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THE INTERACTION BETWEEN NERVE AND MUSCLE
DURING METAMORPHOSIS
OF THE WAXMOTH
GALLERIA MELLONELLA

A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ZOOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
BY CLARE WARD
1977

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been begun or completed without the assistance and inspiration of many people. It is my pleasure to thank the following people for their advice, support and encouragement.

My supervisors Dr J. P. Leader and Dr J. A. MacDonald.

My friends among the staff and students of the Zoology Department.

The Technical staff of the department particularly Janet Osmond.

The staff of the Biological Sciences Library.

Dr J. Slack.

Clive Evans, Mike Barker, Sue Feary and Robin Watts.

My family.

Finally I particularly wish to acknowledge the continued help and support of David Schiel and to thank him for many hours of practical assistance including a critical reading of the manuscript.

ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with the interaction between the nervous system and muscles during the metamorphosis of the waxmoth *Galleria mellonella*.

The mesothoracic dorsolongitudinal muscles of the waxmoth arise from dorsal muscles in the larval mesothorax. Several of these dorsal larval muscles begin their transformation shortly before the larva-pupa ecdysis when they break down to be replaced by presumptive myoblasts. These appear to arise from the nuclei of the larval muscle. In the 60-72 hours pupa all three mesothoracic dorsolongitudinal (2d1) muscles are made up of the characteristic number of fibres and the first dorsolongitudinal muscle (d11) has its characteristic adult shape. From the 82 hour stage onwards the muscle fibres increase in diameter until the 168 hour stage when the muscles have achieved the adult condition.

Cautery of the first thoracic ganglion of the larva or section of the nerve cord between the first two thoracic ganglia leads to an adult in which most of the 2d1 muscles are absent. Only the dorsal part of 2d11 is present as normal.

Up until the 24 hours pupa cautery of the first thoracic ganglion has the same results as cautery of the larva. Cautery of the 25-30 hours pupa results in an adult in which the ventral fasciculae of 2d11 are represented by a few tiny muscle fibres. At this stage there is no sign of 2d12 or 2d13 except for a few small cells which are about the same size as presumptive myoblasts. Cautery of the 40 hours pupa leads to an adult in which all of the 2d11 fasciculae are present as smaller versions of the normal case. Up until the 108 hours pupa cautery of the first thoracic ganglion leads to an adult in which the 2d11 muscles

are smaller than normal.

An ultrastructural investigation of the small cells found in the denervated adult in the place of the 2d1 muscles showed these to be similar to presumptive myoblasts. It therefore appears that the nervous system affects the ability of the presumptive myoblasts both to differentiate and then to grow as normal.

Denervation of the fifth and sixth instar larvae by section of one of the connectives between the first two thoracic ganglia has the same effect on the operated side as denervation of the last larval instar. Cobalt staining of the nerve supplying the dorsal muscles of the larva shows that the motor neuron complement in both the fifth and seventh instar larvae is very similar. Cobalt staining of the nerve to the 2d1 muscles of the adult reveals cell bodies which are similar in position and size to those found in the larva.

The interaction between nerve and muscle during development in insects and vertebrates is discussed. From this work it is hypothesised that the nervous system affects muscle development by preventing mitosis in the presumptive myoblasts. It is also hypothesised that the adult muscles are served by the same motor neurons which were present in the later instars of the larva.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Chapter 1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter 2. GENERAL METHODS	10
2.2 Developmental Stages	11
2.3 Anaesthetisation and Dissection Procedures	12
2.4 Light Microscopy	12
2.5 Electron Microscopy	13
PART 1. DESCRIPTIONS OF THE MORPHOLOGY OF THE ADULT PTEROTHORAX AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MESOTHORACIC DORSOLONGITUDINAL MUSCLES OF THE ADULT WAXMOTH.	
Chapter 3. THE MORPHOLOGY OF THE SKELETAL AND MUSCLE SYSTEMS OF THE PTEROTHORAX OF THE ADULT WAXMOTH	14
3.1 Introduction	14
3.2 The Exoskeleton	15
3.2.1 Introduction	15
3.2.2 Results	18
3.2.2.1 The Mesothorax	18
3.2.2.2 The Metathorax	23
3.2.2.3 The Wing Base Structure	26
3.3 The Musculature of the Pterothorax	27
3.3.1 Introduction	27
3.3.2 Results	29
3.3.2.1 The Mesothorax	29
3.3.2.2 The Metathorax	33
Chapter 4. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MESOTHORACIC DORSOLONGITUDINAL FLIGHT MUSCLES	36
4.1 Introduction	36
4.2 Methods	38
4.3 The Larval Musculature	38
4.4 Results	39
4.5 Discussion	52
PART II. THE INFLUENCE OF THE LARVAL AND PUPAL NERVOUS SYSTEMS ON THE DEVELOPING MESOTHORACIC DORSOLONGITUDINAL MUSCLES OF THE ADULT WAXMOTH.	
Introduction to PART II	
	61
Chapter 5. THE INFLUENCE OF THE LARVAL NERVOUS SYSTEM ON THE ADULT MESOTHORACIC DORSOLONGITUDINAL MUSCLE	63
5.1 Introduction	63
5.2 Methods	64
5.3 Results	69
5.3.1 Cauterisation of Ganglia	69

Table of Contents continued,		PAGE
5.3.1.1	The First Thoracic Ganglion (T1G) Cauterised	69
5.3.1.2	The Second Thoracic Ganglion (T2G) Cauterised	73
5.3.1.3	The Third Thoracic Ganglion (T3G) Cauterised	76
5.3.1.4	The First Abdominal Ganglion (A1G) Cauterised	78
5.3.1.5	The Second Abdominal Ganglion (A2G) Cauterised	78
5.3.2	Section of the Ventral Nerve Cord	79
5.3.2.1	Connectives Between the First Two Thoracic Ganglia (T1//T2) Severed	79
5.3.2.2	Connectives Between the Second Two Thoracic Ganglia (T2//T3) Severed	80
5.4	Discussion	81
Chapter 6.	THE LARVAL MUSCLE CONSTITUENTS OF THE DL1 MUSCLE IN THE T1G DENERVATED ADULT	87
6.1	Introduction	87
6.2	Methods	88
6.3	Results	88
6.3.1	One Connective Between the First Two Thoracic Ganglia (T1/T2) Sectioned	88
6.3.2	Larval Constituents of the 2DL1 Muscle From T1/T2 Operated Larvae	89
6.4	Discussion	90
Chapter 7.	THE INFLUENCE OF THE PUPAL NERVOUS SYSTEM ON THE MESOTHORACIC DORSOLONGITUDINAL MUSCLES OF THE ADULT	91
7.1	Introduction	91
7.2	Methods	92
7.3	Results	93
7.3.1	The First Thoracic Ganglion (T1G) of the Pupa Cauterised	93
7.3.2	Cauterisation at the Level of the Second Ganglion (Mesothoracic Ganglion) in the 0-10 Hours Pupa	101
7.4	Discussion	103
Chapter 8.	THE ULTRASTRUCTURE OF CELLS OF ADULTS DERIVED FROM EARLY DENERVATED PUPAE.	108
8.1	Introduction	108
8.2	Methods	108
8.3	Results	109
8.4	Discussion	109

PART III. PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION OF THE NEURAL
INFLUENCE ON THE DORSOLONGITUDINAL FLIGHT MUSCLES
OF THE MESOTHORAX.

Chapter 9.	PARTIAL CHARACTERISATION AND DURATION OF THE NEURAL INFLUENCE ON THE MESOTHORACIC DORSOLONGITUDINAL MUSCLES	113
9.1	Introduction	113
9.2	Methods	115
9.3	Results	116
9.3.1	The First Wing Disc Removed on One Side	116
9.3.2	One Connective Between the First and Second Thoracic Ganglia Sectioned in the Fifth, Sixth and Early Seventh Instar Larvae	116
9.4	Discussion	117
Chapter 10.	IDENTIFICATION OF THE MOTOR NEURONS SUPPLYING THE DORSAL LONGITUDINAL MUSCLES OF THE MESOTHORACIC SEGMENT	119
10.1	Introduction	119
10.2	Methods	121
10.3	Results	121
10.3.1	The Morphology of the Nerve to the Larval and Adult Dorsal Longitudinal Muscles	121
10.3.2	Identity of the Motor Neurons Innervating the Dorsal Longitudinal Muscles of the Larval and Adult Waxmoths	122
10.4	Discussion	122
	GENERAL DISCUSSION TO THESIS	
Chapter 11.	GENERAL DISCUSSION	127
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	146
	APPENDIX	158

LIST OF TABLES

	PAGE	
Table 1.	The nomenclature of the adult thorax.	16
Table 2.	The sequence of events in the development of the mesothoracic dorsolongitudinal muscles.	39
Table 3.	A summary of results of the larval denervation experiments.	67
Table 4.	First thoracic ganglion cauterised: summary of results.	69
Table 5.	Second thoracic ganglion cauterised: summary of results.	73
Table 6.	Third thoracic ganglion cauterised: summary of results.	76
Table 7.	First abdominal ganglion cauterised: summary of results.	78
Table 8.	Connectives between the first two thoracic ganglia severed: summary of results.	79
Table 9.	Connectives between the second two thoracic ganglia severed: summary of results.	80
Table 10.	One connective between the first two thoracic ganglia sectioned: a summary of results.	88
Table 11.	A summary of dissection results for T1G cauterised pupae: explanation of categories and summary of dissection results.	94
Table 12.	Summary of histology results for T1G cauterised pupae	96
Table 13.	Summary of results for number of muscle nuclei per fibre versus stage of denervation.	103
Table 14.	A summary of results for the operation in which the first wing disc was removed on one side.	116
Table 15.	Summary of results for cobalt staining in fifth and seventh instar larvae and adults.	124

LIST OF FIGURES.

Figure 1.	Sagittal view of pterothorax.	After page 35
Figure 2.	Dorsal view of mesothorax.	" " "
Figure 3A.	Ventral view of mesothorax.	" " "
3B,C	Details of anterior wing margin.	" " "
Figure 4A	Lateral view of mesoscutum.	" " "
4B,C.	Tegula.	" " "
4D.	Lateral view of mesothorax.	" " "
4E.	Mesocoxa.	" " "
Figure 5A.	Ventral view of metathorax.	" " "
5B.	Dorsal view of metathorax.	" " "
Figure 6A.	Inner view of metathorax showing second phragma.	" " "
6B	Metacoxa	" " "
Figure 7A,B.	Muscles of the mesothorax.	" " "
Figure 8A,B.	Muscles of the mesothorax.	" " "
Figure 9A-C	Muscles of mesothorax.	" " "
9D,E.	Muscles of the metathorax.	" " "
Figure 10A-D.	Muscles of the metathorax.	" " "
Figure 11.	Dorsal longitudinal muscles of the larval mesothorax.	After page 60
Figure 12.	Figure showing muscle changes during metamorphosis.	" " "
Figure 13A.	T.S. of dorsal muscles of mesothorax of last instar larva.	" " "
13B.	T.S. of transforming of last instar (stage 3) larva.	" " "
13C.	T.S. of transforming muscles of 0 hours pupa.	" " "
13D.	T.S. of developing 2d11 muscle of 12 hours pupa.	" " "
Figure 14A.	L.S. of developing 2d11 and 2d12 muscles of 21½-24½ hours pupa.	" " "
14B	T.S. of developing 2d11 muscle of 25½-27½ hours pupa.	" " "
14C.	T.S. of developing 2d11 muscle of 32-34 hours pupa.	" " "
14D.	T.S. of developing 2d11 muscle of 36-38 hours pupa.	" " "
14E.	T.S. of developing 2d11 muscle of 60-72 hours pupa.	" " "

List of figures continued,

Figure 14F.	T.S. of developing 2d11 muscle of 82-87 hours pupa.	After page 60
14G.	T.S. of developing 2d11 muscle of 120-126 hours pupa.	
Figure 15A,B.	Electron micrographs of nuclei from muscle 7 of last instar larva.	" " "
Figure 16A.	Electron micrograph of nucleus from muscle 7 of last instar larva.	" " "
16B.	Electron micrograph showing myoblast and closely adjoining myofibre in 55-64 hours pupa.	
Figure 17.	Graph of increase in diameter of 2d11 fibres versus time.	" " "
Figure 18A.	Diagram to show sites for larval nerve cautery operations.	After page 86
18B.	Diagram to show site for larval wing disc cautery operation.	
Figure 19A.	T.S. of mesothorax in adult resulting from T1G cauterised larva.	" " "
19B.	T.S. of mesothorax in adult resulting from T2G cauterised larva.	
19C.	T.S. of mesothorax in adult resulting from larva in which the connectives between the first two thoracic ganglia were severed.	
19D.	T.S. of mesothorax in adult resulting from last instar larva in which one of the connectives between the first two thoracic ganglia was severed.	
19E.	T.S. of mesothorax in adult resulting from fifth instar larva in which one of the connectives between the first two thoracic ganglia was severed.	
19F.	T.S. of mesothorax in adult resulting from sixth instar larva in which one of the connectives between the first two thoracic ganglia was severed.	
Figure 20	Diagram to show sites for pupal nerve cautery operations.	After page 107
Figure 21A.	T.S. of mesothorax in adult resulting from pupa denervated at 0-10 hours.	" " "
21B.	T.S. of mesothorax in adult resulting from pupa denervated at 0-10 hours.	
21C.	T.S. of mesothorax in adult resulting from pupa denervated at 30-33 hours.	
21D.	T.S. of mesothorax in adult resulting from pupa denervated at 34-40 hours.	

List of figures continued,

- | | | |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Figure 21E. | T.S. of mesothorax in adult resulting from pupa denervated at 40-48 hours. | After page 107 |
| 21F. | T.S. of mesothorax in adult resulting from pupa denervated at 64-72 hours. | |
| 21G. | T.S. of mesothorax of normal adult. | |
| Figure 22A. | Electron micrograph of presumptive 2d13 myoblasts in 0-10 hours pupa. | After page 109 |
| 22B. | Electron micrograph of undifferentiated cells found in 2d13 position in adult resulting from pupa which was denervated at 0-10 hours. | |
| Figure 23. | Diagram showing innervation of dorsal muscles of larval mesothorax. | After page 124 |
| Figure 24. | Diagram of adult thoracic nervous system showing nerves which go to 2d1 muscles. | " " " |
| Figure 25A. | Diagram of neuronal cell bodies belonging to the nerve to the dorsal muscles of the larval mesothorax. | " " " |
| 25B. | Diagram of neuronal cell bodies belonging to the nerves to the 2d1 muscles of the adult mesothorax. | |