

Preface

This monograph on Prokaryotic Toxin–Antitoxins (TAs), the first of its kind, is meant to give an overview of a complex and rapidly developing scientific field. It will hopefully be useful not only as an introduction to the topic for newcomers to the field but also as a tool for established researchers to gain a comprehensive overview of the field. I’ve made an attempt to cover almost all aspects of Toxin–Antitoxins by inviting leading research groups to summarize and discuss the present stage of their respective field, resulting in a collection of 18 excellent Chapters that summarize the latest progress in the TA field. Initially, it seemed a daunting task to coordinate this monograph but almost all researchers that I approached with an invitation responded positively—and they were all able to produce their chapters with excellence—I’m very happy and grateful to the Authors that the progress with the monograph went so smoothly. I’d also like to apologize to the research groups that were not invited to contribute due to space constraints.

The monograph makes an attempt to give a timely and systematic overview of the TA field, which is a very complex one. The complexity originates from several facts: (i) the bewildering number of TA loci in single organisms; (ii) the very mild or almost absent phenotypes of single TA gene deletions; (iii) different research labs using different strains. These facts may have (mis)led different research groups to interpret similar observations differently thus adding to the complexity within the field. From the outside scientist, this complexity may look like confusion and, to my view, is one of the best arguments to produce a serene and unbiased monograph that enables the readers to make a judgement themselves. The Introduction ([Chap. 1](#)) tries to give an organized definition, overview, and discussion of this multifaceted problem before the individual TA gene families are presented and discussed.

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