

A mutant γ -glutamyltransferase with improved transpeptidase activity

Michela Massone,^a Alessandra M. Albertini,^b Cinzia Calvio,^b Giovanna Speranza,^a Carlo F. Morelli^a

^aUniversità degli Studi di Milano, Dipartimento di Chimica via Golgi, 19 -20133 Milano

^bUniversità degli Studi di Pavia Dipartimento di Biologia e Biotecnologie “Lazzaro Spallanzani” via Ferrata, 9 – 27100 Pavia

e-mail: carlo.morelli@unimi.it

Despite their potential applicative interest as biologically active compounds and as flavor enhancers, γ -glutamyl derivatives are commercially underexploited compounds. This is mainly due to the difficulties connected with their supply at a reasonable cost. As a consequence, enzymatic approaches to their preparation, based on the use of γ -glutamyltransferases (GGTs), have been proposed¹ to circumvent both the low-yielding extractive procedures from natural sources and the troublesome chemical synthesis, rendered uneconomical by the need of protection and deprotection steps.

GGTs catalyze the transfer of a γ -glutamyl moiety from a donor substrate (e.g. glutathione or glutamine) to the primary amino group of an acceptor compound in a so-called transpeptidation reaction through the formation of a γ -glutamyl-enzyme intermediate. However, also the use of GGTs as biocatalysts is not free from drawbacks. In addition to the transpeptidase activity, GGTs show a non-negligible hydrolase activity towards both the donor substrate and the newly formed transpeptidation product, affording irreversibly glutamic acid.²

In our ongoing studies on bacterial GGTs, we found that the presence of the lid loop – a short amino acids sequence covering the active site in most of the known GGTs – not only affects substrate selection, but also modulates hydrolase/transpeptidase activities.³ Within the TailGluTran Project,⁴ aimed at the development of mutant GGTs with improved transpeptidase activity, is currently under investigation a mutant enzyme obtained by inserting the sequence of the lid loop on the structure of a GGT naturally lacking it. The mutant enzyme shows promising high transpeptidase activity with respect to wild type counterparts and represents a starting point for further modifications in the search of a suitable biocatalyst intended for preparative purposes.

References:

- [1] Speranza, G.; Morelli, C. F. *J. Mol. Catal. B: enzymatic*. **2012**, *84*, 65-71..
- [2] Morelli, C. F.; Calvio, C.; Biagiotti, M.; Speranza, G. *FEBS J.* **2014**, *281*-232-245.
- [3] C. Calvio, F. Romagnuolo, F. Vulcano, G. Speranza, C. F. Morelli, *Enz. Micr. Technol.* **2018**, *114*, 55-62
- [4] The TailGluTran Project is funded by Fondazione Cariplo, Bando 2016 sulle Biotecnologie Industriali e la Bioeconomia, n. 2016-0741.