

EVIDENCE THAT RENILLA LUCIFERASE IS NOT
A CALCIUM-TRIGGERED PHOTOPROTEIN*

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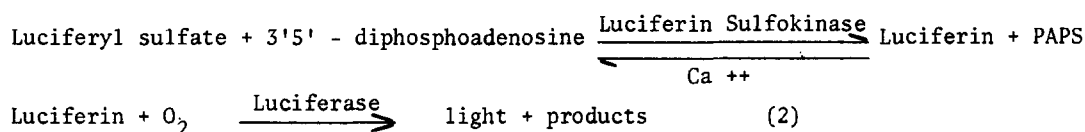
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Received January 27, 1970

Summary

When crude extracts of *Renilla luciferase* are prepared in the presence of a chelator such as EDTA, a flash of light is observed upon the addition of calcium ions to such extracts. Although this behavior is reminiscent of calcium triggered photoproteins, we have shown that calcium ions have no effect on the activity of highly purified *Renilla luciferase*.

We have recently isolated and studied the properties of two enzymes linked to bioluminescence in *Renilla reniformis*.¹ Luciferase¹ and, more recently, luciferin sulfokinase (Karkhanis, Y. D. and M. J. Cormier, unpublished data) have been purified to homogeneity. They catalyze the following reactions:



A flash of light is observed when calcium ions are added to crude extracts of *Renilla* prepared in the presence of chelators, such as EDTA. (Cormier, M.J. and C.B. Eckroade, unpublished data). Recently it has been suggested² that this identifies *Renilla luciferase* as a calcium triggered photoprotein analogous to those previously isolated^{3,4,5}. These photoproteins emit visible light when they are mixed with calcium ions.

Because any possible effect of calcium ions on luciferase would be of importance relative to the mechanism of the light reaction we reexamined the effect of calcium on that enzyme and report the results of those investigations here.

* This work was supported in part by grants from the National Science Foundation and the U. S. Atomic Energy Commission. M.J.C. is a Career Development Awardee No. 1-K3-6M-3331-05 of the U.S. Public Health Service.

Materials and Methods-Luciferase and luciferin sulfokinase were prepared as previously described¹. Similarly pure luciferyl sulfate and luciferin were prepared as described earlier^{1,6}. 3', 5'-diphosphoadenosine was prepared by the phosphorylation of adenosine with dibenzylphosphoryl chloride⁷, as modified by Moffatt and Khorana⁸.

Results and Discussion-Table I shows that calcium ion is without effect on the activity of luciferase in the presence or absence of an excess of EDTA. Furthermore all buffers used during the purification of luciferase contained 2.5×10^{-4} M EDTA. As previously indicated⁹ the only enzyme in this bioluminescence system that is inhibited by EDTA and stimulated by calcium is luciferin sulfokinase.

It is not possible to simulate a calcium-triggered photoprotein effect by incubating luciferase and luciferin sulfokinase together with luciferyl sulfate, 3', 5'-diphosphoadenosine, and EDTA. The size of the active complex recently reported² appears to be large since the activity sediments in 20 minutes at $30,000 \times g$. The molecular weight of luciferase is approximately 14,000 while that of luciferin sulfokinase is about the same. These results suggest that some component(s) in the crude extract in addition to luciferase, is responsible for the apparent photoprotein behavior of EDTA treated material.

TABLE I

Effect of EDTA and Calcium on the Activity
of Renilla Luciferase

Test System	Maximal Light Intensity
	Quanta Sec ⁻¹ x 10 ⁻¹⁰
A. Luciferase	20
B. Luciferase + Calcium	21
C. Luciferase + EDTA; incubated 5 minutes	21

Conditions: The assay system consisted of final concentrations of the following: potassium phosphate (pH 7.5), 50 mM; luciferin, 4×10^{-3} mM; luciferase, 0.1mg in a total vol. of 1.1 ml. B contained calcium chloride, 2mM and C contained disodium EDTA, 5 mM. Temperature was maintained at 25°C.

It is clear, however, that the purified enzymes do not exhibit the photoprotein effect in the presence of EDTA.

It has been suggested^{10,11} that photoprotein systems of the types mentioned above may be explained by assuming the existence of an EDTA-inhibited complex of some type that contains luciferin and luciferase and which is triggered to react upon the addition of calcium ions. The Renilla system provides a model for this type of explanation.

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