

Reconstitution of photophosphorylation in EDTA-treated thylakoids by added chloroplast coupling factor 1 (ATPase) and chloroplast coupling factor 1 lacking the δ subunit Structural or functional?

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Upon EDTA treatment thylakoids lose the chloroplast coupling factor 1 (CF₁) part of their ATP synthase, CF₀CF₁, this exposes the proton channel, CF₀. The previously established ability of the CF₁ subunit δ to block the proton leak through CF₀ prompted us to study (a) the ability of complete CF₁ and, for comparison, CF₁ lacking the δ subunit to block proton leakage and thereby to reconstitute structurally some photophosphorylation activity of the remaining CF₀CF₁ molecules and (b) their ability to form functional enzymes (functional reconstitution). In order to discriminate between activities caused by added CF₁ or CF₁(- δ) and remaining CF₀CF₁, the former were inhibited by chemical modification of subunit β by *N,N'*-dicyclohexyl carbodiimide (DCCD) and the latter by tentoxin. We found that added CF₁ acted both structurally and functionally while added DCCD-treated CF₁ (DCCD-CF₁) acted only structurally. In contrast to previous observations, CF₁(- δ) and DCCD-CF₁(- δ) also acted structurally although the reduction of proton leakage was smaller than with DCCD-CF₁. Hence there was no functional reconstitution without subunit δ present. Previous studies indicated that only a small fraction of exposed CF₀ is highly conducting and that this small fraction is distinguished by its high affinity for added CF₁. The results of this study point rather to a wider distribution of CF₀ conductance states and binding affinities.

ATP synthesis at the expense of a transmembrane proton-motive force is catalysed by F₀F₁ ATP synthases which exist in thylakoids, mitochondria and a wide range of microorganisms. These enzymes comprise a membrane-embedded proton-conducting part (F₀) and a water-soluble, extrinsic part which contains the nucleotide binding sites (F₁). Solubilized F₁ functions as an ATPase. CF₁ contains five different subunits with the stoichiometry of (α , β)₃ $\gamma\delta\epsilon$. For recent reviews on the enzyme, see Senior [1] and Schneider and Altendorf [2].

By various approaches we have demonstrated the essential role in photophosphorylation of subunit δ , one of the smaller subunits of CF₁. It was shown that subunit δ can stay on the membrane despite CF₁(- δ) removal by EDTA treatment. It probably remains attached to CF₀ where it acts as a plug in the open proton channel thus preventing dissipating proton efflux [3–5]. When purified subunit δ is added to EDTA-treated and therefore leaky membranes, it enhances the rate of photophosphorylation [6, 7]. As subunit δ does not carry catalytic activity by itself, this enhancement is further evidence for a plugging action on open channels: added subunit δ restored the proton-motive force which is necessary for ATP

synthesis by those coupling factors which remained on the membrane after EDTA treatment [4, 5, 7]. The ability of purified subunit δ to plug open CF₀ cannot fully reflect the role of the subunit in intact and phosphorylating CF₀CF₁, which conducts protons in a coupled reaction [8]. As it has also been shown that subunit δ is indispensable for an active coupling factor [9], it is necessary to postulate a more involved role for subunit δ as a valve or even as part of the proton-to-conformation transducer. At first sight, the reconstitutive activity of CF₁(- δ) on EDTA-treated thylakoids seemed to argue against such an essential role for subunit δ in phosphorylation, but this could be attributed to traces of residual subunit δ which are difficult to remove from CF₁(- δ) preparations and, to a small extent, to a complementary binding of CF₁(- δ) to (+ δ) [9].

In this context we attempted a differentiation between structural and functional reconstitution in EDTA-treated thylakoids (vesicles) by CF₁ and CF₁(- δ). The terms functional and structural reconstitution relate to two ways in which the phosphorylation ability of EDTA vesicles are impaired: (a) proton leakage through exposed CF₀ channels prevents the generation of a sufficiently large proton-motive force by light-driven proton-pumping; (b) even with unimpaired proton efflux the partial loss of functional coupling factors would decrease the catalytic capacity of the vesicles. In partially CF₁-depleted vesicles, addition of CF₁ or of certain fragments thereof may reconstitute photophosphorylation in either way: structurally by plugging proton leaks, i.e. without increasing the catalytic capacity, or functionally by increasing catalytic

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Abbreviations. CF₀ chloroplast coupling factor 0 (proton channel); CF₁ chloroplast coupling factor 1 (ATPase); CF₁(- δ) chloroplast coupling factor 1 lacking the δ subunit; DCCD, *N,N'*-dicyclohexyl carbodiimide.

Enzyme. ATPase (EC 3.6.1.34).

capacity. The latter can be accompanied by the former. It is noteworthy that these two different kinds of reconstitution are relevant only in vesicle preparations which are not completely depleted of CF₁, a situation, however, which is common for all known CF₁-depleted thylakoid vesicles: even NaBr-treated thylakoids are not completely depleted of CF₁ [10, 11]. This is further complicated by the finding that EDTA treatment liberates both CF₁ and CF₁(-δ) from the membrane, leaving behind the respective complement, CF₀ or (+δ) [3–5, 9, 12]. Functional reconstitution theoretically can then occur in two ways, by complementary rebinding of CF₁ to CF₀, and of CF₁(-δ) to (+δ). The latter possibility, however, cannot be shown directly, because of the unavoidable concomitant proton leaks generated through open CF₀ channels.

Experimental investigations have previously followed different approaches: Selman and Durbin [13] used the tentoxin-insensitive CF₁ from *Nicotiana tabacum* and *Nicotiana knightiana* for reconstitution of tentoxin-sensitive thylakoid vesicles obtained by EDTA treatment of spinach thylakoids. They observed functional reconstitution. Shoshan and Selman [14] and Bar-Zvi, Yoshida and Shavit [15] compared the efficacy of CF₁ inhibited by *N,N'*-dicyclohexyl carbodiimide (structural reconstitution) and CF₁ alone (functional reconstitution). The latter authors concluded that mainly structural reconstitution occurred. This approach was also used by us some years ago [12]. Berzborn and Schröder [16] reported that, depending on the specific activity of added CF₁, the extent of photophosphorylation after reconstitution exceeded the number of residual coupling factors that remained on the membrane. Hesse et al. also concluded that functional reconstitution took place [17] based upon the finding that [¹⁴C]ADP-labelled CF₁ after reconstitution and membrane energization exchanged its adenylate moiety.

We combined and extended these previous approaches [13–15] placing emphasis on the role of subunit δ: CF₁ and CF₁(-δ) were added to EDTA vesicles with selective poisoning of either the added or the remaining CF₁.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

CF₁ was prepared from spinach thylakoids by EDTA treatment followed by anion-exchange chromatography on Whatman cellulose DE 52 and Merck fractogel TSK DEAE-650 (S) as described [12, 18]. Prior to use, it was supplemented with a slight excess of purified chloroplast subunit δ (1.3 mol δ/mol CF₁) in order to get a homogeneous population of five-subunit CF₁ (*K_d* ≈ 100 nM) [19]. CF₁(-δ) was prepared by anion-exchange chromatography in the presence of 25 mM *N*-(D-glucosyl-2,3,4,5,6-pentahydroxyl)-*N*-methylnonanamide [6, 9, 12]; the procedure was carried out twice in order to remove remaining subunit δ quantitatively. This preparation of CF₁(-δ) did not contain any subunit δ as determined by rocket immunoelectrophoresis [9] with rabbit anti-(δ subunit) antibodies. Immunoelectrophoresis was also used for the determination of the relative levels of extraction of CF₁ and subunit δ after EDTA treatment of thylakoids.

Subunit δ, which was obtained in crude form with the anion-exchange chromatography in the presence of *N*-D (gluco-2,3,4,5,6-pentahydroxyl)-*N*-methylnonanamide (Oxyl Chemie, Bobingen, FRG) was further purified to apparent homogeneity by twofold dilution with water (to bring the detergent concentration below its critical micellar concentration), addition of 125 mM ammonium sulphate, and hydrophobic interaction chromatography on a self-prepared

column [12] of fractogel TSK Butyl-650 (S), Merck. Subunit β of CF₁, nucleotides, the detergent and other contaminants passed through the column, leaving subunit δ behind. Elution with 25 mM Tris/HCl, pH 7.8, then liberated pure subunit δ from the column. This procedure circumvented the lengthy pressure dialysis steps and rechromatography that were formerly used for preparation of chloroplast subunit δ [6, 9, 12]. To date, however, chloroplast subunit δ which was prepared according to this procedure was not active in restoring photophosphorylation. Subunit δ was added to CF₁ at 1.5% (by mass) and to CF₁(-δ) at 6.5% (by mass) in order to get subunit δ-saturated CF₁ (see above) or CF₁(-δ) with added δ subunit.

N,N'-Dicyclohexyl carbodiimide modifications were carried out according to Bar-Zvi et al. [15]: after gel filtration against 50 mM Mops/NaOH, 1 mM EDTA, 2 mM K⁺-ADP, pH 7, the samples [CF₁ and CF₁(-δ) at ≈ 1 mg/ml] were incubated with 0.5 mM DCCD for 1 h at 37°C, followed by gel filtration against 25 mM Tris/HCl, pH 7.8. This treatment decreased the Mg²⁺-ATPase activities of CF₁ and CF₁(-δ) (≈ 17 U/mg) to 0.3–1.5 U/mg for DCCD-CF₁ and DCCD-CF₁(-δ) (measured in the presence of 30% (by vol.) methanol and 10 mM Na₂SO₃) [9].

EDTA vesicles were prepared by a 20-min incubation of thylakoids (400 μM chlorophyll) with 1 mM EDTA on ice, followed by centrifugation, washing and repeated centrifugation as first described by Shoshan and Shavit [20]. Tentoxin vesicles were prepared by the same procedure, 5 μM tentoxin (Sigma) were present during EDTA treatment and 2 μM tentoxin were included in the wash with 0.4 M sorbitol, 10 mM Tricine/NaOH, pH 7.8. After the second centrifugation, the vesicles were suspended in 100 mM sorbitol, 10 mM Tricine/NaOH, 10 mM NaCl, pH 7.8 at ≈ 3 mM chlorophyll.

For reconstitution, the chlorophyll concentration was lowered to 1 mM, 10 μg chlorophyll were incubated with 100 μg of sample in 25 mM phosphate, 6 mM MgSO₄, pH 7.8 in a volume of 300 μl on ice in the dark for 10 min, followed by illumination for 1 min in the presence of 50 μM phenazine methosulphate and 3 mM K⁺-ADP. The mixture was quenched by the addition of 0.5 ml 0.6 M trichloroacetic acid, and ATP was determined via the luciferin/luciferase assay (LKB) as described before [7, 9, 12].

Oxygen measurements were performed with a Clark-type electrode in 0.2 M sucrose, 30 mM Tricine/NaOH, 20 mM NaCl, 10 mM MgCl₂, 2 mM K₃Fe(CN)₆, pH 7.5; 15 μM chlorophyll, 300 μg sample. Electrochromism was measured as described [21].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Restoration of photophosphorylation in EDTA vesicles and in tentoxin vesicles was assayed as a function of added CF₁, DCCD-treated CF₁, CF₁(-δ), DCCD-CF₁(-δ), and CF₁(-δ) supplemented with an excess of purified subunit δ.

Fig. 1 shows the result of one representative set of experiments with EDTA-treated spinach thylakoids, the data were obtained at very high excess of CF₁/chlorophyll (10:1). In addition, the binding curves shown in Fig. 2 revealed very similar shapes with all four samples [CF₁, DCCD-CF₁, CF₁(-δ), DCCD-CF₁(-δ)]. Saturation of reconstitution occurred between 2 μg and 3 μg CF₁/μg chlorophyll. Although the absolute rates of photophosphorylation varied from preparation to preparation, the relative extents of reconstitution were very reproducible, e.g. DCCD-CF₁ was always approximately half

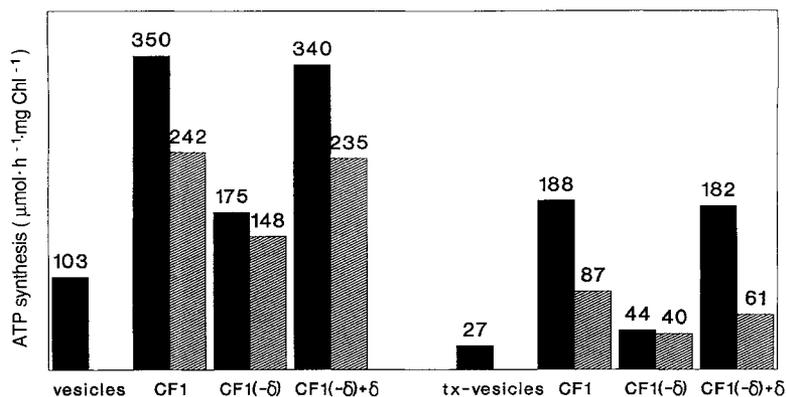


Fig. 1. Restoration of phenazine-methosulphate-mediated photophosphorylation in EDTA-treated spinach thylakoids or EDTA-treated spinach thylakoids that were treated in addition with tentoxin (tx). 100- μ g samples were incubated for 10 min on ice in the dark with 10 μ g chlorophyll (Chl), followed by 1-min illumination with saturating, heat-filtered, white light. Rocket immunoelectrophoresis indicated losses of 52% CF₁ and of 45% subunit δ in both EDTA-treated thylakoids and EDTA/tentoxin-treated thylakoids. (■) Native samples; (▨) DCCD-treated samples. CF₁(- δ) (+ δ), CF₁(- δ) supplemented with subunit δ . Control thylakoid activity was 830 μ mol ATP · h⁻¹ · mg chlorophyll⁻¹

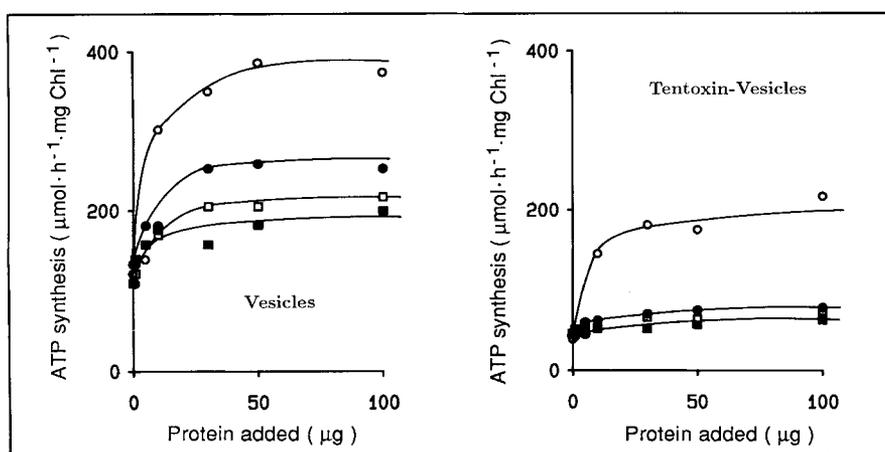


Fig. 2. Restoration of phenazine-methosulphate-mediated photophosphorylation in EDTA-treated spinach thylakoids (vesicles) or EDTA-treated spinach thylakoids that were treated in addition with tentoxin ('tentoxin vesicles'). The indicated amounts of CF₁ (○) DCCD-CF₁ (●) CF₁(- δ) (□) and DCCD-CF₁(- δ) (■) were incubated for 10 min on ice in the dark with 10 μ g chlorophyll (Chl) followed by 1 min illumination with saturating, heat-filtered, white light and luminometric ATP determination. Control thylakoids activity was 868 μ mol ATP · h⁻¹ · mg chlorophyll⁻¹

as effective in reconstitution as CF₁ (55 ± 4%, n = 6). Very similar results were also obtained with pea thylakoids and with variation of the extraction protocol (duration of EDTA treatment, temperature during extraction, concentrations of chlorophyll and EDTA, data not shown).

CF₁ restored photophosphorylation to a certain extent. DCCD-CF₁ was also effective, but to a lesser extent. Either it bound less avidly to CF₀, or it was only structurally active. In view of the similar binding curves of CF₁ and DCCD-CF₁ (Fig. 2) the first possibility could be excluded (see also below). DCCD-CF₁ only plugged leaks, thereby enabling the remaining CF₁ to resume ATP synthesis. We interpreted the clear difference in the degree of restoration of photophosphorylation by CF₁ and DCCD-CF₁ as functional reconstitution by added CF₁, in complete accordance with previously published data [13–17].

CF₁(- δ) restored photophosphorylation, but to an even smaller extent than DCCD-CF₁. DCCD-CF₁(- δ) was only slightly less effective than CF₁(- δ) alone. According to earlier work [9, 12] no reconstitution at all was expected neither through plugging of leaks nor through addition of catalytic

capacity. Taken together, these results had to be explained by the assumption that both, CF₁(- δ) and DCCD-CF₁(- δ), after rebinding to CF₀ impaired proton efflux slightly, thereby enlarging the protonmotive force a little.

CF₁(- δ) supplemented with subunit δ was nearly indistinguishable from CF₁. This suggested highly intact preparations of CF₁(- δ) and subunit δ which were fully competent to recombine to form native CF₁.

In the tentoxin vesicle approach EDTA vesicles were treated with tentoxin in order to inhibit the remaining CF₁, a subsequent wash removed excess tentoxin. The tentoxin vesicles were then reconstituted with various samples. These vesicles were nearly completely inhibited, as was evident from the very low photophosphorylation rate (rates uncorrected for intrinsic ATP amounted to 20–25 μ mol ATP/mg chlorophyll). A shift of tentoxin from binding sites on remaining CF₁ to added samples could be excluded because both CF₁(- δ) and DCCD-CF₁(- δ) were practically ineffective on tentoxin vesicles.

Any restoration of photophosphorylation in tentoxin vesicles would indicate functional reconstitution. CF₁ improved

Table 1. Electron-transport rates as measured with a Clark-type electrode

nig, 500 μM nigericin; n.d., not determined. All vesicle samples contained 60 μg chlorophyll

Sample	Addition	Experiment 1		Experiment 2	
		-nig	+nig	-nig	+nig
$\text{mmol e}^- \cdot \text{s}^{-1} \cdot \text{mol chlorophyll}^{-1}$					
Thylakoids	—	25	104	38	132
Vesicles	—	138	145	143	144
	300 μg CF_1	95	117	83	112
	300 μg DCCD- CF_1	76	121	83	114
	300 μg $\text{CF}_1(-\delta)$	116	138		
	300 μg DCCD- $\text{CF}_1(-\delta)$	114	131		
	25 μM DCCD	46	n.d.		

the photophosphorylation rate 5–7-fold, whereas DCCD- CF_1 was significantly less active. The remaining activity of DCCD- CF_1 was probably due to a (minor) DCCD-free subpopulation (note the different effectiveness of the two different preparations of DCCD- CF_1 in Figs 1 and 2).

The ineffectiveness of $\text{CF}_1(-\delta)$ and DCCD- $\text{CF}_1(-\delta)$ was explained as follows: the relative level of extraction of the vesicles was determined by rocket immunoelectrophoresis. It indicated a 52% loss in CF_1 and a 45% loss in subunit δ . Hence only 7% of the exposed CF_0 could be expected to retain subunit δ . A functional reconstitution by $\text{CF}_1(-\delta)$ could be expected only if all proton leaks through open CF_0 channels were overcome by rapid proton pumping, which was highly unlikely. Therefore, a slight impairment of proton efflux through the CF_0 channel was the most probable explanation for the reconstitutive activity of $\text{CF}_1(-\delta)$ in EDTA vesicles.

This view was supported by the data shown in Tables 1 and 2: $\text{CF}_1(-\delta)$ improved the electron-transport rates of EDTA-treated vesicles and it increased the decay time of the membrane potential in these vesicles generated by a short flash of light and indicating a decrease in membrane permeability.

In conclusion functional reconstitution was only obtained with CF_1 , that is in the presence of subunit δ , whereas all other samples were effective only at the structural level.

It would have been desirable to determine the number of CF_1 rebound directly after reconstitution. However, with the vesicle preparations currently used this was not possible. Any determination of membrane-bound CF_1 must discriminate between CF_0CF_1 and CF_1 that just sticks to the membrane. In order to remove the latter, the membrane would have to be washed and this washing in our experience always resulted in further depletion. This is the reason why all reconstitutions were carried out without removal of excess sample.

The DCCD-derived samples might have had an impaired ability to rebind (correctly) to CF_1 -depleted CF_0 [14]. This possibility was checked by measuring the ratio of the rates of uncoupled to coupled oxygen evolution and, additionally, by measuring the decay of the electrochromic absorption changes at 522 nm [21], both of which can be used as indicators of the proton leak conductance of the membrane. As shown in Tables 1 and 2, the leak-plugging action of added CF_1 and DCCD- CF_1 on one hand, and of $\text{CF}_1(-\delta)$ and DCCD- $\text{CF}_1(-\delta)$ on the other, were practically the same and therefore the rebinding ability of the DCCD-modified samples was not changed.

Table 2. The half-decay times (t) of the flash light-induced electrical potential across the thylakoid membrane, as determined via the electrochromic absorption change at 522 nm [21]

Tx, tentoxin. All vesicle samples contained 40 μg chlorophyll

Sample	Addition	t	
		-Tx	+Tx
ms			
Thylakoids	—	125	125
Vesicles	—	6	8
	200 μg CF_1	41	41
	200 μg DCCD- CF_1	42	39
	200 μg $\text{CF}_1(-\delta)$	22	21
	200 μg DCCD- $\text{CF}_1(-\delta)$	23	23

How do these results relate to earlier work? In contrast to data in [9], where the reconstitutive activity of $\text{CF}_1(-\delta)$ could be abolished by immunodecoration of residual subunit δ ; in this study, $\text{CF}_1(-\delta)$ obviously blocked the proton leak through open CF_0 , although to a lesser extent than CF_1 . The reasons for this discrepancy have remained unclear. The high excess of $\text{CF}_1(-\delta)$ to chlorophyll, which was used here, might be relevant. The antibodies which masked remaining subunit δ [9] also decreased the rate of photophosphorylation. This could be explained simply by further detachment of CF_1 from the vesicles [9] but it might have affected the potential for reconstitution in these vesicles in a more complicated way. The easiest explanation for the reconstitutive activity of $\text{CF}_1(-\delta)$ is a small amount of subunit δ which was not removed but undetected. This was disproved by the finding that in rocket electrophoresis there was no subunit δ detectable, even with large amounts of sample. The homogeneity of the $\text{CF}_1(-\delta)$ preparations was further demonstrated by the nearly complete lack of effectiveness of $\text{CF}_1(-\delta)$ and DCCD- $\text{CF}_1(-\delta)$ on the tentoxin vesicles (an improvement in the photophosphorylation rate by 13–17 $\mu\text{mol ATP}_{\text{synthesized}} \cdot \text{h}^{-1} \cdot \text{mg chlorophyll}^{-1}$ was not considered to be relevant).

Similar data were also obtained with thylakoids from peas which were treated, at very low chlorophyll concentrations, with EDTA (data not shown). Proton conduction in these vesicles was previously investigated [21, 22] and it was deduced that, partly due to subunit δ remaining on CF_0 and partly due to a rearrangement of most of the CF_1 -depleted CF_0 which were thus converted from a high to a low conductance state, only very few highly conducting CF_0 were left over. These were able to rebind CF_1 while the majority were badly conducting channels which had lost this ability [23]. According to these results, the minimal and maximal restoration of photophosphorylation is predetermined by the level of extraction of CF_1 (50% extraction means a yield after reconstitution of 50% of the initial rate of photophosphorylation). The degree of functional reconstitution is negligible because of the small number of reconstitutable CF_0 , in the range of one or two/vesicle.

Clearly, this prediction was not verified in this study. Restoration of photophosphorylation was, at least partly, functional and it was significantly smaller than the predicted value. The discrepancy might be related to the different time scales and energization at which the various experiments were carried out. Energization of intact thylakoids in single-flash experiments produces a ΔpH of ≈ 0.05 and a membrane voltage

of ≈ 50 mV for about 10 ms, whereas photophosphorylation with saturating white light for 1 min in the presence of 50 μ M phenazine methosulphate will produce Δ pH ≥ 3 and a negligible transmembrane voltage.

The current data can be explained by the assumption that a substantial number of CF₁-depleted CF₀ no longer reacted with CF₁. The remaining (moderately conducting) fraction, however, reacted with CF₁ with moderate affinity and every member of this population started ATP synthesis and simultaneously switched on about one CF₀CF₁ that remained on the membrane. Proton leaks were still effective to an extent which prevented photophosphorylation rates comparable to the total number of intact CF₀CF₁. It therefore appears that CF₀ can assume various conformations with different proton conduction and rebinding affinity. A similar conclusion was drawn by Nelson [24].

This point is also illustrated by the effect of CF₁(- δ) on open CF₀ and is further demonstrated by the following observation: in the usual reconstitution assay involving a 10-min incubation of vesicles with freshly prepared CF₁, the rate of photophosphorylation was increased by 247 μ mol ATP_{synthesized} \cdot h⁻¹ \cdot mg chlorophyll⁻¹. The same CF₁ sample, after two weeks of storage at 4°C in the presence of 1 mM ADP (and without any sign of denaturation), increased the ATP synthesis rate by only 139 μ mol \cdot h⁻¹ \cdot mg chlorophyll⁻¹ after a 10-min incubation but by 274 μ mol \cdot h⁻¹ \cdot mg chlorophyll⁻¹ after a 60-min incubation. In the same experiment, the EDTA extract of the vesicle preparation (mainly CF₁ [7]) restored the photophosphorylation rate to the same extent, irrespective of the incubation time. A possible explanation (see also Nelson [24]) is that conformational rearrangements which are necessary for effective reconstitution, depending on the initial conformation of both CF₀ and CF₁, can be rather slow processes: an induced fit over many or large energy barriers.

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