Isotopic (18O) shift in 31P nuclear magnetic resonance applied to a study of enzyme-catalyzed phosphate–phosphate exchange and phosphate (oxygen)–water exchange reactions

(ADP–P exchange/poly nucleotide phosphorylase/site of bond cleavage/inorganic pyrophosphatase/oxygen scrambling)

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Contributed by Mildred Cohn, October 14, 1977

ABSTRACT An isotopic shift of the 31P nuclear magnetic resonance due to 18O bonded to phosphorus of 0.2206 ppm has been observed in inorganic orthophosphate and adenine nucleotides. Thus, the separation between the resonances of 31P18O4 and 31P16O4 at 145.7 MHz is 12 Hz and, in a randomized sample containing ~50% 18O, all five 18O–16O species are resolved and separated from each other by 3 Hz. Not only does this yield the 18O/16O ratio of the phosphate but, more important, the 16O-labeled phosphate in effect can serve as a double label in following phosphate reactions, for oxygen in all cases and for phosphorus, provided the oxygen does not exchange with solvent water. Thus, it becomes possible to follow labeled phosphate or labeled oxygen continuously as reactions proceed. Rate studies involving (i) phosphorus and (ii) oxygen are illustrated by continuous monitoring of the reaction between (i) the β phosphate of ADP and inorganic phosphate catalyzed by poly nucleotide phosphorylase and (ii) inorganic orthophosphate and water catalyzed by yeast inorganic pyrophosphatase. In the ADP–P exchange, the P(18O) yielded an α P(18O16O) and a β P(16O18O) proving that bond cleavage occurs between the α P and the α-β bridge oxygen. Among the many additional potential uses of this labeling technique and its spectroscopic observation are: (i) different labeling of each phosphate group of ATP, (ii) to follow rate of transfer of 18O from a nonphosphate compound such as a carboxylic acid to a phosphate compound, and (iii) to follow the rate of scrambling (for example, of the β-γ bridge oxygen of ATP to nonbridge β P positions) and simultaneously the rate of exchange of the γ P nonbridge oxgens with solvent water in various ATPase reactions.

The involvement of a large variety of phosphate compounds in the cell as structural units, metabolic intermediates, and regulatory factors has led to widespread use of radioactive 32P as a tracer and, to a lesser extent, the stable isotope 18O. Both 18O and 32P measurements require separation of individual components of the reaction mixture, and with neither mass spectrometer nor radioactivity measurement is it possible to follow rates of isotopic transfer or exchange continuously. Furthermore, analysis of [18O]phosphate requires considerable chemical manipulation for mass spectrometric analysis (1) and even more complex and ingenious procedures for establishing 18O scrambling in enzymatic reactions of phosphate compounds (3). In this communication, we describe a spectroscopic method for following the phosphate or oxygen of phosphate continuously. The method is based on our finding that substitution of 18O for 16O in phosphate induces a chemical shift in the 31P nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectrum for each O of the four Os substituted and in effect introduces a double label that simultaneously labels the phosphates and oxygen of phosphates.

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The usefulness of phosphate exchange and 18O exchange reactions in elucidating mechanistic aspects of enzymatic reactions has been amply demonstrated (2–4). In particular, the site of bond cleavage has been determined, the existence of intermediates has been established, and rate-determining steps have been identified. Exchange rates of the order of milliseconds between enzyme-bound phosphate compounds at equilibrium have been measured by line broadening of 31P resonances (5, 6), and exchange rates of the order of seconds have been measured by transfer of saturation in 31P NMR (7). The method described in this communication is applicable to phosphate–phosphate and phosphate–oxygen exchanges occurring in minutes or hours.

31P NMR of phosphate (18O) permits continuous monitoring of phosphate transfer from reactant to product or phosphate exchange between them at equilibrium, provided the oxygen is not exchanging with solvent water simultaneously, in which case the label is lost. The latter exchange does not occur spontaneously but is catalyzed by a number of enzymes (4). Phosphate–phosphate exchange rate measurement by 31P NMR is exemplified in this report by the P(18O)–ADP (18O) exchange catalyzed by poly nucleotide phosphorylase (8). In the same experiment, the site of bond cleavage in ADP is simultaneously established. The resolution of the resonances arising from P18O4, P18O216O2, P16O218O2, P18O16O3, and P16O4 also makes it possible to monitor continuously by 31P NMR the rate of transfer of oxygen into phosphate or of exchange of the oxygen in the absence of net reaction between phosphates as well as scrambling of the oxygen label during reaction. An example is given by the phosphate (93.4% 18O)–water (18O) exchange reaction catalyzed by inorganic pyrophosphatase of yeast (9) and the concomitant scrambling of the four oxygens of inorganic phosphate.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Potassium dihydrogen phosphate was exchanged with H218O as described (10) to yield a product containing 44.4% 18O. Phosphoric acid containing 93.4% 18O was a generous gift from I. A. Rose of the Institute of Cancer Research. H218O was purchased from Miles Chemical Co. Inorganic pyrophosphatase was a gift from B. Cooperman of the University of Pennsylvania, and poly nucleotide phosphorylase, type 15 (Micrococcus luteus) was purchased from P-L Biochemicals. ADP and Tris were obtained from Sigma Chemical Co. All other reagents were of reagent grade.

NMR Measurements. The 31P spectra were recorded either at 24.3 MHz on a Varian NV14 spectrometer modified to operate in the Fourier transform mode with quadrature detection

Abbreviation: NMR, nuclear magnetic resonance.
RESULTS

Isotopic (\(^{18}\)O) Shift of \(^{31}\)P Resonance. The \(^{31}\)P spectra of a mixture of 10 mM P\(_1\) (\(^{16}\)O\(_4\)) and 10 mM P\(_1\) (93.4\% \(^{18}\)O) are shown in Fig. 1. The latter contained the following fractions by statistical distribution: 0.76 \(^{16}\)O\(_4\), 0.215 \(^{16}\)O\(^{18}\)O\(_4\), and 0.023 \(^{18}\)O\(_4\)\(^{18}\)O\(_4\); other species were negligible. The separation between the \(^{18}\)O\(_4\) species and the \(^{16}\)O\(_4\) species at 145.7 MHz (Fig. 1A) was 12 Hz and all peaks were well resolved; at this signal-to-noise ratio, the \(^{16}\)O\(_2\)\(^{18}\)O\(_2\) (0.025) species cannot be observed. The percentage \(^{18}\)O calculated from the ratio of the intensities of the \(^{18}\)O\(_2\)\(^{18}\)O\(_2\) peaks from the binomial distribution is 93.9\% compared to 93.4\% obtained by mass spectrometric analysis. At 24.3 MHz (Fig. 1B), the separation between \(^{18}\)O\(_4\) and \(^{16}\)O\(_4\) peaks was only 2 Hz; the \(^{16}\)O\(_4\) and \(^{18}\)O\(_4\)\(^{18}\)O\(_4\) peaks, which were separated by 0.5 Hz, were only partially resolved. In Fig. 2, the spectrum of KH\(_2\)PO\(_4\) prepared by equilibration with H\(_2\)\(^{18}\)O (~51\% \(^{18}\)O) shows all five possible species with the following fractional distribution of peak intensities: \(^{18}\)O\(_4\) = 0.098, \(^{16}\)O\(_3\)\(^{18}\)O = 0.302, \(^{16}\)O\(_2\)\(^{18}\)O\(_2\) = 0.367, \(^{16}\)O\(^{18}\)O\(_3\) = 0.194, and \(^{18}\)O\(_3\) = 0.038. From this distribution, the \(^{18}\)O/\(^{18}\)O + \(^{18}\)O ratio is calculated to be 0.444. On a statistical basis, the calculated values for the distribution of species in a sample of KH\(_2\)PO\(_4\) containing 44.4\% \(^{18}\)O in the sample are 0.096, 0.305, 0.366, 0.195, and 0.039, respectively.

Exchange of Phosphate (\(^{18}\)O) with ADP (\(^{18}\)O). The exchange reaction \(P_1 \leftrightarrow ADP\) catalyzed by polynucleotide phosphorylase, a nucleotidyl transferring enzyme (8), usually measured with \(^{32}\)P does not involve any \(^{18}\)O exchange with the solvent water. Therefore, it should be possible to follow the exchange reaction between \(P_1\) (\(^{18}\)O) and the \(\beta\) phosphate of ADP (\(^{18}\)O). Initial, intermediate, and final time points of such an exchange experiment are shown in Fig. 3. The results show that, as \(P_1\) (93.4\% \(^{18}\)O) (see Fig. 1 for detailed spectrum of this species) exchanged with the \(\beta\) P of ADP (\(^{18}\)O), the \(^{18}\)O\(_4\) peak of \(P_1\) increased with time as the \(^{18}\)O\(_4\) and its accompanying \(^{18}\)O\(_3\)\(^{18}\)O\(_2\) decreased with time. The inverse growth pattern of \(^{18}\)O species with time was observed for the \(\beta\) P of ADP. Because 15 mM ADP and 10 mM \(P_1\) were initially present, if no net reaction occurred at equilibrium, one would expect the transferred peak of \(P_1\) (\(^{18}\)O\(_4\)) to be 1.5 times the original \(P_1\) peaks and an equivalent ratio of 2:3 for the new to the original peak of ADP. These quantitative relationships do not hold exactly because a small amount of oligo(A) was formed as observed in Fig. 3 at ~3.7 ppm upfield from \(P_1\).

The \(^{31}\)P spectrum of the final equilibrium mixture at 145.7 MHz is shown in Fig. 4 with the \(P_i\), \(\alpha\) P, and \(\beta\) P resonances of \(^{18}\)O (see Fig. 1 for detailed spectrum of this species) exchanged with the \(\beta\) P of ADP (\(^{18}\)O). The \(^{18}\)O\(_4\) peak of \(P_1\) increased with time as the \(^{18}\)O\(_4\) and its accompanying \(^{18}\)O\(_3\)\(^{18}\)O\(_2\) decreased with time. The inverse growth pattern of \(^{18}\)O species with time was observed for the \(\beta\) P of ADP. Because 15 mM ADP and 10 mM \(P_1\) were initially present, if no net reaction occurred at equilibrium, one would expect the transferred peak of \(P_1\) (\(^{18}\)O\(_4\)) to be 1.5 times the original \(P_1\) peaks and an equivalent ratio of 2:3 for the new to the original peak of ADP. These quantitative relationships do not hold exactly because a small amount of oligo(A) was formed as observed in Fig. 3 at ~3.7 ppm upfield from \(P_1\).

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ADP expanded. It should be noted that all four oxygens of P1 exchanged with the four oxygens of β P, yielding a β P with the same distribution of 18O and 16O species as the initial P1—i.e., 0.76 P18O4 and 0.215 P18O216O. Because the bridge oxygen between the α and β P contains 0.92 18O (0.76 + 0.215), the primary species of α P formed is P18O318O. Thus, the site of cleavage of ADP in the reaction is between the α P and the bridge oxygen, as proved by the 18O phosphate species formed for both α and β P. The reaction may be formulated as:

\[ ^{18}\text{O}P_1 - ^{16}\text{O} + A - ^{16}\text{O}P_1 ^{18}\text{O} \rightleftarrows ^{16}\text{O}P_1 - ^{18}\text{O} + A - ^{18}\text{O}P_1 ^{16}\text{O} \]

Exchange of Phosphate (18O) with H216O. The oxygen of inorganic orthophosphate does not exchange with water spontaneously at a measurable rate at room temperature, but a number of enzymes catalyze this reaction (4). The 31P spectra of orthophosphate (93.4% 18O) in Fig 5 taken at different times after initiation of the reaction by the addition of inorganic pyrophosphatase shows the rise and fall of each intermediate between 18O4 and 16O4 as the exchange reaction proceeds. Computer simulations of such a process have been presented by Eargle et al. (11). No attempt has been made to determine the actual rate in this case because the peak heights are not a true measure of the concentration of each species, due to overlap of the resonances at 24.3 MHz. Although these spectra could be analyzed for concentration of each species, the spectra at 145.7 MHz (see Fig. 2) give the concentrations from peak heights directly, and future experiments should be done at the higher frequency.

**DISCUSSION**

Isotope effects of 2H on hydrogen (12) and fluorine (13) chemical shifts have been observed and have been ascribed to differences in zero-point vibrational functions (14). The existence of an observable chemical shift of the 31P NMR resonance due to 18O substitution in the phosphate group opens up many potential uses of this phenomenon for the study of biochemical reactions. A few have been demonstrated in the experiments reported, including (i) a nondestructive method for the determination of high concentrations of 18O (>5-95%) from the distribution of 16O18O species (Figs. 1 and 2); (ii) continuous monitoring of phosphate (oxygen)—water exchange as illustrated in inorganic pyrophosphatase-catalyzed reaction; (iii) continuous monitoring of PO4 = XOPO3 exchange as illustrated by polynucleotide phosphorylase catalyzed exchange; and (iv) the site of bond cleavage in such reactions.

Bond cleavage of ATP between the β-γ bridge oxygen and the γ P (15) in the 3-phosphoglycerate kinase-catalyzed reaction has been demonstrated by following the 31P NMR of the P1—ATP exchange catalyzed by the coupled reactions of glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate dehydrogenase and 3-phosphoglycerate kinase. In this set of reactions, the γ phosphate formed from P18O4 of P1 is P18O318O, in contrast to the P18O4 species that appears in the β P of ADP in the polynucleotide phosphorylase reaction. (The details of these experiments will be published elsewhere.) Obviously, rates of phosphate—phosphate exchange measurements can be generalized to any reactant–product pair such as ATP—PPi. To follow rates of phosphate exchange, sufficient resolution is available at low frequency, and a 60-MHz instrument (24.3 MHz for 31P) suffices. For oxygen exchange, a 360-MHz instrument (145.7 MHz for 31P) is necessary to obtain accurate rate measurements.

The synthesis of ATP with each phosphate labeled differently with 18O would permit the fate of each phosphate moiety to be followed: for example, in the type of reaction of phosphoenolpyruvate synthetase in which it is not obvious whether the source of the phosphate of phosphoenolpyruvate is the β or γ P of ATP. Thus, the advantages of this method of labeling phosphate groups over the use of 32P are the possibility of multiple distinguishable labels, the removal of the need to separate reaction components, and the ability to monitor con-

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* M. Cohn and A. Hu, unpublished data.
accumulated for 8 enzyme inorganic pyrophosphatase. yeast 180), (93.4% few enzymes. exchange NMR must be used, are disadvantages recorded at 145.7 MHz tinuously all reaction components simultaneously. The serious disadvantages are the relatively large amounts of substrates that must be used, the high concentrations of $^{18}$O, and the need for an NMR spectrometer (of high frequency for some applications). A less serious limitation is the loss of the label by $^{18}$O exchange with solvent water, a reaction catalyzed by relatively few enzymes.

![Diagram of NMR spectra](image)

**FIG. 4.** $^{31}$P NMR spectrum of equilibrated ADP–P$_1$ exchange reaction. The same reaction mixture shown in the bottom trace of Fig. 3 was recorded at 145.7 MHz and each $^{31}$P is expanded to indicate the isotopic species.

For most reactions in which $^{18}$O is to be followed with time, whether it is phosphate–water exchange (4) or the transfer of oxygen from a carboxyl group to a phosphate as in the succinyl-CoA synthetase reaction (16) or the rate of scrambling of the $\beta$-$\gamma$ bridge oxygen of ATP in the glutamine synthetase reaction (2), $^{31}$P NMR is the method of choice compared to mass spectrometric analysis.

The authors thank Dr. George H. Reed and Dr. Jacques Reuben for helpful discussions. This work was supported in part by Grant GM 12446 from the U.S. Public Health Service and Grant PCM 74-23620 from the National Science Foundation. M.C. is a Career Investigator of the American Heart Association.


**FIG. 5.** Time course of P$_1$ ($^{18}$O)–water exchange catalyzed by yeast inorganic pyrophosphatase. The solution contained 20 mM P$_1$ (93.4% $^{18}$O), 21 mM MgCl$_2$, 1 mM potassium EDTA, and 2.68 μg of enzyme in 1 ml of D$_2$O; the pH was 7.0. Each $^{31}$P NMR spectrum was accumulated for 8 min at 24.3 MHz with 40 scans, an acquisition time of 6 sec, and a pulse angle of 60°.