1	Modulation of calcineurin activity in Aspergillus nidulans: the roles of high
2	magnesium concentrations and of transcriptional factor CrzA.
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4	Running title: Roles of magnesium and CrzA in calcineurin signaling
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26	

27 Title: Modulation of calcineurin activity in Aspergillus nidulans: the roles of high

28 magnesium concentrations and of transcriptional factor CrzA

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33 Summary

A proper response to elevated extracellular calcium levels helps to most organisms to keep this 34 35 secondary messenger under strict control, thereby preventing inadequate activation or 36 inhibition of many regulatory activities into cells. In fungi, the calcineurin responsive zincfinger Crz1/CrzA transcription factor transduces calcium signaling to gene expression. In 37 Aspergillus nidulans, absence of CrzA activity leads to alkaline pH sensitivity and loss of 38 39 tolerance to high levels of extracellular calcium. Disruption of calcium uptake mechanisms or the presence of high levels of Mg^{2+} partially suppresses this calcium-sensitive phenotype of 40 null crzA strain. The effects of Mg²⁺ on CrzA phosphorylation and perturbations that reduce 41 42 calcineurin phosphatase activity on CrzA demonstrate that the calcium sensitive phenotype of 43 null crzA strain is a consequence of up-regulated calcineurin activity under calcium-induced conditions. 44

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46 Keywords: Signaling, Calcineurin, alkaline pH, calcium sensitivity, filamentous fungus

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50 Introduction

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52 Calcium and magnesium are central cations for cell survival because they participate in the regulation of numerous processes in either prokaryotes or eukaryotes. Accordingly, to their 53 54 importance, their intracellular concentrations are tightly regulated. Environments with abundant Ca²⁺ or Mg²⁺ can challenge homeostatic mechanisms (Wolf and Trapani, 2008) 55 (Cunningham, 2005). On the other hand, limitation of Ca^{2+} and Mg^{2+} supply can also constrain 56 57 microbial growth. Both cations can enter the cell through different transport mechanisms and, 58 due to the importance of these cations, it must exist a feedback control system in order to regulate the levels of free cytosolic Ca²⁺ and Mg²⁺. Regulation of the cytosolic free-ionized Mg²⁺ 59 60 concentration is likely achieved by three major mechanisms: control of uptake systems, efflux 61 from the cell and sequestration within organelles (Grubbs, 2002). Levels of intracellular 62 calcium are carefully regulated to enable a stable cytosolic concentration of 50-200 nM (Aiello et al., 2002). From fungi to metazoans, the elevation of cytosolic calcium levels sequentially 63 64 activates a signaling cascade based on two calcium binding proteins, calmodulin (CaM) and 65 calcineurin, a serine/threonine protein phosphatase composed of a catalytic A subunit (CnA) 66 and the calcium binding regulatory B subunit (CnB) (Guerini, 1997). Direct interaction of 67 calcium-bound CaM to its specific binding domain present in the catalytic CnA subunit leads to 68 the activation of the phosphatase calcineurin (Guerini, 1997).

Saccharomyces cerevisiae has served as a model organism to study calcium and magnesium homeostasis and calcium-dependent signaling in fungi. The best-characterized target of calcineurin is the transcription factor (TF) Crz1p. In response to stress, the Ca²⁺/ calmodulin/calcineurin pathway is activated and leads to the dephosphorylation of Crz1p and therefore its translocation to the nucleus to modulate gene expression. The nucleocytoplasmic trafficking of Crz1p depends on the phosphorylation state of its Nuclear Localization Signal (NLS) and Nuclear Export Signal (NES) (reviewed in (Cyert, 2003)). Previous work from our

Iaboratory showed that CrzA, the orthologue of Crz1p in filamentous fungi *A. nidulans,* undergoes a similar activation process in response to elevated calcium levels, but also to other divalent cations such as manganese and alkaline pH (Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2013). Furthermore, we demonstrated that the phospho-protein CrzA has different phosphorylation states in response to elevated calcium levels or alkaline pH (Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2013).

82 In A. nidulans, CrzA is properly signalized and transported to nuclei at extracellular calcium 83 concentrations below 0.1 mM (Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2017). However, a null crzA strain 84 displays sensitivity to extracellular concentrations of calcium over 10 mM. This fact indicates 85 that CrzA function is mainly required to prevent the negative effects of high extracellular 86 concentrations of calcium (Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2017). CrzA is also required for 87 tolerance of concentrations of manganese above 5 mM and pH values over 7.5 (Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2013). Under these conditions, the null *cnaA* (catalytic subunit of calcineurin) 88 89 mutant displays an impaired colonial growth with severe morphological defects and sensitivity 90 (Soriani et al., 2008; Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2013). To understand the mechanisms of 91 calcium signalling in Aspergillus, Almeida and collaborators selected for suppressor mutations 92 of crzA_d calcium intolerance (Almeida et al., 2013). Mutations in three genes were identified 93 and it was relevant the finding of a mutation, cnaB2, affecting the regulatory subunit of 94 calcineurin. The *cnaB2* suppressor mutation was interpreted as conferring calcium tolerance to 95 crzAA strains through restoration of calcium homeostasis. These results could indicate that in 96 A. nidulans there are calcineurin-dependent and CrzA-independent pathways (Almeida et al., 97 2013).

Calcium homeostasis in *A. nidulans* is greatly influenced by the activity of the transcription factor SltA. The *sltA* deletion strain display sensitivity to high concentrations of Li^+ , Na^+ , K^+ and Mg^{2+} cations but not to Ca^{2+} . In fact, an elevated extracellular concentration of Ca^{2+} reduces the sensitivity of null *sltA* strains to cations and alkalinity (Spielvogel *et al.*, 2008). Intracellular

102 calcium storage is also increased in a null *sltA* background and transcriptional analyses of 103 vacuolar calcium ATPases pointed to an important role of these transporters in calcium 104 homeostasis in *A. nidulans*. To date the role of calcium channel MidA/CchA in calcium 105 tolerance and the interplay of Ca²⁺/Mg²⁺ cations has not been explored in detail in fungi. In this 106 work, we focus on understanding the mechanisms to control calcium homeostasis by studying 107 the suppression of calcium sensitive phenotype of null *crzA* strain and also revisiting previous 108 findings by Almeida and collaborators (2013).

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111 Results

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Elevated extracellular levels of magnesium suppress calcium sensitivity displayed by null crzA
mutant.

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SltA is a zinc-finger transcription factor involved in cation homeostasis and tolerance to ambient alkaline pH. The null *sltA* strain is sensitive to elevated levels of extracellular magnesium but no phenotype has been observed under excess of calcium compared to a wild type strain (Mellado *et al.*, 2016). An opposite phenotype was described for the null *crzA* strain (Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2013). However, we detected a cross effect between calcium and magnesium during characterization of both null *sltA* and *crzA* strains.

When medium was supplemented with 200 mM Mg²⁺ the null *crzA* mutant exhibited colonial growth and asexual development (sporulation capacity) comparable to the wild-type strain (Fig. 1A). A mixture of 200 mM Mg²⁺ and 100 mM Ca²⁺ was tolerated by the null *crzA* mutant. Thus, magnesium prevented the negative effect of this large excess of extracellular calcium concentration (Fig. 1A). A similar cross effect was observed with the null *sltA* strain. A concentration of 200 mM Mg²⁺ prevented growth of null *sltA* mutant, but addition of 100 mM Ca²⁺ restored normal colonial growth (Fig. 1A).

To investigate the importance of Mg^{2+} for *sltA* and crzA mutants, we studied the effect of 129 restricting the availability of this cation in the medium. Figure 1B shows that depletion of Mg²⁺ 130 131 in AMM strongly reduced colonial growth for the three strains analyzed. In fact, the null crzA 132 strain displayed a colony morphology that resembled that observed under high calcium concentrations: poor radial growth and accumulation of an orange/brown pigment (compare 133 growth of $crzA \Delta$ mutant with extra Ca²⁺ in Fig. 1A). This phenotype agrees with observations 134 from other groups that low extracellular levels of Mg²⁺ may cause alterations in cation 135 136 homoeostasis, by upregulating ENA1, that encodes the P-type ATPase sodium pump, and

PHO89, encoding a sodium/phosphate cotransporter, which are also upregulated under 137 calcium and alkaline stress. It has been proposed that Mg²⁺ starvation causes an increase in 138 cytoplasmic free calcium leading to calcium signaling (Mendizabal et al., 2001; Hu et al., 2007; 139 140 Wiesenberger et al., 2007). Supplementation with at least 0.2 mM Mg²⁺ was necessary for reconstitution of colony growth of both null sltA and crzA strains to a similar extent to that 141 142 observed for the wild-type strain. Thus, these results corroborate that magnesium is an 143 important cation in A. nidulans physiology and a cross talk between calcium and magnesium 144 homeostatic pathways may occur.

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Absence of functional MidA/CchA calcium channel reduces but not fully suppress calcium
sensitivity of null crzA mutant.

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150 Calcium tolerance of *crzA* \varDelta strain depends on the extracellular concentration of this cation 151 (Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2017). As shown on Figure 2, on standard *Aspergillus* minimal 152 medium a colony of null *crzA* mutant displays normal radial growth although poor conidiation 153 compared to the wild type. A continuous reduction in radial growth of null *crzA* mutant was 154 observed when increasing the concentration of extracellular calcium up to 10 mM (less than 155 20% of radial growth). Above 50 mM Ca²⁺, growth of *crzA* \varDelta mutant was completely inhibited 156 (Fig. 2).

A possible explanation for the calcium-sensitive phenotype of $crzA\Delta$ mutant is that calcium entry through the high affinity calcium channel is not properly regulated. To test this possibility, the effect of deleting calcium channel CchA and its regulatory subunit MidA in a $crzA\Delta$ background was analyzed. We constructed single and double null $midA\Delta$ $cchA\Delta$ mutants and we analyzed them under the same conditions. These $midA\Delta/cchA\Delta$ mutant strains did not displayed any sensitivity to high calcium concentrations (Fig. 2). In contrast, on standard AMM

a strong compact colony morphology and poor asexual development was observed. This 163 164 phenotype is consistent with a lower influx of calcium and limitation of intracellular calcium as 165 observed before (Fig. 1B). Single nulls of both calcium channel subunits in combination with 166 $crzA\Delta$ were generated. Both $cchA\Delta$ $crzA\Delta$ and $midA\Delta$ $crzA\Delta$ double mutants grew comparable 167 to WT at calcium concentrations in which the single null crzA mutant displayed some degree of 168 sensitivity to this cation (7.5 and 10 mM). In fact, a calcium concentration of 50 mM was now 169 required to observe a similar growth inhibitory effect to that shown by the single $crzA\Delta$ strain 170 at 25 mM. Thus, loss-of-function of any of both subunits of the calcium channel reduced 2 to 3 171 times the sensitivity of null *crzA* to calcium (Fig. 2).

172 The suppressor effect of magnesium was also visible in the absence of a functional calcium channel (Fig. 2). Presence of 100 mM Mg²⁺ suppressed the calcium-sensitive phenotype 173 174 displayed by strains carrying the $crzA\Delta$ allele when 50 mM calcium was added. A negative 175 effect of magnesium was not observed in $midA\Delta/cchA\Delta$ strains even when medium was supplemented with 200 mM Mg²⁺, suggesting that magnesium does not obstruct or compete 176 177 with other remaining calcium uptake mechanisms. These results strongly support the idea that a reduction in calcium uptake together with an increase in intracellular levels of Mg²⁺ may act 178 179 in concert to prevent the deleterious effect of lacking CrzA activity at high extracellular 180 concentrations of calcium.

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183 Magnesium impinges on the calcium-dependent signaling of CrzA.

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185 CrzA is detected at different phosphorylation levels in SDS-polyacrylamide 186 electrophoresis. CrzA forms with a high level of phosphorylation migrate at a low rate 187 compared to those forms that are dephosphorylated, indicated with CrzA^{+P} and CrzA^{-P} 188 respectively in Fig. 3 (Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2013). Figure 3 displays those changes in

189 the electrophoretic mobility of CrzA-GFP fusion in response to calcium (compare RC, resting 190 cells, and calcium-induced cells). An increase in mobility is observed after 1 min of calcium addition (CrzA^{-P} in Fig. 3) and no qualitative difference was detected between 1 mM or 100 191 192 mM calcium, showing that 1 mM Ca²⁺ suffices for calcineurin (CN) mediated dephosphorylation of CrzA (Fig. 3). However, recovery of highly phosphorylated states of CrzA (CrzA^{+P}) changed 193 194 with the amount of added calcium. Full recovery of low electrophoretic migration was 195 observed after 30 min upon 1 mM calcium addition. In contrast, after 30 min of exposure to a 196 100-fold concentration of calcium, we detected intermediate states of phosphorylated CrzA 197 (asterisk, Fig. 3A). Figure 3A (bottom) shows an experiment to confirm that the observed 198 electrophoretic changes of CrzA were due to its dephosphorylation. We performed control in 199 vitro dephosphorylation assays of the low mobility CrzA (RC) by inhibiting the calcineurin 200 activity with the use of cyclosporine A (CsA) (as previously demonstrated in detail, (Hernández-201 Ortiz and Espeso, 2013). These results indicate that higher levels of intracellular calcium drive 202 to a prolonged active state of CN.

In contrast to the effect of Ca²⁺ in reducing CrzA mobility, addition of 100 mM Mg²⁺ had the 203 204 opposite effect (Fig. 3B). Compared to mobility of CrzA in resting cells, a visible reduction in 205 mobility was observed from 1 min after magnesium addition, indicating that any dephosphorylating mechanism acting on CrzA was attenuated. Next, we analyzed if such Mg²⁺-206 207 dependent attenuation could affect calcium signaling. Cells expressing CrzA-GFP were treated for 30 min with 100 mM Mg²⁺ (RC30), and then either 1 mM or 100 mM Ca²⁺ was added (Fig. 208 209 3C). Mycelial samples were taken different times and analyzed for the phosphorylation pattern of CrzA. In contrast to the strong dephosphorylating effect when 1 mM Ca²⁺ was added to 210 211 resting cells, magnesium pre-treated cells showed partial change in CrzA mobility. A stronger effect on CrzA mobility in Mg²⁺ pre-treated cells was observed after addition of 100 mM Ca²⁺. 212 213 At 1 min, the high mobility band corresponding to a dephosphorylated form of CrzA was 214 clearly visible, however a low mobility band, corresponding to phosphorylated forms, was observed in all samples. In fact, the high mobility band reduced its signal over the time. These results show a negative effect of magnesium in calcium signaling over CrzA by preventing its Ca²⁺-induced dephosphorylation. Taking the post-translational modification process of CrzA as a model, these results suggest that Mg²⁺ has a regulating role in the activity of calcineurin, opposing the activating effect of calcium.

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222 Magnesium modifies the nuclear import dynamics of CrzA.

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224 The graph shown in Figure 4A illustrates the effect of adding either 1 mM or 100 mM calcium 225 in the nuclear accumulation of the functional fluorescent CrzA fusion. Nuclear fluorescence 226 was measured and compared to cytoplasmic fluorescence at different times along 30 minutes 227 after addition of the cation. In contrast to calcium, a large concentration of magnesium does 228 not induce nuclear entry of CrzA (white bars, Fig. 4A) while 1 mM or 100 mM produced a 229 comparable effect on promoting nuclear accumulation of CrzA (light and dark grey bars, 230 respectively, Fig. 4A), as was noticed before (Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2013; Hernández-231 Ortiz and Espeso, 2017). In the previous section, we show that calcium-dependent signaling of 232 CrzA is blocked in the presence of magnesium. Predictably, accumulation of highly 233 phosphorylated forms would result in the exclusion of CrzA from nuclei since 234 dephosphorylation is required for its nuclear transport (Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2013; 235 Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2017). Quantitative measurements of nuclear vs cytoplasmic 236 fluorescence of a strain expressing CrzA-GFP demonstrate that magnesium largely prevents 237 nuclear entry of CrzA when 1 mM calcium is added (stripped bars, Fig. 4B). This magnesium-238 dependent effect is also dependent of calcium concentration. A 100 times higher concentration of Ca²⁺ still has the capacity to promote nuclear accumulation of this 239 240 transcription factor (dotted bars, Fig. 4B), although delayed and transient. In agreement with

previous immunodetection data, magnesium attenuates the calcium-induced
dephosphorylation of CrzA and consequently the timely activation of nuclear transport signals.

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Role of calcineurin in the calcium-hypersensitivity phenotype caused by null crzA allele.
Inhibiting the activity of CN.

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Due to the negative effect of Mg²⁺ on the calcium-dependent signaling of CrzA, we 248 249 analyzed whether attenuation of CN activity could suppress calcium sensitive phenotype of 250 crzA Δ strain. Using a concentration of 10 μ M cyclosporine A (CsA), a well-known inhibitor of 251 CN, we observed a strong reduction of colony diameter of a wild-type strain, and a similar 252 inhibitory effect was observed for a crzA Δ mutant, sltA Δ and double cchA Δ crzA Δ and midA Δ 253 $crzA \Delta$ mutants (Fig. 5A). This CsA effect on colony morphology was similar to the phenotype 254 observed before for a strain lacking of the calcineurin subunit CnaA (Hernández-Ortiz and 255 Espeso, 2013). All null crzA strains used in this experiment showed the expected sensitivity to 256 100 mM calcium, however, addition of CsA improved colonial growth to a similar extend to 257 that observed for the wild type, although largely differs to the positive effect of adding 258 magnesium (see controls marked by the red box, Fig. 5A). Fig. 5B shows a quantitative 259 experiment of the effect on mycelial growth caused by calcium in the previous mutant 260 backgrounds, confirming colonial growth tests. Calcium caused a strong reduction in mycelial 261 mass in the absence of CrzA activity. As for colonial growth, inhibition of calcineurin by CsA 262 relieves the negative effect of calcium increasing mycelial masses for the three null crzA strains 263 tested. We conclude that attenuation of calcium sensitivity of null crzA by addition of 264 cyclosporine A suggests that calcineurin activity must be a deregulated element in the $crzA\Delta$ 265 mutant background under high calcium concentrations.

Role of calcineurin in the calcium-hypersensitivity phenotype caused by null crzA allele;
reviewing the phenotype of cnaB2 mutation.

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A mutation in the calcineurin regulatory subunit, cnaB2, was isolated as a suppressor of 271 272 calcium sensitivity of null crzA mutant (Almeida et al., 2013). To study the effect of cnaB2 273 mutation in the signaling of CrzA in a loss-of-function crzA background, we took advantage of 274 the GFP-CrzA(1-448) chimera. This truncated form lacks the DNA binding domain and the 275 mutant expressing this truncated version of CrzA displays a null crzA phenotype (Fig. 6A). 276 However, GFP-CrzA(1-448) is a target of CN becoming dephosphorylated when calcium is 277 added and subsequently displays nuclear accumulation (see (Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 278 2013)). In addition, this truncated GFP-tagged version of CrzA is expressed ectopically and 279 consequently we can study its signaling in the presence or absence of the endogenous CrzA 280 protein. Figure 6A shows the differential sensitivity to calcium of MAD2168 strain expressing 281 GFP-CrzA(1-448) chimera in a crzA+ background and of MAD2172 that carries a null crzA allele. 282 The presence of a endogenous copy of crzA suppresses the sensitivity to calcium displayed by 283 the only expression of GFP-CrzA(1-448). The calcium-sensitive phenotype of MAD2172 (crzA(1-284 448) crzA Δ) can also be suppressed by the cnaB2 mutation. A cnaB2 crzA(1-448) crzA Δ mutant 285 (MAD5514) is able to grow on media containing 50 mM Ca²⁺ as it is the double *cnaB2 crzA* Δ 286 strain (MAD5537/rev2) (Fig. 6A). These phenotypic analyses showed that *cnaB2* suppresses the 287 calcium sensitive phenotype independently of presence of ectopically expressed CrzA(1-448). 288 Diverse forms of the GFP-CrzA(1-448) chimera are immunodetected in protein extracts of

resting cells of strain MAD2172 (*crzA* Δ) indicating that CrzA(1-448) was found in different states of phosphorylation (Fig. 6B lane 3). Addition of 50 μ M CsA largely reduced the mobility of GFP-CrzA(1-448) chimera to a single band, evidencing that CN activity participates on the phospho-turnover of this fusion protein (Fig. 6B, compare lanes 3 and 4). Addition of Mg²⁺ also 293 altered the mobility of CrzA(1-448) and a well-defined slower mobility band was detected when increasing concentrations of Mg^{2+} were added (Fig. 6B lanes 1-4). Presence of *cnaB2* 294 295 mutation causes a reduction in the mobility of CrzA(1-448) comparable to the effect of adding 296 CsA (Fig. 6B, compare lanes 4 and 5). Addition of 1 mM or 100 mM calcium has no effect on 297 the cnaB2 mutant and the mobility of CrzA(1-448) remained unaltered (Fig. 6B, lanes 5-9). A 298 dephosphorylation experiment using lambda protein phosphatase (λ PP, Fig. 6C) showed the 299 presence of phosphorylated forms of CrzA(1-448) in resting cells of cnaB2 strain MAD5515 but 300 not in extracts from strain MAD2172. These results demonstrate that cnaB2 constitutes a loss 301 of CN function and that a proper signaling of CrzA is abolished in this mutant background. The 302 electrophoretic mobility of CrzA(1-448) also changes when a functional form of CrzA is present 303 in the cell. Mobility of CrzA(1-448) in resting cells of strain MAD2168 is comparable to that 304 found in MAD2172 in the presence of CN inhibitor CsA (Fig. 6B, compare lanes 10 and 4). The 305 dephosphorylation experiment shown in Fig. 6C demonstrate the presence of phosphorylated 306 forms of CrzA(1-448) in the presence of a wild-type CrzA protein (strain MAD2168). 307 Magnesium has a minor effect on the mobility of CrzA (1-448) in the presence of functional 308 CrzA (lanes 10, 12 and 13, Fig. 6B). Instead, addition of CsA increased the reduced mobility of 309 CrzA(1-448) in a $crzA^{\dagger}$ background. These results indicate that phosphorylation levels of 310 CrzA(1-448) also depend on the CrzA activity, finding lower phosphorylation levels in the 311 absence of CrzA. In addition, the observed effect of CsA on the mobility of CrzA(1-448) in the 312 presence or absence of CrzA strongly supports the idea that calcineurin activity is increased in 313 a cell that lacks of a functional form of CrzA.

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315 Phosphoproteomic studies of functional and non functional versions of CrzA

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The possibility that truncated forms of CrzA might be modified by calcineurin depending on their functional grade determined that we analyzed phosphorylated residues in two truncated

319 forms, the non-functional form CrzA(1-448) and the functional form CrzA(1-612). A global phosphoproteomic analysis (to be published elsewhere) revealed several phosphopeptides for 320 321 the functional form of CrzA, while none were observed in the non-functional form (Fig. 7A; 322 Table S1). To validate these results we compared the presence in our samples of 323 phosphopeptides of other proteins predictably regulated by phosphorylation such as the 324 plasma ATPase PmaA and the ammonium transporter MepA (Estrada et al., 1996; Reoyo et al., 325 1998; Monahan et al., 2002; Boeckstaens et al., 2014) (Supporting material, Table S1). At least 326 eleven serine residues were differentially found to be phosphorylated in the form CrzA(1-612) 327 (Fig. 7A). These serine residues were identified into four peptides from a region between 328 coordinates 379 and 467, upstream of the DNA binding domain (Fig. 7B). This region was 329 already predicted to be highly phosphorylated and contains the functional site for calcineurin 330 docking, CDD2 (Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2013) (Fig. 7B). In the absence of calcineurin 331 activity, we detected at least seven potential phosphorylated serine residues in the form 332 CrzA(1-612), most of them in common with those identified in the presence of a functional 333 calcineurin (Fig. 7).

As determined before, the presence of *cnaB2* elevated the phosphorylation levels of CrzA(1-448). The phospho-proteomic analysis of protein extract from resting cells of CrzA(1-448) *cnaB2* mutant (MAD5514) confirmed that result. We detected phosphorylated serine residues in two peptides close to CDD2 also found to be modified in CrzA(1-612). The overall phosphoproteomic data confirms that CrzA is phosphorylated at various serine residues located in the proximity to the functional calcineurin domain in CrzA and that a non-functional CrzA is mainly in a dephosphorylated state.

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Lack of effect of calcium, magnesium and alkaline pH on the CnaB electrophoretic mobility and
cellular localization.

346 CnaA has been shown to accumulate in septa and cytoplasmic aggregates (Hernández-Ortiz 347 and Espeso, 2017). We tagged CnaB with GFP epitope to follow its localization and 348 electrophoretic mobility in response to the calcium, magnesium and alkalinity. Recombinant 349 strains expressing CnaB-GFP showed a wild-type phenotype. Immunodetection experiments 350 showed a single band of a size of 52 kDa for the tagged CnaB-GFP protein, in both wild type 351 (MAD5502, Fig. S1A) and null crzA background (MAD5507, data not shown). Mobility of CnaB-352 GFP remained unchanged when medium was alkalinized or supplemented with magnesium or 353 calcium (Supporting material, Fig. S1A).

Microscopy analysis of cells expressing CnaB-GFP showed that the regulatory subunit had the same localization as the catalytic module, accumulating at both sides for septa and in cytoplasmic aggregates ((Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2017), Supporting material, Fig. S1B). These localizations remained unaltered when cations were added or pH was alkalinized (not shown). The results indicate that, if modulation of CN activity occurs upon stress, this is independent of its cellular localization.

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362 Transcriptional control of the regulator of calcineurin activity, rcnA.

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A key element in regulating the activity of CN is the highly conserved RCN factor, also known as calcipressin (Görlach *et al.*, 2000). In *S. cerevisiae*, expression of RCN1 is positively regulated by Crz1p (Kingsbury and Cunningham, 2000; Mehta *et al.*, 2009). A homologue in *A. nidulans* has been described, *rcnA*, but its regulation by CrzA has not been determined (Almeida *et al.*, 2013). We have analyzed the expression levels of *rcnA* in a wild type background (Fig. 8). Transcription of *rcnA* is detected in mycelium grown in standard minimal medium. Depletion of Mg²⁺ caused a small reduction in *rcnA* levels (ratio *rcnA* vs 18S rRNA, 18.5 and 11.8,

respectively). In contrast, 10 min after addition of 10 mM Ca²⁺ greatly increased expression of 371 372 rcnA (41.6 vs 18.5). This increase in expression could be due to calcium-induced dephosphorylation and activation of CrzA nuclear import. Thus, presence of Mg²⁺, that 373 374 prevents dephosphorylation and nuclear import of CrzA, should reduce expression of rcnA. Northern analysis shows that this is the case and addition of 200 mM Mg²⁺ alone or together 375 376 with calcium largely reduced expression levels of rcnA (3.1 and 8.4, respectively) compared to 377 the levels found in control medium (18.5) or in the presence of calcium (41.5). These results 378 support a regulation of rcnA expression dependent on CrzA activity. Then, we analyzed 379 expression levels of rcnA in a null crzA background. Northern analysis showed that expression 380 of rcnA was downregulated in the absence of CrzA function. Expression levels of rcnA in 381 standard minimal medium reduced in the null crzA strain compared to WT (5.9 vs 18.5). Calcium did not increased expression of rcnA and either depletion or addition of 200 mM of 382 Mg²⁺ did not affect expression of *rcnA*. The overall data indicates that CrzA is responsible of 383 384 rcnA regulation although expression is continuously detected. Thus, RcnA must be present at 385 basal level in the cell irrespective of CrzA activity, however, calcium induces expression and it 386 is expected an elevation of RcnA protein levels, supposedly involved in controlling activity of 387 CN after its induction by calcium.

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390 Discussion

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Calcium is a key messenger and the signaling pathway is well conserved along phylogeny. In fungi, an effector of calcium signaling is the family of transcription factors Crz, which are substrates of calcineurin phosphatase. In *A. nidulans, crzA* mutants tolerate a limited amount of extracellular calcium (Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2013) and similar calcium hypersensitivity is observed for other Crz homologues from *S. cerevisiae, C. albicans, S. pombe*

and *A. fumigatus* (Hirayama *et al.*, 2003; Zakrzewska *et al.*, 2005; Karababa *et al.*, 2006; Soriani *et al.*, 2008). However, it has been intriguing the partial tolerance of a *crzA* mutant to
moderate (10 mM) concentrations of calcium, indicating a need of CrzA activity mainly under
large excess of extracellular calcium, thus we have focused on elucidating the basis of this
partial tolerance to calcium.

402 A predicted role of CrzA is to prevent an excessive cytoplasmic accumulation of calcium as a 403 result of massive entry through calcium uptake systems (Almeida et al., 2013). The accepted 404 model of calcium homeostasis for most organisms contemplates that the inadequate 405 cytoplasmic accumulation of calcium constitutes a source for deregulation of important 406 cellular processes and thus affecting cell viability (Cui and Kaandorp, 2006; Cui, Kaandorp, 407 Sloot, et al., 2009; Tisi et al., 2016). As in yeast, the principal system for entry of calcium into A. nidulans cells is the putative voltage-gated Ca²⁺ channel (VGCC) composed of the CchA and 408 409 MidA proteins (Wang et al., 2012). Wang S and collaborators found that these channels play 410 important roles in conidiation, hyphal polarity and cell wall components in A. nidulans (Wang 411 et al., 2012). They demonstrated that depletion of CchA /MidA resulted in conidiation defects 412 in an inoculum-size-dependent way and interestingly these conidiation defects can be rescued by extracellular Ca²⁺ in a calcineurin-dependent way. This observation is also confirmed from 413 414 our growth plates assays (Fig. 2). Here we show that a reduction of calcium uptake by lacking 415 the VGCC activity ameliorates the sensitive phenotype displayed by the null crzA and 416 reinforces the idea that excessive availability of free cytoplasmic calcium could be a cause for 417 this sensitivity.

In *A. nidulans* we have identified another transcription factor involved in calcium homeostasis,
SltA (Spielvogel *et al.*, 2008). Opposite to the phenotype displayed by *crzA*∆ mutant, null *sltA*strains tolerate elevated extracellular concentrations of calcium due, most probably, to the
high capacity of *sltA* mutant to store this cation at intracellular compartments (Findon *et al.*,
When studying tolerance to other divalent cations, we observed that magnesium

423 causes an opposite effect in null crzA and sltA strains. Excess of extracellular magnesium 424 contributes to a better colonial growth of null crzA strain also improving asexual development, 425 while inhibits colonial growth of a null sltA mutant (Spielvogel et al., 2008). Interestingly, a 426 mixture of both divalent cations mitigate respective sensitive phenotypes for both null mutant 427 strains suggesting an overlap of homeostatic or regulatory mechanisms for both cations. Here we focused in those related to CrzA TF. The cross interaction between Mg²⁺ and Ca²⁺ that we 428 429 describe in A. nidulans was also found in S. cerevisiae. Cui and collaborators (2009) described 430 that sensitivity displayed by a *pmc1* mutant to high calcium concentrations was dependent on 431 the medium composition, and particularly to the presence of magnesium cation (Cui, 432 Kaandorp, Ositelu, et al., 2009). These authors found that alternative calcium transport 433 systems are also under the regulation of magnesium. In our study, we found a positive effect 434 of magnesium in tolerance to calcium and enhancing A. nidulans growth even in the absence 435 of a functional VGCC system, thus magnesium has no particular negative effect in this fungus 436 when the Slt regulatory system is functional.

437 At other level of possible crosstalk between magnesium and calcium are signaling proteins in 438 the calcineurin (CN) activation system. CN activity is affected by a deregulated level of 439 cytoplasmic calcium. Our work measures activity of CN by detecting the diverse 440 posttranslational forms of CrzA (Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2013). Absence of CN activity 441 renders a highly phosphorylated version of CrzA that has a particularly low electrophoretic mobility. Sudden elevation of extracellular calcium rapidly activates CN and one derived effect 442 443 is the increase in electrophoretic mobility of CrzA and its nuclear accumulation. 444 Dephosphorylated forms of CrzA display a markedly higher mobility (this work and 445 (Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2013)). Importantly, as shown before, signaling of CrzA occurs 446 within a wide range of calcium concentrations, some of which are well below the sensitive 447 concentration of 10 mM (see this work and (Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2017)) however, 448 calcium concentration seems to govern only the duration of this signaling. We demonstrate

that Mg²⁺ prevents dephosphorylation of CrzA and has this effect also when calcium is added. 449 Indicating that Mg²⁺ might well contribute to CN inactivation. Thus, we focused on the 450 451 hypothesis that loss of CrzA function generates deregulated state of CN. We revisited the 452 phenotype exhibited by the cnaB2 mutant. A mutation in the regulatory subunit of CN was 453 isolated as a suppressor of the calcium sensitive phenotype. Initially, this phenotype was 454 explained as the cnaB2 suppressor mutation confers calcium tolerance to crzAA strains 455 through restoration of calcium homeostasis (Almeida et al., 2013). Here we show that 456 phosphorylated levels or CrzA are elevated in the cnaB2 mutant background. Thus, CN is 457 downregulated in a cnaB2 mutation. Phosphoproteomic studies have revealed multiple serine 458 residues potentially modified in CrzA from resting cells (Fig. 7), as it was previously expected 459 (Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2013). Importantly, the presence of a functional CrzA protein is key to maintain those serine residues in such modified state. These studies also support our 460 conclusion that *cnaB2* reduces CN activity (Fig. 7, Table S1). This mutation points to the excess 461 462 of CN as an important cause of the calcium sensitive phenotype. CnaB2 acts at the level of 463 posttranslational modifications occurring at CrzA but cannot be excluded that a mutant CnaB2 464 form might modify CN activity in a way to interfere with calcium homeostasis in a CrzA-465 independent basis. Future experimentation on the effects of cnaB2 mutation may explore these possibilities and additional targets of CN. 466

How Mg²⁺ suppresses calcium sensitive phenotype? Which are the possible roles of 467 intracellular Mg^{2+} ? Our results fit well with the regulatory role of Mg^{2+} described in S. 468 cerevisiae (see revision by (Cyert and Philpott, 2013; Espeso, 2016)). In yeast, Mg²⁺ act at three 469 levels, reducing the intracellular pool of Ca²⁺ and the release from the internal stores, and the 470 competition with Ca²⁺ to the EF-hands present in regulatory proteins such as calmodulin and 471 472 calcineurin regulatory subunit (Grabarek, 2011). There are several biochemical and biophysical 473 works identifying magnesium-binding sites to calmodulin and its role on target recognition by 474 calmodulin. Ohki et al., found that magnesium preferentially binds to calcium binding sites I

475 and IV of calmodulin in the absence of calcium and that calcium binding site III displays the 476 lowest affinity for magnesium (Ohki et al., 1997). In contrast to the marked structural 477 transitions induced by calcium binding, magnesium-binding causes only localized 478 conformational changes within the four calcium-binding loops of calmodulin, not able to cause 479 interaction of CaM with target proteins. They also found that the binding of calcium-saturated 480 calmodulin to target peptides is affected by magnesium with the binding affinity decreasing as 481 the magnesium concentration increases. We propose in A. nidulans a similar regulatory role for Mg²⁺ by modulating the activity of the regulatory subunit of CN through competition with 482 Ca²⁺ at the EF hands. The phenotype displayed by *cnaB2* mutation shows the importance of a 483 correct folding of EF-hand-II in the activity of CnaB. Substitution of Ca²⁺ at EF-hand II by Mg²⁺ 484 485 could be a key process to modulate CN activity.

486 Is calcipressin RcnA a missing factor in a null crzA background? Two RCN proteins are found in 487 S. cerevisae and had diverse roles in regulating CN activity. RCN1 may act as both negative and 488 positive modulator of CN and RCN2 is a negative one. Crz1p was demonstrated to modulate 489 the transcription of these calcineurin regulators (Kingsbury and Cunningham, 2000; Mehta et 490 al., 2009). In A. nidulans and A. fumigatus a single gene (rcnA) coding for a member of this 491 family of negative calcineurin regulators was described (Soriani et al., 2008). We studied the 492 expression levels of rcnA in a wild-type and null crzA background. Expression of rcnA is 493 detected in both genetic backgrounds indicating the presence of a basal level of RcnA in the 494 absence of CrzA function. This is important because those low/basal levels of calcipressin could 495 be modulating CN activity at low calcium concentrations. However, an elevation of RcnA levels 496 seem to be required when calcium is present. Northern analyses show that *rcnA* expression 497 greatly elevates when calcium was added, and that this change in expression pattern was 498 dependent on CrzA. Upregulation or rcnA is interesting because the "active" form of 499 calcipressin has a lower lifetime (Genesca et al., 2003) and turnover of RcnA must be 500 accelerated to maintain appropriate levels of CN activity. However, this negative feedback is 501 broken in a null *crzA* mutant. Upregulation of RcnA is lost in the null *crzA* mutant, supporting 502 the conclusion that mechanisms of control of CN activity are missing in *crzA* mutant 503 background.

504 Figure 9 depicts an integrative model of our findings on how to turn CN activity off in A. 505 nidulans. CrzA plays an important role by regulating the expression of rcnA. In agreement with 506 its proposed role as a negative regulator or CN activity in A. nidulans (Soriani et al., 2008), 507 expression of rcnA is elevated in the presence of calcium. In this model of regulation, RcnA 508 levels in the cell must be increased as an immediate response to the induction of the CN-CrzA 509 system. CrzA plays an important role here and modulates the production of the regulator of 510 CN activity in addition to calcium homeostasis, most probably through expression of calcium transporters. Magnesium plays also a key role in the system by releasing Ca^{2+} from the holo-511 512 version of CnaB and probably CaM, conducting to an inactive form of CN. Absence of CrzA 513 causes a major distortion of these regulatory circuits and, in the presence of calcium, the 514 hyperactivation of CN and subsequent failure to conduct the adequate regulation or other 515 pathways dependent on CN activity.

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519 Conclusions

In this work, we proved that a mixture of calcium and magnesium mitigate respective sensitive phenotypes in null *crzA* and *sltA* mutant strains, due to possible overlapping homeostatic or regulatory mechanisms for both cations. We further confirmed our hypothesis that loss of CrzA function generates deregulated state of CN. By using a *cnaB2* suppressor mutation, which confers calcium tolerance to *crzAΔ* strains, we showed that phosphorylated levels of CrzA are elevated in this mutant background. Furthermore, taken in account the lost upregulation of

526 RcnA in the null crzA mutant, we propose that excess of calcineurin could be the main cause of

527 the observed calcium sensitive phenotype.

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531 Experimental Procedures.

532 Strains and media

533 The Aspergillus nidulans and Escherichia coli strains used in this work are listed in Table 1 and 534 for the gene nomenclature, we based at (Clutterbuck, 1993). A. nidulans strains were grown 535 routinely in appropriately supplemented standard minimal medium (AMM) and complete 536 medium (ACM) at 37°C as described by Cove (Cove, 1966). The solid ACM medium was mainly 537 used for propagation/obtaining conidiospores and maintenance of the strains. Solid AMM 538 properly supplemented was used to characterize the phenotypes of the different mutations of 539 interest (for more details see the section of growth assays on plate). In all experiments in this 540 work calcium and magnesium supplementation was done by adding the respective chloride 541 salts, usually from concentrated stock solutions sterilized by filtration. Sensitivity to calcium 542 and magnesium salts or alkaline pH were scored after culturing the strains for two days at 37°C 543 and then photographed. Colony growth of mutant strains was compared with that of the 544 parental and wild type strains.

545

546 Generation of recombinant strains

547 Standard molecular biology techniques were performed (Sambrook *et al.*, 1989). The 548 oligonucleotides used in this work are listed in Table 2. The *A. nidulans* recombinant strains 549 were obtained by transformation following the protocol described in (Tilburn *et al.*, 1983) or 550 by crossing. For deletion or tagging we used the targeted direct gene replacement technique 551 using the protocol described in (Nayak *et al.*, 2006; Markina-Iñarrairaegui *et al.*, 2011). 552 Essentially, linear DNA cassettes were generated by fusion PCR. Fragments of 1.5 kb 553 comprising the 5'UTR and 3'UTR of a target gene were amplified by using specific primers 554 following the strategies shown in Fig. S2. The fragments for the homologous recombination, 555 were fused to a prototrophic selectable marker (SM, Aspergillus fumigatus pyrG or riboB loci, 556 indicated as pyrG^{Af} and riboB^{Af}, respectively) (Markina-Iñarrairaegui et al., 2011). Gene 557 replacements were favored by the presence of null nkuA allele (Nayak et al., 2006). Pyrimidine 558 or riboflavin prototrophs were selected and homokaryotic transformants carrying single-copy 559 integration events were identified by PCR, Southern blotting or sequencing procedures. Strain MAD1427 was used as recipient for transformation of $midA\Delta$::riboB^{Af} or cchA Δ ::riboB^{Af} 560 561 cassettes to generate strains MAD2740 and MAD2741, respectively. To generate the double 562 null midA cchA mutant, two cassettes were cotransformed in MAD1427 resulting in a $midA\Delta$::riboB^{Af} and cchA Δ ::pyrG^{Af} alleles (strain MAD2742). To construct double null mutant 563 564 involving crzA and each subunit of the calcium channel, cchA and midA, we transformed strains 565 MAD2740 and MAD2741 with a DNA cassette containing the 5'UTR of crzA fused to the $pyrG^{Af}$ 566 gene and to the 3'UTR region of crzA. This DNA cassette was obtained by using PCR and 567 oligonucleotides CrzA(1) and CrzA(4) (Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2013) and genomic DNA 568 from strain MAD2842. After transformation, strains MAD2843 and MAD2844 were selected as 569 double crzA midA and crzA cchA null mutants, respectively.

570 As previously described (Nayak et al., 2006) and Fig. S2B, for CnaB tagged strains, we 571 transformed MAD1425 strain (wild-type crzA strain) and MAD3709 (crzA∆ strain), with the CnaB-GFP cassette by using *pyrG*^{Af} as a selection marker and we obtained the MAD5501 and 572 573 MAD5507 strains, respectively. Following the strategy for epitope tagging, Fig. S2B, we obtained a strain expressing the mutant CnaB2 protein fused to HA/pyrG^{Af} (MAD5514) by using 574 575 as recipient MAD5513 strain. MAD5513 was selected among progeny of a crossing event 576 between the strains MAD3709 and MAD2172, and was properly verified by PCR and Southern 577 blotting before use.

578

579 Protein extraction and analysis procedure

580 For total protein extractions, strains were cultivated in appropriately supplemented 581 fermentation media for 16 h at 37°C under agitation. Then, different stimulus were added to the culture medium as figured from 1 to 100 mM Ca^{2+} , 100 to 200 mM Mg^{2+} , 50 μ M calcineurin 582 583 inhibitor (CsA) and further incubated from 1 to 30 min, as indicated in the text. In each time 584 point as mentioned, mycelia were collected by vacuum filtered using 0.45 µm pore size 585 nitrocellulose membranes (Scharlau) and frozen in dry ice. Frozen samples were lyophilized for 586 16 h before protein extraction. In order to prevent protein degradation, the alkaline lysis 587 extraction procedure was used as previously tested by (Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2013). For Western blotting proteins were resolved in 4-15% Mini PROTEAN® TGX ™ precast 588 589 polyacrylamide gels (Biorad) and subsequently transferred to nitrocellulose filters using Trans-590 Blot®Turbo™ Transfer System (Biorad). Proteins tagged with GFP were detected using a 591 polyclonal mouse anti-GFP (1/5000; clones 7.1 and 13.1; Sigma-Aldrich). Calcineurin regulatory 592 subunit fused to HA was detected using a monoclonal rat anti-HA (1:1000; clone 3F10; Sigma-593 Aldrich). Peroxidase conjugated goat secondary antibody anti-mouse IgG immunoglubin 594 (1/4000, Jackson Immuno Research Laboratories) or anti-rat IgG +IgGM (1:4000; Southern 595 Biotech) were used to detect primary antibodies. The peroxidase activity was detected with 596 Amersham Biosciences ECL kit and luminescence detected and recorded using a LAS3000 597 imager system (Fuji). The images were analyzed using the Multi-Gauge V3.0 (Fuji) and 598 Coreldraw X7 softwares.

For lambda protein phosphatase (λPP) induced dephosphorylation of protein extracts, we used
the protocol described in (Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2013).

601

602 Phosphoproteomic procedures

For determination of phosphorylated serine and threonine residues the starting material were
total protein extracts obtained by the alkaline-lysis protocol described in (Hernández-Ortiz and

605 Espeso, 2013). From each sample, 300 μ g of total protein were precipitated with trichloroacetic acid and suspended in 8 M urea, 50 mM ammonium bicarbonate. Proteins were 606 607 reduced with 10 mM dithiothreitol for 30 min at room temperature (RT), alkylated with 50 mM 608 iodoacetamide in the dark for 30 min at RT, and digested with 15 µg of trypsin overnight at 609 37°C. Peptides mixtures were desalted using C18 SEP-PAK columns. Samples were dried in 610 speed-vac at RT. For phosphopeptide enrichment, TiO₂ affinity chromatography was 611 performed (Boulousis et al., 2011). Briefly, slurry of Titansphere TiO₂ (5 μ m) beads was 612 equilibrated in TiO₂ binding buffer; 300 mg/ml lactic acid, 53 % acetonitrile (ACN), 0.07 % 613 trifluoroacetic acid (TFA) at ratio of 25 mg slurry/ml buffer. Peptides were dissolved in 600 µl 614 TiO_2 binding buffer and 72 µl of the Titanium slurry were added to each sample, further 615 incubated during 30 min at RT with end-over-end rotation. Beads were collected by 616 centrifugation and suspended in 150 μ l of TiO₂ binding buffer and transferred on top of C8 617 disks Stage Tips, prepared as in (Rappsilber et al., 2007). Using a syringe, beads were drained 618 at 20 μ /min and washed with 150 μ l of TiO₂ binding buffer. An additional washing step was 619 carried out using 100 μl of a solution of 80 % ACN, 0.1 % TFA. Bound phosphopeptides were 620 eluted using two steps of 50 μ l of 0.5 % NH₄OH, collecting each eluate in 100 μ l 2 % TFA. 621 Phosphopeptide-enriched samples were speed-vac dried and reconstituted in 0.1 % TFA for 622 desalting using C 18 Zip-Tip columns.

623 For MS analysis, fractions of 1/6 from each phosphopeptide-enriched sample were analyzed by 624 nano-LC-MS/MS. Peptides were trapped onto a AcclaimPepMap 100 C18 (2 cm) precolumn 625 (Thermo-Scientific), and then eluted onto a AcclaimPepMap 100 C18 column (inner diameter 626 75 μ m, 25 cm long, 3 μ m particle size) (Thermo-Scientific) and separated using a 180 min 627 gradient (0-21 % Buffer B 60 min; 21 %-35 % Buffer B 100 min, 95 % Buffer B 10 min, and 0 % 628 Buffer B 10 min). (Buffer A: 0.1 % formic acid/2 % ACN; Buffer B: 0.1 % formic acid in ACN) at a 629 flow-rate of 250 nL/min on a nanoEasy HPLC (Proxeon) coupled to a nanoelectrospray ion source (Thermo-Scientific). Mass spectra were acquired on a LTQ-Orbitrap Velos mass 630

631 spectrometer (Thermo-Scientific) in the positive ion mode. Full-scan MS spectra (m/z 400-632 1,500) were acquired in the Orbitrap at a resolution of 60,000 at 400 m/z and the 15 most 633 intense ions were selected for collision induced dissociation (CID) fragmentation in the linear 634 ion trap with a normalized collision energy of 35 %. Singly charged ions and unassigned charge 635 states were rejected. Dynamic exclusion was enabled with exclusion duration of 30 s. Mass 636 spectra *.raw files were searched against an Anidulans.fasta database (10,720 protein entries) 637 using Sequest search engine through Proteome Discoverer (version 1.4.0.288, Thermo 638 Scientific). Search parameters included a maximum of two missed cleavages allowed, 639 carbamidomethylation of cysteines as a fixed modification and N-terminal acetylation, C-640 terminal oxidation and serines, threonines and tyrosines phosphorylation as variable 641 modifications. Precursor and fragment mass tolerance were set to 10 ppm and 0.6 Da, respectively. As scoring algorithm, node 3 phosphoRS was used to evaluate the statistical 642 643 confidence of location of phosphorylation sites. Identified peptides were validated using 644 Percolator algorithm with a q-value threshold ≤ 0.01 as described in (Käll *et al.*, 2007).

645

646 Growth assays on solid medium.

647 We studied the sensitivity of the recombinant A. nidulans strains to salt / cations and 648 calcineurin inhibitor. Firstly, the colony growth was studied by point inoculating conidiospores 649 on solid AMM supplemented with the appropriate stress condition as indicated in the figures from 1 - 100 mM Ca²⁺, 0.02 - 200 mM Mg²⁺ (both as chloride salts as indicated above) and 650 651 incubated at 37°C for 2 days. In addition, using 24-multiwell plates containing 1 ml of AMM plus the stress of interest; 100 mM Ca²⁺, 200 mM Mg²⁺ and 10 μ M immunosuppressant 652 Cyclosporin A (CsA) were used as an additional tool of sensitivity screening (Sebastián-Pérez et 653 al., 2016). CsA (Sigma-Aldrich) stock was prepared in dimethyl sulphoxide. 10³ spores of 654 655 Aspergillus, calculated using a Neubauer chamber, were centrally inoculated on each well. The 656 plates were incubated at 37°C for 2 days and then photographed.

658 Gene expression analyses

659 Wild type (MAD2666) (Garzia et al., 2013) and mutant (MAD2448) strains were cultivated in 660 liquid minimal medium for 16 h at 37°C under agitation (250 rpm). Then, different stimulus was added to the culture medium; 200 mM Mg²⁺, 10 mM Ca²⁺, and their combination and 661 further incubated for 10 minutes. Where figured -Mg²⁺, we refer in AMM medium without 662 663 magnesium, which was properly prepared. Total RNA extraction and Northern blot analyses 664 were carried out following standard protocols (Garzia et al., 2009). Briefly, the mycelia were 665 harvested by filtration using Miracloth (Calbiochem, Merck-Millipore, Darmstadt, Germany) 666 and were rapidly frozen in liquid nitrogen. TRIreagent (Fluka, Sigma-Aldrich) was added and we 667 further processed according to the manufacture's protocols. We checked the integrity and concentration of the resulted RNA samples using a Nanodrop spectrophotometer and we 668 669 proceeded to Northern blot assays. rcnA transcript was detected by using specific genomic 670 probes (oligonucleotides listed in Table 2). Finally, mRNA-DNA hybridization was detected by 671 using a PhosphorImager FLA-5100 plate Reader (FujiFilm). Furthermore, band quantification 672 intensities were performed by using Multi-Gauge V3.0 software (FujiFilm) (Mellado et al., 673 2015).

674

675 Microscopy

For all microscopy experiments, *A. nidulans* conidia were germinated on uncoated μ -Slide 8 well (Ibidi GmbH, Germany) for a direct observation of cultures which contained appropriately supplemented watch minimal medium (WMM) (Peñalva, 2005) and incubated at 25°C for 16 h. After this period, the medium was replaced with fresh one supplemented with different stimulus when indicated, from 1 to 100 mM Ca²⁺ or/and 200 mM Mg²⁺. In the case of figure 6, photographs were taken of several cells in the same field at the indicated times. The fluorescence was measured in a specific region of the nucleus and compared with a region of 683 similar area in the nearest cytoplasm. At least 10 cell compartments were imaged and nuclear 684 and cytoplasmic fluorescence were compared in three nuclei of each cell. A Leica DMI-6000b 685 inverted microscope equipped with Normarski and epifluorescence optics was used and the 686 images acquisition were acquired with a Hamamatsu ORCA ER digital camera driven by 687 Metamorph software (Universal Imaging Corporation), using Semrock Brightline GFP- 3035B and TXRED-4040B (mCherry) filter sets. Images were processed to a minimum using 688 689 Metamorph (Universal Imaging Corporation) or ImageJ (http://rsb.info.nih.gov/ij/index.html) 690 software.

- 691
- 692

693 Figure legends

Fig. 1. Effect of different extracellular concentrations of magnesium and calcium in *A. nidulans*

695 mutants. Conidia from selected strains were point inoculated on AMM supplemented with the

696 indicated concentrations of cations. Images were taken after 2 days of incubation at 37°C.

A. Effects of separate or mixed high concentrations of calcium and magnesium on the colonialgrowth of wild type and null *crzA* and *sltA* mutants.

699 B. Selected wild-type, *crzA* and *sltA* mutant strains were grown on AMM lacking any source

for Mg^{2+} and the same minimal medium supplemented with the indicated amounts of Mg^{2+} .

701

Fig. 2. Phenotypic analysis of strains lacking a functional calcium channel and CrzA function.

Strains combining null alleles in *crzA* and of genes coding for the subunits of the calcium channel, *midA* and *cchA*, were analyzed for the sensitivity to different concentrations of calcium and the cross effect of adding magnesium. Conidia from each strain were point inoculated onto AMM supplemented with the indicated concentrations of calcium and magnesium.

708

Fig. 3. Effect of calcium and magnesium on the phosphorylation levels of CrzA.

710 A. Representative Western blots showing changes in the mobility of CrzA-GFP fusion in total 711 protein extracts from strain MAD3020 when subjected to treatments with a low (1 mM) and a 712 high (100 mM) concentration of calcium (Ca²⁺). CrzA^{+P} indicate highly phosphorylated forms of CrzA, which had a reduced electrophoretic mobility. CrzA^P indicate non or very low 713 714 phosphorylated forms of CrzA, which had a higher electrophoretic mobility. Below are shown lambda protein phosphatase (λ PP) treatments of protein extract from RC to demonstrate that 715 the change in electrophoretic mobility of CrzA^{+P} and CrzA^{-P} forms depends on its 716 717 phosphorylated state.

B. Detection of CrzA-GFP fusion in protein extracts of cells subjected to treatment with magnesium (Mg^{2+}) during the indicated times (in minutes).

C. Detection of CrzA-GFP in protein extracts of cells pretreated for 30 min with 100 mM Mg²⁺
(RC30) and then supplemented with either 1 mM or 100 mM Ca²⁺ for the indicated times in
minutes.

RC indicates control protein extracts from resting cells.. CrzA^{+P} indicates phosphorylated forms
 of CrzA. CrzA^{-P} indicates dephosphorylated or low phosphorylated forms of CrzA.

725

Fig. 4. Cellular distribution of CrzA-GFP in response to extracellular calcium and magnesium.

A. Chart depicting the dynamics of nuclear accumulation of the fluorescent protein CrzA-GFP in

response to 1 mM calcium (light grey bars), 100 mM calcium (dark grey bars) and 200 mM

magnesium (white bars) at different times over 30 min.

730 B. Chart showing the effect in nuclear accumulation of CrzA by combining 200 mM magnesium

plus 1 mM (striped bars) or 100 mM of calcium (dotted bars). For both panels, fluorescence

vas measured inside 30 nuclei and in nearby cytoplasmic regions for 10 cell compartments (3

nuclei/compartment). Error bars indicate the standard error of the mean.

734

Fig. 5. Inhibition of CN activity by cyclosporin A suppresses CrzA-dependent sensitivity to Ca²⁺. 736 737 A. Strains carrying single null sltA and crzA alleles and combination of null alleles of genes 738 coding for calcium channel subunits cchA and midA in a null crzA background were analyzed 739 for sensitivity to calcium in the absence or presence of calcineurin inhibitor cyclosporin A 740 (CsA). Each well contained 1 ml of AMM with the supplemented concentration of calcium and/or CsA. For comparison, on the right (red square), the effect of 100 mM and 200 mM Mg²⁺ 741 on the growth of null *crzA* strain on medium containing 100 mM Ca²⁺ is shown. 10³ conidia per 742 743 well were inoculated. Colonial growth was evaluated after 2 days of incubation at 37°C.

B. Quantitative analysis of suppression by CsA of calcium-sensitive phenotype of null *crzA* strains. Mycelial growth was quantified from liquid AMM cultures in the same conditions as in panel A. 10 ml of liquid AMM plus supplements were inoculated with 10⁶ conidia/ml and incubated at 37°C for 24 hr in liquid medium. Mycelia were filtered, dried and weighted. Triplicates were done for each conditions and the mean weight values are shown. Standard errors of the mean are indicated.

750

751 Fig. 6. Effect of *cnaB2* mutation.

A. Growth tests showing the suppression by *cnaB2* mutation of the calcium-sensitive phenotype caused by the absence of CrzA function. Strains carrying an endogenous wild-type *crzA* allele or carrying the *cnaB2* mutation tolerate the presence of calcium. Strains shown were grown on AMM without or with supplementation of 50 mM calcium. Strains were point inoculated and imaged after 2 days of incubation at 37°C.

B. Immunoblot showing the range of electrophoretic mobility displayed by the GFP-CrzA(1488) form in different genetic backgrounds. Detection of low mobility bands indicate the
presence of highly phosphorylated forms of CrzA

C. Immunodetection of GFP-CrzA(1-448) in protein extracts from resting cells of strains MAD2172, MAD5514 and MAD2168 treated with lambda protein phosphatase (λ PP). The increase in electrophoretic mobility of GFP-CrzA(1-448) in extracts from MAD5514 and MAD2168 after treatment with λ PP indicate the presence of phosphorylated forms in RCs of these strains but not in MAD2172.

Strains used are indicated at the bottom and genotypes are listed in Table 2. RC,
 resting/unstressed cells. CsA, calcineurin inhibitor cyclosporin A.

767

768 Fig. 7. Phosphoproteomics of CrzA.

A. Schematic drawing of the CrzA protein indicating the boundaries of the two truncated

constructs used in the determination of phosphorylated peptides. The initial position of the

771 main identified phosphopeptides is indicated with red arrows. Below are indicated the

sequences of the phosphopeptides identified in the protein extracts of the *cnaB2* mutant

strain expressing the GFP-CrzA(1-448) chimera, and of the strains expressing the GFP-CrzA(1-

612) form with or without the calcineurin function. In red are indicated those serine residues

potentially phosphorylated in CrzA.

776 B. CrzA amino acid sequence on which is indicated the position of identified phosphopeptides

(overlaid in red), the ending coordinates of the truncated forms, the DNA binding domain (in

yellow) and the calcineurin binding sequences. Green indicates the calcineurin docking site 1,

779 CDD1, and blue indicates the CDD2 site that was shown to be the most functional (Hernández-

780 Ortiz and Espeso, 2013).

781

Fig. 8. Transcriptional regulation of calcineurin regulator *rcnA*.

783 Northern blot showing expression levels of *rcnA* transcript in wild-type and *crzA* strains

grown in AMM with different concentrations of calcium and/or magnesium. Control indicates

total RNA extracted from mycelia grown in standard AMM. -Mg²⁺ indicates AMM lacking

786	magnesium salts. Calcium and magnesium chloride salts were added and mycelia samples
787	were collected after 10 min incubation. A 1.5 kbps fragment was used as a probe for <i>rcnA</i>
788	transcript. rRNA was used as loading control. At the bottom are shown the ratio of <i>rcnA</i> levels
789	vs intensity of 18S rRNA.
790	
791	Fig. 9. Model of regulation of CN activity in Aspergillus nidulans. The key for each element in
792	this calcium signaling/regulatory pathway is shown.
793	
794	
795	Supporting information
796	
797	Fig. S1. Immuno and epi-fluorescence detection of calcineurin regulatory subunit.
798	A. Immunoblots showing the mobility of CnaB-GFP fusion in protein extracts of mycelia grown
799	under non-stressing conditions (RC) and in time course experiments in which cultures were
800	supplemented with elevated concentrations of calcium and magnesium or alkalinized to pH 8.
801	B. Fluorescence microscopy of strain MAD5501 under non-stressing conditions. White
802	arrowheads point to the septa at which CN regulatory subunit accumulates at both sides.
803	Green arrowheads indicate cytoplasmic accretion of CnaB-GFP. Addition of calcium,
804	magnesium or alkalinization of medium did not modified these foci.
805	
806	Fig. S2. Strategy of gene targeting.
807	Generation of null alleles and tagged versions of target genes follow the procedures described
808	in (Nayak et al., 2006; Markina-Iñarrairaegui et al., 2011). The figure describes the essential
809	steps for production of recombinant loci.
810	A. Strategy for deleting the CDS of a target gene. 5'UTR and 3'UTR regions were amplified with
811	specific primers. In the figure are indicated as nnn + plus a code for the gene specific primer

812 (GSP), where nnn refers to the target gene as indicated in the list of oligonucleotides. These 813 two fragments were fused to a selectable cassette containing 5'UTR-CDS-3'UTR sequences of a 814 selectable marker (SM), namely genes riboB or pyrG from A. fumigatus. Using PCR techniques 815 and flanking oligonucleotides a transformation cassette was amplified by fusing the three 816 fragments in the correct order. The cassette was used to transform protoplasts and those 817 transformants with a double recombination event at the desired locus were selected, replacing 818 the target gene by the selectable marker. 819 B. Strategy for epitope tagging of a target gene. As before a transformation cassette was 820 generated by fusion PCR, using a fragment of the 3'end of CDS of target gene, the 3'UTR and a 821 fragment containing the coding region for the tag, and the selectable marker. The cassette 822 was used to transform protoplasts and those transformants with a double recombination 823 event at the desired locus were selected, placing the tag on frame at the 3'end of the target 824 gene followed by the selectable marker. 825

- Table S1. Phosphoproteomic analysis of CrzA and control proteins PmaA and MepA in total
- protein extracts of RCs from strains MAD5513, MAD5514, MAD3494 and MAD3559.

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	2

Table 1: List of Aspergillus nidulans strains used in this work						
Strains	Full Genotype	Sources				
MAD1425	pyrG89, argB2; pyroA4, nkuA∆::argB	Markina-Inarrairaegui et al., 2011				
MAD1427	pyrG89, pabaB22; argB2; nkuA∆::argB, riboB2	Markina-Inarrairaegui et al., 2011				
MAD2168	pyrG89; argB2; pyroA*::gpdA ^m ::gfp::crzA(1-448), nkuA∆::argB	Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2013				
MAD2172	pyrG89, yA2; arg*::afp::lacZ; pyroA*:: gpdA ^m ::gfp::crzA(1-448), nkuA∆::argB; crzA∆::pyr4 [№] ; pantoB100	Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2013				
MAD2666	argB2; pyroA4, nkuA∆::argB	Garzia et al., 2013				
MAD2448/ BER02	pyrG89; argB2; pyroA4, nkuAΔ::argB; crzAΔ:: pyr4 ^{Nc}	Spielvogel et al., 2008				
MAD2740	pyrG89, pabaB22; argB2, midAΔ::riboB ^{Af} ; nkuAΔ::argB; riboB2	This work				
MAD2741	pyrG89, pabaB22; argB2; nkuAΔ::argB; cchAΔ::riboB ^{Af} , riboB2	This work				
MAD2742	pyrG89, pabaB22; argB2, midAΔ::riboB ^{Af} ; nkuAΔ::argB; cchAΔ:: pyrG ^{Af} , riboB2	This work				
MAD2842	pyrG89, pabaB22; argB2; nkuAΔ::argB; crzAΔ:: pyrG ^{A†} ; riboB2	This work				
MAD2843	pyrG89, pabaB22; argB2, midAΔ::riboB ^{Af} ; nkuAΔ::argB; crzAΔ:: pyrG ^{Af} ; riboB2	This work				
MAD2844	pyrG89, pabaB22; argB2; nkuAΔ::argB; crzAΔ:: pyrG ^{Af} ; cchAΔ:: riboB ^{Af} , riboB2	This work				
MAD3020	pyrG89, pabaB22; argB2, nkuA∆::argB; crzA::gfp::pyrG ^{A†} , riboB2	Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2013				
MAD3021	pyrG89, pabaB22; argB2, nkuA∆::argB; crzA::gfp::pyrG ^{Af}	Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2013				
MAD3222	pyrG89, pabaB22; cnaAΔ::pyroA, pyroA4 crzA::gfp::pyrG ^{Af}	Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2013				
MAD3709	pyrG89, pabaB22; argB2; nkuAΔ::argB; crzAΔ::riboB ^{Af} ; riboB2	Hernández-Ortiz and Espeso, 2013				
MAD4096/ HHF27a	Prototrophic wild type	Findon et al., 2010				
MAD4097/ HHF27b	sltAΔ::riboB ^{Af}	Findon et al., 2010				
MAD4100/ HHF27L	crzAΔ::pyr4 ^{Nc}	Sebastián et al., 2016				
MAD5501	pyrG89, cnaB-gfp-pyrG ^{At} ; argB2; pyroA4, nkuAΔ::argB	This work				
MAD5507	pyrG89, cnaB-gfp-pyrG ^{Af} , pabaB22; argB2; nkuAΔ::argB; crzAΔ::riboB ^{Af} ; riboB2	This work				
MAD5513	pyrG89; yA2; argB2 [argB*::afp::lacZ]; pyroA*::[pyroA*:: gpdA ^m ::gfp::crzA (M1-R448)], nkuAΔ::argB; crzAΔ::riboB ^{Af} ; riboB2; pantoB100	This work				
MAD5514	cnaB2-HA::pyrG ^A ; pyrG89; yA2; argB2 [argB*::afp::lacZ]; pyroA*::[pyroA*:: gpdA ^m ::gfp::crzA (M1-R448)], nkuAΔ::argB; crzAΔ::riboB ^{Af} ; riboB2; pantoB100	This work				
MAD5537/ rev-2	crzAΔ::pyr4; cnaB2; paba-; wA3	Almeida et al., 2013				

Table 2: List of oligonucleotides used in this work							
Name	Sequence 5´-3´	Description	Source				
CchA-PP1	ATCCCAACATGAGAATGCC	Generation of null cchA allele	This work				
CchA–PP2	GGTGGGCAGAATTGATTGACTAGC	Generation of null cchA allele	This work				
CchA–GSP3	ATAAAGCGCCGCTGAAGTGAGACG	Generation of null cchA allele	This work				
CchA–GSP4	CGACTGTGGCTGTACTACACC	Generation of null cchA allele	This work				
CchA–SMP	GCTAGTCAATCAATTCTGCCCACCACCGGTCGCCTCAAA CAATGC	Generation of null cchA allele	This work				
CchA–GSP3'	CGTCTCACTTCAGCGGCGCTTTATCTGTCTGAGAGGAG GCACTGATGC	Generation of null cchA allele	This work				
cnaB fw_ol1	TGTCTCATTGCTTTTAGGTC	Sequencing cnaB allele	This work				
cnaB rv_ol2	CGGACATACAGTTAGACCCGG	Sequencing cnaB allele	This work				
cnaB-PP1	AGTATCCGCTCTGTCGCCAGCATCTCCTTTCGC	Generation of labeled CnaB	This work				
cnaB-GSP2	AATTTGGTCTAATATCGCCGCATGTTAGC	Generation of labeled CnaB	This work				
cnaB-GFP1	GCTAACATGCGGCGATATTAGACCAAATTGGAGCTGGT GCAGGCGCTGGAGCC	Generation of labeled CnaB	This work				
cnaB-GSP3'	GGTATCCCATTTACGTTGCGCTAGAAAGTCTGAGAGGA GGCACTGATGCG	Generation of labeled CnaB	This work				
cnaB-GSP3	TTTCTAGCGCAACGTAAATGGGATACC	Generation of labeled CnaB	This work				
cnaB-GSP4	GCAACTTGCAAGACGCACTATCGATTTGAGG	Generation of labeled CnaB	This work				
MidA-PP1	CCAGGAGTCACGTGAGAAAG	Generation of null midA allele	This work				
MidA – PP2	GGGAGGTCAAGTGCTCCG	Generation of null midA allele	This work				
MidA –GSP3	TCCTTTTCAAACTCGTCTTCC	Generation of null midA allele	This work				
MidA–GSP4	GCTCAGGATGCATGACACC	Generation of null midA allele	This work				
MidA–SMP	CGGAGCACTTGACCTCCCACCGGTCGCCTCAAACAATG C	Generation of null <i>midA</i> allele	This work				
MidA –GSP3'	GGAAGACGAGTTTGAAAAGGACTGTCTGAGAGGAGGC ACTGATGCG	Generation of null <i>midA</i> allele	This work				
pyrGAnsequp	CAGCCATCCCACTTCCAGCTTC	Amplification of A.nidulans pyrG gene	This work				
pyrGAnseqdw	CTGGTAATACTATGCTGGCTGC	Amplification of A.nidulans pyrG gene	This work				
rcnA-GSP1	GGAGGTTGCTTTCTTTGCTGTGTTCCTAGG	Amplification of <i>rcnA</i> gene	This work				
rcnA-GSP2	AACCATCAACTCAACAGGCGGTCGAGCAG	Amplification of <i>rcnA</i> gene	This work				

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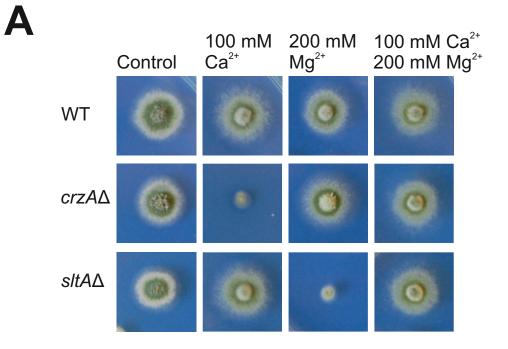
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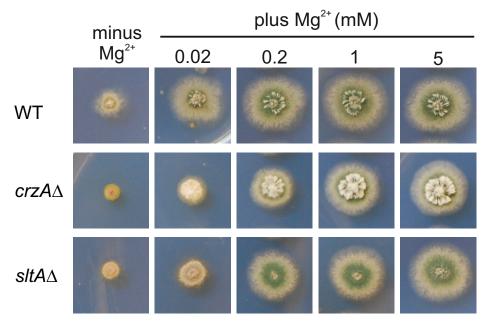
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Β



				Ca	a²⁺ (mM)		Mg ²⁺	(mM)	Ca²⁺(50 mM) Mg²⁺(mM)		
	control	5	7.5	10	25	50	100	100	200	100	200
WT CrzA-GFP		0	0	0	G	0	0		ette	0	
crzA∆	3		0	0	0	•					
midA∆	1	0	0	۲		0	0	8	0	0	0
cchA∆		0		0	*		0	-		0	0
cchA∆ midA∆	0	0		0	0	0	0	13	-		
crzA∆ midA∆	3	0	0	0	8	•			0		(F)
crzA∆ cchA∆	*	0	0	0	0	۲	•		0	0	0



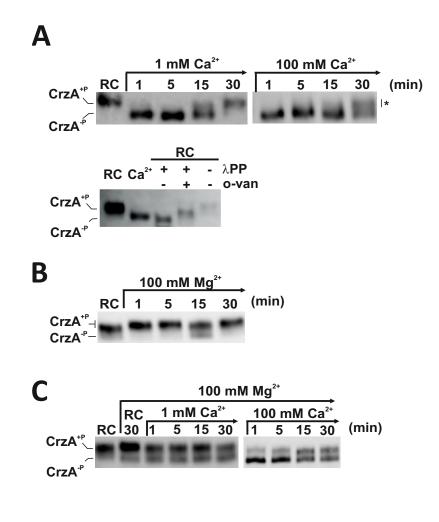
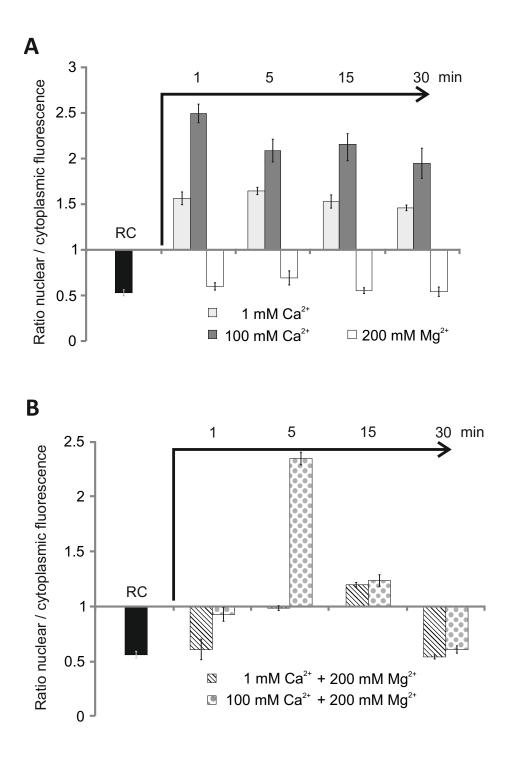
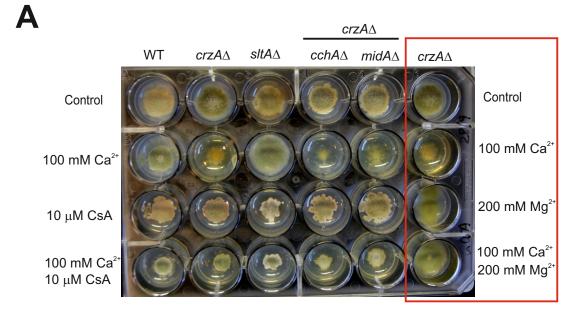
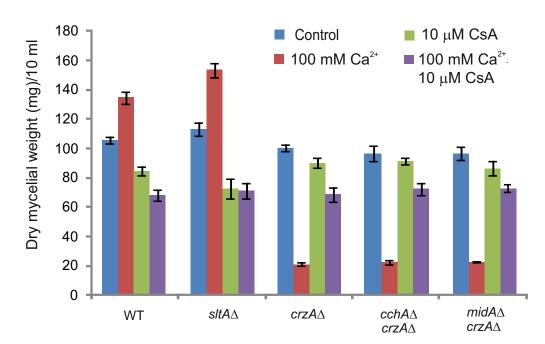


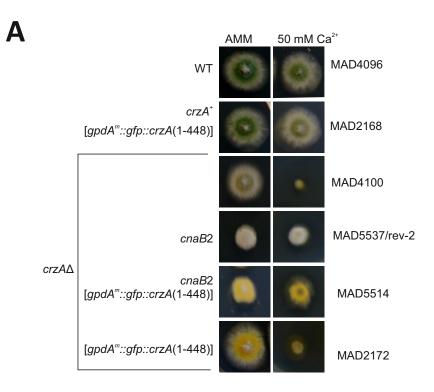
Figure 4





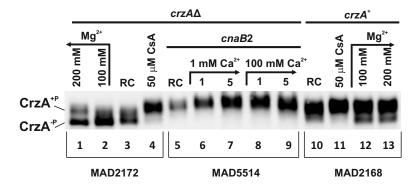
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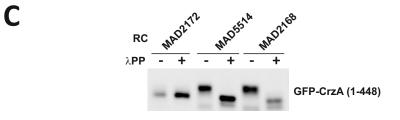




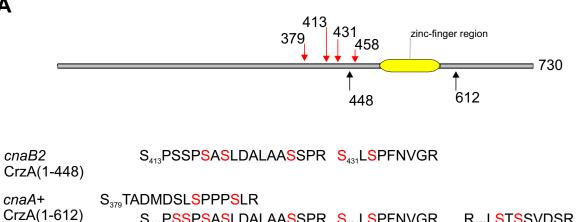
В

Ectopic GFP-CrzA (1-448)





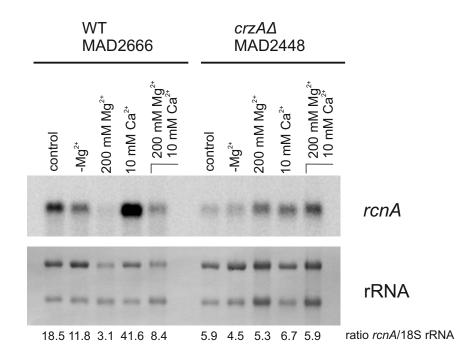
Α

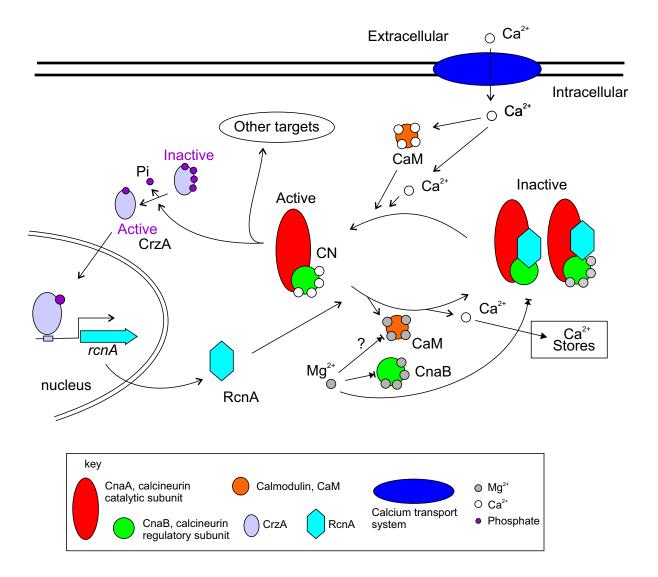


012A(1-012)	S ₄₁₃ PSSPSASLDALAASSPR	S ₄₃₁ LSPFNVGR	R ₄₅₈ LSISSVDSR
cnaA∆	S ₃₇₈ TADMDSL <mark>S</mark> PPP <mark>S</mark> LR		
CrzA(1-612)	518	S ₄₃₁ LSPFNVGR	R ₄₅₈ L <mark>STSS</mark> VDSR

В

	IDPSVTSNSS	QYNNNHNDLT	SASPSAHAHQ	GQAPAAHINR	MDPQDTLQDL	1
	IPQSFDQGLS	DHNFARPSLQ	SSYLTPATAT	APGSEAFAYS	YPPSSFANNS	51
	LLDPQQSGNQ	NTGSDYPSSG	FSLYQGSSPN	LLNSNTGDFD	HQPAEENFSN	101
	GTFYTPQHSR	SAMSPPASSP	QTSPLDQPPS	IPSPHPSNSS	AVNPVDLVSQ	151
	EVSSAAHSPY	GHRRAPSEVS	QAVMNNSAFH	YMTNVSHPEW	HTSLDPASAA	201
	EHHQPQTQGI	ALGIESFTLS	QNDPSLYDNA	DNNPSPLLAA	LPQHDSFDVA	251
	TEGYPNGGDI	ATNSAYPTPP	IPGGPFISAP	QLMPQ HPTDI	SPHHSPYISP	301
	SLRTSRMRSK	ADMDSLSPPP	AQVFPPEKST	INVEFAPPAK	GQASQ <mark>MAPPS</mark>	351
- 448	PYSNPSSR ←	SLSPFNVGRH	LDALAASSPR	PRSPSSPSAS	SDPYAVSISR	401
	EP					
	KHPAT <mark>FQCTL</mark>	SNNTDSKRVQ	LGLADPQRPG	TSSVDSRNYI	SPARSARRLS	451
	RHEGLHSGEK	KAFARQHDRK	ERPFVCTVCG	LRSHLRTHTD	CPKRFTRAYN	501
	PLLDEESQER	RSEAGRIC IK	ARADALGRHF	GGQWGCGRRF	KFVCRGDLSR	551
				HL ← 612	ERTLINQQQQ	601
		TCSFTIDANI	LPGOGTEAOH	OPVNOPLM		
	LAQYPALQ'I'L	IGST I DI AAD	TT OĞOTTRĂĞU	QE VINQE LIN		
	~ ~	FDDDESGISV	~ ~	DTSDIGGRNS	QWDQIPAGTD	651
	~ ~		FDASSGGEFG	DTSDIGGRNS	QWDQIPAGTD QGNIYNVDAQ	651 701





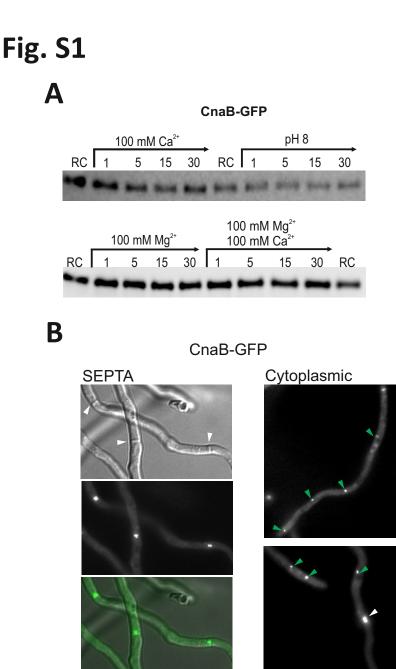


Fig. S1. Immuno and epi-fluorescence detection of calcineurin regulatory subunit. A. Immunoblots showing the mobility of CnaB-GFP fusion in protein extracts of mycelia grown under non-stressing conditions (RC) and in time course experiments in which cultures were supplemented with elevated concentrations of calcium and magnesium or alkalinized to pH 8. B. Fluorescence microscopy of strain MAD5501 under non-stressing conditions. White arrowheads point to the septa at which CN regulatory subunit accumulates at both sides. Green arrowheads indicate cytoplasmic accretion of CnaB-GFP. Addition of calcium, magnesium or alkalinization of medium did not modified these foci.

Fig. S2

Α

В

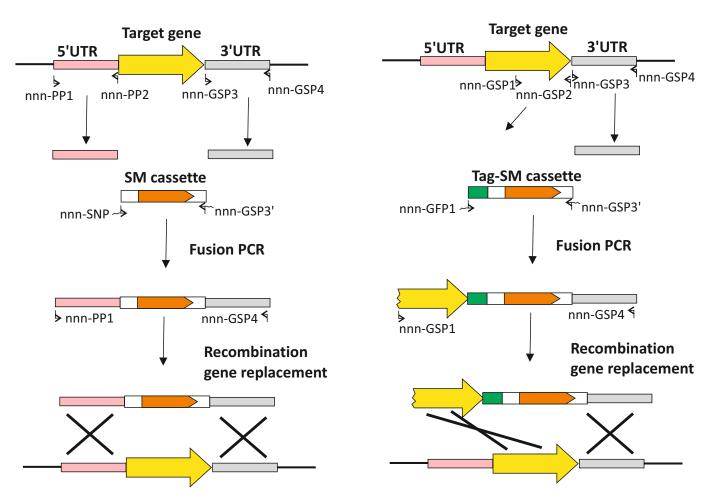


Fig. S2. Strategy of gene targeting.

Generation of null alleles and tagged versions of target genes follow the procedures described in (Nayak et al., 2006; Markina-Iñarrairaegui et al., 2011). The figure describes the essential steps for production of recombinant loci. A. Strategy for deleting the CDS of a target gene. 5'UTR and 3'UTR regions were amplified with specific primers. In the figure are indicated as nnn + plus a code for the gene specific primer (GSP), where nnn refers to the target gene as indicated in the list of oligonucleotides. These two fragments were fused to a selectable cassette containing 5'UTR-CDS-3'UTR sequences of a selectable marker (SM), namely genes *riboB* or *pyrG* from *A. fumigatus*. Using PCR techniques and flanking oligonucleotides a transformation cassette was amplified by fusing the three fragments in the correct order. The cassette was used to transform protoplasts and those transformants with a double recombination event at the desired locus were selected, replacing the target gene by the selectable marker.

B. Strategy for epitope tagging of a target gene. As before a transformation cassette was generated by fusion PCR, using a fragment of the 3'end of CDS of target gene, the 3'UTR and a fragment containing the coding region for the tag, and the selectable marker. The cassette was used to transform protoplasts and those transformants with a double recombination event at the desired locus were selected, placing the tag on frame at the 3'end of the target gene followed by the selectable marker.

Table S1

MAD5513 Strain expressing CrzA(1-448)

Accessio	n Description	Score	Coverage	# Proteins	# Unique Peptides	# Peptides	# PSMs
AN5726							

CrzA, AN5726 Phospho-peptides not detected

	Accession	Description	Score	Coverage	# Proteins	# Unique Peptides	# Peptides	# PSMs
Control 1	AN1181	mepA AspGDID:A	34,74	3,77	1	3	3	19
MepA, AN1181		A2	Sequence	# PSMs	# Proteins	# Protein Groups	Protein Group Accessions	Modifications
		High	SttPTGPVEPSPAELKA	4	1	1	AN1181	T2(Phospho); T3(Phospho)
		High	STtPTGPVEPSPAELKA	10	1	1	AN1181	T3(Phospho)
		High	RSttPTGPVEPSPAELKA	3	1	1	AN1181	T3(Phospho); T4(Phospho)
		High	SttPTGPVEPSPAELK	2	1	1	AN1181	T2(Phospho); T3(Phospho)

Control 2	Accession	Description	Score	Coverage	# Proteins	# Unique Peptides	# Peptides	# PSMs
PmaA, AN4859	AN4859	pmaA AspGDID:A	91,45	2,53	1	5	5	39
		A2	Sequence	# PSMs	# Proteins	# Protein Groups	Protein Group Accessions	Modifications
		High	RGsTsSAGALSMK	6	1	1	AN4859	S3(Phospho); S5(Phospho)
		High	RGSTssAGALsMKQK	5	1	1		S5(Phospho); S6(Phospho); S11(Phospho)
		High	GSTSsAGALSMK	3	1	1	AN4859	S5(Phospho)
		High	RGsTsSAGALSMk	7	1	1		S3(Phospho); S5(Phospho); C- Term(Oxidation)
		High	GSTSsAGALsMK	2	1	1	AN4859	S5(Phospho); S10(Phospho)
		High	RGStSsAGALsMK	5	1	1		T4(Phospho); S6(Phospho); S11(Phospho)
		High	GSTSsAGALSMk	2	1	1		S5(Phospho); C- Term(Oxidation)

High	RGStSsAGALsMk	1	1	1	AN4859	T4(Phospho); S6(Phospho); S11(Phospho); C- Term(Oxidation)
High	GSTSsAGALsMKQK	3	1	1	AN4859	S5(Phospho); S10(Phospho)
High	RGSTSsAGALsMKQK	2	1	1	AN4859	S6(Phospho); S11(Phospho)
High	GSTSsAGALsMk	1	1	1	AN4859	S5(Phospho); S10(Phospho); C· Term(Oxidation)
High	RGStSsAGALsMKQk	1	1	1	AN4859	T4(Phospho); S6(Phospho); S11(Phospho); C- Term(Oxidation)

MAD5514 cnaB2 mutant expressing CrzA(1-448)

	Accession	Description	Score	Coverage	# Proteins	# Unique Peptides	# Peptides	# PSMs
CrzA, AN5726	AN5726	crzA AspGDID:AS	25,60	3,70	1	2	2	13
		A2	Sequence	# PSMs	# Proteins	# Protein Groups	Protein Group Accessions	Modifications
		High	SPSSPsAsLDALAAsSPR	5	1	1		S6(Phospho); S8(Phospho); S15(Phospho)
		High	SPSSPSAsLDALAAsSPR	7	1	1	AN5726	S8(Phospho); S15(Phospho)
		High	sLsPFNVGR	1	1	1	AN5726	S1(Phospho); S3(Phospho)

	Accession	Description	Score	Coverage	# Proteins	# Unique Peptides	# Peptides	# PSMs
Control 1	AN1181	mepA AspGDID:A	52,42	3,77	1	2	2	28
MepA, AN1181		A2	Sequence	# PSMs	# Proteins	# Protein Groups	Protein Group Accessions	Modifications
		High	SttPTGPVEPSPAELKA	8	1	1	AN1181	T2(Phospho); T3(Phospho)
		High	RSttPTGPVEPSPAELKA	4	1	1	AN1181	T3(Phospho); T4(Phospho)
		High	STTPTGPVEPSPAELKA	16	1	1	AN1181	S1(Phospho)

	Accession	Description	Score	Coverage	# Proteins	# Unique Peptides	# Peptides	# PSMs
Control 2	AN4859	pmaA AspGDID:A	33,00	2,83	1	5	5	15

PmaA, AN4859

A2	Sequence	# PSMs	# Proteins	# Protein Groups	Protein Group Accessions	Modifications
High	RGsTsSAGALSMK	5	1	1	AN4859	S3(Phospho); S5(Phospho)
High	GSTSSAGALsMK	2	1	1	AN4859	S10(Phospho)
High	GSTSsAGALsMK	1	1	1	AN4859	S5(Phospho); S10(Phospho)
High	RGSTSsAGALsMk	2	1	1		S6(Phospho); S11(Phospho); C- Term(Oxidation)
High	RGSTssAGALsMKQK	3	1	1		S5(Phospho); S6(Phospho); S11(Phospho)
High	DNRRGStSsAGALsMK	1	1	1		T7(Phospho); S9(Phospho); S14(Phospho)

MAD3494 WT, strain expressing CrzA(1-612)

	Accession	Description	Score	Coverage	# Proteins	# Unique Peptides	# Peptides	# PSMs
CrzA, AN5726	AN5726	crzA AspGDID:AS	42,74	7,12	1	4	4	22
		A2	Sequence	# PSMs	# Proteins	# Protein Groups	Protein Group Accessions	Modifications
		High	SPssPSASLDALAASSPR	14	1	1	AN5726	S3(Phospho); S4(Phospho)
		High	STADMDSLsPPPsLR	2	1	1	AN5726	S9(Phospho); S13(Phospho)
		High	RLsTSSVDSR	2	1	1	AN5726	S3(Phospho)
		High	RLsTsSVDSR	2	1	1	AN5726	S3(Phospho); S5(Phospho)
		High	SPSSPsAsLDALAAsSPR	1	1	1		S6(Phospho); S8(Phospho); S15(Phospho)
		High	sLsPFNVGR	1	1	1	AN5726	S1(Phospho); S3(Phospho)

	Accession	Description	Score	Coverage	# Proteins	# Unique Peptides	# Peptides	# PSMs
Control 1	AN1181	mepA AspGDID:A	49,98	3,77	1	2	2	28
MepA, AN1181		A2	Sequence	# PSMs	# Proteins	# Protein Groups	Protein Group Accessions	Modifications
		High	SttPTGPVEPSPAELKA	8	1	1	AN1181	T2(Phospho); T3(Phospho)
		High	STtPTGPVEPSPAELKA	13	1	1	AN1181	T3(Phospho)
		High	RSttPTGPVEPSPAELKA	7	1	1	AN1181	T3(Phospho); T4(Phospho)

	Accession	Description	Score	Coverage	# Proteins	# Unique Peptides	# Peptides	# PSMs
Control 2	AN4859	pmaA AspGDID:A	133,17	2,83	1	6	6	59
PmaA/AN4859		A2	Sequence	# PSMs	# Proteins	# Protein Groups	Protein Group Accessions	Modifications
		High	RGsTsSAGALSMK	6	1	1	AN4859	S3(Phospho); S5(Phospho)
		High	GSTSsAGALsMK	2	1	1	AN4859	S5(Phospho); S10(Phospho)
		High	RGStSsAGALsMK	5	1	1	AN4859	T4(Phospho); S6(Phospho); S11(Phospho)
		High	RGsTsSAGALSMk	5	1	1	AN4859	S3(Phospho); S5(Phospho); C- Term(Oxidation)
		High	RGsTssAGALSMK	2	1	1	AN4859	S3(Phospho); S5(Phospho); S6(Phospho); C- Term(Oxidation)
		High	RGSTSsAGALsMKQK	3	1	1	AN4859	S6(Phospho); S11(Phospho)
		5	RGsTSSAGALSMk	1	1		AN4859	S3(Phospho); C- Term(Oxidation)
		High	GSTSSAGALsMK	2	1	1	AN4859	S10(Phospho)
		High	GSTSsAGALsMKQK	2	1	1	AN4859	S5(Phospho); S10(Phospho)
		High	GSTSSAGALsMk	3	1	1	AN4859	S10(Phospho); C- Term(Oxidation)
		High	RGStSsAGALsMKQK	11	1	1	AN4859	T4(Phospho); S6(Phospho); S11(Phospho)
		High	DNRRGsTssAGALSMK	4	1	1	AN4859	S6(Phospho); S8(Phospho); S9(Phospho)
		High	GSTSsAGALsMk	2	1	1	AN4859	S5(Phospho); S10(Phospho); C- Term(Oxidation)
		High	GStSsAGALsMKQK	2	1	1	AN4859	T3(Phospho); S5(Phospho); S10(Phospho)
		Ĵ	RGStSsAGALsMKQk	4	1		AN4859	T4(Phospho); S6(Phospho); S11(Phospho); C- Term(Oxidation)
		High	DNRRGsTsSAGALSMk	1	1	1	AN4859	S6(Phospho); S8(Phospho); C- Term(Oxidation)

High	GSTSsAGALsMKQk	1	1	1		S5(Phospho); S10(Phospho); C- Term(Oxidation)
High	DNRRGsTsSAGALSMK	2	1	1	AN4859	S6(Phospho); S8(Phospho)

MAD3559 Null *cnaA* strain expressing CrzA(1-612)

	Accession	Description	Score	Coverage	# Proteins	# Unique Peptides	# Peptides	# PSMs
CrzA, AN5726	AN5726	crzA AspGDID:AS	15,56	4,66	1	3	3	7
		A2	Sequence	# PSMs	# Proteins	# Protein Groups	Protein Group Accessions	Modifications
		High	RLsTssVDSR	1	1	1		S3(Phospho); S5(Phospho);
								S6(Phospho)
		High	RLsTsSVDSR	2	1	1	AN5726	S3(Phospho); S5(Phospho)
		High	sLsPFNVGR	1	1	1	AN5726	S1(Phospho); S3(Phospho)
		High	STADMDSLsPPPsLR	2	1	1	AN5726	S9(Phospho); S13(Phospho)
		High	RLsTSSVDSR	1	1	1	AN5726	S3(Phospho)

	Accession	Description	Score	Coverage	# Proteins	# Unique Peptides	# Peptides	# PSMs
Control 1	AN1181	mepA AspGDID:A	42,56	3,77	1	2	2	22
MepA, AN1181		A2	Sequence	# PSMs	# Proteins	# Protein Groups	Protein Group Accessions	Modifications
		High	SttPTGPVEPSPAELKA	9	1	1	AN1181	T2(Phospho); T3(Phospho)
		High	RSttPTGPVEPSPAELKA	6	1	1	AN1181	T3(Phospho); T4(Phospho)
		High	STtPTGPVEPSPAELKA	7	1	1	AN1181	T3(Phospho)

	Accession	Description	Score	Coverage	# Proteins	# Unique Peptides	# Peptides	# PSMs
Control 2	AN4859	pmaA AspGDID:A	70,42	3,43	1	7	7	38
PmaA/AN4859		A2	Sequence	# PSMs	# Proteins	# Protein Groups	Protein Group Accessions	Modifications
		High	RGsTsSAGALSMK	3	1	1	AN4859	S3(Phospho); S5(Phospho)
		High	RGStSsAGALsMK	3	1	1		T4(Phospho); S6(Phospho); S11(Phospho)
		High	GSTSsAGALsMK	1	1	1	AN4859	S5(Phospho); S10(Phospho)

High	DNRRGStSsAGALsMK	2	1	1 AN4859	T7(Phospho); S9(Phospho); S14(Phospho)
High	RGSTSsAGALsMk	4	1	1 AN4859	S6(Phospho); S11(Phospho); C Term(Oxidation)
High	RGStSsAGALsMk	1	1	1 AN4859	T4(Phospho); S6(Phospho); S11(Phospho); C- Term(Oxidation)
High	GSTSsAGALSMK	1	1	1 AN4859	S5(Phospho)
High	RGStSsAGALsMKQK	8	1	1 AN4859	T4(Phospho); S6(Phospho); S11(Phospho)
High	GSTSsAGALsMKQK	2	1	1 AN4859	S5(Phospho); S10(Phospho)
High	RGSTSsAGALSMk	1	1	1 AN4859	S6(Phospho); C- Term(Oxidation)
High	DNRRGSTssAGALSMK	2	1	1 AN4859	S8(Phospho); S9(Phospho)
High	DNRRGStSsAGALsMk	1	1	1 AN4859	T7(Phospho); S9(Phospho); S14(Phospho); C- Term(Oxidation)
High	RGStSsAGALsMKQk	3	1	1 AN4859	T4(Phospho); S6(Phospho); S11(Phospho); C- Term(Oxidation)
High	YISTARDNR	1	1	1 AN4859	S3(Phospho)
High	GSTSsAGALsMKQk	1	1	1 AN4859	S5(Phospho); S10(Phospho); C Term(Oxidation)
High	GSTSsAGALsMk	1	1	1 AN4859	S5(Phospho); S10(Phospho); C Term(Oxidation)
High	GStSsAGALsMKQK	2	1	1 AN4859	T3(Phospho); S5(Phospho); S10(Phospho)

Control MepA, Putative transporter with a predicted role in small molecule transport; ammonium permease

Monahan BJ, et al. (2002) Isolation and characterization of two ammonium permease genes, meaA and mepA, from Aspergillus nidulan:Control PmaAPlasma membrane ATPase with a predicted role in energy metabolism

Reoyo E, et al. (1998) The essential Aspergillus nidulans gene pmaA encodes an homologue of fungal plasma membrane H(+)-ATPases

# AAs	MW [kDa]	calc. pl
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# AAs	MW [kDa]	calc. pl						
478	51,1	5,60						
ΔCn	q-Value	PEP	XCorr	Charge	MH+ [Da]	ΔM [ppm]	RT [min]	# Missed Cleavages
0,0000	0	2,348E-07	4,88	2	1841,80840	6,16	60,76	1
0,0000	0	0,00009695	3,74	2	1761,83721	3,68	53,55	1
0,0000	0	0,0002647	2,43	2	1997,90654	4,19	52,56	2
0,0000	0,002	0,01035	2,47	2	1770,77434	8,14	57,31	0

# AAs	MW [kDa]	calc. pl						
990	108,7	5,36						
ΔCn	q-Value	PEP	XCorr	Charge	MH+ [Da]	ΔM [ppm]	RT [min]	
0,0000	0	0,00007717	3,94	2	1412,56816	2,85	38,84	1
0,0000	0	0,00006741	3,84	3	1748,68869	2,67	33,96	2
0,0000	0	0,00004378	3,82	2	1176,49944	2,33	39,49	0
0,0417	0	0,00007604	3,68	2	1428,56377	3,30	29,49	1
0,0000	0	0,0007897	3,51	2	1256,46721	3,33	44,20	0
0,0000	0	0,0002721	3,48	2	1492,53594	3,66	43,17	1
0,0000	0	0,00006544	3,00	2	1192,49431	2,27	29,86	0

0,0000	0	0,0004891	2,89	2	1508,52995	3,03	31,58	1
0,0182	0,001	0,001126	2,69	2	1512,62065	2,70	34,86	1
0,0000	0,001	0,002779	2,60	2	1668,72392	3,73	30,00	2
0,0000	0,003	0,02093	1,95	2	1272,46001	1,63	32,29	0
0,0000	0,005	0,02805	2,70	3	1764,68387	2,80	25,84	2

# AAs	MW [kDa]	calc. pl						
730	78,5	6,38						
ΔCn	q-Value	PEP	XCorr	Charge	MH+ [Da]	ΔM [ppm]	RT [min]	# Missed Cleavages
0,0000	0	0,007226	3,39	2	1940,75383	5,04	73,73	0
0,0000	0	0,003986	1,91	3	1860,78714	5,07	64,05	0
0,0000	0,009	0,1429	1,41	2	1136,45891	4,53	66,45	0

# AAs	MW [kDa]	calc. pl						
478	51,1	5,60						
ΔCn	q-Value	PEP	XCorr	Charge	MH+ [Da]	ΔM [ppm]	RT [min]	# Missed Cleavages
0,0000	0	0,0004938	4,69	2	1841,80644	5,10	60,19	1
0,0000	0	0,0006005	3,71	3	1997,90366	2,75	52,69	2
0,0000	0	0,006039	3,57	2	1761,83440	2,09	54,30	1

# AAs	MW [kDa]	calc. pl
990	108,7	5,36

ΔCn	q-Value	PEP	XCorr	Charge	MH+ [Da]	ΔM [ppm]	RT [min]	¥ Missed Cleavages
0,0000	0	0,002858	3,62	2	1412,56816	2,85	38,69	1
0,0000	0	0,003099	2,34	2	1176,49858	1,61	38,92	0
0,0000	0,001	0,03315	3,43	2	1256,46745	3,53	44,27	0
0,0000	0,002	0,03821	2,53	2	1428,56194	2,02	27,08	1
0,0000	0,003	0,08073	2,99	3	1748,68888	2,78	34,09	2
0,0000	0,009	0,136	2,29	2	1877,70586	2,33	38,13	2

# AAs	MW [kDa]	calc. pl						
730	78,5	6,38						
ΔCn	q-Value	PEP	XCorr	Charge	MH+ [Da]	ΔM [ppm]	RT [min]	# Missed Cleavages
0,0000	0	0,000001034	2,86	2	1860,78716	5,08	68,38	0
0,0000	0	0,001696	2,17	2	1733,69402	4,97	61,50	0
0,0000	0	0,0001205	1,91	2	1187,54436	2,28	30,23	1
0,0000	0,001	0,003115	2,36	2	1267,51103	2,41	34,37	1
0,0000	0,003	0,02469	2,40	2	1940,75395	5,11	73,71	0
0,0000	0,007	0,07586	1,75	2	1136,45732	3,13	66,57	0

# AAs	MW [kDa]	calc. pl						
478	51,1	5,60						
ΔCn	q-Value	PEP	XCorr	Charge	MH+ [Da]	ΔM [ppm]	RT [min]	# Missed Cleavages
0,0000	0	0,000001233	4,99	2	1841,80559	4,63	60,78	1
0,0025	0	0,000001269	3,99	2	1761,83611	3,06	54,07	1
0,0000	0	2,175E-08	3,93	3	1997,90604	3,94	52,56	2

# AAs	MW [kDa]	calc. pl						
990	108,7	5,36						
ΔCn	q-Value	PEP	XCorr	Charge	MH+ [Da]	ΔM [ppm]	RT [min]	# Missed Cleavage
0,0000	0	0,000001046	3,98	2	1412,56841	3,02	38,75	1
0,0000	0	0,0005805	3,86	2	1256,46758	3,62	44,22	0
0,0000	0	9,888E-07	3,81	2	1492,53569	3,50	43,40	1
0,0000	0	0,0003444	3,78	2	1428,56182	1,93	29,91	1
0,0000	0	0,000002533	3,70	2	1508,52971	2,86	33,91	1
0,0000	0	0,00001159	3,29	2	1668,72087	1,91	30,68	2
0,0000	0	0,000003327	2,98	2	1348,59453	1,34	26,15	1
0,0000	0	0,00002493	2,80	2	1176,49980	2,64	39,00	0
0,0000	0	0,00009342	2,78	2	1512,62078	2,78	35,32	1
0,0000	0	0,001267	2,44	2	1192,49419	2,16	29,09	0
0,0000	0	0,0004907	1,71	3	1748,68833	2,46	35,28	2
0,0000	0,001	0,006498	2,94	2	1877,70635	2,59	39,78	2
0,0000	0,001	0,01192	2,79	2	1272,46062	2,11	32,13	0
0,0077	0,001	0,002234	2,57	2	1592,58684	2,47	39,97	1
0,0000	0,001	0,01203	2,12	2	1764,68083	1,07	25,84	2
0,0000	0,001	0,002954	1,92	2	1813,73393	2,14	28,07	2

0,0000	0,003	0,02919	1,85	2	1528,61601	2,96	26,63	1
0,0446	0,006	0,06709	1,93	2	1797,74077	3,13	35,97	2

# AAs	MW [kDa]	calc. pl						
730	78,5	6,38						
ΔCn	q-Value	PEP	XCorr	Charge	MH+ [Da]	ΔM [ppm]	RT [min]	# Missed Cleavages
0,0000	0	0,003691	3,00	2	1347,47722	2,16	34,93	1
0,0000	0	0,001617	2,86	2	1267,51091	2,31	34,46	1
0,0000	0	0,005526	2,47	2	1136,45598	1,95	66,43	0
0,0000	0,001	0,01081	2,36	2	1733,69402	4,97	61,63	0
0,0000	0,001	0,01268	1,91	2	1187,54350	1,56	30,14	1

# AAs	MW [kDa]	calc. pl						
478	51,1	5,60						
ΔCn	q-Value	PEP	XCorr	Charge	MH+ [Da]	ΔM [ppm]	RT [min]	# Missed Cleavages
0,0000	0	5,413E-08	5,06	2	1841,80254	2,98	60,30	1
0,0000	0	1,453E-08	3,95	3	1997,90384	2,84	52,78	2
0,0000	0	0,0000317	3,94	2	1761,83501	2,43	54,08	1

# AAs	MW [kDa]	calc. pl						
990	108,7	5,36						
ΔCn	q-Value	PEP	XCorr	Charge	MH+ [Da]	ΔM [ppm]	RT [min]	¥ Missed Cleavage
0,0000	0	0,000003151	3,74	2	1412,56731	2,24	39,11	1
0,0000	0	0,00002078	3,64	2	1492,53496	3,01	43,27	1
0,0000	0	0,0004442	3,51	2	1256,46623	2,56	44,45	0

0,0000	0	0,0007498	3,27	2	1877,70647	2,66	38,51	2
0,0000	0	0,002041	3,20	2	1428,56218	2,19	27,78	1
0,0000	0	0,0001105	3,05	2	1508,52910	2,46	31,64	1
0,0000	0	0,000114	2,87	2	1176,49822	1,30	40,04	0
0,0000	0	0,00242	2,85	2	1748,68962	3,20	34,92	2
0,0000	0	0,0001105	2,64	2	1512,61931	1,81	35,38	1
0,0000	0	0,002701	2,37	2	1348,59624	2,60	26,41	1
0,0000	0	0,0003466	2,03	2	1797,73931	2,32	35,91	2
0,0000	0,001	0,01293	2,03	2	1893,70049	2,16	29,01	2
0,0000	0,001	0,009618	1,93	2	1764,68120	1,28	26,11	2
0,0000	0,001	0,008109	1,37	2	1175,52324	2,32	28,02	1
0,0000	0,002	0,02078	1,56	2	1528,61553	2,64	26,30	1
0,0000	0,005	0,05862	2,20	2	1272,46001	1,63	32,48	0
0,0000	0,005	0,063	1,80	2	1592,58586	1,86	40,30	1

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