

# The Primary Structure of the Flavoprotein D-Aspartate Oxidase from Beef Kidney\*

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The complete primary structure of the peroxisomal flavoenzyme D-aspartate oxidase from beef kidney has been determined by analyses of the peptides obtained through fragmentation of the carboxymethylated protein with trypsin, CNBr, heptafluorobutyric acid/CNBr and *Staphylococcus aureus* V8 protease. The protein consists of a single polypeptide of 338 residues, accounting for a  $M_r$  of 37,305 for the apoprotein. A form of the enzyme lacking Lys-338 and therefore ending with Pro-337 has been detected.

The N-terminal residue is blocked. Seven cysteines and no disulfide bridges are present. Residue 228 can be either Ile or Val. Thus, D-aspartate oxidase presents two types of heterogeneity in the polypeptide chain in addition to the one already described concerning the possible content of FAD or 6-hydroxyflavin adenine dinucleotide.

Comparison of the primary structure of D-aspartate oxidase with other known sequences reveals that D-aspartate oxidase is homologous with D-amino acid oxidase (another flavo-oxidase) and does not present significant sequence similarities with any other protein, including flavoenzymes.

D-Aspartate oxidase (EC 1.4.3.1) is a flavoprotein that catalyzes the oxidative deamination of dicarboxylic D-amino acids by  $O_2$  with the production of  $H_2O_2$ ,  $NH_3$ , and the corresponding  $\alpha$ -keto acids (1). Since the discovery of a D-aspartate oxidase activity in tissue homogenates, it became clear that the enzyme responsible for this activity is distinct from the other well known flavoenzyme D-amino acid oxidase (EC 1.4.3.3), which catalyzes the same reaction but is active only toward neutral and basic amino acids.

D-Aspartate oxidase has been so far purified only from the hepatopancreas of *Octopus vulgaris*. (2) and beef kidney cortex (3). The spectrophotometric properties and kinetic mechanism of the beef enzyme have been investigated in detail (3, 4). These studies showed that the general properties of D-aspartate oxidase resemble those of D-amino acid oxidase.

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The nucleotide sequence(s) reported in this paper has been submitted to the GenBank™/EMBL Data Bank with accession number(s) M91559.

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The latter is still considered a model for the understanding of the mechanism of action of flavoprotein oxidases. For this reason, we extended the comparison between the two enzymes at the primary structure level by determining the amino acid sequence of beef kidney D-aspartate oxidase and comparing it with the one of D-amino acid oxidase from mammals (5-7), yeast (8), and bacteria (9). This information will be useful in order to understand the evolution of these molecules, in view of a possible explanation for their physiological role, which is still unclear.

This report presents the experimental work that allowed the determination of the amino acid sequence of D-aspartate oxidase.

## EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURES AND RESULTS<sup>1,2</sup>

### DISCUSSION

This paper reports for the first time the characterization of the primary structure of the flavoprotein D-aspartate oxidase from beef kidney. The enzyme contains 338 amino acid residues, accounting for a  $M_r$  of 37,305 for the apoprotein. This value agrees with the one determined by sodium dodecyl sulfate-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis and gel filtration, suggesting that also this peroxisomal enzyme is not a glycoprotein, despite the presence of N-glycosylation consensus sequences (Asn-X-Ser/Thr) at positions 181-183, 230-232, and 243-245.

The N-terminal residue is blocked. Seven cysteines and no disulfide bridges are present. The primary structure has been determined by sequencing the fragments obtained by digestion of the carboxymethylated enzyme with trypsin, CNBr, CNBr/HFBA, and *Staphylococcus aureus* protease. Experimental evidence for the amino acid sequence shown in Fig. 9 has been obtained for all but the first amino acid residue, which has been indicated as Met on the basis of the following observations: (a) the sequence of C2 shows an N-terminal extension of 4 amino acid residues with respect to T2, the first tryptic peptide sequenced; (b) the amino acid composition of the tryptic peptide with retention time of 25 min in Fig. 1, whose N terminus is blocked, agrees with the one expected for T1 (Table I); (c) the amino acid composition of the protein deduced from the sequence is in good agreement

<sup>1</sup> Portions of this paper (including "Experimental Procedures" and "Results," Figs. 1-8, and Tables I and II) are presented in miniprint at the end of this paper. Miniprint is easily read with the aid of a standard magnifying glass. Full size photocopies are included in the microfilm edition of the Journal that is available from Waverly Press.

<sup>2</sup> The abbreviations used are: HFBA, heptafluorobutyric acid; PTH, phenylthiohydantoin; GnCl, guanidine hydrochloride; TFA, trifluoroacetic acid; DTNB, 5,5'-dithiobis(2-nitrobenzoic) acid; PVDF, polyvinylidene difluoride; TPCK, N-p-tosyl-L-phenylalanine chloromethyl ketone.

with the one determined by amino acid analysis (Table I); (d) no additional short peptides deriving from fragmentation with CNBr were isolated, suggesting that no other amino acid residues besides a single Met is present before C2. The identification of the C-terminal residue posed some problems due to the lack of information derived from the direct sequence of the entire protein through digestion with carboxypeptidase. In addition, since the last residue is Lys, no tryptic peptide lacking a basic residue at its C terminus was detected, except for T37a, which, however, appears to derive from a form of the enzyme that underwent partial C-terminal proteolysis either in the cell or during the purification procedure of the native enzyme. The assignment of T37 as the C-terminal tryptic peptide is based on the sequence of C7. This CNBr peptide, in fact, overlaps T35, T36, and T37 and lacks a methionine residue at its C terminus. In conclusion, these data show that the enzyme is isolated as a mixture of two forms differing for the C-terminal residue that can be either Pro-337 or Lys-338. This observation is important in view of the role proposed for the C-terminal tripeptide in many peroxisomal enzymes as a "peroxisomal targeting signal" (10). The data presented here for D-aspartate oxidase suggest that such a tripeptide (usually Ser/His(Lys)/Leu) is absent, indicating that some different structural feature fulfills the requirement for the targeting of this enzyme to peroxisomes. However, since Pro has been shown to be a possible substitute for Ser as the first residue of the tripeptide (10), it is also possible that a third residue following Lys-338 (Leu or a residue functionally equivalent for protein targeting) has been proteolytically lost in a manner similar to what is observed for Lys-338.

Microheterogeneity has also been observed at position 228, which can either be Val or Ile. However, this substitution represents a conservative replacement, originated by a single point mutation in the gene, and is not expected to have a major effect on the general properties of the enzyme. In conclusion, this study reveals that D-aspartate oxidase shows molecular microheterogeneity in the polypeptide chain, in addition to the one already described concerning the possible content of FAD or 6-hydroxyflavin adenine dinucleotide in the isolated protein (3).

Fig. 10 shows the alignment of the amino acid sequence of D-aspartate oxidase from bovine kidney and that of several D-amino acid oxidases from various sources. The "consensus sequence," comprising 137 out of 387 residues (35%) was obtained, considering those amino acids that are identical or conservatively substituted in at least six out of the seven sequences shown. It is interesting to note that D-aspartate oxidase presents 125 of the 137 residues of the consensus sequence (91%), pig, human, and mouse D-amino acid oxidase presents 137 (100%), rabbit D-amino acid oxidase presents 134 (98%), *Trigonopsis variabilis* D-amino acid oxidase presents 107 (78%), and *Fusarium solani* D-amino acid oxidase presents 115 (84%). This observation suggests that indeed D-aspartate oxidase retains most of the primary structural characteristics common to D-amino acid oxidases. Inspection of the consensus sequence reveals that it comprises residues belonging to all the different portions of the molecules: 39, 50, and 48 conserved amino acids are present between residues 1 and 120, 121 and 240, and 241 and 387 of the consensus sequence, respectively. It can be concluded that D-aspartate oxidase and D-amino acid oxidase derive from divergent evolution of a single gene.

When the comparative analysis is restricted to D-aspartate oxidase from beef kidney and D-amino acid oxidase from pig kidney (the usual and best studied source of this enzyme), the

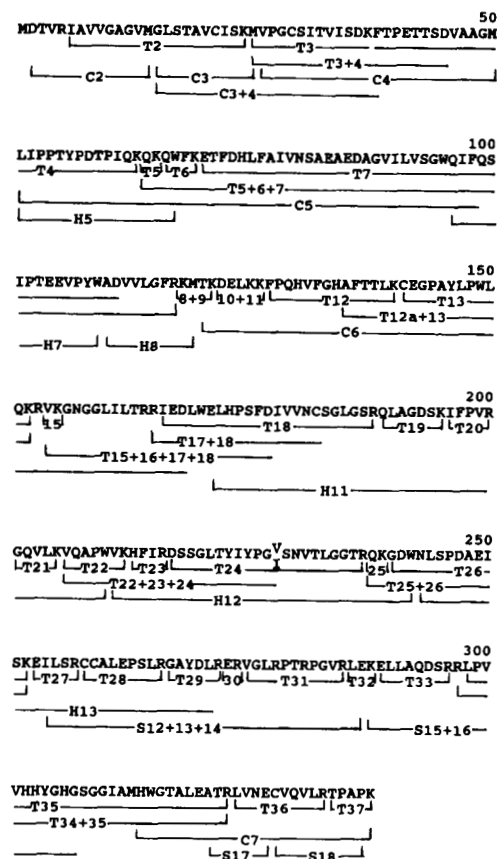


FIG. 9. The complete amino acid sequence of beef kidney D-aspartate oxidase. T, tryptic peptides; C, CNBr peptides; H, CNBr/HFBA peptides; S, *S. aureus* V8 peptides.

two proteins appear to be homologous (41% identities and an additional 15% of conservative replacements). In addition, the observation that 75% of the glycines and tryptophans and 60% of the prolines are conserved suggests also that the tertiary structure of the two enzymes must be very similar.

The role of active site residues in pig kidney D-amino acid oxidase has been extensively investigated using both chemical modification and site-directed mutagenesis techniques (7, 11). According to the alignment shown in Fig. 10, Tyr-228 and His-307 (the numbers refer to pig kidney D-amino acid oxidase) are punctually conserved in all the enzymes, suggesting a common catalytic role for these residues that, however, has not yet been elucidated. None of the other "active site residues" (11) (Tyr-55, Met-110, Lys-204, His-217, and Tyr-224; marked with an asterisk in Fig. 10) are conserved in all the proteins considered, although in most cases, functionally equivalent residues can be found around the position of those amino acids in the sequence of the enzymes.

No other proteins besides those shown in Fig. 10 present extended primary structure similarity with D-aspartate oxidase, except for the N-terminal sequence, which is known to be common to most enzymes binding ADP-containing nucleotides (12). In particular, no significant similarities were detected between D-aspartate oxidase and the FMN-containing flavoproteins of the oxidase/dehydrogenase class that have been shown to share a common mechanism of catalysis with D-amino acid oxidase (13) (lactate oxidase, glycolate oxidase, and flavocytochrome  $b_2$  (14-16)). This observation reinforces the proposal of Geigel *et al.* (14) that D-aspartate oxidase and D-amino acid oxidase (both FAD-containing enzymes) constitute a family of homologous proteins different from the one comprising the FMN-containing oxidases and



Supplemental Material to

THE PRIMARY STRUCTURE OF THE FLAVOPROTEIN D-ASPARTATE OXIDASE  
FROM BEEF KIDNEY

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## EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURE

**Materials.** Beef kidney D-aspartate oxidase was purified as described in (3). TFA, 6 N HCl, HFBA, CNBr and GdnCl were from Pierce Chemical Company. TPCK-trypsin, *Staphylococcus aureus* protease and carboxypeptidase B were obtained from Boehringer Mannheim. Iodo[2-<sup>14</sup>C]acetic acid was from Amersham. All the other reagents used were of the highest purity commercially available.

**Amino acid analysis.** Gas-phase hydrolysis was carried out in 6 N HCl containing 1% (v/v) phenol at 105 °C for 24 h. Amino acid analyses were carried out by a post-column o-phthalaldehyde derivatization procedure (20), using a Jasco (Japan Spectroscopy) amino acid analyzer equipped with a 880-PU pump and a 820-FP detector. Cysteine content was determined either as carboxymethylcysteine after reduction and carboxymethylation of the protein or by titration with DTNB under denaturing non-reducing conditions in 50 mM KPi, 6 M GdnCl, pH 7.4 (21).

**Carboxymethylation.** Reduction and carboxymethylation of the protein were performed as described in (22). The material to be subjected to tryptic digestion was derivatized using iodo[2-<sup>14</sup>C]acetic acid 1  $\mu$ Cl /  $\mu$ mol.

**Enzymatic cleavages.** Tryptic digestion was carried out in 0.1% NH<sub>4</sub>HCO<sub>3</sub>, pH 8.0 at 37 °C for 4 h using a protease : carboxymethylated D-aspartate oxidase ratio of 1 : 100. A second aliquot of protease was then added and the digestion was allowed to proceed for an additional hour under the same conditions. The reaction was stopped by lowering the pH below 2.0 with TFA followed by lyophilization. The material was then resuspended in 500  $\mu$ l of 0.1% TFA and centrifuged for 8 min using an Eppendorf 5414 centrifuge. The pellet was washed with 100  $\mu$ l of 0.1% TFA and centrifuged as above. The supernatants from the two centrifugations were pooled and the peptides (0.1% TFA soluble peptides) chromatographed on a RP-HPLC column as described below. The pellet (0.1% TFA insoluble material) was dissolved in 400  $\mu$ l of 30% CH<sub>3</sub>COOH, centrifuged and separated on a second RP-HPLC chromatography. No insoluble material was present after solubilization with 30% CH<sub>3</sub>COOH.

Digestion with *S. aureus* protease was carried out for 24 h at 37 °C using a protease : carboxymethylated D-aspartate oxidase ratio of 1 : 25 (w/w), in 50 mM ammonium acetate, pH 4.0.

Carboxypeptidase B digestion was conducted both on the carboxymethylated enzyme (using a protease : substrate ratio of 1 : 25 (w/w)) in 0.2 M N-ethylmorpholine acetate, 1 M urea, pH 8.5. Aliquots of the incubation mixture were withdrawn at different times, the proteins precipitated with 10% trichloroacetic acid and centrifuged, and the supernatant analyzed for amino acid content.

**Chemical cleavages.** Cleavage at methionyl residues was accomplished by dissolving 0.5 mg of carboxymethylated protein in 70% formic acid and adding a 100-fold molar excess of CNBr over methionyl residues. After 24 h at room temperature in the dark the reaction was stopped by a 10-fold dilution with water followed by lyophilization.

Further cleavage of the CNBr peptides at tryptophanyl residue was carried out by dissolving the peptides in 2 ml of 70% formic acid : HFBA 1 : 1 and adding a 10,000-fold molar excess of solid CNBr over tryptophanyl residues (23). After 24 h at room temperature the mixture was dried with a stream of nitrogen in hood, dissolved in 10 ml of water and lyophilized.

**Reverse-phase HPLC chromatography.** Purification of peptides was carried out by RP-HPLC using a JASCO (Japan Spectroscopy) HPLC equipped with a Uvidex-100 V detector set at 220 nm and an Aquapore C-8 RP-300 (4.6 x 25 mm) column (Applied Biosystems). The chromatographic conditions used are indicated in the Figure legends. Aliquots from each fraction were withdrawn and analyzed for amino acid content, [<sup>14</sup>C] incorporation and amino acid sequence.

**[<sup>14</sup>C] incorporation measurement.** [<sup>14</sup>C] incorporation was measured by dissolving aliquots of [<sup>14</sup>C]-carboxymethylated enzyme, HPLC-purified peptides or PTH-amino acid derivatives originated during the Edman degradation and recovered from the sequencer in Instagel (Packard) and counting in a Packard Minaxi Triacarb liquid scintillation counter.

**Sequence analysis.** Sequence analyses were carried out on an Applied Biosystems Model 477-A pulse liquid-phase sequencer equipped with a Model 120-A PTH-analyzer according to the manufacturer's instructions. Identification of PTH-[<sup>14</sup>C]-carboxymethylcysteine was confirmed by [<sup>14</sup>C] incorporation measurements. Blotting of the protein on PVDF membrane prior to sequencing was performed according to (24).

**Computer analysis.** A search for similarities between the primary structure of D-aspartate oxidase with the one of other proteins was performed using the Swiss-Prot Protein Database.

## RESULTS

The N-terminal residue of D-aspartate oxidase is blocked, as indicated by the fact that no sequence informations were obtained by submitting either the native, carboxymethylated or PVDF-membrane blotted protein to Edman degradation. Thus, the determination of the amino acid sequence of D-aspartate oxidase was accomplished through the characterization of all the peptides obtained by tryptic digestion of the carboxymethylated protein. Alignment of the tryptic peptides was subsequently achieved by submitting the carboxymethylated protein to different enzymatic or chemical fragmentations.

**Tryptic digest.** Tryptic digestion of 3 mg D-aspartate oxidase gave two sets of peptides: (a) soluble in 0.1% TFA and (b) insoluble in 0.1% TFA. The two sets were separated by centrifugation as indicated under "Experimental Procedure". Peptides contained in set (a) were separated directly by RP-HPLC (Fig. 1). The peptides co-eluted in the fractions with retention time of 32, 35 and 43 min were further purified by RP-HPLC under different conditions (Figs. 2, 3 and 4). The 0.1% TFA insoluble material was first solubilized in 30% CH<sub>3</sub>COOH and then separated by RP-HPLC (Fig. 5). Fractions from each chromatography were analyzed for amino acid composition, [<sup>14</sup>C]-incorporation and amino acid sequence. Tables I and II and Figure 9 report the results of such analyses for all the tryptic peptides characterized. Since the digestion conditions (i.e. protease to substrate ratio and time of digestion) were relatively mild a significant number of partially digested peptides were obtained. This, however, allowed immediate alignment of many short peptides, as shown in Figure 9. No amino acid sequence was obtained by submitting the peptide with retention time 25 min of Figure 1 to Edman degradation. This peptide was assigned as T1 since its N-terminus is blocked, as expected from the analysis of the entire protein, and its amino acid composition (Table I) corresponds to the one expected for this portion of the molecule on the basis of the results obtained through the analysis of the CNBr fragments (see below).

In conclusion, the characterization of the tryptic peptides allowed to establish portions of the sequence accounting for 333 out of the total 338 amino acid residues which constitute the enzyme. Complete alignment of the tryptic peptides and identification of the sequence of the 5 amino acid residues still missing (positions 1-5) were achieved by the characterization of the peptides obtained by fragmentation of the carboxymethylated protein with CNBr, CNBr/HFBA and *S. aureus* V8 protease.

**CNBr and CNBr/HFBA digests.** RP-HPLC separation of the peptides obtained by fragmentation of the carboxymethylated protein with CNBr is shown in Figure 6. The number of peaks largely exceeded the number of peptides expected from the methionine content as determined by amino acid analysis of the protein (Table I). Characterization of all the HPLC fractions revealed that some peaks contained the same peptide, sometimes in various mixtures with others, or partially fragmented portions. However, C2, C3, C4 and C7 were obtained as pure peptides and their sequence was unambiguously determined (Table II and Fig. 9). The large fragments C5 and C6 instead were isolated only as a mixture. Sequence analysis performed on aliquots of the fractions eluting between 80 and 86 min and containing C5 and C6 resulted in more than one amino acid released for each degradation cycle. In this case, tentative assignment of the amino acid sequence for each fragment was deduced by comparison with the known primary sequence of the corresponding tryptic peptides previously characterized. The remaining material from the HPLC fractions containing C5 and C6 was pooled and further fragmented at tryptophanyl residues as described under "Experimental Conditions". RP-HPLC separation of the peptides obtained is shown in Figure 7. Again, only the data obtained from the analysis of the pure peptides have been used to determine the alignment described in Figure 9.

***Staphylococcus aureus* V8 digest.** Experimental evidence for the alignment of the tryptic peptides comprising the C-terminal portion of the molecule (T27-T37) was obtained by the characterization of a few peptides originated by digesting the protein with *S. aureus* V8 protease (Fig. 8). Both native and carboxymethylated D-aspartate oxidase resulted to be very resistant to digestion. In fact, only the C-terminal portion of the molecule (starting after Glu253) appeared to be sensitive to the action of the protease.

**Special problems.** Apart from the failure in sequencing the N-terminal portion of the entire protein, the unambiguous assignment of a few other portions of the molecule required special attention. In particular, no C-terminal sequence was obtained by submitting the carboxymethylated protein to digestion with carboxypeptidase. Thus, the C-terminus of the protein has been identified as Lys338 from the amino acid sequence of T37 and C7. However the sequence of tryptic peptide T37a is equal to the one of T37 except for the absence of the terminal Lys residue. Determination of the amino acid composition of T37 and T37a confirms that these peptides differ only for one Lys residue (Table I). In addition, S18 also ends with Pro337. Taken together these results suggest that partial digestion of the C-terminal residue might occur, either in the cell or during the purification of the native protein, originating two forms of the enzyme ending with Lys338 or with Pro337.

Another type of molecular microheterogeneity has been detected, deriving from genetic variants of the enzyme. In fact, either Val or Ile were found at position 228 (peptide T24 and T24a, respectively). Finally, overlapping of the tryptic peptides was in some cases complicated by a few peculiar "tryptic" cleavages, such as between His134 and Ala135, Leu160 and Ile 161 and Asn181 and Cys182 (Fig. 9).

Table II and Figure 9 summarize the data used to determine the complete primary structure of beef kidney D-aspartate oxidase. The enzyme consists of 338 amino acid residues, accounting for a M<sub>r</sub> of 37305 for the apoprotein, in accordance with the value reported in previous studies (3). Table I shows the good correlation between the amino acid composition of the entire protein determined by amino acid analysis with the one deduced from the sequence. The data relative to the Cys content suggest that the enzyme contains 7 Cys and no disulfide bridges, since all the Cys can be titrated by DTNB under denaturing non-reducing conditions.

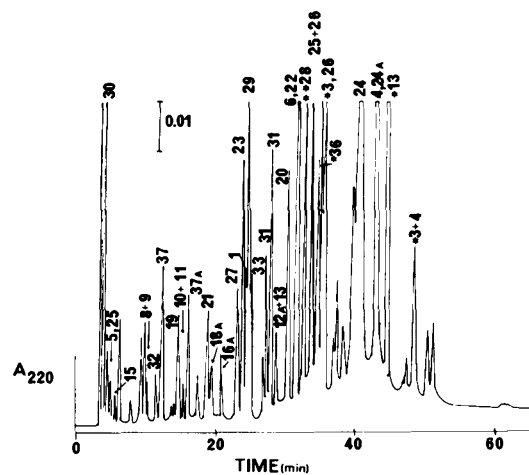


Fig. 1. RP-HPLC of the 0.1% TFA-soluble peptides obtained by tryptic digestion of [<sup>14</sup>C]-carboxymethylated D-aspartate oxidase. Conditions: column C-8 Aquapore RP-300 (250 x 7 mm); buffer A: 0.1% TFA; buffer B: CH<sub>3</sub>CN + 0.075% TFA; flow rate 2 ml/min. Gradient: from 0 to 60% B in 85 min. Fraction numbers refer to the tryptic peptides found in each peak and aligned as shown in Fig. 9. An asterisk marks peptides containing [<sup>14</sup>C]-carboxymethylcysteine determined by radioactivity counting both on an aliquot of each fraction and of the PTH-derivative recovered from the Edman degradation. The peptides contained in fractions with retention time of 32, 35 and 43 min were identified after re-purification as described in Fig. 3, 4 and 5, respectively.

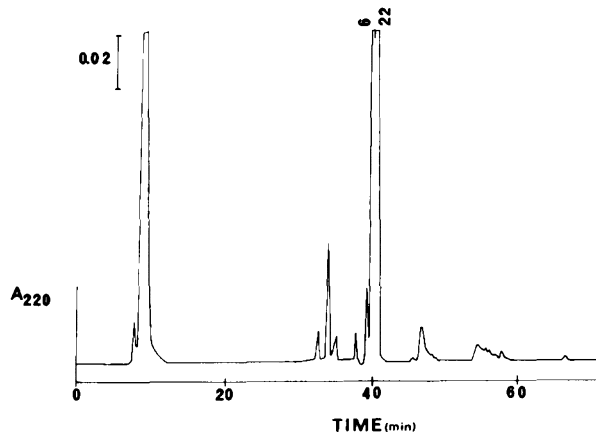


Fig. 2. RP-HPLC purification of peptides contained in fraction with retention time of 32 min in Fig. 1. Conditions: column C-8 Aquapore RP-300 (250 x 4.6 mm), flow rate 0.7 ml/min; buffer A: 5 mM NaPi, pH 6.0; buffer B: CH<sub>3</sub>CN. Gradient: from 0 to 60% B in 85 min.

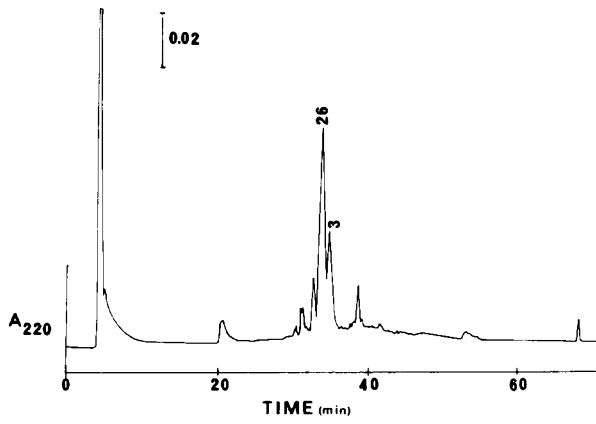


Fig. 3. RP-HPLC purification of peptides contained in fraction with retention time of 35 min in Fig. 1. Conditions as in Fig. 3.

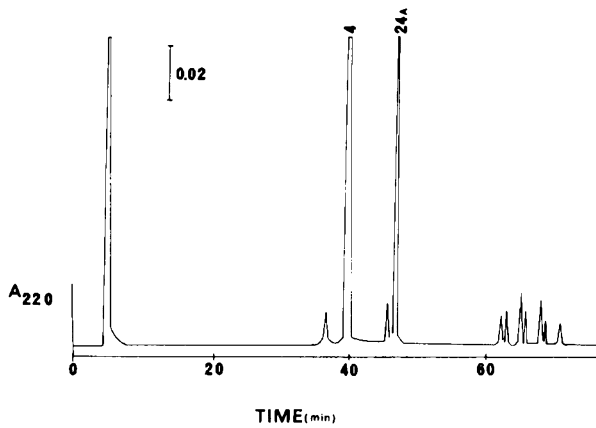


Fig. 4. RP-HPLC purification of peptides contained in fraction with retention time of 43 min in Fig. 1. Conditions as in Fig. 3.

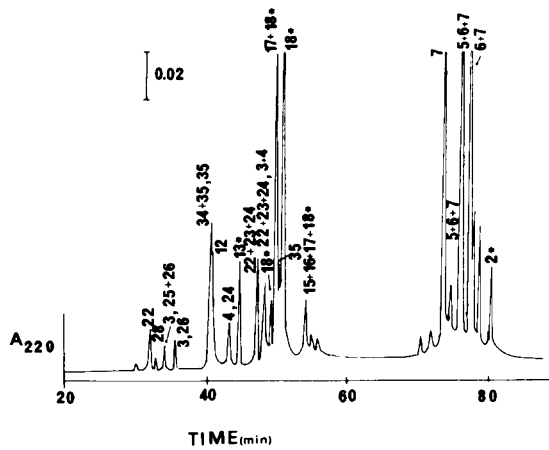


Fig. 5. RP-HPLC of the 0.1 % TFA-insoluble peptides obtained by tryptic digestion of [<sup>14</sup>C]-carboxymethylated D-aspartate oxidase. Conditions as in Fig. 1.

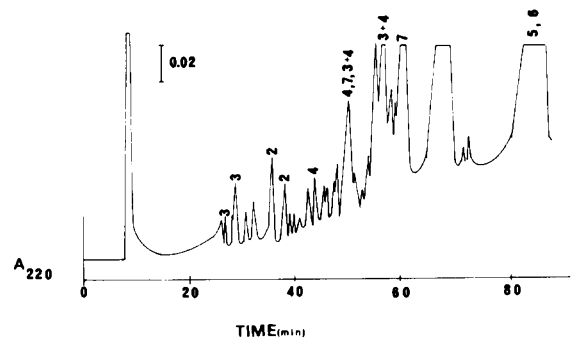


Fig. 6. RP-HPLC of peptides obtained by CNBr fragmentation of S-carboxymethylated D-aspartate oxidase. Conditions: column C-8 Aquapore RP-300 (250 x 4.6 mm); flow rate 0.7 ml/min; buffer A: 0.1 % TFA; buffer B: CH<sub>3</sub>CN + 0.075 % TFA. Gradient: from 0 to 60% B in 85 min.

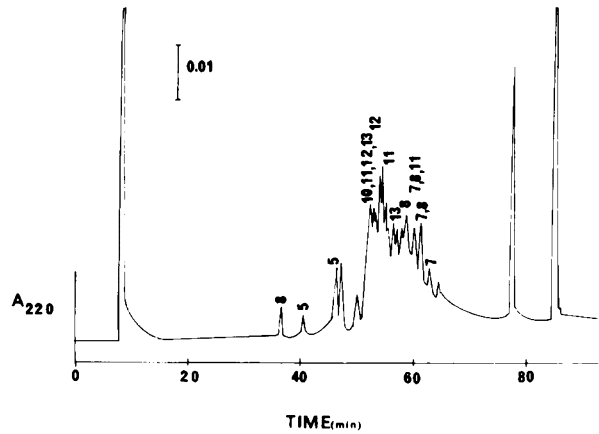


Fig. 7. RP-HPLC of peptides obtained by CNBr/HFBA fragmentation of peptides C5 and C6 contained in fractions with retention time ranging from 80 to 85 min in Fig. 6. Conditions as in Fig. 6.

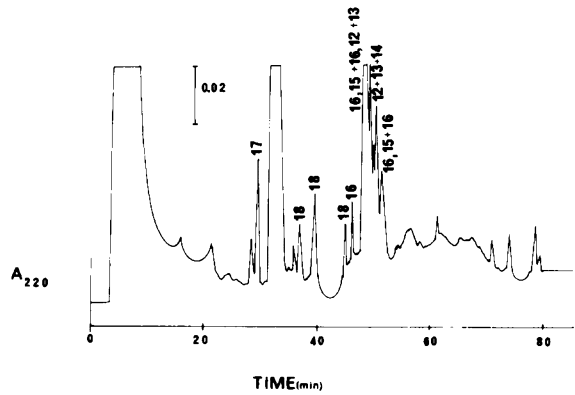


Fig. 8. RP-HPLC of peptides obtained by digestion with *S. aureus* protease of S-carboxymethylated D-aspartate oxidase. Conditions as in Fig. 6.



