

Two distinct ubiquitin-proteolysis pathways in the fission yeast cell cycle

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The SCF complex (Skpl-Cullin-1-F-box) and the APC/cyclosome (anaphase-promoting complex) are two ubiquitin ligases that play a crucial role in eukaryotic cell cycle control. In fission yeast F-box/WD-repeat proteins Popl and Pop2, components of SCF are required for cell-cycle-dependent degradation of the cyclin-dependent kinase (CDK) inhibitor Ruml and the S-phase regulator Cdcl8. Accumulation of these proteins in *pop1* and *pop2* mutants leads to re-replication and defects in sexual differentiation. Despite structural and functional similarities, Popl and Pop2 are not redundant homologues. Instead, these two proteins form heterodimers as well as homodimers, such that three distinct complexes, namely SCF^{Pop1/Pop2}, SCF^{Pop1/Pop2} and SCF^{Pop2/Pop2}, appear to exist in the cell. The APC/cyclosome is responsible for inactivation of CDK/cyclins through the degradation of B-type cyclins. We have identified two novel components or regulators of this complex, called Apcl0 and Ste9, which are evolutionarily highly conserved. Apcl0 (and Ste9), together with Ruml, are required for the establishment of and progression through the Gl phase in fission yeast. We propose that dual downregulation of CDK, one via the APC/cyclosome and the other via the CDK inhibitor, is a universal mechanism that is used to arrest the cell cycle at Gl.

Keywords: anaphase-promoting complex (APC); cyclosome; Cullin; F-box; fission yeast; WD-repeat

1. INTRODUCTION

The SCF complex (Skpl-Cullin-l-F-box) and the APC/ cyclosome (anaphase-promoting complex) are two ubiquitin ligases (E3s) that play a pivotal role in cell cycle progression. Both complexes are composed of multiple protein subunits, most of which are evolutionarily conserved from vertebrates to yeasts. In fission yeast Popl and Pop2, members of an F-box/WD-repeat family are components of SCF. Popl and Pop2 are required for ubiquitin-dependent degradation of the cyclin-dependent kinase (CDK) inhibitor Ruml and the S-phase regulator Cdc18. Mutations in the pop1 and/or pop2 genes result in stabilization of these two cell cycle regulators, which leads to re-replication and failure to differentiate. Despite structural and functional similarities, Popl and Pop2 are not redundant homologues. Instead, these two proteins act independently and form heterodimers as well as homodimers in the cell. Therefore, there appear to be three distinct complexes, namely SCFPopl/Popl, SCFPopl/Pop2, and SCF^{Pop2/Pop2}, by which SCF might evolve a sophisticated mechanism to control a cell-cycle-dependent fluctuation of Ruml and Cdc18. As in other eukaryotes, Cullin-1 (called Pcul) comprises a platform for SCF^{Popl, Pop2}. We have found that cell-cycle-regulating

The APC/cyclosome is responsible for inactivation of CDK/cyclins through ubiquitin-dependent degradation of mitotic cyclins, and required for sister chromatid separation through the degradation of Cut2. In frogs, it has been shown that the APC/cyclosome forms the 20S complex, consisting of eight stoichiometric subunits that are conserved through evolution. We have identified a novel regulator of this complex, called Apcl0. Homologues of Apcl0 are found from budding yeast to humans. In budding yeast, Apcl0 (also called Docl) is also required for the degradation of mitotic cyclins and has been proposed to be a stoichiometric component of the APC/cyclosome. In fission yeast, our data suggest that Apcl0 is rather a positive regulator for this complex as Apcl0 does not co-sediment with the 20S complex. Nonetheless, Apcl0 does co-immunoprecipitate with this complex. We have shown that the APC/cyclosome, together with the CDK inhibitor Ruml, is required for the establishment of and progression through the Gl phase in fission yeast. We propose that dual downregulation of CDK, one via the APC/cyclosome and the other via the CDK inhibitor, is a universal mechanism that is used to arrest cell-cycle progression at Gl.

proteins other than Ruml and Cdcl8 are also degraded in a Popl- and Pop2-dependent manner. Therefore, it appears that SCF^{Pop1, Pop2} is required for ubiquitin-dependent degradation of a broader range of substrates than originally thought. Furthermore, we have evidence that shows fission yeast SCF is composed of F-box-containing proteins other than Popl and Pop2, as proposed in budding yeast SCF.

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2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

(a) E3-ubiquitin ligase as a crucial regulator for selective proteolysis

In the ubiquitin-proteasome-dependent proteolysis pathway, a ubiquitin ligase (E3), as well as a ubiquitin-conjugating enzyme (E2), is responsible for substrate selectivity and timing of degradation. Novel E3s, SCF and the APC/cyclosome play a pivotal role in cell-cycle progression. Recent studies in a variety of organisms and systems have begun to uncover the importance of these novel E3s in cell-cycle regulation. We have been investigating the molecular mechanisms underlying cell-cycle progression via ubiquitin-dependent selective proteolysis by using fission yeast, *Schizosaccharomyces pombe* as a convenient model system.

(b) Skp1-Cullin-1-F-box (SCF)

(i) Identification of pop1⁺ as a gene required for degradation of the CDK inhibitor and S-phase regulator

Studies of the fission yeast SCF E3-complex began when we isolated and characterized a mutant (designated pop1) that increased genome ploidy. Polyploidization in the pop1 mutants takes place via the occasional bypass of M phase, resulting in re-replication (S-phase-S-phase) of genomic DNA (Kominami & Toda 1997; Maekawa et al. 1998). In fission yeast, three distinct mechanisms are known to lead to polyploidization. One is a bypass of M phase, which arises from either mutations in genes encoding components of mitotic CDK/cyclins (cdc2 and cdc13), or overproduction of the CDK inhibitor Ruml, both of which result in inhibition of activities of mitotic CDK/cyclins without preventing S-phase progression (Broek et al. 1991; Hayles et al. 1994; Moreno & Nurse 1994; Correa-Bordes & Nurse 1995; Fisher & Nurse 1996; Jallepalli & Kelly 1996; Mondesert et al. 1996). The second mechanism is overproduction of the S-phase regulator Cdc18, which results in successive S phases (Nishitani & Nurse 1995; Jallepalli et al. 1997). The third is failure in proper chromosome segregation at anaphase, which is caused by mutations in genes involved in sister chromatid separation (Creanor & Mitchison 1990; Broek et al. 1991; Yanagida 1998).

Phenotypic similarities between the pop1 mutants and strains in which Ruml or Cdc18 is overproduced prompted us to examine the level of these two proteins in the pop1 mutants. It was found that Ruml and Cdcl8 accumulate to a high level in this mutant, suggesting that Popl is involved in the stability of these two proteins. Subsequent analysis showed that (i) Ruml and Cdcl8 are normally degraded through the ubiquitin-proteasome pathway; (ii) ubiquitination of Ruml and Cdc18 does not occur or is dramatically reduced in the pop1 mutants; and (iii) the reason that the *pop1* mutants re-replicate is mainly due to the accumulation of Ruml. The pop1 + gene was cloned and found to encode a protein that contains an F-box motif and seven WD40-repeats (Neer et al. 1994; Bai et al. 1996). In budding yeast, it was found that Cdc4, which shows the highest homology to Popl, is required for ubiquitin-dependent degradation of the CDK inhibitor Sicl and Farl (Schwob et al. 1994; Henchoz et al. 1997) and also of the S-phase regulator Cdc6, the budding yeast homologue of Cdc18 (Piatti et al. 1996; Drury et al. 1997). It was also reported in mammalian cells that the CDK inhibitor p27^{Kipl} was degraded through the ubiquitin–proteasome pathway (Pagano *et al.* 1995). Taken together, these results suggest that the molecular mechanisms underlying cell-cycle progression via proteolysis of the CDK inhibitors and S-phase regulators are evolutionarily conserved.

(ii) Identification of components of SCF and novel substrates

Extensive studies from various laboratories mainly performed on budding yeast have established the notion that SCF is composed of Skpl, Cullin-1 (in budding yeast Cdc53) and F-box-containing proteins like Cdc4, together with Cdc34/Ubc3 (E2-ubiquitin-conjugating enzyme) (Schwob et al. 1994; Bai et al. 1996; Mathias et al. 1996; Willems et al. 1996; Feldman et al. 1997; Skowyra et al. 1997). The F-box is a motif that is responsible for an interaction with Skpl. There are a number of proteins containing an F-box even within the same organisms (15 in budding yeast and at least five in fission yeast) and experimental data suggest that SCF comprises multiple populations depending on which F-box-containing proteins form a complex (Patton et al. 1998a). For clarity, to show which F-box-containing proteins bind SCF, SCF complexed with particular F-box-containing proteins is referred to in the form of a superscript suffix, such as SCF^{Cdc4}. SCF is conserved in vertebrates as Skpl is a highly conserved protein; in fact, the gene was originally cloned from human cells (Zhang et al. 1995) and Skp2, F-box-containing protein, forms a complex with Skpl and Cullin-1 (Lisztwan et al. 1998; Lyapina et al. 1998; Yu et al. 1998), although cell-cycle regulators that are degraded via SCF in human cells still remain to be established.

In fission yeast, we have identified $pop2^+$, which encodes another F-box/WD-repeat protein with significant homology to Popl and Cdc4 (overall identity of amino-acid sequence is around 35% to both proteins). Deletion of pop2⁺ results in defective phenotypes similar to the pop1 mutants; re-replication and sterility (Kominami et al. 1998a; Jallepalli et al. 1998). Immunoblotting analysis indicates that as in the pop1 mutants, in the pop2 mutants the level of Ruml and Cdcl8 increases to a high level. Interestingly, the profile of the accumulation of these two proteins between pop1 and pop2 mutants differs in that more Ruml accumulates in the pop1 mutants, while more Cdcl8 accumulates in the pop2 mutants. The double poplpop2 mutants are viable, but result in even more accumulation of Ruml and Cdc18. Popl and Pop2 bind Cdc18 (Kominami & Toda 1997; Jallepalli et al. 1998). This suggests that there is a difference in specificity of substrate recognition between Popl and Pop2. Importantly, despite structural and functional similarities, Popl and Pop2 are not redundant homologues. Overproduction of Popl fails to rescue defects of the pop2 mutants and vice versa. Binding experiments using the tagged products derived from multicopy plasmids show that Popl and Pop2 form a heterocomplex in the cell. Furthermore, Popl and Pop2 also form homocomplexes. Therefore, it appears that three distinct complexes exist (SCF^{Popl/Popl}, SCF^{Popl/Pop2} and SCF^{Pop2/Pop2}), that are responsible for the elaborate regulation of the level of cellcycle regulators through SCF (figure 1; Kominami et al. 1998a).

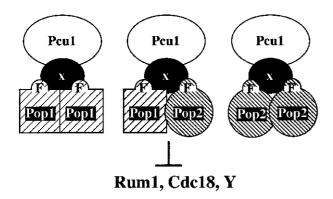


Figure 1. Model of fission yeast SCF^{Pop1, Pop2} complexes. The $\widetilde{SCF}^{Pop1,\ Pop2}$ complex comprises three distinct forms in terms of compositions of Pop1 and Pop2—SCF $^{Pop1/Pop1},$ SCF $^{Pop1/Pop2},$ SCF^{Pop2/Pop2}—which are responsible for the recognition of substrates (Rum1, Cdc18 and something else also, denoted by Y) and subsequent ubiquitination and degradation via the 26S proteasome. Most probably a Skp1 homologue (denoted by X) is also a component of SCF.

We have some evidence that Ruml and Cdcl8 are not the sole substrates to be degraded through SCFPopl, Pop2. These include B-type cyclins other than Cdcl3 (Bueno & Russell 1993; Connonlly & Beach 1994; Obara-Ishihara & Okayama 1994). B-type cyclins are believed to be degraded through the APC/cyclosome (Stern & Nurse 1998). These results raise the interesting possibility that some cell-cycle regulators are degraded via two distinct E3 pathways, and suggest that there is cross-talk between SCF and the APC/cyclosome.

Cullin-1 was first identified as a mutation (cul-1) in Caenorhabditis elegans that is defective in Gl-phase regulation (Kipreos et al. 1996). It is part of a large protein family: at least six members exist in humans (Cullin-1, -2, -3, -4A, -4B and -5). Cullin-1, both in budding yeast (called Cdc53) and human cells, acts as a platform for components of SCF (Feldman et al. 1997; Skowyra et al. 1997). We have identified a fission yeast homologue of cullin-1 and cullin-3 (designated pcu1 + and pcu3+, respectively) in the S. pombe genome database (which is located at the Sanger Centre, Cambridge, UK). Gene-disruption experiments of the pcu1+ gene showed that cells deleted for pcu1+ re-replicate, consistent with the idea that Pcul is a component of fission yeast SCFPopl, Pop2 (Kominami et al. 1998a). In fact, Pcul forms a complex with Popl and Pop2. In contrast to Pcul, Pcu3 is not a component of SCFPopl, nor does it regulate genome ploidy. Instead, Pcu3 appears to be involved in a stress-responsive signal transduction pathway, as the loss of Pcu3 results in hypersensitivity to various stress conditions including DNA damage and drugs (Kominami et al. 1998a). It is of note that Pcu3 is nonetheless involved in, either directly or indirectly, cell cycle progression, as pcu3-deleted cells are delayed at G2/M-transition. Recently, Cullin members other than Cullin-1 have started to be analysed in other organisms and it will be interesting to see the biological role of each Cullin and the molecules with which they interact (Pause et al. 1997; Du et al. 1998; Lonergan et al. 1998; Osaka et al. 1998).

It should be noted that, unlike pop1 + and pop2 +, pcu1 + is essential for cell viability. Therefore, it appears that fission yeast SCF, in which Pcul acts as a platform, consists of F-box-containing components other than Popl and Pop2, which play a role essential to cell viability. This situation is similar to that of budding yeast SCF, in which at least three distinct F-box-containing proteins are known to be components of SCF (SCF Cdc4, SCF Grrl and SCF^{Met30}: Jaquenoud et al. 1998; Kishi et al. 1998; Li & Johnston 1997; Patton et al. 1998a). This complexity of regulation through F-box-containing subunit exchange is called 'combinatorial control' (Patton et al. 1998b).

(iii) Mechanisms underlying substrate recognition by SCFPop1, Pop2

Detailed molecular mechanisms concerning how SCF, in particular F-box-containing proteins, binds substrates for ubiquitination and transfers them to the proteasome for degradation in a temporally and spatially specific manner remain to be determined. It has been shown that, at least in the case of Cdc4, Popl and Pop2, substrates such as Sicl, Farl, Ruml and Cdcl8 need to be phosphorylated by CDK/cyclins for recognition and degradation. In other words, phosphorylation via CDK/cyclins is a prerequisite for these substrates to be degraded by SCF. In fact, mutant forms of Sicl, Ruml and Cdcl8, in which the consensus CDK-phosphorylation sites are either substituted or deleted, become highly stable and fail to bind SCF (Lanker et al. 1996; Schneider et al. 1996; Henchoz et al. 1997; Jallepalli et al. 1997, 1998; Verma et al. 1997a,b; Baum et al. 1998; Benito et al. 1998; Nishizawa et al. 1998).

(c) APC/cyclosome

(i) A role of the APC/cyclosome in G1 cell-cycle arrest

It has been shown unambiguously that the APC/cyclosome is required for the onset of anaphase (King et al. 1996; Hershko 1997). It has also been shown that activity of the APC/cyclosome persists from anaphase throughout the Gl phase in various organisms, including yeast and animal cells (Amon et al. 1994; Brandeis & Hunt 1996; Yamano et al. 1996). This suggests not only that the APC/ cyclosome is required for the onset of anaphase, but also that it might be crucial for the maintenance of the Gl phase.

We have proposed previously the existence of the molecular mechanisms underlying Gl cell-cycle arrest upon nutritional deprivation in fission yeast (Kumada et al. 1995). A novel genetic screen for identifying factors required for this Gl cell-cycle arrest has been undertaken and has revealed the following simple mechanism. Gl cell-cycle arrest is achieved through dual downregulation of CDK/cyclins, one via direct physical inhibition of the CDK/cyclins by the Ruml CDK inhibitor and the other via protein degradation of cyclins by the APC/cyclosome (figure 2; Kominami et al. 1998b). We propose that dual downregulation of CDK is a universal mechanism that is used to arrest cell-cycle progression in Gl not only in fission yeast but also in other eukaryotes. As described before, the level of Ruml is regulated by SCF^{Popl, Pop2}. Thus Gl cell-cycle arrest is regulated independently by two distinct E3s, another example of cross-talk between SCF and the APC/cyclosome. However, it should be noted that in this case, these two E3s function in an

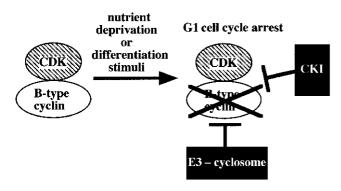


Figure 2. Dual downregulation of CDK/cyclins to achieve G1 cell-cycle arrest and differentiation. The APC/cyclosome plays a role in not only the onset of anaphase during mitotic cycle but also the establishment and maintenance of the G1 phase upon nutritional deprivation or differentiation conditions. To achieve proper G1 cell-cycle arrest, CDK/cyclins need to be downregulated in a dual manner, one via physical inhibition by the CDK inhibitor and the other via degradation of cyclins by the APC/cyclosome.

antagonistic manner: SCF inhibits the occurrence of Gl via degradation of Ruml, while the APC/cyclosome promotes it via degradation of B-type cyclins.

(ii) Novel regulators of the APC/cyclosome

Upon screening of mutants that are defective in Gl cell cycle arrest, we have identified, in addition to rum1+ encoding the CDK inhibitor, two other genes that are important for the APC/cyclosome activities. One gene encodes Ste9/Srwl, a member of the WD-repeat proteins (Yamaguchi et al. 1997; Kitamura et al. 1998). Ste9/Srwl is evolutionarily conserved and is the homologue of Hctl/ Cdhl in budding yeast (Schwab et al. 1997; Visintin et al. 1997) and Fzr in Drosophila (Sigrist & Lehner 1997), which has been shown to be a positive regulator of the APC/cyclosome. The other gene, called apc10⁺, which has been identified in our screen, is also highly conserved in the evolution of yeast to human. In budding yeast, the homologue (APC10/DOC1) has been proposed to be a subunit of the APC/cyclosome (Hwang & Murray 1997; Zachariae et al. 1998). Our analysis in fission yeast, however, suggests that Apcl0 is a regulator, rather than a subunit of the APC/cyclosome, as Apcl0 does not cosediment with the 20S APC/cyclosome (figure 3). Furthermore, in the temperature-sensitive apc10 mutations, this 20S complex is still intact. This clearly contrasts with the situation of mutant stoichiometric subunits of this complex (cut4, cut9 and nuc2) in this organism, where the 20S complex is physically disrupted (Yamashita et al. 1996; Yamada et al. 1997). It has been shown that the native size of the budding yeast APC/cyclosome is somewhat larger (36S: Zachariae et al. 1996) than that reported both for animals (20S: King et al. 1995; Sudakin et al. 1995) and for fission yeast (20S: Yamashita et al. 1996; Yamada et al. 1997). It is possible that during evolution, Apc10, which is essential for the activity of APC/ cyclosome, is incorporated into the APC/cyclosome as a core complex in budding yeast; or, conversely, in animal and fission yeast cells, Apcl0 gains a regulatory role, so the binding between Apcl0 and the APC/cyclosome becomes more loose. It should be noted that although

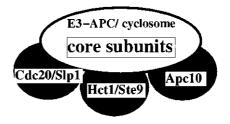


Figure 3. Subunits and regulators of the APC/cyclosome. The APC/cyclosome comprises stoichiometric core subunits (in frogs Apc1–8) and a number of regulators. These include two distinct WD-repeat proteins Cdc20/Slp1 (the names used in reference to budding yeast/fission yeast) and Hct1/Ste9, and Apc10. Cdc20/Slp1 (called Fizzy in *Drosophila* and vertebrates) is a positive regulator of the APC/cyclosome, which binds directly and activates this complex (Matsumoto 1997; Fang et al. 1998; Kramer et al. 1998; Lim et al. 1998; Lorca et al. 1998; Wolf & Jackson 1998).

Apcl0 does not co-sediment with the 20S core complex, it does co-immunoprecipitate with the APC/cyclosome (Kominami *et al.* 1998*b*).

3. FUTURE QUESTIONS

In mammalian cells, counterparts for yeast Cdc4 and Popl have not been identified yet. In view of the high degree of conservation of other components in SCF such as Cullin-1 and Skpl, it is likely that mammalian cells also have F-box/WD-repeat proteins as components of SCF. In fission yeast, by forming three distinct complexes, $SCF^{Popl/Popl}$, $SCF^{Popl/Pop2}$ and $SCF^{Pop2/Pop2}$, SCF has appeared to evolve a sophisticated mechanism to control the level of Ruml and Cdcl8. It is of interest to see whether this degree of regulation by hetero- and homodimerization between F-box-containing proteins in a single SCF complex is conserved in evolution. Also, as there are a number of distinct F-box-containing proteins in the same organism, how SCF specifically forms a complex with distinct F-box-containing proteins is an important question. Finally, the identification of more substrates that are degraded via each form of SCF and the molecular mechanisms underlying substrate recognition by SCF need to be explored. One of the important functions of the APC/cyclosome is the establishment and maintenance of the Gl phase. As the mutants we have isolated in fission yeast are impaired in differentiation due to failure to arrest at Gl, some mutations in genes encoding subunits or regulators of the APC/cyclosome in human cells might result in the occurrence of cancerous cells. How the APC/cyclosome is regulated through the cell cycle is, therefore, a crucial question to be addressed in terms of eukaryotic growth control.

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- **Note added in proof**. After submission of the manuscript, a number of papers have been published which describe substrates and F-box proteins of metazoan SCF.

These include β -catenin, $I\kappa B\alpha$ and HIV-1 Vpu (for the F-box β-TrCP protein, reviewed in Laney & Hochstrasser (1999 Cell 97, 427-430) and Maniatis (1999 Genes Dev. 13, 505-510)), and E2F-1 and p27^{Kipl} (for the F-box Skp2 protein, Marti et al. (1999 Nature Cell Biol. 1, 14-19) and Tsvetkov et al. (1999 Curr. Biol. 9, 661-664)).

Discussion

- M. Hochstrasser (University of Chicago, USA). You mentioned that Cig2 has a destruction box. Is this required for its degradation and, if not, is there a PEST sequence in the protein?
- T. Toda. The destruction box of Cig2 is important for its degradation by the APC. We don't know what sequence in Cig2 is required for its degradation by the Popl pathway.
- R. T. Hunt (ICRF Clare Hall Laboratories, Hertfordshire, UK). Have homologues of Cdc34 or Skpl been found in S. pombe?
- T. Toda. Not yet.
- K. A. Nasmyth (Research Institute for Molecular Pathology, Vienna, Austria). I would like to make a comment on the Apcl0. I wonder whether you have tried to 'pull down' the APC from extracts to see the other stoichiometric subunits and failed to have seen Apc10. The reason I say this is because the budding yeast results are very clear—Apcl0 is present in stoichiometric amounts.
- T. Toda. We think that the fact that the 20S complex is not affected in the temperature-sensitive mutants suggests that Apcl0 might not be an integral component of the APC.

- T. Humphrey (MRC, Harwell, Didcot, Oxon, UK). Your analysis of the S. pombe Cullin disruption showed a clear 4C peak of DNA content. If this is the sole Cullin involved in Ruml and Cdc18 degradation, then you should get quite a high level of expression of these proteins and, therefore, you should see more re-replication.
- T. Toda. In the *pcul* mutants, other things like Cig2 are being overexpressed, which might counteract the effects of overproduction of a single protein.
- M. Tyers (Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute, Toronto, Canada). I am interested in the Popl-Pop2 heterodimers. If you overexpress either Popl or Pop2, do you see any dominant phenotypes similar to the loss of either protein?
- T. Toda. Overproduction of either pop1 or pop2 produces only very mild phenotypes. However, in the pop2 mutant background, for example, overexpression of pop1+ has a more severe effect.
- M. Yanagida (CREST Research Project, Kyoto University, Japan). Why are only Nuc2 and Apcl0 found to be required for arresting cells in G1? There are many other apc mutants which do not have this phenotype.
- T. Toda. The simplest explanation is that our screen is not saturated.
- M. Yanagida (CREST Research Project, Kyoto University, Japan). Is it possible that Apcl0 is only bound to the APC during
- T. Toda. We have tried to examine this but we don't see any significant increase in the amount of APC-associated Apcl0 in Gl.