Diffusion and Consumption of Oxygen in the Resting Frog Sartorius Muscle

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ABSTRACT Adaptations of the method of Takahashi et al. (1966, J. Gen. Physiol. 50:317–333) were used to test the validity of the one-dimensional diffusion equation for O₂ in the resting excised frog sartorius muscle. This equation is:

\[ D \frac{\partial^2 P}{\partial x^2} - \frac{\partial P}{\partial t} = Q, \]

where \( x \) is the distance perpendicular to the muscle surface, \( t \) is time, \( P(x, t) \) is the partial pressure of \( O₂ \), \( D \) and \( \alpha \) are the diffusion coefficient and solubility for \( O₂ \) in the tissue, and \( Q \) is the rate of \( O₂ \) consumption. \( P(0, t) \), the time-course of \( P₀₂ \) at one muscle surface, was measured by a micro-oxygen electrode. Transients in the \( P₀₂ \) profile of the muscle were induced by two methods: (a) after an equilibration period, one surface was sealed off by a disc in which the \( O₂ \) electrode was embedded; (b) when \( P₀₂ \) at this surface reached a steady state, a step change was made in the \( P₀₂ \) at the other surface. With either method, the agreement between the measured \( P(0, t) \) and that predicted by the diffusion equation was excellent, making possible the calculation of \( D \) and \( Q \). These two methods yielded statistically indistinguishable results, with the following pooled means (±SEM):

| T (°C) | D \( \times 10^4 \) (cm²/min) | \( Q₀ \) | \( Q \) (µl O₂/g min) | \( Q₀ \)/

\[ 22.8 \] | 8.54 ± 0.34 | 0.590 ± 0.042 | 2.01
\[ 10 \] | 6.50 ± 0.30 | 0.241 ± 0.019 | 0.060 ± 0.008
\[ 0 \] | 4.94 ± 0.16 | 0.060 ± 0.008

At each temperature, \( D \) was independent of muscle thickness (range, 0.67–1.34 mm). The activation energy (\( E_A \)) for diffusion of oxygen in muscle was –3.85 kcal/mol, which closely matches the corresponding value in water. Together with absolute values of \( D \) in water taken from the literature, the present data imply that \( (D_{muscle}/D_{water}) \) is in the range 0.59–0.69. This value, and that of \( E_A \), are in agreement with the theory of Wang (1954, J. Am. Chem. Soc. 76:4755–4763), suggesting that with respect to the diffusion of \( O₂ \) to a useful approximation, frog skeletal muscle may be considered simply as a homogeneous protein solution.

INTRODUCTION

In the early stages of an investigation of the kinetics of oxygen consumption in
the excised frog sartorius muscle (Mahler, 1978), it became clear that it was
essential to have an accurate description of the time-course of change in the
amount of stored oxygen in a stimulated muscle. It has customarily been
assumed (Hill, 1928, 1966; Hill, 1940; Kushmerick and Paul, 1976) that such a
description can be calculated via the one-dimensional diffusion equation for
oxygen, using a value for the diffusion coefficient ($D$) for oxygen derived from
the results of Krogh (1919). The experiments described in this paper were
designed to test these assumptions.

The equation in question (Fick's diffusion equation) can be written in the
form:

$$D\alpha \frac{\partial^2 P}{\partial x^2}(x, t) - \alpha \frac{\partial P}{\partial t}(x, t) = Q(t), \quad (1)$$

where $x$ is the distance perpendicular to the muscle surface, $t$ is time, $P$ is
the partial pressure of oxygen ($PO_2$), $\alpha$ is the solubility of oxygen in the muscle, $D$
is the diffusion coefficient for oxygen, and $Q$ is the rate of oxygen consumption
($QO_2$). $D$, $\alpha$, and $Q$ are assumed to be constant throughout the muscle, and Eq.
1 thus describes the diffusion of oxygen through a homogeneous plane sheet in
which oxygen is also being consumed at a uniform rate. Despite the heteroge-
neity of muscle tissue, it can be shown a priori that on a scale of microns, the
validity of Eq. 1 in the excised frog sartorius is plausible (cf. Discussion).

Apart from a preliminary report on the results of the present study (Mahler,
1975), the only work that deals directly with the validity of the diffusion equation
for oxygen in skeletal muscle appears to be that of Gore and Whalen (1968) and
Kawashiro et al. (1975). The classical work of Krogh (1919) also merits a
summary here. Krogh maintained an essentially constant $PO_2$ difference across
a sheet of tissue, and measured the amount of $O_2$ that crossed the tissue over a
period of several hours. The average rate of $O_2$ transport through the tissue,
normalized for surface area, thickness, and $PO_2$ difference, was referred to by
Krogh as the "diffusion constant" for oxygen in the tissue; it has since been
given the symbol $K$. It is a straightforward matter to show that if Eq. 1 is valid in
such preparations, with $Q$ independent of $P$ (Hill, 1948), $K$ should closely
approximate $Da$. However, this method can provide no evidence whether Eq.
1 is in fact valid—that is, whether the movement of oxygen through the tissue
has actually taken place by simple diffusion through an essentially homogeneous
medium. At $20^\circ C$, Krogh's mean value for $K$ in frog skeletal muscle was $1.49$
$\times 10^{-8}$ ml $O_2/min/cm/\text{atm}$.

The first direct test of the validity of the diffusion equation for oxygen in
skeletal muscle was that of Gore and Whalen (1968), who used a recessed micro-
$O_2$-electrode to map the intramuscular $PO_2$, profile of a resting excised frog
sartorius at $22^\circ C$. For muscles in $25\% O_2$, their results are consistent with the
steady-state solution of Eq. 1, and imply a value for $Da$ of $1.37 \times 10^{-5}$ ml/
min $\cdot cm \cdot \text{atm}$. For muscles in $10\% O_2$, however, the results of Gore and Whalen
are difficult to interpret. Kawashiro et al. (1975) measured rates of $O_2$ transport
across sheets of rat abdominal muscle at $37^\circ C$, under conditions in which the
$PO_2$ difference across the tissue changed very slowly. Their results were
consistent with the steady-state solution of Eq. 1, and allowed simultaneous
measurement of both $Q$ and $D\alpha$. The latter had a mean value of $2.53 \times 10^{-8}$ ml/min·cm·atm; using the formula postulated by Krogh (1919) for the temperature dependence of $K$, this is equivalent to $2.16 \times 10^{-8}$ ml/min·cm·atm at 20°C. The results of Gore and Whalen (1968) and Kawashiro et al. (1975) are consistent with steady-state solutions of Eq. 1 in isolated skeletal muscle, but have not tested its validity in nonsteady states. Moreover, the data reported in these studies, as well as that of Krogh (1919), can accommodate a rather wide range of values for $D\alpha$.

The diffusion coefficient for oxygen ($D$) does not appear to have been previously directly measured in skeletal muscle. The values given by Hill (1928, 1966) were calculated from the values of $K$ reported by Krogh (1919), and the assumption that $D = K/\alpha$. These values are thus subject to the same uncertainty as Krogh's $K$ (cf. Discussion). In addition, it appears that $\alpha$ has never been directly measured.

In the experiments to be described below, the validity of the one-dimensional diffusion equation (Eq. 1) in the resting excised frog sartorius was tested during periods when the intramuscular $P_{O_2}$ profile was changing with time. During these periods, the time-course of $P_{O_2}$ at one surface of the muscle was measured with a Clark-type oxygen electrode; in terms of Eq. 1, this was denoted $P(0, t)$. Transients in the $P_{O_2}$ profile were induced by interventions which could be expressed analytically as changes in a boundary condition for Eq. 1. These boundary changes were chosen so as to allow exact solutions of Eq. 1; that is, closed form expressions for $P(x, t)$, the predicted transient change in the intramuscular $P_{O_2}$ profile after the given change in the boundary condition. In particular, expressions could be obtained for $P(0, t)$, the predicted time-course of $P_{O_2}$ at the muscle surface; a predicted $P(0, t)$ could then be tested by comparison with that actually measured. The results of these experiments support the validity of Eq. 1 on the macroscale in this muscle, and allow direct calculation of the diffusion coefficient $D$.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Preparation of Muscle**

For most experiments, Northern *Rana pipiens* (Nasco, Fort Atkinson, Wisc.), unsorted for sex, were used; they were kept at 5°C. In a few cases, to obtain muscle of thickness 1.2–1.4 mm, large Southern *R. pipiens* were used; these were kept at room temperature and fed every other day. After dissection, individual sartorii, with split pelvic bones attached, were stored in Ringer solution at 4°C for 2–24 h before use in an experiment. With a few exceptions, the experiments were all performed in the months of December through March.

**Oxygen Electrodes**

The polarographic oxygen electrodes used were of the basic type described by Fatt (1964). A 25-µm platinum wire and a 500-µm silver wire, lying in parallel, were encased in an epoxy-filled Lucite rod with outer diameter 9.5 mm and length 6–8 cm (Lucite, E. I. Du Pont de Nemours & Co., Wilmington, Del.). At one end, the wires were joined to a coaxial cable. During operation, the cable was connected to a battery supplying 0.67 V, and the circuit was closed by covering the other end of the electrode with an electrolyte.
solution, held in place by a polyethylene membrane of thickness 12.7 µm. The electrolyte solution employed had the following composition: 50 mM boric acid (H₃BO₃), 50 mM KCl, 21.3 mM NaOH, pH 9. The electrode current was amplified and recorded by a Beckman model 160 gas analyzer (Beckman Instruments, Inc., Fullerton, Calif.) and a Brush model 440 chart recorder (Gould, Inc., Inst. Sys. Div., Cleveland, Ohio). At the conclusion of a day's experiments, the electrode tip was immersed overnight in a NaCl solution, the electrode remaining polarized. Before further use, the platinum surface was swabbed with 15% NH₄OH. The initial stabilization period after cleaning and reassembly was considerably shorter when the electrode had been stored in a polarized condition than when it had been stored unpolarized in air.

Performance Characteristics of Oxygen Electrodes and Recording System

Linearity in Test Gases  When treated in the above manner, these electrodes showed excellent linearity in test gases at 23, 10, and 0°C, over the PO₂ range 0-700 mm Hg. Before each experiment, the electrode was calibrated at the temperature of the experiment, by using gases whose oxygen tensions spanned the range that would be encountered; experiments were not performed unless the electrode current at the upper limit of this span was within 5% of the theoretical linear value.

Time Response  The time response of the entire recording system for PO₂ (oxygen electrode, gas analyzer, and chart recorder) was quantified by measuring its response to a step increase in the PO₂ at the surface of the membrane. Such a change could be readily produced by placing the electrode against a blotted muscle for a short time, then rapidly removing it. When this was done, the system response was adequately approximated by first order kinetics, with τ = 1.8, 2.2, and 3.6 s at 23, 10, and 0°C, respectively. This is fast enough to be considered instantaneous in comparison with the changes in PO₂ which took place at the muscle surface during the experiments.

Rate of Oxygen Consumption  The rate of oxygen consumption by the electrode was at a maximum in 95% O₂ at 23°C, in which case it was calculated to be roughly 3 × 10⁻⁸ ml O₂/h, ~0.2% as large as the resting QO₂ observed at 23°C for a 50-mg muscle. This figure was arrived at by calculating the electrode current from the formula given by Fatt (1964), and assuming that, for each molecule of O₂ consumed at the platinum surface, four electrons pass between anode and cathode (Davies, 1962). For other experimental conditions, the QO₂ of the electrode relative to that of the muscle was even smaller.

Calibration of Electrode with Muscle as the External Medium

When a muscle replaced gas as the medium external to the oxygen electrode, a slightly different calibration curve was used. Within the first few seconds of the initial contact between the electrode and the muscle, a rapid linear change occurred in the electrode current, similar to that reported by Takahashi et al. (1966), but of considerably smaller magnitude. The initial change was usually a decrease, but in ~10% of experiments, a small increase occurred. At 22-23, 10, and 0°C, respectively, the electrode current at the end of this rapid phase averaged 91.5% (± 0.82% SEM; n = 24), 97.0% (± 0.44%; n = 18), and 99.3% (± 0.37%; n = 18) of the current for the chamber gas. These values were independent of the O₂ content of the gas. It was assumed that this rapid decrease in electrode current was caused by the change in the external medium per se, and not by a rapid fall in PO₂ (see below). Accordingly, because the PO₂ at the muscle surface at the time of contact was necessarily the same as that of the chamber gas, it was assumed that the electrode current at the end of the rapid change corresponded to a muscle PO₂ which matched that of the gas. The current corresponding to a PO₂ of zero in the muscle was measured by the method of Takahashi et al. (1966): a moistened glass microscope
cover slip was placed over the upper surface of the muscle; the subsequent time-course of the $P_{O_2}$ at the lower surface of the muscle was recorded, and the final, constant level was assumed to indicate that the muscle was completely anoxic above the Pt cathode. This current was essentially identical to that observed with a test gas containing zero oxygen (typically 93% N$_2$, 7% CO$_2$). Once this fact had been established, the "zero current" in gas, which was measured before each day's experiments, was routinely assumed to be valid for the muscles as well. This current was not susceptible to electrode drift. A calibration curve for muscle constructed in this way was linear over the $P_{O_2}$ range 0-700 mm Hg.

The cause of the rapid initial change in electrode current after contact with a muscle is not well understood. Goldstick and Fatt (1970) showed that the electrode has a negligible effect on the external medium when it is in a gas; if the gas is replaced by water, however, Gutheran and Goldstick (1974) concluded on theoretical grounds that the oxygen consumption of the electrode should cause the steady-state $P_{O_2}$ at the outer surface of the membrane to be ~3% less than that in the bulk phase at 20°C, and thus cause a decreased current flow relative to that in the gas. This suggests that the rapid fall in current after the change in external medium from gas to muscle might be due simply to a fall in $P_{O_2}$. Experiments designed to test this hypothesis did not appear consistent with it (for details, cf. Methods in Mahler, 1976), but neither did they provide an obvious alternative explanation. If a rapid fall in the surface $P_{O_2}$, caused by the electrode, did in fact occur after contact with the muscle, the electrode calibration curve for muscle as the external medium would then be the same as that determined with test gases, but it would be necessary to correct the $P_{O_2}$ records for the effect of the electrode. In this context, evidence summarized above would suggest that this effect was the reduction of $P_{O_2}$ to a fixed percentage of the value that would occur in the absence of the electrode, with this percentage being 91.5, 97.0, or 99.3% at 22-23, 10, and 0°C, respectively. Correcting records on this basis would have exactly the same result as using the calibration procedure for muscle described in the previous paragraph.

As an internal check on calibration, values of $(\Delta\text{current} / \Delta P_{O_2})$ were calculated from steady-state measurements made with method II (see below), and found to agree to within 5-10% with those determined by the method described above.

**Chamber for Measurement of $P_{O_2}$ at Muscle Surface**

Fig. 1 is a schematic representation of the chamber constructed for the measurement of $P_{O_2}$ at the surface of a muscle. The main body of the chamber was a cylinder of Lucite, closed at both ends, with inner diameter 13.1 cm and height 4.6 cm. The top and walls of the cylinder constituted a separate piece, which could be lifted off to mount or remove a muscle. At the center of the chamber floor was a circular hole (diam. 9.5 mm); beneath this was a shaft 2.5 cm long, with inner diameter 9.5 mm. The oxygen electrode was inserted into this shaft, and an attached lever allowed the upper surface of the electrode to be brought flush with the chamber floor, or recessed by 6 mm. A muscle was placed across the top of the shaft, with its length set at the value measured in vivo before dissection. A flow of saturated gas was maintained through the chamber at all times. The entire chamber was immersed in a water bath whose temperature was constant to within 0.1°C. A thermister embedded in the floor of the chamber measured the temperature at the surface of the muscle.

**Implementation of Changes in Boundary Conditions for $P_{O_2}$ at Muscle Surfaces**

Muscles were placed in the chamber while the electrode was recessed; because muscle widths were always <9.5 mm, the portion of the muscle lying over the shaft was oxygenated at both surfaces. The chamber was then placed into the water bath. After the
muscle temperature had reached the desired level, a further equilibration period was allowed, to enable the muscle $Q_{O_2}$ to fall to a constant value characteristic of that temperature, and the $P_{O_2}$ profile to reach a steady state. At 23, 10, and 0°C, 30, 30, and 60 min, respectively, were allowed for this to occur. Experimental interventions were then begun.

**Method I**

The object of this method was to abruptly change the boundary condition at the portion of the lower surface of the muscle lying over the shaft. While this surface was exposed to the gas phase, its boundary condition was $P(0, t) = P_0$, where $P_0$ denotes the $P_{O_2}$ of the gas phase. At time $t = 0$, the oxygen electrode was raised so that its surface was flush with the floor of the chamber, thereby sealing off the lower surface of the muscle, and presumably changing the boundary condition there to $(\partial P/\partial x) = 0$. The oxygen electrode measured the subsequent $P(0, t)$. This method is similar to that used by Takahashi et al. (1966) in their determination of $D$ and $Q$ in rabbit corneal stroma.

**Method II.**

In a muscle with constant $Q_{O_2}$, after an intervention of method I above, the $P_{O_2}$ profile would eventually reach a new steady state, in which oxygen was supplied only at the upper surface. This was evidenced by a constant value of $P_{O_2}$ at the lower surface, as measured by the electrode. When this condition was met, an abrupt boundary change was made at the upper surface of the muscle at a new time zero, by rapidly changing the $P_{O_2}$ of the gas in the chamber; this change was 50% complete in ~20 s, and complete in ~3 min. Again, the subsequent time-course of $P_{O_2}$ at the lower surface of the tissue was measured by the electrode. A somewhat similar method for testing the Fick equation and measuring $D$ was used by Connelly et al. (1953) with frog nerve.

**Measurement of Muscle Thickness**

The thickness of the muscle at the point above the platinum cathode was measured by focusing a microscope first on the muscle surface, then on the surface of the electrode membrane after the muscle had been removed, and measuring with a micrometer dial the net distance the microscope head had traveled in the process. This was done in the following way. At the conclusion of the experiments, the top of the chamber was removed, and a bracket was attached to the lower portion, allowing it to be affixed to the microscope in place of its stage. During readings, the field was illuminated with a fiber optics light source (type K-150 American Optical Corp., Buffalo, N.Y.), and a flexible
light guide. One eyepiece of the microscope contained a numbered grid, and by using previously determined landmarks, the chamber was positioned so that the platinum cathode, which could not be seen through the muscle, would lie beneath the muscle surface covered by the grid at a magnification of \( \times 215 \); this was a square of \( \sim 300 \mu m \) on a side. The chamber was also positioned so that the longitudinal axes of the muscle fibers lay parallel to the X-axis of the grid. Several drops of a suspension of jeweller's rouge in Ringer solution were then placed on the muscle surface, and on the adjoining surface of the electrode; the diameter of the particles was about 5 \( \mu m \). By touching an absorbent tissue to the fluid next to the muscle, most of the added Ringer solution was then drained off the muscle, leaving a scattering of particles. At a magnification of \( \times 215 \), the microscope was then focused on each of 5–10 particles, whose positions along the Y-axis of the grid spanned its entire range; the height of the microscope head was recorded in each instance via a fine focus knob graduated to 1 \( \mu m \). Readings were found to be independent of the particle position along the X-axis. The muscle was then removed, and the focusing procedure was repeated on the surface of the electrode membrane; here, only one reading was taken, over the platinum cathode, which was now visible. The position of the cathode on the Y-axis of the grid determined which of the readings taken from the muscle surface was to be used; if necessary, linear interpolation between readings from adjoining points was employed. The error in measurements of tissue thickness over the cathode by this method was probably always \( < -15 \mu m \), while the measured values ranged from 600 to 1400 \( \mu m \).

**Curve-Fitting Procedure**

Points were read from the records of \( P(0, t) \) with a low power microscope. Fitting the measured \( P(0, t) \) points by the solutions of the diffusion equation (Eq. 1) was accomplished with a digital computer, via a nonlinear least squares curve-fitting routine (Brown and Dennis, 1970).

**RESULTS**

**Validity of Diffusion Equation and Calculation of Diffusion Coefficient**

**METHOD I** If the one-dimensional diffusion equation (Eq. 1) is valid in the resting sartorius, with \( Q \) independent of \( P \), then after the closing of the lower surface of the muscle by the electrode, the kinetics of change in the \( P_0_2 \) profile within the muscle should be given by:

\[
P(x, t) = P_0 - \frac{Q}{2D \alpha} (l^2 - x^2) + \frac{Q}{2D \alpha} \frac{8}{\pi^2} \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^n}{(2n + 1)^2} \frac{\pi^2 D \cdot t}{4l^2} \sin \frac{(2n + 1)(l - x)\pi}{2l},
\]

where \( l \) is the muscle thickness above the platinum cathode, and the other symbols are as defined above (cf. Eq. 1). The derivation of this equation is given by Takahashi et al. (1966). At the muscle surface, the predicted kinetics of \( P_0_2 \) are thus:

\[
P(0, t) = P_0 - \frac{Ql^2}{2D \alpha} + \frac{Q}{2D \alpha} \frac{8}{\pi^2} \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{1}{(2n + 1)^2} \frac{\pi^2 D \cdot t}{4l^2}.
\]

This equation is potentially useful, because after a relatively short time, all terms...
in the infinite series other than the first can be ignored, and the predicted \( P(0, t) \) becomes a simple exponential, with rate constant proportional to \( D \). This will occur when \( \pi^2 D t / 4 l^2 = 0.5 \), or for \( D = (3-6) \times 10^{-4} \) cm\(^2\)/min (Hill, 1966) and \( l = 0.7-1.0 \) mm, after \( \sim 100-400 \) s.

Fig. 2 shows typical records from experiments of method I at 22.6, 10, and 0°C. Experiments at 22–23°C and 10°C were performed in air. At 0°C in air, the changes in surface \( P_{O_2} \) were quite small relative to the starting value; to magnify the changes, experiments were performed in an environment of 7.3% O\(_2\), 2.8% CO\(_2\), and the balance N\(_2\); even then, the changes in \( P_{O_2} \) were still relatively small. In 10–20% of the experiments, the \( P_{O_2} \) at the muscle surface never reached a steady level, but showed a continuous slow decrease; this was interpreted as evidence that the rate of oxygen consumption was not constant, and these records were not analyzed.

Fig. 3 shows semilogarithmic plots of \( [P(0, t) - P(0, \infty)] \), hereafter referred to as \( \Delta P(t) \), for the records displayed in Fig. 2. To fit the measured \( P(0, t) \) by Eq. 3, the best-fitting curve of the form \( a e^{-kt} \) was calculated for that portion of the measured \( \Delta P(t) \) for which Eq. 3 predicted monoexponential kinetics. The lines shown in Fig. 3 were determined by this method, and illustrate average fits. The range of points which were fit by a single exponential were those for which \( \Delta P(t) \) was between 45 and 5% of its initial value. The upper limit of this range was set by the condition that the first term of the series of exponentials in Eq. 3 exceed the remaining terms by a factor of \( 10^3 \). Points for which \( \Delta P(t) \) was <5% of its initial value were not used, because of their relatively large uncertainties.

The fit of a measured \( P(0,t) \) by Eq. 3 could also be tested by calculating the best-fitting curve of the form \( a \sum_n \frac{1}{(2n+1)^3} e^{-[(2n+1)^2] \pi^2 t / 4 l^2} \) to all points for which
\( \Delta P(t) \) was between 100 and 5\% of its initial value. This method also produced satisfactory fits, but yielded values for the rate constant \( k \) that were, on average, \( \sim 15\% \) higher than those obtained from the monoexponential fits. The latter were judged the more reliable, because it was considered that in the vicinity of \( t = 0 \), the experimental protocol itself might have caused \( P(0, t) \) to differ slightly from the behavior predicted by Eq. 3 (cf. Discussion).

The agreement between the measured \( P(0, t) \) and the fitted curves suggests that the one-dimensional diffusion equation for oxygen is indeed valid on the macroscale in the resting sartorius; if so, the measured rate constant \( k \) is equal to

\[
\pi^2 D/4l^2
\]

and the diffusion constant \( D \) is given by:

\[
D = 0.405 l^2 k. \tag{4}
\]

At each temperature, consistent values for \( D \) were obtained via Eq. 4, and these are summarized in Table I. As an example of these calculations, for the records shown in Figs. 2 and 3, the values for \( l \) were 723, 907, and 768 \( \mu \)m, respectively, at 22.8, 10, and 0\(^\circ\)C; the rate constants (cf. Fig. 3) were 0.442, 0.218, and 0.160 min\(^{-1}\), and the values for \( D \) calculated from Eq. 4 were thus 9.36, 7.25, and 3.83 \( \times 10^{-4} \) cm\(^2\)/min.

**Method II** Under the conditions of an experiment of method II, after the change in \( P_{O_2} \) of the gas phase from \( P_0 \) to \( P_1 \), the diffusion equation (Eq. 1) predicts that the kinetics of change in the \( P_{O_2} \) profile above the platinum cathode will be given by:
\[ P(x, t) = P_0 - \frac{Q(l^2 - x^2)}{2D\alpha} + \frac{4(P_1 - P_0)}{\pi} \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^n}{(2n + 1)} \cos \left( \frac{(2n + 1)\pi x}{2l} \right) \left( 1 - e^{-\frac{(2n + 1)^2 \pi^2 D \cdot t}{4l^2}} \right). \]

The predicted time-course of \( P_{O_2} \) at the lower surface of the muscle is given by:

\[ P(0, t) = P_1 - \frac{Ql^2}{2D\alpha} + \frac{4(P_1 - P_0)}{\pi} \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^n}{(2n + 1)} e^{-\frac{(2n + 1)^2 \pi^2 D \cdot t}{4l^2}}. \]

A derivation of Eqs. 5 and 6 is given in Appendix II of Mahler (1976). Eq. 6 is similar to Eq. 3 in that it quickly becomes monoexponential, with rate constant \( \pi^2 D/4l^2 \); it differs in that the terms of the series of exponents have alternating signs, giving a distinctive S-shape to the early phase of the curve.

Fig. 4 shows results of actual records from experiments of method II at 22.8, 10, and 0°C, and semilogarithmic plots of the same records appear in Fig. 5. To quantify the agreement between an observed \( P(0, t) \) and that predicted by Eq. 6, the portion of the record for which Eq. 6 predicted monoeponential kinetics was fit by \( a e^{-kt} \). The points fit were those for which \( \Delta P(t) \) was between 61 and 5% of its initial value; this range was set by the same criteria explained above for the experiments of method I. These fits were typically excellent. To check that the earlier points in \( \Delta P(t) \) were also well described by Eq. 6, the best-fitting monoeexponentials were used to generate curves of the form \( a \cdot \sum (-1)^n/(2n + 1) e^{-((2n + 1)^2 \pi^2 D \cdot t)/4l^2} \), which according to Eq. 6, should describe the entire time-course of \( \Delta P(t) \). The best-fitting time delay \( t_0 \) was allowed to compensate for the fact that the change in chamber \( P_{O_2} \) was slower than a true step; its mean value was \( \sim 50 \) s, consistent with the fact that the change in chamber \( P_{O_2} \) took \( \sim 3 \) min to complete. Fig. 5 shows that these curves did provide satisfactory fits of the early points.

The agreement between the recorded \( P(0, t) \) and the general time-course predicted by the diffusion equation again suggests strongly that Eq. 1 is valid in this tissue on the macroscale, and that Eq. 4 can be used to calculate \( D \). The values obtained from the experiments of method II are summarized in Table I. If the diffusion equation is valid, the experiments of methods I and II should yield the same value for \( D \); that this was in fact the case is shown in Table I.

### Table I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temperature</th>
<th>Method I</th>
<th>Method II</th>
<th>Pooled</th>
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<td>( D \times 10^4 ) cm(^2)/min</td>
<td>( D \times 10^4 ) cm(^2)/min</td>
<td>( D \times 10^4 ) cm(^2)/min</td>
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<td>22-23</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.81±0.20</td>
<td>5.06±0.24</td>
<td>4.94±0.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Moreover, experiments of both types were done on eight muscles at 0°C; the mean difference between the paired values for $D$ was $0.07 (±0.38) \times 10^{-4}$ cm$^2$/min ($P > 0.8$). Table I also gives the values for $D$ obtained by pooling the results from the two types of experiments; in the cases where experiments of both types were done on the same muscle, the average of the two results was used.

If the quantity $D$ calculated from these experiments is a true diffusion coefficient, it should be independent of muscle thickness ($l$). Regression of $D$ against $l$ showed that this requirement was satisfied: correlation coefficients of 0.43 ($P > 0.15$), 0.22 ($P > 0.5$), and 0.22 ($P > 0.3$) were obtained at 23, 10, and 0°C, respectively (cf. Fig. 6).

**Activation Energy for Diffusion of Oxygen in Muscle**

On a macroscale, diffusion can be considered a continuous process, and Fick’s equation in fact makes this assumption. At the molecular level, however, diffusion in biological materials proceeds in discrete steps, which occur when the diffusing molecule has sufficient energy to overcome the attractive forces binding it to its neighbors; in a homogeneous medium, this energy has an essentially constant value which is referred to as the activation energy for diffusion, $E_A$. Diffusion can thus be thought of as a process analogous to a chemical reaction, and by analogy with the Arrhenius equation, it can be expected that the temperature dependence of the diffusion coefficient $D$ will be given by the equation:

$$D_T = D_0 \cdot e^{-E_A/kT}. \quad (7)$$

Fig. 7 shows an Arrhenius plot of $D$ versus $T$ for the pooled results given in Table II. Its linearity makes it reasonable to calculate the value of $E_A$ predicted by Eq. 7 for the diffusion of oxygen in the resting sartorius; this gives the result $-3.85 ± 0.06$ kcal/mol. Also plotted in Fig. 7 are the values for the diffusion coefficient of oxygen in water reported by Gertz and Loeschke (1954) and Grote (1967) for the temperature range 20–37°C. The corresponding values for $E_A$ are.

[Figure 4. Photograph of typical recordings of the time-course of Po$_2$ at the lower surface of a muscle during experiments of method II at (a) 22.8°C, (b) 10°C, and (c) 0°C. At the time designated by the arrow, the Po$_2$ at the upper surface of the muscle was changed from 548 to 154.5 mm Hg in a, from 557 to 155 mm Hg in b, and from 156 to 54.6 mm Hg in c.]
-3.63 and -3.85 kcal/mol, respectively, and for the pooled data, -3.73 ± 0.13 kcal/mol. Taken together, the data shown in Fig. 7 suggest that $(D_{\text{muscle}}/D_{\text{H}_2\text{O}})$ is about 0.59 in the frog sartorius. However, although the papers of Gertz and Loeschcke (1954) and Grote (1967) appear to describe the only systematic investigations of the temperature dependence of the diffusion coefficient for O$_2$ in water, other investigators, each working at a single temperature, have reported somewhat lower values for this parameter. At 25°C, the data of Fig. 7 indicate that $D_{\text{H}_2\text{O}} = 2.55 \times 10^{-5}$ cm$^2$/s, at the upper extreme of the range of published values tabulated by Goldstick and Fatt (1970), which average $2.2 \times 10^{-5}$ cm$^2$/s. Goldstick and Fatt (1970), using a method similar to that employed in this paper, reported a value of $2.13 \times 10^{-5}$ cm$^2$/s. If the latter figures are correct, the value of $(D_{\text{muscle}}/D_{\text{H}_2\text{O}})$ based on the present results would be about 0.69.

**QO$_2$ in the Resting Sartorius**

In the experiments of method I, it follows from Eq. 3 that the rate of oxygen consumption by the muscle is given by:

$$Q = \Delta P \cdot \frac{2D\alpha}{l^2},$$

where $\Delta P$ denotes $P(0, 0) - P(0, \infty)$, the drop in $P_{O_2}$ at the muscle surface.
between the initial and final steady states. This relationship has previously been used by Hill (1948) and Kawashiro et al. (1975). Substituting Eq. 4 into Eq. 8 yields a simpler formula which makes use of the nonsteady-state data, and permits the calculation of \( Q \) without knowledge of \( D \) or \( l \):

\[
Q = 0.811 \cdot \Delta P \cdot k \alpha.
\]

(9)

Given the value of \( \alpha \), the solubility of oxygen in the muscle, the rate of oxygen consumption could be calculated from the data of the present experiments via Eqs. 8 or 9. The average solubility of oxygen in skeletal muscle has apparently never been directly measured, but by using the reasoning of Hill (1966), it can be estimated that \( \alpha \) is \( \sim 82\% \) as great in the frog sartorius as in isotonic saline. Based on the values of the latter parameter tabulated by Bartels et al. (1971), the

![Graph](https://example.com/graph.png)

**Figure 6.** Dependence of the diffusion coefficient \( D \) on muscle thickness at 0°C. (□) Method I experiment; (◇) method II experiment; (△) average from method I and method II experiments. Dashed line: \( D = 4.94 \times 10^{-4} \text{ cm}^2/\text{min} \), the mean value at 0°C. The actual line of best fit is \( Y = (4.17 \pm 0.84) + (0.00081 \pm 0.00086)X \).

actual values for \( \alpha \) assumed in this paper, expressed in \( \mu l \text{ O}_2/\text{g muscle} \cdot \text{mmHg} \), are at 22.6, 10, and 0°C, respectively, 0.0292, 0.0378, and 0.0488.

Given these values, the rates of oxygen consumption by the resting sartorius at 22–23, 10, and 0°C have been calculated from Eq. 9, with the results listed in Table II. Between 10 and 0°C, a fourfold drop in \( Q_{O_2} \) was observed (cf. Fig. 8). The method I experiments at 22–23°C and 10°C were done in air, whereas those at 0°C were performed in an atmosphere of 7.3% \( \text{O}_2 \), 2.8% \( \text{CO}_2 \). This raises the question of whether the gas concentrations per se could have affected the \( Q_{O_2} \). Several lines of evidence suggest that this did not occur. In the first place, it should be noted that in all cases, muscles were well oxygenated: during the method I experiments, the \( P_{O_2} \) at the closed lower surface of the muscle was always lower than anywhere else in the tissue; this was the point at which \( P_{O_2} \) was being measured by the oxygen electrode, and at all temperatures, this minimal \( P_{O_2} \) was safely above the critical \( P_{O_2} \) measured in this muscle (Hill, 1948; Gore and Whalen, 1968; cf. Fig. 2). Secondly, in the experiments of method II, the gas in the chamber was usually changed at \( t = 0 \) from air to the 7.3% \( \text{O}_2 \).
mixture; if $Q$ had changed markedly because of the change in gas composition, the recorded $P(0, t)$ could not have agreed so strikingly with that predicted by Eq. 6, which assumes that $Q$ is constant. Finally, in three cases at 10° and 15°C, method I experiments were performed on the same muscle in both air and the 7.3% $O_2$ gas, and the values for $Q$ obtained in the two different gas environments agreed to within 10%.

**Calculation of the Permeation Constant $K$**

Using the values of $D$ given in Table I, together with the values of $\alpha$ assumed above for the calculation of $Q$, the permeation constant $K$ for oxygen in the excised frog sartorius can be calculated as $D\alpha$. These values are listed in Table III.

![Arrhenius plots of the diffusion coefficient $D$.](image)

**FIGURE 7.** Arrhenius plots of the diffusion coefficient $D$. (△) Data of the present study. (□, ○) Values for $D$ in water reported by Gertz and Loeschcke (1954) and Grote (1967), respectively. Solid lines: lines of best fit in semilogarithmic coordinates. The corresponding values of $E_A$ are $-3.73 \pm 0.13$ kcal/mol and $-3.85 \pm 0.06$ kcal/mol for the upper and lower line, respectively.

**DISCUSSION**

**Methodology**

For the method I experiments, it was assumed that the initial $P_{O_2}$ profile above the platinum cathode was given by the steady-state solution of Eq. 1 for a tissue exposed at both surfaces to a constant $P_{O_2}$. However, these boundary conditions applied only to the portion of the muscle which lay above the recessed electrode; the remainder of the muscle, which rested on the chamber floor, had the boundary condition $(\partial P/\partial x) = 0$, and the initial $P_{O_2}$ profile there was thus quite different from that in the section of the muscle above the electrode. For the approach of method I to be valid, the distance from the platinum cathode to the edge of the shaft, which is about 5 mm, must be large enough to ensure that the $P_{O_2}$ profile above the cathode was essentially unaffected by the "end conditions." Three arguments indicate that this condition was satisfied. First, a rough
indication is furnished by the fact that for a species with a diffusion coefficient on the order of $5 \times 10^{-4} \text{ cm}^2/\text{min}$, 5 mm is a formidable distance; for instance, if a step change is made at one surface of a 5-mm slab, it will be 90% complete at the other surface only after 500 min. Second, Eq. 3, which is based on the assumption that end effects are negligible, provides a good fit of the observed $P(0, t)$. Finally, the method I experiments yield the same value for $D$ as those of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temperature</th>
<th>Qo$_o$</th>
<th>Qo$_o$ (range)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22-23</td>
<td>0.590±0.042 (0.305-1.11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.241±0.019 (0.094-0.379)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.060±0.0075 (0.053-0.145)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An objection relevant to the experiments of both types is that the theoretical equations are those for an infinite plane sheet, while the isolated sartorius of $R$: pipiens certainly shows deviations from this configuration. Above the platinum cathode, the measured muscle thickness ($l$) was essentially constant along the longitudinal axis, but typically varied by 30–100 $\mu$m within a 400 $\mu$m range in

\[ Q_0 = (\mu_l \cdot \text{g} \cdot \text{min}) \]

\[ (22.8^\circ \text{C}) \]

\[ (10^\circ \text{C}) \]

\[ (0^\circ \text{C}) \]

\[ (\frac{1}{T}) \times 10^3 (\frac{1}{l_{sp}}) \]

\[ 0.01 \]

\[ 0.1 \]

\[ 1 \]

\[ 10 \]

\[ 22^\circ \text{C} \]

\[ 10^\circ \text{C} \]

\[ 0^\circ \text{C} \]
the lateral direction. It is assumed that \( P(x, t) \) above this point is the same as in an infinite sheet with the same thickness. Again, perhaps the strongest justification for this is simply that the observed kinetics of \( P_{O_2} \) at the muscle surface were well fit by Eqs. 3 and 6, which are, in effect, based on this assumption. This agreement is seen whether (method II) or not (method I) the boundary condition beyond the circumference of the electrode is the same as that within it; this indicates that \( P(0, t) \) is the same as would be observed in an infinitely long muscle. As for the effect on \( P(x, t) \) of the variation in \( l \) in the lateral direction, no additional direct evidence can be offered; it is plausible, though, that the variation in \( l \) is sufficiently gradual that at each thickness, the deviation from the \( P_{O_2} \) profiles predicted by Eqs. 3 and 6 are acceptably small.

**Validity of the Diffusion Equation for Oxygen; the Values of \( D \) and \( K \)**

The first purpose of these experiments was to test the hypothesis that the distribution of \( O_2 \) within the excised sartorius of *R. pipiens* is well described by the one-dimensional diffusion equation (Eq. 1). It might be expected that this could not be the case: within sufficiently small, uniform volume elements, the diffusion of oxygen in muscle must certainly be well described by the three-dimensional version of Eq. 1; on such a scale it is equally certain, however, that the values of \( D, \alpha, \) and \( Q \) vary widely within the muscle. For example:

\( a) \) The oxygen consumption rate \( Q \) is presumably negligible except at mitochondria;

\( b) \) Myofibrils, which account for \( \sim 15\% \) of the volume of a muscle fiber, can apparently be considered fixed structures impermeable to oxygen, so that \( D, \alpha, \) and \( P \) in this volume are essentially zero;

\( c) \) The cell membrane of the fiber is not a homogeneous structure, and even if it can be considered so on a macroscopic level, at least with respect to the diffusion of oxygen, its composition is sufficiently different from that of the fiber interior that it may present a relative barrier to the passage of oxygen;

\( d) \) In contrast, within the extracellular space, which comprises roughly 10–25\% of the muscle volume in an amphibian sartorius (Tasker et al., 1959; Neville and White, 1978) and can presumably be regarded as a dilute aqueous solution of small molecules, it can be expected that \( D \) and \( \alpha \) will be greater than they are elsewhere in the muscle;

**TABLE III**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temperature</th>
<th>( D \times 10^4 )</th>
<th>( \alpha )</th>
<th>( K \times 10^6 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>°C</td>
<td>cm(^2)min</td>
<td>ml ( O_2/cm(^2) ) atm</td>
<td>ml ( O_2/cm(^2) ) min \cdot atm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>(11.49)</td>
<td>0.01885</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>8.54±0.34</td>
<td>0.02344</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.30±0.30</td>
<td>0.03046</td>
<td>1.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.94±0.16</td>
<td>0.03933</td>
<td>1.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It has been assumed that \( \alpha \) in muscle is 0.82 times the value in 0.12 M saline. The value of \( D \) at 37° was obtained by extrapolation from 0°–22.8° (cf. Fig. 7).
The presence of an unsaturated tissue oxygen carrier, such as myoglobin, would cause the $P_{O_2}$ profile to differ from that predicted by Eq. 1 (Wittenberg, 1970; Longmuir et al., 1971). However, Keilin (1925) reported that frog skeletal muscle was "completely devoid" of myoglobin. Additional complications are certainly present, and it is by no means obvious that the distribution of oxygen within an excised muscle can be well approximated by Eq. 1 if boundary conditions are specified only for the tissue surfaces, and average values assumed for $D$, $\alpha$, and $Q$. Fick's law is certainly not generally valid on the macroscale in the heterogeneous media (Barrier, 1968).

On the other hand, this simplification is not necessarily invalid in the present case on account of the inhomogeneities mentioned above. Wang (1954) showed on both theoretical and experimental grounds that diffusion of water in an aqueous protein solution obeyed Fick's law, but that the apparent diffusion coefficient, when compared with that in pure water, was reduced in a predictable manner depending on the concentration, orientation, and water binding capacity of the protein molecules. This suggests that muscle proteins might have a similar effect on diffusion within the interior of a muscle fiber. Kushnerick and Podolsky (1969), Hinke et al. (1973), and Caillé and Hinke (1974) have in fact shown that the movement of a variety of radioactivity labeled substances down the longitudinal axis of a single muscle fiber is well described by Eq. 1, and as pointed out by Caillé and Hinke, their diffusion coefficients appear to be in good agreement with Wang's theory. Based on these results, the concentration profile for oxygen within a single fiber might also be expected to obey Fick's law on the macroscale. Moreover, it is also plausible that the diffusion coefficient for oxygen within muscle cell membranes is similar to that in myoplasm, as suggested by the results of Fischkoff and Vanderkooi (1975), and that the effect of the extracellular space on the distribution of oxygen in muscle can be approximated as a uniform dilution; taken together, these observations make it plausible a priori that, to a good approximation, Fick's equation for the diffusion of oxygen will be valid on the macroscale for an entire excised muscle.

The results presented above suggest strongly that this is indeed the case in the sartorius of $R.\ pipsiens$; during transient changes in the $P_{O_2}$ profile of the muscle, the measured kinetics of $P_{O_2}$ at its surface were in good agreement with detailed predictions based on Eq. 1. However, during the first few minutes after the boundary changes of methods I and II, the recorded kinetics of surface $P_{O_2}$ did deviate somewhat from the solutions of Eq. 1 given by Eqs. 3 and 6, respectively. This may simply mean that the diffusion equation is not precisely valid on the macroscale. However, a plausible alternative explanation is that the initial and (or) boundary conditions assumed in the derivation of Eqs. 3 and 6 were not exactly matched experimentally. In the method II experiments, the recorded $P(0, t)$ changed more slowly than that predicted by Eq. 6; however, in the derivation of Eq. 6, it is assumed that the change in $P_{O_2}$ at the upper boundary of the muscle is made instantaneously, whereas in practice, this took 2-3 min (cf. Methods). If the boundary change was approximated as a step occurring at roughly $t = 50$ s, the recorded $P(0, t)$ was then in excellent agreement with the corresponding solution of Eq. 1 (cf. Fig. 5). In the case of the method I experiments, after the oxygen electrode was brought into contact with the lower
surface of the muscle, the early changes in \( P_{O_2} \) at that surface again appeared to be somewhat slower than expected: if the exponential rate constant \( k = \pi^2 D/4l^2 \) predicted by Eq. 3 was determined from the latter portion of the recorded curve, and then used to generate the higher order exponential terms called for by Eq. 3, the theoretical \( P(0, t) \) usually fell below the recorded curve for the first 1-2 min. The experimental protocol itself may have been at least partly responsible for this. Placing the electrode against the muscle caused a rapid change in its current which did not appear to reflect the actual time-course of surface \( P_{O_2} \) (cf. Methods); this effect was assumed to be restricted to the first few seconds after contact was made, but a smaller, longer lasting discrepancy between electrode current and surface \( P_{O_2} \) might have occurred. Furthermore, in the derivation of Eq. 3, it was assumed that the \( P_{O_2} \) profile within the muscle is constant at \( t = 0 \); in practice, this condition might not have been exactly satisfied. (In either case, however, the diffusion equation predicts that \( P(0, t) \) should eventually become monoexponential, provided \( Q \) is constant.) From an overall viewpoint, the deviations cited above are relatively small, and even in the worst possible case, it appears that the solution of the one-dimensional diffusion equation (Eq. 1) still provides a good approximation to the \( P_{O_2} \) profile within the excised frog sartorius. This conclusion was anticipated by the work of Gore and Whalen (1968) and Kawashiro et al. (1975), which suggests that Eq. 1 is valid during steady states in excised frog and rat skeletal muscle.

As discussed above, the data reported here imply that the value of \( D \) in the excised frog sartorius is \( \sim 59-69\% \) as great as in water. Within the extracellular space, \( D \) presumably approximates its value in water. If this space constitutes 10-25\% of the muscle volume, the present results would then imply a value of 0.44-0.66 for \( D_{myoplasm}/D_{H_2O} \), in the same range as the relative values reported by Kushmerick and Podolsky (1969), Hinke et al. (1975), and Caillé and Hinke (1974) for a variety of other small molecules.

Taken together with the theory of Wang (1954), the present results also suggest why the diffusion equation is valid on the macroscale in the excised frog sartorius. In the first place, the activation energy for diffusion of oxygen in the excised sartorius is \( \sim 3.85 \) kcal/mol, essentially the same as that reported for the diffusion of oxygen in water by Gertz and Loeschcke (1954) and Grote (1967). The simplest explanation for this seems to be that the molecular level forces impeding the movement of oxygen through muscle membranes are not markedly different from those in the extracellular space and the myoplasm, which can themselves apparently both be considered as dilute aqueous solutions in the present context. Evidence consistent with this conclusion has already been reported by Fischkoff and Vanderkooi (1975), who found that in artificial phospholipid membranes and erythrocyte plasma membranes, the diffusion coefficients for oxygen were on the order of \( 10^{-5} \) cm\(^2\)/s at 37\(^\circ\)C, and the values of \( E_A \) averaged about \(-2.5 \) kcal/mol. Despite the similar values of \( E_A \) in water and muscle, the diffusion coefficient \( D \) in the excised sartorius is apparently only \( \sim 59-69\% \) as great as in water. Wang (1954) presented a framework within which this result can be interpreted, by providing evidence that the self-diffusion of water within an aqueous protein solution is well described on the
macroscale by Fick's equation, but that $D$ is reduced to a predictable fraction of its value in pure water. As pointed out by Caillé and Hinke (1974), Wang's theory can be applied to the diffusion of any substance in a complex system having obstructing molecules with sequestration sites for the diffusant; in general, the values of $D$ in the complex system and in the pure solvent will be related by:

$$D^* = D(1 - f)(1 - \phi),$$

(10)

where $D^*$ and $D$ are the diffusion coefficients in the complex system and the solvent, respectively; $\phi$ is the volume fraction occupied by obstructing molecules; $\beta$ is a constant determined by the average shape and orientation of the obstructing molecules; and $f$ is the fraction of the diffusing molecules sequestered by the obstructing species. If the frog sartorius is simply treated as a protein solution, the parameters $\phi$, $\beta$, and $f$ can be estimated to have values of roughly 0.15-0.30 (Hill, 1930, 1966; Blinks, 1965; Caillé and Hinke, 1974; Palmer and Guliati, 1976), 1.6-1.8 (Wang, 1954; Mahler, 1976), and 0. The range of values for $(D^*/D)$ predicted on the basis of these assumptions is thus 0.47-0.76, which brackets the range of plausible values based on actual measurements (0.59-0.69). While admittedly imprecise, this analysis suggests the possibility that, at least with respect to the diffusion of oxygen, as a useful first approximation the excised frog sartorius can be considered simply as a protein solution.

The diffusion coefficient for oxygen in skeletal muscle has apparently not been previously measured directly. The values calculated by Hill (1966) are $5.5 \times 10^{-4}$ cm$^2$/min at 20°C, and $2.75 \times 10^{-4}$ cm$^2$/min at 0°C. At these temperatures, the results of the present study are $8.03 (\pm 0.32) \times 10^{-4}$ cm$^2$/min (interpolated values) and $4.94 (\pm 0.16) \times 10^{-4}$ cm$^2$/min, respectively, and thus differ from Hill's values at a high level of probability ($P < 0.001$). Hill's values at 20°C and 0°C are only ~40-48% and 33-39% as large, respectively, as the corresponding values for $D$ in water; both ratios appear to be below the range of values of $(D_{\text{myoplasm}}/D_{\text{H2O}})$ for other small nonelectrolytes, or that predicted by the model of Wang. Hill calculated $D$ as $K/\alpha$, using the results of Krogh (1919) for $K$. Krogh's $K$ for 20°C is subject to considerable uncertainty: it is based on a very small sample size; the values of $K$ were proportional to the tissue thickness, which may have been underestimated by Krogh's methods; the thickness of the connective tissue layers surrounding the muscle was apparently not measured in the individual cases; and the value of $K$ in the connective tissue was itself rather uncertain. The values for $\alpha$ assumed by Hill might also be questioned. Finally, Krogh's measurements of $K$ in muscle were all made at 16-20°C, so it seems justified to consider the value assumed by Hill for 0°C to be only a first approximation. Grote and Thews (1962), using an experimental design similar to that employed here, measured $D$ in sections of nonrespiring rat myocardium at 20°C. Their result, as corrected by Grote (1967), was $8.10 \times 10^{-4}$ cm$^2$/min, virtually identical with that reported here for the frog sartorius.

The permeation constant $K$ was not measured in the present experiments, but given the assumed values of $\alpha$, can be calculated as $D\alpha$. These calculated values are roughly 40% higher than those reported by Krogh (1919) and Gore.
and Whalen (1968), but ~15% lower than that measured by Kawashiro et al. (1975). However, although exact statistical comparisons are not possible, the 95% confidence limits calculated from the data of Krogh (1.08-1.89 \times 10^{-5} \text{ ml/cm} \cdot \text{min} \cdot \text{atm}), Gore and Whalen (0.98-1.86 \times 10^{-5} \text{ ml/cm} \cdot \text{min} \cdot \text{atm}), and Kawashiro et al. (2.09-2.96 \times 10^{-5} \text{ ml/cm} \cdot \text{min} \cdot \text{atm}) indicate that the present values of \( K \) are reasonably consistent with this previous work (cf. Table III).

The values of \( K \) calculated here show a much less marked temperature dependence over the range 0-37°C than predicted by the general formula of Krogh (1919), which was based on a small number of measurements in dog peritoneal membranes, and can be quantified at \( (K_T/K_{20}) = (T + 80)/100 \), where \( T \) is the temperature in °C. On the other hand, because the values for \( D \) and \( \alpha \) used in the present calculations were both proportional to the values in water, the calculated temperature dependence of \( K \) in muscle is the same, in relative terms, as that in water, which manifestly does not obey Krogh’s formula. It should be noted that, according to the Wang equation (Eq. 10), the assumption that \( (\alpha_{\text{muscle}}/\alpha_{H_2O}) \) is independent of temperature appears consistent with the parallel linear Arrhenius plots of \( D \) in muscle and \( H_2O \). When \( (\alpha_{\text{muscle}}/\alpha_{H_2O}) \) is constant, so presumably are the solvent volume for \( O_2 \), the complementary excluded volume \( \phi \) in Eq. 10, and thus \( (D_{\text{muscle}}/D_{H_2O}) \). By the same reasoning, for any tissue in which the diffusion equation for oxygen is valid on the macroscale, and the solvent volume for \( O_2 \) does not vary markedly with temperature, the prediction that \( (K_{\text{tissue}}/K_{H_2O}) \) is constant thus constitutes a plausible alternative to Krogh’s general formula.

\( QO_2 \) of the Resting Sartorius

At 22-25°C, the resting \( QO_2 \) obtained with the present method is in good agreement with the classical values tabulated by Hill (1966). The relative decrease in \( QO_2 \) from 22.8° to 10°C, corresponding to a \( Q_{10} \) of 2.0, agrees well with previous work on the temperature dependence of the resting metabolic rate in both intact organisms and isolated tissues, over their physiological temperature ranges (Hill, 1911; Hutchison, 1971; Allen and Kushmerick, 1975). It is thus rather surprising that between 10 and 0°C, the resting \( QO_2 \) measured in the present study decreased by a factor of 4.0. The only previously published systematic measurement of the resting \( QO_2 \) in the frog sartorius at 0°C appears to be that of Kushmerick and Paul (1976); their value, \( 0.164 \pm 0.027 \mu l/g \cdot \text{min}, \) is about three times as large as the one reported here. However, the latter value, if correct, might be too small to be measured by the method of Kushmerick and Paul (1976): for a 60-mg muscle, a \( QO_2 \) of 0.06 \mu l/g \cdot \text{min} gives an absolute rate of 0.0086 \mu l/min; relative to the amount of \( O_2 \) in their chamber, this represents a decrease of only about 0.5% per h.

In a resting muscle with constant \( QO_2 \), the rate of ATP production via oxidative metabolism is presumably virtually identical to the rate of ATP utilization. If the overall \( P:O_2 \) for oxidative metabolism does not vary with temperature, the temperature dependence of the resting \( QO_2 \) should thus be the same as that for the overall rate of ATP splitting. The latter should simply be an average of the temperature profiles of the various muscle ATPases, weighted by
their relative rates. In this context, it is of interest that the Arrhenius plot for $Q_{O_2}$, shown as Fig. 8, is strikingly similar to that for the rate of Mg-activated myofibrillar ATPase of frog muscle published by Barany (1967), for the ionic strength nearest the physiological range; for ionic strength 0.064, the $Q_{10}$ between 30 and 10°C was 2.0, whereas between 10 and 0°C, it was 4.2. For actin-activated myosin ATPase of frog muscle, Barany reported somewhat higher $Q_{10}$'s, but again, the value between 10 and 0°C was more than twice as great as between 20° and 10°C. Similar nonlinear Arrhenius plots, with “break points” occurring around 15°C, have been reported for myofibrillar and actomyosin ATPase of a number of other types of muscle (Levy et al., 1959; Bendall, 1964). In contrast, linear Arrhenius plots have been reported for the Ca$^{++}$-activated myosin ATPases of frog, tortoise, cat, and sloth skeletal muscle (Barany, 1967), and the sarcolemmal Na$^+$, K$^+$-activated ATPase of rabbit skeletal muscle (Boldyrev et al., 1974), with the corresponding $Q_{10}$'s averaging 2.0-2.5. A plausible explanation for the temperature profile reported here for the resting $Q_{O_2}$ of the sartorius of *R. pipiens* is that the basal rate of ATP utilization in this muscle is primarily attributable to the actomyosin ATPase.

**Solubility of Oxygen in Muscle**

The values for $Q_{O_2}$ and $K$ reported here are proportional to the values assumed for $\alpha$, the solubility of $O_2$ in the excised frog sartorius. Following the reasoning of Hill (1966), it has been assumed that $\alpha$ is 0.82 times the solubility of $O_2$ in isotonic saline. Hill postulated that: (a) 97% of muscle water, comprising 82% of the volume of the sartorius, is “free” to dissolve $O_2$ (Hill, 1930); (b) the solubility of $O_2$ in this fraction is the same as in normal water; and (c) the solubility of $O_2$ in the remaining tissue volume is negligible. Assumption (a) is controversial. The existence of a fraction of muscle water, which is “bound” to protein and excluded from the solvent volume, has long been postulated (Hill, 1930), and some recent work has indicated that such a fraction may comprise as much as 15-25% of fiber water (Blinks, 1965; Caillé and Hinke, 1974). Other recent evidence, however, suggests that no more than 1% of fiber water is excluded from the solvent volume (Palmer and Guliati, 1976; cf. also Levin et al., 1976). Assumptions (b) and (c) can also be questioned. For example, intrafiber water, even if not “icelike,” may nevertheless have reduced mobility in comparison with pure water (e.g., cf. Hazlewood et al., 1974); by analogy with the increase in the solubility of gases which occurs when water mobility is lowered with temperature, intrafiber water might possibly dissolve more $O_2$ than normal water. Finally, the amount of $O_2$ dissolved in the nonaqueous volume of muscle might not be negligible; for instance, inasmuch as the olive oil/water partition coefficient for $O_2$ is about 4 (Battino et al., 1968), the lipid volume of the frog sartorius might contain a significant amount of $O_2$.

Two lines of evidence, however, suggest that the values assumed for $\alpha$ are substantially correct. First, Grote and Thews (1962) measured $\alpha$ indirectly in sections of nonrespiring rat myocardium at 20°C, by measuring both $D$ and $K$, and calculating $\alpha$ as $K/D$. Their results, as corrected by Grote (1967), indicate that $\alpha_{\text{muscle}}/\alpha_{\text{H}_{2}O} = 0.84$. Second, the values reported here for $Q_{O_2}$ and $K$, which
are proportional to the assumed values of $\alpha$, are in satisfactory agreement with previously published results obtained by direct methods. Values of about 0.5 $\mu l/g\cdot min$ for the resting $Q_{O_2}$ of the frog sartorius at 20°C have been reported by Fenn and Latchford (1932), Gemmill (1934, 1935), and Stannard (1939), and a similar figure can be calculated from the resting rate of heat production given by Hill and Howarth (1957); interpolation based on the data of Table II yields a value of $0.48 \pm 0.03 \mu l/g\cdot min$ at 20°C. As discussed above, the values of $K$ calculated here fall within the range of directly measured values reported by Krogh (1919), Gore and Whalen (1968), and Kawashiro et al. (1975).

**ADDENDUM.**

During the review of this paper, it was pointed out that the respiratory rate $Q$ can be measured with method II experiments, as well as by method I, via Eq. 8 or 9. To do this, it is necessary to calculate $\Delta P$, the steady-state $PO_2$ difference across the muscle. The following equations can be used:

$$\Delta P = P_g - P(0, \infty),$$  \hspace{1cm} (11)

$$C_{ss} = a \cdot P(0, \infty)$$  \hspace{1cm} (12)

$$= a \cdot P_g - a \cdot \Delta P$$  \hspace{1cm} (12.1)

where $P_g$ and $P(0, \infty)$ denote the $PO_2$ of the gas phase and at the lower surface of the muscle, respectively; $C_{ss}$ is the steady-state electrode current (or more precisely, the corresponding chart reading); and $a$ is the calibration constant relating $PO_2$ to chart reading when muscle is the medium external to the electrode (cf. Methods; note that Eq. 12 assumes that the electrode "zero current" is electronically or graphically set equal to zero). As long as the diffusion equation Eq. 1 is valid, $\Delta P$ will be constant, and according to Eq. 12.1, a plot of $C_{ss}$ (measured) vs. $P_g$ (known) will be linear. With $X$-intercept $\Delta P$, $n$ successive method II experiments will provide $(n + 1)$ pairs of values of $P_g$ and $C_{ss}$, and for the graphical determination of $\Delta P$, it would be desirable to have at least four or five points. However, even a single experiment can be expected to provide a useful first approximation to $\Delta P$. The method II experiments of the present series conducted at 22.8 and 10°C yielded estimates of 107 and 65 mm Hg, respectively, for $\Delta P$, and 0.484 and 0.261 $\mu l/g\cdot min$ for $Q_{O_2}$, consistent with the results obtained with method I (cf. Table II). At 0°C, the results were less satisfactory. This was not unexpected, because $\Delta P$ as measured by method I was typically on the order of only 10 mm Hg (e.g., cf. Fig. 2e), so that relatively large errors could occur in the graphical approximation. 11 method II experiments yielded estimates of $-3.4-34.4$ mm Hg for $\Delta P$, and $-0.029-0.113$ (mean $\pm$ SEM, 0.012 $\pm$ 0.013) $\mu l/g\cdot min$ for $Q_{O_2}$. These values are less than those obtained with method I, but do reinforce the conclusion that the resting $Q_{O_2}$ is relatively small at 0°C (cf. Fig. 8).

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