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Part 2

SCANNING ELECTRON MICROSCOPY/1981/II

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of
SCANNING ELECTRON MICROSCOPY,
RELATED TECHNIQUES,
and
APPLICATIONS
PART II**

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Scanning Electron Microscopy/1982 - April 25-30, Anaheim, CA, See p. xvi.
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Each paper in this volume contains a Discussion with Reviewers. This discussion follows the text and should be read with the paper. Each paper submitted to SEM, Inc. for publication is reviewed by at least three, up to an average of five, reviewers. The reviewers are asked to separate their comments from their questions. The comments are useful in determining the acceptability of the papers as submitted. Although the comments require no written response, in several cases, the authors have included responses to comments, or to questions phrased from, or based on, comments (either as a result of editorial suggestions or on the author's own initiative). Based on these comments approximately 15% of the submitted papers were not accepted for publication; while almost all of the others were asked to make changes involving from minor to major revisions.

The questions, for the most part, originate as a result of statements included in our cover letter accompanying each paper sent to the reviewers. The reviewers are asked to suppose they are attendees at a conference where this paper, as written, is being presented, and then ask relevant questions which would occur to them resulting from the presentation. From the questions so asked, some are not included with the published paper because the authors attended to them by text revisions. In some cases, editorial and/or space considerations may exclude inclusion of all questions asked by reviewers. The authors are asked to prepare their Discussion with Reviewers section in a camera-ready format in accordance with detailed instructions which they are sent by SEM, Inc. In some instances the authors edit the questions and/or combine several similar questions from different reviewers to provide one answer. While all efforts are made to check that the questions in the printed version faithfully follow the views of the specific reviewer, the editors apologize, if in some instances, the actual meaning and/or emphasis may have been changed by the author.

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If you disagree with the results, conclusions or approaches in a paper, please send your comments, as a Letter to Editor, typed in a column format (each column is 4-1/8 inches wide and 11-1/2 inches long; i.e., 10.5 by 29.3 cm.). Your comments along with author's response will be published in a subsequent issue.

The editor gratefully thanks the authors and reviewers (see p. ix-xii) for their contributions, invites your comments on ways to improve this procedure, and seeks qualified volunteers to assist with reviewing of papers in the future (see p. xii).

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editorial Board; SEM Inc.	iii
Discussion with Reviewers, Errata	iv
Reviewers List, Call for Reviewers	ix
DEMONSTRATION OF INTRACELLULAR STRUCTURES BY HIGH RESOLUTION SCANNING ELECTRON MICROSCOPY K. Tanaka	1
COLLOIDAL GOLD: A CYTOCHEMICAL MARKER FOR LIGHT AND FLUORESCENT MICROSCOPY AND FOR TRANSMISSION AND SCANNING ELECTRON MICROSCOPY M. Horisberger	9
INTRACELLULAR LOCALIZATION OF ANTIGENS WITH BACKSCATTER MODE OF SEM USING PEROXIDASE-LABELED ANTIBODIES A.L. Hartman and P.K. Nakane	33
MONOCLONAL ANTIBODIES AS IMMUNOSPECIFIC PROBES FOR VIRUS AND CELL SURFACE ANTIGEN LOCALIZATION WITH THE UNLABELED ANTIBODY HEMO- CYANIN BRIDGE: A REVIEW M.A. Gonda, C.V. Benton, R.J. Massey and A.M. Schultz	45
ONE TO ONE CORRELATION OF HISTOLOGICAL AND HISTOCHEMICAL LIGHT MICROSCOPY WITH SCANNING ELECTRON MICROSCOPY L.R. Sweney and B.L. Shapiro	63
SEM IMAGES OF BLOCK FACES, CUT BY A MINIATURE MICROTOME WITHIN THE SEM - A TECHNICAL NOTE S.B. Leighton	73
THE ULTRAPLANING TECHNIQUE FOR SEM SPECIMEN PREPARATION D.B. Jones	77
MOUNTING OF BIOLOGICAL MICROSAMPLES ON PROTEIN COATS FOR TaOTO NON-COATED SCANNING ELECTRON MICROSCOPY A. Ohtsuka, T. Murakami, S. Irino and A.L. Jones	83
SAFETY IN THE SEM LABORATORY - 1981 UPDATE (Tutorial Paper) G.N. Bance, V.C. Barber and J.A. Sholdice	87
BACKSCATTERED ELECTRON IMAGING OF HUMAN LEUKOCYTES D. Soligo, N. Lampen and E. de Harven	95
CARBOHYDRATE HISTOCHEMISTRY OF SURFACE EPITHELIUM OF RAT TRACHEA; BACKSCATTER AND X-RAY IMAGING S.M. Bodner, P. Ingram, S.S. Spicer, A. Spock and J.D. Shelburne	105
COMPARISON OF SELECTIVE STAINING OF FUNGI IN PARAFFIN SECTIONS BY LIGHT MICROSCOPY, SEM AND BEI E.L. Berman, A. Laudate and H.W. Carter	115
A HIGH VACUUM PHOTOELECTRON MICROSCOPE FOR THE STUDY OF BIOLOGICAL SPECIMENS O.H. Griffith, G.F. Rempfer and G.H. Lesch	123

*See page viii

HIGH RESOLUTION CONFOCAL SCANNING LIGHT MICROSCOPY (CSLM) AS APPLIED TO LIVING BIOLOGICAL SPECIMENS (Review Paper) G.J. Brakenhoff, J.S. Binnerts and P. Barends	131
THE APPLICATION OF SCANNING ELECTRON MICROSCOPY TO THE STUDY OF THE CYTOSKELETON OF CELLS IN CULTURE (Review Paper) P.B. Bell, Jr.	139
HIGH RESOLUTION SEM OF CULTURED CELLS: PREPARATORY PROCEDURES (Tutorial Paper) E. Arro, V.P. Collins and U.T. Brunk	159
RESPONSE OF HAMSTER TRACHEA IN ORGAN CULTURE TO MOUNT ST. HELENS VOLCANO ASH L.J. Schiff, M.M. Byrne, S.F. Elliott, S.J. Moore, K.V. Ketels and J.A. Graham	169
MORPHOLOGICAL STUDIES OF ACTIVATION OF PERITONEAL AND ALVEOLAR RAT MACROPHAGES AND OF PHAGOCYTOSIS BY THESE CELLS M.L. Saint-Guillain, B. Vray, J. Hoebeke and R. Leloup	179
CHANGES ASSOCIATED WITH THE GROWTH STIMULATION OF <u>IN VITRO</u> CULTIVATED SPHEROIDS OF HUMAN GLIOMA CELLS (Review Paper) V.P. Collins, B.-A. Fredriksson and U.T. Brunk	187
SURFACE TOPOGRAPHY AND OTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF NON-TRANSFORMED AND CARCINOGEN TRANSFORMED C3H/10T $\frac{1}{2}$ CELLS IN MITOSIS, AS REVEALED BY QUANTITATIVE SCANNING ELECTRON MICROSCOPY K. Feren and A. Reith	197
MORPHOLOGY OF TEMPERATURE-SENSITIVE STRAINS OF VIRAL-TRANSFORMED 3T3 MOUSE FIBROBLASTS <u>IN VITRO</u> AS DETERMINED BY SEM AND STEM R.G. Ulrich, R.G. Frederickson and D.C. Quinlan	205
SURFACE FEATURES OF NORMAL AND NEOPLASTIC HUMAN ESOPHAGEAL CELLS <u>IN VIVO</u> AND <u>IN VITRO</u> K.M. Robinson, L. Maistry and P. Evers	213
PRENATAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENDOCARDIUM: A REVIEW (Review Paper) T. Pexieder	223
ORIGIN AND MIGRATION OF CUSHION TISSUE IN THE DEVELOPING HEART (Review Paper) T.P. Fitzharris	255
ENDOCARDIAL CUSHION TISSUE DEVELOPMENT: STRUCTURAL ANALYSES ON THE ATTACHMENT OF EXTRACELLULAR MATRIX TO MIGRATING MESENCHYMAL CELL SURFACES (Review Paper) R.R. Markwald, J.M. Krook, G.T. Kitten and R.B. Runyan	261
EPICARDIAL COVERING OVER MYOCARDIAL WALL IN THE CHICKEN EMBRYO AS SEEN WITH THE SCANNING ELECTRON MICROSCOPE (Review Paper) Y. Shimada, E. Ho and N. Toyota	275
MYOCARDIAL FILOPODIA DURING EARLY HEART DEVELOPMENT F.J. Manasek and R.R. Kulikowski	281
STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF EXTRACELLULAR MATRIX PRIOR TO THE MIGRATION OF CEPHALIC NEURAL CREST CELLS (Review Paper) D.L. Bolender, W.G. Seliger, R.R. Markwald and P.R. Brauer	285
EPITHELIAL CELL-CELL AND SUBSTRATE CONTACTS (Review Paper) J. Overton, R. Meyer and E.A.G. Chernoff	297

TISSUE INTERACTIONS DURING AXIAL STRUCTURE PATTERN FORMATION IN AMPHIBIA	(Review Paper)	307
G.M. Malacinski, B.W. Youn, and A. Jurand		
PATTERNS IN QUENCH-FROZEN, FREEZE-DRIED, BLOOD PROTEINS		319
I. Talstad, H. Dalen, P. Scheie and J. Røli		
SIMULTANEOUS USE OF EDS, WINDOWLESS EDS, BE AND SE DETECTORS AND DIGITAL REAL-TIME LINE SCANNING FOR THE X-RAY MICROANALYSIS OF FROZEN-HYDRATED BIOLOGICAL SPECIMENS	(Review Paper)	327
A.T. Marshall		
QUANTITATIVE ELECTRON PROBE X-RAY MICROANALYSIS OF BIOLOGICAL BULK SPECIMENS	(Tutorial Paper)	345
G.M. Roomans		
IDEAL STANDARDS FOR QUANTITATIVE X-RAY MICROANALYSIS OF BIOLOGICAL SPECIMENS	(Review Paper)	357
W.C. de Bruijn		
QUANTITATIVE EPMA OF BIOLOGICAL TISSUE USING MIXTURES OF SALTS AS STANDARDS	(Review Paper)	369
E.-R. Krefting, G. Lissner, H.J. Höhling		
FOCUS: A FORTRAN PROGRAM FOR THE QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF X-RAY SPECTRA FROM THIN BIOLOGICAL SPECIMENS	(Review Paper)	377
H. Fuchs and W. Fuchs		
OBSERVATIONS ON ELECTRON PROBE X-RAY MICROANALYSIS COMPARED TO OTHER METHODS FOR MEASURING INTRACELLULAR ELEMENTAL CONCENTRATION	(Review Paper)	395
N.K.R. Smith and I.L. Cameron		
X-RAY MICROANALYSIS OF TISSUE CULTURE CELLS IN SEM AND STEM	(Review Paper)	409
K. Zierold		
MITOCHONDRIAL MATRIX GRANULES, DENSE PARTICLES AND THE SEQUESTRATION OF CALCIUM BY MITOCHONDRIA	(Review Paper)	419
T. Barnard		
SODIUM AND CALCIUM REGULATION AND THE ROLE OF THE CYTOSKELETON IN THE PATHOGENESIS OF DISEASE: A REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS	(Review Paper)	435
B.F. Trump, I.K. Berezesky and P.C. Phelps		
ELECTRON PROBE MICROANALYSIS OF FROZEN DRIED SECTIONS OF HEART MUSCLE PREPARED USING LOW TEMPERATURE TECHNIQUES		455
M.F. Wendt-Gallitelli and H. Wolburg		
PROGRESSION OF ION MOVEMENTS DURING ACUTE MYOCARDIAL INFARCTION IN THE RAT. AN X-RAY MICROANALYSIS STUDY		463
A.R. Osornio-Vargas, I.K. Berezesky and B.F. Trump		
X-RAY MICROANALYSIS OF THE AVIAN SHELL GLAND AND EGGSHELL		473
T. Makita		
LOCALIZATION OF GLUCOSINOLATES IN ROOTS OF <u>SINAPIS ALBA</u> USING X-RAY MICROANALYSIS		481
X. Wei, G.M. Roomans, L. Seveus and K. Pihakaski		
THE DISTRIBUTION AND RELATIVE CONCENTRATION OF POTASSIUM IN THE ROOT- TIPS OF <u>LEMNA MINOR</u> L. ANALYSED BY LOW-TEMPERATURE X-RAY MICROANALYSIS		489
P. Echlin, C. Lai and T.L. Hayes		

**X-RAY MICROANALYSIS OF METALS IN ALGAE - A CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY
OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION (Review Paper)**

M. Pedersen, G.M. Roomans, M. Andrén, A. Lignell,
G. Lindahl, K. Wallström and A. Forsberg

499

ABOUT SCANNING ELECTRON MICROSCOPY, INC.

510

SUBJECT INDEX

511

AUTHOR INDEX

514

RELATED PAPERS IN SEM/1981/III

515

SEM/1982, PROGRAMS; ORGANIZERS AND MEMBERS OF EDITORIAL BOARD

516

***EXPLANATION OF THE TYPES OF PAPERS IN THIS VOLUME:**

TUTORIAL: Presentation of established material in teaching format emphasizing techniques.

REVIEW: A review of the chosen subject with emphasis on author's own work, placing it in context with relevant literature and putting the topic in perspective.

Volunteers to prepare tutorial, review papers or bibliographies should contact
Om Johari (see page ii).

DEMONSTRATION OF INTRACELLULAR STRUCTURES BY HIGH RESOLUTION
SCANNING ELECTRON MICROSCOPY

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Abstract

Three dimensional structure of intracellular elements were observed by the Osmium-DMSO-Osmium method and by a field emission SEM equipped with a high resolution device.

(1) Rough endoplasmic reticulum: Their cisternae were closely opposed to form a lamellar system of flat cavities and they were supported at regular interval by fine thread-like structures. They were also connected to the cell membrane with similar threads.

(2) Golgi complex: The Golgi cisternae of the serous cell of rat submandibular gland showed a bell-shape fitting one above another. The most characteristic structure of this Golgi complex was its foot-like tubuli which projected to all sides from the periphery of the cisternae.

(3) Synaptic vesicles: The synaptic vesicles of rat retina were observed at the direct magnification from 100,000 to 200,000 fold with the field emission SEM. The vesicles ranged from 30 to 50nm in diameter, and their shapes were also various, such as spherical, cocoon-like and kidney-shape. The synaptic vesicles were studded with several granules, about 10 nm in diameter.

In addition, the fine structure of mitochondria and centrioles were examined.

Introduction

Generally speaking, it has been considered that the scanning electron microscope (SEM) is unsuitable for researching cellular fine structure, because it has lower resolving power than that of the transmission electron microscope (TEM). The SEM with high resolving power whose spot size is strongly decreased but has a strong enough probe current to provide contrast in the picture, is useful for researching the intracellular structures. As techniques to achieve high resolution in SEM, the low-loss method¹⁻³ and SEM in TEM method⁴ have been reported. Nagatani and Okura⁵ also devised a method to obtain high resolution by reducing the working distance and adding an electrically biased electrode next to the specimen in a field emission SEM.

As to specimen preparation techniques, on the other hand, two effective methods for revealing intracellular structures have been developed in recent years. The first method is "the freeze-fracture, thaw fix technique" devised by Haggis and Phipps-Todd.⁶ Haggis and Bond⁷ could successfully observe the chromatin fibers of chicken erythrocytes by this method. The second method is "the Osmium-DMSO-Osmium method" (O-D-O method) devised by us.⁸ This method intends to remove the excess cytoplasmic matrices, which obscure cell organelles, from the frozen-cracked surfaces of previously fixed cells by a dilute osmic acid solution. With this method we could clearly disclose many kinds of intracellular structures such as Golgi complex, endoplasmic reticulum, mitochondria and others.

In this paper, three dimensional structure of intracellular elements, studied by the O-D-O method and by a field emission SEM equipped with a high resolution device, are described.

Materials and Methods

As materials the rat pancreas, submandibular glands, retina and hamster liver were used. Immediately after excision, the small tissue fragments (1x1x5mm) were treated by the O-D-O method.

1) The specimens were fixed at 4°C for 60-90 minutes with 1% osmium tetroxide in M/15 phosphate buffer solution at pH 7.4.

2) After having been rinsed with the buffer solution, the specimens were successively immersed in

KEY WORDS: Osmium-DMSO-Osmium method, rough ER, Golgi complex, mitochondria, synaptic vesicles, centrioles, high resolution device.

15, 30, 50% dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO) for 30 minutes each.

3) The specimens were frozen on a metal plate chilled with liquid nitrogen and cracked into two by a razor blade and a hammer. We have used a freeze cracking apparatus (TF-1, EIKO Engineering Co. Ltd., Japan) for this procedure which has been very useful for our purpose.

4) The cracked pieces were immediately placed in 50% DMSO solution for thawing.

5) After having been rinsed in the buffer solution, they were transferred to 0.1% osmium tetroxide solution buffered at pH 7.4 with M/15 phosphate buffer solution and left standing at 4°C for 24-72 hours. This procedure was very effective for removing the cytoplasmic matrices.

6) The specimens were fixed again for 1 hour in 1% osmium tetroxide solution. They were treated with 2% tannic acid solution about 12 hours and then 1% osmium tetroxide solution for 1-2 hours. This procedure is necessary for enhancing the electric conductivity of specimens.

7) They were dehydrated through graded alcohol series. After treatment with isoamyl acetate, they were dried in a critical point dryer (HCP-2, Hitachi Koki Co. Ltd., Japan) with dry ice.

8) Dried specimens were coated with platinum in an ion-coater with rotating stage (VX-10R, EIKO Engineering Co. Ltd., Japan).

9) The metal coated specimens were observed with a field emission SEM.

Scanning Electron Microscope Used

The field emission SEM (Hitachi HFS-2ST) with a high resolution device constructed by Nagatani and Okura⁵ was used. The sample holder is equipped with a 45° pre-tilted pole 2mm in diameter, on which a sample is attached, and a cone-shape electrode which effectively guides the secondary electrons. The electrode can be supplied with a positive potential from 0 to 400V, when the sample holder is set on the stage in the specimen chamber. The sample holder itself can be independently biased negatively through the inlet terminal, which is normally used for absorbed current measurement. In the present study, positive 200V potential was supplied to the electrode and negative 10V potential to the sample holder. With this device, the working distance was reduced from 5 to 0mm and consequently the spot size of the electron beam decreased (on calculation) from 2 to 1.45nm.

In addition, the SEM has an objective lens with a lower pole piece with an enlarged bore diameter of 7mm for keeping the movement of the specimen holder on X and Y axis (2mm each) at the working distance of 0 mm.

Results

Rough endoplasmic reticulum

Cisternae of the rough endoplasmic reticulum were closely opposed to form a lamellar system of flat cavities. These cisternae were linked to each other at regular interval with fine thread-like structures (Fig. 1). They were fixed also to the cell membrane with similar threads (Fig. 2). The thread-like structures are about 10-15nm in diameter. The feature of these thread-like structures

remain to be examined.

The outer surface of rough endoplasmic reticulum was studded with numerous ribosomes. The ribosomes were observed as a combined body of two subunits of unequal size, and often formed a polysome (Fig. 3). The size of the ribosomes were 20-25nm in diameter. In general, ribosomes observed by SEM are considerably larger than those reported by TEM studies (15nm). Kirschner et al.⁹ reported ribosomes to be 20-25nm in diameter in their SEM study on isolated mouse liver nuclear envelope. The difference in size between SEM and TEM observations probably depends upon the metal coat around the ribosomes of the SEM specimens.

Golgi complex

We previously reported that the Golgi complex of the rat epididymal cell consisted of three elements. These are the Golgi stacks with numerous small vesicles, the plexus of anastomosing tubuli with associated granules of various sizes, and large vacuoles which might be secondary lysosomes.¹⁰ In the present study, the Golgi complex of the serous cell in rat submandibular gland was observed. Its construction differed considerably from that of epididymal cells.

The Golgi cisternae of the serous cell appeared to be formed from a number of bell-shapes fitting one above another. The number of the cisternae was 4-5, less than that of the epididymal cell. The most characteristic structure of this Golgi complex was its foot-like tubuli which projected to all sides from the periphery of the cisternae (Fig. 4). Some of the feet from the cisternae were gathered at the lower part of the Golgi complex as shown in Figure 6. They rarely anastomosed and did not form a plexus. Vacuoles which were found in the plexus of anastomotic tubuli of epididymal cells (probably lysosomes) were rarely ever observed in this gathering tubuli, but sometimes the end of a cisterna was expanded to form a vacuole (Fig. 5). On the other hand, some feet expanded from the cisterna and joined to the endoplasmic reticulum closely located around the Golgi complex (Fig. 6). The surface of the Golgi stack was studded with Golgi vacuoles, about 50nm in diameter, but their number was considerably less than that of the epididymal cell (Fig. 5). No secondary lysosome and multivesicular body were observed around the Golgi complex.

As described above, the constitution of the Golgi complex in the serous cell of submandibular glands is much different from that of the epididymal cell.

Mitochondria

For identification of mitochondria from other intracellular structures, the mitochondrial cristae must be clearly disclosed.^{11,12} The O-D-O method is very useful for this purpose. The mitochondrial cristae or tubuli are easily observed *in situ* in the specimens prepared by this method.

Recently Masunaga¹³ in our department studied the mitochondria of rabbit heart muscle cells by our method and reported the three dimensional structure of them. He showed that the outer and inner membranes that enclose the mitochondria were sometimes separately recognized. The outer membrane was a smooth contoured with a continuous limiting membrane, and the inner one generally ran

Demonstration of intracellular structures by SEM.



Fig. 1 Rough endoplasmic reticulum. The cisternae are supported at regular intervals with fine thread-like structures (arrow).

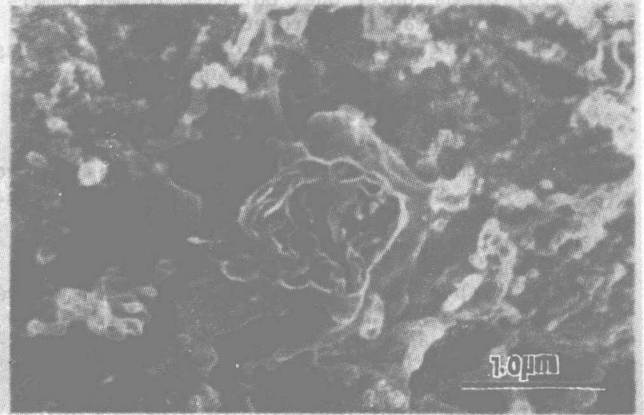


Fig. 4 Golgi complex of a serous cell in rat submandibular gland.

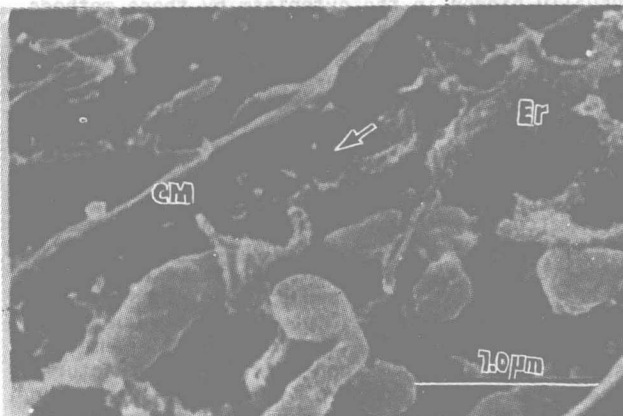


Fig. 2 Rough endoplasmic reticulum (Er). They are connected to the cell membrane (CM) with fine thread-like structures (arrows).

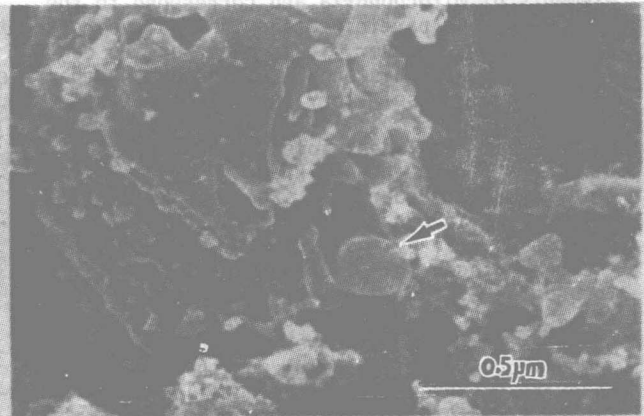


Fig. 5 Golgi complex of a serous cell. On the surface of the Golgi stack, many vesicles are seen (asterisk) and the end of a cisterna expanded to form a vacuole (arrow).



Fig. 3 A polysome observed on a rough endoplasmic reticulum (P). A ribosome consists of two sub-units (arrow).

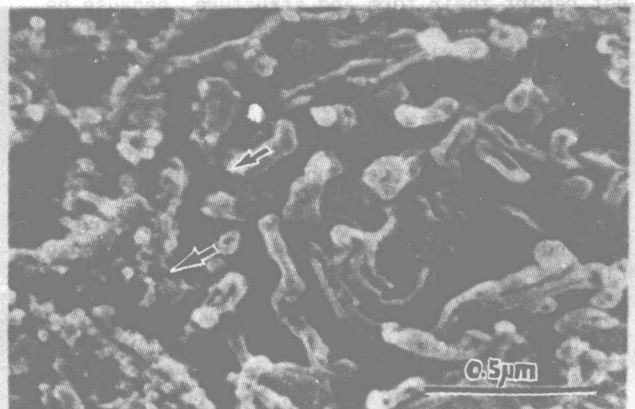


Fig. 6 The lower part of the Golgi complex in a serous cell. Many tubuli are gathering. Some of them lead to the endoplasmic reticulum (arrow).

parallel to the outer one, but also formed numerous narrow cristae that projected into the interior of the organelle. The mitochondrial membranes formed two compartments. By SEM observation, the outer compartment was not usually distinguished and consequently the limiting membrane of mitochondria and cristae were seen as thick plates. The inner compartment, on the other hand, appeared empty, since the mitochondrial matrix was removed. On the surface of the inner compartment, especially on the cristae, numerous small particles, about 20nm in diameter, were observed. They were usually in spherical shape but sometimes they were mushroom-shape.

Kirschner and Rusli,¹⁴ in their study of isolated mitochondria, reported that the inner mitochondrial membrane had a granular surface and these granules might represent respiratory enzyme complexes perhaps the ATPase particles. We could also see mitochondrial cristae or tubuli clearly by the O-D-O method (Fig. 7) and could observe the small particles on the cristae or tubuli (Fig. 8). Thus we assume that such particles are common elements of mitochondria and correspond to the inner membrane particles seen in negative contrast preparations. However, it is necessary to confirm in the future by histochemical methods whether the particles are respiratory enzyme complexes or not.

Centrioles

Detection of centrioles under SEM was very difficult because nobody knew the shape the centrioles showed under SEM. Recently Mitsuhashi and Inoue¹⁵ in our department found them in a rabbit plasma cell by the O-D-O method. According to their findings, the centrioles were situated at the center of the Golgi region beside the nucleus and appeared as a cylindrical body with small granules in its cavity. We could also find the same structure at the Golgi region of a rat lymphocyte. Unfortunately their detailed three dimensional structure remains to be examined.

Synaptic vesicles

As materials for higher resolution SEM, synaptic vesicles were used. In 1978, Furusawa¹⁶ studied the synaptic vesicles of cat Purkinje and spinal motor nerve cells with SEM. However, he did not report their form and structure, because he could not obtain micrographs of high magnification which permits visualization of their detailed configuration.

In the present study the synapses of the outer plexiform layer in rat retina were examined. The outer plexiform layer is the region of synaptic interplay between photoreceptor cells, bipolar and horizontal cells. The synaptic terminals of the photoreceptor cells are large pyramidal endings containing synaptic vesicles, synaptic ribbons and mitochondria.

The synaptic vesicles of this region were observed at the direct magnification of 100,000 - 200,000 fold with the field emission SEM equipped with the high resolution device. Many transmission electron microscopic studies have reported that the synaptic vesicles showed, in general, spherical shape and their size was 40-65nm in diameter. By our SEM observation, the vesicles had various sizes, from 30 to 50nm in diameter, and their shapes were also various, such as spherical, cocoon-like and kidney-shape (Fig. 9).

The synaptic vesicles had attached to them with several small granules, about 10nm in diameter, on their surfaces. With these granules, the vesicles were often joined together. Granules of similar size could be observed on the cytoplasmic surface of the synaptic membrane also (Fig. 10). Though it is uncertain yet whether both granules have the same features or not, we assume that the synaptic vesicles are probably attached to the synaptic membrane with these granules. In the present paper, details of the synaptic ribbon are omitted.

Discussion

For observing intracellular structures by SEM, it is indispensable to have a good method for revealing intracellular structures (i.e. for removing the surrounding matrix material) and a high resolution SEM to permit their adequate visualization. As to such preparation techniques, many kinds of cryofracture and cracking methods have been devised,¹⁷⁻²³ but it was practically impossible to expose the intracellular structures usually hidden in the cytoplasm by these methods alone. In recent years, three methods for revealing intracellular structures have been reported. The first is ion-etching method.²⁴⁻²⁸ When this method was applied to the cracked surfaces of cells, the intracellular structures were clearly disclosed,²⁹ because moderate ion-etching was quite effective in exposing membranous structures from the cytoplasmic matrix which was much less etch resistant. Unfortunately, the ion-etching method has shortcomings. It often produces artificial cone figures which fail to reflect the intrinsic structures properly. The second method is the freeze-fracture, thaw fix technique devised by Haggis and Phipps-Todd.⁶ In this method, soluble protein is washed out from the fractured surface of unfixed materials at the thawing stage.

The third method is the O-D-O method. This method is characterized by the use of fixation with a slightly hypotonic osmium tetroxide solution and a maceration procedure for eliminating cytoplasmic matrices with a dilute osmium tetroxide solution. It is well known in light microscopic technique that dilute solutions of some metal salts such as osmium tetroxide, chromium trioxide and potassium dichromate are effective in macerating the cytoplasm. Though any one of these reagents may be used for the maceration, osmium tetroxide was chosen in this study, because it does not cause any remarkable damage to the fine structures. When the specimens are left standing 24-72 hours in the dilute osmium tetroxide solution, the excess cytoplasmic matrices are successfully removed from the cracked surfaces of fixed cells. The effect of this maceration procedure is strengthened by the fixation with a slightly hypotonic osmic acid solution. This fixation is also important in disclosing the intracellular structures. When isotonic osmic acid solution is used for fixation, the cytoplasm is incompletely removed by the subsequent maceration procedure. Now it becomes a question whether the treatment with the hypotonic fixative produces some artifacts or not. Fortunately we did not find any significant artifacts in the specimens prepared by this method. Thus we think that the O-D-O method is very