013). In rice, the 10 member gene family was comparatively characterized in terms of expression, structure, and

function. They were divided into five subgroups, and OPR7 was identified as a JA-forming enzyme (Li *et al.*, 2011). In Arabidopsis there is a gene family of six members, with OPR3 exclusively involved in JA formation. *opr3* mutants are male sterile, the most obvious phenotypes for JA deficiency, due to a defect in stamen development. All of them are affected in JA-induced root growth inhibition. A JA-independent direct role for OPR3 was identified recently in primary root growth under P deficiency (Zheng *et al.*, 2016). Even though primary root growth inhibition by P deficiency is a well-known phenomenon, the underlying mechanism was unknown. Now, a novel function of AtOPR3 has been shown via suppression of root tip growth at the transcriptional level under P deficiency, including a crosstalk with the ethylene and gibberellin (GA) signaling pathways (Zheng *et al.*, 2016). The initial characterization of the *opr3* mutant of *Arabidopsis thaliana* showed that the mutant is OPDA and JA deficient (Stintzi and Browse, 2000) and was therefore used to distinguish between OPDA- and JA-specific responses (see below). Later on, however, conditional JA formation was shown due to intronic T-DNA insertion in the *opr3* mutant (Chehab *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, for tomato, OPR3-RNAi lines were generated for inspection of OPDA-specific responses (Bosch *et al.*, 2014; Scalschi *et al.*, 2015) (see below).

β -Oxidation of the pentenyl side chain (ACX, MFP, and KAT)

Similar to the final steps in auxin biosynthesis, the pentenyl side chain of JA is shortened by the fatty acid β -oxidation machinery (Hu *et al.*, 2012). This was shown by labeling experiments (Miersch and Wasternack, 2000), as well as biochemical and genetic evidence for the enzymes involved such as acyl-CoA oxidase (Li *et al.*, 2005; Schillmiller *et al.*, 2007), L-3-ketoacyl CoA thiolase (Cruz Castillo *et al.*, 2004), and 4-coumarate:CoA ligase-like enzymes (Schneider *et al.*, 2005; Koo *et al.*, 2006). Additional evidence was collected by diminished JA formation in *pex* mutants affected in components of the peroxisomal import complex (Hu *et al.*, 2012). These aspects have been reviewed (Hu *et al.*, 2012; Kombrink, 2012; Wasternack, 2014). Among the *pex* mutants, PEX13 interacts with DAYU/ABERRANT PEROXISOME MORPHOLOGY9 (DAU) which is critical in pollen maturation as well as JA formation (X-R Li *et al.*, 2014). An interesting link between the evolutionarily conserved KAT1 and KAT5 and Arabidopsis inflorescence development was shown, suggesting the requirement for JA for normal inflorescence development (Wiszniewski *et al.*, 2014). This is reminiscent of the flower inflorescence phenotype initially observed in the mutant *aim1*, which is affected in the MFP protein (Richmond and Bleecker, 1999).

Intracellular localization of 13-LOXs, AOS, and AOCs

Enzymes of OPDA formation such as 13-LOXs, AOS, and AOCs carry a target sequence for chloroplast import, with some exceptions, but all of them were localized in chloroplasts by import studies and immunocytochemistry including electron microscopy Farmaki *et al.*, 2007; Wasternack, 2007;

Schaller *et al.*, 2008). Corresponding data were found by a proteomic approach with wounded and unwounded Arabidopsis leaves (Gfeller *et al.*, 2011). Even though AOS1 of barley and AOS1 of rice lack the putative chloroplast targeting sequence, both of them localize to the chloroplasts (Maucher *et al.*, 2000; Yoeun *et al.*, 2013). AOS was found in the lipid-rich plastoglobuli, where the high quinone and α -tocopherol content may stabilize the highly unstable epoxide formed in the AOS reaction (Ytterberg *et al.*, 2006). For tomato, in vitro import studies revealed import of AOS to the inner envelope membrane (Froehlich *et al.*, 2001). A common localization of AOS in the Arabidopsis inner envelope with the rhomboid-like protease AtRBL8/9 leads to regulation of AOS (Knopf *et al.*, 2012).

Regulation of JA biosynthesis

Regulation of JA biosynthesis has been repeatedly reviewed in terms of three main principles by (i) requirement for release α -LeA as the substrate upon external stimuli; (ii) positive feedback loop in expression of JA biosynthesis genes by JA; and (iii) tissue specificity (Wasternack, 2007; Schaller and Stintzi, 2009; Wasternack and Hause, 2013). Additional regulatory factors may occur by concurrent activity between the AOS and HPL, and other branches of the LOX pathway, by the negative regulators JAZs, post-translational control (e.g. OPR3), heteromerization (e.g. AOCs of Arabidopsis) (Otto *et al.*, 2016), Ca^{2+} signaling, and the mitogen-activated protein kinase cascade (see the review by Wasternack and Hause, 2013). More recent data argue against a positive feedback loop in JA formation, but still show such a regulation in expression of JA biosynthesis genes, thereby suggesting involvement of post-translational modifications (Scholz *et al.*, 2015).

Arabidopsides

Beside the free forms, 18:2 and 18:3 fatty acids and their 9- and 13-hydroperoxides formed by the corresponding LOXs occur in esterified form in many plant species (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2011; Yu *et al.*, 2014). Specifically in Arabidopsis, OPDA and dinor-OPDA have been detected esterified in the *sn-1* or *sn-2* position of galactolipids such as mono- or digalactosyl-diacylglycerol (MGDG or DGDG) and are called arabidopsides A–F (reviewed by Andreou *et al.*, 2009; Göbel and Feussner, 2009). The large amount of OPDA esterified in arabidopsides and their involvement in the hypersensitive response as well as abiotic stress led to an ongoing discussion on the putative role of arabidopsides. The formation of arabidopsides is dependent on LOX2, which oxidizes bound fatty acids (Glauser *et al.*, 2009), followed by AOS, active with the bound substrate (Park *et al.*, 2002), and is completed with bound oxidized fatty acid products (Nilsson *et al.*, 2012). An interesting new aspect was found by inspection of natural variation of accumulation of arabidopsides (Nilsson *et al.*, 2016) which highlights the repeatedly observed competition between AOS and HPL also for arabidopside formation. High accumulation of arabidopsides was negatively correlated with expression of the HPL which competes with AOS on bound LOX2-generated

hydroperoxides (Nilsson *et al.*, 2016). Whereas arabidopsides occur specifically in Arabidopsis, acylated MGDG, the parallel constituent of galactolipids, appears in most plant species (Nilsson *et al.*, 2015). In Arabidopsis, these acylated MGDGs frequently incorporate OPDA. Mutants of the enzyme involved in acylation have complete loss of OPDA-containing acyl-MGDG, but no clear biological role has been identified so far for these acyl-MGDGs (Nilsson *et al.*, 2015).

OPDA as a signal

A distinct set of genes is induced specifically by OPDA (Taki *et al.*, 2005). OPDA perception does not take place via the SCF^{COI1}-JAZ co-receptor complex (Thines *et al.*, 2007). These observations led to numerous studies, where expression by OPDA was shown to occur independently of COI1 in different processes of different higher plants, as well as in lower plants which are JA deficient. These aspects have been repeatedly reviewed (e.g. Wasternack and Hause, 2013; Wasternack and Strnad, 2016). Due to the requirement for JA-Ile as the ligand of the receptor complex, the identification of a conjugate of OPDA, OPDA-Ile (Floková *et al.*, 2016), led to the suggestion that this compound might mediate OPDA-specific responses. Indeed, OPDA-Ile has biological activity in terms of expression of OPDA-specific genes (Arnold *et al.*, 2016). Its perception, however, has not been studied so far.

Metabolism

Twelve metabolic pathways are known today that convert JA into active and inactive compounds, or compounds which are partially active (Fig. 2) (Koo and Howe, 2012; Wasternack and Hause, 2013; Heitz *et al.*, 2016). Whereas the majority of JA signaling is provided by homeostasis among different JA-Ile derivatives (see below), some reactions lead to compounds with activity in specific reactions of stress responses and development such as leaf movement (see below).

Conjugation

Formation of JA-Ile by jasmonoyl-isoleucine synthetase (JAR1), a member of the GH3 gene family (AtGH3.11) (Staswick and Tiriyaki, 2004), is the ultimate step in JA perception. The GH3 protein family comprises acyl acid-amido synthetases with auxin, JA, or benzoate as substrates (Westfall *et al.*, 2013). The role of JA-Ile became obvious upon its identification as the most biologically active JA compound (Fonseca *et al.*, 2009), by initial reports on JA-Ile-mediated promotion of SCF^{COI1}-JAZ co-receptor complex formation (Thines *et al.*, 2007; Katsir *et al.*, 2008; Melotto *et al.*, 2008), and by properties of JA-Ile as the ligand of the complex (Yan *et al.*, 2009; Sheard *et al.*, 2010). This scenario has been used to design a ligand-based antagonist of JA-Ile by modifying coronatine (Monte *et al.*, 2014) or for generation of inhibitors of JAR1 such as jarin1 by chemical screening (Meesters *et al.*, 2014). Crystallization of JAR1 led to a mechanistic explanation of why the epimer (+)-7-*iso*-JA-Ile is formed (Westfall *et al.*, 2012). Even though (+)-7-*iso*-JA-Ile is exclusively

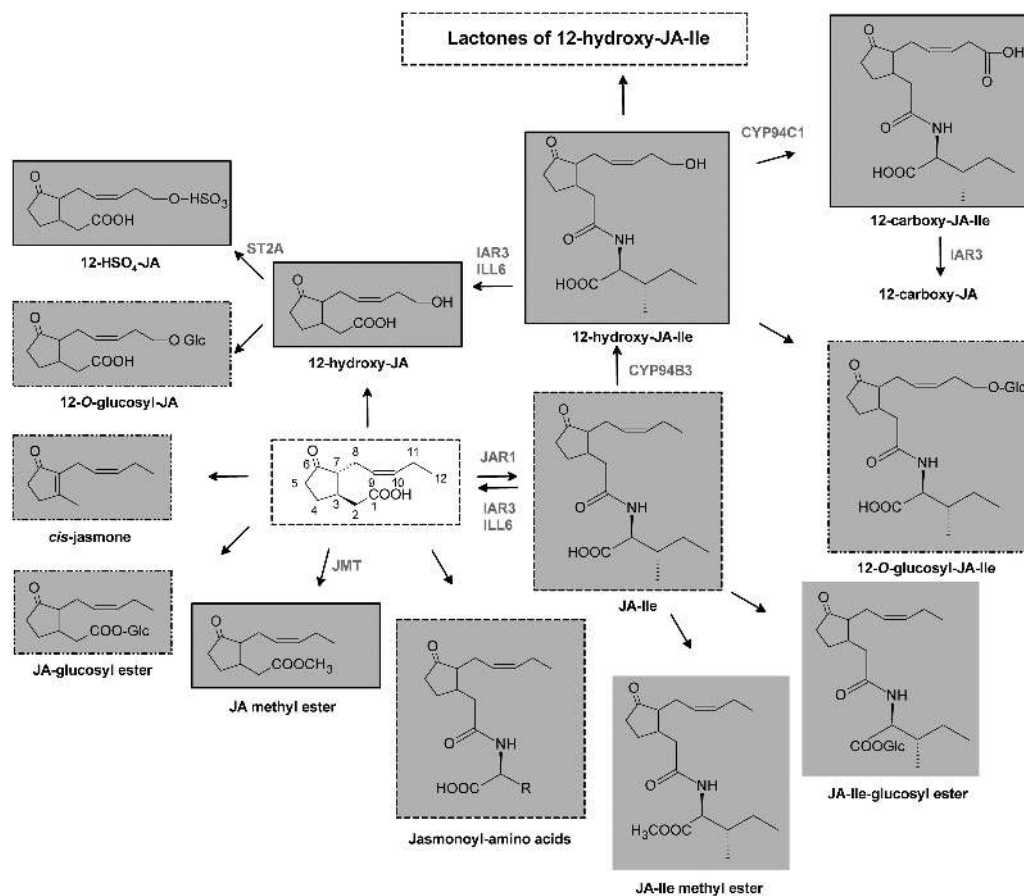


Fig. 2. Metabolic conversion of JA. Methylation to JA-Me, JA glucosyl ester formation, decarboxylation to *cis*-jasmonone, hydroxylation to 12-OH-JA, sulfation of 12-OH-JA, O-glucosylation of 12-OH-JA, conjugation with amino acids, preferentially isoleucine to give JA-Ile, methylation to JA-Me-Ile, 12-hydroxylation of JA-Ile, carboxylation of 12-OH-JA-Ile, O-glucosylation of JA-Ile, and JA-Ile glucosyl ester formation are indicated, together with the known enzymes involved: JAR1, jasmonoyl isoleucine synthetase; JA-Ile-12-hydroxylase; CYP94B3; 12-OH-JA-Ile carboxylase, CYP94C1; amidohydrolases IAR3 and ILL6; JMT, JA methyl transferase; ST2a, 12-OH-JA sulfotransferase. The lactone of 12-OH-JA-Ile was added even though its detection in plants is missing to date. Biologically inactive compounds are outlined with solid lines, partially active compounds are outlined with dashed and dotted lines, and active compounds are outlined with dotted lines; the biological activity of 12-carboxy-JA, as well as of JA-Ile-glucosyl ester and JA-Ile methyl ester are unknown [modified after [Wasternack and Strnad \(2016\)](#)]. Jasmonate signaling in plant stress responses and development—active and inactive compounds. *New Biotechnology* 33, 604–613, Copyright (2016), with permission from Elsevier].

formed upon wounding, tomato JAR1-RNAi lines showed only 50–75% down-regulation, suggesting the occurrence of another JA-conjugating enzyme other than JAR1 ([Suza et al., 2010](#)). This has to be taken into account in the use of *jar1* mutants. In rice, OsJAR1, exhibiting similar substrate specificity to AtJAR1, is the most important JA-conjugating enzyme in the wounding response ([Fukumoto et al., 2013](#); [Svyatyna et al., 2014](#)), seed development under field conditions ([Fukumoto et al., 2013](#)), as well as floret opening and anther dehiscence ([Xiao et al., 2014](#)). In photomorphogenesis, OsJAR1 activity is also required, but acts partially redundantly to OsJAR2 ([Svyatyna et al., 2014](#)). The two major functions of OsJAR1 cannot be complemented by OsJAR2 ([Fukumoto et al., 2013](#)). The level of JA-Ile plays an important regulatory role for all JA-dependent processes and is sustained by JAR1 activity and subsequent metabolic reactions such as hydroxylation, carboxylation, and hydrolysis of conjugates. Recently, (+)-7-*iso*-JA-Ala, (+)-7-*iso*-JA-VAL, (+)-7-*iso*-JA-Leu, and (+)-7-*iso*-JA-Met have also been identified as endogenous bioactive JA derivatives via corresponding coronafacic acid conjugates as stable molecular mimics

([Yan et al., 2016](#)). These conjugates showed distinct binding in the COI1-JAZ interaction assay (see below).

Hydroxylation and carboxylation

Direct hydroxylation of JA to 12-OH-JA has not been detected so far, except a putative activity of a fungal monooxygenase ([Patkar et al., 2015](#)). Several members of the CYP94 gene family have been identified to hydroxylate JA-Ile (CYP94B3, CYP94C1) and to carboxylate 12-OH-JA-Ile (CYP94C1) ([Koo et al., 2011](#); [Heitz et al., 2012](#)). This work was recently extended to additional family members such as CYP94B1 ([Koo et al., 2014](#); [Bruckhoff et al., 2016](#)) and CYP94B2 ([Bruckhoff et al., 2016](#)). Hydroxylation and carboxylation contribute to JA catabolism via an ω -oxidation pathway. The family members act in a semi-redundant manner, as shown with quadruple mutants ([Bruckhoff et al., 2016](#)). Data on overexpression lines and mutants of CYP94 gene family members revealed involvement in JA-Ile signaling during herbivory and pathogen attack by *Botrytis cinerea* ([Koo et al., 2011](#); [Heitz et al., 2012](#)). There is, however, a complex sustainment of JA-Ile

homeostasis, in which hydroxylation and carboxylation remove the active JA-Ile, whereas the amido-hydrolases ILL6 and IAR3 cleave JA-Ile and 12-hydroxy-JA-Ile (see review by Heitz *et al.*, 2016). The dynamics in JA-Ile homeostasis differ between leaf injury, *B. cinerea*-infected leaves, and developing flowers (Widemann *et al.*, 2016). Even though the basic scenario of activation and inactivation via CYP94s seems to be clear, a complex regulation may occur: triple mutants of *CYP94B1*, *CYP94B3*, and *CYP94C1* revealed accumulation of JA-Ile without a stronger wound response, but symptoms known for JA-Ile deficiencies and normal responses to exogenous JA (Poudel *et al.*, 2016).

ILL6 and IAR3 are active in simultaneous regulation of JA and auxin homeostasis, indicating an important crosstalk between JA and auxin signaling (Zhang *et al.*, 2016). The amido-hydrolases are active in the endoplasmic reticulum (Sanchez Carranza *et al.*, 2016) which corresponds to the intracellular location of the CYP94s (Koo *et al.*, 2014). Interestingly, a novel JA derivative, 12-carboxy-JA, was identified recently by a non-targeted metabolite analysis in floral tissues which is formed presumably from 12-carboxy-JA-Ile via IAR3 (Bruckhoff *et al.*, 2016). In *N. attenuata*, JIH1, a homolog of AtIAR3, also regulates the JA-Ile level (Woldemariam *et al.*, 2012), and *N. attenuata* CYP94B3 contributes to attenuation of resistance to herbivores (Luo *et al.*, 2016).

Decarboxylation

The volatile *cis*-jasmonone has been known for a long time as a constituent of the floral bouquet of many plants attracting insects for pollination. Wounding leads to *cis*-jasmonone formation and its activity in multitrophic interactions of plants with aphids and their parasitoids (Bruce *et al.*, 2008). A distinct set of genes, different from those of JA, is expressed by *cis*-jasmonone treatment (Matthes *et al.*, 2010). In maize, *cis*-jasmonone can prime formation of volatile organic compounds (Oluwafemi *et al.*, 2013). Beside decarboxylation of JA, isomerization of *cis*-(+)-OPDA into *iso*-OPDA followed by β -oxidation to 3,7-didehydro-JA and decarboxylation was proposed for synthesis of *cis*-jasmonone (Schulze *et al.*, 2007).

Methylation and esterification

Even though MeJA has been known for a long time as a constituent of floral scent active in pollination and as a signaling compound in all reactions where JA or JA-Ile are active, MeJA is not active *per se*. Transgenic approaches showed clear evidence that MeJA has to be cleaved by esterases and subsequently converted to JA-Ile by JAR1 (Stütz *et al.*, 2011). These data correspond to the inactivity of the JA-Ile-receptor complex in binding MeJA (Sheard *et al.*, 2010). MeJA transferases have been cloned from Arabidopsis, tomato, rice, grapevine, strawberry, and black cottonwood, and are involved, among others, in stress responses and fruit development via sustaining JA levels (see reviews by Wasternack and Hause, 2013; Preuß *et al.*, 2014; Qi *et al.*, 2016; Zhao *et al.*, 2016). *Lasiodiplodia theobromae* was the fungal species from which (+)-7-*iso*-JA was first isolated (Miersch *et al.*, 1987).

Meanwhile, several JA esters, so-called lasiojasmonates, were isolated from *Lasiodiplodia* sp., a grapevine pathogen (Andolfi *et al.*, 2014). In different phytotoxic and zootoxic assays, however, these new compounds were inactive.

Sulfation

The composition, occurrence, substrate specificity, and functions of 21 sulfotransferases (STs) of Arabidopsis have been comprehensively described (Hirschmann *et al.*, 2014; Koprivova and Kopriva, 2016). Among them, AtST2a (AtSOT15) is active specifically with 12-OH-JA as substrate (Gidda *et al.*, 2003). The sulfonyl group donor is 3'-phosphoadenosine 5'-phosphosulfate (PAPS). Therefore, in kinase mutants involved in PAPS formation, 12-HSO₄-JA levels are altered (Mugford *et al.*, 2009). A new addition to the plant ST gene family is the tyrosylprotein ST active on peptides and tyrosyl residues of proteins (Koprivova and Kopriva, 2016), thereby active in signaling such as the auxin/plethora pathway in root stem cell niche maintenance (Zhou *et al.*, 2010).

O-Glycosylation

Glycosylation, preferentially glucosylation, is a basic modification of secondary compounds as well as hormones. In the case of jasmonates, 12-OH-JA (tuberonic acid) and its glucosyl derivative were described as tuber-inducing factors of potato in the 1990s (see Wasternack and Hause, 2013). This is obviously an indirect role, since strong evidence supports a light-dependent tuber induction via leaf-generated mRNAs and two TFs activating temperature-dependent GA formation within the stolon (Hannapel, 2010; Wasternack and Hause, 2013). 12-*O*-Glucosyl-JA is a late but abundantly accumulating JA compound in wounded leaves of tomato or Arabidopsis (Glaser *et al.*, 2008; Miersch *et al.*, 2008). Constitutive accumulation in tissues such as filaments of *Zea mays* or leaves of *Glycine max* can occur at up to two to three orders of magnitude higher levels than JA (Miersch *et al.*, 2008). Interestingly, in Albizzia and Samanea species, 12-*O*-glucosyl-JA acts as a leaf closing factor in motor cells with high structural specificity of the 12-OH-JA (Nakamura *et al.*, 2011) as well as the glucone moiety (Ueda *et al.*, 2015). Only a few reports are available so far on characterization of glucosyltransferase of 12-OH-JA and a 12-OH-JA-glucoside hydrolase (Wakuta *et al.*, 2010; Seto *et al.*, 2011).

A new derivative of 12-OH-JA and 12-OH-JA-Ile was identified as jasmine ketolactone (Jimenez-Aleman *et al.*, 2015). Based on these naturally occurring compounds, macrolactones of 12-OH-JA-Ile were synthesized which exhibited biological activity as (3*R*,7*R*) and as (3*S*,7*S*) forms (Jimenez-Aleman *et al.*, 2015), indicating conversion of an inactive JA derivative into an active one.

Jasmonate signaling

SCF^{COI1}-JAZ co-receptor complex

Since the 1990s, research on JA signaling has become a hot-spot. The isolation of the F-box protein COI1, which forms

the SCF^{COI1} E3 ligase with SKP1 and CULLIN1 to mediate JA responses, is the first milestone in JA signaling (Feys *et al.*, 1994; Xie *et al.*, 1998). In 2007, the family of Arabidopsis JAZ proteins were discovered to be the substrates of SCF^{COI1}, and interact with and inhibit the TF MYC2 to repress JA responses (Chini *et al.*, 2007; Thines *et al.*, 2007; Yan *et al.*, 2007). In the resting state, JAZs interact with and repress downstream TFs (e.g. MYC2) to suppress of JA responses. In response to JA signal, COI1 interacts with and ubiquitinates JAZs tagging them for degradation through the 26S proteasome, thereby releasing downstream TFs to regulate gene expression and activate JA responses (Fig. 3) (Wasternack and Hause, 2013).

(+)-7-*iso*-JA-Ile is the most bioactive endogenous JA in promoting COI1 interaction with JAZ1, and the JA analog coronatine synthesized by some strains of *Pseudomonas syringae* is more active than (+)-7-*iso*-JA-Ile (Fonseca *et al.*, 2009), and can be a potent agonist of the JA receptor complex (Katsir *et al.*, 2008). The recently identified conjugates (+)-7-*iso*-JA-Ala, (+)-7-*iso*-JA-Val, (+)-7-*iso*-JA-Leu, and (+)-7-*iso*-JA-Met showed distinct and highly different binding activity in the COI1–JAZ interaction assay, if COI1 paralogs of various species were used (Yan *et al.*, 2016). This suggests evolution of the COI1 function by only a few amino acid substitutions.

Studies on the structure of the COI1–ASK1–JA-Ile/coronatine–JAZ1 decon showed that COI1, the JAZ1 decon, and IP₅ constitute a co-receptor with high affinity for JA-Ile and coronatine (Sheard *et al.*, 2010). A modified COI1 that is able to maintain high fertility and defense against insect attack, but is resistant to *P. syringae* pv. *tomato*, was isolated

(L. Zhang *et al.*, 2015), and coronatine-*O*-methyloxime was identified as a JA antagonist that prevents the COI1 interaction with JAZs, and enhances plant resistance to *P. syringae* (Monte *et al.*, 2014). This latter aspect corresponds to the initial observation that coronatine is a potent agonist of the JA receptor complex (Katsir *et al.*, 2008).

The family of Arabidopsis JAZs with 13 members normally have a conserved C-terminal Jas domain for binding to COI1, MYC2, or other TFs, a highly conserved ZIM domain in the middle for interacting with the Novel Interactor of JAZ (NINJA)/TOPLESS (TPL) co-repressors and dimerizations of JAZs, and a variable N-terminal NT domain for interaction with several signal transduction factors (e.g. DELLA proteins) (Chung and Howe, 2009; Chung *et al.*, 2009; Pauwels and Goossens, 2011).

Overexpression of *JAZ9*, *JAZ8*, *JAZ7*, *JAZ4*, and *JAZ13*, and alternative splice variants or truncated forms of JAZs (*JAZ10.3*, *JAZ10.4*, *JAZ1Δ3A*, and *JAZ3ΔC*) inhibits JA-inhibitory root growth and hypocotyl elongation, flowering, leaf senescence, and defense against the herbivore *Spodoptera exigua* or the pathogen *Fusarium oxysporum*, and single or multiple mutants of *JAZ4*, *JAZ7*, *JAZ8*, *JAZ9*, *JAZ10*, and *JAZ13* exhibit JA hypersensitivity in JA-inhibitory root growth and hypocotyl elongation, leaf senescence, flowering, or susceptibility to *P. syringae* (Chini *et al.*, 2007; Thines *et al.*, 2007; Chung and Howe, 2009; Chung *et al.*, 2010; Demianski *et al.*, 2012; Shyu *et al.*, 2012; Yang *et al.*, 2012; Thireault *et al.*, 2015; Thatcher *et al.*, 2016; Yu *et al.*, 2016).

JAZs can be depleted in a COI1-independent manner by bacterial effectors. HopX1, a cysteine protease from

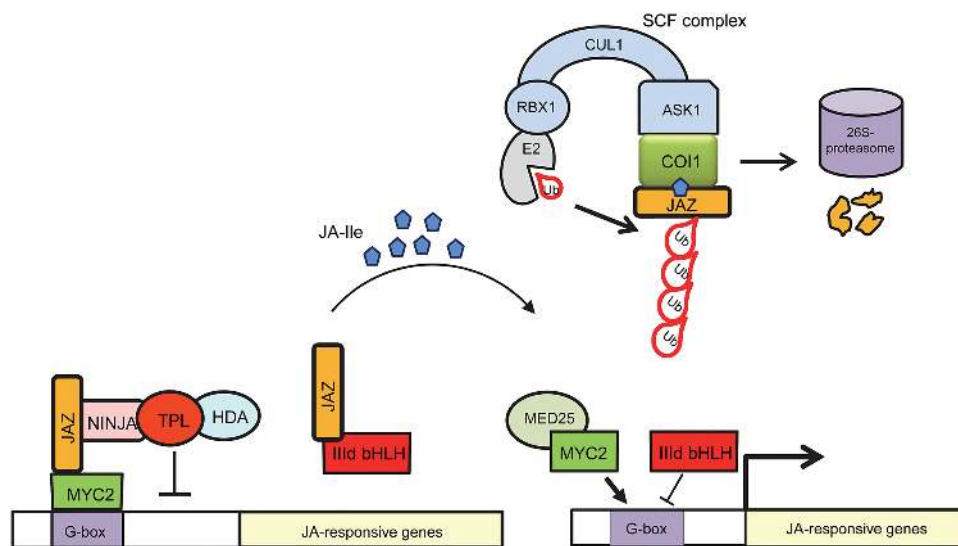


Fig. 3. A simplified model of JA-Ile perception and signaling via the SCF^{COI1}–JAZ co-receptor complex. The JAZ repressors recruit the co-repressor complex consisting of NINJA, TOPLESS (TPL), and histone deacetylase (HDA), interact with and repress positive regulators of JA signaling such as the transcription activator MYC2, and also inhibit negative regulators of JA signaling such as the transcriptional repressors I3ld bHLH factors. The perception of JA-Ile by the COI1–JAZ co-receptor leads to degradation of JAZs via the 26S proteasome; the downstream transcription factors are activated to regulate expression of JA-responsive genes and JA responses synergistically or antagonistically. MYC2 associates with the MED25 subunit of the mediator complex, binds to the G-box motif of the target promoters, and activates JA-responsive genes. The I3ld bHLH factors antagonize MYC2 via competitive binding to the G-box motif and inhibiting JA-responsive genes. COI1, ASK2, CULLIN1, Rbx, and E2 are components of the SCF^{COI1} complex. Ub, ubiquitin. [Modified with permission from Wasternack and Hause (2013). Jasmonates: biosynthesis, perception, signal transduction and action in plant stress response, growth and development. An update to the 2007 review in *Annals of Botany*. *Annals of Botany* 111, 1021–1058, by permission of Oxford University Press.]

P. syringae pv. *tabaci*, degrades JAZs, and complements the function of coronatine in susceptibility to *P. syringae* (Gimenez-Ibanez *et al.*, 2014). HopZ1a, a member of the YopJ effector family, interacts with and acetylates JAZs for degradation, and rescues the virulence of the *P. syringae* mutant without coronatine (Jiang *et al.*, 2013).

NINJA/TPL co-repressors

NINJA acts as an adaptor, binds with its C-terminus to the ZIM domain of JAZs, and utilizes its ERF-associated amphiphilic repression (EAR) domain to recruit the co-repressors TPL and TPL-related proteins (TPRs), which affect epigenetic modification with histone deacetylases (e.g. HDA19), to repress JA responses (Fig. 3) (Pauwels *et al.*, 2010). The non-canonical JAZ8 and JAZ13, which harbor a divergent Jas domain exhibiting little interaction with COI1 and are resistant to JA-induced degradation, have an EAR motif that directly recruits the TPL repressors, and interact with MYC2 to inhibit JA responses (Shyu *et al.*, 2012; Thireault *et al.*, 2015).

Activators and repressors in JA signaling

After the discovery of JAZs, a battery of TFs and signal transduction factors acting as activators or repressors were isolated and helped in understanding the JA signaling and crosstalk for different biological processes. We will briefly describe these TFs and their roles in crosstalk.

JA signaling activators

bHLH subgroup IIIe TFs: MYC2. MYC2 was first identified as a master regulator through cloning of the Arabidopsis JA-insensitive mutant *myc2/jai1/jin1* (Lorenzo *et al.*, 2004). MYC2 contains an N-terminal JAZ interaction domain (JID) that interacts with JAZs (Fernández-Calvo *et al.*, 2011), a transcription activation domain (TAD) required for transactivation and interaction with MEDIATOR25 (MED25) (Chen *et al.*, 2012; Zhai *et al.*, 2013), a C-terminal NLS for recruiting JAZs into the nucleus (Withers *et al.*, 2012), and a C-terminal bHLH (basic helix-loop-helix) domain for dimerization and binding to the G-box (CACGTG) or G-box like motifs (Toledo-Ortiz *et al.*, 2003).

Arabidopsis MYC2 positively regulates most JA-dependent responses, such as expression of wound-responsive genes, wounding response, inhibition of root growth and the apical hook, sesquiterpene synthase, defense against insects (e.g. *Spodoptera littoralis* and *Helicoverpa armigera*), and susceptibility to the pathogen *P. syringae*; however, MYC2 negatively regulates a subset of JA responses, including biosynthesis of indole glucosinolates and tryptophan, resistance to necrotrophic pathogens (e.g. *B. cinerea*), and expression of pathogen-response genes *ETHYLENE RESPONSE FACTOR1* (*ERF1*), *OCTADECANOID-RESPONSIVE ARABIDOPSIS AP2/ERF 59* (*ORA59*), and *PLANT DEFENSIN1.2* (*PDF1.2*) (Lorenzo *et al.*, 2004; Dombrecht *et al.*, 2007; Fernández-Calvo *et al.*, 2011; Montiel *et al.*, 2011; Hong *et al.*, 2012; Zhai *et al.*, 2013; Song *et al.*, 2014b).

MYC2 functions as a transcriptional activator, interacts with the mediator subunit MED25 (Kidd *et al.*, 2009; Çevik

et al., 2012; Chen *et al.*, 2012), and binds to and activates the G-box or G-box-like motifs of promoters of JA-responsive genes, such as *TAT1* (Fig. 3) (Hou *et al.*, 2010). However, MYC2 also acts as a transcriptional repressor, binding to and repressing the promoters of *PLETHORA1* (*PLT1*)/*PLT2* or *ORA59*, to attenuate root growth or resistance to *B. cinerea* (Chen *et al.*, 2011). These studies suggest that MYC2 differentially regulates JA responses by acting as a transcriptional activator or repressor, and as a positive or negative regulator.

MYC2 is a node of crosstalks. Both DELLA repressors in the GA pathway and JAZs interact with MYC2 to repress sesquiterpene biosynthesis in flowers (Hong *et al.*, 2012). JA and GA activate MYC2 and induce sesquiterpene biosynthesis. Abscisic acid (ABA) promotes the interaction of the ABA receptor PYL6 with MYC2, and impedes the binding ability of MYC2 to target promoters (Aleman *et al.*, 2016). β C1 of *Tomato yellow leaf curl China virus* interacts with MYC2, suppressing MYC2-regulated terpene synthase, and reducing defense to whitefly, thereby promoting the performance of whitefly and accelerating the spread of the virus (R Li *et al.*, 2014).

bHLH subgroup IIIe TFs: MYC3 and MYC4. These two TFs interact with JAZs (Fernández-Calvo *et al.*, 2011). The α -helix of the Jas domain in JAZ9 nestles between the JID and TAD domains of MYC3, becomes an integral part, and competitively inhibits MYC3's interaction with MED25 (F. Zhang *et al.*, 2015). Specific mutations in the JID of MYC2 and MYC3 could abolish the interactions with most JAZs, and enhance JA sensitivity (Goossens *et al.*, 2015). MYC3 and MYC4 function redundantly with MYC2 in JA-inhibitory root growth, apical hook formation, JA-induced leaf senescence, glucosinolate biosynthesis, susceptibility to *P. syringae*, resistance to *B. cinerea*, defense against *S. littoralis*, and insect growth (Fernández-Calvo *et al.*, 2011; Schweizer *et al.*, 2013; Chico *et al.*, 2014; Song *et al.*, 2014a; Qi *et al.*, 2015b).

The E3 ligase PLANT U-BOX PROTEIN10 (PUB10) ubiquitinates MYC2, MYC3, and MYC4 for degradation, and inhibits JA responses (Jung *et al.*, 2015). MYC2, MYC3, and MYC4 participate in the daily cycle of plant growth and defense: during the day, blue and red light stabilize MYC2/3/4, inhibit growth, and promote defense; in the night, dark destabilizes MYC2/3/4, promotes growth and suppresses defense (Chico *et al.*, 2014). TIME FOR COFFEE, a key determinant of the circadian clock, binds to and destabilizes MYC2 to regulate plant growth and defense rhythmically (Shin *et al.*, 2012).

bHLH subgroup IIIe TFs: MYC5. MYC5, MYC2, MYC3, and MYC4 function redundantly in regulation of the expression of *MYB21*, *MYB24*, *MYB57*, and *MYB108*, and form the JAZ-inhibited MYC-MYB transcriptional complexes with MYB21 and MYB24 to mediate stamen development (Song *et al.*, 2011, 2013; Figueroa and Browse, 2015; Qi *et al.*, 2015a). The *myc2 my3 myc4 myc5* quadruple mutant exhibits short filament, delayed anther dehiscence, and unviable pollen grains at floral stage 13 (Qi *et al.*, 2015a). Moreover, the MYC2^{E165K} mutation increases transactivation activity, and restores the stamen development of *aos ninja* (Gasparini *et al.*, 2015b).

TTG1/bHLH/MYB complex. The WD-repeat protein Transparent Testa Glabra1 (TTG1), bHLH transcription factors GLABRA3 (GL3) or ENHANCER of GL3 (EGL3), TRANSPARENT TESTA8 (TT8), and R2R3-MYB transcription factors MYB75 or GLABRA1 (GL1) form the WD-repeat/bHLH/MYB complexes, which activate downstream genes to promote trichome formation and anthocyanin accumulation (Ramsay and Glover, 2005). JAZs interact with bHLH and MYB components of the TTG1/bHLH/MYB complexes to inhibit their transcriptional activity. Environmental stress leads to a rise in endogenous JA; JAZs are degraded, and the TTG1/bHLH/MYB complexes are activated to enhance trichome formation and anthocyanin accumulation, respectively, thereby resulting in increased defense or stress tolerance (Qi *et al.*, 2011). DELLAs also bind to and repress the TTG1/bHLH/MYB complexes, and attenuate GA/JA-induced trichome formation (Qi *et al.*, 2014). JA and GA, respectively, induce degradation of JAZs and DELLAs, activate the TTG1/bHLH/MYB complexes, and synergistically enhance trichome formation.

Other bHLH TFs. The bHLH factors Arabidopsis INDUCER OF CBF EXPRESSION1 (ICE1)/ICE2, OsbHLH148, and RICE SALT SENSITIVE3 (RSS3)/OsbHLH094 interact with JAZs, and respectively regulate tolerance to freezing (Hu *et al.*, 2013) and salt (Toda *et al.*, 2013), suggesting that JA plays important roles in plant tolerance to abiotic stresses. In secondary metabolism, bHLH Iridoid Synthesis 1 (BIS1) and BIS2 regulate monoterpenoid indole alkaloid biosynthesis in *Catharanthus roseus* (Van Moerkercke *et al.*, 2015, 2016), and TRITERPENE SAPONIN BIOSYNTHESIS ACTIVATING REGULATOR1 (TSAR1) and TSAR2 regulate triterpene saponin biosynthesis in *Medicago truncatula* (Mertens *et al.*, 2016).

R2R3-MYB TFs. The JA-responsive flower-specific R2R3-MYB TFs MYB21, MYB24, and MYB57 function as direct targets of JAZs, specifically and redundantly regulate filament elongation, anther dehiscence and pollen maturation (Mandaokar *et al.*, 2006; Cheng *et al.*, 2009). Overexpression of *MYB21* can restore the stamen development of *coil* and *opr3* (Song *et al.*, 2011). MYB108 acts downstream of MYB21, and controls anther dehiscence and pollen maturation (Mandaokar and Browse, 2009). GA induces the degradation of DELLAs, up-regulates *DAD1* expression to enhance JA biosynthesis, and promotes filament elongation via the MYB pathway (Cheng *et al.*, 2009). The key components of the auxin pathway, including Transport Inhibitor Response 1 (TIR1)/Auxin-signaling F-box proteins (AFBs), Indole-3-Acetic Acid protein 8 (IAA8), and Auxin Response Factor 6 (ARF6)/ARF8, modulate late stamen development via JA biosynthesis (Nagpal *et al.*, 2005; Cecchetti *et al.*, 2008; Wang *et al.*, 2013).

The plant metabolites glucosinolates (GSs) can be converted to toxins during insect feeding, and fend off herbivore attack (Bones and Rossiter, 2006). The R2R3-MYB TFs MYB28, MYB29, and MYB76 control the expression of biosynthetic genes, and biosynthesis of aliphatic GS, whereas MYB34, MYB51, and MYB122 regulate indole GS biosynthesis. These MYBs form MYB-MYC transcriptional complexes with MYC2, MYC3, and MYC4, bind to the promoters of GS

biosynthetic genes, and activate JA-induced GS biosynthesis and defense against insect attack (Schweizer *et al.*, 2013).

AP2/ERF-domain TFs. Among the APETALA2/ETHYLENE RESPONSE FACTOR (AP2/ERF) domain TFs, JAZs only interact with TARGET OF EAT1 (TOE1) and TOE2, which bind to and repress the promoter of *FLOWERING LOCUS T* for suppression of flowering (Zhai *et al.*, 2015). ERF1, ORA59, ERF5, and ERF6 interact with MED25 (Çevik *et al.*, 2012) and mediate JA/ethylene (ET)-regulated immunity to necrotrophic fungi (Pre *et al.*, 2008; Moffat *et al.*, 2012). Salicylic acid (SA) antagonizes JA-regulated plant immunity via repressing the *ORA59* promoter (Van der Does *et al.*, 2013). JA-responsive ERF109 transactivates the auxin biosynthetic genes ANTHRANYLATE SYNTHASE1 (*ASA1*) and *YUCCA2*, activates auxin biosynthesis, and promotes JA-induced lateral root formation (Cai *et al.*, 2014). OCTADECANOID-DERIVATIVE RESPONSIVE CATARANTHUS AP2-DOMAIN2 (CrORCA2) and CrORCA3 function in a complementary manner with BIS1 and BIS2 to promote monoterpenoid indole alkaloid biosynthesis in *C. roseus* (Van Moerkercke *et al.*, 2015, 2016).

EIN3/EIL1. ETHYLENE-INSENSITIVE3 (EIN3) and EIN3-LIKE 1 (EIL1) are the core TFs in the ET pathway. JAZ1 interacts with and represses EIN3/EIL1 through recruiting HDA6, and JA activates EIN3 and EIL1 via suppression of JAZ1, and promotes the expression of *ERF1/ORA59* to enhance resistance and root hair formation (Zhu *et al.*, 2011). On the other hand, the interactions between EIN3/EIL1 and MYC2/3/4 mediate the antagonism between JA and ET in various plant developmental processes and defense responses against herbivore attack: ET-stabilized EIN3 and EIL1 interact with and repress the transcriptional activity of MYC2/3/4 to suppress expression of wound-responsive genes and defense against the generalist *S. exigua*; meanwhile, JA-activated MYC2/3/4 interact with and inhibit EIN3 and EIL1 to reduce apical hook formation of seedlings under dark (Song *et al.*, 2014a, b). JA also activates the expression of EIN3 BINDING F-BOX PROTEIN1 (EBF1) to suppress EIN3 and EIL1 (Zhang *et al.*, 2014).

YABs. The YABBY (YAB) family TFs YAB1 and YAB3 interact with JAZ3 to modulate anthocyanin accumulation, chlorophyll degradation, and susceptibility to *P. syringae* (Boter *et al.*, 2015).

NAC019, NAC055, and NAC072. Plants recognize *P. syringae* entry in stomata, and trigger stomatal closure via SA and ABA. Coronatine activates MYC2, and MYC2 directly transactivates the NAM/ATAF/CUC (NAC) TFs NAC019, NAC055, and NAC072, which repress the SA biosynthetic gene *ISOCHORISMATE SYNTHASE1 (ICS1)* and activate the SA metabolic gene *BSMT1* to inhibit SA accumulation, and promote stomatal reopening and bacterial entry (Zheng *et al.*, 2012). In addition, NAC019, NAC055, and NAC072 mediate JA/MYC2/3/4-regulated leaf senescence via up-regulation of

the chlorophyll catabolic genes (e.g. *NYE1* and *NYE2*) and promotion of chlorophyll degradation (Zhu *et al.*, 2015).

DELLAs. The DELLA repressors in the GA pathway interact with JAZs and function as positive regulators of the JA pathway, and mediate the antagonism between JA and GA in regulating plant growth and defense. A herbivore attack-induced increase in JA leads to proteasomal degradation of JAZs and activation of MYC2 plant defense, whereas DELLAs are relieved of JAZs inhibition, and interact with PHYTOCHROME INTERACTING FACTORS (PIFs) to suppress growth. Conversely, GA triggers DELLA degradation, allowing the PIFs to activate growth and meanwhile the JAZ repressors are released to inhibit MYC2-mediated plant defense responses (Hou *et al.*, 2010; Yang *et al.*, 2012). Interestingly, the combined mutations of five JAZs and the photoreceptor phyB, which directly inhibits PIFs, can de-repress both MYCs and PIFs, uncouple the trade-off between growth and defense, and promote both defense and growth, providing a potential way to assemble plant traits (Campos *et al.*, 2016).

JA signaling repressors

bHLH subgroup IIIId TFs. The bHLH subgroup IIIId TFs, including bHLH17/JASMONATE ASSOCIATED MYC2-like TF (JAM1), bHLH13/JAM2, bHLH3/JAM3, and bHLH14, interact with JAZs and function redundantly as transcriptional repressors, which antagonize the transcription activators (e.g. MYC2, WD-repeat/bHLH/MYB complexes) via competitively binding to the G-box of the mutual target genes (e.g. *TATI*, *DFR*), and inhibit various JA responses, including anthocyanin biosynthesis, root growth inhibition, trichome formation, stamen development, flowering, chlorophyll degradation, resistance to necrotrophic pathogens, and defense against insect attack (Fig. 3) (Nakata *et al.*, 2013; Sasaki-Sekimoto *et al.*, 2013; Fonseca *et al.*, 2014; Song *et al.*, 2014b). The existence of the JA-activated IIIId bHLH factors is a strategy for plants to avoid overstimulated growth due to excess defense response.

Other JA signaling repressors. Arabidopsis WRKY57 binds to and represses the promoters of senescence-associated genes (e.g. *SAG12* and *SEN4*) to inhibit leaf senescence, and mediates auxin/JA crosstalk in leaf senescence via interactions with JAZ4/JAZ8 and IAA29 (Jiang *et al.*, 2014). The VQ protein JASMONATE-ASSOCIATED VQ MOTIF GENE (JAV1) acts as a repressor that only inhibits plant defense against herbivores and necrotrophic pathogens, but not JA-regulated growth (Hu *et al.*, 2013), indicating that plants can distinguish the signaling branch of defense responses from that of growth.

Conclusions and future perspectives

The homeostasis among active and inactive JA compounds contributes to fine tuning in regulation of JA responses. Even though the number of these compounds has already been

increased, new and more sensitive methods for analysis of different jasmonate compounds will lead to identification of new active and inactive JA derivatives. The increased knowledge on gene families in biosynthesis and metabolism of JA led to improved understanding of intracellular and whole plant JA responses. Future work will show how different JA compounds are involved in systemic responses. The hierarchical positive regulators, negative regulators, transcription activators, and repressors collaborate to regulate different JA responses synergistically and antagonistically and mediate the synergy/antagonism of crosstalks and plant–environment interaction. Studies on such aspects will increase our knowledge on the specificity and redundancy in action of the different JA compounds. The co-existence of members of various positive/negative regulators and transcription activators/repressors in JA signaling network improves the complexity and stability of JA action, and adaptability of plants. The research on JA signaling in Arabidopsis and tomato has helped to reveal the scenario of JA signaling. Further studies in crops and medicinal herbs will broaden our knowledge on JA function and signaling events, and help agricultural production and even human health. New future perspectives in JA research will be drawn from studies on plant–plant, plant–herbivore, and plant–microbe interactions, and will lead to increased applications.

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