ESRF	**Experiment title:** Molecular bases of regulation of cardiac muscle contractility	**Experiment number**: LS-3148
Beamline: ID02	**Date of experiment**: from:08/10/2022 to:12/10/2022	**Date of report**: 5th March 2023
Shifts: 12	**Local contact(s)**: Theyencheri Narayanan	*Received at ESRF:*

Names and affiliations of applicants (* indicates experimentalists):

Marco Linari*, University of Florence

Marco Caremani*, University of Florence

Vincenzo Lombardi*, University of Florence

Massimo Reconditi*, University of Florence

Gabriella Piazzesi, University of Florence

Matteo Marcello*, University of Florence

Ilaria Morotti*, University of Florence

Report:

Introduction: The aim of the project is to investigate the molecular bases of heart regulation. Using X-ray diffraction on electrically paced intact trabeculae from the rat ventricle at ID02, we have shown that in the heart as in the skeletal muscle a dual filament mechanism of regulation of contraction operates: the Ca^{2+}-dependent thin filament activation, making the actin sites available for binding of the myosin motors, and the mechano-sensitivity of the thick filament (1,2), acting as a downstream mechanism that adapts to the load the recruitment of the myosin motors from their OFF state, in which they lie on the surface of the thick filament unable to split ATP and bind actin. In a heartbeat, unlike during skeletal muscle tetanic contraction, the rise of internal [Ca^{2+}] is transient and may not reach the level for full thin filament activation, thus the mechanical response depends on both the internal [Ca^{2+}] and the sensitivity of the thin filament to calcium (3,4), parameters that are under the control of several regulatory mechanisms among which the increase in sarcomere length (SL) (Length Dependent Activation, the cellular basis of the Starling Law of the heart (5) that relates the systolic performance to the degree of ventricular filling in diastole) and the phosphorylation of contractile, regulatory, and cytoskeletal proteins (6-8). Previous work on demembranated preparations suggested that the increase of SL and degree of phosphorylation of the Myosin Binding Protein-C (MyBP-C), an accessory protein that lies on the thick filament and can bind the thin filament with its N-terminus, can by themselves alter the regulatory state of the thick filament, switching motors ON at low Ca^{2+} (9). In contrast, our recent X-ray diffraction experiments on intact trabeculae from the rat heart have demonstrated that inotropic interventions able to double the systolic force like increase in SL from 1.95 to 2.22 μm or addition of isoprenaline (ISO) 10^{-7} M to the bathing solution (which increases the degree of phosphorylation of MyBP-C) do not affect any of the myosin based reflections related to the OFF state of the thick filament in diastole (10), as expected from an energetically well suited downstream mechanism as thick filament mechanosensing, which adapts the recruitment of myosin motors to the load during contraction (1). This idea is solidified by the recent finding in skeletal muscle that upon activation titin in the A band is able to control the orientation of myosin motors in relation to the load, by becoming 100 time stiffer (11). However, the classical view of the Starling has been recently reaffirmed in demembranated bundles dissected from the papillary muscle of Yucatan mini-pig showing that, at 22°C and without recovering the native lattice dimension thick filament is activated at low Ca^{2+} by SL increase from 2 to 2.2 μm (12). Considering the lack in that

experiment of the requirements for preserving the OFF state of myosin motors in demembranated fibres (13, 14) and that porcine ventricle has the same myosin isoform (β-cardiac myosin) as the human ventricle, we found compelling to solve the contradiction by applying our mechanical and X-ray diffraction methods to define thick filament activation on intact preparations from the minipig heart. The first fundamental steps pursued during LS 3148, were to: (i) define a suitable intact preparation from minipig heart; (ii) determine the native lattice dimension, which, after demenbranation can be recovered by the osmotic agent dextran.

Methods. *Intact preparation.* Hearts from 2-years old male minipigs are harvested, rinsed, and brought in cold cardioplegia solution to the ESRF. The suitable intact preparation has been identified in the trabecula from the left ventricle (a pillar like multicellular preparation of ~4 mm length and ~2 mm diameter). Trabeculae are dissected from the internal wall of the left-ventricle and mounted vertically in a thermo-regulated trough between the lever arms of the force and length transducers via T-shaped aluminium clips, continuously perfused with physiological solution bubbled with oxycarb (95% O_2, 5% CO_2) and electrically stimulated to produce twitches at 0.5 Hz by means of platinum electrodes (SL 2.0-2.2 μm; temp. 27-35°C). 5 ms 2D diffraction patterns are recorded with the EIGER2-4M detector (2068x2162 pixels, active area 155x162 mm^2) in the different protocols. To mitigate radiation damage from the high photon flux (10^{13} photons/s) at the ESRF-EBS, the trabecula is shifted axially by 200 μm between exposures. Fast shutters are used to limit the exposure to the acquisition time. 4.8 m camera length allows the spatial resolution adequate to resolve the fine structure of the reflections marking the state of the thick filament, up to the M6. 31 m camera length is used to record the SL.

Skinned preparation. Two-three weeks before the experimental session, at Florence laboratory, trabeculae are dissected from the left-ventricle of minipig heart and stored in skinning solution (50% relaxing solution, 50% glycerol) at -20°C before use at the ESRF. At the beamline, the glutaraldehyde-fixed ends of the trabecula are glued to T-shaped aluminium clips applied to both ends for attachment to the levers of the motor and force transducer in a thermo-regulated trough mounted vertically on the beam path. 2-6% dextran is added to the relaxing solution to compress the filament lattice toward the value in the intact preparation.

Results. The preliminary results indicate that the native lattice dimension of the minipig intact trabecula measured as the spacing of the 1,0 equatorial reflection at 35°C and 2.1 μm SL is $d_{1,0} \approx 37$ nm. By comparison with the lattice dimension in demembranated trabeculae at the same temperature and SL, we found that demembranation induces ~3% swelling in the lattice linear dimension (~5.5% in its area), that can be recovered with the addition of 2% osmotic agent dextran to the bath (Figure 1).

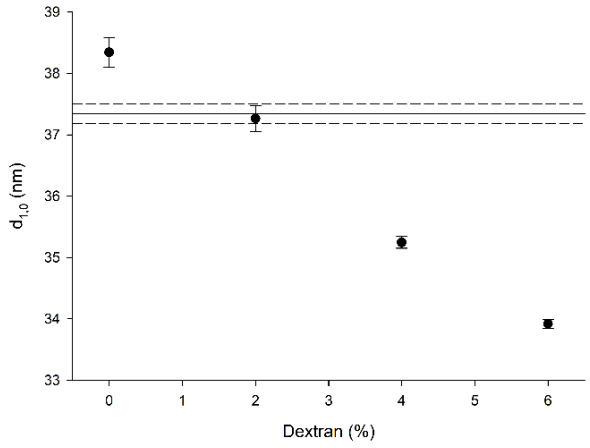

Figure 1. Spacing of the equatorial 1,0 reflection (d10), measured in demembranated trabeculae with different dextran concentrations (symbols, mean±SEM) and in intact trabeculae (horizontal continuos line: mean; dashed lines: ±SEM).

Conclusions. The results indicate that the intact trabecula from the porcine ventricle is a suitable preparation to investigate the structural dynamics of thick filament activation with the same β-cardiac myosin isoform as in the human ventricle. We establish the conditions for extending the study to demembrated preparations without altering the OFF state of myosin motors at low Ca^{2+} (13, 14). Recent results in demebranated preparations from porcine ventricle were likely influenced by low temperature and altered lattice dimension.

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