Nucleotide sequence of the PaeR7 restriction/modification system and partial characterization of its protein products

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ABSTRACT

Bal3l deletion experiments on clones of the PaeR7 restriction-modification system from Pseudomonas aeruginosa demonstrate that it is arranged as an operon, with the methylase gene preceding the endonuclease gene. The DNA sequence of this operon agrees with in vitro transcription-translation assays which predict proteins of 532 amino acids, $Mr = 59,260$ daltons, and 246 amino acids, Mr = 27,280 daltons, coincident with the methylase and endonuclease genes, respectively. These predicted values coincide with the measured molecular weights of the puri-
fied, denatured PaeR7 endonuclease and methylase proteins. The fied, denatured PaeR7 endonuclease and methylase proteins. first twenty amino acids from the amino-terminus of the purified endonuclease exactly match those predicted from the DNA sequence. Finally, potential regulatory mechanisms for the expression of phage restriction are described based on the properties of several PaeR7 subclones.

INTRODUCTION

Restriction-modification systems provide a means for host bacterial cells to recognize and destroy foreign DNA. Of the three types of prokaryotic restriction-modification systems (1-3), the genes of the type II systems have been most frequently studied because of their simplicity and their production of endonucleases commonly used in genetic engineering. Of the type II systems which have been cloned and characterized, the HhaII (4,5), PstI (6,7) and MspI (R. Roberts, personal communication) systems are believed to be located on the bacterial chromosomes, while the $ECORI (8,9)$, $ECORII (10)$, $ECORV (11)$, **PvuII** (12) and $P_{\text{A}}(13,14)$ systems are encoded on naturally occurring bacterial plasmids.

The PaeR7 system was originally identified as part of a 42 kilobase plasmid, pMG7, found in Pseudomonas aeruginosa (15). After being identified as a type II system by Hinkle and Miller

(16), the PaeR7 system was transferred onto $E.$ coli (13) and subcloned and characterized on a 3.8 kilobase DNA fragment (pPAORM3.8) from pMG7 (14). The PaeR7 system is unique among characterized restriction-modification systems in its ability to permit the separation of the endonuclease and methylase genes into viable clones (14). The expected lethality of an expressing endonuclease gene in an unmodified host was not observed with clones carrying the PaeR7 endonuclease. In addition, E. coli cells expressing only the PaeR7 endonuclease no longer appeared capable of restricting bacteriophage. The questions of how unmodified host cells expressing the endonuclease survive and of why bacterial cells containing a restriction endonuclease were no longer capable of restricting infecting bacteriophage called for additional investigation.

In an attempt to answer these questions, we have begun by determining the structure and organization of the PaeR7 genes as well as partially characterizing their gene products. In a companion paper (17), we describe how the structure and expression of these genes affects the viability of the host cell and its ability to restrict infecting bacteriophage.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Phage and DNA Preparations:

Plasmid DNA used in the experiments was isolated by the cleared lysate method (18) followed by banding in CsCl/ethidium bromide gradients. Small scale preparations of plasmid DNA from clones were obtained by a modified version of Birnboim and Doly (19). High titer stocks of 080 phage for in vivo restriction analysis were prepared by plate lysates (20).

E. coli strains MM294 and RR1 [20] were used for cloning and enzyme purification. JM103 was used for M13 cloning using M13 vectors mp7, mp8, mp9, mpl8 and mpl9 (21,22). Clone Constructions:

Deletions in clones carrying the PaeR7 methylase and endonuclease genes were constructed by use of Bal3l nuclease (Bethesda Research Laboratories) as described previously (14). Restriction endonuclease mapping of all constructions was done using enzymes from New England BioLabs following conditions

recommended by the manufacturer. E. coli cells were transformed by the CaCl, heat shock method of Cohen et al. (23).

A plasmid which expresses elevated levels of the endonuclease and methylase proteins was constructed in the following manner (Figure 1). A SalI linker was inserted into pPAORM3.8 linearized at the NruI site. Five ig of this new construct (designated pPAORM3.8[S]) and 5 µg of the lambda P_r promoter regulated expression vector pGW7 (from G. Wilson) were each digested in a reaction volume of 100 ul using an excess of SalI; the reactions were stopped by incubation at 65°C for 10 min. pGW7 was then digested by an excess of BamHI. pPAORM3.8[s] was digested with an excess of PstI, PvuII, BamHI and SalI for 2 hours at 37^oC. After phenol extraction and ethanol precipitation, 1 μ q of each digest was combined and ligated in 100 μ 1. The ligation mix was used to transform RRl cells; transformants were selected for $Ap(r)$ and individual colonies tested for $PaeR7$ endonuclease activity.

Analysis of restriction-modification activities:

In vivo restriction-modification tests have previously been described (14). Similarly in vitro assays of cell extracts were performed as described except p80 DNA was substituted for Adenovirus-2 DNA.

DNA Sequencing:

A portion of the DNA sequencing was performed according to the chemical cleavage method of Maxam and Gilbert (24). Plasmids pPAORM3.2, pPAOM2.7, pPAO2.2 and pPAOl.6 were end-labeled with $[y-32P]$ -ATP and T4 polynucleotide kinase (New England Bio-Labs) at the SalI linker sites to determine the junction between the vector and Bal31-treated insert. In the plasmids pPAOA594, $pPAO\triangle 614$, $pPAO\triangle 628$ and $pPAORM3.8$, a BstNI site approximately 100 base pairs away from the junction sequences for each of the deletion clones (Figure 3) was cleaved, end-labeled with ³²P and used to determine the DNA sequences.

The dideoxynucleotide chain-termination procedure (25) was also used to determine the sequence of the PaeR7 operon. Templates were prepared from M13 clones which contained either various restriction fragments from the insert in pPAORM3.8 or the entire 3800 base pair PaeR7 operon inserted into the vectors

Figure 1. CONSTRUCTION OF pPAORM3.8-X, A PLASMID WHICH OVER-PRODUCES ENDONUCLEASE AND METHYLASE.

mp7, mp8, mp9, mpl8 or mpl9 (21,22). In addition to the 17 nucleotide universal primer (New England BioLabs) used in the M13 sequencing system, a collection of 10 oligonucleotides complementary to various regions within the 3800 base pair PaeR7 insert was synthesized (using phosphoramidite chemistry in an Applied Biosystems Synthesizer) and used as internal primers to elucidate about 1540 nucleotides of the PaeR7 system. DNA sequences were resolved using 6, 8 and 12% thin polyacrylamide gels run in a gradient buffer system (26) . 35_S and 32_P -labeled nucleotides were used to visualize the DNA sequences.

Protein sequencing:

A Waters Associates Liquid Chromatograph was used for C4 and Cyano reverse phase chromatography. Protein samples were subjected to a final chromatography on a Vydac C4 214TP54 (5 μ m, 4.6 x 300 mm) 300 Angstrom pore reverse phase column developed with a linear gradient of 5% to 50% acetonitrile in 0.1% trifluoroacetic acid over 25 min. at a flow rate of 1 ml/min with detection at 214 nm. Individual peaks were manually collected and lyophilized.

The sequential degradation of proteins was performed with an Applied Biosystems model 470A gas-phase sequenator. The phenylthiohydantoins were unambigiously identified by highperformance liquid chromatography on an IBM Cyano (5 μ m, 4.5 x 250 mm) column with slight gradient modifications. In vitro Transcription-Translation:

Experiments involving in vitro transcription-translation of plasmids encoding all or part of the PaeR7 restriction-modification system were performed by using kits supplied by Worthington, Inc. The protocol used was the one recommended by the manufacturer. Reactions included using 3 µq of supercoiled DNA for plasmids pPAORM3.8, pPAOR1.9, pPAOM2.7 and pBR322. addition, $3 \mu q$ of each of these plasmid DNAs were cleaved with HincII to block the expression of the beta-lactamase protein so as to visualize the production of the 27,000 dalton PaeR7 endonuclease. Proteins were labeled with 35 S-methionine as a result of the translation process and resolved using an 11% polyacrylamide and SDS gel with a 5% stacking gel (27). Isolation and Characterization of Methylase and Endonuclease:

The plasmid pX164 DNA linearized with PvuII (pX164/PvuII) and was used as a substrate for the detection of PaeR7 endonuclease activity. pX164 is a pBR322 derivative containing a XhoI linker (CCTCGAGG) ligated at position 164 in the pBR322 sequence (14). Endonuclease and methylase enzymes were diluted into PaeR7 storage buffer, as recommended by New England BioLabs.

During the purification, column fractions were assayed in a 50 μ 1 reaction containing PaeR7 assay buffer and 1 μ g pX164/ PvuII. 1 μ 1 column samples were added to the reaction. To quantify endonuclease activity, extracts were serially diluted in 10-fold increments, and reactions were incubated for 20 min. at 37° C. One unit of PaeR7 endonuclease is defined as the amount of enzyme required to cut pX164/PvuII DNA to completion.

Column fractions were assayed for methylase activity, using ligated $XhoI$ linkers as substrate, in a 25 μI reaction volume

containing 50 mM Tris, pH 7.5; 10 mM EDTA, 5 mM beta-mercaptoethanol, 100 μ g/ml BSA, 80 μ M [³H]S-Adenosyl-L-methionine [New England Nuclear, 12.8 Ci/mmol] and 0.5 µg ligated Xhol linkers. Reactions were incubated for 1 hour, 37° C, then stopped by the addition of an equal volume of 10% TCA. The precipitated reactions were spotted onto Whatman 5 MM filter paper. The filter paper was submerged and shaken at 4°C in 10% TCA, washed one time with more 10% TCA, rinsed in isopropanol and dried. The filter paper was cut into 1-inch squares and counted, using 2 ml of opti-fluor [Packard), in a Packard Tricarb scintillation counter.

Quantitation of methylase units was done by a protection assay in which 1 μ g of pX164/PvuII plasmid served as a substrate in a 50 μ l reaction volume. Reaction components were the same as above, except 1 mM unlabeled S-Adenosyl-L-methionine [Sigma] was used as the methyl donor. Reactions were incubated for 15 minutes at 37[°]C, phenol extracted, ethanol precipitated, resuspended in lx XhoI buffer (New England BioLabs) and challenged with 10 units of XhoI (or PaeR7) enzyme for 30 minutes at 37° C. The reaction products were resolved by agarose gel electrophoresis. One unit of PaeR7 methylase is defined as the amount of enzyme which, in a 20-minute reaction at 37° C, is required to completely protect 1 pg of pX164/PvuII DNA against PaeR7 (or XhoI) cleavage.

Quantitative protein determinations were done using the protein dye binding assay of Bradford (28) with bovine serum albumin as a standard.

Protein Purifications and Characterization:

Cell growth and soluble extract preparation: E. coli RR1 cells containing the pPAORM3.8-X overproducing clone were grown to A_{550} =0.9 at 30^oC in L-broth (24 liters). The cells were induced by shifting the temperature to 43° C, and 82 grams were harvested by centrifugation three hours later.

Forty-one grams of cells were resuspended in 100 ml of Buffer S (10 mM Tris, pH 7.6; 10 mM beta-mercaptoethanol). Cells were partially lysed by freezing at -70° C and thawing in a solution containing 500 µg/ml lysozyme and 10 mM EDTA, pH 7.9. Thawed cells were sonicated at full intensity for two 1-minute bursts. After bringing the suspension to 0.5 M NaCl, sonicated

cells were centrifuged at 10,000 x g in a Type JA-14 rotor (Beckman) for 10 minutes at 4° C.

The resulting supernatant (131 ml) was made 7.5% with PEG 6000. After precipitating for one hour at 4° C, this solution was centrifuged at 10,000 x g for 30 minutes. The 17 gram pellet was resuspended in approximately 500 ml of Buffer S using a Waring blender. The small portion of the pellet that did not redissolve (<1%) was eliminated by centrifugation. All subsequent purification steps took place at $0-4^{\circ}$ C, unless otherwise stated.

Heparin-Sepharose Chromatography: The 500 ml resuspended PEG pellet was loaded on a Heparin-Sepharose (Pharmacia) column (2.5 x 14 cm) equilibrated and washed with Buffer SN (Buffer S and 50 mM NaCl). The enzyme was eluted with a linear gradient of 700 ml of Buffer S containing 50 mM to 1.0 M NaCl, and 6.5 ml fractions were collected. The PaeR7 endonuclease eluted at approximately 0.2 M NaCl. Peak fractions were pooled, and the 40 ml peak was dialyzed against 2 liters of Buffer Q (20 mM Tris, pH 7.5; 10 mM beta-mercaptoethanol). The PaeR7 methylase eluted as a single peak at approximately 0.33 M NaCl. Peak fractions were pooled, and the 33 ml peak was dialyzed against KPO₄ Buffer (20 mM KPO₄, pH 6.9; 10 mM beta-mercaptoethanol).

Synchromprep Q-300 Chromatography (for endonuclease): Because of high protein concentrations, the PaeR7 endonuclease pool was divided into two batches. Each was loaded on a 1 x 8 cm column packed with Synchromprep $Q-300$, 30 μ m, (Synchrom, Inc., Linden, Indiana) equilibrated and washed with 50 mM KC1 in Buffer Q. A gradient from 50 mM to 0.9 M KC1 was used; the endonuclease eluted between 0.6 M and 0.7 M KC1. Peak fractions were pooled into a 300 ml total and dialyzed against KPO₄ buffer.

PolyCAT A Chromatography (for endonuclease): A 9.4 x 250 mm polyCAT A column (Custom LC, Inc.) was charged with 1.0 M KCl in KPO, Buffer and then equilibrated with 50 mM KCl. Two 150 ml portions of the pooled fractions from the Synchroprep column were loaded and developed independently. The column was washed with 50 mM KCl/KPO₄ Buffer and the enzyme eluted with a 75 ml linear gradient from 50 mM to 1.0 M KC1. The PaeR7 endonuclease eluted at approximately 0.33 M KC1 and was stored in

TABLE 1

a_{Values} extrapolated from OD profile of enzyme elution.

37% glycerol at either -20°C or -70°C.

PolyCAT A Chromotagraphy (for methylase): 32 ml of PaeR7 methylase from the Heparin-Sepharose column was loaded onto a PolyCAT A column prepared as described above. The enzyme was eluted with a linear gradient of 48 ml from 50 mM to 0.6 M KC1. The methylase eluted at 0.4 M KCl in 4 ml. This pool was diluted to 28 ml in Buffer Q, bringing the solution to approximately 50 mM KC1.

Polvanion SI (for methylase): The 28 ml pool of methylase was loaded on a 0.5 x 5 cm Polyanion-SI-17 column (Pharmacia), and the column was washed with 50 mM KCl/Buffer Q. The enzyme was eluted by running a 46 ml linear gradient from 50 mM to 0.9 M KC1, with the PaeR7 methylase eluting at 0.15 M KC1. A 1 ml fraction contained the majority of the methylase. The methylase was stored in 37% glycerol at -20° C. The enzymatic activity of the methylase and endonuclease at each step in the purification was determined, and the latter is detailed in Table 1.

Molecular Weight Determination by Gel Filtration: Molecular weights of the native form of the endonuclease and methylase proteins were determined by gel filtration using a 2.5 x 78 cm Sephadex G-100 column (Pharmacia). The calibration standards (Bovine Serum Albumin, Ovalbumin, and Ribonuclease A) were prepared and applied to the Sephadex Gloo column according to the manufacturer.

The endonuclease and methylase samples used were taken from Heparin Sepharose peaks. 1.5 ml (1.5 x 10^5 units) of endonu-

Figure 2. SUMMARY OF THE BAL31 DELETION MUTANTS DERIVED FROM pPAORM3.8. Each mutant was tested by in vitro and in vivo assays for restriction modification phenotype. $(+)=$ an activity level equivalent to pPAORM3.8. (+/-)= a lOx or greater decrease in activity relative to pPAORM3.8. (-)= no detectable activity. Bal3l deletion mutants were named as previously described (14), except pPAOA594, pPAOA614 and pPAOA628, where the number following the " Δ " indicates the approximate distance of the deletion end point from the BamHI site.

clease was applied to the column. 4.7 ml fractions were collected and assayed for enzymatic activity as previously described, using 1 μ l from each fraction. 1.5 ml (1.0 x 10⁴ units) of methylase was applied to the column. 3.7 ml fractions were collected and tested with the protection assay, using 10 μ 1 from each fraction. The K_{av} was also calculated for the standards, endonuclease and methylase, and these were plotted to determine the relative molecular weights.

RESULTS

Organization and DNA Sequence of PaeR7 System:

In the initial report concerning the cloning of the PaeR7 system, the order of the genes encoded in the 3800 base pair fragment was determined to be the methylase gene nearest to the BamHI site, with the endonuclease closest to the NruI site (Figure 2). To determine the boundaries of each of these genes more accurately within the 3800 base pair insert in pPAORM3.8, a second series of deletions was made from either the BamHI or

Figure 3. NUCLEOTIDE SEQUENCE OF PaeR7 RESTRICTION-MODIFICATION SYSTEM DERIVED FROM pPAORM3.8. Putative regulatory regions are labeled with "...." for the -10, and with "***" for the -35 regions. Two tandem PaeR7 recognition sites (CTCGAGGCTCGAG) are also highlighted. Also denoted (---) is the amino acid sequence of the endonuclease which was confirmed by direct protein sequencing. The first nucleotide of each of the Bal31 mutants, $pPAO\Delta594$, $pPAO\Delta614$ and $pPAO\Delta628$, is marked. The in vivo phenotypes of these mutants are summarized in Figure 2.

NruI sites by use of Bal31 nuclease digestions. Deletions from the NruI site produced mutations in the structural region of first the endonuclease and then the methylase genes. Figure 2 presents the location of four of these structural gene mutants. Plasmid pPAORM3.2 is the smallest characterized plasmid capable of transferring (in vivo and in vitro) both restriction and modification phenotypes (R+M+) to E. coli. However, pPA02.2 and pPA01.6 are plasmids incapable of conferring either phenotype $(R-M-)$.

Bal3l deletion mutants made from the BamHI site 5' to the methylase gene demarcates the putative promoter region of this

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system. The clone $pPAO_{\Delta}594$, the least-deleted of this series, conferred the same phenotype as pPAORM3.8 (R+M+) and had comparable levels of endonuclease and methylase activities in extracts. pPAO \triangle 614 is 20 base pairs shorter than pPAO \triangle 594. Although its in vitro activities and phage modification levels are indistinguishable from pPAORM3.8, the clones restrict p80 at least lOx less efficiently. pPAOA628, an additional 14 base pairs shorter, has even more unusual properties. This clone no longer detectably restricts 080 phage and only partially modifies progeny phage. There is no discernible methylase activity in crude extracts, and restriction activity is reduced over 1000x (i.e., equivalent to the level of pPAOR1.9) with pPAOA628. Both proteins are still being made but at a much lower level. These results are consistent with the region 5' to the methylase gene acting in a regulatory capacity, and with the PaeR7 system functioning as an operon. Since the endonuclease continues to be made even when this region and part of the methylase is deleted (as in pPAORl.9), a secondary promoter may possibly be present within the methylase gene controlling endonuclease expression.

Both the chemical cleavage and dideoxynucleotide chain terminator methods for DNA sequence analysis were used to determine 3393 base pairs encoding the primary structures of the endonuclease and methylase genes within the 3800 base pair insert of pPAORM3.8 (Figure 3). In addition, the nucleotide sequences of several of the Bal3l deletion mutants were determined for the regions which constituted the junction sites between the vector and insert. Overlapping sequences were identified by computer analysis (29).

The PaeR7 sequence was analyzed for open reading frames beginning with an ATG codon and capable of encoding polypeptides of at least 150 amino acids in length (Figure 4). Two contiguous open reading frames were detected which could encode the endonuclease and methylase genes as a single operon. Such a gene organization is suggested by the Bal31 deletion mutants. The open reading frame for the putative methylase gene begins with an ATG at nucleotide 112 and terminates at 1834 (TAA) (Figure 3). Contiguous with this first open reading frame is a second open reading frame which could encode the endonuclease

Figure 4. ANALYSIS OF PaeR7 SEQUENCE FOR OPEN READING FRAMES. Only open reading frames at least 150 amino acids in length and beginning with an ATG are depicted. PaeR7 endonuclease and methylase genes are labeled as well as the P27 (from nucleotides 2691 to 1935 in Figure 3) and the P28 (from 864-108) open reading frames. Each (.) represents 26 nucleotides. The P27 and P28 open reading frames share identical codon usage preference with the <u>Pae</u>R7 genes and three other <u>P. aeruginosa</u> genes. The DNA sequence 5' to the P28 open reading frames shares significant homology with the putative control region for the PaeR7 operon.

gene. The translational initiation codon (ATG) for this putative gene begins at nucleotide 1837 and terminates at 2575 (TGA) (Figure 3). These two open reading frames follow one another with the last nucleotide of the termination codon of the putative methylase (1836) followed immediately by the first base of the initiation codon of the endonuclease (1837) (Figure 3).

In addition to the insert of the plasmid pPAORM3.8, several of the Bal3l mutants were sequenced to determine the extent and location of each of the deletions. The sequences of clones pPAOA594, pPAOA614 and pPAOA628 reveal the junction of the insert and vector and indicate that the deletions are within 34 nucleotides of each other. Clone pPAOA628 which begins at base pair 166 and is only 14 nucleotides from $pPAO_A614$ (bp 152) results in a significant decrease in the expression of both genes of the PaeR7 system (Figure 2). The phenotype of these putative regulatory mutants suggests that the translational start of the methylase gene begins downstream from the junction of $pPAO \triangle 628$. This would imply that neither of the ATG codons at base pairs 112 and 169 which are at the beginning of the first open reading frame are utilized as translational initiation codons for the methylase.

The next in-frame ATG codon occurs at base pair 670 which would in effect remove one third of the coding capacity of the first open reading frame used by the methylase gene. An alternative translational initiation site after the junction sequence of pPAO \triangle 628 is a GTG codon at base pair 241 which is the first

occurrence of such a codon after base pair 166 (pPAO \triangle 628). A methylase gene initiating at nucleotide 241 (GTG) would be 531 amino acids and have a predicted size of 59,260 daltons.

Figure 5A. IN VITRO TRANSCRIPTION-TRANSLATION PRODUCTS. An autoradiograph of 11% polyacrylamide gel containing methylase and endonuclease products synthesized from a coupled in vitro system. Plasmids were supercoiled plasmids as used in the coupled reaction. A 60,000 dalton protein (M) appears in lanes from pPAORM3.8 and pPAOM2.7 but not in the others. Size markers (Biorad) indicate the relative size of both proteins. As indicated by the manufacturer, the efficiency of transcription decreases using the HincII-linearized DNA in place of the supercoiled forms. HincIIcleaved forms of the plasmids are used to block the expression of B-lactamase protein in order to visualize the 27,000 dalton endonculease band.

B. SAMPLES OF PURIFIED PaeR7 METHYLASE AND ENDONUCLEASE RUN ON 15% SDS ACRYLAMIDE GEL WITH A 5% STACKING GEL. E = endonuclease and $M = \text{methylase.}$

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Contiguous with the open reading frame of the putative methylase gene is a second reading frame which may encode the endonuclease gene. Translation of the DNA sequence of the putative endonuclease gene predicts a 246 amino acid polypeptide, having a size of 27,283 daltons.

Gene Products of PaeR7 System:

Coupled In Vitro Transcription/Translation Systems: Plasmids pPAORM3.8, pPAORl.9 and pPAOM2.7 were used in a coupled in vitro transcription/translation system to study the synthesis of the endonuclease and methylase enzymes. Since pPAORl.9 expresses only the endonuclease and pPAOM2.7 expresses only the methylase (Figure 2), these plasmids were used to identify which in vitro synthesized products made from parent plasmid pPAORM3.8 were the respective proteins (Figure 5A). Comparison of the protein products made by the three plasmids indicate a 60,000 dalton polypeptide synthesized by pPAOM2.7 and pPAORM3.8 but not by pPAORl.9. A polypeptide of this size is predicted by the DNA sequence for the putative methylase (59,260) initiating with a GTG codon at nucleotide 241. A 27,000 dalton protein is synthesized by pPAORl.9 and pPAORM3.8 but not pPAOM2.7 (Figure 5A). The size of this polypeptide agrees well with the size predicted by the DNA sequence for the putative endonuclease (27,283) starting at nucleotide 1837.

Characterization of PaeR7 Methylase and Endonuclease: Twelve mg of purified endonuclease was recovered from 41 g of E. coli cells containing the overexpression plasmid (Table 1). The enzyme, which ran as a single 27,000 dalton protein during SDS-PAGE (Figure 5B), has a specific activity of 6 x 10⁶ units/ mg. The specific activity of this purified PaeR7 endonuclease when measured on lambda DNA is 15 x 10^6 units/mg and is comparable to values found for homogenous BamHI, PstI and EcoRI endonucleases (J. Benner and L. Sznyter, New England BioLabs, unpublished observations). In contrast, we recovered 0.4 mg of purified methylase (30x less than endonuclease) from these cells. The methylase ran as a single band of 60,000 daltons on SDS-PAGE (Figure 5B). It had a specific activity of 10^5 units/mg.

The active forms of the enzymes were sized by gel filtration. The endonuclease and methylase activities eluted with estimated sizes of 52,000 and 58,000 daltons, respectively.

This is consistent with the endonuclease forming a dimer and the methylase acting as a monomer.

The amino acid sequence of the first 20 residues of the purified PaeR7 endonuclease was determined by Edman degradation. Assuming post-translational removal of the first amino acid, this sequence agrees precisely with that predicted by the DNA sequence (Figure 3). Attempts to sequence the methylase by the same procedure proved unsuccessful.

DISCUSSION

Restriction-modification systems differ markedly in their organization. The only common feature thus far found among the characterized systems is that the two genes are closely linked. The organization of the PaeR7 system most closely resembles the chromosomal HhaII system in that the genes are cotranscribed in the order methylase to endonuclease (5). In the best-studied system, EcoRI, the order is reversed with the endonuclease preceding the methylase on a common transcription unit (8,9). In three other systems characterized, PstI (7), EcoRV (11) and PvuII (12), the two promoters for the endonuclease and methylase are situated in an intergenic region and are divergently transcribed. From the diversity of these gene arrangements, it would seem that the mode of coordinate control between the endonuclease and methylase genes must vary.

The regulatory region for the PaeR7 operon has been operationally defined by characterizing several Bal3l deletion mutants. The DNA sequences of these mutants provide supporting data which indicate that deletions within a 34 nucleotide region, 5' to the putative start of the methylase gene, have pleiotropic effects. Plasmids pPAOA594, pPAOA614 and pPAOA628 demonstrate a spectrum of decreasing levels of expression for both the proximal methylase and distal endonuclease genes. Inspection of the nucleotide sequence of these Bal31 deletion mutants reveals that beginning at nucleotide 165 (76 base pairs away from the putative translational start for the methylase gene) the sequence TGTCATG occurs. This sequence has been reported to be the Pribnow region (-10 region) for the E. coli araC gene (30). Although this observation is disputed by RNA transcription mapping experiments of this gene (31), there is

evidence that indicates this sequence may be capable of acting as a secondary promoter for the araC gene (G. Wilcox, personal communication). The sequence TTGCCG beginning at nucleotide 146, has been designated as the -35 region of the PaeR7 promoter. Although closer to the Pribnow region than is usually found in E. coli promoters [13 base pairs instead of 15-21 (32)], this -35 sequence shows the most resemblance to the consensus -35 region of E. coli promoters (TTGACA) (33). It is uncertain whether the sequence we have identified as the putative control region for the PaeR7 system operates as such in P . aeruginosa.

The molar amount of endonuclease purified exceeded that of methylase by 30-fold (data not shown). It is unlikely that the discrepancy resulted from differential losses during purification. ³⁵S-labeled cell extracts run on 2-D polyacrylamide gels show greater than lOx excess of endonuclease in crude extracts (data not shown). It is curious that the yield of endonuclease and methylase vary so greatly since the two genes are presumably cotranscribed with the methylase preceding the endonuclease. If both genes are being translated from the message with equal efficiency one would expect more methylase than endonuclease in the cell since: a) the methylase polypeptide is twice the size of the endonuclease and b) the methylase is active as a monomer and the endonuclease as a dimer.

This suggests that there is a greater turnover of methylase than endonuclease within the cell and/or that the endonuclease is translated more efficiently than the methylase. Comparison of putative ribosome binding sites and translation initiation codons favors the latter possibility. In the region proximal to the putative start of the methylase there is no occurrence of a sequence resembling the consensus Shine-Dalgarno [i.e. GGAGG; (34)]; however, nine bases 5' to the initiation of the endonuclease gene is the sequence GGAGA. It may be significant that other methylase genes that have been sequenced (i.e., HhaII [5], PstI [7], EcoRV [11], Bacillus subtilis phage SPR [35] and dam [36]) also have poor ribosome binding sites. In addition, it is possible that use of the infrequent initiation codon GTG rather than the more conventional ATG reduces methylase expression.

The translational initiation codon for the endonuclease gene is an ATG starting at nucleotide 1837 (Figure 3); the initiating fMET of this polypeptide is removed in E. coli. Similar processing has been observed for the EcoRI endonuclease and methylase (8), as well as for the PstI methylase (7) and the EcoRV endonuclease (11). However, such processing is not universal for all endonuclease-methylase products; PstI endonuclease (7) and EcoRV methylase retain their fMET residues (11). Other types of protein processing are missing from the PaeR7 products. The sequence data for both the PaeR7 methylase and endonuclease genes confirm that neither enzyme possesses a hydrophobic signal peptide sequence at the amino-termini (Figure 3). The protein products observed as a result of the coupled transcription-translation and the PaeR7 enzyme purifications support this observation. The lack of such signal peptides at the amino termini suggest that these proteins are not transported through a membrane system of the host by a canonical transport mechanism, as exemplified by the beta-lactamase enzyme (37).

Additional analysis of the PaeR7 sequence suggests other levels of control of expression. During translation, there is in bacteria a non-random use of codons which is reflected in the choice of the nucleotide at the third position (38,39). Comparison of the codon usage of the PaeR7 genes to the strongly and weakly expressed genes of $E.$ coli demonstrates a similarity to the strongly expressed E. coli genes (40). Thus, the codon usage for the PaeR7 genes probably contributes to the reasonable levels of expression of these genes in E . coli. The PaeR7 methylase (61.5%) and endonuclease (59.3%) have a combined G+C content of 60.8%. Comparison of the codon usage of these PaeR7 genes and three other Pseudomonas genes (41,42,43) show the same preference for G or C nucleotides in the third position of a codon, thus resulting in identical codon preferences except for the amino acids Val, Thr, Asn, Asp, Cys and Ser.

Finally, there appears to be control of bacteriophage restriction as a result of post-translational events. There is evidence from complementation experiments using subclones of the PaeR7 system which suggests that both parts of the system are

required for efficient phage restriction. The details of this observation are covered in a companion paper (17).

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