

A FLUORESCENT PROBE AT THE ACTIVE SITE OF  $\alpha$ -CHYMOTRYPSIN\*

By

Richard P. Haugland and Lubert Stryer

Department of Chemistry, Stanford University

and the

Department of Biochemistry, Stanford University School of Medicine

Palo Alto, California, U.S. A.

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## SUMMARY

A highly fluorescent anthraniloyl group has been inserted at the active site of  $\alpha$ -chymotrypsin. The anthraniloyl acyl enzyme is indefinitely stable at neutral pH, allowing a detailed spectrofluorimetric study of the mobility and polarity of the active site. The acylating reagent, p-nitrophenyl anthranilate, is very selective in its reactivity. Only one anthraniloyl chromophore is introduced into chymotrypsin, rendering the enzyme inactive. Chymotrypsinogen, diisopropylphosphoryl chymotrypsin, trypsinogen, lysozyme, and serum albumin do not react at all, while trypsin reacts slowly.

The anthraniloyl chromophore in the acyl enzyme can be selectively excited since its absorption (342 m $\mu$ ) and emission (422 m $\mu$ ) maxima are distinct from those of the aromatic residues of the protein. The absorption and emission spectra of methyl anthranilate and other anthraniloyl model compounds vary with solvent polarity. This sensitivity to solvent makes it feasible to determine the polarity of the immediate environment of the acyl group in the enzyme. From the positions of the absorption and emission maxima, as well as from the broadening of those spectra, it is concluded that the environment of the anthraniloyl group at the active site is highly polar. The fluorescence polarization and emission kinetics in the nanosecond range were measured to determine the flexibility of the active site. The rotational

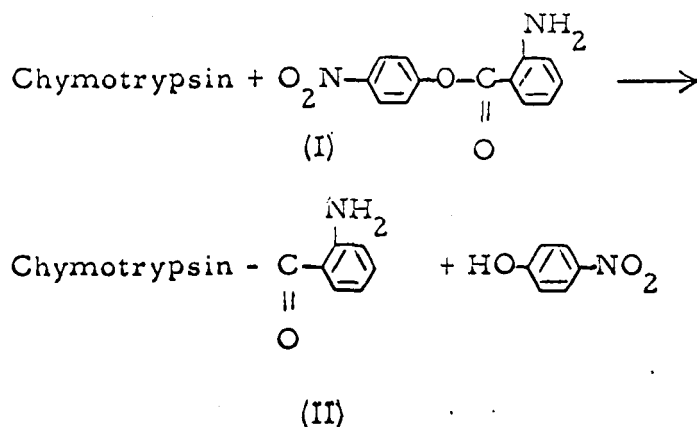


relaxation time of the anthraniloyl group is 49 nsec<sup>†</sup>, indicating that the active site of the acyl enzyme is rigid. The anthraniloyl chromophore has no rotational mobility independent of the motion of the whole chymotrypsin molecule. Emission and excitation spectra reveal that energy is transferred from the tryptophan residues of the acyl enzyme to the anthraniloyl group with an efficiency of 65%.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Fluorescence spectroscopy has proven to be a valuable technique in the study of protein structure and interactions in solution (Velick, 1961; Steiner and Edelhoch, 1962). The method can provide detailed information concerning the active sites of enzymes, if a suitable fluorescent chromophore is located near the active center. The fluorescent group should have an absorption and emission maximum distinct from that of the aromatic residues of the protein, and its excited state lifetime should be sufficiently long so that the rotational mobility of the active site can be determined (Weber, 1953). In addition, it is desirable if the emission properties are sensitive to the polarity of the environment of the chromophore (Stryer, 1965). Finally, the fluorescent probe should be highly selective in terms of its site of attachment to the protein.

We report here a spectrofluorimetric study of the active site of  $\alpha$ -chymotrypsin, using a fluorescent probe which meets these criteria. The *p*-nitrophenyl ester of anthranilic acid (I) reacts specifically with the active site of  $\alpha$ -chymotrypsin to form a highly fluorescent anthraniloyl chymotrypsin (II).



This derivative is stable for months at neutral pH, allowing a detailed study of its spectroscopic properties. Absorption and fluorescence studies of anthraniloyl chymotrypsin have provided a measure of the polarity and rotational mobility of the active site of the active site of the acyl enzyme.

## 2. EXPERIMENTAL METHODS

### (a) Materials :

The synthesis of p-nitrophenyl anthranilate (NPA, I) has been described by Staiger and Miller (1959). However, we obtained a product which melts at a significantly higher temperature than previously reported. Commercial grade isatoic anhydride (29.9 g, 0.183 mole), p-nitrophenol (25.4 g, 0.183 mole) and powdered sodium hydroxide (1.5 g) were heated with 150 ml dioxane on a steam bath. Carbon dioxide evolution proceeded briskly above 75°. After 45 minutes, the dark reaction mixture was poured into 75 ml warm water and cooled, yielding 27.5 g yellow crystals, m.p. 127-128° (cf. Staiger and Miller, m.p. 108°). An additional 10.4 g, m.p. 126-128°, was obtained by concentrating the filtrate to near dryness and recrystallizing the residue from absolute ethanol. The analytical sample recrystallized from methanol in wide yellow sheaths, m.p. 127.8-128.3°.

Anal. Calcd for  $C_{13}H_{10}N_2O_4$ : C, 60.46; H, 3.90; N, 10.85.

Found C, 60.28; H, 3.80; N, 10.95.

The synthesis and characterization of methyl anthanilate, p-cresyl anthranilate and anthranilamide will be described elsewhere.

Chymotrypsinogen,  $\alpha$ -chymotrypsin (3x recrystallized), diisopropylphosphoryl chymotrypsin, trypsinogen, and trypsin were obtained from Worthington, while bovine serum albumin and lysozyme were purchased from Armour.

(b) Anthraniloyl chymotrypsin

Anthraniloyl chymotrypsin (II) was prepared by addition of 1 ml of  $4.8 \times 10^{-3}$  M NPA (4.8  $\mu$ moles) in acetonitrile to 20 ml of  $2.0 \times 10^{-4}$  M  $\alpha$ -chymotrypsin (4.0  $\mu$ moles) in 0.1 M phosphate buffer, pH 6.8, at 5<sup>o</sup>. The NPA was added in five aliquots at three hour intervals. After an additional 15 hours at 5<sup>o</sup>, the yellow solution was filtered to remove excess NPA that had precipitated and then dialyzed for two days against several changes of water.

(c) Absorption and fluorescence spectra

Absorption spectra were obtained on a Cary model 14 recording spectrophotometer using 1 cm cell paths. Fluorescence emission, excitation, and polarization measurements were performed on a recording spectrofluorimeter described previously (Stryer, 1965). The emission spectra reported here are the direct recorder tracings which have not been corrected for the variation with wavelength in the sensitivity of the detection system. The relative sensitivity of the 1P28 photomultiplier-grating monochromator system has been experimentally determined to be 3.68, 3.34, 2.97, 2.69, 2.55, 2.29, 1.91, 1.78, 1.59, 1.40, 1.31, 1.20, 1.08, 0.99, 0.89, 0.81, and 0.72 at 10 m $\mu$  intervals from 340 m $\mu$  to 500 m $\mu$ . The corrected fluorescence excitation spectra and polarization measurements were recorded directly using a ratio amplifier. Corning CS 3-73 filters were used to isolate the emission in both the excitation and polari-

zation measurements. Fluorescence spectra were taken at  $20.0 \pm 0.2^\circ$ .

The fluorescence polarization is expressed in terms of the emission anisotropy,  $A$ . Jablonski (1960) has emphasized the advantage of using  $A$  rather than  $p$ , the customary measure of polarization. The emission anisotropy is defined as

$$A = \frac{F_x - F_y}{F_x + 2F_y}, \text{ while } p = \frac{F_x - F_y}{F_x + F_y}.$$

#### (d) Nanosecond fluorescence kinetics

The excited state lifetime of the anthraniloyl group was measured on a nanosecond fluorimeter designed by Hindley, Garwin, and Stryer. (1966). A flash lamp operated at 12 kV and a repetition rate of about 1 kc provides light pulses which have a width at half-height of less than 3 nsec. The emission was detected by an RCA 1P21 photomultiplier tube operated at 1.3 kV and a Tektronix sampling oscilloscope. Multiple scans (typically 64) of the sampling oscilloscope output are averaged on a LINC computer, which then writes a magnetic tape for detailed analysis on the IBM 7090. Computer analysis of the nanosecond data is necessary because the duration of the light pulse is comparable to the excited state lifetime of many chromophores of biological interest. The observed time course of fluorescence,  $R(t)$ , is related to the light pulse and instrument response time,  $L(t')$ , by the expression

$$R(t) = \int_0^x L(t') e^{-(t-t')/\tau} dt'$$

if the emission is characterized by an exponential decay of lifetime  $\tau$ .

$R(t)$  and  $L(t')$  are experimentally observed.  $\tau$  is then determined by



evaluating  $\sum L(t')e^{-(t-t')/\tau}$  for various trial values of  $\tau$  and finding the one that gives the best least-squares fit to  $R(t)$ . When the emission is partially polarized, as in anthraniloyl chymotrypsin, the lifetimes of the parallel and perpendicularly polarized components differ (Jablonski, 1960). The mean lifetime depends on the kinetics of the sum of the components,  $F_x + F_y + F_z$ . When the exciting light is y-polarized, the total emission is proportional to  $F_y + 2F_x$ , since  $F_x = F_z$ . As noted by Jablonski, (1960), the emission polarized at  $55^\circ$  to the direction of excitation is in fact proportional to  $(F_y + 2F_x)$ . In the present study, a Polaroid type HNB sheet polarizer was used to obtain y-polarized excitation. The emission was observed at right angles to the direction of excitation, with a Polaroid HN 32 sheet polarizer oriented at  $55^\circ$  to y. A Corning CS 7-60 filter was used for excitation, while the HN 32 polarizer served as the emission filter.

### 3. RESULTS

#### (a) Reaction of p-nitrophenyl anthranilate with $\alpha$ -chymotrypsin

Spectrophotometric and spectrofluorimetric measurements reveal that p-nitrophenyl anthranilate reacts specifically and stoichiometrically with  $\alpha$ -chymotrypsin. When excess p-nitrophenyl anthranilate is added to  $\alpha$ -chymotrypsin, 1.0 equivalent p-nitrophenol is released per equivalent of enzyme, as determined by following the absorbance of the p-nitrophenolate ion at 410 m $\mu$ . The reaction is complete within thirty minutes and no additional p-nitrophenol is formed during the next several hours. The

fluorescence emission spectrum (Figure 1) provides further information. Addition of 1.3 equivalents NPA to  $10^{-5}$  M  $\alpha$ -chymotrypsin leads to a large decrease in the 333 m $\mu$  emission peak and to a large increase in the 422 m $\mu$  emission maximum. The half-time of the reaction is about 25 minutes. The 333 m $\mu$  peak is due to the fluorescence of the tryptophan residues in  $\alpha$ -chymotrypsin, while the 422 m $\mu$  emission comes from the anthraniloyl chromophore. The decrease of the 333 m $\mu$  peak is due to energy transfer from the tryptophan residues to the anthraniloyl group. The increase in fluorescence at 422 m $\mu$  is the result of the release of the p-nitrophenol group, which had completely quenched the fluorescence of the anthraniloyl chromophore in NPA. It is evident that anthranilic acid is not released in the course of the reaction. There is no peak or shoulder at 393 m $\mu$ , the emission maximum of anthranilic acid. Furthermore, the existence of an isoemissive point (Anderson and Weber, 1965) at 379 m $\mu$  confirms that only two fluorescent species are present.

The constancy of the emission and absorption spectra of the anthraniloyl chymotrypsin following extensive dialysis and gel filtration chromatography indicates that the anthraniloyl group is covalently bonded to the enzyme. Moreover, the complex is stable for months at pH 6.8. The stability of the anthraniloyl chymotrypsin makes it feasible to carry out extensive spectrofluorimetric studies of the modified enzyme.

The enzymatic activity of  $\alpha$ -chymotrypsin is virtually completely inhibited by reaction with p-nitrophenyl anthranilate. At pH 6.8, anthraniloyl chymotrypsin has less than 5% of the activity of the native enzyme. The

assay was carried out with glutaryl-L-phenylalanine p-nitroanilide as substrate (Erlanger, Cooper, and Bendich, 1964).

(b) Specificity of p-nitrophenyl anthranilate as a fluorescent labeling reagent

Chymotrypsinogen, diisopropylphosphoryl chymotrypsin, bovine serum albumin, and lysozyme do not react with NPA. Excess NPA was added to  $10^{-5}$  M solutions of these protein. There was no change in absorbance at 410 m $\mu$  or in the fluorescence emission spectrum after 24 hours.

Trypsin, but not trypsinogen, does react with NPA, though at a slower rate than chymotrypsin.

(c) Absorption and emission spectra of anthraniloyl chymotrypsin

The absorption spectrum of anthraniloyl chymotrypsin is given in Figure 2. The extinction coefficient is  $5.0 \times 10^4$  cm<sup>2</sup>/mmole at 280 m $\mu$  and  $4.0 \times 10^3$  cm<sup>2</sup>/mmole at 342 m $\mu$ . The concentration of the solution was determined by amino acid analysis. The observed extinction coefficient at 342 m $\mu$  is consistent with a stoichiometry of one anthraniloyl group per chymotrypsin, since the extinction coefficient of methyl anthranilate in a variety of solvents ranges from  $3.8 \times 10^3$  to  $5.4 \times 10^3$  cm<sup>2</sup>/mmole.

The emission spectrum (Figure 3) shows a maximum at 422 m $\mu$ . The absolute quantum yield of the anthraniloyl chromophore when attached to chymotrypsin is 0.53. The emission was excited at 336 m $\mu$ , where all of the absorption is due to the anthraniloyl group.

(d) Absorption and emission spectra of model compounds

Absorption and emission spectra of methyl anthranilate, p-cresyl anthranilate, and anthranilamide were obtained in solvents of varying polarity. The solvents were cyclohexane, dioxane, acetonitrile, methanol, and water. The absorption and emission maxima are given in Table I and II.

The emission maxima of these compounds are markedly dependent on the polarity of the solvent. There is a shift of some 40 m $\mu$  to the red as the solvent polarity increases from cyclohexane to water. In contrast, the solvent dependence of the absorption maxima is complex. A small shift to the red is observed in going from cyclohexane to dioxane (Table I). However, a significant shift to lower wavelengths is observed in going from dioxane to water. In fact, the absorption maxima in water are at lower wavelengths than in cyclohexane.

The emission spectra of methyl anthranilate in cyclohexane, dioxane, and water are shown in Figure 4. As the solvent polarity increases, there is a broadening of the spectrum as well as a red shift of 2500  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . The width of the emission spectrum at half-height is 3100  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ , 3400  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  and 3600  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  in cyclohexane, dioxane, and water, respectively. A similar broadening of the emission spectrum is observed for the other model compounds. It is of interest to note that for anthraniloyl chymotrypsin (Figure 3), the width at half-height is 3700  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ .

The width of the near-ultraviolet absorption band of the model compounds varies with solvent polarity in the same manner. The width at half-height in the absorption spectrum of methyl anthranilate is  $3200 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ ,  $3600 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ , and  $4400 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  in cyclohexane, dioxane, and water, respectively. The corresponding width in the absorption spectrum of anthraniloyl chymotrypsin is  $4200 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ .

(e) Energy transfer

The excitation and emission spectra demonstrate that energy is transferred from the tryptophan residues to the anthraniloyl group. The emission spectrum (Figure 1) shows that the tryptophan fluorescence is quenched, while the excitation spectrum (Figure 5) reveals that the energy is in fact transferred to the anthraniloyl group. These spectra provide independent measures of the efficiency of energy transfer.

The efficiency of transfer,  $T$ , is related to the intensity of tryptophan emission in native chymotrypsin,  $F_0$ , and in anthraniloyl chymotrypsin,  $F$ , by the expression

$$T = 1 - (F/F_0).$$

From the emission spectrum,  $F/F_0$  is 0.37, and so the transfer efficiency is 63%.

The transfer efficiency can also be obtained from the excitation spectrum of the anthraniloyl fluorescence, using the relationships

$$E_{280} = \epsilon_{280}^a + T \epsilon_{280}^p$$

$$E_{342} = \epsilon_{342}^a$$

where  $E_{280}$  and  $E_{342}$  are the magnitudes of the excitation spectrum at 280 and 342 m $\mu$ ,  $\epsilon_{280}^p$  is the extinction coefficient of the protein alone, and  $\epsilon_{280}^a$  and  $\epsilon_{342}^a$  are the extinction coefficients of the anthraniloyl group at 280 and 342 m $\mu$ . On re-arranging terms,

$$T = \left[ \frac{E_{280}}{E_{342}} - \frac{\epsilon_{280}^a}{\epsilon_{342}^a} \right] \times \frac{\epsilon_{342}^a}{\epsilon_{280}^p}$$

$E_{280}/E_{342}$  is 8.47 (from Figure 4), while  $\epsilon_{280}^a$ ,  $\epsilon_{342}^a$ , and  $\epsilon_{280}^p$  are  $1.0 \times 10^3$ ,  $4.0 \times 10^3$ , and  $49.0 \times 10^3$  cm<sup>2</sup>/mmole, respectively. These values give a transfer efficiency of 67%.

(f) Fluorescence polarization and excited state lifetime

The fluorescence polarization of anthraniloyl chymotrypsin was measured in order to determine the rotational relaxation time of the active site. On excitation at 360 m $\mu$ , the emission anisotropy,  $A$ , is 0.211 in 0.1 M phosphate buffer, pH 6.8, at 20<sup>o</sup>. The enzyme concentration was  $3.75 \times 10^{-5}$  M. A plot of the reciprocal of the emission anisotropy as a function of  $T/\eta$  (Figure 6) gives a straight line which extrapolates to a value of 3.29. at  $T/\eta = 0$ . This corresponds to a limiting emission anisotropy,  $A_0$ , of 0.304.  $T/\eta$  was varied by changing the viscosity,  $\eta$ , while the temperature,  $T$ , was kept constant at 20<sup>o</sup>. The viscosity was varied by addition of glycerol to a solution of the enzyme in 0.1 M phosphate buffer.

The rotational relaxation time,  $\rho$ , is related to  $A$ ,  $A_0$ , and  $\tau$ , the excited state lifetime, by the expression (Weber, 1953)

$$\rho = 3\tau \frac{A}{(A_0 - A)}$$

From nanosecond pulse measurements (Figure 7), a value of 7.2 nsec was obtained for  $\tau$ . These values give a rotational relaxation time of 49.4 nsec.

Sephadex G-75 chromatography of anthraniloyl chymotrypsin was carried out in order to determine whether the modified protein is monomeric or dimeric at the concentration used in these fluorescence polarization measurements. The elution pattern of  $3.75 \times 10^{-5}$  M anthraniloyl chymotrypsin corresponds closely to that of  $\alpha$ -chymotrypsin at the same concentration ( $V/V_0 = 1.6$ ). The elution volume of ovalbumin, which has a molecular weight nearly twice that of chymotrypsin, was  $V/V_0 = 1.25$ . Thus, anthraniloyl chymotrypsin, like  $\alpha$ -chymotrypsin (Safare, Kegeles, and Kwon-Rhee, 1966), is almost entirely monomeric at this concentration.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

A highly fluorescent anthraniloyl group has been inserted at the active site of  $\alpha$ -chymotrypsin. The striking experimental finding is that the anthraniloyl acyl enzyme is indefinitely stable at neutral pH, allowing a detailed spectrofluorimetric study of some features of the active site. The acylating reagent, p-nitrophenyl anthranilate, is very selective in its reactivity. Only one anthraniloyl chromophore is introduced into chymotrypsin, rendering the enzyme inactive. Chymotrypsinogen, trypsinogen, lysozyme, and serum albumin do not react at all. Enzymatically active chymotrypsin appears to be essential for the reaction, since diisopropylphosphoryl chymotrypsin is not labeled by the reagent. Numerous studies have shown that acylation, carbamylation, and sulfonylation, as well as phosphorylation, all occur at a highly reactive serine residue in the active site (for a review, see Bruice and Benkovic, 1966). It seems likely that the anthraniloyl group also is esterified to this serine residue.

Of the proteins studied, trypsin is the only other one which reacts with p-nitrophenyl anthranilate, though it does so at a considerably slower rate than chymotrypsin. The acylation of trypsin by this reagent is not unexpected, since trypsin and chymotrypsin have overlapping specificities (Inagami and Sturtevant, 1960). It is of interest to know whether other serine proteases react with p-nitrophenyl anthranilate.

The indefinite stability of anthraniloyl chymotrypsin at neutral pH is also a characteristic of sulfonyl, carbamyl, and phosphoryl derivatives of the enzyme. In contrast, most carboxylic acid derivatives of chymotrypsin



deacylate rather rapidly at neutral pH. The most stable acyl enzyme previously reported (Balls, McDonald, and Brecher, 1958) is trimethylacetyl chymotrypsin, which has a half-life of about an hour under these conditions. It remains to be determined whether the stability of anthraniloyl chymotrypsin is typical of anthraniloyl esters per se or whether it is due to a particular interaction of this acyl group with the active site of chymotrypsin.

Hartley and Massey (1956) have sulfonylated the active site of  $\alpha$ -chymotrypsin with a fluorescent chromophore. They found that dansyl chloride (1-dimethylaminonaphthalene-5-sulfonyl chloride) reacts preferentially with a residue at the active site. In comparing dansyl chloride with p-nitrophenyl anthranilate, we find that the latter reagent is more suitable as a fluorescent probe of the active site of chymotrypsin. An advantage of p-nitrophenyl anthranilate is that it reacts only at the active site, while dansyl chloride reacts with other residues as well. This makes it more difficult to obtain a homogeneous derivative in which all of the chymotrypsin molecules contain a fluorescent group at only a single residue.

The fluorescence polarization and nanosecond kinetic studies of anthraniloyl chymotrypsin (Figures 6 and 7) provide a measure of the rotational mobility of the active site. The observed rotational relaxation time,  $\rho$ , of 49 nsec can be compared with  $\rho$  calculated for a model structure. The rotational relaxation time of an anhydrous,

rigid sphere is given by

$$\rho_0 = \frac{3\eta V}{RT} = \frac{3\eta M\bar{v}}{RT}$$

where  $V$  is the volume of the sphere,  $M$  is its molecular weight,  $\bar{v}$  is its partial specific volume,  $\eta$  is the viscosity of the solution,  $R$  is the gas constant, and  $T$  is the absolute temperature. For a sphere of molecular weight 25,000 and a  $\bar{v}$  of 0.73,  $\rho_0$  is calculated to be 22 nsec, in aqueous solution at 20°. The observed rotational relaxation time of a rigid protein molecule will be greater than  $\rho_0$  if the protein is hydrated or if its shape is not spherical. On the other hand, if the protein is not rigid, the observed  $\rho$  will be less than  $\rho_0$ . For anthraniloyl chymotrypsin,  $\rho/\rho_0$  is 2.2. It can be concluded that the active site of the acyl enzyme is rigid. The anthraniloyl chromophore has no rotational mobility independent of the motion of the whole chymotrypsin molecule, which behaves as a rigid particle. This conclusion is consistent with previous spectroscopic studies of different acyl chymotrypsins (Massey, Harrington and Hartley, 1955; Berliner and McConnell, 1966).

The absorption and emission spectra of anthraniloyl derivatives vary with solvent polarity (Table I and II). This dependence makes it possible to infer the polarity of the immediate environment of the acyl group in anthraniloyl chymotrypsin. The interpretation of the emission spectra (Table II) is straightforward. The emission maximum of anthraniloyl chymotrypsin is at 422 m $\mu$ , while methyl anthranilate emits at 420 m $\mu$  in water and at 380 m $\mu$  in cyclohexane (Figure 4). The other model compounds show the same red shift in the emission maxi-

mum with increasing solvent polarity, an effect generally observed for fluorescent molecules that possess a substantial dipole moment in the excited state (Lippert, 1956). Thus, it can be concluded from the position of the emission maximum that the environment of the anthraniloyl group at the active site is highly polar.

The absorption spectra are more complex, since there appear to be two distinct solvent effects (Table I). The absorption maxima of the model compounds shift to the red in going from cyclohexane to dioxane. However, in going from dioxane to water, there is a significant shift to the blue, so that the absorption maxima in water are actually at lower wavelengths than in cyclohexane. The red shift is most likely a solvent polarity effect. The blue shift may be due to hydrogen bonding between the anthraniloyl chromophore and the solvent, but it must be stressed that this interpretation is by no means unique. The absorption maxima of anthraniloyl chymotrypsin, 342 m $\mu$ , is at a longer wavelength than that of any of the model compounds in water. This finding suggests that the environment of the acyl group is highly polar but that water is excluded from it.

The polarity of the environment of the acyl group can also be assessed from the breadth of the absorption and emission spectra of anthraniloyl chymotrypsin. The theoretical basis of the relationship between solvent polarity and spectral broadening has recently been given by Marcus (1965). In polar solvents, the absorption and emission spectra of the anthraniloyl

model compounds are considerably broader than in non-polar solvents.

For example, methyl anthranilate has an absorption bandwidth of  $3200\text{ cm}^{-1}$  in cyclohexane and  $4400\text{ cm}^{-1}$  in water, while its emission bandwidth is  $3100\text{ cm}^{-1}$  in cyclohexane and  $3600\text{ cm}^{-1}$  in water.

Anthraniloyl chymotrypsin has an emission bandwidth of  $4200\text{ cm}^{-1}$  and an absorption bandwidth of  $3700\text{ cm}^{-1}$ . These spectral broadening data provide independent confirmation that the environment of the anthraniloyl group at the active site is highly polar.

It is of interest to compare our conclusions concerning the polarity of the active site with those derived by other investigators who have used different probes. The absorption spectrum of trans-cinnamoyl chymotrypsin indicates that the environment of that group is more polar than water (Bender, Schonbaum and Zerner, 1962). The high polarity was attributed to the carboxylate group of an aspartate residue adjacent to the reactive serine. In contrast, Kallos and Avatis (1966) reported that the absorption spectrum of p-nitrobenzenesulfonyl chymotrypsin indicates that the chromophore is situated in a hydrocarbon-like environment. A similar conclusion was reached for the binding site of proflavine (Bernhard, Lee and Tashjian, 1966). The finding of a hydrocarbon-like environment with some chromophores and a highly polar environment with others is not surprising since the active site of chymotrypsin consists of distinct binding loci (Hein and Niemann, 1961), which probably differ greatly in polarity. Thus, each of the probes samples a particular region of the active site.

Electronic excitation energy is transferred from the tryptophan residues to the anthraniloyl group in the acyl enzyme, as demonstrated by the quenching of tryptophan fluorescence (Figure 1), as well as by the excitation spectrum (Figure 5). The transfer efficiency is 65%. The spectroscopic conditions for dipole-dipole resonance transfer (Förster, 1947) are fulfilled here. Using Förster's equations, it is possible to calculate a distance  $R_0$  at which the efficiency of transfer is 50%, assuming that the chromophores are randomly oriented with respect to each other. For tryptophan to anthraniloyl transfer,  $R_0$  is calculated to be 29 Å. In Förster's treatment, the rate constant for energy transfer is proportional to the inverse sixth power of the distance between the energy acceptor and donor, so that the transfer efficiency is expected to be 75% at 23 Å, and 25% at 35 Å. Since there are eight tryptophan residues in  $\alpha$ -chymotrypsin, it is not possible to interpret the observed transfer efficiency in terms of a distance between the donor and acceptor groups. Rather, when the coordinates of the tryptophan residues become known from an x-ray crystallographic analysis, it will be of considerable interest to determine whether Förster's theory gives good quantitative agreement with the observed transfer efficiency.

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FOOTNOTE

† Abbreviations used: A, emission anisotropy; NPA, p-nitrophenyl anthranilate; nsec, nanosecond ( $10^{-9}$  sec);  $\rho$ , rotational relaxation time;  $\tau$ , excited state lifetime.

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Table I

Absorption Maxima of Model Compounds

	SOLVENT				
	Water*	Methanol	Acetonitrile	Dioxane	Cyclohexane
Methyl Anthranilate	327 m $\mu$	336 m $\mu$	335 m $\mu$	335 m $\mu$	332 m $\mu$
Anthranilamide	316	328	327	331	330
p-Cresyl Anthranilate	334	343	341	340	337
Anthraniloyl chymo- trypsin	342				

\* 0.1 M phosphate buffer, pH 6.8

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Table II

Emission Maxima of Model Compounds

	Water <sup>*</sup>	Methanol	Acetonitrile	Dioxane	Cyclohexane
Methyl Anthranilate	420 m $\mu$	405 m $\mu$	391 m $\mu$	390 m $\mu$	380 m $\mu$
Anthranilamide	418	406	393	390	386
p-Cresyl Anthranilate	428	418	402	401	386
Anthraniloyl Chymo- trypsin	422				

\* 0.1 M phosphate buffer, pH 6.8

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## LEGENDS

Figure 1. The reaction of p-nitrophenyl anthranilate ( $1.4 \times 10^{-5}$  M) with a  $\alpha$ -chymotrypsin ( $1.0 \times 10^{-5}$  M) is shown by changes in the emission spectrum on excitation at 290 m $\mu$ . The tryptophan emission at 333 m $\mu$  decreases due to energy transfer to the anthraniloyl group, while the anthraniloyl fluorescence at 422 m $\mu$  increases because of release of p-nitrophenol.

Figure 2. Absorption spectrum of anthraniloyl chymotrypsin in 0.1 M phosphate buffer, pH 6.8. An absorbance of 1 corresponds to an extinction coefficient of 10,000 cm<sup>2</sup>/mmole for the (---) spectrum or 1,000 cm<sup>2</sup>/mmole for the (—) spectrum.

Figure 3. The emission spectrum of the anthraniloyl chromophore in anthraniloyl chymotrypsin. The excitation wavelength was 336 m $\mu$ .

Figure 4. The solvent-dependence of the emission spectrum of methyl anthranilate. As the solvent polarity increases from cyclohexane (----) to dioxane (-●-●-) and water (—), there is a large shift to the red in the emission spectrum. In addition, the emission spectrum becomes broader as solvent polarity increases.

Figure 5. Energy transfer from the tryptophan residues to the attached anthraniloyl group is shown by this excitation spectrum. The observed excitation spectrum (—) has a peak of high magnitude at 280 m $\mu$ , where nearly all of the absorption is due to the aromatic residues of the protein. The calculated excitation spectrum corresponding to an

absence of energy transfer (----) is strikingly different at wavelengths below 300 m $\mu$ . The efficiency of energy transfer is 67%.

Figure 6. Fluorescence polarization of anthraniloyl chymotrypsin in aqueous glycerol solutions. The reciprocal of the emission anisotropy,  $A^{-1}$ , is plotted as a function of  $T/\eta$ , to extrapolate to a limiting emission anisotropy  $A_0$  at  $T/\eta = 0$ . The emission was excited at 360 m $\mu$ . The temperature was 20 $^{\circ}$ .

Figure 7. Nanosecond fluorescence kinetics of anthraniloyl chymotrypsin: (a) The intensity of the exciting light pulse (—) and of the fluorescence of the anthraniloyl group (•••) are shown as a function of time; (b) A least-squares fit (---) to the observed fluorescence (•••) yields a lifetime of 7.2 nsec.

Fig. 1

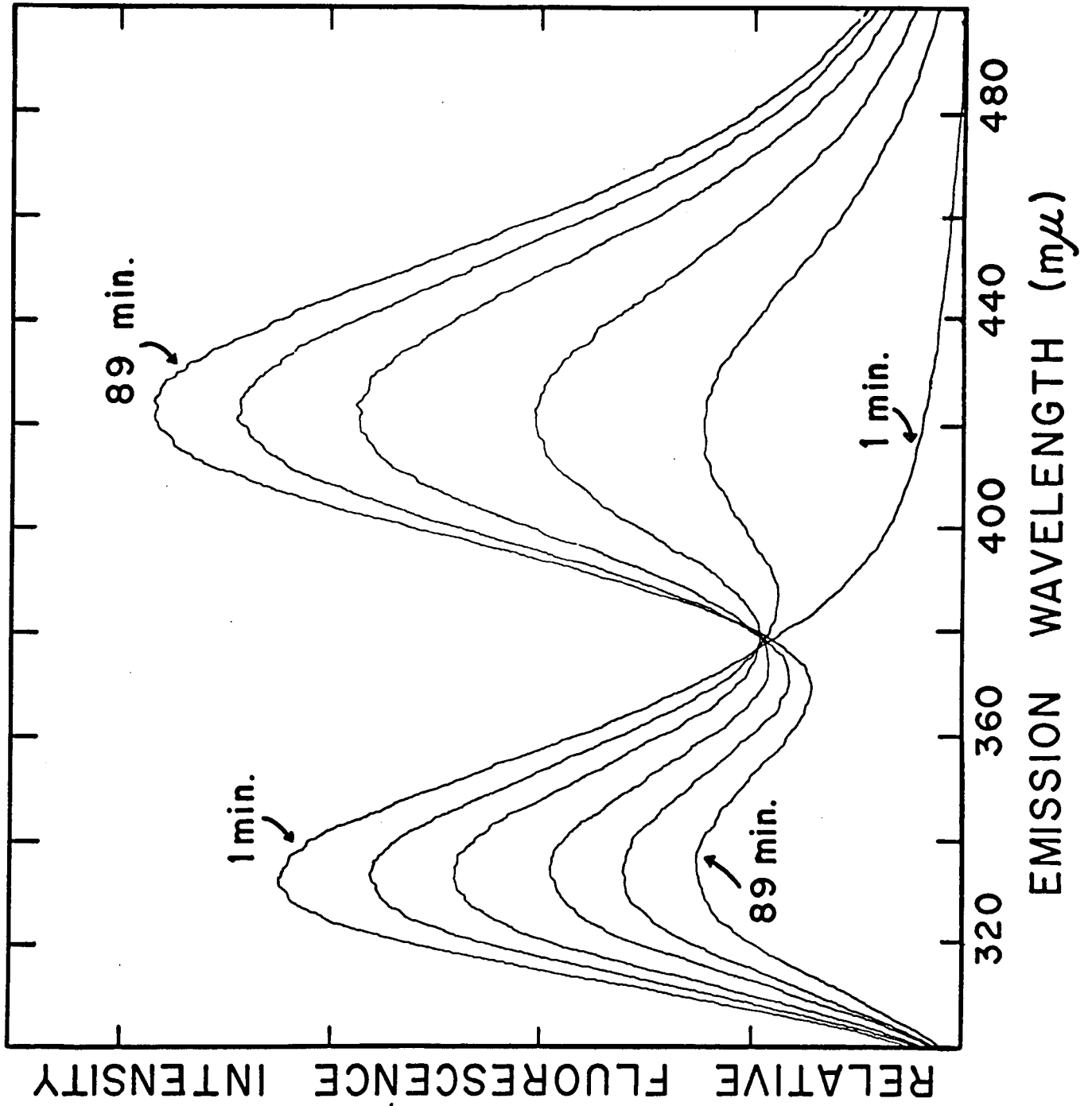


Figure 2

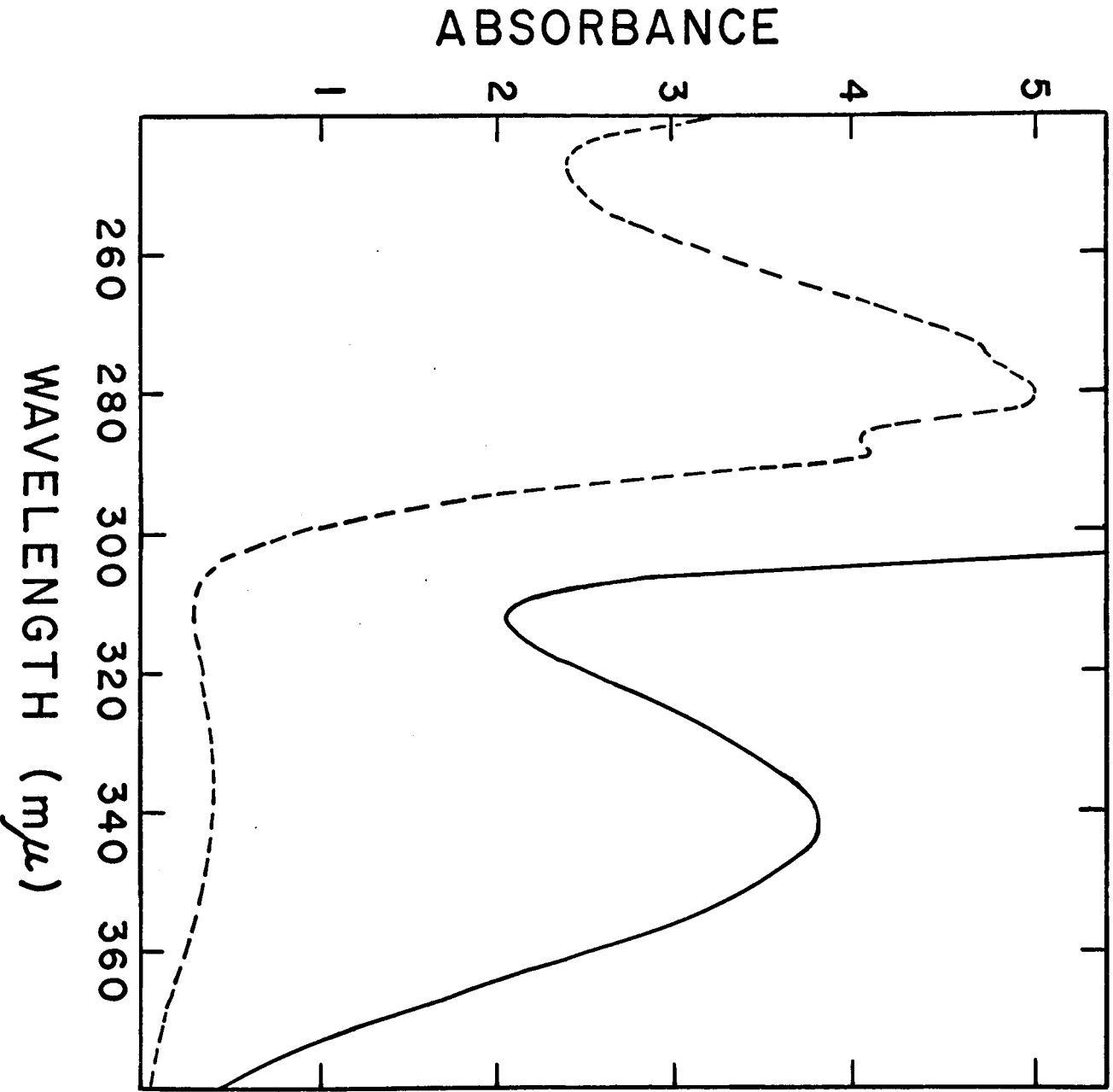


Fig 2

Figure 3

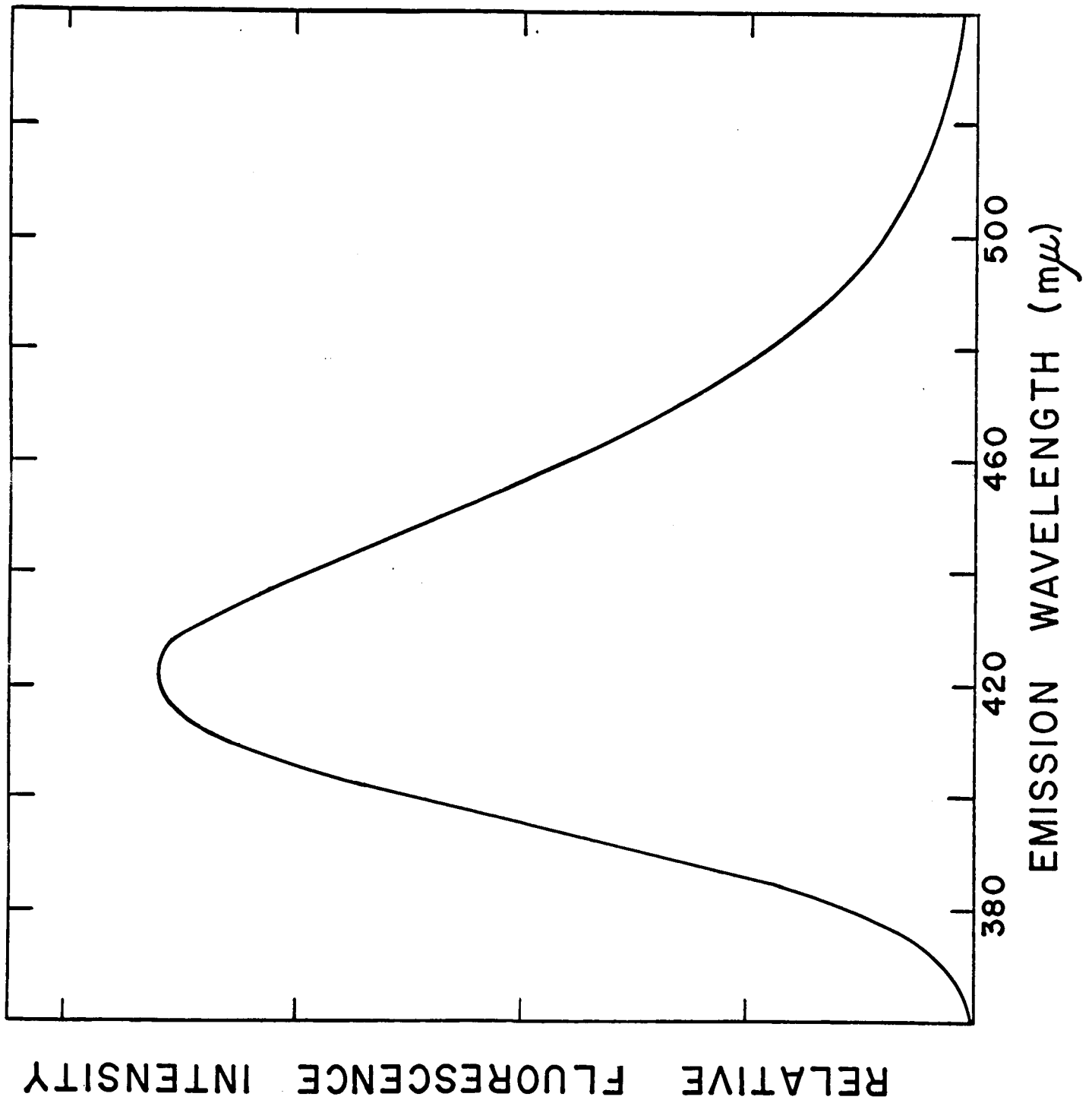




Figure 4

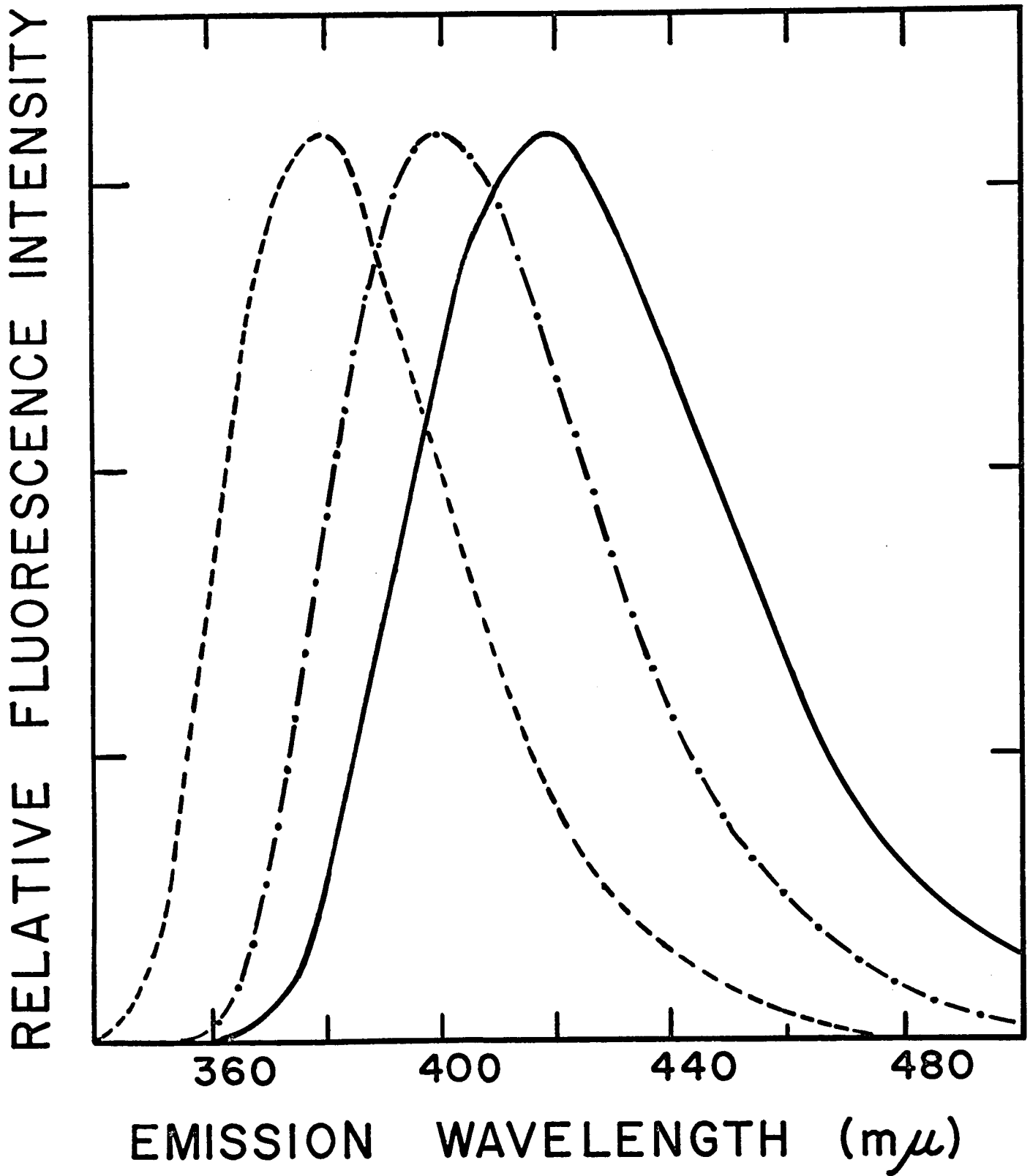


Figure 5

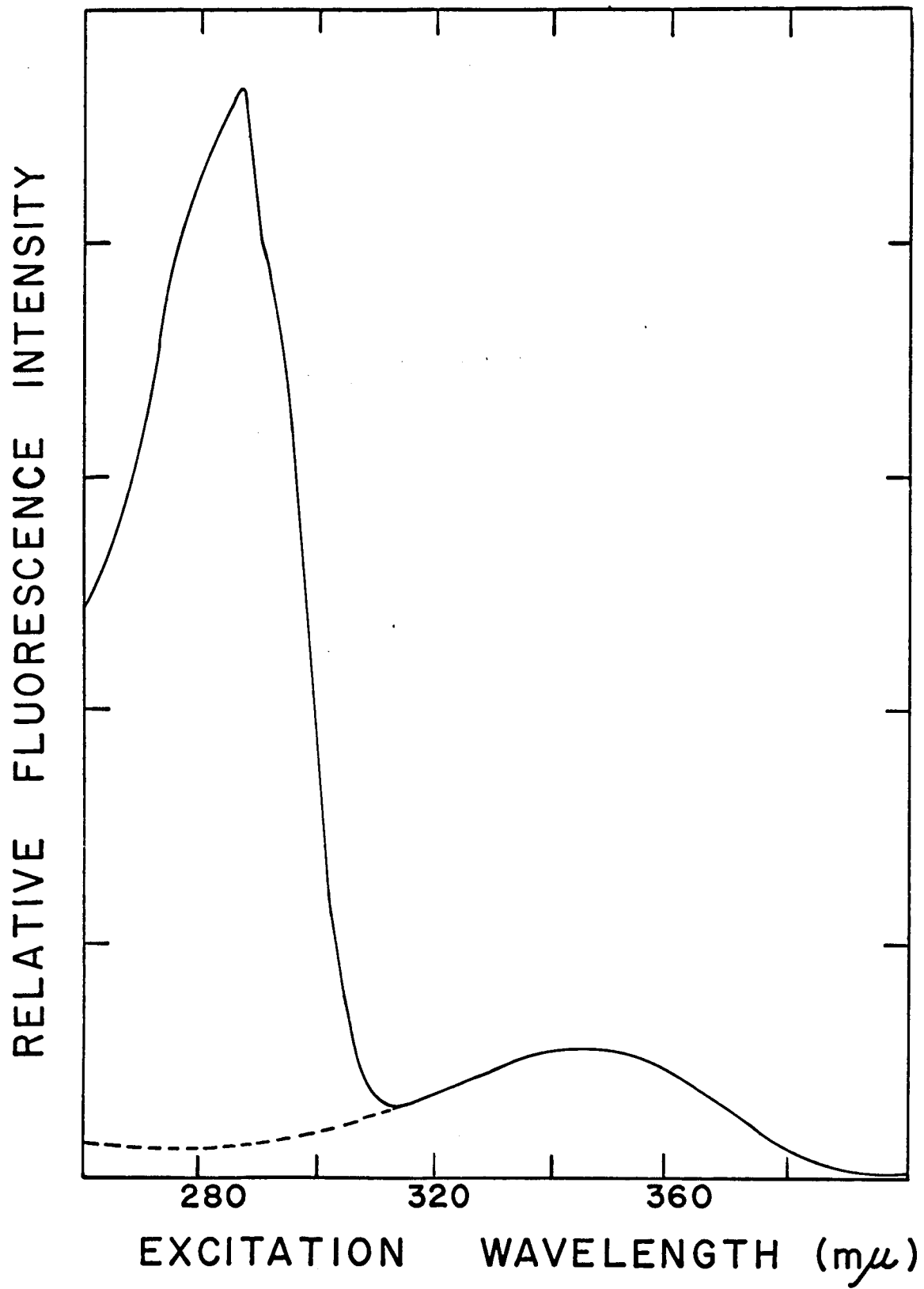


Figure 6

