

Rapid Alteration of the Phosphoproteome in the Moss *Physcomitrella patens* after Cytokinin Treatment

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Received April 7, 2006

Cytokinin hormones are crucial regulators of a large number of processes in plant development. Recently, significant progress has been made toward the elucidation of the molecular details of cytokinin that has led to a model for signal transduction involving a phosphorylation cascade. However, the current knowledge of cytokinin action remains largely unknown and does not explain the different roles of this hormone. To gain further insights into this aspect of cytokinin action and the inducible phosphorelay, we have produced the first large-scale map of a phosphoproteome in the moss *Physcomitrella patens*. Using a protocol that we recently published (Heintz, D.; et al. *Electrophoresis* **2004**, *25*, 1149–1159) that combines IMAC, MALDI-TOF-MS, and LC-MS/MS, a total of 172 phosphopeptide sequences were obtained by a peptide de novo sequencing strategy. Specific *P. patens* EST and raw genomic databases were interrogated, and protein homology searches resulted in the identification of 112 proteins that were then classified into functional categories. In addition, the temporal dynamics of the phosphoproteome in response to cytokinin stimulation was studied at 2, 4, 6, and 15 min after hormone addition. We identified 13 proteins that were not previously known targets of cytokinin action. Among the responsive proteins, some were involved in metabolism, and several proteins of unknown function were also identified. We have mapped the time course of their activation in response to cytokinin and discussed their hypothetical biological significance. Deciphering these early induced phosphorylation events has shown that the cytokinin effect can be rapid (few minutes), and the duration of this effect can be variable. Also phosphorylation events can be differentially regulated. Taken together our proteomic study provides an enriched look of the multistep phosphorelay system mediating cytokinin response and suggests the existence of a multidirectional interaction between cytokinin and numerous other pathways.

Keywords: phosphoproteomics • *Physcomitrella patens* • cytokinin • phosphorylation

Introduction

Phosphorylation is one of the most common and well-studied posttranslational protein modifications. Recent studies have demonstrated that cytokinin signaling exploits reversible phosphorylation modifications of proteins for signal transduction.^{1–3} However, the current knowledge of cytokinin signaling does not explain all of the pivotal roles of this phytohormone in plants. Indeed cytokinin is known to promote growth, cell division, chloroplast division, senescence delay, nutrient mobilization, and mediation of a number of light-regulated processes such as de-etiolation and chloroplast maturation.^{1,2} For the most part, signal propagation for these well established cytokinin effects remains poorly understood.

In recent years, it has been shown that the moss *Physcomitrella patens* (*P. patens*) provides a suitable model to study cytokinin signaling since it is one of the few plant systems where cytokinin-induced differentiation can be studied at the single-cell level.^{4–6} Additionally *P. patens* is unique among plants in its ability to incorporate DNA very precisely at pre-defined genomic loci (homologous recombination), allowing gene knock-outs similar to the ones performed in yeast and embryonic mouse cells.^{7–10} Furthermore, *P. patens* is one of the oldest land plants and has not changed much during 450 million years and therefore contains some unique genes that have likely been lost in other plant species during their evolution.^{4,8} Finally, *P. patens* can be cultivated in bioreactors providing large-scale production under highly standardized conditions that involve tight control of plant growth and differentiation, thus allowing proteomic studies in a reproducible manner.^{11,12}

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62 Immobilized metal affinity chromatography (IMAC) using
63 Fe(III) as the ligand is highly useful for the enrichment of
64 phosphopeptides from complex mixtures.^{13–15}

65 IMAC has enabled mass-spectrometry-based phosphopro-
66 tein and phosphoproteome analysis in a variety of organisms,
67 including yeast, humans, and, to a lesser extent, plants.^{16–19,20–22}

68 However, large scale mapping of phosphoproteins gives only
69 a partial picture of signaling dynamics. Therefore, temporal
70 studies of early phosphorylation events induced specifically in
71 response to a stimulus are of particular interest from a
72 biological point of view. For example, in a recent report, 81
73 proteins belonging to the human epithelium growth factor
74 (EGF) signaling pathway were identified.¹⁶ A recent study done
75 in yeast described 139 phosphorylated proteins that were
76 differentially regulated in response to a mating pheromone.²³
77 Plant global dynamic studies of phosphorylation-based early
78 signaling events in response to a stimulus have not been widely
79 published to date. Here, in this report, we have produced the
80 first large-scale map of phosphorylated proteins and a temporal
81 dynamics profile of cytokinin signaling by deciphering the early
82 phosphorylation events that occur during the first 15 min after
83 cytokinin stimulation in *P. patens*. We have previously reported
84 a method for large-scale phosphopeptide purification from
85 complex protein mixtures in *P. patens*, combining RP-HPLC,
86 IMAC, alkaline phosphatase treatment, MALDI-TOF-MS, LC-
87 MS/MS, and peptide de novo sequencing.²⁴ The classical
88 approach for peptide identification, which consists of scoring
89 the mass spectrum obtained by LC-MS/MS against a database
90 of all candidate peptides to detect significant matches, requires
91 that the genome be accurately sequenced and all protein
92 coding genes annotated.²⁵ Since the *P. patens* genome has not
93 yet been fully sequenced and is only available as expressed
94 sequence tags (EST) and a set of raw genomic data, a de novo
95 sequencing strategy was necessary to allow successful protein
96 identification. This strategy involves the manual treatment of
97 the peptide fragmentation LC-MS/MS mass spectra to deduce
98 a complete or partial peptide sequence tag.²⁶

99 The peptide sequences determined this way are then sub-
100 mitted to a BLAST program that allows the interrogation of
101 existing *P. patens* EST and raw genomic data. The ESTs were
102 then used as query to interrogate the NCBI protein database
103 in order to identify proteins by homology searches. Thus, in
104 this study, we have produced the first large-scale map of
105 phosphorylated proteins from a whole *P. patens* cell lysate.
106 Additionally, we analyzed the temporal changes of phospho-
107 rylation that occur within a time course of 15 min after
108 cytokinin stimulation. We identified 13 proteins which were
109 not previously known to be targets of early phosphorylation
110 events in response to cytokinin stimulation. The biological
111 significance of these 13 proteins as well as the mechanism by
112 which cytokinin mediated phosphorelay may occur is described
113 and discussed in this paper.

114 Results and Discussion

115 Starting from a whole *P. patens* protein tryptic digest, a total
116 of 179 peptide sequences were obtained by de novo peptide
117 sequencing using LC-MS/MS spectra (Table 1, Supporting
118 Information). The combination of MALDI-TOF-MS profiling
119 and alkaline phosphatase treatment highlights the specificity
120 of our IMAC-based phosphopeptide isolation strategy. Indeed
121 among the 179 peptides identified, 172 (representing 96.1%)
122 responded positively to alkaline phosphatase treatment and
123 therefore were considered to be phosphorylated peptides (Table

1, Supporting Information). Only 7 peptides (representing 3.9%) 124
of the 172 peptides were not responsive to alkaline phosphatase 125
treatment and thus considered to be nonphosphorylated 126
peptides. We could not determine conclusively from our 127
experiments whether the 7 peptides that did not respond to 128
alkaline phosphatase treatment bound nonspecifically to the 129
IMAC matrix, lost their phosphate groups prior to alkaline 130
phosphatase treatment, or displayed resistance toward enzymatic 131
dephosphorylation.²⁷ From the 172 phosphorylated pep- 132
tides, 78 were unambiguously monophosphorylated (45.3%) 133
and 94 were multiphosphorylated peptides (54.7%). Surpris- 134
ingly, the number of multiphosphorylated peptides enriched 135
was higher than the monophosphorylated peptides, and this 136
result seems to be a characteristic of IMAC–Fe3+ principle, 137
since several authors have observed this phenomenon in 138
different phosphoproteomics studies.^{23,28} The use of the *P.* 139
patens single phosphopeptide tag for the determination of the 140
P. patens ESTs was revealed to be largely successful as reported 141
earlier.²⁴ Thus, in the present study, among the 179 peptide 142
tags, we succeed with 169 peptide sequences using a tBLASTn 143
approach in the determination of the ESTs (Table 1, Supporting 144
Information). However, some limitations exist: for example, 145
BLAST searches failed when MSMS spectra were not sufficiently 146
informative and consequently peptide sequences obtained by 147
de novo sequencing were too short (Table 1 “No BLAST”, 148
Supporting Information). 149

As a way to highlight the presence of phosphopeptides and 150
assign phosphorylation sites on the different fractionated 151
phosphopeptides, we attempted direct sequencing of the 152
phosphopeptides by MALDI-TOF-MS/MS and LC-MS/MS, 153
LIFT, and CID in the reflectron positive and negative mode. 154
The negative mode was characterized by a high decrease of 155
the global signal intensity (data not shown). The MS and MS/ 156
MS spectra obtained in the positive mode were characterized 157
by the neutral loss of 98 or 80 Da from the simply charged 158
precursor characteristic of phosphoserine and phosphothreo- 159
nine peptides (data not shown). These diagnostic ions are used 160
to unambiguously distinguish phosphorylated peptides from 161
nonphosphorylated peptides.^{29,31} However, in our study, the 162
phosphopeptides MS/MS spectra obtained were often not 163
sufficiently informative to enable manual reconstruction of the 164
peptide sequence (bold amino acid sequences Table 1 and 165
Supporting Information, Table 1). Indeed it is well-known that 166
the increased acidity of the phosphate group generally results 167
in decreased ionization efficiency of a peptide.^{30,31} We therefore 168
sequenced the phosphorylated peptides after having been 169
dephosphorylated by alkaline phosphatase treatment by MALDI- 170
TOF-MS/MS and LC-MS/MS, and thereby we obtained larger 171
peptide sequences (Table 1 and Figure 6 in the Supporting 172
Information). However, this strategy needed some additional 173
verifications to control the peptides that were fragmented by 174
LC-MS/MS, following a MS and MS/MS priority sequencing 175
list (see Materials and Methods section) correspond really to 176
the peptides which we identified as being phosphorylated by 177
MALDI-TOF-MS (peptides whose mass shifted following phos- 178
phatase treatment). Therefore, we controlled systematically 179
visually the LC–UV and MS run profiles and checked the 180
precursor ions which have been selected for MSMS. Addition- 181
ally, we compared the amino acid sequences obtained by 182
MALDI-TOF-MS, MS/MS LIFT, and CID with the amino acid 183
sequences obtained by LC-MS/MS. Thus, all of the amino acids 184
obtained by phosphopeptide fragmentations using MALDI- 185
TOF–MS/MS and LC-MS/MS could be found in the corre- 186

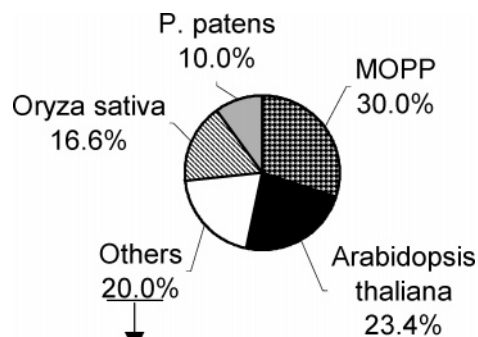
Table 1. List of the 13 *P. patens* Proteins Responsive to Cytokinin Treatment at Different Time Points after Stimulation

| HPLC fraction ^a | MS mass (m/z) [M+H] ⁺ | protein description | phosphopeptide (partial) sequence obtained by de novo sequencing ^b | species | GI number (NCBI) | E value ^c | <i>P. patens</i> EST/contig/raw genomic sequence no. ^d | phosphorylation state cytokinin + cytokinin – | | phosphorylation previously determined |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|---|--|-----------|---------------------------------------|
| 2 min after stimulation | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | 2171.0 | MOPP 1 | YSKPHGWP | <i>Physcomitrella patens</i> | | | AW739428 | 3 | ≠3 | |
| 3 | 2155.1 | MOPP 2 | S*YAEWAEEGK | <i>Physcomitrella patens</i> | | | PP_17759_C1 | 2 (8X increase) | 2 | |
| 3 | 1668.7 | MOPP 3 | VYDAGDGAK | <i>Physcomitrella patens</i> | | | PP001075088R | 1 | ≠1 | |
| 3 | 1214.6 | rubisco large subunit | DDY*IEKDR | <i>Physcomitrella patens</i> | 14861091 | 0.0 | | 2 | ≠2 | |
| 5 | 1475.2 | serine hydroxymethyltransferase | VAEYFDR | <i>Pisum sativum</i> | 169158 | 1e-168 | PP_176_C5 | 1 | ≠1 | |
| | | | | <i>Arabidopsis thaliana</i> | 17979462 | 1e-49 | BJ591938 | | | |
| | | | | <i>Pisum sativum</i> | 169158 | 2e-30 | BJ173131 | | | |
| 4 | 1460.4 | sedoheptulose-1,7-bisphosphatase | FEET*LY*GDSR | <i>Arabidopsis thaliana</i> | 15451178 | 4e-73 | PP_SD_143_C1 | 1 | ≠1 | |
| 4 min after stimulation | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 1118.6 | MOPP 4 | DTDLAQAFR | <i>Physcomitrella patens</i> | | | PP_4706_C3 | 1 | ≠1 | |
| 2 | 2361.0 | MOPP 5 | YAPENESA-GGAGYR | <i>Physcomitrella patens</i> | | | not found | 3 | ≠3 | |
| 3 | 1290.6 | MOPP 6 | TAS*LGDR | <i>Physcomitrella patens</i> | | | PP_14772_C1 | 1 | ≠1 | |
| 3 | 2155.1 | MOPP 2 | S*YAEWAEEGK | <i>Physcomitrella patens</i> | | | PP_17759_C1 | 2 (8X increase) | 2 | |
| 9 | 2042.0 | methionine synthase | IS*EEDY*DK | <i>Hordeum vulgare</i> | 68655500 | 0.0 | PP_304_C2 | 2 (3–6X increase) | 2 | |
| 6 min after stimulation | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | 877.5 | carbonic anhydrase isoform 1 | DSALFDK | <i>Gossypium hirsutum</i> | 4754913 | 1e-29 | PP011003042R | 1 (5X increase) | 1 | |
| | | | | | | 8e-41 | PP004069260R | | | |
| | | | | | | 7e-23 | PP_403_C10 | | | |
| 9 | 2042.0 | methionine synthase | IS*EEDY*DK | <i>Hordeum vulgare</i> | 68655500 | 0.0 | PP_304_C2 | 2 (3–6X increase) | 2 | |
| 7 | 1471.6 | glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate dehydrogenase | TFAEVQNQAFR | <i>Sphagnum cuspidatum</i> | 18076108 | 5e-88 | PP004107162R | 2 | ≠2 | (63) |
| | | | | <i>Marchantia polymorpha</i> | 18076100 | 5e-80 | PP_325_CB5 | | | |
| | | | | <i>Spinacia oleracea</i> | 2529370 | 1e-132 | PP_73_CB11 | | | |
| 15 min after stimulation | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | 2042.0 | methionine synthase | IS*EEDY*DK | <i>Hordeum vulgare</i> | 68655500 | 0.0 | PP_304_C2 | 2 (3–6X increase) | 2 | |
| 1 | 1718.6 | oxygen-evolving enhancer protein 2 | FLDEVSY*LFGK | <i>Arabidopsis thaliana</i> | 6692695 | 3e-55 | BI437128 | 2 | ≠2 | (64) |
| | | | | <i>Solanum tuberosum</i> | 1771778 | 1e-74 | PP_1032_C7 | | | |
| | | | | <i>Arabidopsis thaliana</i> | 6692695 | 2e-70 | PP_370_C1 | PP_370_C1 | PP_370_C1 | PP_370_C1 |
| 2 | 1198.7 | MOPP 7 | GDEVPGH | <i>Physcomitrella patens</i> | | | BJ605312 | ≠ 1 | 1 | |
| | | | | | | | PP004083078R | | | |
| | | | | | | | PP_48_CB5 | | | |
| | | | | PP_48_CB5 | PP_48_CB5 | PP_48_CB5 | BJ161355 | | | |

^a The numbers 1–10 correspond to the HPLC fraction which contains the phosphopeptide analyzed. ^b The partial peptide sequences resulted from de novo sequencing using nano LC-MS/MS M spectra. In bold are the sequences obtained by MALDI-TOF-MS/MS using LIFT and CID fragmentation mode on the phosphorylated peptides. ^c The expected value of the *P. patens* ESTs, contigs, or genomic data. The peptide sequence tag has been used to interrogate the *P. patens* EST, contig, and genomic available raw sequences databases (<http://www.cosmoss.org/>, ftp://ftp.ncbi.nih.gov/pub/TraceDB/Physcomitrella_patens/). The phosphorylated peptide is indicated by the mono charged peptide mass [M+H]⁺. The proteins were identified by homology searches on NCBI. The protein database was interrogated using as query the identified *P. patens* EST, contig, and genomic available raw sequences data. The gene info identifier (GI) number of the protein from the species identified on NCBI. The phosphorylated and dephosphorylated states are shown and have determined by MALDI profiling before/after alkaline phosphatase treatment. The phosphorylated proteins for which the phosphorylation state involves a stronger recruitment of that protein for a particular phosphorylation state in response to cytokinin are labeled in parentheses by the factor of increase/decrease. MOPP “Moss Phosphorylated Protein” represent *P. patens* peptides from which the corresponding EST, contig, and raw genomic sequences shared no homology to any organism in the current nonredundant protein database maintained by the NCBI. The identified phosphopeptides have been evaluated by NETPHOS 2.0 (www.cbs.dtu.dk/services/Net-Phos) and phosphorylated amino acids are labeled (*).

187 sponding dephosphorylated peptide sequences (Supporting
188 Information, Table 1). These precautions were taken to regard
189 the list of phosphorylated peptides given in this study as
190 validated.

Proteomic Analysis Validates *P. patens* as a Rich Source 191
of Moss Phosphorylated Proteins (MOPP). In the present 192
study, we identified 112 proteins (Figure 1). As a result, we 193
could show that 30.0% of *P. patens* ESTs/contig or raw genomic 194



| | |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| Hyacinthus orientalis | 2.5% |
| Solanum tuberosum | 1.87% |
| Nicotiana plumbaginifolia | 1.25% |
| Spinacia oleracea | 1.25% |
| Arachis hypogaea | 0.62% |
| Caenorhabditis elegans | 0.62% |
| Chlamydomonas reinhardtii | 0.62% |
| Cicer arietinum | 0.62% |
| Hevea brasiliensis | 0.62% |
| Triticum aestivum | 0.62% |
| Lycopersicon esculentum | 0.62% |
| Medicago truncatula | 0.62% |
| Mesembryanthemum crystallinum | 0.62% |
| Petroselinum crispum | 0.62% |
| Pinus pinaster | 0.62% |
| Pisum sativum | 0.62% |
| Phaseolus vulgaris | 0.62% |
| Prunus dulcis | 0.62% |
| Solanum demissum | 0.62% |
| Zantedeschia aethiopica | 0.62% |
| Zea mays | 0.62% |
| Nicotiana tabacum | 0.31% |
| Cryptococcus neoformans | 0.31% |
| Daucus carota | 0.31% |
| Gossypium hirsutum | 0.31% |

Figure 1. Distribution of *P. patens* phosphorylated proteins by homology searching. The proteins listed in Table 1 of the Supporting Information have been classified by their homology to other species. 30.0% were *P. patens* proteins that shared no homology to any organism in the current National Centre for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) nonredundant protein database. These proteins were therefore named MOPP “MOss Phosphorylated Protein”. 23.4% of the *P. patens* ESTs, contigs, or raw genomic data were homologous to *Arabidopsis thaliana* proteins; 16.6% were homologous to *Oryza sativa* proteins; 20% were homologous to 25 additional organisms termed “others” and listed in the table below the pie chart.

195 sequences have no homology to any other organism in the
 196 current publicly accessible databases. Thus, we named these
 197 proteins MOPP for “MOss Phosphorylated Proteins”. Different
 198 predictive bioinformatic tools have been tested, but these have
 199 not permitted us to conclude any hypothetical function for
 200 these proteins. Thus, we can only propose to date that these
 201 proteins are phosphorylated in *P. patens*. We are aware that
 202 we cannot exclude the fact that similar MOPPs may exist in
 203 other organisms different from *P. patens* but that are not yet
 204 present in the current protein databases and therefore would
 205 not have shown up as hits during our searches. We can also
 206 not exclude that MOPPs are specific to *P. patens*. Indeed this
 207 hypothesis of “moss specificity” can be supported and might
 208 not be excluded since *P. patens* is one of the oldest land plants
 209 and has not changed much during 450 million years of
 210 evolution as reported by different authors.^{32–34} Therefore, *P.*

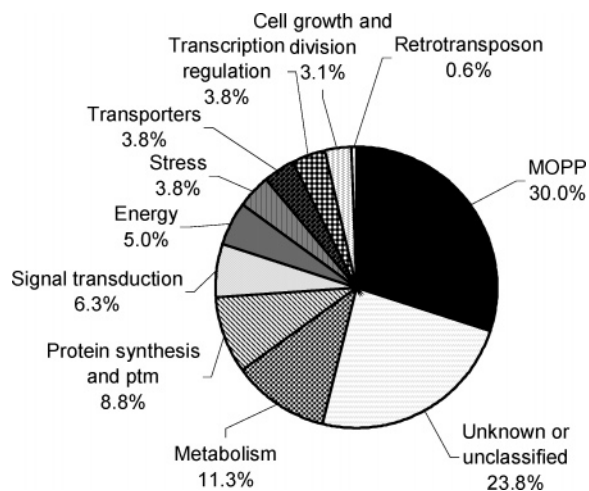


Figure 2. Distribution of *P. patens* phosphorylated proteins by putative similar function. The proteins listed in Table 1 of the Supporting Information have been grouped into different functional categories. The protein function assignment was made according to homology search results in NCBI and completed by InterPro (<http://www.ebi.ac.uk/interpro/>) and Pfam (<http://www.sanger.ac.uk/Software/Pfam/index.shtml>). MOPP “MOss Phosphorylated Protein” represent *P. patens* proteins from which the corresponding EST, contig, and raw genomic sequences shared no homology to any organism in the current nonredundant protein database maintained by the NCBI.

211 *patens* should contain unique genes that have been lost in other
 212 plant species during their evolution.^{32–34} Indeed, of the 25 000
 213 estimated *P. patens* genes, 5000 may be unknown expressed
 214 genes unique to that organism.^{32–35} Our protein homology
 215 search data revealed that the *P. patens* proteins are largely
 216 homologous to higher plants (Figure 1), especially to *Arabi-*
 217 *dopsis thaliana* (23.4%). Rice appeared as the second most
 218 homologous species, whereas 20% of the *P. patens* phospho-
 219 proteome is homologous to a group of 25 different species from
 220 which 23 are different plants. Additionally, the results of protein
 221 functional classification attempted in our study provided
 222 information that the *P. patens* phosphoproteome contains a
 223 set of proteins shared with different higher plants but with
 224 unknown function (23.8%; Figure 2). Interestingly, most of the
 225 homologue proteins are not known to be phosphorylated in
 226 the different species; therefore, we cannot conclude if phos-
 227 phosphorylation is conserved from one species to the other. The
 228 new information provided here is that these *Physcomitrella*
 229 proteins are phosphorylated, and it would be interesting in
 230 the future to know if similar proteins are also phosphorylated in
 231 other species. Nevertheless, this result strongly suggests that
 232 plant communication circuits based on phosphorylation events
 233 remain complex and largely unknown. Our study has indicated
 234 that phosphorylation events in *P. patens* are largely involved
 235 with metabolism (11.3%, Figure 2). We can hypothesize that
 236 protein phosphorylation plays an important role in the regula-
 237 tion of metabolic activity in *P. patens*. *Physcomitrella* is known
 238 to contain an extremely high percentage of genes involved in
 239 metabolism (73%) compared to other plants which might be
 240 explained by a lot of alternative metabolic pathways not known
 241 from seed plants.³⁶

Cytokinin-Induced Phosphorylation Events Are Rapid and Nearly Complete in 15 min. Up to now, temporal changes in phosphorylation have not been studied in the cytokinin signaling pathway. Here we report phosphopeptide profiling in

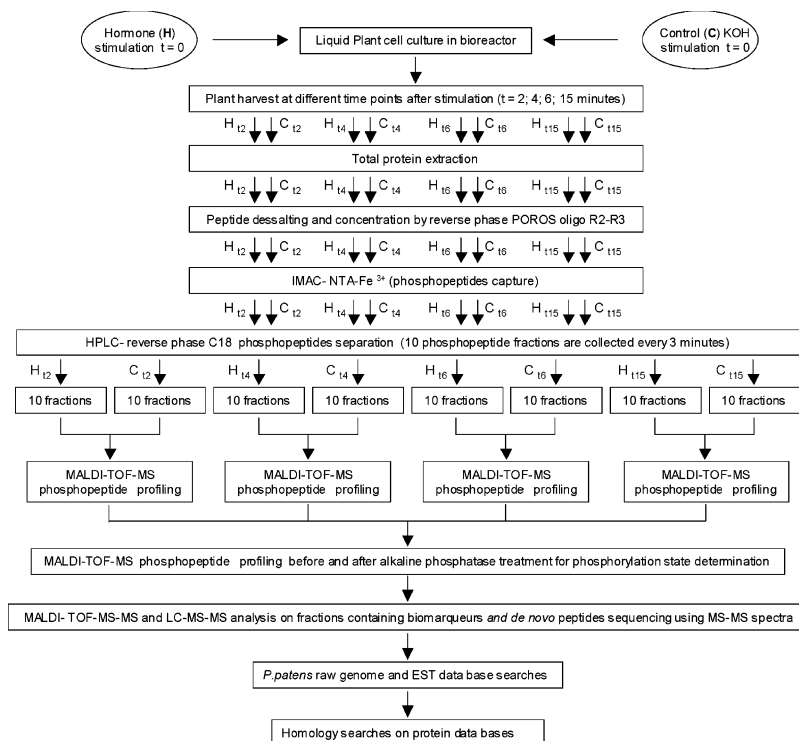


Figure 3. Schematic illustrating the strategy used for phosphopeptides profiling and identification and characterization of phosphorylated proteins responsive to cytokinin.

246 response to cytokinin at different time points after the stimulation (Figure 3). MALDI-TOF-MS peptide profiling exhibits
 248 several advantages such as automation, speed, sensitivity,
 249 reproducibility, and relative quantitation at the low femtomole
 250 level.³⁷ MALDI-TOF-MS phosphopeptide profiling and relative
 251 quantitation in combination with alkaline phosphatase treat-
 252 ment permitted to identify 13 phosphopeptides specifically
 253 altered in response to cytokinin (Figure 4). One significant
 254 outcome of our study is that the number of phosphopeptides
 255 responsive to cytokinin was elevated immediately (two min-
 256 utes) after hormone stimulation, reached a maximum 4 min
 257 after the stimulation, and decreased to a minimum 15 min
 258 after stimulation. This data shows that cytokinin signal propa-
 259 gation mediated through phosphorylation events can occur extremely
 260 rapidly in *P. patens*. In line with that observation are some
 261 known cytokinin effects that have been reported recently which
 262 are all rapid, e.g. 3 min after cytokinin addition to a plant
 263 suspension culture. These include the release of NO molecules
 264 indicating involvement of a rapid NO-dependent signaling
 265 system.³⁸ Signal “run-on” experiments revealed that cytokinin
 266 induced the expression of the *Arabidopsis* response regulator
 267 (ARR) genes after 5 min and that maximal expression was
 268 detected after 10 min, accompanied by rapid termination of
 269 this effect after 20 min.³⁹ Recently, a genome-wide expression
 270 profiling has shown that 15 min after cytokinin treatment on
 271 *Arabidopsis* seedlings 82 genes were responsive to the hor-
 272 mone.⁴⁰ It is therefore conceivable that protein phosphorylation
 273 mediated by cytokinin must be rapid since several authors
 274 reported gene expression under cytokinin control within 15 min
 275 after the cytokinin pulse.^{39,40}

276 **Thirteen Proteins Respond to Cytokinin Stimulation by**
 277 **Temporal Changes in Their Phosphorylation Pattern.** The 13
 278 phosphopeptides altered in response to cytokinin action
 279 permit us to identify and characterize 13 proteins responsive

280 to cytokinin (Supporting Information, Table 1). Interestingly,
 281 none of these proteins were previously known to be linked to
 282 cytokinin signaling. This new finding is evidence that the
 283 cytokinin-induced phosphorelay involves more proteins than
 284 the current view of the phosphorelay proposes. Our result is
 285 in line with reports of several authors indicating the existence
 286 of an alternative mechanism of cytokinin coexisting with the
 287 canonical phosphorelay of the two-component system medi-
 288 ating cytokinin signaling.^{40–42} Interestingly, none of the known
 289 members of the two-component cytokinin signaling pathway
 290 were identified in our work. This result is not surprising and
 291 was anticipated since all proteins from the two-component
 292 pathway are phosphorylated on histidine and aspartic acid
 293 residues⁴² that are labile in acidic or basic conditions.⁴³ In our
 294 proteomic approach, we made no special effort to modify
 295 conditions to preserve phosphate groups that may have resided
 296 on histidine or aspartic acid amino acids.

297 **Some of the Proteins Responsive to Cytokinin Are Plastid**
 298 **Proteins.** Our study showed that among the 13 proteins
 299 responsive to cytokinin 4 are known members of metabolic
 300 pathways or key enzymes of the chloroplast energy conversion
 301 machinery (rubisco large subunit, sedoheptulose-1,7-bispho-
 302 sphatase, carbonic anhydrase isoform 1, oxygen-evolving en-
 303 hancer protein 2; Figure 5). This result shows that cytokinin
 304 affects phosphorylated proteins of the *P. patens* plastome. The
 305 fast response of plastid phosphorylated proteins to a cytokinin
 306 signal is very important information. To our knowledge, this
 307 is the first report indicating that several plastid proteins can
 308 rapidly be altered at the level of phosphorylation in response
 309 to cytokinin. Numerous reports show that plastids are primary
 310 targets of cytokinin action.^{42,44,45} Indeed it is largely acknowl-
 311 edged that cytokinins control chloroplast biogenesis and dif-
 312 ferentiation.^{42,44,45} In a recent report, the fast response of plastid
 313 genes (within 15 min) to cytokinin was shown, and the authors

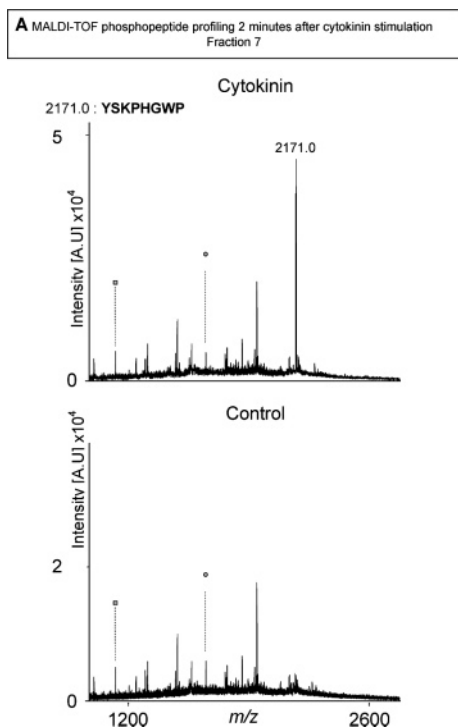


Figure 4. MALDI-TOF-MS phosphopeptide profiling of cytokinin stimulated and control fractions. (A and B—M Supporting Information) These figures show phosphopeptide patterns at different time points after cytokinin stimulation (2, 4, 6, and 15 min) as compared to the corresponding control (nontreated fractions). The phosphopeptides were purified by IMAC and the phosphopeptide mixture was separated by RP-HPLC into 10 fractions. These 10 fractions were collected and then a comparison was made between cytokinin treated and the corresponding control fractions. The MS spectra represent the phosphopeptides that were altered in response to cytokinin stimulation and their corresponding monoisotopic masses $[M+H]^+$ are indicated. Ring and square labeled peaks represent the peptides used as internal standards for the relative quantisation ($[M+H]^+ = 1645.8076$; $[M+H]^+ = 1125.4941$).

314 hypothesize that the plastids may be partially autonomous with
 315 respect to their cytokinin response.⁴⁰ A specific route of
 316 phosphorelay cytokinin action for chloroplasts might therefore
 317 also be an explanation for rapid signal transfer to plastids we
 318 observe in our study. Among the different chloroplast proteins
 319 responsive to cytokinin and identified in our work are some
 320 that are involved in light signaling (rubisco large subunit,
 321 oxygen evolving enhancer protein 2, sedoheptulose-1,7-bis-
 322 phosphatase). The possible involvement of these key enzymes
 323 of the chloroplast energy-conversion machinery in organelle
 324 division and cellular differentiation has been discussed previ-
 325 ously.⁵ The cross-talk between cytokinin and light signaling
 326 pathways has been reported by several authors.^{46–48} Recently,
 327 it has been shown that elevated cytokinin doses can even mimic
 328 the phenotype of constitutive photomorphogenic (de-etiolated)
 329 mutants⁴⁹, i.e., mutants that display a light-grown morphology
 330 in darkness. A recent report has shown that the response
 331 regulator 4 protein (ARR4), a possible mediator of cytokinin
 332 action, interacts directly with phytochrome B and stabilizes its
 333 active form.⁴⁸ In summary, physiological experiments and
 334 mutant analyses suggest a link between hormone and light
 335 signaling pathways; however, the mechanistic basis of this
 336 cross-talk is still poorly understood.^{47,48} A plastid carbonic

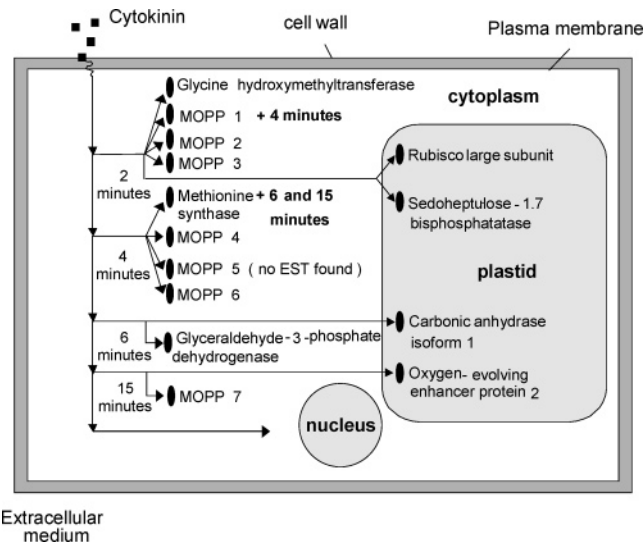


Figure 5. Schematic illustrating the localization in the cell of 13 *P. patens* phosphoproteins that were identified and determined to be responsive to cytokinin at different time points after stimulation (2, 4, 6, and 15 min). The rings indicate the cellular localization of the phosphoprotein based on the information provided by the function of the corresponding homologous protein and different bioinformatics prediction tools. MOPP “MOss Phosphorylated Protein” represents *P. patens* peptides from which the corresponding EST, contig, and raw genomic sequences shared no homology to any organism in the current nonredundant protein database maintained by the NCBI.

anhydrase was identified as a cytokinin target protein (Table 337
 1) indicating that cytokinin action is linked to CO₂ metabolism. 338
 Recently, it was reported that increases of the CO₂ concentra- 339
 tion in cotton leaves have the effect of increasing cellular 340
 cytokinin concentration and an elevated photosynthetic activity 341
 was observed. It was also hypothesized that elevated CO₂ 342
 stimulates cells to divide.⁵⁰ Additionally CO₂ is known to be a 343
 substrate for Rubisco (involved in photosynthetic activity). It 344
 is therefore conceivable that cytokinin action on carbonic 345
 anhydrase has a consequence in the variation of cellular CO₂ 346
 flux leading to an increase of photosynthetic activity. Taken 347
 together, our data showing key chloroplast proteins as targets 348
 of cytokinin action suggests that cytokinin can regulate plant 349
 photosynthetic activity and energy-conversion machinery by 350
 controlling the activity of plastid proteins by modifying their 351
 phosphorylation states and levels. 352

Cytokinin Action Is Complex. The different functional 353
 categories of the cytokinin target proteins (Figure 5) highlight 354
 the multiple pathways in which cytokinin action takes place 355
 in *P. patens*. We have previously described proteins implicated 356
 in light signaling and photosynthesis, including some proteins 357
 involved in different metabolisms (glycine hydroxymethyltrans- 358
 ferase, methionine synthase, glyceraldehyde 3-phosphate de- 359
 hydrogenase), and glycine hydroxymethyltransferase and meth- 360
 ionine synthase, which both are enzymes in the primary 361
 metabolism involved in amino acid synthesis.^{51–53} A link 362
 between cytokinin and amino acid synthesis has to our 363
 knowledge not been previously described. Regulation of protein 364
 synthesis and turnover is important in plants and may be 365
 expected to be relevant for cytokinin function, although little 366
 experimental evidence has been published to date.⁵⁴ Since cell 367
 growth is promoted by cytokinin as an accompaniment to 368
 biomass production, we can hypothesize that it also has an 369

370 effect on protein turnover and therefore a possible involvement
371 with these key enzymes. A glyceraldehyde 3-phosphate dehy-
372 drogenase (GAPDH) cytokinin target protein was identified in
373 our work (Table 1). This enzyme is involved in sugar metabo-
374 lism and displays diverse nonglycolytic functions depending
375 upon its subcellular location.^{55–57} The relationship between
376 cytokinin and sugar metabolism has been reported by different
377 authors, although the full physiological relevance of this role
378 remains unclear.^{38,58} Recently, it was shown that plants with
379 impaired cytokinin receptors CRE1 and AHK3 display increased
380 sugar sensitivity. The authors suggested the existence of a
381 bidirectional antagonist interaction between sugars and cyto-
382 kinins.⁵⁸ In addition, it is plausible that GAPDH is a target of
383 cytokinin action as a way to regulate glycolytic activity by
384 modifying the phosphorylation state of GAPDH.

385 Our study has shown that several moss phosphorylated
386 proteins (MOPP) are also cytokinin target proteins (Figure 5).
387 Due to the absence of homologous proteins in the current
388 databases, we are not able to conclude that MOPPs are
389 exclusively involved in a specific *P. patens* cytokinin signaling
390 pathway. However, we cannot exclude that other species share
391 MOPP proteins as it was described earlier in this paper. These
392 results indicate that a large part of cytokinin target proteins
393 remains a mystery with regard to their function.

394 Additionally, we observed from MALDI-TOF-MS phospho-
395 peptide profiling that cytokinin can affect phosphorylation in
396 different ways (Figure 4).

397 Indeed we observed at the peptide level that a change of
398 phosphorylation state in response to cytokinin stimulation can
399 occur (Figure 4). Thus, for 10 of the 13 proteins responsive to
400 cytokinin, the effect is characterized by a change in the
401 phosphorylation/dephosphorylation state in response to the
402 hormone pulse, (see e.g., MOPP, 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, glycine
403 hydroxymethyltransferase, methionine synthase, glyceralde-
404 hydes-3-phosphate dehydrogenase (Table 1)). The change of
405 phosphorylation state is characterized by peaks present exclu-
406 sively in phosphopeptide profiles of the cytokinin-treated
407 fractions compared to the absence of corresponding peaks in
408 the control phosphopeptide profiles and vice versa.

409 Additionally, we have also observed that cytokinin can affect
410 the phosphorylated to nonphosphorylated ratio of particular
411 peptides. For these peaks, the *m/z* value is the same in control
412 and cytokinin phosphopeptide profiles but the intensity varies
413 between cytokinin treated and control phosphopeptide profiles
414 (see e.g., MOPP 2, the methionine synthase, and the carbonic
415 anhydrase protein, Table 1). Our results show that temporal
416 changes in phosphorylation can be differentially modulated by
417 cytokinin. However, at this level, we cannot exclude that the
418 limits of sensitivity of our approach, explain that diminished
419 phosphorylation below a certain threshold cannot be deter-
420 mined.

421 Finally, an additional degree of complexity in the cytokinin
422 mechanism of phosphorylation modulation has been high-
423 lighted in our study. Indeed the variable duration of cytokinin
424 phosphorylation modulation on its different target proteins was
425 determined (Table 1, Figure 5). For 11 of the 13 proteins
426 responsive to cytokinin, the duration of the signal does not
427 exceed 2 min following activation. At this stage, we cannot
428 exclude that the duration of the signal is prolonged and remains
429 under the limit of detection. Additionally, due to the numerous
430 samples to analyze simultaneously, we have not studied
431 phosphorylation events in response to cytokinin before 2 min
432 or after 15 min. However, for MOPP 2 and the methionine

synthase, the cytokinin effect is maintained several minutes 433
(Figure 5). Taken together these multiple levels of phosphoryl- 434
ation modulation/regulation contribute to the complex network 435
of mechanisms that characterize cytokinin action. 436

In conclusion, our proteomic study has provided the first 437
large-scale phosphoprotein map in *P. patens* and therefore 438
shows a view of the global organization of the phosphopro- 439
teome. 440

Indeed the data presented here demonstrates that the 441
seedless *P. patens* phosphoproteome is composed largely of 442
proteins homologous to higher plants. It suggests that the 443
organization of the phosphoproteome in *P. patens* might have 444
a similarity to that of higher order plants, but unfortunately, a 445
comparative study made in a higher plant has not yet been 446
done. Our data also shows that the cytokinin-activated phos- 447
phoproteome is largely composed of proteins with unknown 448
function as well as of proteins not present in the current protein 449
database (MOPP). Clearly, this finding shows that the role and 450
importance of phosphorylation in the plant cell remains poorly 451
understood. Additionally, we have taken particular interest to 452
study the global dynamics of the phosphoproteome in response 453
to cytokinin stimulation. We devised a proteomic strategy to 454
enable global, time-dependent analysis, and we studied the 455
early phosphorylation events that occur in response to cyto- 456
kinin stimulation within a period of 15 min. One significant 457
outcome of this study is the finding of 13 novel early cytokinin- 458
responsive target proteins that were not previously known to 459
be associated with cytokinin action. This result indicates that 460
cytokinin action may not exclusively involve phosphorylated 461
proteins from the two-component system for mediating the 462
cytokinin response. Here we provide direct evidence that an 463
alternative pathway exists. The temporal order of the different 464
participants in the cytokinin signaling as well as the magnitude 465
of their activation was determined and was shown to be 466
variable from one target protein to the other. Our data has 467
shown that cytokinin action is involved in numerous cellular 468
pathways. An important result in our study is the clear evidence 469
that cytokinin-induced phosphorelay can rapidly occur in 470
plastids. With the rapidity of the phenomenon observed, we 471
can hypothesise a specific route of cytokinin action to the 472
plastids. 473

In light of the findings reported here, one can readily 474
conclude that cytokinin action is complex, but our data helps 475
to provide a better understanding of it and its mechanism. We 476
have demonstrated a viable framework for further investiga- 477
tions of the mechanisms plants use to mediate cytokinin 478
response, which will allow us to advance our knowledge of the 479
many biological processes governed by cytokinin. More broadly, 480
the protocol used in our report is robust and our methodology 481
is established, allowing our temporal analysis to be extended 482
to many other organisms, time courses, other hormones, or 483
stress conditions. 484

485 Experimental Section

486 Materials. Urea (electrophoresis reagent), 3-[(3-cholami-
487 dopropyl)-dimethylammonio]-1-propane sulfonate (CHAPS), 6
488 (γ - γ)dimethylallylaminopurine (2iP, Sigma-Aldrich Chemie
489 GmbH) were from Sigma-Aldrich (St Louis, MO). Trifluoroacetic
490 acid, tributyl phosphine (TBP), and iron(III) chloride hexahy-
491 drate were from Fluka (Buchs, Switzerland). Sequencing grade
492 modified trypsin was from Promega (Madison, WI) and alkaline
493 phosphatase (1×10^3 U/mL) was from Roche Applied Science
494 (Mannheim, Germany). Reversed phase packing POROS 50 R2

495 was from PerSeptive Biosystems (Framingham, MA) and oligo
496 R3 reversed phase packing was from Applied Biosystems (Foster
497 City, CA). IMAC material, Ni-NTA Superflow, was from Qiagen
498 (Hilden, Germany). MALDI matrix α -cyano-4-hydroxycinnamic
499 acid (HCCA) was from Sigma-Aldrich. MS calibration standards
500 were from Sigma-Adrich. All other chemicals were reagent
501 grade. All solutions were prepared with HPLC grade water.

502 **Growth of Plant Material.** *P. patens* (Hedw.) B. S. G. was
503 grown in liquid modified Knop's medium as previously de-
504 scribed.¹¹ The protonema cultures were run in semi-continuous
505 bioreactors.¹² For time course analysis, the bioreactor material
506 was taken when the dry weight reached, 150 mg/L correspond-
507 ing to six-day-old bioreactor culture. The plant material was
508 harvested from 4 L of culture medium by filtration and
509 transferred to 6 L balloon flasks containing 4 L of fresh Knop
510 medium. The culture homogeneity was kept constant by
511 continuous stirring on a magnetic agitator while 150 mL of
512 moss medium was transferred to 180 mL Erlenmeyer flasks.
513 The cultures were grown while agitated for 17 additional hours
514 under standard conditions described above, until hormone
515 treatment. The overall procedure was conducted under sterile
516 conditions.

517 **Hormone Treatment and Time Course Procedure.** The
518 protonema cultures were treated either with cytokinin 6 (γ - γ)
519 dimethylallylaminopurine (2iP) to a final concentration of 5 μ M,
520 prepared in a 1 M KOH solution, or with a 1 M KOH solution
521 to a final concentration of 100 μ M as the control. The time
522 course procedure started at time zero with the simultaneous
523 and parallel inoculation of 10 Erlenmeyer flasks containing
524 *Physcomitrella* plant material. Five were treated with the
525 hormone (2iP) and five others treated with the KOH solution
526 as negative controls. A total of 10 inoculations were made
527 within 12 s with a variation of 3 s from one experiment to the
528 next. Two minutes after the beginning of inoculations, two
529 treated Erlenmeyer flasks containing 150 mL of protonema
530 culture were taken simultaneously, and the plant material was
531 harvested through parallel filtration using gauze and suction
532 in a double Büchner funnel (diameter 80 mm) system (self-
533 made) connected to a membrane pump. Afterward, the materi-
534 al was immediately frozen in liquid nitrogen and stored at
535 -80°C . The total procedure until the sample was frozen in
536 liquid nitrogen took approximately 23 s, with a variation of 5 s
537 from one experiment to the next. The total harvest from each
538 of the Erlenmeyer flasks containing 150 mL of plant material
539 was sufficient for analysis in triplicate. The time course
540 experiment continued at minutes 4, 6, and finally at minute
541 15. At each of these time points, the previously described
542 procedure was repeated three times.

543 **Extraction of Total Proteins.** Total protein extraction was
544 conducted as described earlier.²⁴ Briefly, 60 mg of ground moss
545 was extracted with 1.9 mL of acetone and 13 mM DTT at room
546 temperature and then stored at -20°C for 2 h. After centrifuga-
547 tion at 19 000g at -10°C for 15 min, the pellet was washed
548 twice with ice cold acetone and 13 mM DTT and then dried
549 under vacuum for 15 min. Total protein was extracted with 100
550 μ L of 9 M urea, 2% (w/v) CHAPS, and 5 mM TBP with shaking
551 at room temperature for 1 h. Insoluble material was removed
552 by centrifugation at 19 000g at room temperature for 15 min.
553 The average protein content was 10 mg/mL determined ac-
554 cording to a modified Bradford protocol.⁵⁹

555 **Trypsin Digestion.** A total of 1 mg of protein in 100 μ L of 9
556 M urea, 2% CHAPS, and 5 mM TBP was diluted with 1.5 mL of
557 50 mM NH_4HCO_3 pH 7.8. After the addition of 20 μ g of trypsin

($\geq 100\text{U}$) digestion was performed at 37°C for 16 h. The reaction 558
559 was stopped by the addition of formic acid to a final concen-
560 tration of 5%.

561 **Desalting and Concentration of Total Peptides.** Desalting
562 and the concentration of the peptide mixture was accomplished
563 using a combination of two different reverse phase chroma-
564 tography systems. Self-made chromatography columns were
565 packed with 60 μ L of POROS 50 R2 reversed phase packing or
566 100 μ L of oligo R3 reversed phase packing described previ-
567 ously.²⁴ The peptides were eluted, then dried under vacuum,
568 and finally redissolved in 50 μ L of 0.1 M acetic acid before being
569 loaded onto the IMAC column.

570 **Isolation of Phosphopeptides.** Phosphopeptides were en-
571 riched from the peptide mixture by immobilized metal affinity
572 chromatography (IMAC) using self-made chromatography
573 columns filled with 100 μ L of Ni-NTA Superflow (Qiagen) as
574 described earlier.²⁴ After the peptides were loaded, the column
575 was washed with 600 μ L of 100 mM NaCl in 75:25:1 (v:v:v)
576 water/acetonitrile/acetic acid. Following an additional wash
577 step with 200 μ L of 0.1 M acetic acid, phosphopeptides were
578 eluted with 500 μ L of 50 mM Na_2HPO_4 , pH 9.4.

579 **Phosphopeptide Separation.** Fractionation of phosphopep-
580 tides was performed by reversed phase HPLC. A precolumn
581 (ChromCart, Macherey-Nagel, Düren, Germany Nucleosil, 8/3,
582 300-5C18) was connected to the analytical HPLC column
583 (Macherey-Nagel, Nucleosil, 300-5 μ m, 125 \times 2 mm ID) as
584 described previously.²⁴ A total of 10 fractions was collected
585 every 3 min starting from the wash step to the end of the
586 gradient. The 10 fractions were spiked with 10 fmol of two
587 synthetic phosphorylated peptides PVRRRP SGANYRAY (mass
588 $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+ = 1645.8076$) and EAQAAP SAAQAK (mass $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$
589 $= 1125.4941$). The 10 fractions were then dried under vacuum
590 prior to MALDI-TOF-MS phosphopeptides profiling.

591 **Alkaline Phosphatase Treatment.** The lyophilised peptides
592 were redissolved in 14 μ L of 50 mM NH_4HCO_3 , pH 7.8. For
593 MALDI-TOF-MS, alkaline phosphatase treatment was per-
594 formed as described previously.²⁴ Briefly, 1.5 μ L of the phos-
595 phopeptide solution was incubated with 0.05 U/ μ L alkaline
596 phosphatase at 37°C for 30 min. For LC-MS/MS, 6.4 μ L of the
597 phosphopeptide solution was loaded for analysis. Alkaline
598 phosphatase (0.05 U/ μ L) was added, and the sample was
599 incubated at 37°C for 30 min. The sample was then acidified
600 with 0.5 μ L of 5% formic acid. The identification of phospho-
601 peptides was achieved in MALDI-TOF-MS by observing the loss
602 of 80Da (due to HPO_3 loss) or multiples of 80Da mass shifts
603 after alkaline phosphatase treatment for multiphosphorylated
604 peptides.

605 **MALDI -TOF-MS, MALDI -TOF-MS/MS, and Phosphopep-**
606 **ptide Profiling.** MALDI-TOF-MS and MS-MS mass measure-
607 ments were carried out on an Ultraflex TOF/TOF mass spec-
608 trometer (Bruker Daltonik, Bremen, Germany). MS and LIFT
609 spectra were acquired with the Ultraflex TOF/TOF mass
610 spectrometer with gridless ion optics under control of Flex-
611 control 2.0. This instrument equipped with the SCOUT High-
612 Resolution Optics with X-Y multisample probe, and a gridless
613 reflector was used at a maximum accelerating potential of 25
614 kV and was operated in reflector mode. Ionization was ac-
615 complished with a 337-nm beam from a nitrogen laser with a
616 repetition rate of 20 Hz. The output signal from the detector
617 was digitized at a sampling rate of 2 GHz.

618 Both phosphopeptides and dephosphorylated peptide (with
619 alkaline phosphatase) fractions were treated as follows: the
620 samples were prepared by standard dried droplet preparation

621 on stainless steel MALDI targets and AnchorChip 384-well
 622 target plate (Bruker Daltonics) using α -cyano-4-hydroxycin-
 623 namic acid (HCCA). The HCCA matrix used was a freshly
 624 saturated solution of recrystallized HCCA in acetonitrile and
 625 water 50:50 (v:v). Before use, one volume of that HCCA solution
 626 was diluted with two volumes of acetonitrile and water 50:50
 627 (v:v). Aliquots (0.5 mL) of sample were spotted onto the target
 628 with 0.1 μ L of 5% formic acid followed by 0.5 μ L of the HCCA
 629 matrix solution. External calibration of MALDI mass spectra
 630 was carried out using the singly charged monoisotopic peak
 631 of four peptides, angiotensin II ($m/z = 1046.542$), substance P
 632 ($m/z = 1347.735$), bombesin ($m/z = 1619.822$), and ACTH 18–
 633 39 ($m/z = 2465.199$). Monoisotopic peptide masses were
 634 automatically annotated using flexAnalysis 2.0 (Bruker Dal-
 635 tonik). The total number of spots analyzed for each round of
 636 experiments was 560. Since we had four time points and 10
 637 HPLC fractions for each time point multiplied by two (each
 638 time point a cytokinin treatment and a KOH control), we had
 639 a total of 80 ($4 \times 10 \times 2 = 80$) phosphopeptide fractions to be
 640 analyzed. Additionally, we measured four MALDI preparations
 641 (MALDI spots) from each phosphopeptide sample and three
 642 MALDI preparations of alkaline phosphatase dephosphorylated
 643 peptide samples, making a total of 560 ($80 \times (4 + 3) = 560$).
 644 The overall procedure was repeated in triplicate consecutive
 645 analysis (3 days). For each MALDI spot, 1000 spectra were
 646 acquired (50 laser shots at 20 different spot positions). All
 647 signals with a signal-to-noise (S/N) ratio >3 in the mass range
 648 of 450–4000 Da were recorded using the AutoXecute tool of
 649 the flexControl 2.0 (Bruker Daltonik) acquisition software for
 650 peptide pattern recognition. All peptide patterns were checked
 651 manually. To that purpose, we determined the variation in the
 652 m/z ratios, and we compared relative and absolute peak
 653 intensities of at least 10 selected signals within a same fraction
 654 including the two internal standard synthetic peptides. The
 655 mass spectra from the repeat experiments were compared and
 656 we accepted a S/N ratio >3 in mass range and a mass error no
 657 more than 20 ppm. We accepted a variation coefficient (CV)
 658 of 24%. All of the mass spectra that did not meet these criteria
 659 were rejected (5.3%). This value indicates that typical quanti-
 660 fication errors from mass spectrometry were smaller than our
 661 selected conservative threshold chosen for biological signifi-
 662 cance. We counted peaks in the mass spectra from controls
 663 and cytokinin-treated fractions which showed reproducible
 664 increases/decreases. From this, we chose three as a conserva-
 665 tive threshold for biological significance. This threshold rep-
 666 resents a phosphopeptide that is quantitatively affected by
 667 cytokinin stimulation. This threshold prevented us from false
 668 data interpretation. We also counted peaks that newly appeared
 669 and also disappeared in the mass spectra of cytokinin treated
 670 fractions versus control. A new peak either corresponds to a
 671 new phosphopeptide which before cytokinin stimulation was
 672 not phosphorylated and therefore not purified by IMAC, or a
 673 new peak may also represent a change in the phosphorylation
 674 state of a previously phosphorylated peptide characterized by
 675 a different m/z before cytokinin stimulation. The phospho-
 676 peptides and the dephosphorylated peptides were then se-
 677 quenced by MALDI-TOF-MS/MS (Ultraflex TOF-TOF mass
 678 spectrometer Bruker Daltonik, Bremen, Germany). The LIFT-
 679 MS/MS spectra were obtained by the analysis of the metastable
 680 ions, generated by laser-induced decomposition (LID) of the
 681 selected precursor ions. No additional collision gas was applied.
 682 Precursor ions were accelerated to 8 kV and selected in a timed
 683 ion gate. The fragments were further accelerated by 19 kV in

684 the LIFT cell and their masses were analyzed after the ion
 685 reflector passage. LIFT-MS/MS spectra were annotated with
 686 the Biotools 2.2 (Bruker Daltonik) software package. A high-
 687 energy CID mode was used to enhance intensities of fragments
 688 in the low fragment mass range; a collision gas, argon, was
 689 introduced to increase the source pressure to 6×10^{-6} mbar.
 690 All of the MS/MS spectra were interpreted manually. The
 691 resulting amino acid sequences obtained are represented in
 692 bold (Table 1 and Table 1 in the Supporting Information).

NanoLC-MS/MS and Data Interpretation. NanoLC-MS/MS
 693 analysis of the tryptic phosphopeptides was performed using
 694 a CapLC capillary LC system (Micromass) coupled to a hybrid
 695 quadrupole orthogonal acceleration time-of-flight tandem mass
 696 spectrometer (Q-TOF II, Micromass, Manchester, U.K.) fitted
 697 with a Z-spray nanoflow electrospray ion source. Chromato-
 698 graphic separations were conducted on a Pepmap C18 75 μ m
 699 i.d. \times 15 cm length, reverse phase (RP) capillary column (LC
 700 Packings, Sunnyvale, CA) with a flow rate of 200 nL min $^{-1}$
 701 accomplished by a precolumn split. An external calibration was
 702 performed using a 2 pmol μ L $^{-1}$ GFP ((Glu 1)-Fibrinopeptide B)
 703 solution. The mass spectrometer was operated in positive ion
 704 mode with a potential of 3500 V applied to the nanoflow probe
 705 body. The collision energy was determined on the fly based
 706 on the mass and charge state of the peptide. Charge state
 707 recognition was used to switch only mono, doubly, and triply
 708 charged ions into MS/MS mode. Mass data acquisition was
 709 piloted by MassLynx 4 software (Micromass) using automatic
 710 switching between MS and MS/MS modes. Phosphopeptide
 711 samples (6.4 μ L; dephosphorylated or not by alkaline phos-
 712 phatase treatment) were injected. For the phosphopeptides
 713 responsive to cytokinin determined by MALDI-TOF-MS phos-
 714 phopeptide profiling, the corresponding monoisotopic peptide
 715 masses were used to calculate doubly and triply charged ions
 716 of the corresponding phosphorylated and dephosphorylated
 717 candidate peptides. The ions were used to create a MS and
 718 MS/MS priority sequencing list.

719 Mass spectra data collected during LC-MS/MS analysis was
 720 processed and converted into PKL files to be submitted to the
 721 local search software MASCOT 2.0 (Matrix Science, London,
 722 U.K.) for *P. patens* EST/contig/ raw genomic database searches.
 723 The peak list was created using the ProteinLynx 4.0 software
 724 (Micromass). The searches were done with a tolerance on mass
 725 measurement of 0.25 Da in MS mode and 0.3 Da in MS/MS
 726 mode. These searches did not always lead to positive identi-
 727 fication since the *P. patens* genome has not yet been fully
 728 sequenced. Therefore, peptide de novo sequencing was neces-
 729 sary for successful identification. The de novo interpretation
 730 of the MS/MS spectra was performed with the PEAKS 2_3
 731 Studio software (Bioinformatics Solutions, Waterloo, Canada).
 732 The sequencing mass tolerance was of 0.25 Da. Confidence of
 733 the amino acid tag was set to 90% and verified manually

734 The MS/MS spectra of the phosphorylated peptides were
 735 mostly poorly informative. Manual sequencing was also made
 736 (on dephosphorylated peptides) using PepSeq 4.0 software
 737 (Micromass). The intensity threshold was set to 1%, and the
 738 fragmentation tolerance was 0.25 Da for monoisotopic ions.
 739 Molecular weight tolerance was 0.25 Da. The amino acid tags
 740 obtained were subsequently used to interrogate the different
 741 *P. patens* EST/contig databases (<http://www.cosmoss.org/>) and
 742 available raw genomic data present in NCBI (National Center
 743 for Biotechnology) using tblastn. The tblastn program has been
 744 used to compare the single peptide tag query sequence against
 745 the *P. patens* nucleotide sequence database dynamically trans-
 746

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lated in all reading frames. The different I/L K/Q possibilities have been tried. The “expected” value represents the statistical significance threshold for reporting matches against database sequences; the default value was $1e^{+4}$ for our single peptide FASTA searches. No filter was set, the substitution matrix used was BLOSUM 62, and the un-gapped alignment mode has been performed. The *P. patens* EST/contig sequences that matched perfectly with the *P. patens* phosphopeptide sequences were retained. If full match was not guaranteed, the ESTs/contigs with the highest sequence coverage with the phosphopeptide tag were retained. Thus, the hits with a minimum of 70% of the peptide sequence coverage were also retained.

The *P. patens* EST/contig or genomic information matching with the single peptide tag were then used as query for protein identification accomplished by homology searches with proteins present in the NCBI (National Center for Biotechnology) nonredundant protein databases (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/blast/>). The overall procedure of EST/contig identification and protein annotation was run on Cosmos (<http://www.cosmos.org/>). The statistical evaluation of the results and the validation of the matches was performed manually as described earlier.^{60–62} Several different predictive bioinformatic tools have been tested on the EST/contigs coding for proteins with unknown function and MOPPs. InterPro (<http://www.ebi.ac.uk/interpro/>) and Pfam (http://www.sanger.ac.uk/Software/Pfam/ind_ex.shtml). ChloroP 1.1 Prediction server (<http://www.cbs.dtu.dk/services/ChloroP/>). TargetP 1.1 server (<http://www.cbs.dtu.dk/services/TargetP/>). TMHMM 2.0 server (<http://www.cbs.dtu.dk/services/TMHMM/>). The obtained peptides were also run against the phospho-predictor site NetPhos (www.cbs.dtu.dk/services/Net-Phos, Table 3, in the Supporting Information)

Abbreviations

P. patens, *Physcomitrella patens*; EST, expressed sequence tags; GPDH, glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate dehydrogenase; BLAST, basic local alignment search tool; Rubisco, lsu, ribulose biphosphate carboxylase large subunit; CHAPS, 3-[(3-cholamidopropyl)-dimethylammonio]-1-propane sulfonate; TBP, tributyl phosphine; MOPP, moss phosphorylated protein; 2iP, 6-(γ - γ)-dimethylallylaminopurine; PTM, posttranslational modification; CV, variation coefficient; CID, collision induced dissociation; NO, nitric oxide.

Acknowledgment. The authors thank Sandra Richardt (Freiburg University) for helping with plant cell culture, Pr. Dr. Thomas J. Bach (IBMP, Strasbourg University) and Dr. Fabrice Bertile (LSMBO, Strasbourg University) for suggestions, discussions, and helpful comments, and Dr. Andreas Tholey (Saarland University) for the gift of the phosphorylated synthetic standard peptides. Financial support by DFG to R.R. (Re 837) and to E.S. (Sa 1014) is gratefully acknowledged

Supporting Information Available: Supplementary tables and figures. This material is available free at <http://pubs.acs.org>.

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