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Full Title:

Genome wide identification of genes required for bacterial plant infection by Tn-seq

Short title: *Dickeya dadantii* virulence genes in chicory

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Abstract

Soft rot enterobacteria (*Dickeya* and *Pectobacterium*) are major pathogens that provoke

diseases on plants of agricultural importance such as potato and ornamentals. Long term

studies to identify virulence factors of these bacteria focused mostly on plant cell wall

degrading enzymes secreted by the type II Out secretion system and the regulation of their

expression. To identify new virulence factors we performed a Tn-seq genome-wide screen of

a transposon mutant library during chicory infection followed by high-throughput

sequencing. This allowed the detection of mutants with reduced but also increased fitness in

the plant. Virulence factors identified differed from those previously known since diffusible

ones (secreted enzymes, siderophores or metabolites) were not detected by this screen. In

addition to genes encoding proteins of unknown function that could be new virulence factors,

others could be assigned to known biological functions. The central role of the FlhDC

regulatory cascade in the control of virulence was highlighted with the identification of new

members of this pathway. Scarcity of the plant in certain amino acids and nucleic acids

required presence of the corresponding biosynthetic genes in the bacteria. Their products

could be targets for the development of antibacterial compounds. Among the genes required

for full development in chicory we also identified six genes involved in the glycosylation of

the flagellin FliC, a modification which in some other plant pathogenic bacteria contributes to

virulence.

Introduction

Dickeya are broad-host range phytopathogenic bacteria belonging to the Pectobacteriaceae family [1] that provoke the soft rot disease on many plant species. They are the cause of important losses on economically important crops such as potato, chicory and ornamentals. Identification and studies on the virulence factors of these bacteria have been performed mostly on the model strain *D. dadantii* 3937 and focused mainly on three domains/aspects, known to be important for disease development: plant cell wall degrading enzymes, the type III secretion system and iron metabolism [2]. Secretion of plant cell wall degrading enzymes has long ago been identified as the bacteria main virulence factor. Many studies focused on the identification and characterization of these secreted enzymes, mostly pectinases [3], of the regulators controlling their production (*kdgR*, *pecS*, *pecT*, *hns*, *gacA*) , [4-8] of the genes whose expression is coregulated with that of the secreted enzyme genes [9, 10], and of the mechanism of their secretion by the Out type II secretion system [11]. Although of a lesser importance for *Dickeya* virulence, the same type of approach has been used to identify Hrp type III secretion system regulators and effectors [12] [13] [14]. Competition for iron within the plant is strong. *D. dadantii* acquires this metal through production of two siderophores, chrysobactin and achromobactin [15] [16] [17]. More recently, omics approaches have also been used to identify genes induced during plant infection [18] [19] [20]. These studies now give a view on a complex network of factors required for *D. dadantii* virulence [2, 21]. However, these approaches may have missed some important factors not targeted by these analyses. More global screens need to be performed to identify these factors. Libraries of transposon-induced mutants were tested on plants to find mutants showing reduced virulence with *Pectobacterium carotovorum* and *atrosepticum*, two other soft rot enterobacteria [22, 23]. These studies identified auxotrophs, mutants defective in production or secretion of exoenzymes and in motility. Other mutants with a more

complex phenotype were not characterized at this time. Moreover, the number of tested

mutants was limited by the necessity to test individually each mutant on plant. This type of

work has never been performed on *Dickeya* strains. To have a more complete view of the

genes required for the virulence of *Dickeya*, we used a high-throughput sequencing of a

saturated transposon library (Tn-seq) to screen tens of thousands random insertion mutants of

D. dadantii in laboratory medium and during infection of chicory. Tn-seq has been

extensively used to uncover essential genes required for mouse colonization by human

pathogens *Vibrio cholerae* [24], *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* [25] and *Streptococcus*

pneumoniae [26]. Thus, Tn-seq is a very powerful method to identify genes required for

bacterial growth in their host. However, this technology has not yet been employed to unveil

genes required for the multiplication of a phytopathogen in a plant host. By applying this

technique to screen a *D. dadantii* mutant library in chicory, we identified metabolic pathways

and bacterial genes required for growth *in planta*. Among them, we found a cluster of genes

required for flagellin glycosylation, a modification known to be important for several plant

pathogenic bacteria virulence.

Results and discussion

Characterization of *D. dadantii* 3937 *Himar1* transposon library

Many tools are available to perform Tn-seq [27]. In order to perform a Tn-seq experiment

with *D. dadantii* 3937, we used a *Himar9* mariner transposon derivative carrying MmeI

restriction sites in the inverted repeats (IR) and a kanamycin resistance cassette between the

IRs [28]. We realized a biparental mating between *E. coli* and *D. dadantii* on M63 agar

medium without carbon source and amino acids. We obtained approximately 300 000

colonies that were pooled. Subsequent DNA sequencing (see below) showed the presence of

transposon insertions in amino acid biosynthesis pathways, demonstrating that mating on

M63 minimal medium does not prevent the obtention of auxotroph mutants. To identify

essential genes, mutants were grown in LB medium during several generations. Two DNA

libraries were prepared from two cultures and subjected to high-throughput sequencing. The

mariner transposon inserts into TA dinucleotides. The TPP software [29] was used to

determine the number of reads at each TA site for each biological replicate. *D. dadantii*

genome has 171 791 TA sites that can be targeted by the *Himar9* transposase. Pairs of

biological replicates were compared. 37 794 and 48 101 unique insertions in TAs were

detected in each sample, which corresponds to 22 and 28% density of insertion respectively

(Table 1). The average number of reads per TA is 88 and 75, respectively. The results were

reproducible with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 72% (Fig. S1) The location of the

unique insertions showed an even distribution around the chromosome (Fig. 1A). For each

gene, we calculated a $\log_2$FC corresponding to a ratio between the measured number of reads

and the expected number of reads. The density plot (Fig. 1B) indicates that essential and non-

essential genes are easily distinguishable, confirming the good quality of our Tn-seq libraries.

Then, gene essentiality of the Tn-seq input libraries was determined by using the TRANSIT

software [29]. We decided to use the Hidden Markov Model (HMM) which predicts

essentiality and non-essentiality for individual insertion sites because it has been shown to

give good prediction in datasets with density as low as 20% [29]. The HMM analysis led to

the identification of 665 genes essential for growth in LB (ES)*,* representing 14% of the genes

of *D. dadantii* 3937, a number in the range of those found for this type of analysis with

bacteria. 552 genes were categorized as Growth Defect genes (GD, i.e. mutations in these

genes lead to loss of fitness), 125 as growth advantage genes (GA, i.e mutations in these

genes lead to gain of fitness) and 3320 as non-essential genes (NE) (table S2).

TABLE 1 Tn-Seq analysis of *Dickeya dadantii* 3937

Mutant pool	Total no. of reads	No. of reads containing Tn end	No. of reads normalized[a]	No. of mapped reads to unique TA sites	No. of mapped reads to unique TA sites after LOESS correction	Density (%)[b]	Mean read count[c]
LB #1	23,152,186	22,647,343	18,748,028	13,166,770 (70 %)	12,904,900 (69 %)	28 %	75
LB #2	30,105,412	27,963,154	18,748,028	15,535,291 (83 %)	15,195,582 (81 %)	22 %	88
Chicory #1	18,925,029	18,748,028	18,748,028	17,535,146 (94 %)	14,906,888 (79 %)	24 %	87
Chicory #2	27,607,717	26,555,297	18,748,028	17,477,706 (93 %)	16,955,724 (90 %)	23 %	99

[a] The number of reads containing the sequence of a Tn end were normalized for each sample according to the number of reads for the sample Chicory #1

[b] *Dickeya dadantii* 3937 genome has 171,791 TA sites. The density is the % of TAs for which mapped reads has been assigned by the TPP software.

[c] the mean value of mapped reads per TA.

Genes necessary for chicory leaf maceration. We used chicory leaf infection as a model to identify *D. dadantii* genes required for growth in plant tissues. Biological duplicates were performed to insure the reproducibility of the results. Each chicory was inoculated with 10^7 bacteria from the mutant pool and after 2 days more than 10^{10} bacteria were collected from the rotten tissue. Sequencing transposon insertion sites in these bacteria followed by the TPP analysis indicated a density of unique insertion in TAs comparable to that of the input datasets (23-24%). Surprisingly, the results were more highly reproducible than in LB with a very high Pearson correlation coefficient of 98% (Fig. S1).

In order to identify genes of *D. dadantii* conferring loss or gain of fitness *in planta*, we performed the RESAMPLING analysis of the TRANSIT software. The RESAMPLING method is a variation of the classical permutation test in statistics that sums the reads at all TA sites for each gene in each condition. It then calculates the difference of the sum of read-counts between the input (LB) and output (chicory) datasets. The advantage of this statistical method is to attribute for each gene an adjusted p-value (q-value). Genes with a significant difference between total read-counts in LB and chicory achieve a q-value ≤ 0.05. The method also calculates a $\log_2$ fold-change ($\log_2$FC) for each gene based on the ratio of the sum of

read counts in the output datasets (chicory) versus the sum of read counts in the input (LB)

datasets [29]. Applied to our Tn-seq datasets and selecting only genes achieving a q-value ≤

0.05, we identified 122 genes out of 4666 required for fitness *in planta*, as shown with the

volcano plot of RESAMPLING results comparing replicates grown in LB versus *in planta*

(Fig. S2). From this 122 genes, we applied an additional cutoff by removing 20 genes with a

mean read count in LB <5 (less than 5 reads in average / TA). These genes were categorized

as ES or GD in LB. We also removed from the analysis 6 genes with a log_2FC comprised

between -2 and 2. By applying all these criteria, we retained only 96 genes for a further

analysis (Fig. 2). 92 of them were identified as GD genes in the chicory ($log_2FC \leq 2$), the 4

left as GA genes in the chicory ($log_2FC \geq 2$). Some of these genes, in bold in Fig 2, were

already known to play a role in *D. dadantii* virulence, confirming the validity of the Tn-seq

approach. Using the Kyoto Encyclopedia of Genes and Genomes (KEGG) [30], we

discovered that certain metabolic pathways and biological functions are very important for

growth in chicory (Table S3). We highlight some of them in the next sections of the article.

Analysis of the genes of *D. dadantii* required for plant colonization.

(i) Metabolism. Chicory appears as an environment in which amino acids, nucleic acids and

some vitamins (pyridoxal) are scarce. Of the 92 genes identified as GD genes *in planta*, 8 are

involved in purine and 7 in pyrimidine metabolisms (table S3). In the purine metabolism

pathway, the inosine monophosphate (IMP) biosynthesis pathway that produces IMP from L-

glutamine and 5-phosphoribosyl diphosphate is particularly important for *D. dadantii in*

planta since 5 out of the 10 genes of this pathway are significantly GD genes *in planta* (Fig.

3). IMP is the precursor of adenine and guanine. Next, IMP can be converted in xanthosine

5'-phosphate (XMP) by the IMP dehydrogenase GuaB. *guaB* gene is also a GD gene *in*

planta, with a strong log_2FC of -10.06 (Fig. 3). In the pyrimidine synthesis, the uridine

monophosphate (UMP) biosynthesis pathway that converts L-glutamine to UMP, a precursor

of uracyl, is very important *in planta* since *carAB*, *pyrB*, *pyrC* and *pyrE*, involved in this

enzymatic pathway, are all required for growth *in planta* (Fig. 3). This pyrimidine

biosynthesis pathway is specific to bacteria. It is noteworthy that in the human pathogen *S.*

pneumoniae, mutants of this pathway have a fitness defect in the nasopharynx of infected

mice [26]. Hence, it looks that the pyrimidine biosynthesis pathway is particularly important

for multiplication of some bacterial species in the host.

Mutants in genes involved in the synthesis of sulfur-containing amino acids (*cysIJQ, metB*),

lysine (*lysA*) and leucine (*leuABC*) are disadvantaged in chicory (Fig. 2 and Fig. 4A). These

amino acids are known to be present in low concentration in plant tissues. Other amino acids

seem to be present in quantity sufficient for growth of *D. dadantii* auxotrophs. Low level of

certain amino acids probably induces the stringent response in the bacteria. Reduced growth

in the plant of the *relA* mutant, unable to synthesize the alarmone ppGpp, supports this

hypothesis. Glucose is the main sugar present in plant tissue, present as a circulating sugar or

a cellulose degradation product. Mutants in the PTS glucose transport system genes *ptsI* and

ptsG have a reduced growth in bacteria (Fig. 2) showing its importance as a carbon source in

planta.

Degradation of cell wall pectin by a battery of extracellular enzymes is the main determinant

of *Dickeya* pathogenicity. Mutants unable to produce or to secrete these enzymes by the type

II Out secretion system were not disfavored in chicory since these mutants could use for their

growth the pectin degradation compounds produced by enzymes secreted by other bacteria.

The redundancy of oligogalacturonate specific porins (KdgM and KdgN) and inner

membrane transporters (TogT and TogMNABC) allow entry of these compounds into the

bacteria even in a mutant in one of these transport systems. However, *kduI* mutants, blocked

in the intracellular part of the pectin degradation pathway, have a limited growth *in planta*,

confirming the importance of the pectin degradation pathway in the disease progression.

(ii) Stress resistance. Plant is an hostile environment for the bacteria that has to cope with

antimicrobial peptides, ROS, toxic compounds and acidic pH [31]. We observed that the

pump AcrABTolC, that can efflux a wide range of compounds [32], is important for survival

in chicory (Fig. S3). Stress can lead to the accumulation of phospholipids in the outer

membrane. This accumulation makes the bacteria more sensitive to small toxic molecules

[33]. Such a phospholipid accumulation probably occurs when the bacteria infect chicory

since *mlaC* and *mlaF* mutants, which are unable to prevent phospholipid accumulation in the

outer membrane, have a reduced growth in plant. Production of exopolysaccharides (EPS)

was shown to protect the bacteria during the first steps of infection [9]. We observed that

rffG and *wzx* mutants unable to synthesize EPS have a growth defect in chicory. A set of

genes required to repair or degrade altered proteins (*clpA, degQ, trxB*) are also important for

survival *in planta*. No gene directly involved in detoxification of ROS was detected in our

analysis. However, ROS can create DNA damage. The two helicases involved in DNA repair,

UvrD and HelD, give growth advantage in plant. Osmoregulated periplasmic glycans (OPG)

are polymers of glucose found in the periplasm of α, β and γ proteobacteria. Their exact role

is unknown but their absence leads to avirulence in certain bacteria such as *D. dadantii* [34].

This absence induces a membrane stress that is sensed and transduced by the Rcs envelope

stress response system. This system controls the expression of many genes, including those

involved in motility, and those encoding plant cell wall degrading enzymes through the

RsmA-RsmB system [35-37]. Thus, mutants defective in OPG synthesis are expected to have

a reduced virulence. Indeed, in our experiment, mutants in the two genes involved in OPG

synthesis, *opgG* and *opgH* were non competitive in chicory (Fig. 2).

(iii) Iron uptake. *D. dadantii* produces two types of siderophores, achromobactin and

chrysobactin, that are required for the development of maceration symptoms in the iron

limited environment of plant hosts [38]. Once iron loaded, the siderophores are imported into

the bacteria. Import through the outer membrane requires a specific outer membrane channel

and the energy transducing complex formed by TonB ExbB and ExbD. While the absence of

synthesis of one of the siderophores can be compensated by the presence of siderophore

secreted by other bacteria in the growth medium, mutants of the TonB complex are totally

unable to acquire iron and thus are unable to grow in the plant. In accordance, *tonB* was

essential in chicory while the genes coding for siderophore synthesis or secretion were not.

Similarly a mutant devoid of the iron-loaded chrysobactin transport gene (*fct)* is non-

competitive.

(iv) Regulation. Mutants in several genes controlling virulence factor production have a

growth defect in the plant. The master regulator FlhDC acts as a regulator of both flagella and

virulence factor synthesis in many bacteria such as *Yersinia ruckeri*, *Edwardsiella tarda* and

Ralstonia solanacearum [39-41]. In *D. dadantii* FlhDC has recently been shown to control, in

addition to flagellar motility, type III secretion system and virulence factor synthesis through

several pathways [42]. We observed that *flhC* gives a growth advantage in chicory. In

addition, we uncovered that some genes regulating *flhDC* in other bacteria regulate *D.*

dadantii virulence, probably by controlling *flhDC* expression. *rsmC* is a poorly characterized

gene in *D. dadantii* but that has been studied in *Pectobacterium carotovorum*. It negatively

controls motility and extracellular enzyme production through modulating transcriptional

activity of FlhCD [43]. HdfR is a poorly characterized LysR family regulator that controls the

std fimbrial operon in *S. enterica* and FlhDC expression in *E. coli* [44]. *rsmC* mutants were

overrepresented in the chicory (Fig. 4B), indicating a gain of virulence for these mutants.

hdfR conferred fitness benefits during growth in chicory and could also act in *D. dadantii* as

activator of *flhDC* expression.

The GGDEF proteins are c-di-GMP synthase. Their gene are often located next to their

cognate EAL diguanylate phosphodiesterase gene. *ecpC (yhjH)* encodes an EAL protein that

was shown to activate virulence factor production in *D. dadantii* [45]. *gcpA*, which is located

next to *ecpC* encodes a GGDEF protein. However, a *gcpA* mutant could not be constructed

and analysed in this previous study. We observed that *gcpA* mutants (Dda_03858) were

overrepresented in chicory (Fig. 2). This increased virulence is a phenotype opposite to that

described for the *ecpC* mutants, indicating that overproduction of c-di-GMP could reduce *D.*

dadantii virulence.

Of the eighteen regulators of the LacI family present in *D. dadantii*, four of them were found

to be involved in plant infection [46]. One of those, LfcR, which has been found important

for infection of chicory, Saintpaulia and Arabidopsis, was identified as important for chicory

infection in our experiment. LfcR is a repressor of adjacent genes [46]. Surprisingly none of

these genes appeared to play a role for chicory infection suggesting that other targets of LfcR

probably remain to be discovered.

Finally, it is noteworthy to mention that the *ackA* and *pta* genes are GD *in planta*. These

genes constitute the reversible Pta-AckA pathway. The steady-state concentration of acetyl-

phosphate (acetyl-P), a signaling molecule in bacteria, depends upon the rate of its formation

catalyzed by Pta and of its degradation catalyzed by AckA [47]. The GD phenotype of *D.*

dadantii ackA and *pta* mutants during infection suggests that acetyl-P might play a crucial

signaling role in the adaptation of *D. dadantii* to the plant tissue.

(v) Motility. Motility is an essential virulence factor of *D. dadantii* required to move on the

surface of the leaf, enter the wounds and propagate into the plant tissue [48-50]. Accordingly,

all the genes required for flagella synthesis, the flagella motor and genes regulating their

synthesis (*flhC*, *flhD*, *fliA*) (see above) are necessary for fitness during chicory infection (Fig.

4C and 5A). All the genes responsible for the transduction of the chemotaxis signal (*cheA, B,*

R, W, X, Y and *Z*) also confer a benefit in planta (Fig. 2). No methyl-accepting chemoreceptor

gene mutant was found. Like other environmental bacteria, *D. dadantii* encodes many such

proteins (47). They probably present some redundancy in the recognized signal which

prevented their detection by our screen.

D. *dadantii* flagellin is modified by glycosylation

A group of six genes located between *fliA* and *fliC* retained our interest since insertions in

these genes led to a growth defect in chicory (Fig. 5A). Dda3937_03424 encodes an O-linked

N-acetylglucosamine transferase and Dda3937_03419 encode a protein with a nucleotide

diphospho sugar transferase predicted activity. The other ones could be involved in the

modification of sugars (predicted function of Dda3937_03423: nucleotide sugar

transaminase, Dda3937_03422: carbamoyl phosphate synthase, Dda3937_03421:

oxidoreductase; Dda3937_03420: methyltransferase). Their location let suppose that this

group of genes could be involved in flagellin glycosylation. Analysis by SDS-PAGE of FliC

produced by the wild type, and the A4277 and A3422 strains (Dda3937_03424 and

Dda3937_03419 mutants, respectively) showed that in the two latter strains the molecular

weight of the protein diminished (Fig. 5B). The molecular weight determined by mass

spectroscopy was 28911 Da for FliCA4277, 31034 Da for FliCA3422 and 32258 Da for the

WT FliC. Thus, in the wild type strain FliC is modified by the products of the genes

Dda_03424 to Dda_03419, probably by multiple glycosylation with a disaccharide. Absence

of modification did not modify *D. dadantii* motility (data not shown). The flagellin of the

plant pathogens *Pseudomonas syringae* pv *tabaci* and *Burkholderia cenocepacia* are also

glycosylated and absence of this modification lowered the ability of these bacteria to cause

disease on tobacco and arabidopsis, respectively [51, 52]. Accordingly, in *D. dadantii*, FliC

modification appears important for multiplication of the bacteria in plant.

Additional genes could be involved in virulence

Several genes have a $\log_2$FC >4 or <-4 but do not satisfy the statistical permutation test

adjusted by the false discovery rate method (q-value) (table S4). However, most of them

belong to the categories described above and could be required for growth in planta. Among

those with a $\log_2$FC< -4 can be found genes involved in amino acid and nucleic acid synthesis

(*cysH*, *ilvC*, *pyrF*, *pyrD*, *purC*, *thrC*, *metA*, *cysK*, *lysC*), flagella and motility *(flgJ, fliO, flgC,*

fliS, flgG, flgA, flgL, cheW, fliN, fliP, fliK, fliG, fliL), pectin and glucose metabolism (*kduD*,

pgi), EPS synthesis (*gmd*), flagella glycosylation (*vioA*) and regulation (*zur*, *ecpC* and the

general RNA chaperone *hfq*).

Among the genes with a $\log_2$FC > 4, three regulators can be noticed: *pecS*, *pecT* and

Dda3937_00840. *pecS* and *pecT* are known regulators of *D. dadantii* controlling the

expression of many factors involved in virulence (ref, ref). Thus, their mutation could confer

an increased fitness of the bacteria in chicory. *D. dadantii* possesses a functional *expI-expR*

quorum sensing system which does not seem to control plant virulence factor production

(Nasser). However, several LuxR family regulator genes which are not associated with a *luxI*

gene are present in the genome of the bacteria. Mutants of one of them (*Dda3937_00840*) are

overrepresented in the chicory. Its product is probably a repressor of genes conferring an

increased fitness i*n planta*.

Validation of the Tn-seq results.

To validate the Tn-seq results, we performed coinoculation experiments in chicory leaves

with the wild type strain and various mutants in genes conferring a growth advantage, a

growth defect or no fitness benefit in a 1/1 ratio. We calculated a competitivity index (CI) by

counting the number of each type of bacteria in the rotten tissue after 24 h. We found a

correlation between the competitivity index of mutants with the $\log_2$FC of the corresponding

genes with a Pearson coefficient of 0.50 (Fig. 6), indicating that Tn-seq is a reliable technique

to identify genes involved in plant colonization and virulence. Additional validations were

performed by inoculation of uncharacterized leucine and cytosine auxotroph mutants in

chicory leaves which confirmed that these mutants are unable to grow in plant and are thus

avirulent (Fig S4).

Conclusion

This Tn-seq experiment highlights new factors required for *D. dadantii* successful rotting of

chicory. Many genes known to be important for pathogenesis were not found in this screen

because their products are secreted and can be shared with other strains in the community.

This includes all the proteins secreted by the type II secretion system and small molecules

such as siderophores and butanediol. Other categories of genes were not found: for example,

no genes involved in response to acidic or oxidative stresses were identified. Chicory has

been described as an inadequate model to study the response of *D. dadantii* to oxidative stress

(touati, expert). Similarly, the type III *hrp* genes were not identified in our study. The Hrp

system is not necessary for *D. dadantii* virulence and in our experimental conditions (high

inoculum on isolated chicory leaves) the necrotrophic capacities of *D. dadantii* (production of

plant cell wall degrading enzymes) is probably sufficient to provoke the disease. Studies on

other host plants will allow to determine all the full virulence repertoire of the bacteria.

Our results give also some information on the metabolic status of the plant. The amount of

nucleic acids and of the amino acids cysteine, leucine, methionine, threonine and isoleucine is

too low in chicory to allow the multiplication of mutant bacteria. Some enzymatic steps

involved in their synthesis are specific to bacteria and fungi. Thus, they could be good target

for the development of specific inhibitors [53] to fight *D. dadantii.*

While Tn-seq has been used to study genes required for the infection of animals, there has

been no genome-wide study of factors necessary for a plant pathogen to develop and provoke

disease on a plant. Besides the genes of known function described in the Result section, this

study allowed the identification of several genes of unknown function required for chicory

rotting. Repetition of this experiment with other strains or on other plants will tell if these

genes encode strain or host specific virulence factors.

Methods

Bacterial strains and growth conditions. Bacterial strains, phages, plasmids and

oligonucleotides used in this study are described in Table S1. *D. dadantii* and *E. coli* cells

were grown at 30 and 37°C respectively in LB medium or M63 minimal medium

supplemented with a carbon source (2 g/L). When required antibiotics were added at the

following concentration: ampicillin, 100 µg/L, kanamycin and chloramphenicol, 25 µg/L.

Media were solidified with 1.5 g/L agar. Transduction with phage PhiEC2 was performed

according to [54]. The motility of each mutant was compared with that of the wild-type strain

on semisolid (0.4%) LB agar plates as previously described [55].

Construction of the transposon library

Five mL of an overnight culture of *D. dadantii* strain A350 and of *E. coli* MFDpir/pSamEC

were mixed and centrifuged 2 min at 6000 g. The bacteria were resuspended in 1 mL of M63

medium and spread onto a 0.45 μm cellulose acetate filter placed on a M63 medium agar

plate. After 8h, bacteria were resuspended in 1 mL M63 medium. An aliquot was diluted and

spread onto LB agar + kanamycin plates to estimate the efficiency of mutagenesis. The other

part was inoculated in 100 mL of LB medium + kanamycin and grown for 24 h at 30°C. To

confirm that the bacteria that grew were *D. dadantii* strains with a transposon but without

plasmid pSamEC, we checked that all the grown bacteria were kan^R, amp^S and

diaminopimelate (DAP) prototrophs (MFDpir is DAP$^-$). The bacteria were frozen in 40%

glycerol at -80°C and represent a library of about 300 000 mutants.

DNA preparation for high-throughput sequencing

An aliquot of the mutant library was grown overnight in LB medium + kanamycin. To

identify essential genes in LB, the culture was diluted 100-fold in LB and grown for 6 h. To

infect chicory, the overnight culture was centrifuged and resuspended at $OD_{600} = 1$ in M63

medium. Chicories cut in half were inoculated with 10 μL of this bacterial suspension and

incubated at 30°C with maximum moist. After 60 h, the rotten tissue was collected and

filtered through a cheesecloth. The bacteria were collected by centrifugation and washed

twice in M63 medium. DNA was extracted from 1.5 mL aliquots of bacterial suspension

adjusted to OD_{600}1.5 with the Promega Wizard Genomic DNA purification kit. Next steps of

the DNA preparation methods were adapted from [25]. All DNA gel-extraction were

performed onto a blue-light transilluminator of DNA stained with gel-green (Biotium) to

avoid DNA mutation and double-stranded breaks. 50 μg of DNA samples were digested with

50 U MmeI in a total volume of 1.2 mL for one hour at 37°C according to manufacturer's

instructions, then heat-inactivated for 20 minutes at 80°C, purified (QIAquick, PCR

purification kit Qiagen) and concentrated using a vacuum concentrator to a final volume of

25 μL. Digested DNA samples were run on a 1% agarose gel, the 1.0–1.5 kb band containing

the transposon and adjacent DNA was cut out and DNA was extracted from the gel according

to manufacturer's instructions (Qiaquik Gel Extraction Kit, Qiagen). This allowed recovery

of all the fragments containing genomic DNA adjacent to transposons (1201 bp of

transposable element with 32-34 bp of genomic DNA). A pair of single-stranded

complementary oligonucleotides containing an unique 5-nt barcode sequence (LIB_AdaptT

and LIB_AdaptB) was mixed and heated to 100°C, then slowly cooled down in a water bath

to obtain double-stranded adaptors with two-nucleotide overhangs. 1 µg DNA of each sample

was ligated to the barcoded adaptors (0.44 mM) with 2000 U T4 DNA ligase in a final

volume of 50 µL at 16°C overnight. Five identical PCR reactions from the ligation product

were performed to amplify the transposon adjacent DNA. One reaction contained 100 ng of

DNA, 1 unit of Q5 DNA polymerase (Biolabs), 1X Q5 Buffer, 0.2 mM dNTPs, 0.4 µM of the

forward primer (LIB_PCR_5, which anneals to the P7 Illumina sequence of the transposon)

and the reverse primer (LIB_PCR_3, which anneals to the P5 adaptor). Only 18 cycles were

performed to keep a proportional amplification of the DNA. Samples were concentrated

using a vacuum concentrator to a final volume of 25 µL. Amplified DNA was run on a 1.8%

agarose gel and the 125 bp band was cut-out and gel extracted (QIAquick, PCR purification

kit Qiagen). DNA was finally dialysed (MF-Millipore™ Membrane Filters) for 4 hours.

Quality control of the Tn-seq DNA libraries (size of the fragments and concentration) and

High-throughput sequencing on HiSeq 2500 (Illumina) was performed by MGX (CNRS

sequencing service, Montpellier). 6 DNA libraries were multiplexed on one flow-cell. After

demultiplexing, the total number of reads was comprised between 18 and 31 millions (Table

1).

Bioinformatics analysis:

Raw reads from the fastQ files were first filtered using cutadapt v1.11 [56] and only reads

containing the *mariner* inverted left repeat (ACAGGTTGGATGATAAGTCCCCGGTCTT)

were trimmed and considered *bona fide* transposon-disrupted genes. Trimmed reads were

then analyzed using a modified version of the TPP script available from the TRANSIT

software v2.0.2 [29]. The mapping step was modified to select only reads mapping uniquely

and without mismatch in the *D. dadantii* 3937 genome (Genbank CP002038.1). Then, the

counting step was modified to accurately count the reads mapping to each TA site in the

reference genome according to the Tn-seq protocol used in this study. Read counts per

insertion were normalized using the LOESS method as described in [57]. We next used the

TRANSIT software (version 2.0) to compare the Tn-seq datasets.

Strain construction. To construct the A4277 strain, gene Dda3937_03424 was

amplified with the oligonucleotides 19732+ and 19732-. The resulting fragment was

inserted into the pGEM-T plasmid (Promega). A *uidA*-kan^R cassette [58]was inserted

into the unique AgeI site of the fragment. The construct was recombined into the *D.*

dadantii chromosome according to [59]. Recombination was checked by PCR.

Protein techniques. Flagella were prepared from overnight LB grown cells.

Bacteria were pelleted, resuspended in 1/10 volume of water and passed 20 fold through

a needle on a syringe. Cells and cells debris were removed by centrifugation 5 min at 20

000 x g [55]. Proteins were analyzed by SDS-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-

PAGE).

Coinoculation experiments. To determine the competitivity index, the wild type strain

and the mutant to test, marked with an antibiotic resistance gene, were grown overnight in

M63 + glycerol medium. Bacteria were washed in M63 medium and the OD_{600} was adjusted

to 1.0. Bacteria were mixed to a 1:1 ratio and diluted 10-fold. 10 uL of the mixture were

inoculated into chicory leaves. The wound was covered with mineral oil and the leaves were

incubated at 30 °C at high humidity. After 24 h the rotten tissue was collected, homogenized,

diluted in M63 and spread onto LB and LB + antibiotic plates. After 48 h at 30°C, colonies

were counted. The competitivity index is the ratio (number of mutant bacteria/number of WT

bacteria) in the rotten tissue / (number of mutant bacteria/number of WT bacteria) in the

inoculum.

References

Legend of figures

Fig. 1. **Quality control of the Tn-seq *D. dadantii* 3937 libraries**.

(A) Frequency and distribution of transposon sequence reads across the entire *D. dadantii*

3937 genome. The localization of transposon insertions shows no bias throughout the genome

of *D. dadantii 3937*. B) Density plot of log_2FC (measured reads/expected reads per gene).

Fig 2. Genes identified by Tn-seq exhibiting a fitness change in chicory compared to LB.

Data were obtained with the TRANSIT software**.** From left to right : (a) classification of the

gene with the HMM method performed in the LB dataset. (b) Number of TA sites left after

removing 10% of 5' and 3' extremities. (c) Mean read number per gene in the LB or chicory

dataset. (d) Ratio of read number between chicory and LB expressed in log_2. (e) p-values

adjusted for multiple comparisons using the false-discovery rate method. Genes for which a

role in *D. dadantii* virulence has been described before are in bold.

Fig 3. Scheme of the purine and pyrimidine biosynthesis pathways in *D. dadantii* that produce XMP (purine metabolism) and UMP (pyrimidine metabolism) from L-glutamine.

In red are indicated the growth defect genes in chicory that pass the permutation test (q-value ≤ 0.05). The $\log_2$FC of read numbers between chicory and LB for each gene is indicated in bracket. Some genes do not pass the permutation test (in black) but have a strong negative $\log_2$FC. PRPP: 5-phosphoribosyl-1-pyrophosphate ; GAR: 5'-phosphoribosyl-1-glycinamide ; FGAM: 5'-phosphoribosyl-*N*-formylglycinamide ; AIR: 5'-phosphoribosyl-5-aminoimidazole ; CAIR: 5'-phosphoribosyl-5-aminoimidazole carboxylic acid ; SAICAR: 5'-phosphoribosyl-4-(*N*-succino-carboxamide)-5-aminoimidazole ; AICAR: 5-aminoimidazole-4-carboxamide ribonucleotide ; IMP: inosine monophosphate ; XMP: xanthine monophosphate ; UMP: uridine monophosphate.

Fig 4. Examples of essential and important genes revealed by Tn-seq.

Number of reads at each transposon location in the sample grown in LB or in chicory. Data are averaged from biological replicates and normalized as described in the method section. Three regions of the genome representative of Tn-seq results are shown, with the predicted genes represented at the bottom of each panel. Peaks represent read number at TA sites. Black arrows represent genes that pass the permutation test (q-value ≤ 0.05). (A) Essentiality of leucine biosynthetic genes in chicory. (B) Insertions in the 5' region of *rsmC* generate growth advantage for the bacteria in chicory. (C) Importance of genes involved in motility for growth in chicory.

Fig 5. Modification of FliC revealed by Tn-seq analysis and SDS-PAGE. (A) Importance of 6 genes located between *fliA* and *fliC* for growth in chicory. Log$_2$FC are indicated in bracket. Dda3937_03425 and Dda3937_03426 are duplicated transposase genes that have

been removed from the analysis. Black arrow: GD in chicory (q-value ≤ 0.05) ; white arrow:

genes that do not pass the permutation test (q-value > 0.05). (B) Analysis by SDS-PAGE of

FliC produced by the wild type (lane 1), the A3422 (lane 2) and A4277 (lane 3) strains.

Fig 6. Correlation between the competitivity index (IC) of several mutant strains with

the log₂FC of the corresponding genes. IC values were determined in chicory leaves as

described in Methods. The IC values for *dltB*, *anrB*, *phoS* and *phoH* are from [60]. Each

value is the mean of 5 experiments.

Fig S1. Biological reproducibility of the Tn-seq results.

Pairs of Tn-seq assay results are compared, with the total number of reads per gene plotted.

Analysis of DNA samples corresponding to two independent cultures of the mutant pool

grown (A) in LB medium (correlation coefficient R = 0.72) and (B) in chicory (correlation

coefficient R = 0.98). Values represent average numbers of reads per gene from the pairs of

biological replicates.

Fig S2. Volcano plot of resampling results comparing replicates grown in chicory versus

in LB. Significant hits have $q < 0.05$ or $-\log_{10} q > 1.3$. Growth defect (GD) or growth

advantage (GA) genes are indicated by a red frame.

Fig S3. *acrAB* are essential in chicory. Number of Tn-seq reads at each insertion site in the

acrA acrB region in samples grown in LB or in chicory. Data are averaged from biological

replicates and normalized as described in Methods. *dnaX* which encodes both the tau and

gamma subunits of DNA polymerase is represented by a grey arrow. *dnaX* is essential gene in

LB. *acrAB* represented by grey arrows are GD in chicory (q-value ≤ 0.05).

Fig S4. Pathogenicity tests on chicory with leucine (A5969) and cytosine (A5968)

mutants of *D. dadantii.*

Each leaf was inoculated with 10^6 bacteria. Length of rotten tissue was observed after 24h.

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Figure 1

Figure 2

Locus	Gene	Function	HMM State in LB[a]	No. of TAs[b]	Mean reads[c] LB	Chicory	log₂FC[d]	q-value[e]
Dda3937_00335	glpD	glycerol-3-phosphate dehydrogenase	GD	33	650	0	-12.56	0.00
Dda3937_03379	purL	phosphoribosylformyl-glycineamide synthetase	NE	73	378	0	-11.91	0.00
Dda3937_03564	**opgG**	**Glucans biosynthesis protein G precursor**	**GA**	**40**	**1976**	**1**	**-11.41**	**0.00**
Dda3937_00244	purH	phosphoribosylaminoimidazolecarboxamide formyltransferase/IMP cyclohydrolase	NE	37	145	0	-11.25	0.00
Dda3937_00432	hflK	FtsH protease regulator	GD	28	339	0	-11.12	0.03
Dda3937_02515	purM	phosphoribosylaminoimidazole synthetase	NE	21	344	0	-10.57	0.00
Dda3937_02627		4-hydroxythreonine-4-phosphate dehydrogenase	NE	26	129	0	-10.06	0.00
Dda3937_00004	guaB	IMP dehydrogenase	NE	33	151	0	-9.97	0.00
Dda3937_03563	**opgH**	**Glucans biosynthesis glucosyltransferase H**	**GA**	**62**	**1409**	**2**	**-9.79**	**0.00**
Dda3937_01284	pyrB	aspartate carbamoyltransferase	NE	17	159	0	-9.68	0.00
Dda3937_03924	**rffG**	**dTDP-glucose 4,6-dehydratase**	**NE**	**23**	**317**	**1**	**-9.38**	**0.02**
Dda3937_01389	carB	carbamoyl-phosphate synthase large subunit	NE	48	249	0	-9.23	0.00
Dda3937_03299	**acrA**	**MexE family multidrug efflux RND transporter periplasmic adaptor subunit**	**NE**	**34**	**196**	**0**	**-9.03**	**0.00**
Dda3937_03300	**acrB**	**multidrug efflux system protein**	**NE**	**89**	**422**	**1**	**-8.90**	**0.00**
Dda3937_03258	pyrE	orotate phosphoribosyltransferase	NE	14	175	0	-8.81	0.00
Dda3937_02336	nlpI	lipoprotein	GD	33	27	0	-8.69	0.00
Dda3937_02506	nlpB (bamC)	outer membrane protein assembly factor BamC	NE	20	47	0	-8.69	0.00
Dda3937_04018	pta	phosphate acetyltransferase	GD	36	579	2	-8.59	0.02
Dda3937_03554	pyrC	dihydro-orotase	NE	25	343	1	-8.44	0.00
Dda3937_04573	lpxM	acyl (myristate) transferase	NE	33	63	0	-8.31	0.00
Dda3937_01116	glnG	Nitrogen regulation protein NR(I), Two-component system	NE	26	39	0	-8.22	0.00
Dda3937_02099	purF	amidophosphoribosyltransferase	NE	32	107	0	-8.19	0.00
Dda3937_04019	ackA	acetate kinase A and propionate kinase 2	NE	29	45	0	-8.16	0.00
Dda3937_02189	yejM	Membrane-anchored periplasmic protein, alkaline phosphatase superfamily	GA	34	4160	15	-8.08	0.00
Dda3937_01390	carA	carbamoyl-phosphate synthase small subunit	NE	21	69	0	-8.05	0.00
Dda3937_01426	ptsI	Phosphoenolpyruvate-protein phosphotransferase of PTS system	NE	33	45	0	-7.85	0.00
Dda3937_00161	cysQ	3'(2'),5'-bisphosphate nucleotidase	NE	16	44	0	-7.81	0.02
Dda3937_00210	cysI	sulfite reductase beta subunit	NE	40	252	1	-7.65	0.00
Dda3937_04075	lysR	LysR family transcriptional regulator	NE	13	2385	13	-7.51	0.00
Dda3937_02526		conserved protein	NE	18	50	0	-7.50	0.00
Dda3937_03888	metB	Cystathionine gamma-synthase	NE	21	118	1	-7.34	0.01
Dda3937_00195	relA	(p)ppGpp synthetase I/GTP pyrophosphokinase	NE	55	256	2	-7.12	0.00
Dda3937_02532	**lfcR**	**Fructose repressor FruR, LacI family**	**NE**	**15**	**399**	**3**	**-7.04**	**0.00**
Dda3937_02226	fliF	Flagellar M-ring protein fliF	NE	46	476	4	-7.02	0.00
Dda3937_02206	flgE	Flagellar hook protein flgE	NE	50	597	5	-7.00	0.00
Dda3937_04507	gnd	phosphogluconate dehydrogenase (NADP(+)-dependent, decarboxylating)	GD	36	7	0	-6.91	0.00
Dda3937_00697	degQ	Protease	NE	28	80	1	-6.87	0.01
Dda3937_03631	trxB	thioredoxin-disulfide reductase	GD	25	16	0	-6.85	0.03
Dda3937_00361	yrfF (igaA)	intracellular growth attenuator protein	GD	38	22	0	-6.78	0.03
Dda3937_00588	cysB	Transcriptional dual regulator, O-acetyl-L-serine-binding protein	NE	29	90	1	-6.75	0.01
Dda3937_03783	prc	carboxy-terminal protease for penicillin-binding protein 3	NE	46	243	2	-6.71	0.00
Dda3937_00433	hflX	predicted GTPase	GD	27	16	0	-6.69	0.04
Dda3937_03427	fliC	flagellar filament structural protein (flagellin)	NE	33	96	1	-6.61	0.03
Dda3937_02223	fliI	Flagellum-specific ATP synthase fliI	NE	42	236	3	-6.56	0.00
Dda3937_04419	hdfR	DNA-binding transcriptional regulator	NE	29	117	1	-6.34	0.01
Dda3937_00209	cysJ	sulfite reductase alpha subunit	NE	41	180	2	-6.25	0.00
Dda3937_02209	flgH	Flagellar L-ring protein flgH	NE	23	586	8	-6.22	0.01
Dda3937_02246	fabF	beta-ketoacyl-[acyl-carrier-protein] synthase II	GD	41	10	0	-6.15	0.01
Dda3937_00301	uvrD	ATP-dependent DNA helicase UvrD/PcrA	NE	42	29	0	-6.11	0.00
Dda3937_02212	flgK	Flagellar hook-associated protein flgK	NE	63	116	2	-6.07	0.00
Dda3937_04046	purU	Formyltetrahydrofolate deformylase	NE	28	51	1	-5.84	0.00
Dda3937_03965	flhA	predicted flagellar export pore protein	NE	49	106	2	-5.80	0.00
Dda3937_02205	flgD	Flagellar basal-body rod modification protein flgD	NE	22	227	4	-5.73	0.01
Dda3937_01352	leuC	3-isopropylmalate dehydratase large subunit	NE	21	139	3	-5.73	0.01
Dda3937_02784	flhC	Flagellar transcriptional activator flhC	NE	20	477	9	-5.66	0.01
Dda3937_02782	motB	Flagellar motor rotation protein motB	NE	40	109	2	-5.55	0.01
Dda3937_02210	flgI	Flagellar P-ring protein flgI	NE	26	163	4	-5.49	0.00
Dda3937_02222	fliJ	Flagellar protein fliJ	NE	14	182	4	-5.44	0.03
Dda3937_02219	fliM	Flagellar motor switch protein fliM	NE	27	143	3	-5.40	0.01
Dda3937_02774	flhB	Flagellar biosynthesis protein flhB	NE	32	186	5	-5.31	0.00
Dda3937_02777	cheB	Chemotaxis response regulator protein-glutamate methylesterase CheB	NE	31	282	8	-5.14	0.00
Dda3937_02783	motA	Flagellar motor rotation protein motA	NE	24	39	1	-5.06	0.00
Dda3937_00565	**tonB**	**TonB protein**	**NE**	**14**	**106**	**3**	**-5.00**	**0.05**
Dda3937_00427	fbp	fructose-bisphosphatase	GA	33	805	27	-4.92	0.01
Dda3937_02781	cheA	Chemotaxis protein CheA	NE	50	151	5	-4.89	0.00
Dda3937_03422		Carbamoyl-phosphate synthase small subunit	NE	43	379	13	-4.85	0.00
Dda3937_02577	lysA	diaminopimelate decarboxylase	NE	23	332	0	-4.79	0.00
Dda3937_02207	flgF	Flagellar basal-body rod protein flgF	NE	21	35	1	-4.76	0.00
Dda3937_02230	fliD	Flagellar hook-associated protein fliD	NE	47	93	3	-4.75	0.00
Dda3937_04301	leuA	2-isopropylmalate synthase	NE	36	35	1	-4.69	0.02
Dda3937_02778	cheR	Chemotaxis protein methyltransferase CheR	NE	30	462	18	-4.67	0.00
Dda3937_02228	fliT	Flagellar biosynthesis protein fliT	GD	16	8	0	-4.63	0.05
Dda3937_04404	leuB	3-isopropylmalate dehydrogenase	NE	16	285	12	-4.63	0.05
Dda3937_02214	fliR	Flagellar biosynthesis protein fliR	NE	33	268	11	-4.56	0.00
Dda3937_03727	**kduI**	**4-deoxy-L-threo-5-hexosulose-uronate ketol-isomerase**	**NE**	**26**	**70**	**3**	**-4.54**	**0.03**
Dda3937_03267		O-antigen, teichoic acid lipoteichoic acids export membrane protein	ES	107	89	4	-4.33	0.00
Dda3937_00415	epd	D-erythrose 4-phosphate dehydrogenase	NE	26	316	16	-4.27	0.00
Dda3937_02337	pnp	polynucleotide phosphorylase/polyadenylase	GD	50	5	0	-3.97	0.00
Dda3937_01683	purK	N5-carboxyaminoimidazole ribonucleotide synthase	NE	16	90	0	-3.49	0.01
Dda3937_00689	yrbF (mlaF)	predicted toluene transporter subunit	NE	9	1254	114	-3.47	0.01
Dda3937_02829	helD	DNA helicase IV	NE	26	99	9	-3.46	0.01
Dda3937_02252	ptsG	PTS system glucose-specific IICB component	NE	37	81	8	-3.38	0.03
Dda3937_00726	**tolC**	**transport channel**	**NE**	**34**	**184**	**0**	**-3.35**	**0.00**
Dda3937_02363	clpA	ATP-dependent Clp protease ATP-binding subunit	NE	44	64	8	-3.02	0.03
Dda3937_02470	corC	magnesium and cobalt ions transport	NE	13	159	21	-2.90	0.02
Dda3937_00692	yrbC (mlaC)	predicted ABC-type organic solvent transporter	GA	23	740	106	-2.81	0.01
Dda3937_02045	envC	murein hydrolase activator	NE	17	71	12	-2.59	0.00
Dda3937_01807	nuoM	NADH-quinone oxidoreductase subunit M	NE	29	57	10	-2.47	0.03
Dda3937_03668	sufB	Fe-S cluster assembly protein	NE	32	116	21	-2.44	0.00
Dda3937_02080	trkG	Potassium uptake protein	NE	36	65	13	-2.33	0.05
Dda3937_03042	**fct**	**ferrichrysobactin outer membrane receptor**	**NE**	**80**	**244**	**51**	**-2.25**	**0.01**
Dda3937_01287	argI	Ornithine carbamoyltransferase	NE	24	279	59	-2.23	0.03
Dda3937_02456	rsmC	global regulatory protein RsmC	NE	10	116	221,705	10.90	0.028
Dda3937_03858	gcpA	hypothetical protein	GA	55	3728	140,136	5.23	0.00
Dda3937_03971	mltD	outer membrane-bound lytic murein transglycosylase D	NE	46	276	10,885	5.30	0.00
Dda3937_00363	mrcA	penicillin-binding protein 1A (PBP1A)	NE	53	85	468	2.47	0.021

Figure 3

PURINE METABOLISM

PYRIMIDINE METABOLISM

Figure 4

A

B

C

Figure 5

A

B

Figure 6