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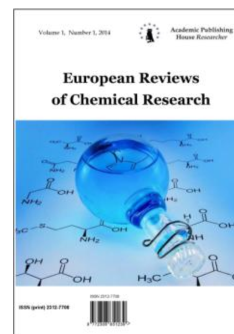

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The Development of Biosynthesis of 2H- and 13C-labeled Amino acids and Proteins with Various Levels of Isotopic Enrichment Using Bacterial Objects

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Abstract

By the method of microbiological synthesis were obtained and analyzed by electron impact mass-spectrometry 2H, 13C-labeled amino acids of a facultative methylotrophic bacterium Brevibacterium methylicum and an obligate methylotrophic bacterium Methylobacillus flagellatum and 2H, 13C-labeled amino acids of the total protein of biomass obtained on media containing as a source of stable isotopes [2H]methanol, [13C]methanol and 2H2O. It was also performed the incorporation of L-[2,3,4,5,6-2H]phenylalanine, L-[3,5-2H]tyrosine and L-[2,4,5,6,7-2H]tryptopan into the membrane integral protein bacteriorhodopsin synthesised in purple membranes of photo-organotrophic halobacterium Halobacterium halobium ET 1001. For mass-spectrometric analysis the multicomponential mixtures of 2H- and 13C-labeled amino acids, derived from cultural media and protein hydrolysates after hydrolysis in 6 M 2HCl (3% phenol) and 2 M Ba(OH)2 were modified into N-benzyloxycarbonyl-derivatives of amino acids as well as into methyl esters of N-5-(dimethylamino)naphthalene-1-sulfonyl chloride (dansyl) derivatives of [2H, 13C]amino acids,

which were preparative separated using a method of reverse-phase HCLP. Biosynthetically obtained 2H- and 13C-labeled amino acids represented the mixtures differing in quantities of isotopes incorporated into molecule. The levels of 2H and 13C enrichment of secreted amino acids and amino acid resigues of protein were found to vary from 20,0 atom.% to L-leucine/isoleucine up to 97,5 atom.% for L-alanine depending on concentration of 2H- and 13C-labelled substrates.

Keywords: stable isotopes, methylotrophic bacteria, halobacteria, isotope labeled amino acids, bacteriorhodopsin

Introduction

The enrichment of molecules by stable isotopes (2H, 13C, 15N, 18O) is an important tool for a variety of biochemical and metabolic studies with amino acids and other biologically active substances (BAS) [1]. The preferential usage of stable isotopes as compared to their counterparts are stipulated by the lack of radioactive radiation hazards and determination of the localization of the label in the molecule by high resolution techniques, including NMR [2], IR spectroscopy [3], and mass spectrometry [4]. The development of these methods for the detection of stable isotopes in biological probes in recent years has significantly increased the efficiency of biological research, as well as studies of the structure and mechanism of action of cellular BAS at the molecular level. In particular, 2H- and 13C-labeled amino acids are used for studying of the spatial structure and conformational changes of proteins, the interaction of protein molecules and in chemical syntheses of some isotope-labeled compounds based on them [5]. For example, isotopically labeled L-phenylalanine is used in the synthesis of peptide hormones and neurotransmitters [6].

An important factor in studies using labeled amino acids is their accessibility. 2H and 13C-labeled amino acids can be prepared using chemical, enzymatic and microbiological methods. The chemical synthesis is multistage often requires a large expenditure of costly labeled reagents and substrates and leads to a racemic mixture of D- and L-enantiomers for separation of which is required the special separation methods [7]. Fine chemical synthesis of 2H- and 13C-labeled amino acids is linked with using a combination of chemical and enzymatic approaches [8].

Microbiology provides an alternative to chemical synthesis a method for obtaining 2H- and 13C-labeled amino acids, which leads to high yields of the synthesized products, the effective incorporation of stable isotopes in the molecule, and preservation of the natural configuration of synthesized [2H, 13C] compounds. For the preparation of biosynthetic 2H- and 13C-labeled amino acids use several approaches, one of which is consisted in uniform enrichment of synthesized compounds at the carbon skeleton in the molecule due to using the bacterial strains growing on selective media containing as a source of stable isotopes [13C] methanol, [2H]methanol and 2H2O [9, 10]. This approach also involves the use of complex chemical components of biomass grown on [2H, 13C] growth substrates with further separating and fractionating of target 2H- and 13C-labeled compounds. Another approach is a site-specific enrichment of amino acids at certain positions of molecules due to assimilation by cell the isotopically labeled precursors such as [1,4-13C]succinate, [1, 2-13C]acetate and [1-13C]lactate [11].

The present work is a continuation of the research toward to the biosynthetic preparation of 2H- and 13C-labeled amino acids due to the disposal by the cell of low-molecular labeled substrates – [2H]methanol, [13C]methanol and 2H2O followed by the monitoring of the inclusion of stable isotopes of 2H and 13C into molecules of biosynthesized amino acids by electron impact mass spectrometry. The sensitivity of EI mass spectrometry is 10-9–10-11 mol in samples, which is considerably higher than the IR and NMR spectroscopy. This method combined with RP-HPLC method has worked well for the study of the level of isotopic enrichment of [2H, 13C]amino acid molecules in the composition of their multi component mixtures as the samples of culture liquids of bacterial strains, producers of amino acids and hydrolysates of total protein of biomass obtained on the minimal growth medium M9 containing isotopic labeled substrates.

Material and methods

Objects of research

Investigations were carried out with genetically marked strains of bacteria obtained from the culture collection of the Russian National Collection of Industrial Microorganisms (PMBC) State Research Institute of Genetics and Selection of Industrial Microorganisms:

1) Brevibacterium methylicum VKPM B 5652 – L-leucine-dependent strain of facultative methylotrophic bacteria producing L-phenylalanine;

2) Methylobacillus flagellatum KT – L-isoleucine-dependent strain of obligate methylotrophic bacteria producing L-leucine;

3) Halobacterium halobium ET 1001 – the pigment-containing strain of photo organotrophic halobacteria, the ability to synthesize bacteriorhodopsin.

Chemicals

In the research was used 2H2O (99,9 atom.% 2H), 2HCl (95,6 atom.% 2H), [2H]methanol (98,5 atom.% 2H) and [13C]methanol (99,5 atom.% 13C) obtained from the Russian Scientific-technical Center "Isotope" (St. Petersburg, Russia). L-[2,3,4,5,6-2H5]phenylalanine (90 atom.% 2H), L- [3,5-2H2]tyrosine (96 atom.% 2H) and L-[2,4,5,6,7-2H5]tryptophan (98 atom.% 2H) were obtained by chemical isotopic exchange (methods of obtaining are listed in [12]). For the synthesis of amino acids used N-5-(dimethylamino)naphthalene-1-sulfonyl chloride (dansyl chloride), chem. pur. ≥99,0% (HPLC) (Sigma Aldrich, USA), benzyloxycarbonyl (CBz-chloride), ≥98,0% (HPLC) (Sigma Aldrich, USA) and diazomethane, prepared from N-nitrosomethylurea, ≥99,0% (HPLC) (Sigma Aldrich, USA).

Growth conditions of microorganisms and isolation
of 2H, 13C-labeled proteins and amino acids

The cultivation of methylotrophic bacteria B. methylicum and M. flagellatum was performed in a mineral M9 medium in Erlenmeyer flasks with 250 ml volume filled up with 50 ml of the growth medium as described in [13], using as a source of stable isotopes [2H]methanol, [13C]methanol and 2H2O in the presence of L-leucine for B. methylicum and L-isoleucine for M. flagellatum in concentrations of 10 mg/l. Cells were separated by centrifugation in the centrifuge T-24 ("Heraues Sepatech", Germany) (10000 g, 20 min). In the culture liquids were analyzed the secreted amino acids.

To isolate the protein fraction of the total biomass the cells were washed twice with distilled water followed by centrifugation (10000 g, 20 min), exposed to ultrasound at 40 kHz (3×15 min) and centrifuged. The resulting precipitate (10 mg) obtained after the separation of lipids and pigments by a mixture of organic solvents: chloroform–methanol–acetone (2: 1: 1) was used as the protein fraction of the total biomass.

For biosynthesis of deuterium labeled bacteriorhodopsin used the synthetic medium containing 18 amino acids, wherein unlabelled aromatic L-amino acids – phenylalanine, tyrosine and tryptophan were replaced by their deuterated analogues – L-[2,3,4,5,6-2H5]phenylalanine, L-[3,5- 2H2]tyrosine and L-[2,4,5,6,7-2H5]tryptophan (the amounts of components are given in g/l): (D,L-alanine – 0,43; L-arginine – 0,4; D,L-aspartic acid – 0,45; L-cysteine – 0,05; L-glutamic acid – 1,3; L-glycine – 0,06; D,L-histidine – 0,3; D,L-isoleucine – 0,44; L-leucine – 0,8; L-lysine – 0,85; D,L-methionine – 0,37; L-phenylalanine – 0,26; L-proline – 0,05; D,L-serine – 0,61; D,L-threonine – 0,5; L-tyrosine – 0,2; D,L-tryptophan – 0,5; D,L-valine – 1,0); nucleotides (adenosine-5-monophosphate – 0,1; uridine-5-monophosphate – 0,1); salts (NaCl – 250; MgSO4.7H2O – 20, KCI – 2; NH4Cl – 0,5; KNO3 – 0,1; KH2PO4 – 0,05; K2HPO4 – 0,05; sodium citrate – 0,5; MnSO4.H2O – 3,10-4; CaCl2.6H2O – 0,065; ZnSO4.7H2O – 4,10-5; FeSO4.7H2O – 5,10-4; CuSO4.H2O – 5.10-5); glycerin – 1,0; growth factors (biotin – 0,1.10-3; folic acid – 10.10-3; vitamin B12 – 2.10-4).

For the isolation of the purple membrane the cell fraction obtained after the separation of the culture liquid and washing with doubly distilled water (100–150 mg) was suspended in 100 ml of 0,1 M Tris-HCl (pH = 7,6), then 1 mg of DNase I were added and incubated for 5–6 hours at 37 0C, then diluted with distilled water to 200 ml and incubated for 15 hours at 4 0C. The precipitate was washed with distilled water followed by separation of the aqueous fraction to give colorless washing water. The purity of the resulting purple membrane suspension (in H2O) was monitored with a spectrophotometer Beckman DU-6, (Beckman Coulter, USA) at the ratio of the absorption bands at λ = 280/568 nm (molar absorbance coefficients: ε280 = 1,1.105 M-1 cm-1 [14] and ε568 = 6,3.104 M-1 cm-1 [15]).

Bacteriorhodopsin was isolated by the method of D. Osterhelta [16], improved by the authors due to the colloidal dissolution (solubilization) of bacteriorhodopsin containing purple membrane fraction (50 mg) in 2 ml of 0,5% of sodium dodecyl sulfate (SDS) in H2O and precipitating protein by 5 fold excess of methanol in the cold (0 0C). The imput of bacteriorhodopsin was 17–20 mg.

Pigments and lipids extracted with chloroform–methanol–acetone (2: 1: 1) according to Bligh and Dyer method [17].

Hydrolysis of total protein was performed with 6 M 2HCl (3% phenol in 2H2O) or 2 M Ba(OH)2 (+110 0C, 24 h).

Synthesis of N-Dns-[2H, 13C] amino acids

For the synthesis of N-Dns-[2H, 13C]amino acids to 4–5 mg of lyophilized samples of culture liquid and protein hydrolysates dissolved in 1 ml of 2 M NaHCO3, pH = 9–10 was added portionwise with stirring 25,5 mg of dansyl chloride in 2 ml of acetone. The reaction mixture was kept under stirring for 1 hour at t = 40 0C, then acidified with 2 M HCl to pH = 3,0 and extracted with ethyl acetate (3×5 ml). The combined extract was washed with water until pH = 7,0, dried over anhydrous sodium sulfate, the solvent was removed at 10 mm. Hg.

Synthesis of methyl esters of N-Dns-[2H, 13C] amino acids

Synthesis of methyl esters of N-Dns-[2H, 13C]amino acids was carried out with using diazomethane. For obtaining of diazomethane to 20 ml of 40% KOH dissolved in 40 ml of diethyl ether was added 3,0 g of wet nitrosomethylurea and stirred at ice-water bath for 15–20 min. After intensive gassing closure ether layer was separated, washed with ice water until pH = 7,0, dried over anhydrous sodium sulfate, and further used to treat N-[2H, 13C]-Dns-amino acids in composition of culture liquids and hydrolysates of total proteins of biomass.

Synthesis of N-Cbz-[2H, 13C] amino acids

For the synthesis of N-Cbz-[2H, 13C]amino acids to 1,5 ml cooled to 0 0C of culture liquid solution (50 mg) or protein hydrolyzate (5,4 mg) in 4 M NaOH were added in portions with stirring 2 ml of 4 M NaOH and 28,5 mg of benzyloxycarbonyl. The reaction mixture was kept at 0 0C, stirred for about 3 hours, acidified with 2 M HCl to pH = 3,0 and extracted with ethyl acetate (3×5 ml). The combined extract was washed with water until pH = 7,0, dried over anhydrous sodium sulfate, the solvent was removed at 10 mm. Hg.

Methods for analytical determination of
2H- and 13C-labeled amino acids and proteins

TLC of derivatives of 2H- and 13C-labeled amino acids was performed on plates with Silufol UV-254 ("Kavalier", Slovakia) in solvent systems: chloroform–methanol–acetic acid, 10:1:0,3, vol.% (A) for N-Cbz-[2H, 13C]amino-acids, and methanol–chloroform–acetone, 7:1:1, vol.% (B) for methyl esters of N-Dns-[2H, 13C] amino asids. N-Cbz-[2H, 13C]amino acids were detected by UV absorbance at λ = 254 nm. Methyl esters of N-Dns-[2H, 13C]amino acids were detected by their fluorescence in UV light. Secreted L-phenylalanine and L-leucine were determined with a spectrophotometer Beckman DU- 6 ("Beckman Coulter", USA) at λ = 540 nm in 10 ml samples of liquid culture (LC) after the treatment with 1% of ninhydrin. The electrophoresis of bacteriorhodopsin was performed in 12,5% PAGE with 0,1% SDS. The samples for electrophoresis were prepared by standard method (protocol of LKB Company, Sweden). For the quantitative determination of the protein synthesized in the cell, the scanning was conducted in solution with Coomassie blue R-250 using a gel electrophoretic laser densitometer CDS-200 (Beckman Coulter, USA).

Analytical and preparative separation of
methyl esters of N-Dns-[2H, 13C] amino acids

Analytical and preparative separation of the mixture of methyl esters of N-Dns-[2H, 13C] of amino acids from the culture liquid and protein hydrolysates was carried out at t = 20±25 0C by RP HPLC on a liquid chromatograph Knauer Smartline (Knauer, Germany) equipped with a UV detector UF-2563 and integrator-R 3A (Shimadzu, Japan) using 250×10 mm column with the

stationary phase of Separon SGX C18, 7 μm (Kova, SK); mobile phase: (A) acetonitril–trifluoroacetic acid = 100:0,1–0,5 vol.% and (B) acetonitrile = 100 vol.% under the gradient elution conditions; sample volume – 50–100 μl; elution rate – 1,5 ml/min. The yield of methyl esters of the individual N-Dns-[2H, 13C] amino acids was 75–89%; the chromatographic purity – 95–98%.

Ion exchange chromatography of protein hydrolysates

Ion exchange chromatography of protein hydrolysates was performed on a Biotronic LC 5001 apparatus ("Eppendorf-Nethleler-Hinz", Germany) using a column with Biotronic resin BIC 2710; t = 20±25 0C; 3,2×230 mm; stationary phase: sulfonated styrene (7,25 % of cross-linking) resin UR-30 (Beckman Spinco, USA); mobile phase – 0,2 M Na-citrate buffer; operating pressure – 50–60 atm; feed rate of Na-citrate buffer – 18,5; ninhydrin – 9,25 ml/h; detection at λ = 570 nm and λ = 440 nm (for proline).

Mass spectrometry derivatives [2H, 13C]amino acids

Mass spectra of electron impact of [2H, 13C]amino acid derivatives were recorded on a MB-80 A (Hitachi, Japan) with a double focusing with ionizing voltage of 70 eV, an accelerating voltage of 8 kV and the temperature of the cathode source of 180–200 0C. The scanning of samples was analyzed at a resolution of 7500 arbitrary units using 10% image sharpness.

Results and discussions

Isolation of 2H and 13C -labeled amino acids from culture liquids and protein hydrolysates

The objects of the study were obtained by mutagenesis of L-phenylalanine-producing strain of the facultative methylotrophic bacteria Brevibacterium methylicum, assimilating methanol via xylulose-5-monophosphate cycle of carbon assimilation, and L-leucine-producing strain of obligate methylotrophic bacteria Methylobacillus flagellatum, implements a 2-keto-3 -deoxy-gluconate aldolase variant of ribulose-5-monophosphate cycle of carbon assimilation. To compensate auxotrophy for L-leucine and L-isoleucine, these amino acids were added into the growth medium in the protonated form. The levels of accumulation of L-phenylalanine and L-leucine in liquid cultures (LC) of these strains-producers reached values of 0,8 and 1,0 g/l respectively [18, 19]. The inclusion of deuterium into the molecules of secreted amino acids and total proteins was carried out via the cultivation of the strain of B. methylicum on mineral M9 medium with 2H2O and protonated methanol, as the level of inclusion of 2H into the amino acid molecules due to assimilation of [2H]methanol is negligible.

Since the cell assimilates hydrogen (deuterium) atoms from H2O (2H2O) environment, we selected conditions of deuterium enrichment of amino acid molecules and proteins under a stepwise increase in concentration of 2H2O in growth media as shown in Table 1. The growth of microorganisms on 2H2O containing growth media was characterized by increasing the duration of the lag phase, the cell generation time, and the reduction of outputs of the microbial biomass (Table 1), so it was necessary to carry out the adaptation of cells to 2H2O.

The method of the optional adaptation of the strain of methylotrophic bacteria B. methylicum to grow on 2H2O while maintaining the ability for the biosynthesis of L-phenylalanine was described in article [20]. In this research, were investigated samples of the culture liquids and biomass hydrolysates obtained during the multi-stage adaptation of B. methylicum to heavy water on minimal mineral M9 media with the different content of 2H2O (from 24,5 to 98,0% 2H2O). Since this strain of methylotrophic bacteria was adapted to grow in 2H2O, the study of inclusion levels of deuterium into the amino acid molecules was the most interesting.

Unlike the bacterial growth on 2H2O medium, wherein it was necessary to carry out the cell adaptation to deuterium, at the preparation of [13C]amino acids via assimilation of 13CH3OH this stage was not required because this isotopic substrate does not exert the adverse biostatic effect on the growth characteristics of methylotrophs (Table 1). Therefore, in the case of the strain of obligate methylotrophic bacteria M. flagellatum the inclusion of 13C into amino acid molecules was carried out in one step by growing the bacteria on minimal M9 media containing 1% of [13C]methanol as a source of carbon-13 isotope.

Table 1: The influence of the isotopic composition of growth media on the growth of strains of B. methylicum and M. flagellatum

Number of experiment	Growth media*	The value of lag-phase, h	The output of biomass, % from control	The generation time, h
1	0	24,0	100	2,2
2	24,5	32,1	90,6	2,4
3	49,0	40,5	70,1	3,0
4	73,5	45,8	56,4	3,5
5	98,0	60,5	32,9	4,4
6	CH_3OH	0	100	1,1
7	$^{13}CH_3OH$	0,1	72,0	1,0

Notes:
* Data for experiments 1–5 were presented for B. methylicum while growing on aqueous M9 media containing 2% methanol and a specified amount (vol.%) of ^2H_2O. Data for experiments 6–7 show for M. flagellatum when growing on aqueous M9 media containing 1% methanol (6) or 1% [13C] methanol.

As another model system for inclusion of isotopic label into the protein molecules used a transmembrane protein bacteriorhodopsin [21] synthesized in the purple membrane of extreme photo-organotrophic halobacterium Halobacterium halobium ET 1001. The selection for this purpose of bacteriorhodopsin functioning in halobacteria cells as the ATP-dependent translocase was dictated by the ability to use it to study of the functioning of membrane proteins in vivo in deuterium isotope enriched media. To include the deuterium label into the bacteriorhodopsin molecule used a method for the selective enrichment of protein by deuterium at functionally important residues of aromatic amino acids – phenylalanine, tyrosine and tryptophan due to the growing of halobacterium H. halobium ET 1001 on mineral synthetic medium containing the deuterated analogues of aromatic amino acids – L-[2,3,4,5,6-2H]phenylalanine, L-[3,5-2H]tyrosine and L-[2,4,5,6,7-2H]tryptophan.

The main stages for the isolation of [2H, 13C]amino acids involved the growing of respective strains producers on growth media containing labeled substrates – [2H]methanol, [13C]methanol and ^2H_2O or L-[2,3,4,5,6-2H]phenylalanine, L-[3,5-2H]tyrosine and L-[2,4,5,6,7-2H]tryptophan (bacteriorhodopsin), isolation of culture liquids (CL) containing [2H, 13C]amino acids from microbial biomass, purification of lipids, cell disruption, isolation of fraction of total protein of biomass and bacteriorhodopsin with their subsequent hydrolysis, derivatization of mixtures of amino acids by dansyl chloride, benzyloxycarbonyl chloride and diazomethane, separating of methyl esters of N-Dns-amino acid derivatives and N-Cbz-amino acid derivatives by reversed-phase HPLC and EI mass spectrometry of the obtained [2H, 13C]amino acid derivatives.

2H and 13C-labeled amino acids were isolated from lyophilized culture liquids of amino acid producing strains of B. methylicum and M. flagellatum, and as part of the total protein hydrolysates of microbial biomass. When isolating the total protein fraction it should be considered the presence of carbohydrates, lipids and pigments in samples. We used the protein rich bacterial strains with a relatively low content of carbohydrates in them. As a fraction of the total protein in the hydrolysis was subjected the residue obtained after the separation of exhaustive extraction of lipids and pigments by organic solvents (methanol–chloroform–acetone). In rare cases for the complete separation of the cellular components used the colloidal dissolution (solubilization) of proteins in 0,5% of SDS, or the salting out by ammonium sulfate.

The isolation and purification of individual proteins to further investigate their spatial structure can be advantageously carried out by the colloidal dissolving (solubilization) with using suitable detergents [22] that is especially important for bacteriorhodopsin which is a highly spiral transmembrane protein. Therefore, while separating of bacteriorhodopsin from purple membranes of halobacterium H. halobium ET 1001 used the solubilization of a purple membrane fraction after the washing out from extraneous phospholipids and carotenoids by 0,5% solution of SDS with preserving of α-helical configuration of the protein, and further precipitation of the protein from

DNS solution with methanol. The homogeneity of the isolated bacteriorhodopsin was confirmed by electrophoresis in 12,5% PAGE with 0,1% SDS.

The hydrolysis of 2H-labeled proteins was performed under conditions to prevent hydrogen isotopic exchange reactions with deuterium during the hydrolysis and preservation of the aromatic [2H]amino acid residues in the protein. We considered two alternatives variants – the acid and alkaline hydrolysis. The acid hydrolysis of the protein under standard conditions (6 M HCl, 24 h, +110 0C), is known to induce complete degradation of tryptophan and partial degradation of serine, threonine, and several other amino acids in the protein [23]. Another significant drawback when carrying out the hydrolysis in HCl consists in the isotopic (1H–2H) exchange of aromatic protons (deuterons) in molecules of tryptophan, tyrosine and histidine, as well as protons (deuterons) at the C3 atom of aspartic and C4 glutamic acids [24]. Therefore, to obtain the information about the real inclusion of deuterium into biosynthetically synthesized molecules of amino acids it was necessary to carry out the protein hydrolysis in deuterated reagents (6 M 2HCl with 3% phenol (in 2H2O)).

Another variant of hydrolysis of the protein was consisted in using 2 M Ba(OH)2 (+110 0C, 24 h). Under these conditions the reactions of isotopic (1H–2H) exchange at aromatic [2H] amino acids – tyrosine and tryptophan do not occur, and tryptophan is not destroyed. Both these methods of hydrolysis showed good results for the conservation of aromatic [2H]amino acids in the protein hydrolysate and the content of deuterium into the molecules of [2H]amino acids. It must be emphasized, however, that for the preparative production of 2H-labeled amino acids from the microbial protein is advisable to use the hydrolysis in 2HCl in 2H2O (in the presence of phenol to maintain the aromatic amino acid) to prevent racemization. For studying the enrichment level of stable isotopes inclusion into residues of aromatic [2H]amino acids of bacteriorhodopsin and for analytical purposes it is better to use the hydrolysis of protein in the solution of Ba(OH)2, in which there is no isotopic (1H–2H) exchange in amino acids and the residues of [2H]phenylalanine, [2H]tyrosine and [2H]tryptophan are retained in the protein. The possible D,L-amino acid racemization by alkaline hydrolysis did not affect the result of the subsequent mass spectrometric study of the level of deuteration into [2H]amino acid molecules.

For preparation of volatile derivatives the amino acids were converted into the methyl esters of N-Dns-[2H, 13C]amino acids or N-Cbz-[2H, 13C]amino acids, which were further separated by RP HPLC method. The conditions of N-derivatization of [2H, 13C]amino acids were practiced so as to obtain as much as possible intensive the molecular ion peaks (M+.) in EI mass spectra at the background level of the growth media metabolites. For this it was carried out the direct N-derivatization of [2H, 13C]amino acids in the composition of lyophilized culture liquids and total protein hydrolysates of biomass by 5-fold excess of dansyl chloride (in acetone) or benzyloxycarbonyl.

Under conditions of the reaction of N-derivatization for lysine, histidine, tyrosine, serine, threonine and cysteine along with monoderivatives were formed N-di-Dns and N-di-Cbz-derivatives. In addition, from arginine it was synthesized N-three-Dns-(Cbz)-arginine. Therefore, in mass-spectrometric studies the molecular ions (M+.) of these compounds were corresponded to di- or tri-derivatives.

The effectiveness of the use of N-Cbz- and N-Dns-amino acid derivatives in the RP-HPLC and EI mass spectrometric studies was demonstrated by us previously [25]. The volatility of N-derivatives of amino acids in EI mass spectrometric analysis can be further enhanced by the esterification of the carboxyl group, so that N-Dns-[2H, 13C]amino acids were converted into their methyl esters. To prevent the reverse isotopic exchange of aromatic protons (deuterons) in a process of esterification of 2H-labeled amino acids, in this research we gave a preference to diazomethane. The freshly prepared solution of diazomethane in diethyl ether was treated with dry mixtures of amino acids residues. At derivatization of amino acids with diazomethane it was occurred an additional N-methylation at α-NH-(Dns)-group in [2H]amino acids, leading to the appearance in the EI mass spectra of methyl esters of N-Dns-amino acids the additional peaks corresponding to compounds with a molecular mass on 14 mass units larger than the original compounds.

Study of levels of inclusion of stable isotopes of 2H and 13C into molecules of amino acids and hydrolysates

The levels of inclusion of stable isotopes of 2H and 13C into multicomponent mixtures of amino acid molecules of culture liquids and protein hydrolysates were determined analytically by EI mass spectrometry method. According to the mass spectrometric analysis the molecular ion peaks [M]+ of methyl esters of N-Dns-[2H]derivatives of aromatic [2H]amino acids have a low intensity in EI mass spectra and were polymorphously split, so the areas of the molecular enrichment were strongly broadened. Moreover, mass spectra of the mixture components are additive, so the mixture can be analyzed only if the spectra of the various components are recorded under the same conditions. These calculations provide for the solution of the system of n equations in n unknowns for a mixture of n components. For components, the concentration of which exceeds 10 mol.%, the accuracy and reproducibility of the analysis makes up ±0,5 mol.% (at 90% confidence probability). Therefore, to obtain reproducible results on deuteration levels it was necessary to chromatographically isolate individual derivatives of [2H] amino acids from the protein hydrolyzate. Methyl esters of N-Dns-[2H, 13C]amino acid derivatives or N-Cbz-[2H, 13C]amino acid derivatives were separated by The method of preparative RP-HPLC on octadecylsilane gel Separon SGX C18. The best result on separation was achieved by gradient elution of the methyl esters of N-Dns-[2H, 13C]amino acid derivatives with a mixture of solvents: (A) – acetonitril–trifluoroacetic acid = 100:0,1–0,5 vol.% and (B) – acetonitrile 100 vol.% in the gradient elution conditions by gradually increasing the concentration of component B in the mixture from 0 to 100 %. In this case, each component of the mixture was separated in the most optimal composition of the eluent, thereby achieving their full separation quality in much less time than in isocratic mode. In addition, using the gradient was significantly increased the maximum number of peaks in the chromatogram can accommodate – a peak capacity, which is very important in the separation of complex multi-component mixtures, which are the protein hydrolysates. Thus, it was possible to separate the tryptophan and intractable pair of phenylalanine/tyrosine by this method. The degrees of chromatographic purity of 2H- and 13C-labeled amino acids, isolated from culture liquids of B. methylicum and M. flagellatum and protein hydrolysates in the form of their N-Cbz-[2H, 13C]amino acid derivatives comprised 96–98% with yields – 67–89%. For some [2H, 13C]amino acids was proved to be more convenient the separation as methyl esters of N-Dns-[2H, 13C] amino acid derivatives. The degrees of the chromatographic purity of methyl esters N-Dns-[2H]phenylalanine, N-Dns-[2H]tyrosine and N-Dns-[2H]tryptophan obtained from the hydrolysates of bacteriorhodopsin were 96, 97 and 98%, respectively. This result is important because of the chemical stability of methyl esters of N-Dns-amino acids; the presence of high-molecular ions (M+.) at higher molecular weights have proved to be very convenient for mass spectrometric investigations and enable to identify 2H- and 13C-labeled amino acids in the presence of low molecular weight metabolites in growth media and other products of derivatization. The latter fact is very important to study the composition of the pool of 2H- and 13C-labeled amino acids secreted into the culture liquids of amino acid producing strains and total protein hydrolysates.

The fragmentation pathways of methyl esters of N-Dns-phenylalanine and N-Dns-leucine by the electron impact mass spectrometry lead to the formation of molecular ion peaks (M+.) at m/z = 412 and m/z = 378 and to the formation of dansyl fragments and products of the further decay to N-dimethylaminonaphthalene, and the formation of the amine fragment A+ and aminoacyl fragment B+ (Fig. 1). The fragmentation of methyl esters of N-Dns-phenylalanine and N-Dns-leucine shown on Fig. 1 is typical for these derivatives of all other amino acids, which allows carry out the mass spectrometric monitoring of 2H- and 13C-labeled amino acids in the intact culture liquids of producing strains containing in liquid media the amino acid mixtures and other metabolites of the growth medium until the stage of chromatographic separation, as well as explore the inclusion of stable isotopes of 2H- and 13C into the molecules of amino acids of protein hydrolysates.

Table 2: The results of one-step gradient separation of a mixture of methyl esters of N-Dns-[2H, 13C]amino acids from hydrolysates by RP HPLC, t = 20±25 0C on a 250×10 mm column with octadecylsilane gel Separon SGX C18, 7 µ (Kova, Slovakia)

Number of processing	Components of the mobile phase, vol.%		Elution time
	A*	B**	
1	90	10	10
2	80	20	10
3	60	40	10
5	50	50	10
6	30	60	5
8	20	80	5
9	10	90	5
10	0	100	5

Notes:
* A – acetonitrile–trifluoroacetic acid = 100:0,1–0,5 vol.%
** B – acetonitrile = 100 vol.%

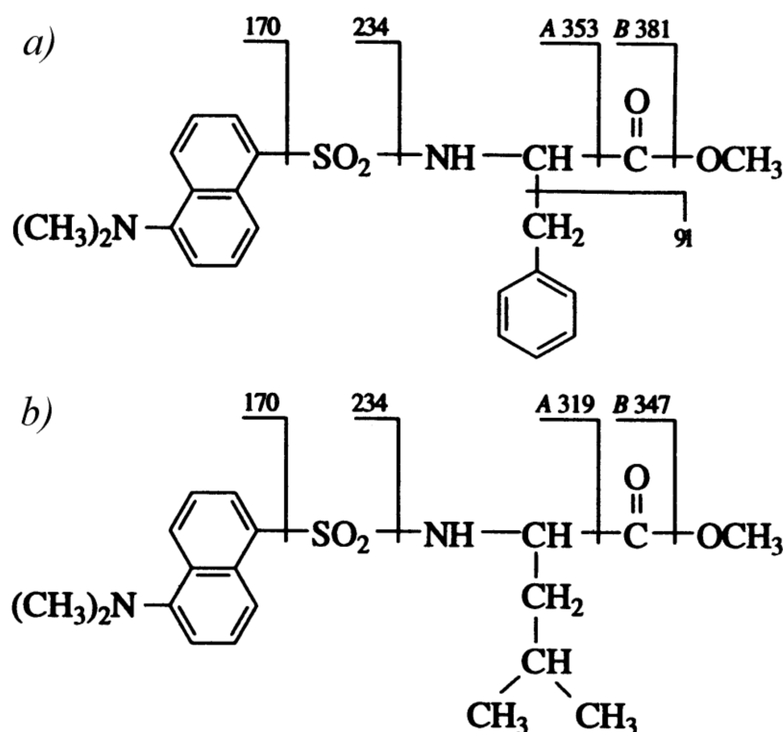

Figure 1: Fragmentation of methyl esters of N-Dns-phenylalanine with Mr = 412 (a) and N-Dns-leucine Mr = 378 (b) in the electron impact mass spectrometry method

When using as a source of stable isotopes [13C]methanol and 2H2O in the cell are synthesized the isotopically-substituted amino acids differ in the number of atoms substituted on isotopes of 13C and 2H. At the same time, the higher is the molecular weight of the amino acids, the larger is a set of possible molecular ions (M+.) corresponding to isotope-substituted forms. The peaks at m/z = 323,2; 337,4; 368,5; 382,3; 420,5 in the EI mass spectrum of [13C]amino acid derivatives in the derivatized liquid culture (LC) of M. flagellatum, obtained on aqueous medium with 1% [13C] methanol (Fig. 2b) correspond by the mass/charge ratios (m/z) to methyl esters of

N-Dns-[13C]glycine, N-Dns-[13C]alanine, N-Dns-[13C]valine, N-Dns-[13C]leucine/[13C]isoleucine and N-Dns-[13C] phenylalanine. It should be emphasized that the value of m/z for the molecular ion (M+.) of methyl esters of N-Dns-[13C]leucine and [13C]isoleucine in the EI mass spectra is the same, so these amino acids could not be accurately identified by this method. The maximum levels of inclusion of 13C isotope into amino acid molecules as measured by an increase of the averaged values of mass to charge ratio m/z for molecular ions (M+.) of isotopically-labeled sample in comparison with a molecular weight of a non-labeled natural amino acid are varied from 35% for [13C]alanine to 95% for [13C] phenylalanine (Fig. 2). Considering the auxotrophy of this strain for L-isoleucine, the variations in the range can be explained by the contribution of an exogenous isoleucine to the level of isotopic incorporation of [13C]leucine, and other metabolically related amino acids – [13C]alanine and [13C]valine.

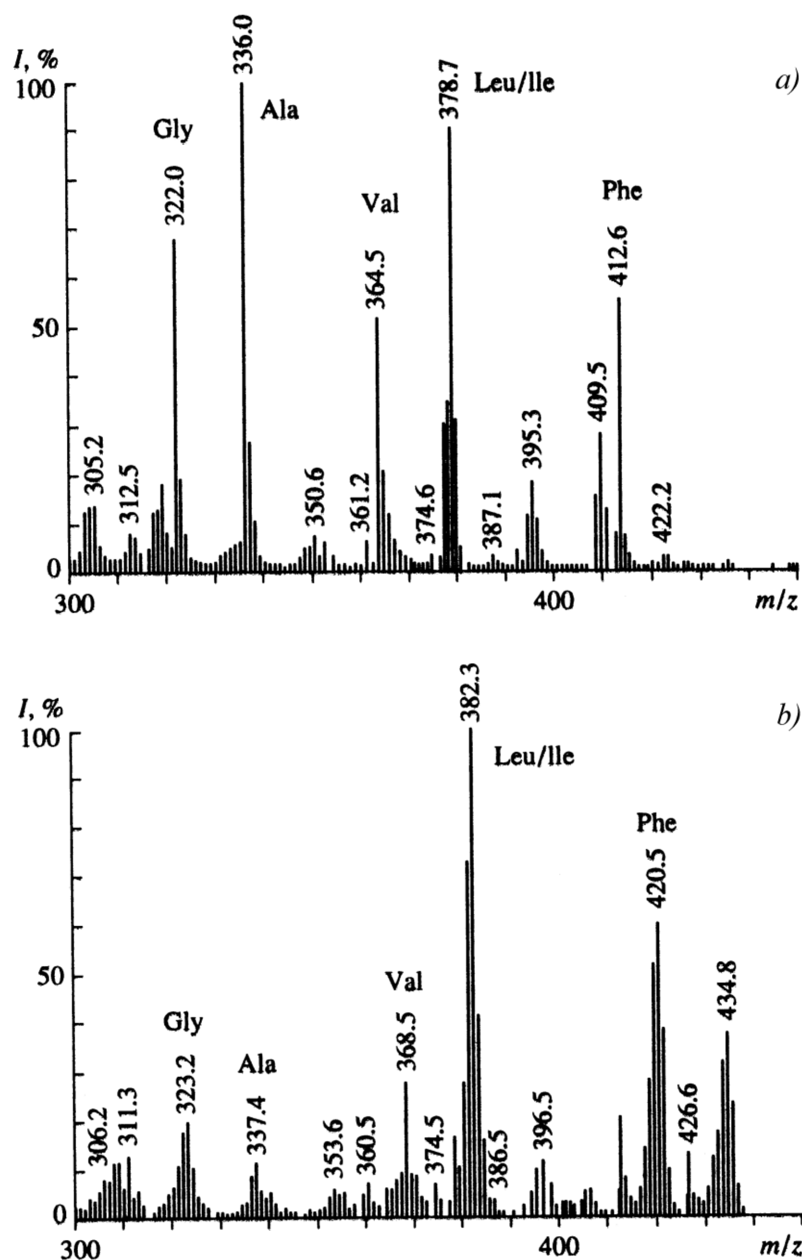

Figure 2: EI mass spectra of methyl esters of N-Dns-[13C]-amino acids from LC of M. flagellatum after treatment with diazomethane and dansyl chloride: a) – 1% methanol and H_2O (control); b) – 1% [13C] methanol and H_2O. Symbols of amino acids are marked peaks of molecular ions [M]+ of methyl esters of N-Dns-[13C] amino acids. The intensity of the peaks is given in %.

For the strain of methylotrophic bacteria B. methylicum there was a specific increase in the levels of isotopic incorporation of deuterium into molecules of individual [2H]amino acids in the composition of culture liquids (Table 3) with stepwise increasing concentrations of 2H2O in growth medium. The inclusion levels of deuterium into molecules of different [2H] amino acids under the same growing conditions are varied. In all experiments was observed the proportional increase in the levels of isotopic incorporation of 2H into the molecules of metabolically related [2H]amino acids with stepwise increasing concentrations of heavy water in the growth media (Table 3). This result was recorded in all experiments wherein as a source of stable isotopes was used 2H2O.

Table 3: Levels of 13C and 2H inclusion into molecules of amino acids (atom%), secreted into the culture liquid (CL) of B. methylicum and M. flagellatum, and into amino acid residues of protein

Amino acid	Content of 2H2O in the growth medium, %*								1% 13CH3OH**	
	24,5		49,0		73,5		98,0			
	LC	Protein	LC	Protein	LC	Protein	LC	Protein	LC	Protein
Glycine	–	15,0	–	35,0	–	50,0	–	90,0	60,0	90,0
Alanine	24,5	20,0	50,0	45,0	50,0	62,5	55,0	97,5	35,0	95,0
Valine	20,0	15,0	50,0	46,0	50,0	50,0	55,8	50,0	50,0	50,0
Leucine /Isoleucine	20,0	15,0	50,0	42,0	50,0	50,0	50,0	50,0	40,0	49,0
Phenylalanine	15,0	24,5	27,5	37,5	51,2	50,0	75,0	95,0	95,0	80,5
Tyrosine	–	20,0	–	25,6	–	68,5	–	92,8	–	53,5
Serene	–	15,0	–	36,7	–	47,6	–	86,6	–	73,3
Aspartic acid	–	20,0	–	36,7	–	60,0	–	66,6	–	33,3
Glutamic acid	–	20,0	–	40,0	–	53,4	–	70,0	–	40,0
Lysine	–	10,0	–	35,3	–	40,0	–	58,9	–	54,4

Notes:
* Data are submitted for inclusion of 2H into the amino acid molecules when growing of B. methylicum on aqueous M9 media containing 2% methanol and a specified amount (vol.%) of 2H2O.
** Data are submitted for inclusion of 13C when growing of M. flagellatum on aqueous M9 media containing 1% [13C]methanol.

From the mass spectrum of methyl esters of N-Dns-[2H]amino asid derivatives of culture liquid of B. methylicum, obtained on the growth medium containing 49% 2H2O (Fig. 3b) is shown that the phenylalanine molecule contains 6 isotopically-substituted forms with an average peak of molecular ion (M+.) with m/z = 414,2, which increases compared with the control conditions (m/z = 412,0, Fig. 3a) on 2,2 units, i.e. 27,5 atom.% of the total number of hydrogen atoms in the molecule are substituted with deuterium. The region in the mass spectrum with values m/z = 90–300 corresponds to relevant products of derivatization of metabolites in the growth medium. The peak with m/z = 431,0, recorded in the mass spectrum of the culture liquid manifested in all the experiments, corresponds to the product of additional methylation of the phenylalanine molecule at α-NH- (Dns)-group. The peak with m/z = 400 (Fig. 3b) corresponds to the product of cleavage of deuterated methyl group from the [2H]phenylalanine derivative.

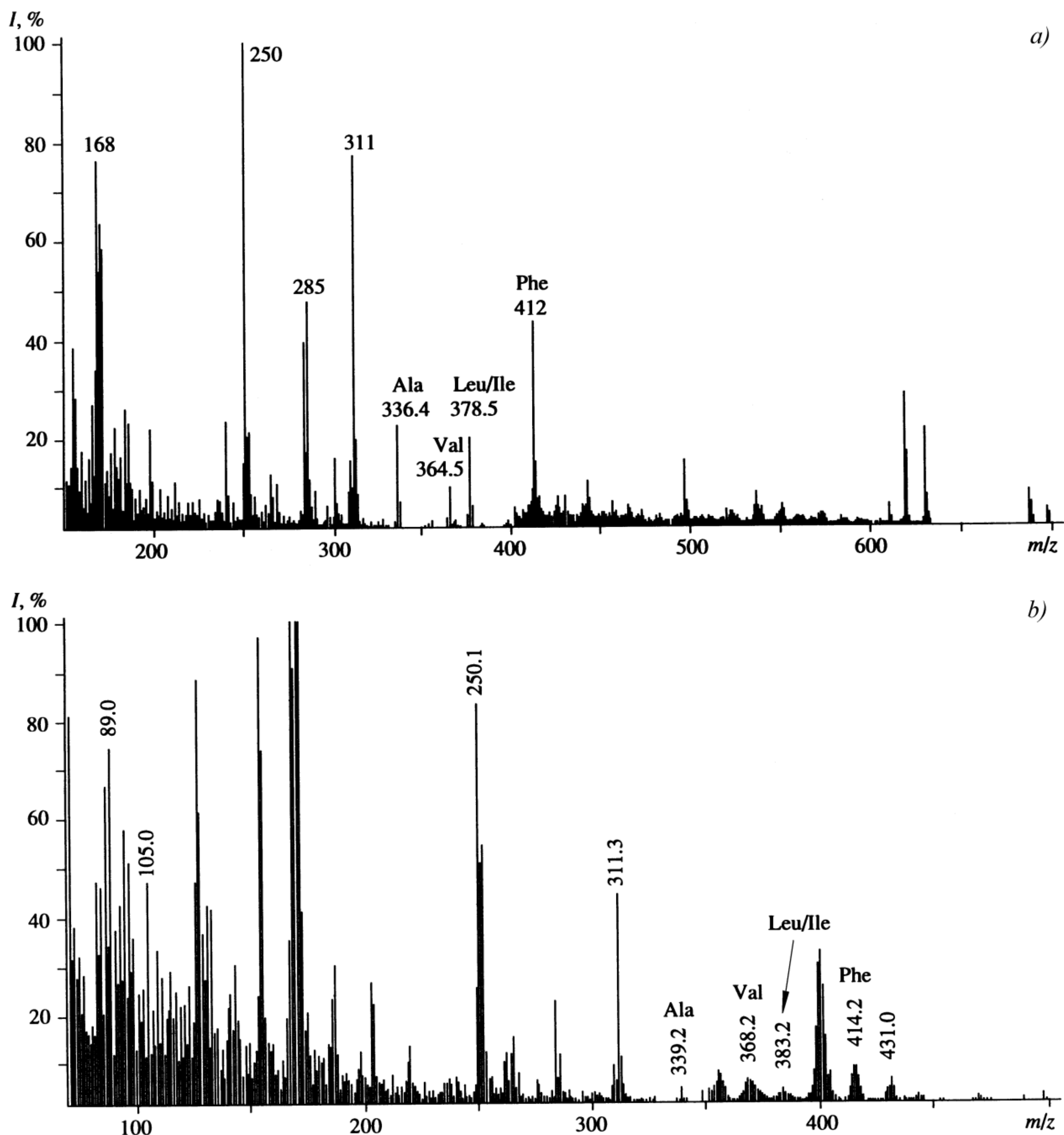

Figure 3: EI mass spectrum of methyl esters of N-Dns-[2H]-amino acids from LC of B. methylicum after treatment with diazomethane and dansyl chloride: a) – 2% methanol and 98,0% H2O (control); b) – 2% [2H]methanol and 49,0% of 2H2O

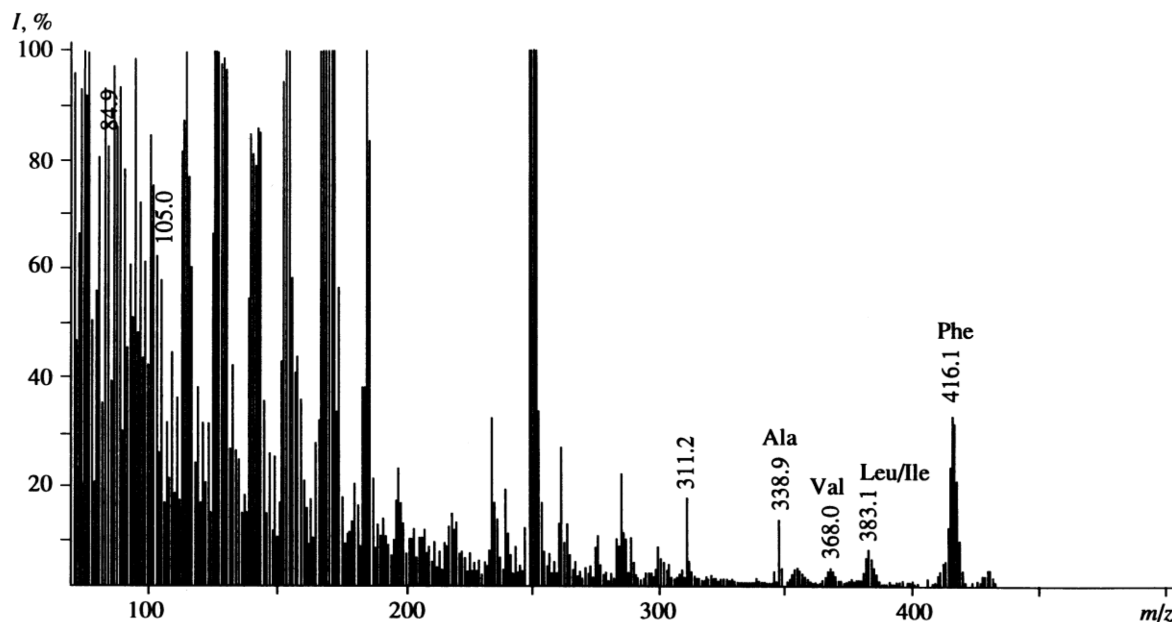

Figure 4: EI mass spectrum of methyl ester of N-Dns-[2H]-amino acids from CL of B. methylicum when grown on growth medium containing 2% [2H]methanol and 73,5% ^2H_2O

The presence in the EI mass spectrum of a sample of the liquid culture of B. methylicum, obtained on a medium containing 73,5% ^2H_2O (Fig. 4) the molecular ion peak of the methyl ester of N-Dns-[2H]phenylalanine ($M^{+.}$) with m/z = 416,1 indicates on an increase in molecular weight of the [2H]phenylalanine molecule on 4,1 unit i.e. 51,2 % of hydrogen atoms in the molecule of [2H]phenylalanine in this case are replaced by deuterium. It is obvious that above mentioned deuterium atoms were entered into the [2H]phenylalanine molecule through biosynthesis de novo, i.e. into the carbon skeleton of the molecule. The protons (deuterons) at heteroatoms in the NH_2- and COOH- groups of amino acids are appertained to the easily exchangeable ones, which are replaced by deuterium at the expense of their ease of the dissociation in H_2O (^2H_2O) solutions.

From Table 3 it is shown that in conditions of auxotrophy in L-leucine the levels of inclusion of 2H into the molecules of [2H]leucine/[2H]isoleucine are lower than those ones for phenylalanine. This feature more clearly manifests in the medium with the highest concentration of ^2H_2O. Once again, this result is confirmed in Figure 5 that shows the EI mass spectrum of methyl esters of N-Dns-[2H]amino acids of liquid culture after the growth of the bacteria B. methylicum under these conditions. Clearly, the molecular ion peak of methyl ester of N-Dns-[2H]phenylalanyl ($M^{+.}$) with m/z = 418,0 increases compared to control conditions for 6 units corresponding to the substitution of 75,0 atom.% of the total number of hydrogen atoms in the molecule. Unlike [2H] phenylalanine the inclusion level of deuterium enrichment in [2H]leucine/[2H]isoleucine was 50,0 atom.%, and [2H]valine – 58,8 atom.%. The peak with m/z = 432, recorded in the EI mass spectrum of methyl esters of N-Dns-[2H]amino acids of CL in Fig. 5 corresponds to additional methylation product of [2H]phenylalanine at α-NH_2- group. In addition, in the EI mass spectrum is recorded the peak of the enriched with deuterium the benzyl fragment $C_6H_5CH_2$ of [2H]phenylalanine with m/z = 97 (instead of m/z = 91 in the control), indicating that the sites of localization of six deuterium atoms in the molecule of [2H] phenylalanine are position of C1–C6 aromatic protons in the benzyl $C_6H_5CH_2$ fragment. From mass spectrometry data is demonstrated that at other concentrations of ^2H_2O in growth media deuterium is also included in the aromatic ring of [2H]phenylalanine since the metabolism of the strain of B. methylicum adapted to ^2H_2O does not undergo significant changes in ^2H_2O [26].

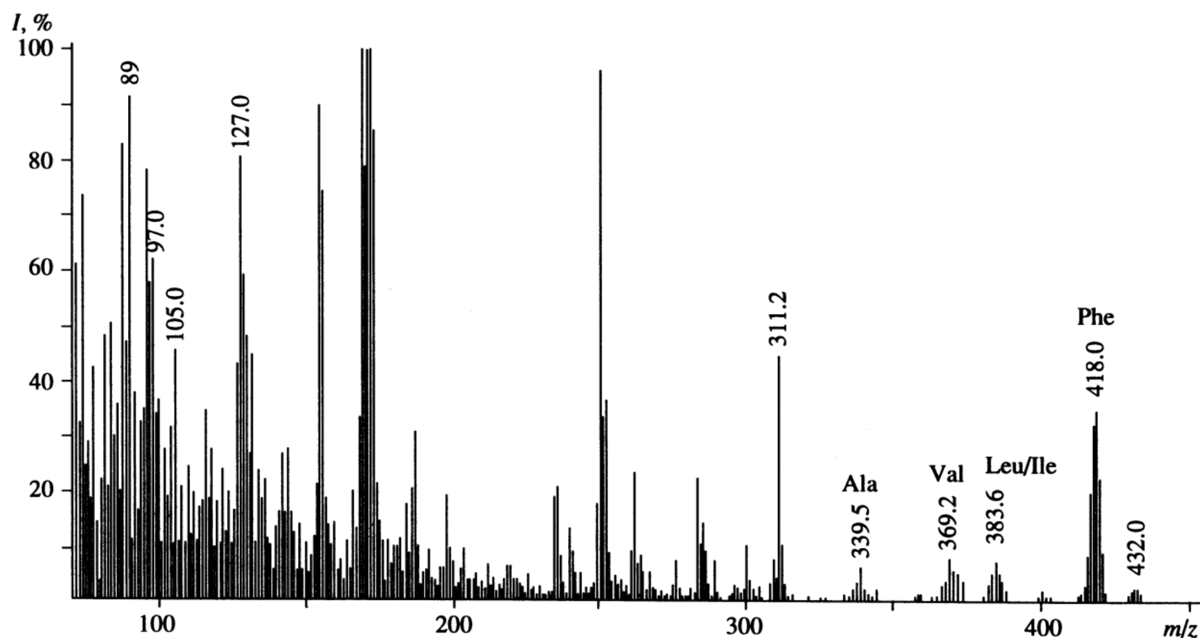

Figure 5: EI mass spectrum of methyl esters N-Dns-[2H]-amino acids from LC of B. methylicum when growing on the growth medium containing 2% [2H]methanol and 98,0% 2H2O (maximum deuterated M9-medium)

A similar pattern in inclusion levels of 13C isotope into amino acid molecules associated with auxotrophic metabolism was manifested when growing the L-isoleucine-dependent strain of M. flagellatum on the growth medium with 1% [13C] methanol. As can be seen from Table 3, unlike that observed for [13C]phenylalanine (the level of isotopic incorporation – 95,0%), the level of incorporation of 13C isotope into the molecules of [13C]leucine/[13C]isoleucine, [13C]alanine and [13C]valine were 38,0; 35,0 and 50,0% respectively. The level of isotopic incorporation into [13C]glycine (60%), was although higher than that for the last three amino acids, but significantly lower than that of [13C]phenylalanine.

Summarizing the data on the level of incorporation of 13C and 2H isotopes into secreted molecules of amino acids, it can be concluded about the maintaining of minor metabolic pathways associated with the de novo biosynthesis of leucine and the metabolically related amino acids. Another logical explanation for the observed effect, if we take into account the origin of leucine and isoleucine due to biosynthesis in various pathways (leucine belongs to the family of pyruvate, while isoleucine – to the family of aspartate (Fig. 6) could be the assimilation by the cell of the unlabeled leucine from the growth media under the background biosynthesis of isotopic-labeled isoleucine de novo. Taking into account of these effects it should be emphasized that the use of auxotrophic forms of microorganisms for production of 13C and 2H-labeled amino acids could not be justified practically because of the multiple character of inclusion of isotopes into the molecule [26]. On the contrary, the use for this purpose the prototrophic forms of microorganisms seem to be more promising for these aims.

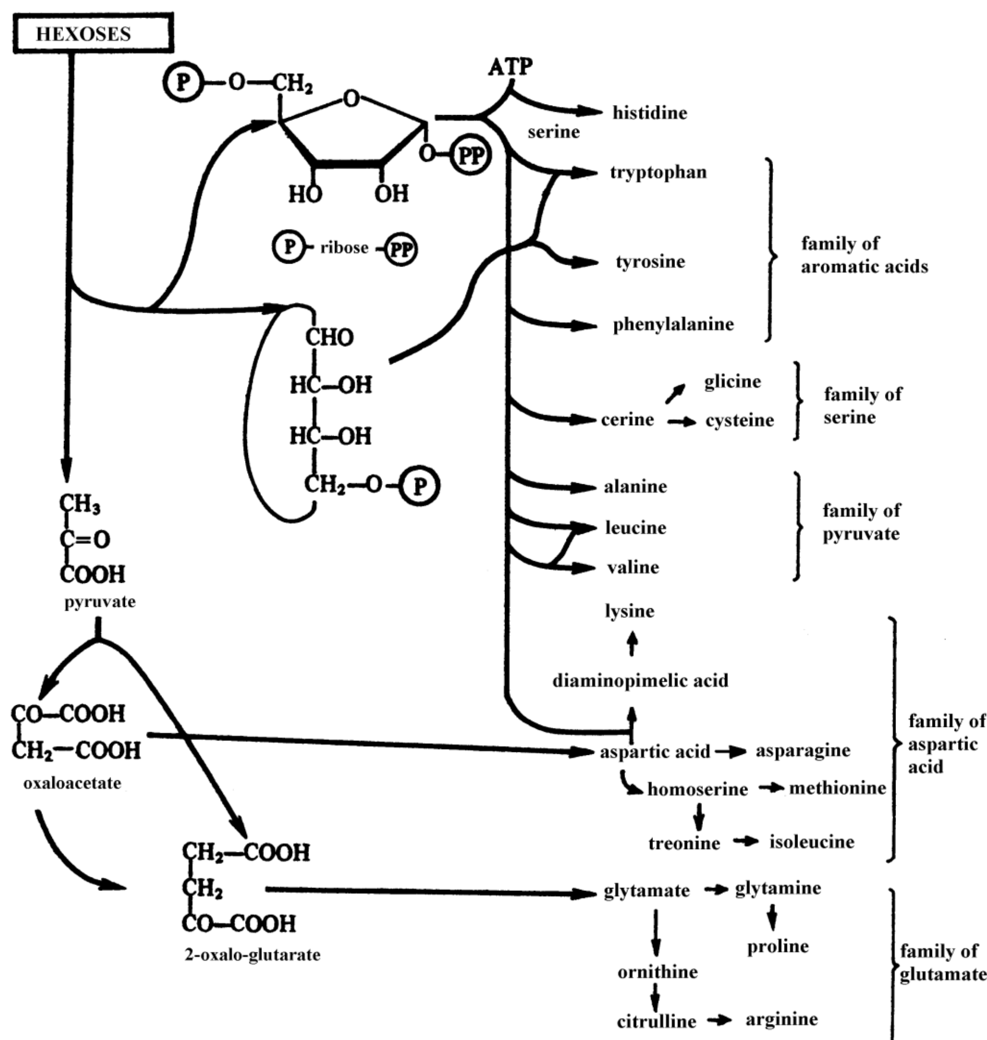

Figure 6: The amino acids required for the synthesis of proteins produced in cells from precursors (by G. Schlegel [27])

The general principles for the study of levels of isotope inclusion of molecules of amino acids in this method of labeling were exemplified by the analysis of complex multicomponent mixtures obtained after total hydrolysis of proteins of biomass of methylotrophic bacteria B. methylicum and transmembrane protein – bacteriorhodopsin, performing the role of ATP-dependent translocase in cells of photo-organotrophic halobacteria Halobacterium halobium. As seen in Figure 7, up until 10 amino acids may be identified in the protein hydrolysate of B. methylicum by peaks of molecular ions (M+.) of corresponding methyl esters of N-Dns-[2H]amino acid derivatives.

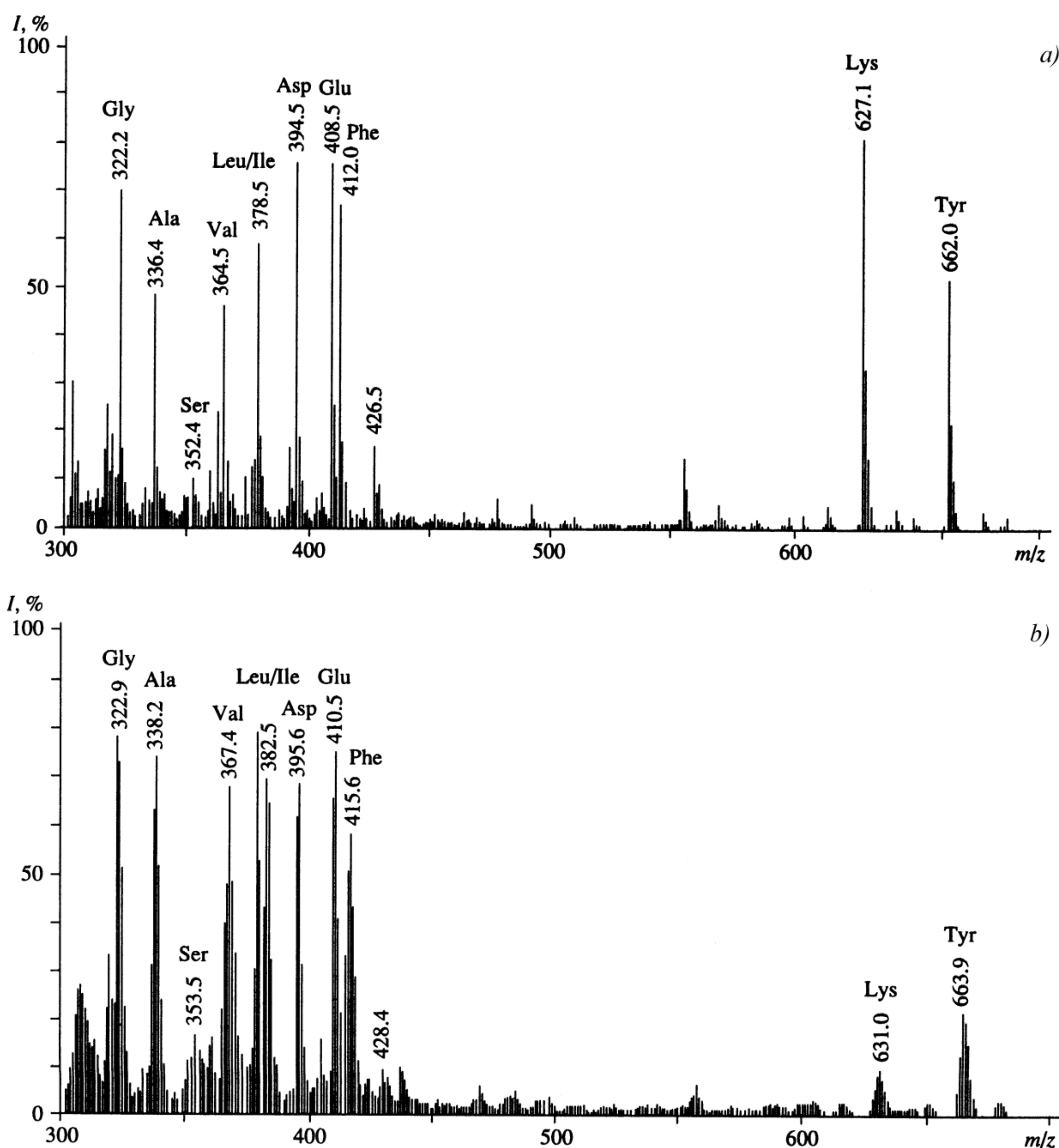

Figure 7: EI mass spectrum of methyl ester of N-Dns-[2H]-amino acids from hydrolysates of total protein of biomass of B. methylicum when growning on M9 medium, containing 2% methanol and H2O (control) (a) and 2% [2H]methanol and 98,0% 2H2O (b)

As in the case with secreted amino acids, the molecular ion peaks (M+.) were corresponded to isotopic mixtures of amino acid derivatives of isotopically substituted forms. For lysine and tyrosine the peaks (M+.) were corresponded to di-methyl esters of amino acid derivatives – α,ε-di-Dns-lysine ((M+.) at m/z = 631,0) and O,N-di-Dns-tyrosine ((M+.) at m/z = 663,9). The levels of isotopic incorporation of deuterium into the molecules of [2H]amino acids from the hydrolysate of total protein biomass at the 2H2O content in the growth medium from 49,0% to 98,0% were varied from 25,6% for [2H]tyrosine to 45,0% for [2H]alanine (Fig. 7b and Table. 3). The levels of isotopic incorporation of deuterium into the molecules of [2H]glycine, [2H]valine, [2H]phenylalanine, [2H]serine, [2H]lysine, [2H]aspartic and [2H]glutamic acid are raged within 35–46%. As in the case with secreted amino acids, with the increase of 2H2O concentration in growth media, it was observed the proportional increase in the level of incorporation of 2H isotope into amino acid molecules. With regard to other [2H]amino acids not detectable by this method, it is obvious that

the levels of isotope inclusion into the amino acid molecules are roughly the same. This is confirmed by data of separation of protein hydrolysates of methylotrophic bacteria by RP HPLC method as N-Cbz-[2H]amino acid derivatives and methyl esters of N-Dns-[2H]amino acid derivatives and ion-exchange chromatography of protein hydrolysates, wherein it is detected 15 amino acids (Fig. 8, Table 4).

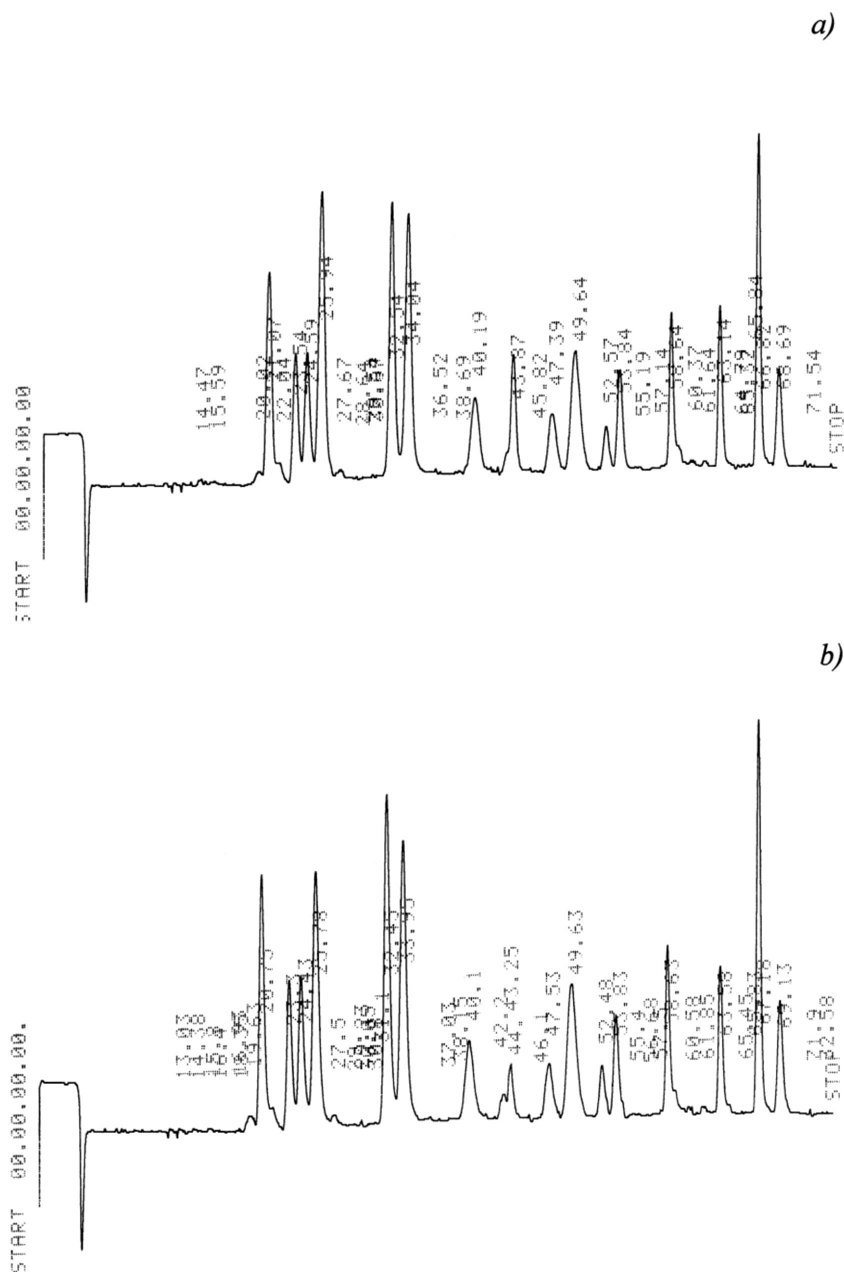

Figure 8: Ion exchange chromatography of amino acids from hydrolysates of protonated (a) and deuterated (b) cells of B. methylicum on maximum deuterated M9 medium: Biotronic LC-5001 (230×3,2 mm) ("Eppendorf-Nethleler-Hinz", Germany); mobile phase: UR-30 sulfonated styrene resin ("Beckman-Spinco", USA); pellet diameter – 25 mm; working pressure – 50–60 atm; mobile phase – 0,2 M Na-citrate buffer (pH = 2,5); eluent flow rate – 18,5 ml/h; ninhydrin – 9,25 ml/h; detection at λ = 570 and λ = 440 nm (for proline).

Table 4: The amino acid composition of a protein hydrolyzate of total protein of biomass of B. methylicum, obtained in the maximum deuterated growth medium* and levels of deuterium enrichment of molecules **

Amino acid	Output, % of dry weight of biomass		The number of included deuterium atoms in carbon skeleton of the molecule	The deuterium enrichment level, % from a total number of hydrogen atoms***
	Protonated sample (control)	Deuterated sample obtained in 98,0% 2H2O		
Glycine	8,03	9,69	2	90,0
Alanine	12,95	13,98	4	97,5
Valine	3,54	3,74	4	50,0
Leucine	8,62	7,33	5	50,0
Isoleucine	4,14	3,64	5	50,0
Phenylalanine	3,88	3,94	8	95,0
Tyrosine	1,56	1,83	7	92,8
Serine	4,18	4,90	3	86,6
Threonine	4,81	5,51	–	–
Methionine	4,94	2,25	–	–
Aspartic acid	7,88	9,59	2	66,6
Glumatic acid	11,68	10,38	4	70,0
Lysine	4,34	3,98	5	58,9
Arginine	4,63	5,28	–	–
Histidine	3,43	3,73	–	–

Notes:
* Data obtained on M9 medium with 98,0% 2H2O and 2% [2H]methanol.
** When calculating the deuterium enrichment level protons (deuterons) at COOH and NH2 groups of amino acid molecules are not taken into account because of the ease of their dissociation and isotopic exchange in H2O/2H2O.
*** A dash indicates no data.

The findings suggest about the possibility of achieving maximum levels of inclusion of stable isotopes 2H and 13C into the amino acid residues of the total protein biomass (except for alanine, valine and leucine/isoleucine, reduced levels of inclusion of which explains the effect of auxotrophy for L-leucine and L-isoleucine). For example, in the case of the deuterated amino acid substitution at full stable isotopes has been achieved by using as a source of deuterium 98,0% 2H2O (Table 4). As can be seen from Table 4, when the growning of B. methylicum on growth medium with 98,0% 2H2O, the inclusion levels of 2H into residues of glycine, alanine, phenylalanine and tyrosine constitute 90,0; 97,5; 95,0 and 92,8 atom.%. In experiments on the inclusion of 13C isotope into the total protein biomass due to the assimilation of [13C]methanol by methylotrophic bacteria M. flagellatum were also observed high levels of isotopic incorporation in [13C]glycine (90,0%), [13C] alanine (95,0%) and [13C]phenylalanine (80,5%) (Table 3). As in the case with secreted amino acids the reduced inclusion levels of stable isotopes into [13C]leucine/isoleucine (49,0%), as well as into the related metabolic [13C]amino acids under these conditions could be explained by the effect of auxotrophy of the strain in L-isoleucine, which was added to the growth medium in the protonated form.

In all isotopic experiments on the integration of stable isotopes 2H and 13C into the amino acid molecules the levels of inclusion of 2H and 13C into metabolically related amino acids found a certain correlation. Thus, the isotopic incorporation levels for alanine, valine and leucine (pyruvate family), phenylalanine and tyrosine (aromatic amino acid family, synthesized from shikimic acid) are correlated (see Table 3). At the same time levels of isotope inclusion for alanine, valine and leucine/isoleucine are stable within a wide variation of 2H2O concentration due to the effect of auxotrophy on leucine. The levels of isotopic incorporation for glycine and serine (serine family),

aspartic acid, and lysine (asparagines family) also have similar values and are in correlation. Table 3 shows that the levels of isotopic incorporation into secreted amino acids and corresponding amino acid residues in the total protein when growing on media with the same isotope content generally are well correlated. The reason for some of the observed differences in the level of inclusion of isotopes into amino acid molecules can be associated with the effect of auxotrophy of the used strains in leucine and isoleucine.

This biosynthetic approach showed good results on the introduction of the deuterium label into the molecule of transmembrane protein bacteriorhodopsin, obtained via the growing of the photo-organotrophic halobacterium H. halobium on medium containing L-[2,3,4,5,6-2H] phenylalanine, L-[3,5-2H] tyrosin and L-[2,4,5,6,7-2H] tryptophan. The El mass spectrum of the mixture of methyl esters of N-Dns-[2H]amino acids as shown in Figure 9 (scanning at m/z = 50–640, base peak at m/z = 527, 100%), is characterized by continuity: the peaks in the range at m/z = 50–400 on the scale of the mass numbers are fragments of metastable ions, low molecular weight impurities, as well as products of chemically modified amino acids. The analyzed aromatic [2H]amino acids occupied the scale mass numbers at m/z = 415–456, are mixtures of molecules containing various numbers of deuterium atoms. Therefore, the molecular ions [M]+ were polymorphously split into individual clusters displaying a statistical set of m/z values depending on a number of hydrogen atoms in the molecule. Taking into account the effect of isotopic polymorphism, the level of deuterium enrichment in [2H]amino acid molecules was determined using the most commonly encountered peak of the molecular ion [M]+ in each cluster with mathematically averaged value of [M]+ (Fig. 9). Thus, for phenylalanine molecular ion peak was determined by [M]+ at m/z = 417, 14% (instead of the [M]+ at m/z = 412, 20% for non-labeled derivative (unlabeled peaks of amino acid derivatives are not shown)), tyrosine – [M]+ at m/z = 429, 15% (instead of [M]+ at m/z = 428, 13%), tryptophan – [M]+ at m/z = 456, 11% (instead of [M]+ at m/z = 451, 17%). The level of deuterium enrichment corresponding to the increase of molecular weight was for [2H]tyrosine 1 (90 atom.% 2H), [2H]phenylalanine – 5 (95 atom.%, 2H) and [2H]tryptophan – 5 (98 atom.% 2H) deuterium atoms. This result coincides with the data on the initial level of deuterium enrichment of aromatic amino acids – [3,5-2H2]Tyr, [2,3,4,5,6-2H5]Phe and [2,4,5,6,7-2H5]Trp, added to the growth medium and indicates a high selectivity of inclusion of aromatic [2H]amino acids into the BR molecule. Deuterium was detected in all residues of aromatic amino acids (Table 5). However, the presence in the EI mass spectrum the peaks [M]+ of protonated and semi-deuterated phenylalanine analogues with [M]+ at m/z = 413–418, tyrosine – with [M]+ at m/z = 428–430 and tryptophan – with [M]+ at m/z = 453–457 with different levels of contributions to the deuterium enrichment of molecules testifies about the conservation of the minor pathways of biosynthesis of aromatic amino acids de novo, resulting in the dilution of the deuterium label in molecules, that evidently is determined by the conditions of biosynthesis of 2H-labeled bacteriorhodopsin (Table 4). In addition to the above-mentioned amino acids in the EI mass spectrum are recorded molecular ion peaks of methyl ester of N-Dns-glycine ((M+.), m/z = 322), N-Dns-alanine ((M+.), m/z = 336), N-Dns-valine ((M+.), m/z = 364) and N-Dns-leucine/isoleucine ((M+.), m/z = 378). As might be expected, these amino acid residues in bacteriorhodopsin do not contain deuterium.

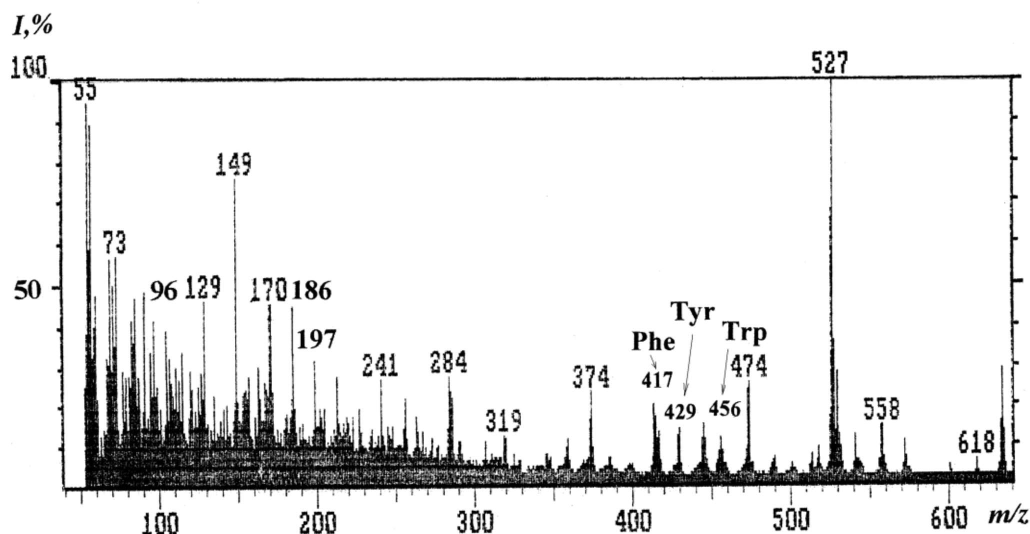

Figure 9: Full scan EI mass spectrum of methyl ester of N-Dns-[2H]derivatives of aromatic amino acids isolated from the hydrolysate of bacteriorhodopsin, obtained on the synthetic medium with L-[2,3,4,5,6-2H5]Phe (0,26 g/l), L-[3,5-2H2]Tyr (0,2 g/l) and L-[2,4,5,6,7-2H5]Trp (0,5 g/l) (energy: 70 eV, accelerating voltage: 8 kV, temperature: +180–200 0C). Hydrolysis conditions: 4 N Ba(OH)2 (in 2H2O), t = +110 0C, 24 h. Molecular ion peaks represented by the symbols of amino acids correspond to their derivatives; I – relative intensity (%).

Table 5: The values of the molecular ion peaks [M]+ in the EI mass spectrum of methyl esters of N-Dns-[2,3,4,5,6-2H5]Phe, N-Dns-[3,5-2H2]Tyr and N-Dns-[2,4,5,6,7-2H5]Trp and levels of their deuterium enrichment

Compound	Value of [M]+	Intensity, %	The total number of hydrogen atoms*	Level of deuterium enrichment, % of the total number of hydrogen atoms **
N-Dns-[2,3,4,5,6-2H5]Phe-OMe	413	7	1	13
	414	18	2	25
	415	15	3	38
	416	11	4	50
	417	14	5	63
	418	6	6	75
N-Dns-[3,5-2H2]Tyr-OMe	428	12	–	–
	429	15	1	14
	430	5	2	29
N-Dns-[2,4,5,6,7-2H5]Trp-OMe	453	5	2	26
	454	6	3	38
	455	9	4	50
	456	11	5	64
	457	5	6	77

Notes:
* A dash means no incorporation of deuterium.
** In calculating the level of deuterium enrichment protons(deuterons) at carboxyl and NH2-amino groups of amino acids were not considered due to the easily isotopic (1H–2H) exchange.

Conclusion

The research has demonstrated the effectiveness of this method of biosynthesis of 2H- and 13C-labeled amino acids with different isotope enrichment levels, and electron impact mass

spectrometry of N-Cbz-amino acid derivatives and methyl esters of N-Dns-amino acid derivatives for the study of isotopic enrichment levels of [2H, 13C]amino acid molecules in composition of multicomponent mixtures obtained biosynthetically with using microorganisms. The method is indispensable for the study of a pool of amino acids, secreted into the culture liquid of producing strains grown on media with stable isotopes and protein hydrolysates of microbial biomass and may find further use in diagnostic studies.

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