Supplementary data

Competition between bridged dinucleotides and activated mononucleotides determines the error frequency of nonenzymatic RNA primer extension

Daniel Duzdevich^{1,2*}, Christopher E. Carr^{1,3,4}, Dian Ding^{1,5}, Stephanie J. Zhang^{1,5}, Travis S. Walton^{1,6}, and Jack W. Szostak^{1,2,5,7}

¹ Department of Molecular Biology, Center for Computational and Integrative Biology,

Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA 02114, United States of America

² Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA 02114, United States of America

³ Department of Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, 02139, United States of America

⁴ Current Address: Daniel Guggenheim School of Aerospace Engineering, School of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, GA 30332, United States of America

⁵ Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 02138, United States of America

⁶ Current Address: Department of Biological Chemistry and Molecular Pharmacology, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA 02115, United States of America

⁷ Department of Genetics, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA 02115, United States of America

* To whom correspondence should be addressed. Email: duzdevich@molbio.mgh.harvard.edu

Mock With Primer Extension Reaction A. V Ligation Product Ligation Cleanup Assembly RNA Ladder Reaction Product I Product Production RTA Reaction Product Putities contact Print Ladder Hairpin Construct (RNA, 59 nt) 5′ Handle **Block** × $\bf H\bf H$ \cdots 1111 G NN N N N N A T (nt) 25 21 17 cDNA with PCR Handles (ssDNA, 80 nt) Residual Residual Residual 5′ Handle Block RT Handle RT Handle + RT Primer

50

80

(nt)

Sequencing Analysis, 20 mM 2AIrN

Figure S1. Validation of the Sequencing Assay with a Random-template Hairpin Construct and all Four Activated Nucleotides. A. Prior to deep-sequencing, the RT Handle (the template for the reverse transcription primer) is ligated to the 3′ terminus of the RNA hairpin construct, which is then reverse transcribed (RT). Denaturing polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (PAGE) was used to visualize the efficiencies of RT Handle ligation and reverse transcription. The Mock condition ommitted activated nucleotides. Experimental conditions, in which the RNA hairpin was incubated with activated nucleotides for 24 hours, yield the same distribution of ligation and RT products as the Mock. This shows that there are no biases in the 3′ ligation of the RT Handle due to variable sequence ends. **B-C.** To validate the entire sequencing protocol, we compared the products of primer extension on a random template with all four activated nucleotides as measured by PAGE (N = number of PAGE experiments) to the equivalent reaction as measured by Nonenzymatic RNA Primer Extension Sequencing (NERPE-Seq) (n_{reads} = number of sequencing read pairs). The histograms show the distribution of product lengths in each case and are in excellent agreement. This demonstrates that NERPE-Seq does not introduce biases due to sequence variability or mismatches during sample preparation or data analysis (1). Experimental conditions for **B**: 5 μM 6N Template, 1 μM Control Primer, 200 mM Na+ bicine, pH 8, and water were heated to 85°C for 30 s, then cooled to 23°C at 0.2 °C/s; 20 mM 2AIrN and 50 mM MgCl₂ were added to initiate the reaction. All concentrations indicate final concentrations in a volume of 20 μl. 1 μl aliquots were quenched in 40 μl Urea Load Buffer (8.3 M urea [Sigma-Aldrich], 1.3x TBE buffer [from a 10x autoclaved stock], 75 μM bromophenol blue [Sigma-Aldrich, from a 7.5 mM stock in DMSO], 880 μM orange G [Sigma-Aldrich, from an 88 mM stock in DMSO], syringe-filtered), 5 μl of which was mixed with 1 μl of a 300 μM stock of Randomer Primer Extension Reverse Complement, heated to 95°C for 3 minutes then cooled to 25℃ at 0.2 ℃/s. 14 μl additional Urea Load Buffer was added and samples were subjected to denaturing PAGE at 5 W for 20 minutes, then 15 W for 1 hour. A control without activated nucleotides was included for comparison.

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Figure S2. The Bridged Dinucleotide Intermediate Determines Complementary Product Sequences, Continued. A. Frequencies of complementary and mismatched nucleotide incorporations after 24 hours with 100 mM 2AIrN (compare with Figure 2A; n = unextended hairpins + total nucleotide incorporation events). **B.** Frequencies of complementary and mismatched nucleotide incorporations after 24 hours in the presence of 100 mM free 2AI, which inhibits accumulation of the bridged dinucleotide intermediate (compare with Figure 2A). **C.** Bridged dinucleotide (left axis scale) and activated mononucleotide (right axis scale) concentrations determined by NMR (see Material and methods for experimental details; ~10 mM starting concentration of each activated mononucleotide). Experimental error is high because the bridged dinucleotides accumulate to relatively low concentrations. Differences among many of the species are not significant, and the differences that are significant correlate with experimental error in the input concentrations of activated mononucleotides (*A and *U are at slightly higher concentrations than *C and *G). Furthermore, the differences do not correlate with inferred bridged dinucleotide frequencies. For example, C*C is measured as the lowest concentration bridged dinucleotide, but it is the most common inferred bridged dinucleotide (Figure 2D). We conclude that the concentrations of the various bridged dinucleotides are not responsible for the patterns of inferred bridged dinucleotides. (MgCl₂ had to be omitted from these experiments because magnesium-catalyzed hydrolysis reduces the bridged dinucleotide concentrations even further, making detection impossible.) **D.** "Inferred bridged dinucleotide analysis" of complementary products from a reaction with 50 mM OAtrN incubated for 24 hours. OAt-based primer extension cannot proceed through a bridged dinucleotide pathway; this analysis is a negative control for comparison with Figure 2D (P value = 0.0385 by Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed rank test). OAt-based primer extension is significantly less efficient than 2AI-based primer extension (see Figure S4D). Even with 50 mM reactants, very few products extend beyond +1 (note the low n-values at positions 3 and 4). **E.** Additional complementary product sequence features (data from the same experiment as in Figure 2). The distribution of terminal product bases is very similar to the overall product distribution (Figure 2B) because the majority of products of a given length are terminal (Figure S1C). The "first null in template" (see inset cartoon) distribution shows templating bases downstream of terminal product bases. There is a steady increase in rG in downstream positions because inferred bridged dinucleotides with a rC in the second position become progressively more frequent (Figure 2D).

Figure S4. Mismatch Sequence Features. A. Mismatch frequencies at position 1 (20 mM 2AIrN, 24 hours; T:P = Template:Product), sorted by correctly paired priming base. This data is from an experiment with a hairpin construct that harbors all combinations of priming bases (rather than just rC, as in the primary construct [Figure 1A]). The distributions are similar except for the prevalence of G:U when the priming base is G. This combination of a GU wobble base pair adjacent to a correct base pair has been measured as the most energetically stable (2,3). (The same work also found that the G:U mismatch is always more stable than the U:G mismatch for each possible adjacent correct base pair. This explains why the frequency of G:U tends to be higher than that of U:G [Figure 4A]). **B.** Mismatch frequencies at position 1 (20 mM 2AIrN, 24 hours; T:P = Template:Product), sorted by features of adjacent positions. i. Position 1 mismatches (for comparison; same data as in Figure 4A). ii. Mismatches that are terminal. The majority of mismatches are terminal, so the distribution is the same as in (i.). iii. Mismatches that are followed by a correct incorporation. rC as the product base is favored because most of the subsequent

correct incorporations are rC or rG (44% C, 38% G, 13% A, and 5.5% U), and adjacent combinations of rC and rG are energetically stable (Figure 3A). Furthermore, the inferred bridged dinucleotides that drive a correct incorporation after a mismatch skew to rC in their second positions (48% C, 19% G, 18% A, and 15% U; n = 355). G:U and U:G mismatches are probably favored because they are the most energentically similar to a correct base pair (2-4). iv.-v. Mismatches that are followed by a mismatch, and mismatches that follow a mismatch. These distributions both exhibit low frequenices of product rA and especially rU, suggesting that base stacking is important for tandem mismatch formation (5). **C.** Positiondependent mismatch frequencies with OAt-activated mononucleotides (20 mM OAtrN, 24 hours). Compare with Figure 4A. The prominant G:U "streak" found with 2AI activation is missing because without the bridged dinucleotide pathway there is no enrichment among extended products for downstream templating rG. **D.** Frequencies of complementary and mismatched nucleotide incorporations at increasing concentrations of OAtrN after 24 hours. The overall mismatch frequency is comparable across the OAtrN concentrations, equaling 50.0%, 44.2%, and 43.2% for 5, 20, and 50 mM OAtrN, respectively. The low yields of +2 products are probably a consequence of the very high frequencies of mismatches at $+1$ position, which extend much less efficiently. (n = unextended hairpins + total nucleotide incorporation events.) **E.** Changes with time in the ratio of correct to incorrect incorporations (left axis) correlate with the formation of bridged dinucleotide over several hours and its subsequent hydrolysis (right axis) (6,7). The more pronounced spike in the ratio at positions 2 and 3 results from the more reactive G- and C-harboring bridged dinucleotides (Figure 2D) taking advantage of the G- and C-enriched templates selected at positions 2 and 3 by bridged dinucleotides reacting at upstream positions (Figure 3C-D). The minor peaks at the 1 and 24 hour timepoints may result from the high reaction frequency of rC-rich bridged dinucleotides when the overall concentration of bridged dinucleotides is relatively low (Figure 3D), either because they are still accumulating (at 1 hour) or because they have largely hydrolyzed (24 hours). The effect is most prominent at positions 2 and 3 because those templating positions (for templates with products that have already extended to +1 or +2) are enriched for rG (Figure 2B-D). The bridged dinucleotide data is from reference (7) and shows the concentration of A*A measured by $31P$ NMR over 15 hours (10 mM 2AIrN, 200 mM HEPES, pH 8). The MgCl₂ concentration in that experiment was 30 mM instead of the 50 mM used in the reported sequencing experiments, so the bridged dinucleotide is expected to hydrolyze more slowly. This probably explains why the bridged dinucleotide concentration peak is slightly shifted to the right relative to the correct:incorrect incorporation ratio peaks.

Figure S5. Complementary Product Sequence Features with Prebiotically Plausible Bridge-

forming Activation Chemistry. A. Position-dependent base frequencies of complementary products for the same reaction as in Figure 5 (10 mM 2AIrN + MeNC-mediated bridge-forming activation, 24 hours). Compare to Figure 2B. **B.** Terminal product and first null in template distributions among complementary products for the same reaction as in Figure 5. Compare to Figure S2E.

Supplemental Table 1, Oligonucleotides

† IDT oligos ordered as RNase-free HPLC-purified ‡ RC = Reverse Complement, as competitor during PAGE analysis $^{\perp}$ See Material and Methods and (1) for details on in-house oligo synthesis and purification App = riboA 5′-adenylation $d\overline{T}$ (-NPOM) = NPOM-caged deoxyT (8) $N = rA$, rU, rC or rG -s- = thiol backbone linkage to inhibit exonucleases

Supplemental Table 2, Sequencing Experiments

Supplemental Table 3 Raw Counts of Each Sequence Triplet from the NERPE-Seq Analysis

Numerical Data Used to Generate each Heat-map Figure

Figure 2D

Figure 4A

Figure 5B

Figure 5C

Figure S2D

Figure S2E, Terminal Product Base

Figure S2E, First Null in the Template

Figure S4A

Figure S4B

Figure S4C

Figure S5A

Figure S5B, Terminal Product Base

Figure S5B, First Null in Template

SUPPLEMENTARY REFERENCES

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