

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. Splicing an essential mechanism of gene expression.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1. Classes of introns.....	2
1.2. Why genes in pieces?.....	3
<b>2. Spliceosomal splicing.....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1. Mechanism of the splicing reaction.....	5
2.2. The spliceosome.....	7
2.3. Dynamic interactions of snRNAs and the pre-mRNA.....	9
2.4. snRNPs.....	13
2.5. Proteins in pre-mRNA splicing.....	14
2.6. Evolution of nuclear pre-mRNA splicing.....	15
2.7. Minor classes of pre-mRNA introns.....	17
2.8. Exon definition and intron bridging.....	18
<b>3. <i>Saccharomyces cerevisiae</i>, a model organism for pre-mRNA splicing.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>4. The importance of being early.....</b>	<b>21</b>
4.1. Commitment to splicing.....	21
4.2. SF1/BBP and U2AF <sup>65</sup> /Mud2p recognize the branchpoint region.....	22
4.3. Domain structure of BBP/SF1 and Mud2/U2AF <sup>65</sup> .....	24
<b>5. Pre-mRNA retention, mRNA export and nonsense-mediated decay.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>6. Aim of this thesis.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>RESULTS.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>1. Transient interaction of BBP/ScSF1 and Mud2 with the splicing machinery affects the kinetics of spliceosome assembly.....</b>	<b>29</b>
1.1. BBP is present in CC2, but not detectable in CC1.....	29
1.2. Co-precipitation of BBP/ScSF1 with CC2 and not with CC1.....	30
1.3. BBP is required for the formation of CC2.....	33
1.4. CC1 is a functional precursor of CC2 and (pre)-spliceosome.....	34
1.5. BBP is not detectable in pre-spliceosomes and spliceosomes.....	36
1.6. BBP and Mud2p are associated in a complex.....	42

1.7. Depletion of BBP does not affect pre-spliceosome formation and splicing .....	44
1.8. <i>In vivo</i> splicing analysis in BBP depleted cells.....	50
1.9. Depletion of BBP leads to accumulation of CC1 during spliceosome formation.....	51
<b>2. A dual role for BBP/ScSF1 in nuclear pre-mRNA retention and splicing.....</b>	<b>53</b>
2.1. Generation of conditional mutants of <i>msl5</i> .....	53
2.2. Identification of mutations in <i>msl5-2</i> (ts) and <i>msl5-5</i> (cs).....	55
2.3. Temperature-sensitive mutants of <i>msl5</i> show no effect on (pre)-spliceosome formation and <i>in vitro</i> splicing.....	62
2.4. Cold sensitive mutant of <i>msl5</i> blocks (pre)-spliceosome formation at non-permissive temperature	65
2.5. Conditional mutants of <i>msl5</i> are affected in the splicing of weak introns <i>in vivo</i> and show increased pre-mRNA leakage to the cytoplasm.....	68
2.6. Disruption of <i>MUD2</i> shows effect on splicing of non-consensus introns <i>in vivo</i> and a minor increase in pre-mRNA leakage to the cytoplasm .....	73
2.7. Temperature-sensitive mutants of <i>msl5</i> show a synthetic phenotype with a mutation in the nonsense-mediated decay pathway .....	74
<b>DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>1. Transient interaction of BBP/ScSF1 and Mud2 with the splicing machinery affects the kinetics of spliceosome assembly.....</b>	<b>79</b>
1.1. Role of Mud2p in spliceosome assembly and splicing .....	80
1.2. Role of BBP/ScSF1 in spliceosome assembly and splicing .....	80
<b>2. A dual role for BBP/ScSF1 in nuclear pre-mRNA retention and splicing.....</b>	<b>83</b>
2.1. Functionally relevant mutations in <i>msl5</i> are located in evolutionary conserved domains.....	83
2.2. <i>In vitro</i> analysis of <i>msl5</i> mutants shows minor defects in (pre)-spliceosome assembly and splicing .....	85
2.3. <i>In vivo</i> analysis of <i>msl5</i> mutants reveals splicing defect of non-consensus introns .....	85
2.4. Pre-mRNA leakage to the cytoplasm .....	85
2.5. Synthetic lethality of <i>msl5</i> in combination with a disruption of the NMD pathway.....	86
<b>3. Outlook .....</b>	<b>88</b>

<b>MATERIALS AND METHODS .....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>1. Strains and oligonucleotides.....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>2. Molecular biology techniques.....</b>	<b>91</b>
2.1. General methods.....	91
2.2. Construction of the TAP-cassette for chromosomal tagging.....	92
2.3. Construction of <i>MSL5</i> yeast expression vectors.....	93
2.4. Construction of <i>msl5</i> mutant library .....	93
2.5. Mapping relevant mutations in thermo- and cold-sensitive <i>msl5</i> mutants.....	94
<b>3. Yeast techniques.....</b>	<b>96</b>
3.1. General methods.....	96
3.2. Growth analysis.....	96
3.3. Gene disruption.....	97
3.4. C-terminal tagging of proteins.....	99
3.5. N-terminal tagging of proteins.....	99
3.6. Yeast transformation and screening for integrations by PCR.....	100
3.7. Extraction of plasmid DNA.....	101
3.8. Small scale preparation of yeast extracts with glass beads .....	101
3.9. Medium scale preparation of yeast extracts with zymolyase.....	102
3.10. Large scale preparation of yeast extracts with French Press .....	102
3.11. <i>In vivo</i> depletion of splicing factors (BBP/ScSF1 and U2 snRNA).....	103
3.12. Screening for conditional <i>msl5</i> mutants .....	103
3.13. <i>In vivo</i> splicing and pre-mRNA retention analysis .....	103
3.14. $\beta$ -galactosidase assay.....	104
3.15. Synthetic phenotype analysis.....	105
<b>4. RNA techniques.....</b>	<b>105</b>
4.1. General methods.....	105
4.2. <i>In vitro</i> transcription of RNA .....	105
4.3. Native gel analysis.....	106
4.4. <i>In vitro</i> splicing.....	107
4.5. Affinity selection of splicing complexes on biotinylated RNA .....	107
4.6. Co-precipitation of splicing complexes.....	108
4.7. RNA extraction from yeast extracts, extract fractions or affinity beads.....	109

4.8. Total RNA extraction .....	109
4.9. Primer Extension .....	109
<b>5. Protein techniques .....</b>	<b>110</b>
5.1. Rapid extraction of proteins from yeast cells.....	110
5.2. SDS-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis .....	111
5.3. Western blotting.....	111
5.4. <i>In vitro</i> depletion of BBP .....	112
5.5. Tandem Affinity Purification (TAP) .....	112
<b>6. Biocomputing.....</b>	<b>113</b>
6.1. Database searches .....	113
6.2. Sequence alignments .....	113
6.3. Secondary structure prediction .....	113
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>ABBREVIATIONS.....</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>138</b>
<b>ZUSAMMENFASSUNG.....</b>	<b>139</b>