

## Calcium Transport Systems in Cardiac Sarcolemma and Their Regulation by the Second Messengers Cyclic AMP and Calcium-Calmodulin\*

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this survey is to describe the importance of cyclic AMP and  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -calmodulin as mediators of the effects of  $\beta$ -adrenergic agonists on cardiac sarcolemma. First, the basic characteristics of the three sarcolemmal  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -transporting systems, the slow  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  channel, the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -pumping ATPase and the  $\text{Na}^+/\text{Ca}^{2+}$  antiporter, are described. These different pathways for in- and outflux of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  play a crucial role in the excitation-contraction coupling and relaxation of heart muscle. Catecholamines in the myocardium cause an increase in the rate and extent of tension development during systole, and in the rate of relaxation during diastole. These functional changes may largely be brought about by cyclic AMP-induced phosphorylation of membrane proteins that increases both the probability of opening the slow  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  channels and the rate of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  pumping ATPase. It is generally believed that the effects on  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  transport systems are due to direct actions of  $\beta$ -adrenergic agonists leading to an increased cytosolic  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  level during systole. Indirectly, an increase in systolic  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  can amplify the primary effect of catecholamine on the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  pumping ATPase and probably also on the  $\text{Na}^+/\text{Ca}^{2+}$  antiporter through  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -calmodulin-dependent phosphorylation of membrane proteins. The intimate involvement of calmodulin in the operation of several sarcolemmal  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -transporting systems is discussed in the light of the unknown mechanism of action of the so-called  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  channel blockers, a class of drugs that have a very important potential to provide information on the fundamental reaction steps in excitation-contraction coupling. Some of these drugs are potent inhibitors of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -calmodulin-regulated enzymes.

**Key words:** Heart muscle — Sarcolemma —  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -pumping ATPase — Slow  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  channel —  $\text{Na}^+/\text{Ca}^{2+}$  antiporter — Phosphorylation — Cyclic AMP — Calmodulin — Catecholamines —  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  channel blockers

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\* Presented at the 2nd International Symposium on Membrane Receptors and Ionic Channels, May 21—26, 1984, Smolenice, Czechoslovakia

## Introduction

Mammalian cardiac muscle contains at least three systems for the transport of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  across the sarcolemma, a voltage-dependent slow  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  channel (Reuter 1983), a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -stimulated  $\text{Mg}^{2+}$ -ATPase (Hui et al. 1976; Sulakhe and St. Louis 1976; Wollenberger and Will 1978; Lamers et al. 1980; Caroni and Carafoli 1981a) and an electrogenic  $\text{Na}^+/\text{Ca}^{2+}$  antiporter (Pitts 1979; Reeves and Sutko 1980; Miyamoto and Racker 1980; Caroni et al. 1980; Lamers and Stinis 1981). The  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  concentration in the extracellular fluid is some 10,000 times higher than that of the cytosol under resting conditions of the heart muscle. Depolarization of the sarcolemma opens slow channels through which  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ , that penetrates by this manner into the cytosol, will activate troponin C either directly or indirectly by producing a  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -induced  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release (Fabiato and Fabiato 1978) from the intracellular stores in the sarcoplasmic reticulum. During the plateau phase of the action potential extracellular  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  can also enter the cytosol via the  $\text{Na}^+/\text{Ca}^{2+}$  antiporter. It is allowed to operate in the  $\text{Na}^+$  out/ $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  in direction due to reduction of both the membrane potential and the  $\text{Na}^+$  gradient. This  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  influx will bear a current although its direction will be opposite to that produced by  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  flowing through the slow channel. Therefore, to what extent  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  entering by  $\text{Na}^+/\text{Ca}^{2+}$  antiporter contributes to the total  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  influx during the plateau phase of cardiac action potential can hardly be estimated by electrophysiological techniques. After contraction a great part of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  bound to the myofibrillar proteins will leave the myocyte again by energy-requiring processes: in exchange for extracellular  $\text{Na}^+$  by the  $\text{Na}^+/\text{Ca}^{2+}$  antiporter and ejected by the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -calmodulin-activated  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  pumping ATPase. During relaxation of the muscle another part of troponin C-bound  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ , as it was released before from internal storage sites, will again be taken up by the action of the sarcoplasmic reticulum  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  pumping ATPase. The extent of myocardial contraction and the velocity of muscle relaxation depends on the intracellular  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  concentration in the cytosol during the systole and on the rate of the removal of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  from the myofibrils, respectively.

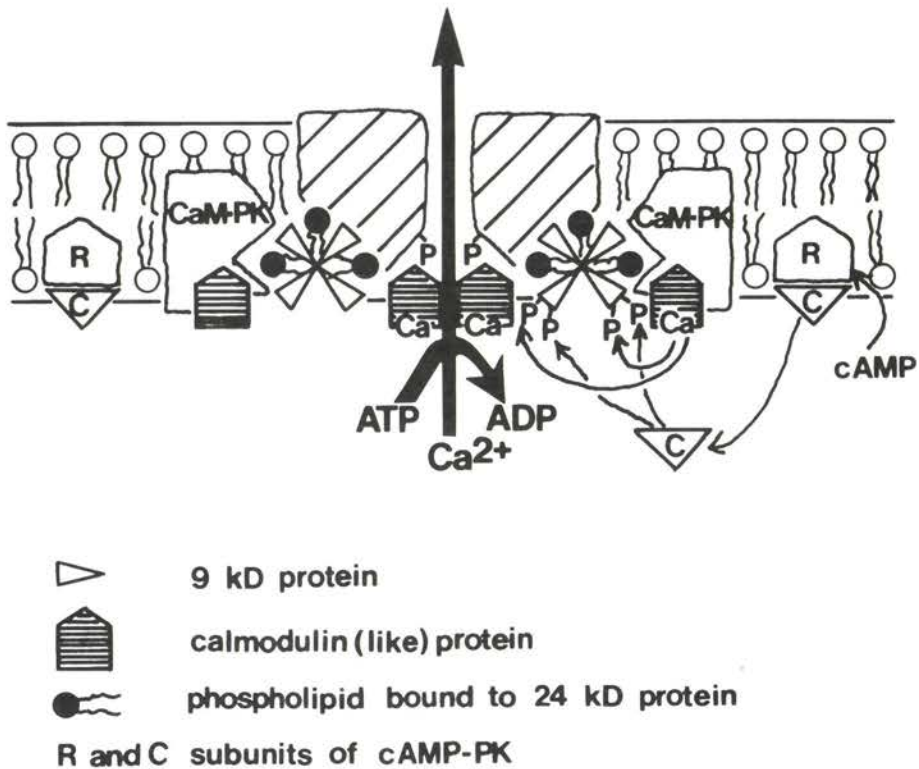
It is well known that both contraction force and relaxation rate of the heart muscle are hormonally regulated. In particular;  $\beta$ -adrenergic agonists not only increase contraction force but also enhance the rate of relaxation. A considerable number of papers have indicated that cyclic AMP as intracellular messenger of catecholamines affects physiological target systems (enzymes and transporters) by stimulating a protein kinase (for reviews, see Sulakhe and St. Louis 1976; Wollenberger and Will 1978; Tada and Katz 1982; Reuter 1983; England 1983). The changes are largely brought about by cyclic AMP-induced phosphorylation of sarcolemmal, cytosolic, contractile and sarcoplasmic reticular proteins. Now it has become apparent that cyclic AMP-induced phosphorylation reactions do regulate force and shortening properties of cardiac muscle by manipulating intracellular



concentration of Ca<sup>2+</sup> ions. This paper gives an outline of the present consensus on how cyclic AMP does so by modulating sarcolemmal Ca<sup>2+</sup> transporting systems. Another concept that evolved quite recently and with which will be dealt here is that Ca<sup>2+</sup>-calmodulin dependent phosphorylation processes may have a role in amplifying the catecholamine response (Haiech and Demaille 1983). On the other hand, these reactions may have an essential role in protecting the myocyte against Ca<sup>2+</sup> overload originating from  $\beta$ -adrenergic overstimulation (Louis and Maffit 1982). In the myocardium, pharmacological agents known under the groupnames:  $\beta$ -blockers and Ca<sup>2+</sup> channel blockers share a common property, namely both drugs reduce Ca<sup>2+</sup> entry during the plateau phase of cardiac action potential (Naylor et al. 1984). However, it has been shown that the mechanisms of their inhibition are quite different. One group of agents apparently interacts with the cyclic AMP-mediated events, and the other may either interact directly with the slow Ca<sup>2+</sup>-channel or with Ca<sup>2+</sup>-calmodulin-dependent regulation of the Ca<sup>2+</sup> channel. The second group of drugs may also affect the Ca<sup>2+</sup>-pumping ATPase or the Na<sup>+</sup>/Ca<sup>2+</sup> antiporter. Before describing these mechanisms, though, it is useful to start with a description of the phosphorylation sites in cardiac sarcolemma and the ultimate effect of phosphorylation on the functioning of Ca<sup>2+</sup> transporters.

### **Phosphorylation of Sarcolemma Proteins in vivo and in vitro**

Several membrane proteins have previously been described in sarcolemma that were substrates for an intrinsic cyclic AMP-dependent protein kinase with apparent  $M_r$  values of 53,000; 26,000; 15,000 and 9000 (Lamers and Stinis 1980; Lamers and Weeda 1984). The protein of  $M_r$  9000 appears to be a substrate protein for an intrinsic Ca<sup>2+</sup>-calmodulin-dependent protein kinase as well, the latter being in addition able to phosphorylate a protein of  $M_r$  55,000 (Lamers et al. 1981). This characteristic phosphoprotein pattern of sarcolemma has been described in several other reports (Jones et al. 1981; Rinaldi et al. 1982; Flockerzi et al. 1983). It should be noted that the sarcolemmal membrane proteins before being processed for electrophoresis, are treated with SDS at 95 °C, which has been shown (Lamers et al. 1981; Lamers and Weeda 1984; Rinaldi et al. 1982) to be a prerequisite for the detection of the  $M_r$  9000 protein. The protein would otherwise be present in the  $M_r$  23–24,000 region of the gel. This was shown to be due to the fact that the  $M_r$  9000 protein is a monomer derived from the 23–24,000 phospholamban-like protein (Fig. 1) which apparently is composed of several electrophoretically indistinguishable monomers  $M_r$  (9–11,000 each), containing a different site for phosphorylation by cyclic AMP and Ca<sup>2+</sup>-calmodulin-dependent protein kinase (Wegener and Jones 1984). The latter results were obtained with the  $M_r$  9000 protein present in cardiac sarcoplasmic reticulum where it originally



**Fig. 1.** Schematic presentation of the regulation of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  pumping ATPase localized in cardiac sarcolemma. CaM-PK is an abbreviation for  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -calmodulin-dependent protein kinase. Introduction of phosphate groups into serine side residues of 9 kD subunit proteins has been shown to induce an increase in the rate of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -pumping ATPase.

was discovered in the high molecular weight form ( $M_r$  22,000) (see Tada and Katz 1982). Those two different sites on the sarcolemmal  $M_r$  9000 protein, phosphorylated by cyclic AMP, and  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -calmodulin-dependent protein kinase, were previously demonstrated by following the time-course of  $^{32}\text{P}$  incorporation in isolated sarcolemmal vesicles (Lamers et al. 1981). It is interesting to note that, very recently, phospholamban-like protein in sarcolemma has also been found to be a substrate protein for an intrinsic  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -activated phospholipid-dependent protein kinase (Iwasa and Hosey 1984). Phosphorylation of the phospholamban-like protein and the  $M_r$  15,000 protein in intact heart can be made apparent by perfusion of  $^{32}\text{P}_i$ -preperfused hearts with added catecholamine (Huggins and England 1983; Walsh et al. 1979). In the latter experiments it was shown that the increase in  $^{32}\text{P}$  incorporation into the  $M_r$  9000 protein preceded the inotropic response by 5–10 s. No data were presented concerning the time at which the

heart showed an increased rate of relaxation. The data support the hypothesis that phosphorylation of the  $M_r$  9000 and 15,000 protein in cardiac sarcolemma mediate changes in Ca<sup>2+</sup> transporting properties induced by catecholamines.

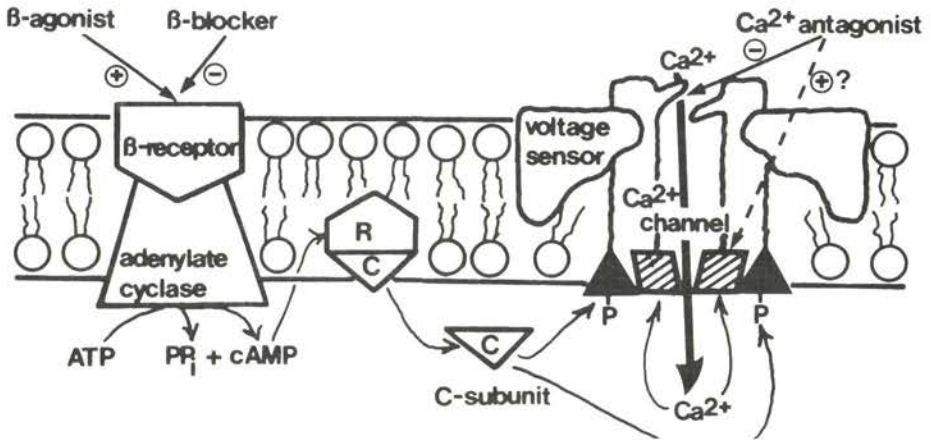
The possibility that the phospholamban-like protein in sarcolemma represents a sarcoplasmic reticulum contaminant has been proposed by Manalan and Jones (1982) and Katz et al. (1983). However, this possibility has been ruled out by other recent reports (Lamers and Stinis 1983; Flockerzi et al. 1983; Huggins and England 1983; and Capony et al. 1983), which demonstrated the abundant presence of  $M_r$  9000 protein molecules in purified sarcolemmal vesicles.

### Regulation of the Sarcolemmal Ca<sup>2+</sup> Pumping ATPase by Phosphorylation

Studies with heart sarcolemmal vesicles have demonstrated that Ca<sup>2+</sup>-pumping ATPase is modulated either by cyclic AMP- or Ca<sup>2+</sup>-calmodulin-dependent phosphorylation (Sulakhe and St. Louis 1976; Hui et al. 1976; Wollenberger and Will 1978; Ziegelhöffer et al. 1979; Lamers et al. 1981; Caroni and Carafoli 1981b; Vetter et al. 1982). The phosphorylation, leading to activation of the Ca<sup>2+</sup> pump, is catalyzed by cyclic AMP-dependent protein kinase, either intrinsically present or exogenously added (Fig. 1). The same is true for the activation through Ca<sup>2+</sup>-dependent phosphorylation. In order to add the Ca<sup>2+</sup>-dependent protein kinase exogenously, Ca<sup>2+</sup>-calmodulin-dependent phosphorylase kinase was used (Sulakhe and St. Louis 1976; Caroni et al. 1983). In most cases, the activation of the Ca<sup>2+</sup> pump originates from a change in the  $V_{max}$  and  $K_{0.5}$  for Ca<sup>2+</sup>. In contrast, in our studies on dog heart sarcolemma (Lamers et al. 1981) cyclic AMP-dependent phosphorylation increased the affinity for Ca<sup>2+</sup> ions, and no effects could be shown if membranes were phosphorylated with Ca<sup>2+</sup>-calmodulin-dependent protein kinase. The specificity of the cyclic AMP-induced activation of the Ca<sup>2+</sup> pumping ATPase could be demonstrated by its sensitivity to less than 10  $\mu$ g/ml of heat-stable protein kinase inhibitor. In this respect it is important to note that in another study a 10-fold higher concentration of the protein kinase inhibitor was needed to partially block the cyclic AMP-induced increase in  $V_{max}$  rate of the Ca<sup>2+</sup>-pumping ATPase (Caroni and Carafoli 1983). At present it is not clear which phosphoprotein is the direct activator of the Ca<sup>2+</sup>-pumping ATPase. In the light of the dual activation by cyclic AMP and Ca<sup>2+</sup>-calmodulin it seems likely that the  $M_r$  9000 protein is involved (Fig. 1). The protein has been shown to be present in more than 5:1 stoichiometry with the monomeric <sup>32</sup>P intermediate of the Ca<sup>2+</sup> pumping ATPase (Lamers and Stinis 1983).

A comparison of Ca<sup>2+</sup> activation patterns between the sarcolemmal Ca<sup>2+</sup> pumping ATPase and Ca<sup>2+</sup> calmodulin-dependent protein kinase was made previously (Lamers et al. 1981). It can be concluded from these results that rather





**Fig. 2.** Regulation of the cardiac slow  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  channel by  $\beta$ -receptor stimulation. Interaction sites of  $\beta$ -blockers and  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  antagonists are also indicated. C-subunit stands for the active component of cyclic AMP-dependent protein kinase. The phosphorylatable subunit (full triangles) and  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -dependent closing gate protein (stripped squares) are presented at the cytosolic part of the transmembrane  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  channel protein.

high concentrations of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  are needed to activate half-maximally  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -calmodulin-dependent protein kinase. Calmodulin-dependent protein kinase thus will have a minimal activity at  $0.3 \mu\text{mol/lCa}^{2+}$ , a level at which the cyclic AMP-dependent protein kinase-induced activation is maximal.

### Regulation of the Sarcolemmal Slow $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ Channel by Phosphorylation

Reuter (1983) has shown that treatment of isolated heart cells with catecholamines increases the probability of opening of the slow  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  channels. Therefore it was postulated that one of the targets of cyclic AMP-dependent protein kinase should be a component of the slow  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  channel, the phosphorylation of which would facilitate voltage-dependent opening of the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  channel (Fig. 2). This postulate was supported by experiments in which a purified catalytic subunit of cyclic AMP-dependent protein kinase was injected into isolated heart cells, resulting in an increased amount of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  entering the cells during depolarization (Osterrieder et al. 1982). Rinaldi et al. (1982) studied  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  channel activity in isolated sarcolemmal vesicles and observed an increase in depolarization-induced  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake if the vesicles were phosphorylated by cyclic AMP-dependent protein kinase. However, this *in vitro* measurable  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  channel requires an outwards directed  $\text{Na}^+$  gradient for activity, and it is relatively insensitive to  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  entry blockers (Philipson 1983). These properties are inconsistent with known properties

of the cardiac muscle Ca<sup>2+</sup> channel. Also, other evidence has raised serious concerns regarding the interpretation of the „passive“ flux of Ca<sup>2+</sup> ions through a channel (Katz et al. 1983). At any rate, Flockerzi et al. (1983) have shown recently that a very small portion of the depolarization-induced Ca<sup>2+</sup> uptake might indeed represent a flux through open voltage-operated channels, but no effect of cyclic AMP-dependent phosphorylation could be detected.

### Regulation of the Na<sup>+</sup>/Ca<sup>2+</sup> Antiporter by Phosphorylation

In heart, one may expect that Ca<sup>2+</sup> enters the cell by the Na<sup>+</sup>/Ca<sup>2+</sup> exchanger during the depolarization phase and leaves it during repolarization of the plasma membrane (Mullins 1979). Thus, cyclic AMP-dependent regulation of the Na<sup>+</sup>/Ca<sup>2+</sup> antiporter alone by phosphorylation would be the least complicated mechanism for explaining the  $\beta$ -adrenergic stimulation of both Ca<sup>2+</sup> entry during systole and Ca<sup>2+</sup> efflux during diastole. However, no effect of cyclic AMP-dependent protein kinase on the Na<sup>+</sup>/Ca<sup>2+</sup> antiporter in cardiac vesicles could be demonstrated (Rinaldi et al. 1982). The Na<sup>+</sup>/Ca<sup>2+</sup> antiporter is however subject to Ca<sup>2+</sup>-calmodulin-dependent phosphorylation, which increase both its affinity for Ca<sup>2+</sup> and its  $V_{max}$  rate (Caroni and Carafoli 1983). The  $K_{0.5}$  value did change from 10 to 2  $\mu\text{mol/l}$  for Ca<sup>2+</sup> ions (Fig. 3). Such a phosphorylation occurs in response to rather high Ca<sup>2+</sup> concentrations ( $K_{0.5} = 2 \mu\text{mol/l}$ ), however, the addition of calmodulin appeared to increase the Ca<sup>2+</sup> affinity of the protein kinase ( $K_{0.5} = 0.8 \mu\text{mol/l}$ ). It is proposed that the activation mechanism would provide a positive feed-back mechanism to potentiate the cyclic AMP-dependent increase of penetration of Ca<sup>2+</sup> into the cell as well as the increase of rate of Ca<sup>2+</sup> extrusion from the myocyte. However, the proposed stimulation of Ca<sup>2+</sup> entry will be marginal in the light of the saturating concentrations of Ca<sup>2+</sup> and Na<sup>+</sup> that permanently exist at the outside of the sarcolemma. The Ca<sup>2+</sup>-calmodulin-dependent inactivating enzyme (a protein phosphatase with  $K_{0.5}$  of 3  $\mu\text{mol/l}$  for Ca<sup>2+</sup>) would represent a negative feed-back mechanism designed to protect the cardiac cell from Ca<sup>2+</sup> overload (Caroni and Carofoli 1983).

### Calmodulin-Like Proteins as Ca<sup>2+</sup>-Dependent Regulators of Sarcolemmal Ca<sup>2+</sup> Transporting Systems

Recently, it has been discovered by us and others (Caroni and Carafoli 1981a; Lamers et al. 1981; Lamers and Stinis 1983; Tuana et al. 1981; Mas-Oliva et al. 1983) that Ca<sup>2+</sup>-pumping ATPase contains a tightly bound calmodulin-like protein that directly regulates Ca<sup>2+</sup> sensitivity of the pump (see also Fig. 1). By hypotonic treatment immediately followed by hypertonic wash in the presence of EGTA (Caroni and Carafoni 1981a) or by calmidazolium treatment (Lamers and Stinis

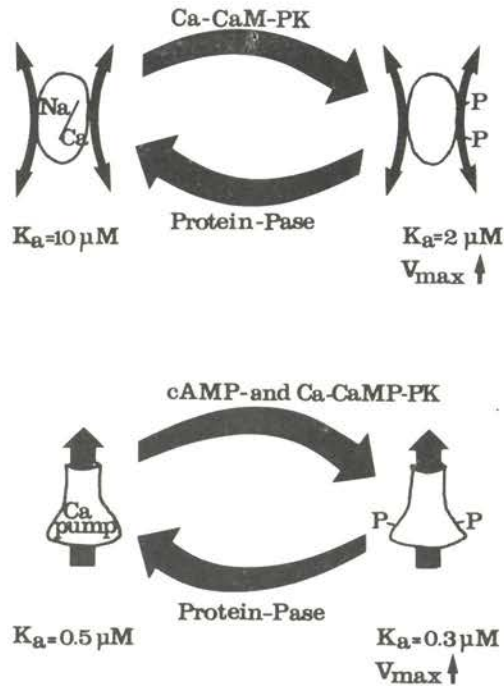
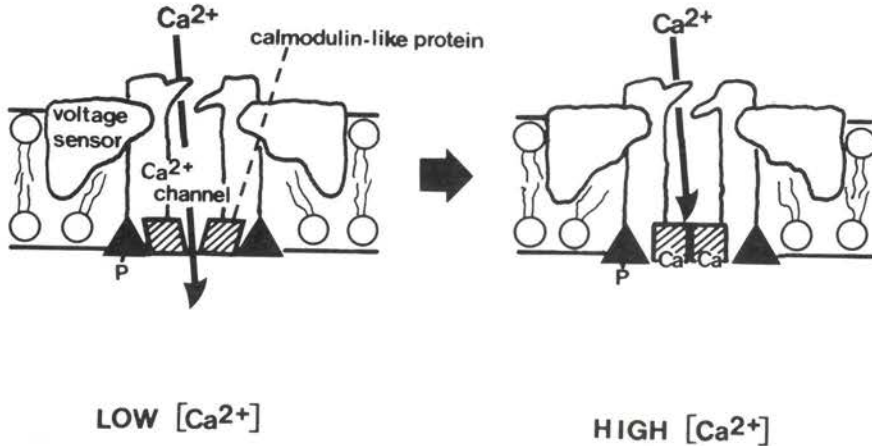


Fig. 3. Comparison between regulation of the Ca<sup>2+</sup>-pumping ATPase and the Na<sup>+</sup>/Ca<sup>2+</sup> antiporter by phosphorylation-dephosphorylation mechanisms. K<sub>a</sub> refers to the affinity of the Ca<sup>2+</sup> transporter for Ca<sup>2+</sup> ions.

1983) of sarcolemmal vesicles the calmodulin-like subunit can be removed from the Ca<sup>2+</sup> pump. The extracted M<sub>r</sub> 15–17,000 protein has been shown to activate brain phosphodiesterase (Lamers and Stinis 1983) and erythrocytic Ca<sup>2+</sup> pumping ATPase (Caroni and Carafoli 1981a). However, amino acid sequencing would be required to prove its identity with calmodulin. The stimulation of brain phosphodiesterase by sarcolemmal calmodulin-like protein has been shown to be Ca<sup>2+</sup> dependent, thus it can be assumed that we have to deal with a Ca<sup>2+</sup> binding protein. Louis and Jarvis (1982), using an affinity labeling technique, were able to show that the M<sub>r</sub> 8–11,000 phosphoprotein (phospholamban) in sarcoplasmic reticulum cross-linked with calmodulin in a Ca<sup>2+</sup>-dependent manner.

These findings may suggest that the phospholamban-like protein in sarcolemma is also an acceptor of calmodulin in Ca<sup>2+</sup>-pumping ATPase. Calmidazolium, the most potent anti-calmodulin drug so far described (Van Belle 1981; Lamers and Stinis 1983) is a strong inhibitor of the sarcolemmal Ca<sup>2+</sup>-pumping ATPase. The drug decreases the affinity of the pumping ATPase for Ca<sup>2+</sup> ions. A comparative measurement was done with a dihydropyridine Ca<sup>2+</sup> entry blocker (Fleckenstein 1977) felodipine. Whereas calmidazolium and felodipine both blocked





**Fig. 4.** A schematic picture of the possible role of a Ca<sup>2+</sup> binding protein (calmodulin-like protein) as the inner side closing gate of the slow Ca<sup>2+</sup> channel (compare also Johnson 1984).

the Ca<sup>2+</sup>-calmodulin-dependent brain phosphodiesterase, felodipine, in contrast to calmidazolium, interacted non-competitively with Ca<sup>2+</sup> on the Ca<sup>2+</sup>-pumping ATPase (results not shown). In conclusion, it is very likely that calmidazolium and felodipine are interacting in a different manner with the calmodulin-like protein of the Ca<sup>2+</sup>-pumping ATPase. It should be noted that another dihydropyridine Ca<sup>2+</sup> entry blocker, nifedipine, did not inhibit the Ca<sup>2+</sup>-pumping ATPase. The drug was even slightly stimulating the enzyme (results not shown).

Recent studies by the group of Johnson and Wittenauer (1983); Johnson et al. (1983) and Johnson (1984), on binding of calmidazolium, felodipine and prenylamine to fluorescent calmodulin are very interesting in the light of the effects on the Ca<sup>2+</sup>-pumping ATPase observed in our laboratory. By fluorescence measurements it was demonstrated by Johnson et al. (1983) that interaction occurred between high affinity binding sites on calmodulin of Ca<sup>2+</sup>, calmidazolium or felodipine, respectively. On the basis of these results and the efficiency of felodipine to block the Ca<sup>2+</sup> channel the authors proposed that a calmodulin-like protein might also be present in the slow Ca<sup>2+</sup> channel protein complex localized at the inside of the sarcolemma (Fig. 4). This Ca<sup>2+</sup> binding protein would regulate the Ca<sup>2+</sup> dependent closing of the slow Ca<sup>2+</sup> channel as it is proposed to occur at the inner gate. This gate would be open at low Ca<sup>2+</sup> and closed at higher levels. Ca<sup>2+</sup> entry blockers would interact with this calmodulin-like protein to increase its affinity for Ca<sup>2+</sup>, thereby closing the slow Ca<sup>2+</sup> channel more rapidly (compare Fig. 2). Similarly, these drugs could interact with the calmodulin-like protein of the Ca<sup>2+</sup>-pumping ATPase, thereby increasing its affinity for Ca<sup>2+</sup> ions. Both mechanisms would explain Ca<sup>2+</sup> antagonistic action of the drug. Indeed, a stimulating

effect has recently been reported on the sarcolemmal ATP-dependent  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake at low concentrations of nifedipine (David-Duflho et al. 1984).

**Acknowledgement.** The author wishes to thank Miss M. I. Wieriks for her assistance in the preparation of the manuscript, and Mr. J. Cysouw for carrying out the experiments on drug effects on the calmodulin-dependent enzymes.

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Received May 25, 1984/Accepted August 7, 1984