

## Quercetin inhibits $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ uptake but not $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ release by sarcoplasmic reticulum in skinned muscle fibers

( $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Mg}^{2+}$ -ATPase/ATP synthesis/muscle contraction/caffeine)

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**ABSTRACT** Quercetin inhibited  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -dependent ATP hydrolysis, ATP-dependent  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake, chelator-induced [ethylene glycol bis( $\beta$ -aminoethyl ether)- $N,N,N',N'$ -tetraacetic acid]  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release, and ATP synthesis coupled to  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release in isolated vesicles of sarcoplasmic reticulum. Use of this inhibitor permitted evaluation of whether  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release from sarcoplasmic reticulum *in situ* occurs through a reversal of the uptake pathway. Release of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  from the sarcoplasmic reticulum of skinned muscle fibers can be detected by the measurement of tension in the fiber. If the sarcoplasmic reticulum of these preparations is first allowed to accumulate  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ , tension development may be induced by the addition of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  itself or of caffeine to the bathing medium or by depolarization with  $\text{Cl}^-$ . The presence of quercetin during the loading phase inhibited  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake by sarcoplasmic reticulum *in situ*. When quercetin was added together with initiators of tension development, however, the rate of tension development was enhanced 4- to 7-fold and the relaxation rate of the fibers was greatly inhibited. These results suggest that quercetin had no effect on  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release in skinned fiber; its effect on  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  reuptake could account for the apparent enhancement of the release rate and for the prolonged relaxation time. These observations rule out reversal of the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  pump as the mechanism of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release *in situ*.

The contraction/relaxation cycle of muscle is mediated through changes in  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  concentration within muscle cells (1). Muscle contraction is elicited by  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  released from the sarcoplasmic reticulum into the myofilament space, whereas muscle relaxation results from sequestration of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  in the same membrane (1, 2). It is well established that the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Mg}^{2+}$ -ATPase (ATP phosphohydrolase, EC 3.6.1.3) of the sarcoplasmic reticulum is the enzyme that catalyzes  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  transport at the expense of ATP hydrolysis, and the enzymatic reactions of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  transport are understood in general terms (3, 4). On the other hand, the process of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release from the sarcoplasmic reticulum is not understood. Various kinds of stimuli applied directly to sarcoplasmic reticulum have been found to be effective in inducing  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release.  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  will induce  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release, increasing permeability of the membrane through an interaction on the cytoplasmic surface (2, 5-9). Caffeine is also effective in  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release and its mode of action has been shown to be intimately related to the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -induced  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release mechanism (2). Chloride-induced  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release is believed to result from a change in electrical potential across the membranes (10-13).

It has been shown that the entire process of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  transport can be reversed (14, 15), and that ATP synthesis is coupled to  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  efflux. The high ratio of ATP synthesized per  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  released suggests that most of the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  leaves the vesicles through the pump system (15). This raises the question of whether the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  pump of the sarcoplasmic reticulum is directly involved

in the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release process. Although in many respects the calcium release process is completely different from the characteristics of pump reversal (2), it has been suggested (16) that a common carrier may be involved in both processes.

We have discovered that quercetin, a potent inhibitor of the ATPase of sarcoplasmic reticulum (17, 18), inhibits forward and backward reactions of ATP-dependent  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  transport. These observations have provided us with the opportunity to examine involvement of the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Mg}^{2+}$ -ATPase of sarcoplasmic reticulum in the release of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  under physiological conditions. Accordingly, we have studied the effects of quercetin on  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake and release in skinned muscle fibers. The results provide evidence that  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release *in vivo* does not occur through reversal of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake and that  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake and release do not involve a common carrier, suggesting that there are independent pathways for the two processes.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Materials.** ATP, ADP, hexokinase (type V), Tris, imidazole, and quercetin were obtained from Sigma. Quercetin was dissolved in 95% ethanol, and the final ethanol concentration was not more than 2% in the control and in the samples containing quercetin. Quercetin concentration was determined spectrophotometrically by using a molar extinction coefficient of 16,100 at 385 nm and pH 8.0 (19).  $^{45}\text{CaCl}_2$  was purchased from New England Nuclear and [ $^{32}\text{P}$ ]phosphate was obtained from Amersham. [ $\gamma$ - $^{32}\text{P}$ ]ATP was synthesized from ADP and  $^{32}\text{P}$  by photophosphorylation (20) and was purified by the method of Glynn and Chappell (21). The other chemicals were analytical reagent grade and all solutions were prepared with deionized, distilled water.

**Isolation of Sarcoplasmic Reticulum Membranes.** Vesicles were prepared from rabbit white skeletal muscle by the method of MacLennan (22).

**Skinned Fiber Preparations.** Skeletal muscle fibers from human or rabbit were obtained by the method of Wood (23). The muscle fibers were skinned chemically by the method of Wood *et al.* (24) and were devoid of sarcolemma and mitochondria but contained actively functioning sarcoplasmic reticulum and myofilaments. All the experiments reported were carried out with human gluteus muscle fibers; similar results were obtained when muscle fibers from rabbit were used.

**Isometric Tension Measurements** The experimental apparatus was essentially as described by Wood *et al.* (24). A single intact fiber was isolated from the skinned muscle, the two ends of the fiber were secured in Lucite clamps, and the isometric tension was recorded with a mechanoelectronic transducer

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Abbreviations: EGTA, ethylene glycol bis( $\beta$ -aminoethyl ether)- $N,N,N',N'$ -tetraacetic acid.

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(Grass Instrument, model FT O3C) and a Gould Brush 2200 recorder. The maximal isometric tension was determined by exposing the fiber to 10  $\mu\text{M}$  free  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ . The experiments were carried out at 22°C in a thermoregulated chamber.

**Assays.** ATPase activity was determined at 37°C as described (22). The  $^{32}\text{P}$  released from [ $\gamma$ - $^{32}\text{P}$ ]ATP was extracted as phosphomolybdate with isobutanol/benzene, 1:1 (vol/vol), by the method of Avron (20) and measured by liquid scintillation counting.  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake was assayed as described (22) by the Millipore filtration method (25). Protein concentration was determined according to Lowry *et al.* (26) with bovine serum albumin as a standard. The concentration of free  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  in the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ /ethylene glycol bis( $\beta$ -aminoethyl ether)- $N,N,N',N'$ -tetraacetic acid (EGTA) buffers was calculated by assuming an association constant of  $2 \times 10^6 \text{ M}^{-1}$  at pH 7.0.

## RESULTS

**Quercetin Inhibition of ATPase Activity and  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  Uptake in Isolated Sarcoplasmic Reticulum Vesicles.** Quercetin, a flavonoid, has been reported to inhibit the activity of enzymes involved in energy conversion reactions (17–19, 27–29). Quercetin inhibited  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -dependent ATPase activity and  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake by sarcoplasmic reticulum membranes (Table 1). In these experiments, half-maximal inhibition was obtained with about 10  $\mu\text{M}$  quercetin. The effective range of quercetin concentration, however, increased with increasing protein concentration (not shown).

**Effect of Quercetin on the Reversal of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  Pump.** It has been shown (14, 15) that, when sarcoplasmic reticulum vesicles previously loaded with  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  are incubated in medium containing ADP,  $\text{P}_i$ ,  $\text{Mg}^{2+}$ , and EGTA, stored  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  is released to the medium and  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  efflux is coupled to ATP synthesis. Under the proper conditions for reversal of the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  pump, quercetin inhibited both ATP synthesis and  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release (Fig. 1). Some  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release was not coupled to ATP synthesis and was resistant to quercetin. Thus, the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  released per ATP synthesized was 2.3 rather than 2.0 as anticipated for perfect coupling.

**Effect of Quercetin on  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  Uptake by Sarcoplasmic Reticulum in Skinned Muscle Fibers.** The inactivation of the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -ATPase by quercetin and the inhibition, thereby, of ATP-driven  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake and the reversal of this process can be used to test the relationship between the reversal of the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  pump and  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release in muscle fibers. The effect of quercetin on  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  movement between the sarcoplasmic reticulum and the myofilament space was studied in skinned muscle fibers by using isometric force as an indicator of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release from the sarcoplasmic reticulum. In the experiment described in Fig. 2, the sarcoplasmic reticulum in the fiber was loaded with  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  in the absence or presence of quercetin at the concentration

Table 1. Effect of quercetin on ATPase and  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake activities of isolated sarcoplasmic reticulum

Quercetin	ATPase activity, $\mu\text{mol}/\text{mg protein}$	$\text{Ca}^{2+}$ uptake, $\mu\text{mol}/\text{mg protein}$
None	12.47	1.454
7 $\mu\text{M}$	9.30	1.279
15 $\mu\text{M}$	3.25	0.518
30 $\mu\text{M}$	0.63	0.087

ATPase and  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake activities were assayed for 4 min. The reaction mixture for ATPase activity contained 20 mM Tris-HCl at pH 7.5, 100 mM KCl, 5 mM  $\text{MgCl}_2$ , 5 mM [ $\gamma$ - $^{32}\text{P}$ ]ATP (containing  $1.5 \times 10^5 \text{ cpm}/\mu\text{mol}$ ), 0.5 mM EGTA, 0.5 mM  $\text{CaCl}_2$ , and sarcoplasmic reticulum at 40  $\mu\text{g}/\text{ml}$ . Conditions for  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake were the same as for ATPase activity, except that 5 mM K oxalate was added to the reaction mixtures, unlabeled ATP was used, and  $^{45}\text{CaCl}_2$  was added to a specific activity of  $5 \times 10^6 \text{ cpm}/\mu\text{mol}$ .

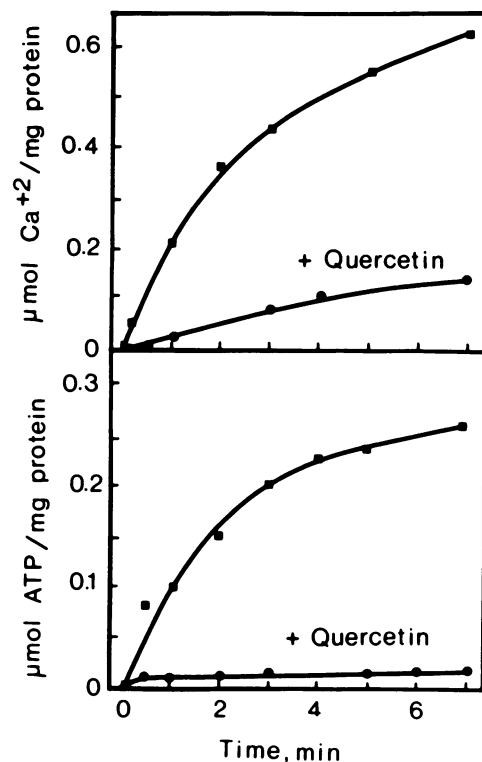


FIG. 1. Inhibition of reversal of the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  pump by quercetin.  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release (Upper) and ATP synthesis (Lower) were measured with  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -loaded vesicles. The loading solution for  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake was as described in Table 1 except that  $^{45}\text{Ca}$ , to a specific activity of  $10^7 \text{ cpm}/\mu\text{mol}$ , was added only to the vesicles used for measurement of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release. After 30 min at 22°C the vesicles were centrifuged at  $80,000 \times g$  for 20 min and the pellets were resuspended in 20 mM Tris-HCl, pH 7.5/100 mM KCl and used immediately. ATP synthesis and  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release were assayed in a medium containing 20 mM Tris maleate at pH 6.5, 2 mM EGTA, 6 mM phosphate, 20 mM  $\text{MgCl}_2$ , 20 mM glucose, 0.5 mM ADP, 10 units of hexokinase per ml, and 100  $\mu\text{g}$  of loaded vesicles per ml.  $^{32}\text{P}$  ( $8.8 \times 10^6 \text{ cpm}/\mu\text{mol}$ ) was added when ATP synthesis was measured. [ $^{32}\text{P}$ ]Phosphate was extracted as described (20) and the glucose 6-phosphate formed in the reaction was measured by liquid scintillation counting.  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release was determined from the amount of  $^{45}\text{Ca}$  retained in the filter (25). The quercetin concentration was 200  $\mu\text{M}$ .

indicated. Then the fiber was washed<sup>§</sup> and the tension response was elicited by the addition of 10 mM caffeine. The amplitude of the caffeine-induced tension was plotted against quercetin concentration in the loading step. Quercetin decreased the tension amplitude, presumably because it inhibited prior  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  accumulation by the sarcoplasmic reticulum. The range of quercetin concentrations required to bring about inhibition of tension development varied somewhat from fiber to fiber but was usually lower than that presented in Fig. 2 (see Fig. 3, where inhibition of relaxation and presumably of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  reuptake was complete at 100  $\mu\text{M}$  quercetin).

**Effect of Quercetin on Caffeine-Induced  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  Release from Sarcoplasmic Reticulum.** In order to test the effect of quercetin on  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release, quercetin was added to the caffeine solution. Fig. 3 shows the force spikes obtained with or without quercetin in the caffeine solution. In caffeine solution without quercetin, the force increased to a maximum and then declined due to calcium reuptake by sarcoplasmic reticulum. With ad-

<sup>§</sup> Quercetin can be removed by washing in aqueous solution. This is shown by the ability of the washed fiber to reload  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  and to redevelop tension if the fiber is washed after exposure to quercetin.

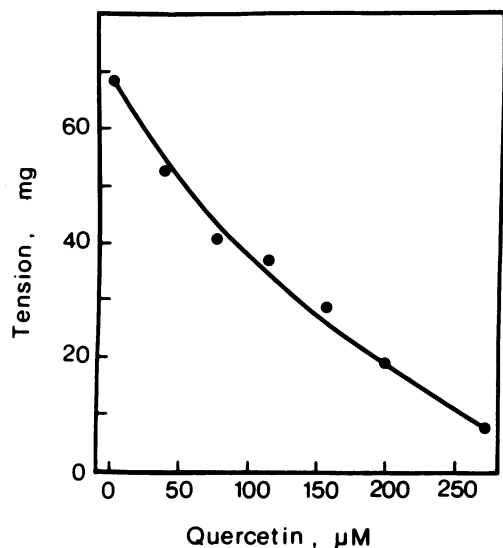


FIG. 2. Effect of quercetin on  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  loading by sarcoplasmic reticulum in skinned, single fiber (diameter,  $75 \mu\text{m}$ ). The sarcoplasmic reticulum was loaded with  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  by exposing the fiber for 30 sec to a wash solution (5 mM imidazole/2.5 mM ATP/2.5 mM MgO/185 mM K propionate, pH 7.0) containing 5 mM EGTA,  $0.158 \mu\text{M}$  free  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ , and the indicated concentrations of quercetin. The fiber was then rinsed twice with wash solution. To elicit a tension response, wash solution containing 10 mM caffeine was added. The fiber was relaxed with wash solution containing 5 mM EGTA followed by wash solution containing 40 mM caffeine (to empty the vesicles) and then rinsed twice with wash solution. The fiber was then reloaded with  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  as described above. Usually, 6–10 cycles of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake and release were obtained with a fiber and the maximum tension decreased only by about 10% during the course of the experiments.

dition of  $50 \mu\text{M}$  quercetin, the rate of tension development increased and relaxation was inhibited. Increasing the quercetin concentration to  $100 \mu\text{M}$  caused a further increase in the rate of tension development and completely prevented the relaxation of the fiber. The inhibitory effect of quercetin on the relaxation of the fiber was consistent with the concept that relaxation is due to reaccumulation of calcium by the sarcoplasmic reticulum. The transient nature of the tension may thus reflect the dynamic equilibrium between uptake and release of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  by the sarcoplasmic reticulum and may explain the positive effect of quercetin on the rate of tension development (Table 2). Addition of 100–200  $\mu\text{M}$  quercetin alone to  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -loaded fibers caused a slow increase in tension (about 0.5 mg/sec after an initial lag). This increased tension probably resulted from passive leakage of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  from sarcoplasmic re-

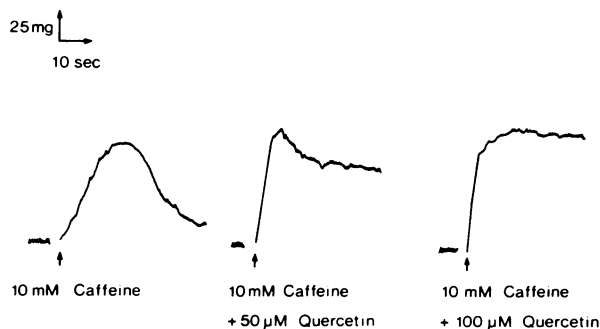


FIG. 3. Effect of quercetin on the response of a skinned fiber to caffeine. The experiments were carried out as described in Fig. 2, except that the fiber diameter was  $62 \mu\text{m}$  and, where indicated, quercetin was added to the wash solution containing 10 mM caffeine.

Table 2. Effect of quercetin on level and rate of change of caffeine-induced tension

Quercetin, $\mu\text{M}$	Tension	
	mg	mg/sec
0	101.3	7.0
50	100	17.5
100	103.8	25.6
150	106.8	33.8
200	112.2	45.0

The experiments were performed as described in Fig. 2, except that quercetin, at the indicated concentrations, was present in the wash solution containing 10 mM caffeine. The chart speed was increased to determine the rates of tension development more precisely. The rates were calculated from the linear part of the responses, which was about 80% of the maximal tension.

ticulum when the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  uptake system was inhibited by quercetin. Quercetin had no effect on the activity of the contractile proteins themselves because the tension developed by direct exposure of an unloaded fiber to  $10 \mu\text{M}$  free  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  was not affected by quercetin (data not shown). In addition, the effects of quercetin described above were completely reversible when the fiber was washed (see legend to Fig. 2).

**Effect of Quercetin on Tension Development Induced by Chloride and Calcium.** Muscle fiber contraction can be induced by various calcium release stimuli (6–8, 10–13). In order to induce  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  efflux from the loaded sarcoplasmic reticulum by depolarization of the internal membrane, K propionate was replaced by KCl. We found that high concentrations of free  $\text{Mg}^{2+}$  inhibited the chloride-induced  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release, in confirmation of a previous report (13). Accordingly, the  $\text{MgCl}_2$  concentration was reduced from 2.5 mM to 0.5 mM; the effect of quercetin on the chloride-induced tension development was similar to that found with caffeine (Table 3). Quercetin also increased the rate of tension development induced by the addition of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  to the bathing medium. In this case the  $\text{MgCl}_2$  concentration in the bathing solution was also reduced (30). It seems, therefore, that the effect of quercetin on tension development was not dependent on the specific stimulus used.

DISCUSSION

The mechanism that initiates  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release and the molecular mechanism of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release from sarcoplasmic reticulum are still not understood. Our study, directed toward the molecular mechanism of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release, concerned the relationship between

Table 3. Effect of quercetin on the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release induced by various stimuli

$\text{Ca}^{2+}$ release induced by	Tension		Relaxation, mg/sec
	mg	mg/sec	
Caffeine	64	17	10
Caffeine + quercetin	90	64	1
KCl	46	20	7
KCl + quercetin	62	64	>1
Calcium	38	22	28
Calcium + quercetin	50	68	2

Experimental conditions were as in Table 2, except that for chloride-induced  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release, K propionate was replaced by KCl and 2.5 mM MgO was replaced by 0.5 mM  $\text{MgCl}_2$  in the wash solution. For the  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -induced  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release, Ca/EGTA solutions were added to the wash solution in which MgO was replaced by 0.5 mM  $\text{MgCl}_2$ . The free  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  concentration was  $0.2 \mu\text{M}$  and this concentration had no effect on the unloaded fiber. The same results with caffeine-induced  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  release were obtained when the caffeine solution contained 0.5 mM  $\text{MgCl}_2$ . The quercetin concentration was  $200 \mu\text{M}$  and the fiber diameter was  $62 \mu\text{m}$ .

Ca<sup>2+</sup> uptake and Ca<sup>2+</sup> release and used quercetin as an inhibitor of the Ca<sup>2+</sup> ATPase. The present findings show that quercetin inhibits Ca<sup>2+</sup> ATPase and Ca<sup>2+</sup> uptake activities of the sarcoplasmic reticulum in isolated membranes and in skinned fibers (Table 1; Fig. 2).

One Ca<sup>2+</sup> release mechanism is that represented by the reversal of ATP-dependent Ca<sup>2+</sup> uptake. We have shown, by using isolated sarcoplasmic reticulum (Fig. 1), that quercetin inhibits Ca<sup>2+</sup> release and ATP synthesis concomitantly. Thus, if Ca<sup>2+</sup> release in the muscle cells, under physiological conditions, were due to reversal of the Ca<sup>2+</sup> pump, one would expect that quercetin would be an inhibitor of the physiologically relevant Ca<sup>2+</sup> release. Analysis of the effect of quercetin on Ca<sup>2+</sup> release from the sarcoplasmic reticulum in skinned fibers shows that Ca<sup>2+</sup> release is not affected by quercetin (Fig. 3; Table 2).

The Ca<sup>2+</sup> release mechanisms induced by caffeine, Ca<sup>2+</sup>, or Cl<sup>-</sup> are believed to be different from the reversal of the Ca<sup>2+</sup> pump because the characteristics of pump reversal are different from those of Ca<sup>2+</sup> release elicited by the various inducers. For example, external free Ca<sup>2+</sup> inhibits pump reversal (14, 31) and stimulates Ca<sup>2+</sup> release. Moreover, external free Mg<sup>2+</sup> is required for pump reversal but has an inhibitory effect on Ca<sup>2+</sup> release (30). In addition, the requirement for ADP and phosphate for reversal of the Ca<sup>2+</sup> pump and its inhibition by ATP (14, 31) are exactly the opposite of the conditions required for Ca<sup>2+</sup> release (2). It is possible, however, that the carrier for the pump might be uncoupled from the ATP-splitting system under certain conditions and act as a carrier for Ca<sup>2+</sup> release. This suggestion is inconsistent with the results in Table 2 and Fig. 3 which indicate that ATPase is active in transporting Ca<sup>2+</sup> during the period of Ca<sup>2+</sup> release. This conclusion is deduced from the marked increase in the rate of Ca<sup>2+</sup> release under conditions such that the Ca<sup>2+</sup> ATPase was inactive. This increase in the rate of Ca<sup>2+</sup> release is a reflection of the dynamic equilibrium between the uptake and release of Ca<sup>2+</sup> under conditions which elicited Ca<sup>2+</sup> release; inhibition of Ca<sup>2+</sup> uptake by quercetin results in an apparent stimulation in the rate of Ca<sup>2+</sup> release. Ogawa and Ebashi (16) found that the ATP analogue AMPOPCP inhibited the Ca<sup>2+</sup> pump and at the same time enhanced Ca<sup>2+</sup>-induced Ca<sup>2+</sup> release, both with similar affinities. They suggested that a common carrier is active in both the release and the uptake of Ca<sup>2+</sup>. Their results, like our results with quercetin, can be explained, however, by an inhibition of Ca<sup>2+</sup> uptake which results in a change in the equilibrium between the release and uptake of Ca<sup>2+</sup>, thereby leading to an apparent stimulation of Ca<sup>2+</sup> release.

The use of skinned muscle fibers for the study of Ca<sup>2+</sup> release for sarcoplasmic reticulum has limitations because connections between the surface membrane and the sarcoplasmic reticulum are disrupted and electrical stimulation no longer elicits Ca<sup>2+</sup> release. We have examined the effect of quercetin on whole muscle fibers that were electrically excitable and found no inhibition of the electrically stimulated twitches. In these experiments we could not prove that quercetin was penetrating to intracellular sites but we could deduce that it did not act at the cell surface to prevent excitation-contraction coupling.

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