

CONTROLLED BIOSYNTHESIS OF NEOVIRIDOGRISEINS,
NEW HOMOLOGUES OF VIRIDOGRISEIN

I. TAXONOMY AND FERMENTATION*

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Neoviridogriseins, new homologues of viridogrisein, were produced with viridogrisein and griseoviridin by *Streptomyces* sp. P8648 which was identified as a strain of *Streptomyces griseoviridus*.

In the course of screening for new antibiotics, we isolated a strain of streptomycete named *Streptomyces* sp. P8648 which produced antibiotics active against some Gram-positive bacteria and mycoplasmas. They were recovered from broth filtrate and identified as viridogrisein¹⁾ (= etamycin) and griseoviridin²⁾ on the basis of their physico-chemical and antimicrobial properties. In the meantime, *Streptomyces* sp. P8648 was taxonomically concluded to be a strain of *Streptomyces griseoviridus*^{3)***}, though some minor differences were observed between the type culture of *Streptomyces griseoviridus* (NRRL2427) and our isolate, as is described in this paper. *Streptomyces* sp. P8648 produced viridogrisein, griseoviridin and three minor factors named neoviridogriseins I, II and III under normal fermentation conditions. The yield improvement of the minor factors was tried by the so-called directed or controlled biosynthesis with amino acids.

According to the classification proposed by TANAKA⁴⁾ and by VAZQUEZ⁵⁾, the mikamycin or streptogramin family of antibiotics is divided into group A and group B which are antimicrobially synergistic. Group A is a non-peptidyl, macrocyclic lactone antibiotic and includes mikamycin A⁶⁾ (= ostreogrycin A⁷⁾ = virginiamycin M⁸⁾ = pristinamycin II_A⁹⁾ = streptogramin A⁵⁾ = vernamycin A¹⁰⁾ = synergistin A-1¹¹⁾, ostreogrycin G¹²⁾ (= virginiamycin M₂¹³⁾ = pristinamycin II_B⁹⁾ = dihydroostreogrycin A¹²⁾, compounds A-2315A, A-2315B and A-2315C¹⁴⁾, madumycins I and II^{15,16)} and griseoviridin²⁾. The structures of these antibiotics are shown in Fig. 1.

Group B includes depsipeptide antibiotics which are further classified into sub-group B I and sub-group B II, based on the number of constituent moieties. As antibiotics in sub-group B I which are composed of seven moieties, that is, 3-hydroxypicolinic acid, L-threonine, L-proline, L-phenylglycine and three amino acids, there are many members known like mikamycin B⁶⁾ (= vernamycin B_α¹⁷⁾ = streptogramin B⁵⁾ = pristinamycin I_A⁹⁾ = ostreogrycin B¹⁸⁾, vernamycin B_β¹⁷⁾ (= ostreogrycin B₂⁸⁾ = pristinamycin I_B⁹⁾, vernamycin B_γ¹⁷⁾ (= ostreogrycin B₁¹⁸⁾ = pristinamycin I_C⁹⁾, vernamycin B_δ¹⁷⁾,

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** *Streptomyces griseoviridis* ANDERSON, EHRLICH, SUN and BURKHOLDER (8th Ed., BERGEY'S Manual of Determinative Bacteriology, The Williams & Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1974).

ostreogrycin B₃¹⁹⁾, patricins A and B²⁰⁾, vernamycin C²¹⁾ (= doricin²¹⁾), virginiamycin S²²⁾, and virginiamycins S₂, S₃ and S₄²³⁾. The structures of sub-group B I antibiotics are summarized in Fig. 2.

In contrast, viridogrisein²⁾ (= etamycin²⁴⁾) has been the sole member in sub-group B II, and contains eight constituent moieties, that is, 3-hydroxypicolinic acid, L-threonine, D-leucine, *allo*-hydroxy-D-proline, sarcosine, N, β -dimethyl-L-leucine, L-alanine and L-phenylsarcosine (Fig. 3). According to the literature, the antibiotics in sub-group B I are most often produced in mixtures of more than two components, while viridogrisein has been reported as a single component.

So-called directed or controlled biosynthesis of antibiotics has been extensively studied for actinomycin²⁵⁾, gramicidin S²⁶⁾ and tyrocidine²⁷⁾, and many homologues of these antibiotics were biochemically produced. Enzyme systems responsible for the biosynthesis of these antibiotics seem to have a loose substrate specificity which results in the production of a diversity of homologues.

This series of studies deal with the controlled biosynthesis of neoviridogriseins I, II and III, viridogrisein (neoviridogrisein IV) and griseoviridin (Fig. 1A).

The structures of these components are illustrated in Fig. 4.

In particular, the present paper deals with the taxonomy of *Streptomyces* sp. P8648, as well as the fermentation and identification of viridogrisein and griseoviridin.

Fig. 1. Structures of mikamycin A group antibiotics.

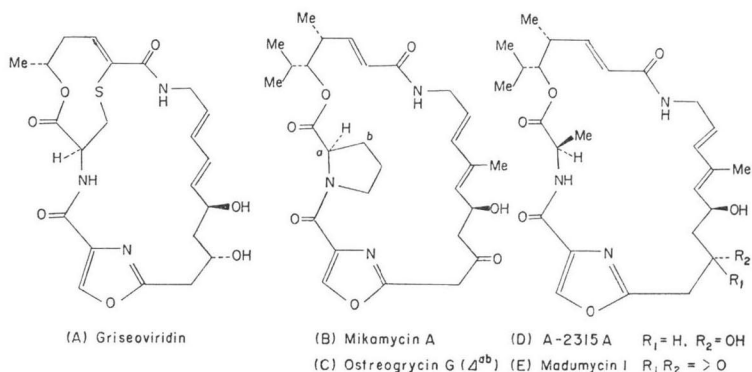
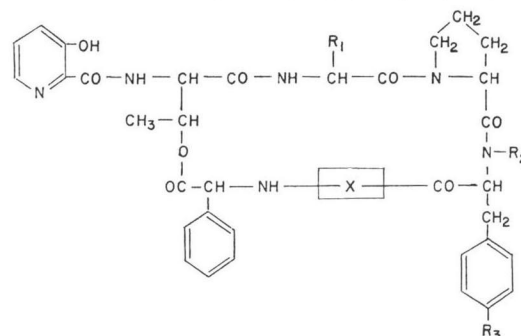


Fig. 2. Structures of mikamycin B group (sub-group B I) antibiotics.



Antibiotic	R ₁	R ₂	R ₃	X
Mikamycin B	-C ₂ H ₅	-CH ₃	-N(CH ₃) ₂	4-oxopipelic acid
Vernamycin B ₅	-C ₂ H ₅	-CH ₃	-NHCH ₃	4-oxopipelic acid
Vernamycin B ₇	-CH ₃	-CH ₃	-N(CH ₃) ₂	4-oxopipelic acid
Vernamycin B ₆	-CH ₃	-CH ₃	-NHCH ₃	4-oxopipelic acid
Ostreogrycin B ₃	-C ₂ H ₅	-CH ₃	-N(CH ₃) ₂	3-hydroxy-4-oxopipelic acid
Patricin A	-C ₂ H ₅	-CH ₃	-H	proline
Patricin B	-C ₂ H ₅	-CH ₃	-H	pipelic acid
Vernamycin C	-C ₂ H ₅	-CH ₃	-N(CH ₃) ₂	aspartic acid
Virginiamycin S	-C ₂ H ₅	-CH ₃	-H	4-oxopipelic acid
Virginiamycin S ₂	-C ₂ H ₅	-H	-H	4-hydroxypipelic acid
Virginiamycin S ₃	-C ₂ H ₅	-CH ₃	-H	3-hydroxy-4-oxopipelic acid
Virginiamycin S ₄	-CH ₃	-CH ₃	-H	4-oxopipelic acid

Fig. 3. Structure of mikamycin B group (sub-group B II) antibiotic.

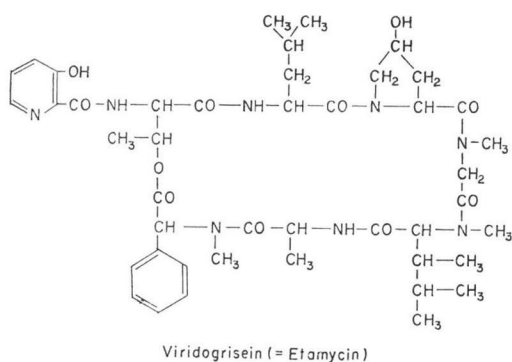
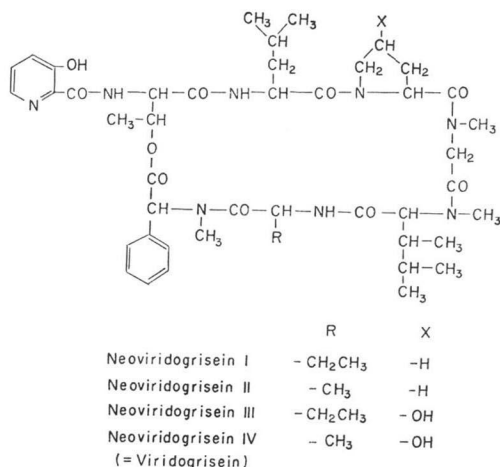


Fig. 4. Structures of neoviridogriseins I, II, III, and IV.



Materials and Methods

1. Materials

(1) Antibiotics and reagents

Viridogrisein and griseoviridin were kindly supplied by Parke, Davis & Co., Detroit 32, Mich., U.S.A. and etamycin by Bristol Laboratories, Inc., Syracuse, New York, U.S.A. Pre-coated silica gel plates (Pre-Coated TLC Plates Silica Gel 60 F-254) and silica gel for column chromatography (Kieselgel 60 Art. 7734) were obtained from E. Merck, Darmstadt, Germany; pre-coated cellulose sheets (Eastman Chromagram Sheet No. 6065) from Eastman Kodak Co., Rochester, New York 14650, U.S.A.; and Sephadex LH-20 from Pharmacia Fine Chemicals AB, Uppsala, Sweden. Other materials were purchased from commercial sources.

(2) Microorganisms

Streptomyces griseus (NRRL2426) was obtained from Northern Regional Research Laboratories, Northern Utilization Research and Development Division, Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Peoria, Illinois, U.S.A.

S. griseoviridus (NRRL2427), *S. griseoroseus* and *S. ostreogriseus* were kindly supplied by Dr. A. SEINO, Kaken Chemical Co., Tokyo, Japan.

2. Methods

(1) Taxonomical methods

The morphological and physiological characteristics of the streptomycete were determined according to the ISP (International Streptomyces Project) procedure²⁸.

(2) Disc-assay method

The potency of broth was determined by the paper-disc method using *Staphylococcus aureus* FDA 209P and *Sarcina lutea* as test organisms. Assay plates were prepared as follows:

One loopful of the test organism on a nutrient agar slant was inoculated into a 100-ml Erlenmeyer flask containing 20 ml of 2% nutrient broth and incubated at 28°C for 16 hours on a rotary shaker. This culture was diluted 66 times in 2% nutrient broth and 0.5 ml of the dilution was added to 50 ml of molten nutrient agar. It was poured on top of a 100-ml layer of the basal agar medium (1% nutrient broth and 2% agar) in a rectangular assay dish (16 cm × 24 cm). Paper discs (Toyo paper disc, 8 mm in diameter, thin, Toyo Roshi Co., Toyo, Japan) were soaked in broth filtrate or antibiotic solutions and, after removal of excessive volume on filter paper, applied on the assay plate. After overnight incubation at 37°C, the inhibition zones were read in mm.

(3) Thin-layer chromatography

Two milliliters of broth filtrate were extracted with 2 ml of ethylacetate. The extract was evaporated to dryness and dissolved in 0.1 ml of methanol. A suitable amount of the solution was spotted on a silica gel TLC plate and developed with CHCl_3 - MeOH (30: 1). The antibiotics were detected by irradiation under UV-light (365 nm) and/or by bioautography using *Staphylococcus aureus* FDA 209P or *Sarcina lutea*. Typical thin-layer chromatogram and bioautogram are shown in Fig. 5.

(4) Fermentation

Seed culture medium (medium LL-3) consisting of 0.5% soy bean meal, 0.5% peanut meal, 0.5% oat meal, 0.5% dry yeast and 0.5% beet molasses was adjusted to pH 6.5 and distributed in 50-ml amounts in 250-ml Erlenmeyer flasks. After sterilization in an autoclave at 120°C for 15 minutes, each flask was inoculated with a loopful of *Streptomyces* sp. P8648 grown on a glucose-yeast extract-malt extract agar slant and the flasks were incubated at 28°C on a rotary shaker at 220 rpm. Broth potency was determined by the disc-assay method. Cell growth was measured as packed volume of mycelium per ml broth. Typical time course of fermentation is shown in Fig. 6.

(5) Isolation

Ten liters of the harvested broth (medium LL-3': 0.5% soy bean meal, 0.5% cotton seed meal, 0.5% oat meal, 0.5% dry yeast and 0.5% beet molasses) were filtered and the filtrate was extracted at pH 8.0 with ethylacetate (3 liters \times 2). The extract was dried over sodium sulfate (anhydrous) and evaporated to dryness under reduced pressure. From the dry material, neoviridogriseins including viridogrisein (mainly) were extracted with toluene (100 ml \times 2), while griseoviridin remained in the residue. The extract was evaporated to dryness and charged on a silica gel column (3 cm \times 50 cm) which was developed with benzene - MeOH (20: 1). Antimicrobial activity was monitored by thin-layer chromatography followed by bioassay. Active materials were separated into four groups. Factors 1, 2

Fig. 5. Diagrammatic thin-layer chromatogram and bioautogram of neoviridogriseins and griseoviridin.

Plate: Pre-coated Silica Gel 60 F-254 (E. Merck)

Solvent system: CHCl_3 - MeOH (30: 1)

Detection:

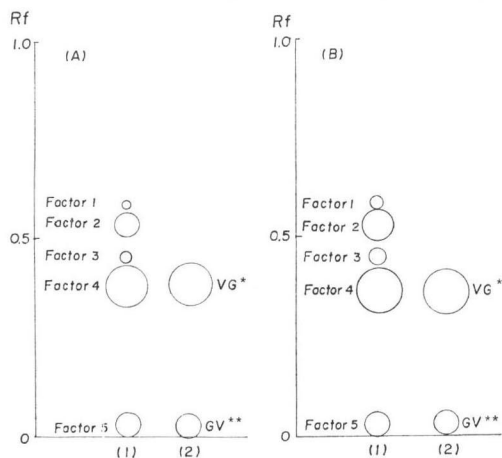
(A) UV-light (365 nm for neoviridogriseins and 254 nm for griseoviridin)

(B) Bioautography on *Sarcina lutea*

Sample:

(1) The ethylacetate extract of broth filtrate from *Streptomyces* sp. P8648 fermented in medium LL-3'

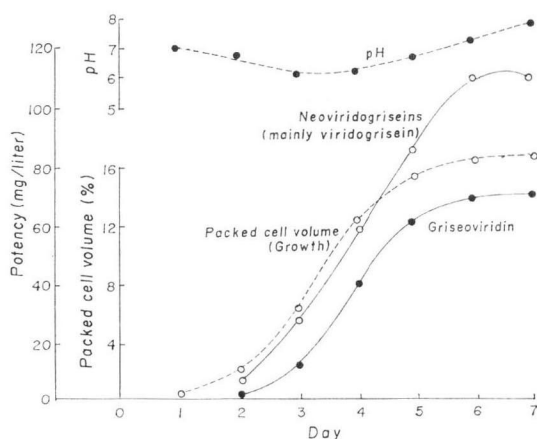
(2) Authentic viridogrisein and griseoviridin
VG*: viridogrisein, GV**: griseoviridin



and 3 which were present in very small quantities were named neoviridogriseins I, II and III respectively, whereas Factor 4, the main component, was named neoviridogrisein IV which is identical with viridogrisein. Relative yields were; Factor 1: Factor 2: Factor 3: Factor 4 = 1: 25: 4: 430.

The toluene extraction residue, containing Factor 5, was dissolved in a small amount of methanol and applied on a Sephadex LH-20

Fig. 6. Time course of fermentation of *Streptomyces* sp. P8648 in medium LL-3' without precursor amino acids.



Scheme 1. Isolation procedure of neoviridogriseins and griseoviridin.

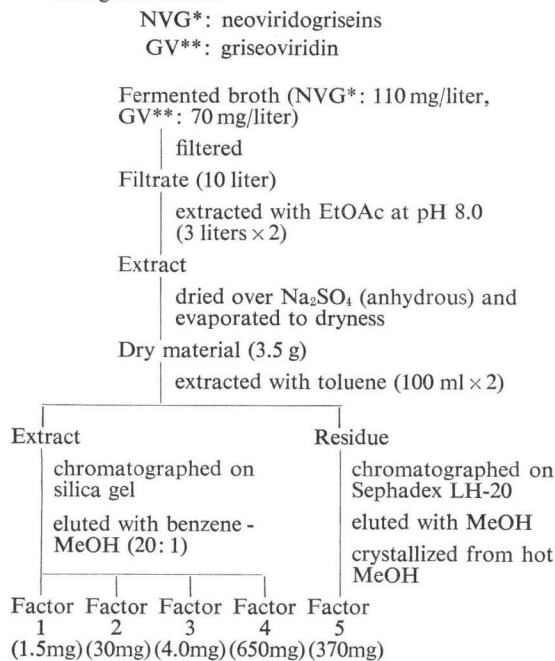
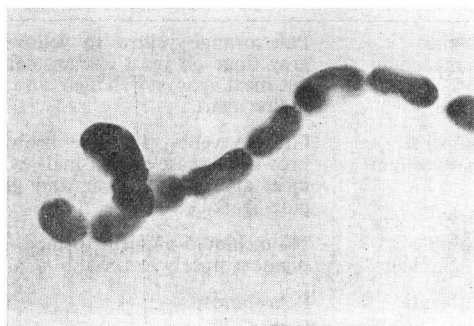


Fig. 7. Electronmicrograph of spores of *Streptomyces* sp. P8648 (Inorganic salt-starch agar, $\times 25,000$)



column (2 cm \times 50 cm), which was then developed with methanol. Each fraction was monitored by bioassay, using *Sarcina lutea* as test organism. Active fractions were combined and evaporated to dryness. The dry material, Factor 5, was crystallized from hot methanol. The overall isolation procedure is summarized in Scheme 1.

Results

1. Microorganism

The streptomycete strain, named *Streptomyces* sp. P8648, produced colorless, short aerial mycelia from well-branched substrate mycelia. Spore chains with smooth surface (Fig. 7) formed in loose loops on top of aerial mycelia.

Streptomyces sp. P8648 was compared with various strains of *Streptomyces* which were known to produce the mikamycin group of antibiotics. Among others, the following strains were compared with our isolate: *S. griseus* (NRRL2426), *S. griseoviridis* (NRRL2427), *S. griseoroseus* (KCC-S-0232) and *S. ostreogriseus* (KCC-S-0186).

The available information on cultural and physiological characteristics indicated that *Streptomyces* sp. P8648 was different from the above-listed strains. But, among the four species, *S. griseoviridis* (NRRL2427) was the most similar to our strain. Therefore, *S. griseoviridis* (NRRL2427) and *Streptomyces* sp. P8648 were critically compared under various conditions. Table 1 shows some of the cultural and physiological differences observed between the two strains. Moreover, *Streptomyces* sp. P8648 and the authentic strain (NRRL2427) of *Streptomyces griseoviridis* were fermented in a medium containing 1% glucose, 1% soluble starch, 1% soy bean meal, 0.2% DL- α -amino-*n*-butyric acid and 0.2% L-proline. Product analysis of the broth filtrate proved that the former produced neoviridogriseins I, II and III, viridogrisein and griseoviridin, whereas the latter produced viridogrisein and griseoviridin but not neoviridogriseins I, II and III.

2. Fermentation

Several carbon and nitrogen sources were examined for increased production of neoviridogriseins. It is clear from the results shown in Tables 2 and 3 that among the test sources glucose was

Table 1. Comparison of *Streptomyces* sp. P8648 with *Streptomyces griseoviridis* NRRL2427.

	<i>Streptomyces griseoviridis</i> NRRL2427	<i>Streptomyces</i> sp. P8648
Aerial mycelium	Pale orange yellow to yellowish pink with gray tinge on yeast extract-malt extract agar, oat meal agar, starch agar and glycerin-asparagine agar.	White to grayish white aerial mycelium slightly formed on most ISP media.
Substrate mycelium	Grayish yellow to olive brown or blackish brown on yeast extract-malt extract agar, oat meal agar, starch agar and glycerin-asparagine agar.	Pale yellow to grayish brown on most ISP media.
Soluble pigment	No melanoid pigment formed. Rarely yellow pigment poorly formed.	No melanoid pigment formed. Rarely brown pigment slightly formed.
Utilization of carbon sources	L-Arabinose ++ D-Fructose ± Sucrose -	L-Arabinose - D-Fructose +++ Sucrose ±
Production of antibiotics	Viridogrisein and griseoviridin.	Neoviridogriseins I, II and III together with viridogrisein and griseoviridin.

Table 2. Effect of the carbon source on the production of neoviridogriseins and griseoviridin.

Carbon source (2%)	Basal medium A			Basal medium B		
	pH	NVG* ($\mu\text{g/ml}$)	GV** ($\mu\text{g/ml}$)	pH	NVG* ($\mu\text{g/ml}$)	GV** ($\mu\text{g/ml}$)
Soluble starch	9.0	60.0	62.5	8.8	trace	12.0
Glucose	8.3	75.0	80.0	8.3	42.0	49.0
Sucrose	9.3	0	0	9.5	0	0
Corn starch	8.7	60.0	57.5	9.1	trace	6.3
Glycerin	8.5	0	0	8.7	0	0
Maltose	9.4	0	0	9.5	0	0
Beet molasses	9.5	37.5	42.0	9.5	0	0

Basal medium A: cotton seed meal 1.5%, soy bean meal 1.5%, K_2HPO_4 0.05% and CaCO_3 0.2% (pH 6.5)

Basal medium B: peptone 1.0%, corn steep liquor 0.5%, soy bean meal 1.5%, K_2HPO_4 0.05%, $\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$ 0.05% and CaCO_3 0.2% (pH 6.5)

NVG*: neoviridogriseins, GV**: griseoviridin

the most suitable carbon source, while soy bean meal and cotton seed meal seemed the best nitrogen sources. The combination of glucose and cotton seed meal and/or soy bean meal was studied in more detail. As a result, the following medium (medium NS-3) was employed for production of neoviridogriseins and griseoviridin: 2% glucose, 0.5% soluble starch, 1% cotton seed meal, 0.5% soy bean meal, 0.05% K_2HPO_4 , 0.05% $\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$ and 0.2% CaCO_3 .

3. Identification of Viridogrisein and Griseoviridin

Identification of Factor 4 (neoviridogrisein IV) was achieved from the following physico-chemical characteristics of Factor 4:

Melting point, 151°C; optical rotation, $[\alpha]_D^{25} + 43.7^\circ$ (c 1 in MeOH); molecular weight (determined by mass spectrometry), 878; UV absorption, λ_{max} 304 nm (in MeOH, $E_{1\text{cm}}^{1\%}$ 90) and λ_{max} 335 nm (in MeOH - 0.1 N NaOH, $E_{1\text{cm}}^{1\%}$ 96); TLC (cf. Fig. 5); mass spectrum (Fig. 8) and IR spectrum. These data proved the identity of Factor 4 with viridogrisein. Finally, two-dimensional thin-layer chromato-

Table 3. Effect of the nitrogen source on the production of neoviridogriseins and griseoviridin.

Nitrogen source (0.5%)	Basal medium C			Basal medium D		
	pH	NVG* ($\mu\text{g/ml}$)	GV** ($\mu\text{g/ml}$)	pH	NVG* ($\mu\text{g/ml}$)	GV** ($\mu\text{g/ml}$)
Soy bean meal	8.9	46.0	52.0	8.8	37.5	41.0
Cotton seed meal	9.0	49.0	57.5	8.6	7.5	33.0
Peptone	9.2	trace	trace	9.0	trace	trace
Casein	8.8	49.0	57.5	8.6	8.5	22.0
Corn steep liquor	8.8	34.0	38.0	9.0	trace	trace
Casamino acid	8.0	60.0	49.0	8.2	41.5	42.0
$(\text{NH}_4)_2\text{SO}_4$	4.6	0	0	4.5	0	0

Basal medium C: glucose 2.0%, K_2HPO_4 0.05%, $\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$ 0.05% and CaCO_3 0.2% (pH 6.5)

Basal medium D: soluble starch 2.0%, K_2HPO_4 0.05%, $\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$ 0.05% and CaCO_3 0.2% (pH 6.5)

NVG*: neoviridogriseins, GV**: griseoviridin

grams of total acid-hydrolysates of Factor 4 and viridogrisein confirmed their identity, too.

Identification of Factor 5 was achieved from the following physico-chemical characteristics of Factor 5:

Melting point, 185°C ; optical rotation, $[\alpha]_D^{25} - 230^\circ$ (c 0.5 in MeOH); UV absorption, λ_{max} 220.5 nm (in MeOH, $E_{1\text{cm}}^{1\%}$ 910); molecular weight (determined by mass spectrometry), 477; TLC (cf. Fig. 5); mass spectrum (Fig. 9) and IR spectrum. These data were practically identical with the physico-chemical properties of griseoviridin.

Discussion

We isolated from a soil sample a streptomycete named *Streptomyces* sp. P8648, which produced viridogrisein¹⁾ and griseoviridin²⁾. This strain was tax-

Fig. 8. Mass spectra of Factor 4 and viridogrisein.

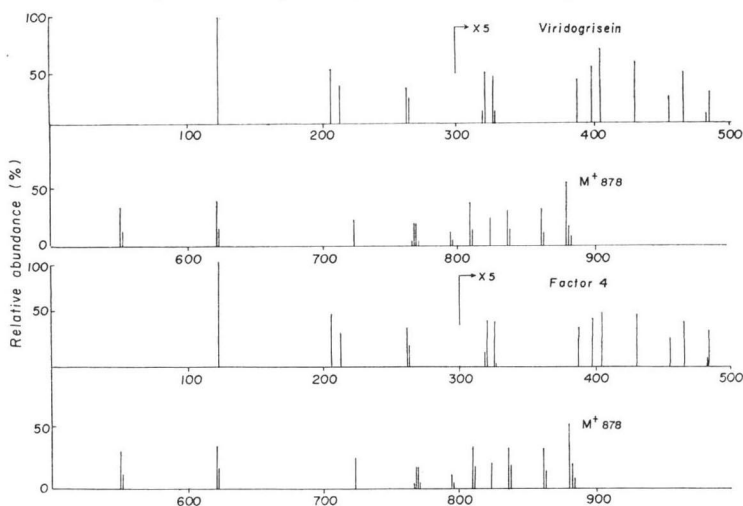
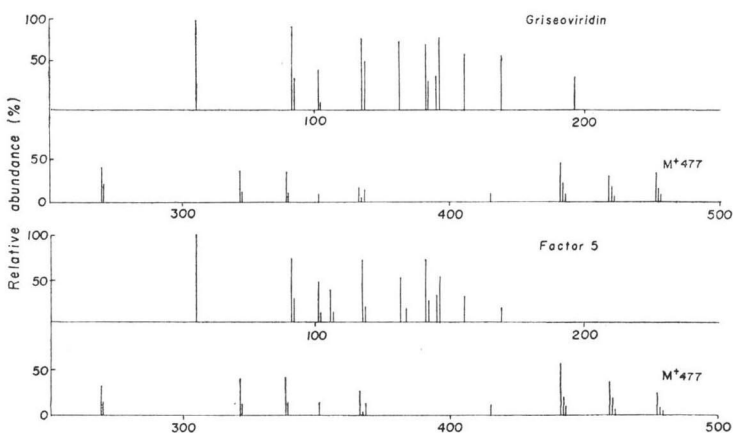


Fig. 9. Mass spectra of Factor 5 and griseoviridin.



onomically studied and identified with *Streptomyces griseoviridis*³⁾, though some minor differences were recorded in their taxonomical and physiological characteristics.

Generally speaking, the biosynthesis of peptide antibiotics is not directed by the ribosome-RNA system of protein synthesis. This fact is well established in the biosynthesis of actinomycin²⁵⁾, gramicidin S²⁶⁾, tyrocidine²⁷⁾, etc. As described by KAMAL and KATZ²⁹⁾, the production of etamycin by *Streptomyces griseoviridis* (strain 04955) was promoted by chloramphenicol, which seemed to indicate a possible participation of the thiotemplate mechanism³⁰⁾ in the biosynthesis of etamycin. Because of the loose specificity of the thiotemplate system, there remain many possibilities to biochemically replace the constituent amino acid(s) in peptide antibiotics with structurally related compounds to produce novel, and hopefully more active homologues. Along this line of approach, we studied the controlled biosynthesis of neoviridogriseins by *Streptomyces* sp. P8648, and, as a result, could obtain more quantities of neoviridogriseins I, II and III. As detailed in the following papers, the two constituent amino acids (*allo*-hydroxy-D-proline and L-alanine) in viridogrisein were proved to be biochemically replaceable by D-proline and L- α -amino-*n*-butyric acid instead of *allo*-hydroxy-D-proline and L-alanine; neoviridogrisein I contains D-proline and L- α -amino-*n*-butyric acid instead of *allo*-hydroxy-D-proline and L-alanine; neoviridogrisein II D-proline instead of *allo*-hydroxy-D-proline; and neoviridogrisein III L- α -amino-*n*-butyric acid instead of L-alanine.

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