Isolation of a β -glucosidase binding and activating polysaccharide from cell walls of *Trichoderma reesei*

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Abstract. The extracellular β -glucosidase from the filamentous fungus Trichoderma reesei QM 9414 is mainly bound to the cell wall of the fungus and only partially released into the medium. Isolation of the cell walls and its hydrolysis by enzymatic treatment with Aspergillus *niger* cellulase released β -glucosidase, which appeared tightly associated with a cell wall polysaccharide. This polysaccharide was purified by gel filtration and ion exchange chromatography and was shown to consist of mannose, galactose, glucose, galacturonic acid and glucuronic acid. It was devoid of protein and phosphate. It reassociated both with extracellular β -glucosidase as well as β -glucosidase released from the fungus' cell wall. Addition of the polysaccharide to the β -glucosidase in vitro increased the enzyme's activity against 4-nitrophenyl- β glucoside twofold. These findings suggest, that the isolated polysaccharide functions as an "anchor glycan" for the β -glucosidase in *Trichoderma reesei*.

Key words: Trichoderma reesei – β -Glucosidase – Polyheteroglycan – Cell wall – Enzyme activation – Reassociation

The filamentous fungus *Trichoderma reesei* is probably the most potent producer of cellulases currently known, with respect to the final amount of secreted protein (Mandels 1985) and its ability to break down cellulose synergistically (Coughlan and Ljungdahl 1988).

The bottleneck in the use of several commercial cellulase preparations for the production of glucose is the relatively low amount of β -glucosidase (Sternberg et al. 1977; Wood and Wiseman 1982). Attempts to improve the β -glucosidase content of *Trichoderma* cellulases have been made by the addition of β -glucosidase from other microorganisms (Enari et al. 1981; Sternberg 1976) or by isolation of mutants with increased rates of β -glucosidase

formation (Kawamori et al. 1986a; Tagnu et al. 1981). The reason of this poor secretion of β -glucosidase into the culture fluid of T. reesei is that 50-100% of the β glucosidase remains cell wall bound during cultivation (Kubicek 1981). The molecular basis of this "trapping" by the cell walls is not satisfactorily understood; release of β -glucosidase into the medium is enhanced in the presence of increased activities of β -1,3-glucanase, an enzyme responsible for cell wall turnover (Kubicek 1982, 1983a) or decreased cell wall β -1,3-glucan upon growth of T. reesei on sorbose (Kubicek 1983b; Bisaria et al. 1986; Nanda et al. 1986; Kawamori et al. 1985, 1986 b). Whether or not a cell wall glucan is the actual place where β -glucosidase is bound, or whether its degradation facilitates subsequent extraction of the enzyme is not yet known.

We have recently described the release of β -glucosidase from *T. reesei* cell walls by an *Aspergillus niger* hydrolase mixture on a scale sufficient for characterization of the released enzyme (Messner and Kubicek 1990a). Here we describe the isolation of the β -glucosidase binding cell wall component, its association with and activation of β -glucosidase from *T. reesei*.

Materials and methods

Maintainance and growth of organism

Trichoderma reesei QM9414 (ATCC 26921) was maintained on malt agar slants. Submerged cultivations were performed as described earlier (Messner et al. 1988). Induction of β -glucosidase formation was carried out in a resting-cell system containing 0.7% (w/v) Omethyl- β -D-glucopyranoside according to Sternberg and Mandels (1982) using 22 h old mycelium pregrown on glucose.

Radiolabeling of mycelium

Specific labeling of cell wall components was performed according Messner and Kubicek (1990a). It must be noted, that for optimal recovery of ³⁵S-methionine labeled wall bound β -glucosidase, the

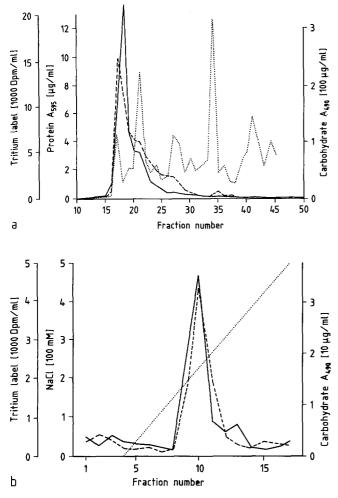


Fig. 1. A Gel filtration on Superose 12 of a digest by cellulase of *Aspergillus niger* of ³H-glucose labeled cell wall of *Trichoderma reesei*. Conditions are described in the text. **B** Mono P anion exchange chromatography of the single carbohydrate peak from the gel filtration given in **A**. Conditions are described in the text

mycelium had to be at least 2 days old. For optimal silver staining or Western blotting of β -glucosidase, however, mycelium of 20 - 24 h age was used.

Cell wall fractionation

Chemical separation of purified cell walls was performed basically as described by Mahadevan and Tatum (1965), as modified by Messner and Kubicek 1990b).

Preparation of wall bound β -glucosidase

Purified cell walls were obtained from mycelia of different age (22 - 50 h) as described above and subjected to enzymatic hydrolysis. About 1 g cell walls (wet weight) was homogenously suspended in 2 volumes of sodium citrate buffer (50 mM, pH 5.0, 0.1 mg/ml final concentration of chloramphenicol from ethanolic stock solution) and digested by incubation with *Aspergillus niger* cellulase [Sigma Chemical Co., 1% (w/v), final concentration] for 46–52 h at 37°C. Suspensions were spun down in a bench top centrifuge (4°C, 15 min, 12000 g) and supernatants dialyzed exhaustively (3 times for 12 h at 4°C) against 25 mM imidazole buffer, pH 8.0.

The total volume of dialyzed digest was loaded on a Mono P anion axchanger (HR, size 0.5×20 cm), connected to an FPLC-apparatus (Pharmacia LKB Biotechnology), which had previously been equilibrated in 25 mM imidazole buffer, pH 8.0. A flow rate of 0.5 ml/min was used. Fractions of 1 ml were collected, lyophilized and stored at -20° C until analysis.

Preparations of β -glucosidase binding carbohydrate

Cell walls from 50 h old mycelium were purified and digested as described above. The supernatant obtained after centrifugation was membrane filtered (0.2 μ m) instead of dialysis and subjected to gel filtration on Superose 12 (HR 16/50, V_t = 100 ml, Pharmacia), previously equilibrated with 50 mM imidazole buffer, pH 8.0 and operated by the FPLC-apparatus at a flow rate of 0.5 ml/min, 2 ml fractions were collected. The three fractions at 36% of V_t, which exhibited the highest carbohydrate content were diluted by 1 vol. of distilled water and subjected to Mono P anion exchange chromatography as described above. After 12 ml elution by the starting buffer, a linear salt gradient was applied (0–0.5 M NaCl in 32 ml). Fractions of 3 ml were collected and analyzed for carbohydrate. Positive fractions were lyophilized.

SDS-PAGE, Western blot and fluorography

SDS-PAGE/Western blotting and immunostaining was performed as described by Kubicek et al. (1987). Goat anti mouse IgG, coupled to alkaline phosphatase (Accurate Chemicals & Scientific Corp., USA) was used as second antibody. Silver staining of SDS-PAGE was done according Merril et al. (1981); radiolabeled proteins and carbohydrates were identified by fluorography described by Kubicek (1987).

Enzyme activity assays

Activity of β -glucosidase against 4-nitrophenyl- β -D-glucopyranoside (PNPG) was measured as described by Messner and Kubicek (1990b).

Chemical cell wall analysis

The concentration of protein was measured by the dye-bindingmethod (Bradford 1976). Total carbohydrate content was quantified b a miniaturized version of the phenol-sulfuric acid method (Dubois et al. 1966): 150 μ l sample, 150 μ l phenol in water (5%, w/v) and 900 μ l H₂SO₄ (98%, w/v) were mixed in a 12 ml glass tube. After 15 min, the absorbance was read at 490 nm. Soluble starch was used for calibration. Hexuronic acid analysis was done according Chaplin (1986) and inorganic phosphate was measured after complete hydrolysis (parameters see below, TCL analysis) with the aid of the ammonium molybdate method (Ames 1966).

TLC analysis

Polysaccharides were desalted with the aid of PD 10 columns $(0.8 \times 5 \text{ cm}, \text{Pharmacia})$, using distilled water as a solvent. They were thereafter lyophilized and subsequently hydrolyzed in 0.1 N HCl at 110°C. Complete hydrolysis was achieved within 4 h. Thereafter samples were desiccated over solid KOH, dissolved in distilled water again and subjected to TLC on silica gel 60 (Merck). Plates were developed 2 times in acetone:n-butanol:water (5:4:1, v/v/v) for separation of monosaccharides (Hotta and Kurokawa 1968). For detection of total carbohydrate spots plates were treated with

a phenol-sulfuric acid spray reagent (Der Marderosian et al. 1968). For detection of reducing sugars, sugar acids and sugar alcohols the benzidine metaperiodate spray reagent was used (Badger et al. 1963).

GLC analysis of carbohydrate constituents

For recovery of neutral monosaccharides, the glycan - after anion exchange chromatography and concentration by lyophilization was hydrolyzed in the presence of 200 mg/ml Dowex 50 cation exchanger (previously equilibrated in 1 N HCl and washed until neutral). Hydrolysis was allowed to proceed for 8 h at 110°C in Reacti-Vials (Pierce Chemical Co., Illinois). Thereafter, the suspensions were reacted with an equal amount of Dowex 1 anion exchanger (equilibrated in 1 N Na₂CO₃ and washed neutral) for 30 min at room temperature. The final supernatants were lyophilized and the sugars released were derivatized for GLC analysis; aliquots of maximal 100 µg were mixed with 200 µl reducing agent (12 mg/ml NaBH₄ in 1 M NH₄OH, freshly prepared) and incubated at 28°C for 2 h. The reaction was stopped by addition of 200 µl 4 N acetic acid, the samples lyophilized and the boric acid formed removed by the addition and subsequent evaporation of 1 ml methanol (repeated five times). The corresponding sugar alcohols were peracetylated in Reacti-Vials, containing 100 µl pyridine and 100 µl acetanhydride, for 30 min at 110°C. The acetylation reagent was removed in vacuo at 50°C and after resolving in chloroform the samples were filtrated through fine glass wool. The solvent was then again completely removed and the final residue taken up in 50 µl pyridine. All solvents used in this procedure had been from Merck (LiChrosolv HPLC purity grade).

The GLC used was a Model 437A from United Technology Packard equipped with a flame ionization detector and a Fused Silica Capillary Column CP-Sil 8 CB ($25 \text{ m} \times 0.32 \text{ mm}$). Peak areas were integrated by an 3390A integrator (Hewlett Packard). Carrier gas was nitrogen 99.999%, flow rate 1.7 ml/min, detector temperature 200°C, injection block 230°C and temperature program was 160°C:2°C/min oven rise:190°C - 5 min hold. 1 µl of the sample was injected and splitted approximately 1:60.

For recovery of neutral and charged sugar monomers the polysaccharide was hydrolyzed as described above for TLC-analysis, and then subjected to derivatization for GLC after removal of hydrochloric acid.

Reassociation studies

Solutions of β -glucosidase as well as radiolabeled glycan were equilibrated in 20 mM sodium citrate buffer, pH 5.0 on PD-10 columns (Pharmacia) and lyophilized. They were then redissolved in an appropriate volume of water to give a final citrate concentration of 100 (\pm 10 mM) citrate. Individual aliquots of glycan were supplied with different amounts of β -glucosidase and diluted to a total volume of 100 µl. Reassociation was allowed to proceed at 30° C for 6 h. The whole sample was then subjected to SDS-PAGE and areas of interest cut out. Radioactive material was eluted from the gel slices by incubating each of them in 3 ml elution buffer [1 M glycine, 3% (w/v) SDS, pH 8.8 per Tris] at 100° C for 18 h. The eluted label was measured in 15 ml scintillation cocktail as recommended by the manufacturers of the liquid scintillation counter (1219 Rackbeta; LKB, Bromma, Sweden).

In vitro activation of β -glucosidase

Extracellular β -glucosidase was purified from 0.5 ml Celluclast (Novo Industri A/S, Denmark) after two times of desalting on PD 10 columns (Pharmacia) by anion exchange chromatography as described above. The "anchor glycan" was also prepared as given above and desalted on PD 10 columns (Pharmacia) against the

buffer. Immediately before use the glycan was heated up to 100° C for 20 min in order to deactivate still attached, active traces of β -glucosidase.

The enzyme assay included in a total volume of 100 μ l of 50 mM sodium citrate buffer, pH 5.0:3 μ g β -glucosidase preparation; various amounts of the substrate PNPG; and freshly deactivated glycan. The enzyme reaction was stopped after 10 min of incubation at 50°C by addition of 100 μ l 1 M sodium carbonate and diluted by 1.0 ml distilled water for photometric measurement at 405 nm.

Results

Comments on the procedure for isolation of the glycan

During our previous studies on the isolation of the cell wall bound β -glucosidase from *Trichoderma reesei*, several attempts to demonstrate the emzyme by electrophoretic methods failed. In the course of this work, it was realized that this was due to masking of the enzyme by a polysaccharide, which led to broad smears not reacting with antibodies (unpublished results). We have supposed therefore, that this polysaccharide may strongly bind to β -glucosidase. In the present study we have therefore purified it (see Materials and methods) and tested this possibility.

The elution profile of this glycan during Superose 12 (Fig. 1 A) and Mono P (Fig. 1 B) chromatography was shown to be identical, irrespective of the carbon source used to grow the mycelium for cell wall preparation: no differences with respect to area, position, geometry and number of peaks had been noticed, when the mycelium used had been grown on cellobiose, lactose and cellulose for 2 days, on lactose for 4 days or when it had been induced for β -glucosidase formation with β -methyl-glucoside for 14 h.

Some properties of the "anchor carbohydrate"

The carbohydrate, isolated as described above, yields a single, symmetrical peak in analytical gel filtration, but exhibits a slightly smaller size than the unpurified glycan, which still contains β -glucosidase and Aspergillus niger hydrolases (38% of V₁ instead of 36%, Superose 12). Its monomere composition after hydrolysis was checked by chemical standart methods and assessed by both TLC and GLC analysis as follows (mol %): 45 (\pm 5) % mannose, 30 (\pm 3) % galactose, 11 (\pm 3) % glucose, 9 (\pm 4) % galacturonic acid and 5 (\pm 3) % glucuronic acid. The glycan exhibits high stability against several hydrolase systems, such as cellulase of A. niger, "lysing enzymes" "lyticase" (Sigma), (Sigma), laminarinase from Arthrobacter sp., gamanase or promozym (Novo Industri A/S, Denmark). Only Novozym 234 was able to degrade the glycan, albeit at a very low rate. Its degradation was not inhibited by 600 μ M δ -gluconolactone or 150 μ M nojirimycin, which inhibits $exo-\beta$ -glucanases.

The presence of low amounts of protein $(1.4 \pm 1.0\%, w/w)$ was assessed whereas phosphate appears to be below the detection limit (< 0.3%, w/w).

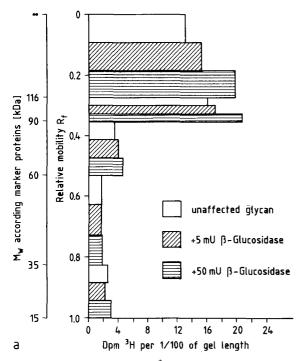


Fig. 2A, B. Reassociation of ³H-glucose-labeled "anchor glycan" with (A) purified extracellular β -glucosidase (A) and wall released β -glucosidase (B) of *T. reesei*. The shift of label distribution, caused by the presence of β -glucosidase with respect to the relative mobility.

Reassociation of β -glucosidase and "anchor glycan"

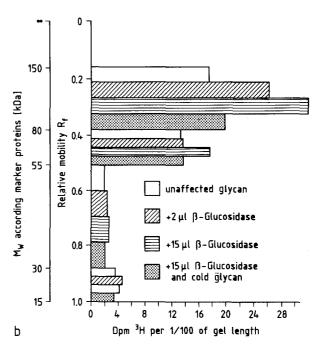
In order to find out, whether binding between β -glucosidase and the "anchor glycan" might be reversible, β glucosidase was mixed with glycan in vitro and the formation of a stable complex investigated by SDS-PAGE.

The pattern of migration of ³H-labeled glycan in SDS-PAGE is clearly altered by the presence of either extracellular (Fig. 2A) or wall-released β -glucosidase (Fig. 2B). Migration of the pure glycan in SDS-PAGE is probably due to the negative charge of its uronic acid constituents. The simultaneous application of glycan and β -glucosidase retards the migration of the protein and accelerates that of the glycan, indicating their association. The specifity of this reassociation assay was ascertained by quenching the "shifting" effect by the addition of a 15fold excess of unlabeled glycan (Fig. 2B). This quenching was not seen with various other polysaccharides (unpublished findings).

Activation of extracellular β -glucosidase by the "anchor glycan"

To answer the question, whether β -glucosidase binding to the glycan is due to a substrate-recognizing-mechanism, the effect of the addition of "anchor glycan" on the activity of β -glucosidase was investigated. It was found, that the enzymatic activity of extracellular β -glucosidase from *T. reesei* against PNPG is enhanced in the presence or purified glycan.

The activation (Table 1) adds up to 150% to the initial enzyme activity as estimated by double inverse plotting



Migration is given in % of total gel length \times 100. Both β -glucosidase used for these experiments were purified by anion exchange chromatography as described in Material and methods

Table 1. Activation of β -glucosidase by the "anchor glycan". The activity is given in mU/ml at 50°C and pH 5.0

Substrate concentration [mM] PNPG	Glycan concentration [µg/ml]					
	0	36	109	364	909	1820
3	1363	1385	1490	1958	2171	2603
1.5	1186	1308	1444	1935	2198	2516
0.7	1097	1294	1354	1553	1653	1785

of relative enzyme velocity against glycan concentration. Most noteworthy, a similar activation is achieved by addition of yeast mannan, but not by other polysaccharides (unpublished results).

Discussion

Although the binding of fungal, extracellular enzymes to the cell wall is a frequent observation, the responsible cell wall polymer acting as receptors have not yet been identified. Data in favour of a β -glucan (Dickerson and Baker 1979; Chang and Trevithick 1972; Kubicek 1981), a "binding protein" (Yabuki and Fukui 1970) and a galactosamine containing polymer (Gratzner 1972) have been published. However, binding "in vitro" has so far not been demonstrated. The present data are the first report on an isolation of a cell wall polymer, which strongly binds β -glucosidase. Chemical analysis of the polymer suggests that it is a heteroglycan consisting of mannose, glucose and galactose and which owes its negative charge to the presence of glucuronic and galacturonic acid. Since β -glucosidase is a positively charged protein (IP of 8.7), it is tempting to speculate that the negative charge of the heteroglycan could be responsible for its ability to bind the enzyme.

Extracellular polysaccharides from filamentous fungi often consist of neuronal sugars and amino sugars (Reissig and Glasgow 1971; Ruperez and Leal 1981; Gomez-Miranda and Leal 1981) but rarely contain uronic acids. The glycan isolated by us is quite similar to glycans from Neurospora crassa (Hiura et al. 1983; Nakajima et al. 1984a, b), wall fraction I of N. crassa (Cardemil and Pincheira 1979; Silva and Pincheira 1984) and Penicillium erythromellis (Ruperez and Leal 1987) and resembles closely the acidic heteropolysaccharide of Aureobasidium pullulans with respect to sugar composition (Brown and Lindberg 1967). In this paper, no attempts were made to assess the type of linkage of the Trichoderma reesei polymer; further methods, which enable the determination of the structure of the intact heteroglycan (i.e. NMR and MS) are required for determining the correct structure and linkage type of this carbohydrate.

Concerning the relation of the heteroglycan to the cell wall structure, it can be assumed that the glycan is a constitutive fragment of the cell wall, because different culture conditions do not alter its occurrence or properties. The amount of "anchor glycan" isolated from intact walls is 5 times the amount of that, which can be obtained by enzymatic hydrolysis of the cell wall, from which fraction I has already been removed. Hence it is obviously mainly a part of the alkali-soluble fraction I of cell walls. These findings are paralleled by the fact that β -glucosidase can also be detected immunologically in extracts of fraction I. Nevertheless, it must be borne in mind that a concomitant solubilization of wall fraction I and the heteroglycan does not necessarily mean that both polymers are associated with each other in the intact native cell wall.

A most interesting finding obtained was the ability of the heteroglycan to activate β -glucosidase. This shows that β -glucosidase does not bind to the polymer via an involvement of its active center, since in this case a competitive type of inhibition may have been anticipated. The very similar activation by yeast cell wall mannan in contrast to other soluble and insoluble polysaccharides suggests that the mannan residues in the heteroglycan may be responsible for this effect. Such an assumption does not necessarily contradict our hypothesis that the uronic acids are responsible for binding to β -glucosidase, since the carbohydrate chains may interact with more than one epitope on β -glucosidase. It is possible that by the binding of the glycan to the β -glucosidase, the polysaccharide alters the conformation of the enzyme in such a way as to render the active center better accessible to its substrates. Activation and stabilization of products by covalently bound carbohydrates has frequently been observed (Eylar 1965; Hayashida and Yoshioka 1979; Mizunaga et al. 1983). However, the fact that a protein can be activated by non-covalent association with a polysaccharide has not yet been reported. This observation may be of interest in the application of several industrial enzymes.

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