

Insect Molecular Biology and Ecology

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Editor

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Dedication

Dedicated to my grand daughters

Preface

A major challenge in current entomology is to integrate different levels of organization, from cellular mechanism to function in ecosystem. In the postgenomic era of the 21st century various fields of study have become possible, which use the information of fully sequenced insect genomes (<https://www.hgsc.bcm.edu/arthropods/i5k-pilot-project-summary>). However, the rapid development of molecular techniques for studying gene functions will revolutionize entomology not only for the insect model organisms, but in general. The majority of these techniques can also be applied if only partial sequence information is available. With these tools, entomologists are able to answer questions in insect biochemistry, physiology, and endocrinology, but also illuminate very complex behavioral and ecological aspects.

When I edited a book on “Environmental Physiology and Biochemistry of Insects” in 1985 for the Springer-Verlag, Berlin, mechanisms of environmental adaptation in growth and development, energy metabolism, or respiration to temperature, oxygen tension, food supply or salt concentrations were in the focus of interest. It was at the time of “Physiological Ecology”. About 30 years later, the omics era gives us the opportunity to gain deeper insight into different aspects of insect physiology and environmental adaptation, for example, by overexpression or silencing of candidate genes of interest. When we understand, how physiological processes are regulated and at what time, we will be able to manipulate them, hereby providing attractive potential for practical application, for example, in an ecologically friendly insect pest control.

In 2008, we started with a Master program in “Molecular Ecology” at our University of Bayreuth, which has become very successful during the last 6 years. The Master’s program was designed to play a special role in the synergistic cross-linking of the two focal points at our University, “Ecology and Environmental Sciences” and “Molecular Biosciences”. The focus of interest is the functions of organisms—and especially of insects—in their environment and the analysis of (bio)chemical interactions in complex ecosystems. “Molecular” should mean not only to study the

function of macromolecular compounds such as proteins and nucleic acids, but to analyze also the structure and capacity of low molecular weight substances like signal molecules, toxins or drugs. This Master program inspired me to edit the present book on *Insect Molecular Biology and Ecology*.

The book provides a mix of topical review articles and current research work. In several chapters previously unpublished data are presented showing novel applications for the use of omics technologies in the postgenomic era. The book should prove useful not only to researchers of the *Insecta*, but also to teachers and graduate students who are interested in understanding the molecular basis of insect functioning in their natural environment.

I acknowledge the support received from the authors who accepted the invitation to write an article on their area of expertise and for delivering the manuscripts in due time. Any success this book may achieve has to be attributed to their efforts.

Bayreuth, July 17, 2014

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Insect Photoperiodism

Shin G. Goto^{1,*} and *Hideharu Numata*²

Seasonal Schedules and the Life History in Insects

The Earth's rotation on its own axis gives rise to daily changes in light and temperature, while the tilt of the Earth relative to its plane of rotation about the sun causes annual changes in light and temperature and, consequently, the changing of seasons. The length of day and its rate of change are functions of latitude; at higher latitudes, days are longer and day length increases more rapidly than in areas at lower latitudes after the spring equinox. Conversely, at higher latitudes, days are shorter and day length decreases more rapidly as compared to lower latitudes after the autumn equinox. Colder climates are typically associated with higher latitudes, which restrict the duration of seasons that are ideal for growth and reproduction even with longer days. Insects have responded to these geographic variations in climate by evolving appropriate modifications to their photoperiodism.

Photoperiodism is an adaptive, seasonal timing system that enables organisms to coordinate their development and physiology to annual changes in the environment using day length (photoperiod) as a cue (Nelson et al. 2010). Insects must concentrate their reproductive efforts into seasons that favor the development and survival of their offspring,

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and other activities, such as growth, migration, and diapause, must also be timed relative to seasonal abiotic and biotic environmental changes. Photoperiodism was first demonstrated in plants nearly a century ago (Garner and Allard 1920). Shortly thereafter, the first published report of photoperiodism in animals described the switch to oviparity in response to short days in the female strawberry root aphid *Aphis forbesi* Weed (Marcovitch 1923). Since this pioneering study, many examples of photoperiodic response in animals have been described; amongst insects, induction and termination of diapause and the control of seasonal morphs are the most widespread, and have been extensively investigated (Saunders 2002).

Temperature is also a useful cue for timing periodic behaviors that affect reproductive and developmental success. However, temperature can be unreliable, particularly in a terrestrial environment. A survey of daily average temperature and day length in Kyoto, Japan (35.0° N, 135.5° E) in 2011–2012 and 2012–2013 revealed dramatic day to day fluctuations and interannual variation (Fig. 1). In contrast, photoperiod is perfectly correlated with the time of year without interannual variation. Moreover, compared with temperature, which can undergo abrupt fluctuations, changes in the photoperiod are gradual, which potentially facilitates monitoring of the adaptive responses by organisms. Photoperiodic changes also occur prior to seasonal transitions. The longest day length (i.e., summer solstice) occurs approximately 1.5 month earlier than the period of highest summer temperatures, while the shortest day length (i.e., winter solstice) precedes the period of lowest winter temperatures by a comparable length of time. As such, organisms can anticipate the seasons much earlier by using photoperiod as a cue.

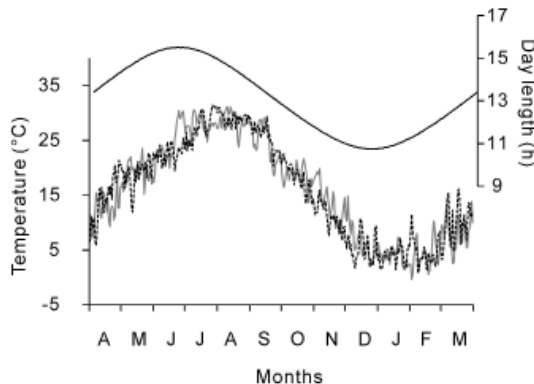


Figure 1. Annual changes in day length (solid line) and temperature during 2011–2012 (grey line) and 2012–2013 (broken line) in Kyoto, Japan (35.0° N, 135.5° E). Day length includes the length of civil twilight. Data are from the Japan Meteorological Agency (2014). There is no interannual difference in day length.

The significance of photoperiodism in the life history of an organism is illustrated by the example of the bean bug *Riptortus pedestris* (F.) from Kyoto (Fig. 2). This insect has a photoperiodic reproductive cycle, laying eggs during longer days, while suppressing the development of their reproductive organs and replenishing energy reserves during shorter days (i.e., reproductive diapause). The critical day length (CDL) for the induction of diapause in the Kyoto strain of *R. pedestris* is between 13 and 14 h; that is, insects avert or enter diapause when the day length is longer than 14 h or shorter than 13 h, respectively (Kobayashi and Numata 1993). The first and second generations of their offspring reproduce during the spring and summer when day lengths are longer than the CDL. However, third generation progeny grow during the autumn, when the day length is shorter than the CDL, enabling adults to enter reproductive diapause and overwinter while deferring oviposition until the following spring (Fig. 2). Thus, the life history of *R. pedestris*, which is characterized by three generations per year, is regulated by photoperiodism.

Photoperiodic responses have been recorded in many insect species (Danilevskii 1965, Tauber et al. 1986, Danks 1987, Saunders 2002). The physiological mechanisms underlying photoperiodic responses have been discovered by observing responses to natural or unnatural photoperiods, and in some species, the biochemical and molecular components have been identified.

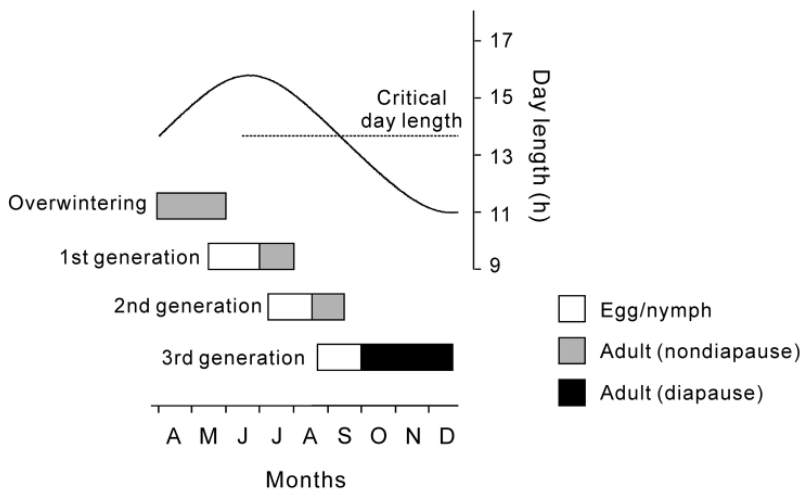


Figure 2. Day length and the life cycle of the bean bug *Riptortus pedestris* from Kyoto, Japan. Photoperiodism plays a significant role in establishing the life cycle of this species: adults in the first and second generations reproduce in response to long days; however, nymphs and adults in the third generation experience a day length that is shorter than the critical day length, inducing adults to enter diapause and overwinter.

Geographic Variations in Photoperiodism and Their Genetic Bases

Geographic variations or clines in photoperiodic responses are present in a large number of insect species (Danilevskii 1965, Saunders 2002). In an exhaustive survey, 41 geographical strains of *Drosophila littoralis* (Meigen) were collected from localities ranging from the Black Sea coast (41.6° N) to northern Finland (69.0° N), revealing geographic variations in CDLs for the induction of adult diapause (Fig. 3, Lankinen 1986). The CDL ranged from 11.6 to 20.3 h (in the south and north, respectively) and was highly correlated with latitude.

Cross matings between strains from different geographical areas have also been performed to investigate the genetic basis of photoperiodism (Saunders 2002). For example, the St. Petersburg (formerly Leningrad, 59.9° N) and Sukhumi (43.0° N) strains of *Acronycta rumicis* (L.) had CDLs of 19 and 15 h, respectively; their F₁ and F₂ progeny had an intermediate CDL of approximately 17 h (Danilevskii 1965). This was similar to the CDL of a population of *A. rumicis* from latitude of 50° N. These results indicate that a continuous latitudinal gradient exists for CDL-determining gene frequencies with continuous hybridization.

Genes that determine differences in photoperiodism have been identified from studies in the model organism *Drosophila melanogaster* (Meigen) (Williams et al. 2006, Schmidt et al. 2008). In this species, genetic crosses between geographically distinct strains differing in their potential for diapause led to the isolation of *Dp110*, a gene encoding the insulin signaling pathway component phosphoinositol-3- OH kinase (Williams et al. 2006). The gene *couch potato*, encoding an RNA-binding protein, was also identified as a major determinant of the diapause phenotype in this species (Schmidt et al. 2008). Although the exact functional mechanisms

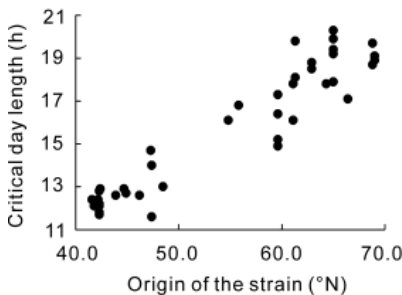


Figure 3. Critical day length (CDL) for the induction of adult diapause in *Drosophila littoralis*. Each point on the graph represents a strain collected from a different locality ranging from 41.6° N to 69.0° N (data from Lankinen 1986). A high correlation is apparent between CDL and strain origin.

of these genes are still unknown, they are thought to directly regulate diapause and not photoperiodism. Quantitative trait loci (QTL) analysis is a powerful tool for identifying specific loci or genomic regions in non-model organisms, and in the first QTL map of photoperiodism for the pitcher plant mosquito *Wyeomyia smithii* (Coquillett), a geographic variation in the photoperiodic control of diapause was revealed: nine QTL for CDL and four for diapause stage were found, although the genes at these loci have yet to be identified (Mathias et al. 2007).

Physiological Cascades and the Molecular Basis of Photoperiodism

The photoperiodic response in an organism comprises a sequence of several events (Fig. 4, Saunders 2002): (i) photoreception; (ii) assessment of day or night length by a photoperiodic time measurement system;

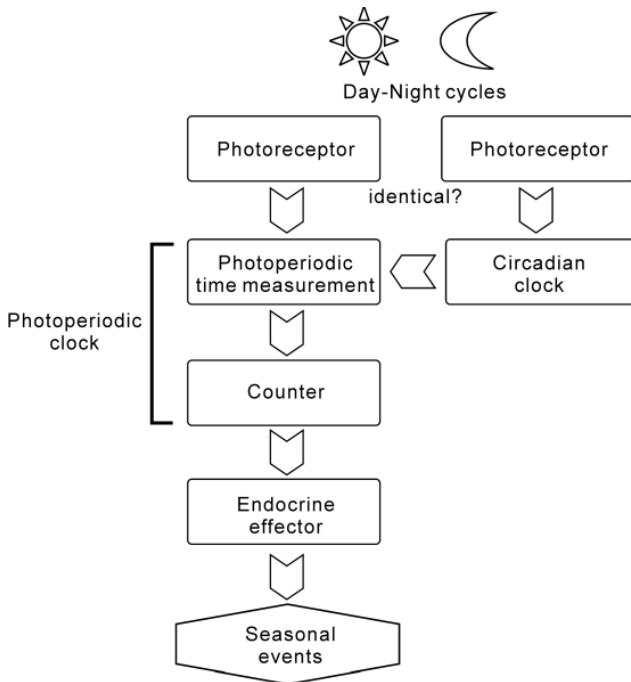


Figure 4. Establishment of photoperiodism through various modules. Light/dark signals are received by photoreceptors for photoperiodism and for the circadian clock, which may or may not be identical depending on the species. The photoperiodic time measurement system measures the length of day or night and involves the circadian clock, while the counter system counts the number of photoperiodic cycles; together, these constitute the photoperiodic clock. When the number of cycles exceeds an internal threshold, the release/restraint of endocrine effectors is triggered, inducing seasonal events.

(iii) simultaneous evaluation of the number of photoperiodic cycles by a counter system; and (iv) activation of endocrine effectors that initiate the seasonal event. In this section, each physiological system and the associated molecular mechanism will be discussed in turn.

Photoreceptors

Visual retinal or nonvisual extraretinal photoreceptors allow organisms to detect photoperiodic information from the environment. Photoperiodic photoreceptors have been described in more than a dozen species from five different orders (Goto et al. 2010). For example, in the blowfly *Protophormia terraenovae* (Robineau-Desvoidy), photoperiodic induction of adult diapause was lost after the surgical removal of their compound eyes (Shiga and Numata 1997), underscoring the importance of retinal photoreceptors for initiating this physiological process. In contrast, the blowfly *Calliphora vicina* Robineau-Desvoidy retained photoperiodic sensitivity for the maternal induction of larval diapause after removal of the optic lobes (Saunders and Cymborowski 1996), suggesting that their photoreceptors are extraretinal. Both of these species belong to the family Calliphoridae and demonstrate photoperiodicity as adults, but their distinct photoreceptors suggest that there are no phylogenetic constraints on photoperiodic photoreceptors. It should be noted that retinal and extraretinal photoreception are not mutually exclusive: the stink bug *Plautia crossota stali* Scott uses both of these for the photoperiodic induction of diapause (Morita and Numata 1999).

Two types of photoreceptive molecules are known in insects: opsin, a class of proteins conjugated to vitamin A-based pigments retinal or 3-hydroxyretinal, and cryptochrome (CRY), a protein conjugated to the vitamin B2-based pigment flavin. Opsins are the major photoreceptive molecules in the retinal photoreceptors. Spectral sensitivity is determined by specific amino acid side chains in the opsin protein, and most species have multiple opsins covering a broad range of wavelengths (Briscoe and Chittka 2001). Carotenoids and their derivatives, including vitamin A, are verified to be essential for photoperiodic responses in various insects and mites, suggesting significance of opsins (Veerman 2001, Saunders 2012). Recent gene knockdown experiments have provided direct support for the role of UV-, blue-, and long-wave-sensitive opsins in the compound eyes of the cricket *Modicogryllus siamensis* Chopard that are responsible for the photoperiodism of nymphal diapause (Sakamoto and Tomioka 2007, Tamaki et al. 2013). There have been no similar experiments performed in species that use extraretinal photoreceptors; however, in the aphid *Megoura viciae* (Buckton), in which photoperiodic photoreceptors are restricted to a small area of the protocerebrum (Lees 1964; Steel and Lees

1977). Gao et al. (1999) detected a crescent-shaped opsin-immunoreactive region in the anterior ventral part of the brain. The opsin-immunoreactive region is not exactly the same as the putative photoreceptor site (Steel and Lees 1977), but they are very close. The long wavelength-sensitive opsin boceropsin is expressed in the cerebral ganglion of *Bombyx mori* (L.), in which the cerebral ganglion is the photoperiodic photoreceptor, implying that boceropsin is their photoperiodic photoreceptor (Shimizu et al. 2001); however, this observation still awaits functional validation.

CRY absorbs short wavelength light in the range from UV to blue, with little or no sensitivity to wavelengths greater than 500 nm (Berndt et al. 2007). CRY resets the circadian clock by phase delay or advancement (Stanewsky et al. 1998, see below). In one study, a light pulse delivered during either early or late scotophase prevented pupal diapause in the flesh fly *Sarcophaga similis* Meade; nonetheless, certain physiological differences were apparent in the responses for each phase, suggesting that distinct mechanisms are involved. The late scotophase was sensitive to a broad range of wavelengths from 395 to 660 nm, indicating that light is perceived by more than one type of opsin. In contrast, the early scotophase detected light at wavelengths of 470 nm or less, and was insensitive to wavelengths of 583 nm or greater (Fig. 5); moreover, a greater responsiveness to low light intensity was observed in the early phase. These results imply that different photoreceptors operate in early and late scotophases. Although

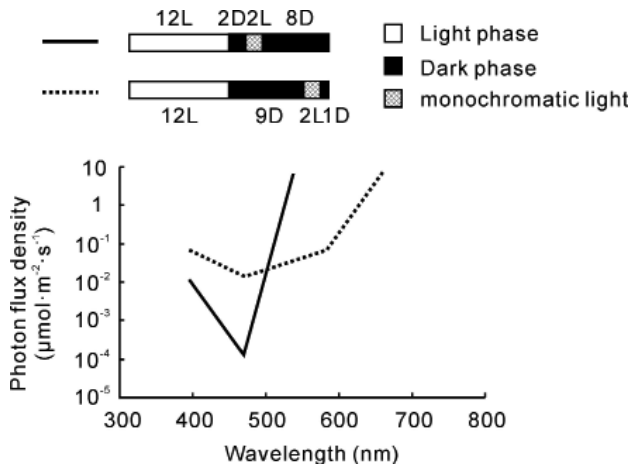


Figure 5. Spectral sensitivity in the flesh fly *Sarcophaga similis* during night interruption photoperiods with various photon flux densities of monochromatic light. Diapause-destined larvae, which were reared under 12:12 h light/dark (12L:12D) conditions, were exposed to night interruption photoperiods of 12L:2D:2L [monochromatic light]: 8D (solid line) or 12L:9D:2L [monochromatic light]:1D (broken line). Lines in the graph indicate estimated values of photon flux density at which a half of individuals entered diapause [from Goto and Numata (2009b)].

the identity of these photoreceptors is unknown, CRY is a candidate photoreceptor for the early scotophase that could act as the photoperiodic time measurement system based on the external coincidence model (see below, Goto and Numata 2009b).

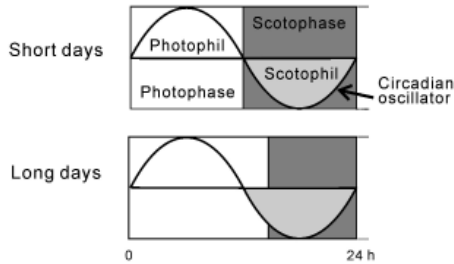
Photoperiodic Time Measurement

Organisms measure the length of day or night based on information on photoperiod acquired through photoreceptors. Bünning (1936) first proposed the involvement of a circadian clock in photoperiodism. Bünning's hypothesis posited that the 24-h circadian clock consisted of two 12-h half-cycles: the photophil and scotophil (light- and dark-loving phases, respectively) (Fig. 6A), and that short-day effects are observed when light is restricted to the photophil, while long day effects are produced when light penetrates the scotophil. Although this idea is too simple to explain the range of photoperiodic responses in organisms, the basic concept of a circadian clock in photoperiodic time measurement is now widely accepted, not only in insects (Saunders and Bertossa 2011) but also in other organisms from fungi to mammals (Nelson et al. 2010).

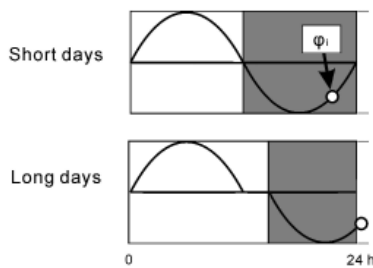
Experiments designed to reveal the role of the circadian system in photoperiodic time measurement are based on the known effects of environmental light pulses on the phase shifting and entrainment of circadian oscillations (Saunders 2002). For instance, a short-day light phase of 10–12 h can be coupled with periods of darkness varying from 4 to 72 h (Nanda and Hamner 1958); alternatively, insects can be exposed to 48- or 72-h cycles consisting of a 12-h photophase with a light pulse systematically interrupting an extended period of perceived night (Bünsow 1953). In both types of experiment, these aberrant light cycles are repeated throughout the photoperiod-sensitive period, and short-day effects are assessed for each condition at the end of the experiment. A circadian involvement is suspected when short-day effects are observed as occurring in alternating peaks and troughs with 24-h periodicity in the extended night; conversely, the absence of this pattern is evidence for an hour glass-like timer, of which *M. viciae* (Lees 1973) is an example. However, this can be considered as a heavily dampened circadian oscillator (Saunders 2009), which has been shown to be important for photoperiodic timing even in *M. viciae* (Vaz Nunes and Hardie 1993). Thus, the functional role of a circadian clock in photoperiodic time measurement is now widely accepted, although some details are still disputed (Bradshaw and Holzapfel 2007b), as discussed below.

A variety of photoperiodic time measurement models have been established by incorporating data accrued under different experimental conditions (Vaz Nunes and Saunders 1999); among these, the external

A: Bünning's hypothesis



B: External coincidence model



C: Internal coincidence model

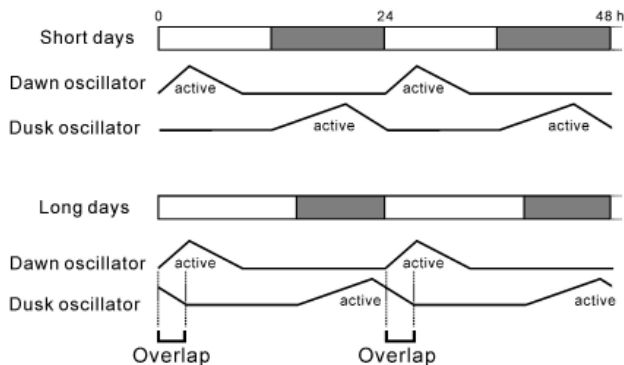


Figure 6. Conceptual diagrams of Bünning's hypothesis and the external and internal coincidence models. (A) In Bünning's hypothesis, the 24-h circadian clock comprises two 12-h half-cycles (photophil and scotophil). Short-day effects are seen when light is restricted to the photophil, while long-day effects are produced when light penetrates the scotophil. (B) Time measurement in the external coincidence model is based on a circadian clock, which sets its phase at dusk and positions the defining light-sensitive phase (ϕ_i) in the latter half of scotophase. Under short days, ϕ_i is not exposed to light, eliciting a short-day response; under long days, ϕ_i is exposed to light and a long-day response is induced. (C) The internal coincidence model proposes two oscillators entrained by dawn and dusk, respectively, whose internal phase relationship changes with photophase length. Specific phases for each oscillator are active phases, and long-day responses occur when these overlap.

and internal coincidence models (Pittendrigh 1960, Pittendrigh and Minis 1964, Tyshchenko 1966) are the most influential. In the former, time measurement is based on a circadian clock that sets its phase at dusk and positions the defining light-sensitive phase (ϕ_i) in the latter half of scotophase (Fig. 6B). During the summer, ϕ_i falls in the light period, which represents a longer day to insects and accordingly elicits a long-day response. In contrast, during the autumn, ϕ_i falls in the dark phase, which is interpreted as a short day and induces a corresponding response (see Saunders 2002, Goto 2013). The internal coincidence model proposes two oscillators that are entrained by dawn and dusk, respectively, with an internal phase that changes with the photophase length (Tyshchenko 1966, Fig. 6C). Certain phases of these oscillators are active phases, and long-day responses are induced when these overlap (see Danilevsky et al. 1970).

Photoperiodic Counter

Following the measurement of day or night length by the photoperiodic time measurement system, a photoperiodic counter registers successive cycles during the sensitive period until an internal threshold is reached, which triggers a physiological response mediated by endocrine effectors (Saunders 2002). The required day number (RDN) is defined as the number of calendar days or photoperiodic cycles needed to produce a specific seasonal event. The RDN has a capacity for temperature compensation. When females of the parasitic wasp *Nasonia vitripennis* (Walker) were maintained at various temperatures under a 12:12 h light/dark (12L:12D) cycle, they produced a physiological response associated with short day length and initiated the production of diapause larvae. The uniformity in the response over a range of temperatures suggested that a high degree of temperature compensation had occurred (Saunders 1966). A similar finding was reported for the photoperiodic induction of pupal diapause in the flesh fly (Saunders 1971). In one model of photoperiodic summation, insects accumulate or reduce (under short or long day conditions, respectively) a hypothetical diapause titer in the counter system after processing photoperiodic information in the time measurement system (Gibbs 1975). Thus, a short-day response is elicited upon exceeding the internal threshold, whereas a long day response is induced at sub-threshold values (Gibbs 1975). This putative substance is quantitatively accumulated in a photoperiod-dependent manner in some species. For example, *S. similis* enters pupal diapause in response to short days, but this can be reversed upon long-day exposure: diapause was averted when larvae progressing toward diapause were exposed to 6 d of 15L:9D or 16L:8D, indicating that both 15 and 16 h of light were both interpreted

as long days. However, after 4 d of exposure, some larvae failed to avert diapause under 15L:9D conditions, although all averted diapause under 16L:8D (Goto and Numata 2009a). This type of quantitative discrimination of photoperiod can be incorporated into Gibbs's model (Fig. 7, Tagaya et al. 2010).

The molecular components of the photoperiodic counter have been investigated in the cabbage moth *Mamestra brassicae* (L.) and the giant oak silkworm *Antheraea pernyi* (Guérin-Méneville). *M. brassicae* enters pupal diapause in response to short days, during which dopamine levels are higher in prepupal and early pupal stages. When larvae were fed the dopamine precursor L-dihydroxyphenylalanine during the final instar, diapause was induced even during long days (Noguchi and Hayakawa 1997). These results indicate that dopamine in the hemolymph and nervous system acts as a putative diapause-promoting substance. The

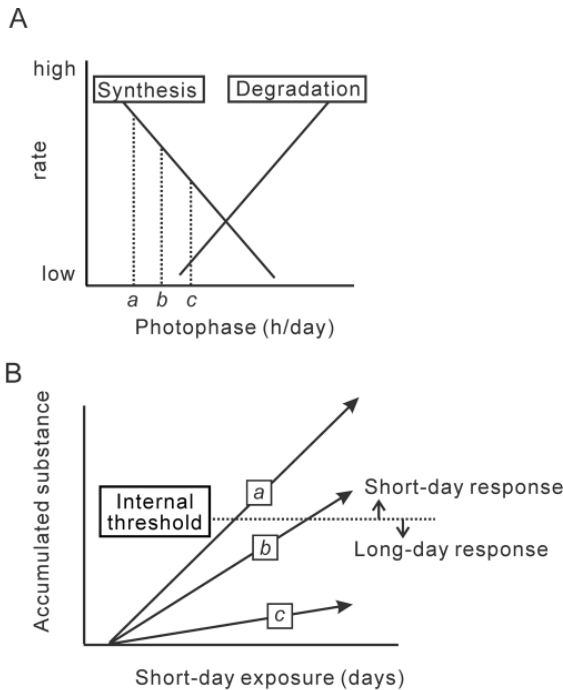


Figure 7. Conceptual diagrams of quantitative photoperiodic time measurement and counter systems. (A) A hypothetical substance is synthesized or degraded according to photoperiod in a quantitative manner (quantitative photoperiodic time measurement). The substance accumulates at a higher rate under shorter (photoperiod *a*) compared to longer (photoperiod *c*) days. (B) A short-day response is elicited when the amount of the substance exceeds an internal threshold, but a long-day response is induced for sub-threshold amounts [based on Tagaya et al. (2010)].

Receptor for activated protein kinase C1 (Rack 1) gene was upregulated in response to short days as well as dopamine treatment in *M. brassicae* (Uryu et al. 2002). The response of the *Rack 1* gene to short day cycles was quantitative; that is, expression was low for a 1-d and high for a 3-d exposure, while an intermediate response was observed upon exposure to 2 short days. This suggests that *Rack 1* is involved in the photoperiodic counter system. Rack 1 protein binds to and stimulates the nuclear translocation of protein kinase C, transducing signals that regulate a variety of cellular functions. In *A. pernyi*, the photoperiodic termination of pupal diapause was induced by injection of melatonin and flupentixol, a dopamine receptor antagonist, even under diapause-promoting short day conditions. Conversely, the injection of dopamine and luzindole, a melatonin receptor antagonist, delayed adult emergence even under diapause-terminating long day conditions. The transition from short to long day conditions was accompanied by the transcriptional upregulation of arylalkylamine N-acetyltransferase (AA-NAT), the rate-limiting enzyme in melatonin synthesis. AA-NAT mRNA levels were also increased by exposure to long days, while the transcript of dopa decarboxylase—the rate-limiting enzyme for the production of dopamine—decreased. These results suggest that dopamine and melatonin are the key molecules involved in the photoperiodic counter and could potentially function through mutual inhibition (Wang et al. 2014).

Endocrine Effectors

The hypothetical substance in the photoperiodic counter triggers the release/restraint of endocrine effectors when the internal threshold is exceeded. These effectors have been extensively studied at the molecular level, and the topic has been covered in several recent reviews (e.g., Denlinger et al. 2012, Nylin 2013); therefore, they will not be further addressed here.

Photoperiodic Time Measurement and the Circadian Clock

It is widely acknowledged that the circadian clock is involved in photoperiodic time measurement (Meuti and Denlinger 2013). Although molecular components of the circadian clock involved in photoperiodism is far from clear, those of the clock governing behavioral rhythmicity have been extensively studied. Such circadian clocks comprise several genes that self-regulate through negative feedback loops (Tomioka and Matsumoto 2010). The core molecular components are well-established, and no alternative, putative clocks have been proposed in insects; thus, it is hypothesized that the molecules of the circadian clock involved in

photoperiodic time measurement and those regulating circadian behavior are the same. This section provides an overview of the current knowledge of the circadian clock that governs behavioral rhythmicity, before discussing the roles of clock genes in photoperiodism.

Molecular Machinery of the Circadian Clock

In a highly influential report that paved the way for the molecular dissection of circadian clocks, Konopka and Benzer (1971) reported on three mutants of *D. melanogaster* with abnormal rhythms of circadian-based adult eclosion and locomotor activity. The mutations were mapped to a single gene known as *period* (*per*). Subsequent forward and reverse genetics approaches have led to the discovery of several additional circadian clock genes (Sandrelli et al. 2008, Tomioka and Matsumoto 2010).

The *Drosophila* circadian clock consists of interlocked transcriptional and translational negative feedback loops (Fig. 8). Positive regulation is provided by the Per-Arnt-Sim domain-containing proteins CLOCK (CLK) and CYCLE (CYC), which heterodimerize and induce the transcription of *per*, *timeless* (*tim*) and other clock-controlled genes. PER and TIM then act as negative regulators by forming a heterodimer that suppresses CYC–CLK activity. This feedback regulation results in an oscillation in the expression levels of the core clock components *per* and *tim*. The expression of *per* and *tim* mRNA is low during photophase but is elevated during scotophase; protein levels have a similar pattern, but with peaks that are delayed by a few hours compared to those of the transcript. The expression of *Clk* mRNA and CLK protein are in antiphase with respect to *per* and *tim* mRNA levels; however, there is no oscillation in the expression of *cyc* transcript or protein.

In insects, two types of CRY are known: a *Drosophila*-type CRY (CRY-d, also known as CRY1) and a mammalian-type CRY (CRY-m, also known as CRY2). CRY-d is a flavin-based UV- and blue light-sensitive photopigment that induces the degradation of TIM in a light-dependent manner in the central clock. The *Drosophila* genome does not contain the *cry-m* gene, but it has been identified in other insect species. CRY-m does not act as a photoreceptor but as a transcriptional suppressor, possibly working with PER and TIM (Fig. 8) in the monarch butterfly *Danaus plexippus* (Yuan et al. 2007, Zhu et al. 2008). *tim* and *cry-d* are not found in the genomes of the honey bee *Apis mellifera* or *N. vitripennis*. Instead, PER is thought to function without TIM in the feedback loop, and opsin-mediated resetting of the clock is expected to play a significant role in these species. Although the diversity of circadian clocks components in insects is recognized, the essential features—positive regulation by CYC and CLK, and negative

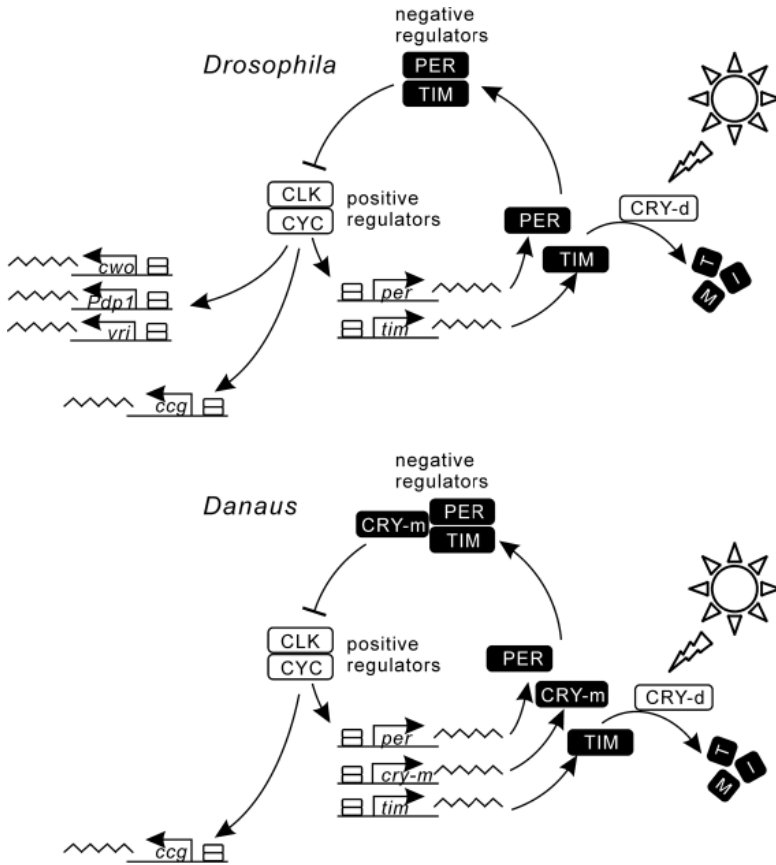


Figure 8. Circadian clock models for *Drosophila melanogaster* and the monarch butterfly *Danaus plexippus*. In *Drosophila*, CLOCK (CLK) and CYCLE (CYC) act as positive regulators to induce transcription of *period* (*per*), *timeless* (*tim*), and other circadian clock genes participating in the interlocked feedback loops of the clock such as *clockwork orange* (*cwo*), *Par-domain protein 1* (*Pdp1*), and *vri*, as well as *clock-controlled genes* (*ccg*) that mediate downstream signaling cascades. PER and TIM act as negative regulators that inhibit the transcriptional activity of the CYC–CLK heterodimer. *Drosophila* CRYPTOCHROME (CRY-d) induces the degradation of TIM in a light-dependent manner. *Danaus* has a near-identical clock, except that mammalian CRY (CRY-m), which is not found in the *Drosophila* genome, also acts as a negative regulator by forming a complex with PER and TIM to inhibit the transcriptional activity of CYC–CLK [modified from Yuan et al. (2007), Zhu et al. (2008), and Tomioka et al. (2012)].

feedback provided by PER—are largely conserved among species (Tomioka and Matsumoto 2010).

Role of Circadian Clock Genes in Photoperiodism

In an early study of the role of circadian clock genes in photoperiodic time measurement, *per* null (*per*⁰) and deletion mutants of *D. melanogaster* were able to discriminate photoperiods for the induction of diapause (Saunders et al. 1989). This finding suggested that *per* is not necessary for sensing photoperiods in this species. However, it is premature to conclude that a *per*-containing circadian clock is dispensable for photoperiodic time measurement, as several lines of evidence suggest otherwise (Košťál 2011); indeed, *per*⁰ mutants had a CDL that was 2 h shorter than in wild-type (Saunders et al. 1989).

It is now known that *tim* is involved in the photoperiodic induction of diapause in *D. melanogaster*. The incidence of diapause in northern European populations of this species is higher than that in the south. Two alleles of *tim*, *s-tim* and *ls-tim*, have been identified, the former producing truncated TIM (S-TIM) and the latter generating both S-TIM and full-length TIM (L-TIM) proteins. Interestingly, the incidence of diapause was altered by introducing natural or artificial *tim* alleles into the different genetic backgrounds (Tauber et al. 2007): a higher frequency was observed among females carrying *ls-tim* than in those with *s-tim* for any given photoperiod. In addition, diapause was also induced in the null mutant *tim*⁰¹. There were no significant interactions found between photoperiod and the *tim* alleles with respect to the incidence of diapause. These results indicate that while *tim* is not a component of the photoperiodic time measurement system *per se*, it can confer a predisposition for the regulation of diapause (Bradshaw and Holzapfel 2007b). It is also worth noting that *tim*⁰¹ flies exhibit an ambiguous photoperiodic response curve, and enter diapause irrespective of the photoperiod (Tauber et al. 2007). This raises the possibility that *tim* is directly involved in the photoperiodic time measurement system.

L-TIM was shown to interact with CRY more weakly than S-TIM; as such, flies carrying the *ls-tim* allele had significantly smaller phase responses in locomotor activity compared to *s-tim* allele carriers (Sandrelli et al. 2007), which promoted higher levels and amplitude of oscillation of TIM in the *ls-tim* flies. It is still unclear how the strength of the L-TIM/CRY interaction contributes to the photoperiodic response or diapause itself. However, it is likely that phase resetting of the clock is involved in seasonal timing.

As a well-established model insect, *D. melanogaster* provides a variety of genetic tools for the study of photoperiodism; nonetheless, it has several limitations. Diapause in this species is shallow, the incidence varies widely (see Saunders et al. 1989), and it is induced at temperatures that are close to the lower developmental threshold. It was recently determined that in two

natural populations of *D. melanogaster* representing latitudinal extremes in eastern North America, temperature was the main determinant of ovarian dormancy, while there was no significant effect of photoperiod (Emerson et al. 2009).

An association between clock genes in the photoperiodic induction of diapause has been demonstrated in several other insect species. A genetic variant of the drosophilid fly *Chymomyza costata* had abnormal photoperiodic response, and failed to enter diapause even under short-day conditions (Riihimaa and Kimura 1988); an arrhythmic pattern of adult eclosion was also observed (Lankinen and Riihimaa 1992), suggesting a causal link between the circadian clock and photoperiodic response. Daily oscillations in *per* and *tim* expression were seen in wild-type flies, but *per* was expressed arrhythmically and at low levels in the variant. In addition, *tim* mRNA was completely absent (Košťál and Shimada 2001, Pavelka et al. 2003) due to a large deletion in a crucial *cis*-regulatory element and minimal promoter (Kobelkova et al. 2010). A genetic linkage analysis mapped the gene responsible for the non-diapause phenotype to the locus containing *tim* (Pavelka et al. 2003), providing evidence for the role of *tim* in the photoperiodic induction of diapause in *C. costata*.

RNA interference (RNAi) is a powerful tool that allows the function of a gene of interest to be studied in an organism, and is particularly useful for non-model organisms (Mito et al. 2011) (see also Orchard and Lange this book, Hoffmann et al. this book). This technique was used to examine the role of *tim* in the photoperiodic response of *C. costata*; however, due to quite small effect on diapause phenotype, a clear interpretation of the results was not possible (Pavelka et al. 2003). In the cricket *M. siamensis*, the induction of nymphal diapause is photoperiodic; under short-day conditions, nymphs take more time to reach adults. In this species, *per* RNAi caused arrhythmic locomotor activity under light-dark conditions and constant darkness, confirming the requirement for *per* in circadian rhythmicity. In addition, irrespective of the photoperiod, adult emergence patterns upon *per* knockdown were similar to those of crickets maintained under constant darkness (Sakamoto et al. 2009), indicating that the circadian clock is indispensable for photoperiodic discrimination.

In a series of studies on *R. pedestris*, the expression of *per*, *cry-m*, *cyc*, and *Clk* was knocked down by RNAi (Ikeno et al. 2010, 2011a,b,c, 2013). Because of the ambiguity of behavioral rhythmicity in this species in the laboratory, cuticle deposition rhythm was used as an output of clock function. The insect endocuticle thickens by the alternating deposition of chitin microfibrils in two different orientations (lamellate and non-lamellate layers) (Fig. 9A), and in *R. pedestris* and in several other insect species, the rhythm of cuticle deposition is regulated by a circadian clock (Neville 1975, Ito et al. 2008, Ikeno et al. 2010). Disruption of

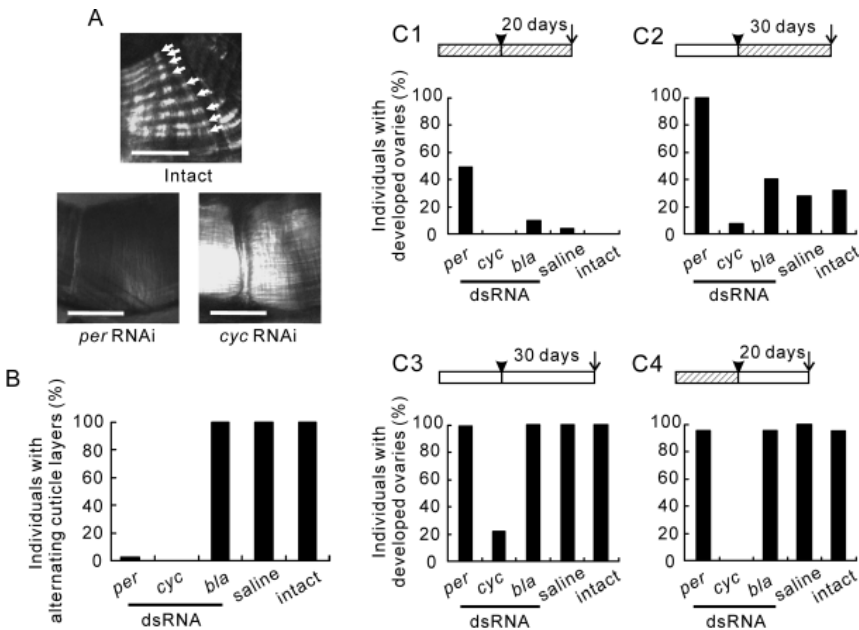


Figure 9. Endocuticle and ovarian development in the bean bug *Riptortus pedestris*. Gene knockdown via RNA interference (RNAi) was performed by injecting double-stranded RNA (dsRNA) on the day of adult emergence. (A) Cross-sections of the tibia in the hind leg of intact, *per* RNAi, and *cyc* RNAi insects 20 d after emergence. Alternating lamellate (arrows) and non-lamellate layers of the endocuticle are observed in intact insects. Knockdown of *per* or *cyc* produced a single, thickened non-lamellate or lamellate layer, respectively. Scale bar, 25 μ m. (B) Fraction of insects with normal, alternating cuticle layers 20 d after the injection of *per*, *cyc*, or β -lactamase (*bla*; negative control) dsRNA or saline. (C) Effects of *per* and *cyc* RNAi on ovarian development. The experimental schedules are shown as horizontal hatched and open bars (short- and long-day conditions, respectively). Arrowheads indicate the day of adult emergence and of dsRNA injection, and arrows indicate the day of dissection. Insects were maintained under short-day conditions (C1), transferred from long- to short-day conditions (C2), maintained under long-day conditions (C3), or transferred from short- to long-day conditions (C4) [from Ikeno et al. (2010)].

either negative or positive regulators arrests the clock and results in the production of single layers with distinct phenotypes: when *per* or *cry-m*, negative regulators, are knocked down, only a thick non-lamellate layer is produced, whereas the silencing of *cyc* and *Clk*, positive regulators, gives rise to only a lamellate layer (Fig. 9A,B). RNAi-mediated knockdown of the negative regulators failed to suppress CYC–CLK activity, causing consistent activation of the downstream cascade; this was in turn suppressed by inhibiting the positive regulators, as evidenced by the expression of other clock genes (Ikeno et al. 2010, 2011a,b). Thus, the removal of either the positive or negative regulators caused the clock to

stop its oscillation, but stuck the clock at distinct phases, causing a specific phenotypic output.

In females of *R. pedestris*, *per* and *cry-m* RNAi promoted ovarian development even under diapause-inducing short-day conditions, which was suppressed by *cyc* and *Clk* RNAi even under diapause-averting long day conditions (Ikeno et al. 2010, 2011b, 2013, Fig. 9C). The different phenotypes induced by silencing negative or positive regulators indicate that the arrest of the circadian clock at specific phases activates distinct signaling cascades that govern photoperiodic response, providing evidence that circadian clock genes are involved in photoperiodic time measurement.

Bünning's Hypothesis and Alternative Hypothesis

Given the participation of the circadian clock in photoperiodism, the question that arises is which processes in the photoperiodic response are affected. On the basis of Bünning's hypothesis, the circadian clock is actively involved in photoperiodic time measurement; however, it is possible that other processes in the photoperiodic response are also under circadian control independent of this clock, and directly induces seasonal events. Support for this idea comes from the observation that the circadian clock regulates a wide array of physiological processes in an organism, such as behavior, learning, feeding, metabolism, chemosensation, and immunity (Allada and Chung 2010). It is also known that in addition to a central circadian oscillator in the brain, peripheral clocks exist in a variety of organs, including the compound eyes, antennae, wings, legs, Malpighian tubules, and epidermis (Ito et al. 2008). These oscillators have an inherent rhythmicity that is independent of the central clock (Tomioka et al. 2012). In experiments where RNAi is introduced into an organism by feeding or injection, gene knockdown is not tissue- or cell type-specific, and it is therefore not possible to identify whether the central or peripheral clocks are being affected (Bradshaw and Holzapfel 2010). Recent studies examining the function of clock genes in peripheral tissues in relation to photoperiodism found that there they played significant "non-circadian" role (Bajgar et al. 2013a,b).

Like *R. pedestris*, the linden bug *Pyrrhocoris apterus* belongs to the infraorder Pentatomomorpha and enters reproductive diapause in response to short days. RNAi of *per* induced oviposition in about one-third of females maintained under conditions promoting diapause, but silencing *cyc* or *cry-m* had no effect on reproduction (Bajgar et al. 2013a). *cry-m* expression was highly upregulated in the gut of *P. apterus* in diapause, while that of the circadian clock gene *Par domain protein 1* (*Pdp1*) was concomitantly reduced. The juvenile hormone (JH) receptor

Methoprene-tolerant (Met), *Clk* and *cyc* are all required in the gut to activate the *Pdp1* gene during reproduction and to simultaneously suppress *cry-m* gene that promotes the diapause program (Bajgar et al. 2013b). Reproductive diapause is induced in a wide variety of insect species in the absence of JH. In *P. apterus* maintained under long-day conditions, ablation of the corpus allatum—the site of JH synthesis and secretion—induced diapause-specific expression patterns of the circadian clock genes in the gut (Bajgar et al. 2013a), implying that their expression is regulated by JH. Thus, while *CYC*, *CLK*, *PDP1*, and *CRY-m* play no role in regulating the peripheral circadian clock in the gut, *PDP1* and *CRY-m* are nonetheless under the control of a hormonal signal that dictates the diapause- or nondiapause-specific physiological state of the organ and *CYC* and *CLK* works with *MET* to regulate the JH signaling (Bajgar et al. 2013b).

Although these results emphasize the role of circadian clock genes in the peripheral tissues as the output system of photoperiodism, they do not exclude their involvement in a photoperiodic time measurement system within the brain, which is discussed in the following section.

Location of the Circadian Clock for Photoperiodism

Microcautery experiments have determined that neurosecretory cells (NSCs) located at the anterior extremity of the protocerebrum (Group I NSCs) secrete effectors that control photoperiodic regulation of virginopara production in *M. viciae* (Steel and Lees 1977). Lesioning a region lateral to Group I NSCs also effectively disrupted the normal photoperiodic response. On the basis of these observations, this region has been assumed to harbor the photoperiodic clock; however, clear functional evidence is still lacking.

Immunocytochemical approaches were used to map neurons expressing *PER*, *TIM*, and the neuropeptide prothoracicotrophic hormone (PTTH) in *A. pernyi*, which enters pupal diapause in response to short days (Sauman and Reppert 1996a,b). PTTH triggers the synthesis and secretion of ecdysteroids, and in most cases the arrest of PTTH secretion is the critical determinant of larval and pupal diapause (Denlinger et al. 2012). In *A. pernyi*, *PER* and *TIM* were coexpressed in the cytoplasm and axons of eight cells in the dorsal lateral protocerebrum of pupae and adults. A pair of *PER*-positive cells was located adjacent to the PTTH-expressing NSCs; their physical proximity and the extensive dendritic arborization of the NSCs in this region suggest routes of communication between these two cell populations that are important for the circadian control of PTTH release (Sauman and Reppert 1996a,b). However, there is no report on a link between these cells and photoperiodic responses in this species. In the tobacco hornworm *Manduca sexta* (L.), four NSCs in the pars lateralis

(PL) of each brain hemisphere are immunoreactive for PER. These cells were identified as type-Ia1 NSCs that produce the neuropeptide hormone corazonin (Wise et al. 2002). When these cells were removed under diapause-inducing short-day conditions, the incidence of nondiapause pupae increased relative to controls (Shiga et al. 2003). The dendrites of type-Ia1 and PTH cells coexist in the same region of neuropil (Shiga et al. 2003), and intracellular staining of lateral NSCs has revealed that their dendritic fields overlap (Carrow et al. 1984). This provides a basis for possible paracrine or synaptic inhibition of the PTH NSCs by type-Ia1 cells, which would implicate the latter as an element of the photoperiodic time measurement system.

In *P. terraenovae*, neurons with cell bodies in the PL projecting to the retrocerebral complex (designated as PL neurons) are necessary for the induction of reproductive diapause under short-day and low temperature conditions (Shiga and Numata 2000). Synaptic connections exist between PL neurons and pigment-dispersing factor (PDF)-immunoreactive neurons (Hamanaka et al. 2005). PDF is considered to function as an output signal from the circadian clock to regulate locomotor activity (Renn et al. 1999). Significant role of PDF in the circadian rhythm has also been reported in other insect species (Petri and Stengl 1997, Lee et al. 2009, Hassaneen et al. 2011). In *P. terraenovae*, PDF-immunoreactive fibers with synaptic connections to PL neurons probably originate from PDF-expressing neurons whose cell bodies are located at the base of the medulla in the optic lobe (Hamanaka et al. 2005). These neurons, called s-LNvs, were also immunoreactive for PER; when the brain region containing s-LNvs was removed, flies showed arrhythmic activity patterns under constant darkness, and failed to discriminate photoperiods, suggesting that s-LNvs, which function as circadian clock neurons in the brain, are also responsible for photoperiodic time measurement (Shiga and Numata 2009).

A similar neural circuit governing photoperiodism also exists in *R. pedestris* (Fig. 10, Ikeno et al. 2014). PDF-immunoreactive neurons in this insect have cell bodies located in the optic lobe, with fibers extending to the protocerebrum. Surgical removal of the region containing PDF-positive cell bodies disrupted the photoperiodic regulation of diapause (Fig. 10), although RNAi-mediated silencing of *pdf* expression had no effect on photoperiodic response. This suggests that PDF-expressing neurons, which are involved in circadian regulation, mediate photoperiodic responses in *R. pedestris* through a factor other than PDF. Although the identification of these neurons as definitive circadian clock components in this species awaits confirmation, their morphological and biochemical similarities to PDF-secreting neurons in other insects provide strong support for this possibility (Stengl and Homberg 1994, Vafopoulou et al. 2010, Vafopoulou and Steel 2012, see also the references in Ikeno et al. 2014).

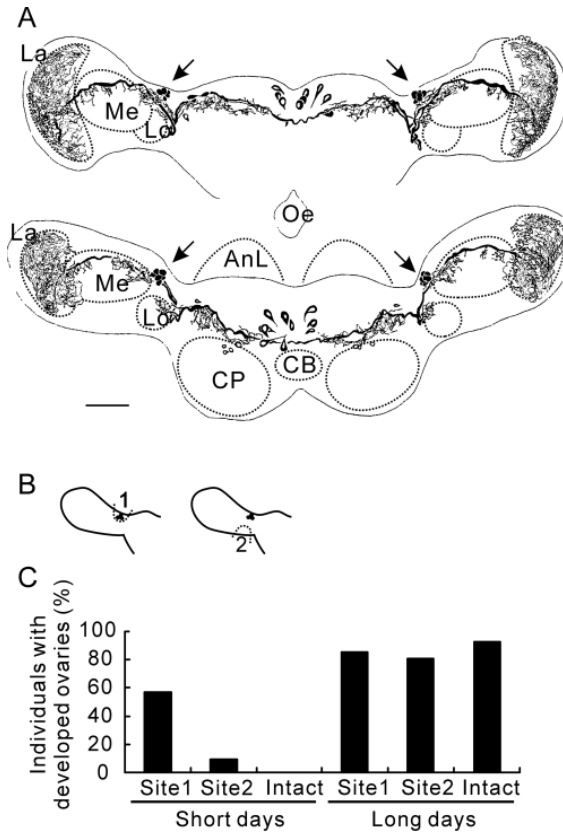


Figure 10. Pigment-dispersing factor (PDF)-immunoreactive neurons in the brain of the bean bug *Riptortus pedestris* and effect of their removal on photoperiodism. (A) Tracings of PDF-expressing neurons in the brain (top, anterior view; bottom, dorsal view). Arrows indicate cell bodies. AnL, antennal lobe; CB, central body; CP, corpus pedunculatus; La, lamina; Lo, lobulla; Me, medulla; Oe, oesophagus. Scale bar, 100 μ m. (B) Schematic illustrations of ablated optic lobe regions. Anterior and posterior bases of the medulla are designated as Sites 1 and 2, respectively. PDF-positive neurons are shown as closed circles. (C) Effect of eliminating Sites 1 or 2 on photoperiodic induction of ovarian development. The brain regions were surgically removed in insects reared under diapause-inducing short-day conditions, after which they were maintained under the same conditions or transferred to diapause-averting long-day conditions [from Ikeno et al. (2014)].

Future Prospects

Endocrine effectors that direct seasonal events in an organism have been extensively studied at the molecular level (Denlinger et al. 2012). Recently, evidence for the causal involvement of opsins in photoperiodic photoreception was obtained (Tamaki et al. 2013), while the role of CRY

is still uncertain. In contrast, the molecular mechanisms underlying photoperiodic time measurement and counter systems are still obscure.

A remaining point of contention in the photoperiodic time measurement system is whether components of the circadian clock are involved. The principles outlined by Bünning's hypothesis are now widely accepted for various organisms (Nelson et al. 2012), and to date, no alternatives to a model involving *per*, *Clk*, and *cyc* have been proposed in the circadian clock. Because circadian rhythmicity and photoperiodism are both dependent on photoperiod, linking the mechanisms that govern daily and seasonal timing has intrinsic appeal. Indeed, data from several insect species support a functional connection, although others have cautioned against drawing too many parallels because of the existence of some discrepancies (Bradshaw and Holzapfel 2012). For example, one study examined the genetic linkage between the circadian clock and photoperiodic time measurement system in *D. littoralis* (Lankinen and Forsman 2006). A northern strain with a long CDL for diapause, early phase of entrained eclosion rhythm in response to extremely short days, and a short period for the free-running eclosion rhythm was crossed with a southern strain with a short CDL, late eclosion phase, and long free-running period. After many generations, during which free recombination, artificial selection, and genetic drift occurred, a novel strain with diapause and eclosion rhythm characteristic of the southern and northern strains, respectively, was produced. The complete separation of the circadian-based eclosion rhythm from photoperiodic behavior revealed that independent mechanisms underlie these two processes. A similar incongruence between circadian rhythmicity and photoperiodism was reported in *W. smithii* (see Bradshaw and Holzapfel 2007a, 2012 and references herein). However, an alternative explanation is that a single oscillator is responsible for both processes, and that circadian or photoperiodic responses are affected through distinct downstream pathways (Lankinen and Forsman 2006, Goto 2013).

On the basis of the existing data, the most parsimonious approach to elucidating the photoperiodic time measurement system is to assume the involvement of the circadian clock genes, particularly as there is still no clear evidence to the contrary. It is also useful to approach the problem using forward genetics in order to identify non-circadian genes that are involved in photoperiodic time measurement. As photoperiodic responses have evolved multiple times in insects and the core circadian clock differs among insect taxa, it is likely that circadian clocks play species-specific roles in photoperiodic responses. Comparative studies involving diverse insect species are therefore welcome.

Apart from the question of whether circadian clock genes participate in photoperiodic time measurement, there is still a lack of basic understanding about process of photoperiodic time measurement itself. For instance,

the physiological entity represented by ϕ_i in the external coincidence model has yet to be identified; in the internal coincidence model, the components that measure the overlap between the two oscillators are still unclear. Similarly, in the counter system, the accumulation of hypothetical substances and existence of internal thresholds have been hypothesized, but these concepts still require substantiation with physiological evidence. Dopamine, melatonin, and the *Rack 1* gene have all been proposed to be involved (Noguchi and Hayakawa 1997, Uryu et al. 2003, Wang et al. 2014) but functional experiments are required in order to confirm their roles.

In conclusion, there is still much to be discerned in the cascade of photoperiodism, and a molecular dissection of this process represents a promising direction in the field. The integration of experimental approaches such as classic physiological experiments, fine-scale mapping of genes by QTL analyses, genome-editing and high-throughput sequencing technologies, which would be particularly powerful for non-model organisms, and loss of function experiments using RNAi will greatly enhance future studies on photoperiodism.

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Keywords: Photoperiodism, photoreceptor, photoperiodic time measurement, circadian clock, counter, endocrine effectors, diapause, Bünning's hypothesis, brain, day length, circadian clock genes, opsin, cryptochrome, pigment-dispersing factor

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