**Ventricular, atrial and outflow tract heart progenitors arise from spatially and**

**molecularly distinct regions of the primitive streak.**

Kenzo Ivanovitch[1,*], Pablo Soro-Barrio[1], Probir Chakravarty[1], Rebecca A Jones[1], S. Neda

Mousavy Gharavy[1], Despina Stamataki[1], Julien Delile[1], James C Smith[1] and James Briscoe[1]

[1]The Francis Crick Institute, 1 Midland Road, London NW1 1AT, UK

[*] Corresponding author

E-mail: kenzo.ivanovitch@crick.ac.uk (K.I.)

## Abstract

The heart develops from two sources of mesoderm progenitors, the first and second heart

field (FHF and SHF). Using a single cell transcriptomic assay in combination with genetic

lineage tracing, we find the FHF and SHF are subdivided into distinct pools of progenitors in

gastrulating mouse embryos at earlier stages than previously thought. Each subpopulation has

a distinct origin in the primitive streak. The first progenitors to leave the primitive streak

contribute to the left ventricle, shortly after right ventricle progenitor emigrate, followed by

the outflow tract and atrial progenitors. Although cells allocated to the outflow tract and

atrium leave the primitive streak at a similar stage, they arise from different regions. Outflow

tract originate from distal locations in the primitive streak while atrial progenitors are

positioned more proximally. Moreover, single cell RNA sequencing demonstrates that the

primitive streak cells contributing to the ventricles have a distinct molecular signature from

those forming the outflow tract and atrium. We conclude that cardiac progenitors are pre-

patterned within the primitive streak and this prefigures their allocation to distinct anatomical

structures of the heart. Together, our data provide a new molecular and spatial map of

mammalian cardiac progenitors that will support future studies of heart development,

function and disease.

## Introduction

The cells that comprise different components of an organ can arise from distinct origins and

acquire their fate at different time during ontogeny. In the case of the heart, two mesodermal

derived sources of cardiac progenitors, named the first heart field (FHF) and the second heart

field (SHF), have been identified (reviewed in Meilhac and Buckingham, 2018). The FHF

forms mainly the left ventricle and constitutes the initial cardiac crescent. By contrast, the

cardiac progenitors of the SHF contribute to the right ventricle, outflow tract and atria in

addition to branchiomeric muscles.

Retrospective clonal analysis has suggested that the FHF and SHF progenitors segregate

either before or at the onset of gastrulation (Meilhac and Buckingham, 2018; Meilhac et al.,

2004). The analysis showed large clones spanning multiple compartments. Clones belonging

to the first lineage labelled the left ventricle and other compartments with the exception of the

outflow tract while the second lineage contributed to the outflow tract, atria and right

ventricle but never to the left ventricle. Subclones within the first and second lineages were

also observed. These were smaller in size and suggested that the individualisation of the

different regions of the heart happens at later stages (Meilhac et al., 2004).

Consistent with the notion that the cardiac lineages are established during gastrulation, clonal

analysis based on tracing the progeny of *Mesp1*-expressing cells, which is expressed in the

primitive streak and nascent mesoderm

(https://marionilab.cruk.cam.ac.uk/MouseGastrulation2018/; Arnold and Robertson, 2009;

Costello et al., 2011; Pijuan-Sala et al., 2019), indicated that independent sets of *Mesp1*

expressing cells contribute to FHF and SHF derivatives (Devine et al., 2014; Lescroart et al.,

2014). These can be distinguished by their time of appearance during gastrulation, with

embryonic day (E)6.5 *Mesp1+* cells contributing to the FHF while SHF derivatives

preferentially derive from E7.5 *Mesp1+* cells (Lescroart et al., 2014). The *Mesp1* clonal

analysis resulted in clones of small sizes restricted to compartments derived from the FHF or

SHF (Devine et al., 2014; Lescroart et al., 2014). Thus, these observations are consistent with

the existence of two groups of progenitors that subsequently became further restricted to

specific cardiac fates in the mesoderm.

In addition to a segregation between the FHF and SHF, genetic tracing experiments

uncovered a distinction between the atria and ventricular progenitors. Genetic lineage tracing

with the transcription factor *Foxa2* identifies a population of cardiac progenitors in the

anterior primitive streak at E6.5 that contribute to both left and right ventricles but not to the

atria (Bardot et al., 2017). This is in line with fate mapping studies in the chick showing that

the atrial and ventricular cells arise at different anterior-posterior positions in the primitive

streak (Garcia-Martinez and Schoenwolf, 1993; Yutzey and Bader, 1995). Although these

analyses did not resolve the clonal relationship between the cells, these findings are

compatible with a model in which sublineages within the FHF and SHF lineages already exist

in the primitive streak, such that the atrial lineage is distinct from the right ventricle lineage

within SHF progenitors. This would imply that two distinct cardiac progenitors exist solely at

the epiblast stage prior to gastrulation and that more subpopulations of cardiac progenitors

than first and second progenitors can be molecularly defined in the primitive streak. The most

rigorous way to decide if this is the case is to define the location of all the cardiac progenitors

in the streak and the precise embryonic stages at which they ingress. This would allow the

comparison of distinct subpopulations of cardiac precursors and reveal putative molecular

differences of cardiac progenitors in the primitive streak. Single cell transcriptomic assays

show *Mesp1+* cardiac progenitors diversify into molecularly distinct FHF and SHF

populations at late embryonic day (E7.25) stage once cells have migrated and reached their

final location in the embryo (Lescroart et al., 2018). The signalling environment cells

encounter during and after their migration might play a role in the patterning of the cardiac

progenitors into FHF and SHF domains (Andersen et al., 2018; Evan et al 2020; Guzzetta et

al., 2020; Hochgreb et al., 2003; Xavier-Neto et al., 1999). Whether initial molecular

differences between different sets of cardiac progenitors already exist in the primitive streak

remains unclear.

In this study, we use genetic tracing of *T* and *Foxa2* expressing cells and find there is an

orderly allocation of primitive streak cells first into the left ventricle at mid-streak stage, then

the right ventricle progenitors at late streak stage, and finally at the no bud (OB)-early bud

(EB) stage into outflow tract and atrial progenitors. Consistent with this, we identified

independent sets of *Foxa2+* cells that are allocated to the left ventricle and right ventricle.

Allocation of cells to the outflow tract and atria happens at similar gastrulation stages but

from distinct locations within the primitive streak. The outflow tract originates from distal

regions of the primitive streak, while proximal regions contribute to the atria. Moreover, the

outflow tract forms from primitive streak cells that initially expressed *Foxa2*, but

subsequently turned off *Foxa2* expression as they switched their contribution from right

ventricle to the outflow tract. Crucially, by combining single cell transcriptomic assays with a

lineage tracer to label cells contributing only to the poles of the heart, we uncover

molecularly distinct subpopulations of cells that correspond to progenitors for right ventricle,

outflow tract and atria in the SHF. Further single cell transcriptomic experiments at earlier

stages established that the primitive streak cells contributing to the ventricles and outflow

tract/atria are also molecularly distinct. Thus, rather than a simple subdivision of cardiac

progenitors into FHF and SHF, our analysis reveals a more elaborate map for the source of

cells that form the heart with distinct spatial and temporal origins for outflow tract and atrial

progenitors as well as left and right ventricular progenitors. We conclude that the cardiac

progenitors are pre-patterned within the primitive streak and this prefigures their contribution

to distinct anatomical structures of the heart both in time and space. This has implications for

the classification of congenital heart diseases based on the origin of malformation in a

specific mesodermal lineage as well as for the design of *in vitro* methods to generate specific

cardiac cells from pluripotent stem cells.

**Results**

**Genetic tracing of primitive streak cells using a tamoxifen inducible T reporter.**

During gastrulation, epiblast cells ingress through the primitive streak to form the mesoderm.

This process occurs over an extended period of time, from embryonic day (E)6 to E8 in the

mouse. The T-box transcription factor *T* is expressed in the primitive streak and is

downregulated shortly after ingression during migration within the nascent mesoderm. To

assess the developmental time points at which the *T*-expressing primitive streak cells are

destined to contribute to the heart, we performed genetic tracing using an inducible $T^{nGFP\text{-}CreERT2/+}$

mouse, expressing *CreERT2* downstream of the endogenous *T* (Imuta et al., 2013), in

combination with the *R26R^tdtomato/+* reporter mice (*T^nEGP-CreERT2/+; R26R^tdtomato/+*, Fig 1A)

(Madisen et al., 2010).

We first assessed how long the activity of the tamoxifen persists after it is administered by

oral gavage in a pregnant mouse. We administered tamoxifen (0.08mg/bw) at E5, ~24 hours

prior to the initial onset of *T*-expression in the primitive streak (Rivera-Perez and Magnuson,

2005), and we detected recombined tdtomato-expressing cells within mesodermal derivatives

including the heart tube, head mesenchyme and endothelium, albeit at a low density, in E8.5

embryos, (S1A Fig.). Thus, the activity of the tamoxifen persists for at least around 24 hours

at this dose.

**Primitive streak cells contribute first to the ventricles and subsequently to the outflow**

**tract and atria myocardium.**

We next administered single doses of tamoxifen *T^nEGP-CreERT2/+; R26R^tdtomato/+* between E6.5 and

E7.5. We reasoned this would result in pulse-labelling of most populations of *T*-expressing

cells from the time of administration for at least 24 hours (Fig 1B). The fate of their progeny

could then be followed and the developmental stages during which primitive streak cells

contribute to the left and right ventricle, atria and outflow tract could be deduced. To gain

better control over the embryonic stages, mice were synchronized in estrus and mated over

short periods of 2 hours for all the experiments. To quantify the contribution of the *T*-

expressing cells to the heart, we measured surface area occupied by the tdtomato-positive

cells in the heart myocardium at E12.5 and within each cardiac chamber.

An early administration of tamoxifen at E6+21h or E7 resulted in the population of left and

right ventricles, outflow tract and Atria with tdtomato-expressing cardiomyocytes (in 17 out of

17 hearts analysed, Fig 1Ci-iv, D and E). The contribution of the tdtomato-positive cells to

the left ventricle was lower compared to the right ventricle (fig 1e, for E6+21h, left ventricle:

22.2% ±11.1; right ventricle: 40.2% ± 12.2 and for E7, left ventricle: 24.8% ±16, and right

ventricle: 33.4% ± 9.9, mean ± sd). Contribution to the outflow tract and atria was the

highest, covering almost their entirety in all cases (Fig 1Ci-iv and Fig 1E, 89.1%± 8.4 and %

94.1± 6.9 on average, for outflow tract and atria respectively). Variability in embryonic

stages within litters at the time of tamoxifen administration can explain the variability in the

results (see below). For example, in 4/17 hearts, tdtomato-expressing cardiomyocytes

populated less than 10% of the total left ventricle surface area. In those hearts, the proportion

of tdtomato-positive cardiomyocytes found in the right ventricle was high (Fig 1Cii, iv and

D). We never observed the reverse, however, where a lower proportion of tdtomato positive

cardiomyocytes was found in the right ventricle compared to the left ventricle (Fig 1D).

These results suggest that subsets of the embryos at E6+21h and E7 were at more advanced

embryonic stages with most left ventricle precursors having already left the primitive streak

with right ventricular precursors remaining in the primitive streak.

We next asked if the administration of tamoxifen at a later time point would result in the

absence of tdtomato-expressing cardiomyocytes in the left ventricle and right ventricle. We

administered tamoxifen at E7+7h. Tdtomato-expressing cardiomyocytes were detected in the

left ventricle in only 2/13 hearts (Fig 1D). Tdtomato-positive cardiomyocytes were detected

more frequently in the right ventricle, in 7/13 hearts (Fig 1D). However, these cells covered

less than 5% of the total right ventricle surface area (yellow arrow in Fig 1Cv and 1E), except

for 2 hearts in which tdtomato-expressing cardiomyocytes were also detected in the left

ventricle. These results indicate that left ventricle and most right ventricle precursors have

left the primitive streak by E7+7h. In these embryos, tdtomato-expressing cardiomyocytes

were evident in the outflow tract and atria in 13/13 hearts, covering in some cases between

72.8% and 94% of the total surface area of the outflow tract and atria, including hearts

without tdtomato-expressing cardiomyocytes in the left ventricle and right ventricle. These

results suggest that the majority of the outflow tract and atria precursors are still located in

the primitive streak at stages after the ventricular precursors have already left the primitive

streak.

Finally, when tamoxifen was administered at a later stage (E7+11h), the contribution of the

tdtomato-expressing cardiomyocytes to the outflow tract and atria was lower (Fig 1Cvii-viii

and E, 12.6% ± 17.4 and 19.7% ± 20.8). In all cases, these embryos lacked tdtomato-

expressing cells in the left and right ventricles. In 5/14 hearts, tdtomato-expressing cells were

absent in the outflow tract but present in the atria albeit in low numbers. The reverse, *i.e.*

tdtomato expressing cells found only in the outflow tract but not in the atria, was never

observed, suggesting that the atrial precursors are the last cardiomyocyte precursors to leave

the primitive streak.

To analyse variability in embryonic stages at the time of tamoxifen administration, we

dissected litters of $T^{nEGP\text{-}CreERT2/+}; R26R^{tdtomato/+}$ embryos at E6+21h and E7+7h and staged

embryos according to morphological landmarks using the dissecting brightfield microscope

(Downs et al., 1993). As expected, we found a range of stages for each time point. Litters

dissected at E6+21h included early (17%), mid (56%) and late-streak stages (27%). Litters

dissected at E7+7h included late streak (10%), no bud (OB, 37%), early bud (EB, 32%) and

late bud stages (LB, 21%) (Fig 1F and H). PCR analysis showed that the $R26R^{tdtomato/+}$ locus

was recombined as early as two hours following oral gavage of tamoxifen (0.08mg/bw) (Fig

1G).

Together, these results indicate that cardiac progenitors ingress in an orderly sequence

through the primitive streak. We propose left ventricle progenitors leave the primitive streak

first, at the mid-streak stage, followed by right ventricle progenitors at the late-streak stage.

Outflow tract and atrial precursors leave the primitive streak at subsequent stages starting

around the OB stage.

**Independent *Foxa2*-expressing cells contribute to either the left or right ventricular**

**myocardium at similar stages to the *T*-expressing primitive streak cells.**

Genetic tracing experiments at around E6-E6.5 (Frank et al., 2007; Bardot et al., 2017)

showed that *Foxa2* positive cells contribute to cardiomyocytes in the ventricles but not in the

atria. These results prompted us to first test whether *Foxa2* positive cells contribute to

ventricular myocardium at similar stages to the *T* expressing cells *i.e.* at the mid-late streak

stage. We performed genetic tracing of the *Foxa2* positive cells using a $Foxa2^{nEGP-CreERT2/+}$ line

expressing *CreERT2* downstream of the endogenous *Foxa2* in combination with the

$R26R^{tdtomato/+}$ reporter line (Imuta et al., 2013) (Fig 2A-B). Mice were synchronized in estrus

and timed matings performed for periods of 2 hours to better control embryonic stages.

Administration of tamoxifen at E6+21h resulted in large patches of tdtomato-expressing

cardiomyocytes populating the left and right ventricle and outflow tract in 8/15 hearts (Fig

2Ciii). In 3/14 hearts, smaller tdtomato-expressing domains formed either in the left or right

ventricular myocardium. This indicates that independent groups of *Foxa2* expressing

progenitors exist in the primitive streak that contribute to the left and right myocardium (Fig

2Ci-ii and D). We conclude that *Foxa2* positive primitive streak cells contribute to the

ventricular myocardium at similar stages to the *T*-expressing cells. Analysis of the embryos at

later stages, when the cardiac crescent is differentiating into cardiomyocytes, confirmed that

cells arising from *Foxa2* positive cells contribute to the myocardium in addition to other

lineages including the epicardium and pericardium but not the endocardium located below

the presumptive myocardial epithelium (S2A-B Fig).

This result prompted us to analyse the location of *Foxa2* and *T* expressing cells at the mid

and late streak stages. Whole mount immunostaining for T and Foxa2 revealed coexpression

in individual primitive streak cells at the mid-streak position of mid and late streak stages

(Fig 3Bii and Dii). This corresponds to where cardiomyocytes precursors have previously

been identified by fate mapping (Kinder et al., 1999). Double positive cells are also detected

at the distal tip of the embryo where the node forms (Fig 3Biii and Diii) and in the definitive

endoderm (Fig 3Bi and Di). These results indicate that *T* and *Foxa2* are not always expressed

in mutually exclusive populations of cells as previously reported (Burtscher and Lickert,

2009). Instead, it suggests *Foxa2* and *T* are co-expressed in a population of anterior primitive

streak cells that contribute to the ventricular myocardium and never to the atria. Finally,

Foxa2 is undetectable in the primitive streak from the OB stage onwards, the stages during

which primitive streak cells switched their contribution from the ventricles to the outflow

tract and atria.

**Distal primitive streak cells downregulate Foxa2 expression as they switch their**

**contribution from the ventricles towards the outflow tract myocardium.**

Following tamoxifen administration in $Foxa2^{nEGP\text{-}CreERT2/+}$ $R26R^{tdtomato/+}$ embryos at E6+21h,

we found tdtomato-expressing cells located in the outflow tract myocardium (Fig 2Ciii and D

and S2A). When we administered tamoxifen at E7+7h, no tdtomato-positive cardiomyocytes

could be detected in either the left ventricle, right ventricle or outflow tract (in 11 out of 13

hearts, Fig 2Civ). This could indicate that a subset of the *Foxa2* positive primitive streak

cells, at E6+21h, are outflow tract progenitors and not solely ventricular progenitors.

Alternatively, primitive streak cells contributing to the outflow tract may arise from cells that

had previously expressed *Foxa2* but no longer do so as the primitive streak switches its

contribution from right ventricular to outflow tract myocardium by E7+7h (Fig 4B).

Consistent with this latter hypothesis, the presence of tdtomato-expressing cardiomyocytes in

the outflow tract was always associated with the presence of tdtomato-expressing

cardiomyocytes in the right ventricle (in 8/8 hearts, Fig 2D).

We next administered tamoxifen in $Foxa2^{nEGP\text{-}CreERT2/+}$ $R26R^{tdtomato/+}$ embryos at E6+21h and

fixed the embryos 10 hours later. We immunostained the embryos for Foxa2 and T protein.

Computationally masking cells with Foxa2 expression (*i.e.* endodermal and axial mesoderm

cells, Fig 4Ai-ii) revealed tdtomato-expressing mesodermal cells (*i.e.* cells that had expressed

Foxa2) forming a stream of migratory cells originating from distal regions of the primitive

streak and finishing in the anterior region of the embryo. This corresponds to the prospective

cardiac crescent (dotted white arrow in Fig 4Aii and red arrows in Fig 4Aiii).

We then analysed all tdtomato-expressing cells within the distal primitive streak region and

found these cells expressed T protein, (yellow arrows in Fig 2Aiv), although none

coexpressed Foxa2 and T. Cells expressing Foxa2 but not T corresponded to endodermal

cells, as indicated by their location in the outer layer of the embryo (see green arrow in Fig

4Aiv). All these experiments show that the outflow tract myocardium arises from the distal

primitive streak while the atria progenitors are instead located in the proximal primitive

streak. The outflow tract progenitors are *Foxa2* negative, but they arise from cells that had

expressed *Foxa2* previously. We propose that distal primitive streak cells downregulate

*Foxa2* as they switch their contribution from the right ventricle to the outflow tract

myocardium (Fig 4B). Atrial cells instead arise from the proximal primitive streak, which had

not previously expressed *Foxa2*.

**Right ventricle, outflow tract and Atrial progenitors have distinct locations and**

**transcriptional profile within the heart fields.**

Having identified distinct population of T-expressing cells descendants, we reasoned their

final locations could correlate with the previously described heart fields. We analysed the

locations of the descendants of early E6+21h and late E7+7h *T*-expressing cells. These cells

formed the ventricles and the majority of the outflow tract/atria, respectively, at heart field

stage (see above). We used a BMP reporter (S5A-A" Fig) and assayed for Phospho(P)-

Smad1/5/8 to mark the FHF – the cardiac crescent - since the FHF is characterised by high

levels of BMP signalling activity at these stages (Klaus et al., 2007; Lescroart et al., 2018).

Progenitors derived from the early E6+21h *T*-expressing cells contributed to anterior

structures, distinct from the region occupied by late E7+7h *T*-expressing cells (Fig 5A). The

descendants from the late E7+7h were located in the posterior mesoderm anterior to the node

and were excluded from the FHF (left ventricle progenitors) domain in which BMP activity is

high, and also from the cranial paraxial mesoderm with no detectable BMP activity (Fig

5Aiii-v and S3 Fig).

To ask whether molecular differences exist between the right ventricle, outtflow and atrial

cardiac progenitors, we performed single-cell transcriptome analysis of four $T^{nEGP-CreERT2/+}$

$R26R^{tdtomato/tdtomato}$ embryos dissected 7 hours after tamoxifen administration at E7+7h (early

head fold -EHF- stage, Fig 5B). The SHF is partitioned into distinct anterior and posterior

regions (AHF and pSHF). We reasoned we could use the presence or absence of tdtomato

transcripts to discriminate the transcriptome of the tdtomato-positive outflow tract and atrial

progenitors from the tdtomato-negative right ventricle progenitors within the AHF and pSHF.

We obtained 3494 high-quality single cell transcriptomes. We clustered cells into

subpopulations, guided by available single cell transcriptomic data (S4A-C Fig) (Lescroart et

al., 2018; Pijuan-Sala et al., 2019). Within these subpopulations, cardiac progenitors

belonging to the previously defined FHF, AHF and pSHF. Among the cardiac progenitors,

the pSHF had the highest proportion of tdtomato-expressing cells (39.5%) followed by the

AHF (7.3%). The FHF had very few tdtomato-positive cells (1%) (S4C Fig).

By increasing the resolution of the clustering, we observed the AHF and pSHF clusters could

be subdivided into four discernible clusters (Fig 5C and D). Two of these clusters were

enriched for tdtomato-positive cells (26% and 46.3%). The two other clusters were depleted

of tdtomato-positive cells (5.8% and 4.8%). We hypothesised that the tdtomato positive

clusters corresponded to progenitors contributing to the outflow and atria. One of these two

clusters was derived from both the AHF and the pSHF while the other cluster was derived

from the pSHF with no contribution from the AHF (Fig 5C). Conversely, we reasoned that

the tdtomato negative clusters comprised progenitors derived from earlier *T*-expressing cells

that contribute to the right ventricle and head mesenchyme. These two clusters derived

mostly from the AHF with no contribution from the pSHF. We have summarised these results

as a fate map for the different cardiac regions (Fig 7A-B) and we propose that right ventricle,

outflow and atrial progenitors form molecularly distinct populations within the AHF and

pSHF mirroring their distinct origin in the primitive streak. We describe below the rationale

behind the classification of these new subclusters into right ventricle, outflow tract, atria and

head mesenchyme progenitor populations based on gene expression patterns (Fig 5E and F).

Cells from the outflow tract and atrial clusters expressed *Raldh2* and *Hoxb*1 (Fig 5F).

Previous lineage tracing experiments have demonstrated that retinoic acid activated cells

contribute to the outflow and atria (Dolle et al., 2010). Additionally, *Hoxb1* positive cells

have been shown to contribute to the atria and to the inferior wall of the outflow tract that

subsequently forms the myocardium at the base of the pulmonary trunk, in addition to

patches of myocardium in the ventricles (Bertrand et al., 2011; Roux et al., 2015). Our data

show *Tbx1* and *Raldh2* positive cells formed complementary cell populations within the

outflow tract cluster. This is consistent with lineage tracing experiments demonstrating that

*Tbx1* expressing cells within the AHF contribute to the outflow tract (Huynh et al., 2007). We

also found that *Wnt2* was absent in the outflow tract cluster but expressed in the atrial cluster.

This is consistent with *Wnt2* expression in posterior mesoderm in addition to the anterior

mesoderm where the prospective cardiac crescent forms (Costello et al., 2011; Monkley et

al., 1996).

*Fgf8,* a known marker of the AHF (Lescroart et al. 2018), was enriched in both the outflow

tract (tdtomato positive) and right ventricle clusters (tdtomato negative). Lineage tracing

experiments have shown that *Tbx1* marks part of the right ventricle progenitor domain within

the AHF (Baldini et al., 2017; Huynh et al., 2007) while *Fgf8* marks it entirely (Crossley and

Martin, 1995; Ilagan et al., 2006). Consistent with these results, we found *Tbx1* to be

enriched within a subset of the right ventricle cluster while *Fgf8* is expressed throughout.

Also consistent with the hypothesis that these cells correspond to right ventricle progenitors

is the enrichment of *Jag1* in this cluster, a regulator of ventricular cardiomyocytes (Evan et

al. 2020). *Jag1* is expressed anteriorly, complementary to the region where the cardiac

crescent resides (Przemeck et al., 2003). *Dkk1*, a Wnt modulator controlling cardiac

differentiation (David et al., 2008; Guo et al., 2019; Phillips et al., 2011), is also uniquely

enriched in the right ventricle cluster. *Id1* and *2,* which are essential for the specification of

the heart tube-forming progenitors (Cunningham et al., 2017) are enriched in both the left and

right ventricle clusters but absent in the outflow and atrial clusters.

As mentioned above, the head mesenchyme cluster was depleted of tdtomato-positive cells

and may correspond to progenitors mostly derived from early *T*-expressing cells. Notably,

*Fgf8* expression was reduced in the head mesenchyme cluster consistent with the absence of

*Fgf8* expression in this cell population (Ilagan et al., 2006). However, this cluster was

uniquely enriched in transcripts marking the cranial paraxial mesoderm anterior to the *Tbx1*

positive domain at E7-E7-5 or the head mesenchyme at E8-8.5 *(Pitx2*, *Alx1*, *Rspo1,  Shisa2*)

(Campione et al., 1999; Filipe et al., 2006; Nam et al., 2007; Zhao et al., 1996).

**The ventricular and outflow tract myocardium are prepatterned within the primitive**

**streak.**

The signalling environment that cells encounter during migration influences the patterning of

the heart fields (Andersen et al., 2018; Evan et al. 2020; Guzzetta et al., 2020; Hochgreb et

al., 2003; Klaus et al., 2007; Sirbu et al., 2008). However, our findings that the ventricles and

the outflow/atria arise from distinct primitive streak cell populations raise the possibility that

these progenitors are already molecularly distinct in the primitive streak. To address this

question, we analysed the transcripts of cells from of tamoxifen treated $T^{nEGP-CreERT2/+}$

$R26R^{tdtomato/tdtomato}$ embryos at E6+21h (3635 cells from nine embryos selected at the mid-late

streak stages, following tamoxifen administration at E6+5h, Fig 6A) and E7+3h (3994 cells

from four embryos selected at the OB-EB stages, following tamoxifen administration at

E6+21h, Fig 6A). In the E6+21h mid-late streak stage embryos, tdtomato-positive cells were

identified in the extra-embryonic mesoderm, consistent with the idea that the earliest

progenitors to emerge from the primitive streak are contributing to the yolk sac blood cells

and vasculature endothelium (Kinder et al., 1999). Tdtomato-positive cells were also sparsely

found in the embryonic mesoderm. In the E7+3h OB-EB stage embryos, tdtomato-positive

cells were found in the embryonic mesoderm where ventricular progenitors reside, and

outflow and atrial progenitors are leaving the primitive streak at these stages.

We clustered cells guided by available atlases of mouse gastrulation (Pijuan-Sala et al., 2019)

(Fig 6B-C and S6A-C Fig*). We analysed cells corresponding to the primitive streak and

anterior primitive streak (aPS) clusters at the mid-late streak stages and cells in primitive

streak cluster at the OB-EB stages (Fig 6E). The transcriptome of the EB-OB primitive streak

cells mapped to a subset of the E7.5 primitive streak cells analysed from the mouse

gastrulation atlas because it contained a wider range of embryonic stages from the late streak

to the LB stages (Pijuan-Sala et al., 2019). The primitive streak cells at the mid-late streak

and OB-EB stages did not express the *Cdx1/4* TFs associated with a posterior mesodermal

identity. Nor did these cells express *Raldh2*, suggesting that the outflow and atrial progenitors

start expressing *Raldh2* once the cells have reached their final location in the embryo (S6E

Fig.).

Differential gene expression analysis revealed major molecular differences between primitive

streak cells contributing to either the ventricles or the outflow/atria (Fig 6E and F). The T-

box transcription factor *Eomes* was strongly expressed in the mid-late streak stage primitive

streak (ventricular progenitors) while its expression was lower at the OB-EB stages in the

outflow/atrial progenitors (Fig 6G).  This is in line with the function of *Eomes* in establishing

the anterior mesoderm and specifying cardiac progenitors upstream of *Mesp1* (Costello et al.,

2011). *T* had the opposite pattern of expression and showed a stronger expression at the OB-

EB stages compared to the mid-late streak stages (Fig 6G). Fate mapping in the mouse also

identified the anterior primitive streak adjacent to the organiser as a source of cardiac

progenitors (Kinder et al., 2001) and *Hes1*, *hHex* (Thomas et al., 1998), *Gsc* (Blum et al.,

1992), *Foxa2* (Ang and Rossant, 1994), *Upp1*, *Tdgf1* (Ding et al., 1998; Dono et al., 1993),

*Bmp2, Epha2, Lhx1* (Costello et al., 2015; Shimono and Behringer, 1999)*, Otx2* (Acampora

et al., 2003) and *Chrd* (Bachiller et al., 2000) were among the genes enriched in the anterior

primitive streak at the mid-late streak stages (Fig 6E and H). *Sp8*, *Amt*, and *Notch2* (Williams

et al., 1995) were preferentially enriched in the primitive streak at the OB-EB stages (Fig 6E

and H). *Ccnd2* is expressed in the proximal regions of the primitive streak where the atrial

progenitors are located (Wianny et al., 1998) and where BMP signalling activity is high

(Morgani et al., 2018). *Mixl1* (Hart *et al.* 2002), *Fst* (Albano et al., 1994), *Gas1* (Lee and Fan,

2001), *Frzb* (Hoang et al., 1998) and *Apln* were commonly expressed in the primitive streak

at both the mid-late streak and OB-EB stages (Fig 6E). We conclude that ventricular, outflow

and atrial progenitors derive from molecularly distinct groups of cells that occupy spatially

and temporally discrete regions of the primitive streak.

**Discussion**

Our findings, summarised in Fig 7A-C, reveal a temporal and spatial order at which different

cardiac lineages arise within the primitive streak. The left ventricular progenitors are the first

to leave the primitive streak at the mid-streak stage followed shortly after by the right

ventricular progenitors at the late-streak stage. Progenitors contributing to the poles of the

heart leave the primitive streak at the OB-EB stages. The ventricular and outflow progenitors

arise from distal regions of the primitive streak while the atrial progenitors are located in

proximal regions of the primitive streak. These different subpopulations constitute

molecularly distinct groups of progenitors within the heart field and the transcriptional

differences in the primitive streak cells suggest that cardiac progenitors are prepatterned in

the primitive streak prior to their migration.

**$T$ is expressed at low level in the ventricular progenitors and at high level in the atrial**

**and outflow tract progenitors.**

Upon administration of tamoxifen to $T^{nEGP\text{-}CreERT2/+}$ $R26R^{tdtomato/tdtomato}$ mice, we found tdtomato-

expressing cells occupied a maximum of 50.8 percent of the total ventricular myocardial

surface area (Figure 1E). The contribution to the poles of the heart instead approached 100

percent in some cases. This result raises the possibility that not all ventricular progenitor

express $T$, whereas $T$ is expressed in all outflow tract and atrial progenitors. Alternatively, all

ventricular progenitors might express $T$ but at low levels or transiently, compared to the

outflow tract and atrial progenitors. This may result in lower levels of cre expression, below

the threshold required for reporter recombination in all ventricular progenitors. We found that

another T-box transcription factor *Eomes* is strongly expressed in ventricular progenitors in

line with other studies also demonstrating *Eomes* function upstream of *Mesp1* to generate

anterior mesoderm and specify a cardiac fate (Costello et al., 2011). A similar pulse labelling

approach using an *Eomes* inducible line (Pimeisl et al., 2013) would test whether all

ventricular progenitors can be traced back to the mid-late streak stages.

**Lineage relationships between cardiac progenitors.**

The *Foxa2* lineage tracing results demonstrate the existence of a common lineage between

the right ventricle and the outflow. This suggests primitive streak cells can divide

asymmetrically to generate successively right ventricle and outflow tract progenitors while

self-renewing (see model in Fig 7A-C). Live-imaging experiments will provide a more direct

indication of the existence of asymmetric cell divisions within the primitive streak. While the

ventricular and outflow tract progenitors are located in the anterior/distal primitive streak,

atrial progenitors are located in the proximal primitive streak. This spatial segregation

suggests that atrial progenitors are likely to constitute a pool of progenitors independent from

other cardiac progenitors because of their physical separation. This is consistent with the

original clonal analysis from Meilhac et al. (Meilhac et al., 2004). In that study, a

retrospective approach based on the random activation of an nLacZ reporter targeted to the

cardiac-actin locus (*Actc1*) was adopted. The timing of recombination was estimated based in

the size of the clones. By analysing clones of small sizes, Meilhac *et al*. predicted that atrial

cells became clonally distinct before the presumptive right ventricle segregate from the

outflow (Meilhac et al. 2004). Subsequent clonal experiments tracing *Mesp1* positive

progenitors (Devine et al., 2014; Lescroart et al., 2014) also resulted in small clones spanning

both the right ventricle and outflow tract compartment while independent clones were found

in the atrium (Lescroart et al., 2014). Thus, the atrial progenitors are likely to constitute an

independent pool of progenitors in the primitive streak distinct from a common progenitor for

right ventricular and outflow tract (see model in Fig 7C).

Meilhac et al. also observed two classes of larger clones extending across multiple

compartments. This demonstrated the existence of two cardiac lineages in the embryo

corresponding to the two heart fields (Meilhac and Buckingham, 2018; Meilhac et al., 2004).

Our analysis suggests the segregation of two cardiac lineages could only occur before the

onset of gastrulation, for example at the epiblast stage. A further subdivision into progenitors

with more restricted lineages then arises by the time epiblast cells ingress through the

primitive streak during gastrulation. This is reflected by the existence of progenitor

subpopulations within the FHF and SHF corresponding to the prospective left and right

ventricle, outflow tract and atria.

**A combination of intrinsic factors and inductive events specify and pattern the cardiac**

**progenitors.**

Depending on the initial timing and site of ingression through the primitive streak, cardiac

progenitors will be exposed to different signaling environments, which may influence their

cardiac fate. BMPs and Fgfs secreted by the anterior endoderm (Alsan and Schultheiss, 2002;

de Soysa et al., 2019; Lough and Sugi, 2000; Schultheiss et al., 1997), retinoic acid expressed

in the posterior lateral plate mesoderm (Hochgreb et al., 2003; Xavier-Neto et al., 1999) and

signals expressed in the anterior intestinal portal (AIP) at later stages (Anderson et al., 2016)

all contribute to the patterning of the cardiac progenitors. A Hedgehog-Fgf signaling axis has

also been recently proposed to pattern the anterior mesoderm to allocate the head and heart

during mesodermal migration (Guzzetta et al., 2020). Our analysis shows the primitive streak

cells that contribute to either the ventricles or to the poles of the heart are molecularly distinct

prior to migration. For example, changes in the transcriptional profile of primitive streak

cells, including the downregulation of *Foxa2* expression, accompany the transition from

contributing to the right ventricle to supplying the outflow tract. This mode of cellular

diversification is reminiscent of temporal programmes in other tissues, such as neural

progenitors (Doe, 2017), where sequential expression of distinct sets of transcription factors

in progenitors defines the later differentiated cell types. These findings raise the possibility

that cardiac progenitors are specified via a combination of both initial conditions set in the

primitive streak and inductive events happening during migration (Evan et al., 2020;

Guzzetta et al., 2020) or once cells have reached their final location in the embryo.

Our analysis could not resolve putative differences between left and right progenitors in the

primitive streak, and a more precise staging of embryos separating the mid from the late

streak stages within a single cell transcriptomic assay will be required for this.

Transcriptional differences between left and right ventricular progenitors may be established

during migration by exposure to BMP and FGF signaling, both of which are known to

mediate medio-lateral patterning of the mesoderm (Dorey and Amaya, 2010; Ilagan et al.,

2006; Kelly et al., 2001; Tuazon and Mullins, 2015).

The observation that initial molecular differences in the primitive streak lead to the formation

of groups of mesodermal cells that generate distinct populations of cardiac progenitors might

inform *in vitro* cardiac differentiation protocols. We show the atria are located in the

proximal primitive streak where BMP signaling marked by P-Smad1/5/8 is high (Morgani et

al., 2018). By contrast, ventricular progenitors originate in anterior primitive streak regions

where cells are exposed to high Nodal signaling. This is consistent with methods to generate

cardiac cells from human ESCs in vitro that rely on the exposure to different levels of Nodal

and BMP signaling (Lee et al., 2017). A higher ratio of BMP4 to activin A signaling is

required for the generation of Raldh2 positive mesoderm, which forms atrial cells.

Conversely, the generation of ventricular cardiomyocytes relies on a higher level of activin to

BMP4 signaling and the formation of Raldh2 negative CD235a positive mesoderm (Lee et

al., 2017).

We conclude that cardiac progenitors are pre-patterned within the primitive streak both in

time and space and this prefigures their allocation to distinct anatomical structures of the

heart. Further work will be required to test if generating the correct population of primitive

streak cells can help to obtain purer populations of cardiomyocytes from pluripotent stem

cells. Our analysis will also help to identify the initial mesodermal population that when

dysregulated lead to specific malformations in the heart. For example, left ventricle

hypoplasia results from a reduction in the number of specified cardiomyocytes within the

mesoderm and this is due to a reduction in the expression of key cardiac transcription factors

(Santos-Ledo et al., 2020). Whether such cardiac defects can arise from mutations affecting

initial primitive streak cell populations and mesoderm remains to be addressed.

## Methods

### Experimental Model and Subject Details

All animal procedures were performed in accordance with the Animal (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 under the UK Home Office project licenses PF59163DB and PIL IA66C8062.

### Mice

The $T^{nEGFP\text{-}CreERT2/+}$(MGI:5490031) and $Foxa2^{nEGP\text{-}CreERT2/+}$ (MGI:5490029) lines (Imuta *et al*. 2013) were obtained from Hiroshi Sasaki. $R26^{\ Tomato\ Ai14/\ Tomato\ Ai14}$ ($Gt(ROSA)26Sor^{tm14(CAG\text{-}tdTomato)Hze}$; MGI:3809524) was obtained from the Jackson Laboratory.

### BRE:H2B-Turquoise BMP reporter line

The MLP:H2B-Turquoise sequence (originally from BRE-MLP-H2B-Turquoise pGL3 basic, Briscoe lab, unpublished) was cloned using In-Fusion Cloning (Takara, 639650) between two chicken insulators at the BamHI site of plasmid pJC5-4 (Chung et al., 1993) without the LCR fragment. The 1.6kb MLP:H2B-Turquoise fragment was amplified using Phusion High-Fidelity PCR Master Mix (ThermoFisher Scientific, F532L) according to the manufacturer's instructions. Subsequently the 92bp BRE element was isolated with MluI/XhoI digest from BRE-MLP-H2B-Turquoise pGL3 basic and cloned 5' to the MLP sequence of MluI/XhoI digested MLP:H2B-Turquoise pJC4-4 plasmid. The final plasmid was linearized with NdeI and used for pronuclear injection using fertilized embryos from the F1 hybrid strain

(C57BL6/CBA). Mice with BRE reporter activity were verified by genotyping by a

commercial vendor (Transnetyx). 5'-3' Forward primer:

CACAAGCTGGAGTACAACTACATCAGCGA Reporter 1: TCTATATCACCGCCGAC

Reverse Primer: GGCGGATCTTGAAGTTGGCCTTGA. The BRE reporter line was

maintained on the F1 background by crossing heterozygous *BRE:H2B-Turquoise* mice to F1

wild-type mice.

**Lineage tracing of the *T* and *Foxa2* expressing cells**

Lineage tracing of *T and Foxa2* mesodermal progenitors was performed by crossing $T^{hEGFP\text{-}CreERT2/+}$

and $Foxa2^{nEGP\text{-}CreERT2/+}$ with $R26^{\,Tomato\ Ai14/\ Tomato\ Ai14}$ mice.  To gain better control over

embryonic staging, mice were synchronized in estrus by by introducing soiled bedding from

a male's cage into the females' three days in advance. On the fourth day, mice were crossed

over a two-hours period from 7am to 9am. Vaginal plugs were checked at 9 am and if

positive, the embryonic day was defined at E0. This was followed by tamoxifen oral gavage

with tamoxifen at 0.08mg/body weight (T5648 SIGMA) dissolved in corn oil at indicated

times.

**Wholemount immunofluorescence and image acquisition**

Embryos were fixed for 20min (for early E6.5-E7.5 embryos) or overnight (for late E12.5

hearts) in 2% PFA at 4°C, then permeabilized in PBST (PBS containing 0.5% Triton X-100)

for 15min (for early E6.5-E7.5 embryos) or 1 hour (for late E12.5 hearts) and blocked for 5

hours (5% donkey serum, Abcam ab138579). Embryos were incubated overnight at 4°C with

antibodies diluted in PBST (PBS 0.1% Triton X-100): goat anti-T (1:250, R&D Systems

AF2085), rabbit anti-FOXA2 (1:250, Abcam ab108422);  mouse anti-cTNT2 (1:250, Thermo

Fischer Scientific Systems, MS295P0); rabbit anti-PhosphoSMAD1/5/8 (1:250, Cell

Signalling D5B10 Rabbit mAb #13820). After washing in freshly prepared PBST at 4°C,

embryos were incubated with secondary antibodies (Molecular Probes) coupled to

AlexaFluor 488 or 647 fluorophores as required at 1:250 overnight at 4°C. Before imaging,

embryos were washed in PBST at room temperature. Confocal images were obtained on an

inverted Zeiss 710 confocal microscope with a 20X water objective (for early E6.5-E7.5

embryos) or a 10X air objective (0.4 NA) (for late E12.5 hearts) at a 1024 × 1024 pixels

dimension with a z-step of 3-6- μm (2 × 2 tile scale, for the late E12.5 hearts). Embryos were

systematically imaged throughout from top to bottom. Images were processed using Fiji

software (Schindelin et al., 2012).

**Image Analysis**

To segment the Foxa2 positive cells a Gaussian filter whose radius is adjusted to the typical

size of a cell was first applied with Fiji (Schindelin et al., 2012). The resulting image was

next converted to a mask by thresholding. When objects touched each other, a watershed on

the binary mask. Finally, particle analyser generated a binary image with objects outside

specified size (50) and circularity (0.75-1.00) removed. This process was repeated in each

optical z-section of the z-stack. To quantify the surface area of the tdtomato labelled

myocardial cells, patches of tdtomato cells were manually segmented and area measured with

Fiji (Schindelin et al., 2012) for each individual heart within each litter.

**PCR analysis**

Primers were designed to span the floxed SV40 poly(A) signal sequence removed from the

genome following Cre recombinase-mediated recombination: 5'-3' Forward primer:

CGTGCTGGTTATTGTGCTGT; Reverse: CATGAACTCTTTGATGACCTCCTCGC.

Primers yield a 1145 bp product from unrecombined DNA and a 274 bp product following

recombination. gDNA was extracted using the HotSHOT method (Truett *et al.*, 2000) from

either the ear clip of an adult $R26^{\text{Tomato Ai14/ Tomato Ai14}}$ mouse (unrecombined) or E9.5 embryos

dissected from a pregnant $T^{\text{nEGFP-CreERT2/+}} R26^{\text{Tomato Ai14/ Tomato Ai14}}$ mouse, at 2, 4 and 12 hrs

following oral gavage with Tamoxifen at 0.08mg/body weight (T5648 SIGMA) dissolved in

corn oil. gDNA was then used in Q5 High-Fidelity 2X Master Mix (NEB) PCR reactions

according to the manufacturer's instructions. Amplicons were resolved on a 2% agarose gel

with a 100 bp ladder.

**Sample preparation for single cell RNA sequencing**

$T^{\text{nEGFP-CreERT2/+}} R26^{\text{Tomato Ai14/ Tomato Ai14}}$ mouse embryos were imaged prior to dissociation with

a Leica stereo fluorescent microscope with an exposure of ~ 1mn to reveal the tdtomato

signal.  Sample preparation was done using previously established method (Delile et al.

2019). Mouse embryos were dissected in Hanks Balanced Solution without calcium and

magnesium (HBSS, Life Technologies, 14185045) supplemented with 5% heat- inactivated

foetal bovine serum (FBS). The samples were then incubated on FACSmax cell dissociation

solution (Amsbio, T200100) with 10× Papain (30 U/mg, Sigma-Aldrich, 10108014001) for

11 min at 37°C to dissociate the cells. To generate a single cell suspension, samples were

transferred to HBSS, with 5% FBS, rock inhibitor (10 μM, Stemcell Technologies, Y-27632)

and 1× non-essential amino acids (Thermo Fisher Scientific, 11140035), disaggregated

through pipetting, and filtered once through 0.35 μm filters and once through 0.20 μm

strainers (Miltenyi Biotech, 130-101-812). Quality control was assayed by measuring live

cells versus cell death, cell size and number of clumps and 10,000 cells per sample were

loaded for sequencing.

**Analysis of scRNA-seq data**

A suspension of 10,000 single cells was loaded onto the 10x Genomics Single Cell 3′ Chip,

and cDNA synthesis and library construction were performed as per the manufacturer's

protocol for the Chromium Single Cell 3′ v2 protocol (10x Genomics; PN-120233) and

sequenced on an Hiseq4000 (Illumina). 10x CellRanger (version 3.0.2) was used to generate

single cell count data for each sample using a custom transcriptome built from the Ensembl

mouse GRCm38 release 86 with the addition of the sequence from tdtomato Ai9 plasmid

(Madisen et al., 2010). Due to 10x's poly A bias, an additional 225 bases between the

tdtomato gene stop codon and the bGH poly(A) signal was included to represent the WPRE

gene. All subsequent analyses were performed with R (v.3.6.1) (R Core Team (2013)) using

the Seurat (v3) package (Stuart et al., 2019). Primary filtering was performed on each dataset

by removing from consideration: cells expressing unique feature counts fewer than 500,

number of Unique Molecular Identifiers (UMIs) fewer than 1000 and cells for which

mitochondrial genes made up greater than 3 times the standard deviation value of all

expressed genes. Each dataset was normalised using the 'LogNormalize' function, with a

scale factor of 10,000. The top 2000 highly variable genes were found using the

'FindVariableGenes' function and the data centred and scaled using the 'ScaleData' function.

PCA decomposition was performed and after consideration of the eigenvalue 'elbow-plots',

the first 50 components were used to construct Uniform Manifold Approximation Projection

(UMAP) plots. The resolution and number of clusters per experiment was guided by

expression of known marker genes (Pijuan-Sala et al., 2019; Lescroart et al., 2018). Clusters

relating to surface ectoderm, epiblast, caudal epiblast, primitive streak, intermediate

mesoderm, caudal and presomitic mesoderm, pSHF, AHF, FHF, ex-mesoderm and allantois

were identified. Cluster specific gene markers were identified using a Wilcoxon rank sum test

and a selection of the top genes ranked were used to generate the heatmaps. The clustering

analysis was then repeated by increasing the resolution parameter and discernible clusters

with distinct marker genes corresponding to the left and right ventricles, head mesenchyme,

outflow tract and atria were identified. Samples E6+21h and E7+3h were integrated using

Seurat standard integration workflow. Common anchors features between both experiments

were selected using the 'FindIntegrationAnchors' functions, using the first 30 dimensions.

Clusters were labelled and grouped using pre-existing cell markers and differential

expression between clusters were determined using the FindMarkers Function, without logfc

or minimum percentage expressed thresholds. Genes showing the largest logFC and smallest

adjusted p value between clusters were used to generate heatmaps.

**Data availability**

609 Single cell RNA sequencing data have been deposited in NCBI under the accession number

610 GSE153789.

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## Author contributions

K.I.: Conceptualization, Investigation, Formal analysis, Visualisation, Writing – Original Draft Preparation. P.S.B. and P.C.: Formal analysis, J.D.: Data curation, N.M.G., D.S.: Investigation, R.A.J.: Investigation, Visualisation, J.C.S.: Funding acquisition, Supervision, Writing-Review & Editing, J.B.: Funding acquisition, Conceptualization, Supervision, Writing-Review & Editing.

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**Figure legends**

**Fig 1. Genetic tracing of the *T+* primitive steak cells. (A)** Schematics of the *$T^{nGPF-CreERT2/+}$*;

*$R26R^{tdtomato/+}$* allele (Imuta et al., 2013). Cre-ERT2 is expressed in cells expressing *T*. In the

presence of tamoxifen, Cre protein is translocated to the nucleus where it recombines the

*$R26R^{tdtomato/+}$* reporter. As a result, the cell and its descendants are permanently labeled. **(B)**

Diagram of the experimental approach. *T*-expressing cells and their descendants are labelled,

from E6+21h, E7, E7+7h and E7+11h by administrating a dose of tamoxifen (Tam) to *$T^{nGPF-}$*

*$^{CreERT2/+}$; $R26R^{tdtomato/+}$* mice (0.08mg/body weight via oral gavage). Cell descendants in the

myocardium are analysed at E12.5.  **(C)** Representative hearts resulting from the

administration of tamoxifen at different time points in *$T^{nGPF-CreERT2/+}$; $R26R^{tdtomato/+}$*

immunostained with cTnnT to reveal the cardiomyoyctes (blue). Yellow arrows identify

small patches of tdtomato positive cardiomyocytes in the LV (ii and iv), in the RV (v) and in

the outflow tract and atria (vii and viii). Views are ventral. Single epicardial cells are labeled

in each condition. **(D-E)** Summary of all $T^{nGPF\text{-}CreERT2/+}$; $R26R^{tdtomato/+}$ hearts examined. The

contribution of the $T$-expressing cells to the different compartments of the heart is quantified

by measuring the proportion of tdtomato positive myocardium. Numbers in brackets in (E)

represent the number of litters assessed. Error bars are SD. **(F)** Stage variation quantified

according to Downs and Davies criteria (Downs and Davies, 1993). Number in brackets

represents the number of litters assessed. All the timed matings were for 2-hour periods. **(G)**

PCR amplicons generated from the genomic region in which Cre-mediated recombination

occurs, resolved on an agarose gel. Before recombination, the PCR product is 1145 bp (white

rectangle); after recombination it is 274 bp (black rectangle). Template gDNA was extracted

from either an ear clip of an adult $T^{nGPF\text{-}CreERT2/+}$; $R26R^{tdtomato/tdtomato}$ mouse (untreated) or $T^{nGPF\text{-}}$

$^{CreERT2/+}$; $R26R^{tdtomato/tdtomato}$ embryos dissected at 2, 4 and 12 hrs following oral gavage with

Tamoxifen, as labelled. An increase in the proportion of the recombined band can be seen

over time following Tamoxifen administration. **(H)** Embryos collected at E6+212h or E7+7h

showing variation in stage. LV: left ventricle, RV: right ventricle, OFT: outflow tract, LA:

left atria, RA: right atria, cTnnT: cardiac troponinin T. MS: Mid-streak LS: late-streak, OB:

"no bud" stage, EB: "early bud" stage, LB: "late bud stage", EHF: early head fold. cTnnT:

cardiac Troponin T. Scale bar: 200 $\mu$m.

**Fig 2. Independent *Foxa2+* progenitors contribute to the ventricles and outflow tract.**

**A)** Schematics of the $Foxa2^{nGPF\text{-}CreERT2/+}$; $R26R^{tdtomato/+}$ allele (Imuta et al., 2013). **(B)** Pulse-

labelling of the *Foxa2*-expressing cells and their descendants, from stage (i) E6+21h, (ii)

E7+7h by administration of tamoxifen to $Foxa2^{nGPF\text{-}CreERT2/+}$; $R26R^{tdtomato/+}$ mice (0.08mg/body

weight via oral gavage). Cells descendants in the heart analysed at E12.5. **(C)** Representative

hearts resulting from the administration of tamoxifen at different time points in *Foxa2^nGPF-*

*^CreERT2/+*; *R26R^tdtomato/+* immunostained for cTnnT to reveal the cardiomyocytes (blue). Views

are ventral. Number in brackets represents the number of litters assessed. Single epicardial

cells are also labelled in iii. **(D)** Summary of all hearts analysed. Scale bar: 200 $\mu$m.

**Fig 3. T and Foxa2 colocalise in primitive streak cells**. Representative embryos of E6+21h

MS (A-B) and LS (C-D) and E7+7h "early bud" EB (E-F). Embryos are immunostained for T

(red) and Foxa2 (green). Images are Z-maximum projections. Views are lateral/slightly

posterior to show the whole width of the primitive streak. Insets in Bi-iii, Di-iii and Fi-iii

show magnified views and white arrows point to T+/Foxa2+ double positive cells. Scale bar:

100 $\mu$m.

**Fig 4. Ventricular precursors originate from distal regions of the primitive streak. (A)**

Localisation of the tdtomato+ cell from the *Foxa2* lineage are assessed at (i) E7+7h. The

embryos are immunostained for T (red) and Foxa2 (green). Image is a z-maximum

projection. (ii) The same embryo (i), but with Foxa2+ cells masked to reveal the

tdtomato+/Foxa2- cells.  Insets (iii) and (iv) show magnified views in single optical sections

of (i). Red arrows point to tdtomato+/Foxa2-/T- mesodermal cells. Yellow arrows point to

tdtomato+/Foxa2-/T+ primitive streak cells. Green arrows point to tdtomato+/Foxa2+/T-

endodermal cells. No tdtomato+/Foxa2+/T+ cells are identifiable. **(B)** (i) A common

progenitor between the RV and the outflow tract in the distal primitive streak. *Foxa2* is

downregulated as it switches its contribution toward outflow tract myocardium. (ii) Proximal

PS contribute to the atria and are descended from cells that had not expressed *Foxa2* in their

past. PS primitive streak, pro. PS: proximal primitive streak. Ant: anterior, Post: posterior.

Scale bar: 100 $\mu$m

**Fig 5. Subclusters corresponding to the right ventricle, outflow tract and atrial**

**progenitors can be defined within the AHF and pSHF.** (**A**) Tdtomato localisation in $T^{nGPF\text{-}}$

$^{CreERT2/+}$; $R26R^{tdtomato/tdtomato}$, *Bre-Cerulean* embryos at the EHF stage and following tamoxifen

administration at E6+21h (i-ii) and at E7+7h (iii-v). (**B**) The four E7+7 h $T^{nGPF\text{-}CreERT2/+}$;

$R26R^{tdtomato/tdtomato}$ embryos analysed in the single cell transcriptomic assay. (**C**) Diagram

showing the repartition of the tdtomato positive cells from the FHF, AHF and pSHF clusters

into the left and right ventricle, head mesenchyme, outflow and Atria clusters. (**D**) UMAP

plot of the FHF, AHF and pSHF and subpopulations corresponding to progenitors

contributing to the left and right ventricle, Head Mesenchyme, outflow tract and atria in

addition to the Pharyngeal arches. (**E**) Expression heat map of marker genes (source data

Figure 5) and tdtomato. Dotted square on the left handside indicates genes associated with the

FHF, AHF or pSHF (Figure 5-Figure supplement 2). Scale indicates z-scored expression

values. (**F**) UMAP showing the log normalised counts of selected genes. n.: node, PS:

Primitive streak, FHF: first heart field, SHF: Second heart field, Hm; Head mesenchyme,

OFT: outflow tract, Pha: Pahryngeal arches, AHF: anterior heart field, pSHF: posterior

second heart field. Scale bar: 100 $\mu$m.

**Fig 6. The molecular signature of the primitive streak cells contributing to the ventricles**

**or outflow/atria are distinct.** (**A**) Mid-late streak and OB/EB $T^{nGPF\text{-}CreERT2/+}$; $R26R^{tdtomato/tdtomato}$

embryos analysed in the sc-RNA seq. (**B-C**) Expression heat map of marker genes (source

data Figure 6). Scale indicates z-scored expression values. (**D**) UMAP plot showing the

integrated data from the two scRNA-seq mid-late streak and OB/EB datasets (see also Figure

6–figure supplement 1). Colour code correspond to the embryonic stage of collection or

population identity. (**E**) Expression heat map of marker genes comparing the anterior

primitive streak and primitive streak cells at the mid-late streak stages and primitive streak

cells at the OB-EB stages (source data Figure 6). Scale indicates z-scored expression values.

(**F**) UMAP plot of the anterior primitive streak, (aPS), mid-late streak (MS-LS) primitive

streak and OB-EB primitive streak cells color coded. (**G-H**) Violin plots showing the

normalized log2 expression value of *Eomes* and *T* (G) and *Foxa2*, *Lhx1*, *Sp8 Hes1*, *Ccnd2*

and *Notch2* (H) in the anterior primitive streak (aPS) and primitive streak at mid-late streak

and OB-EB stages. DE: definitive endoderm, aPS: anterior primitive streak, PS: primitive

streak, Nascent meso: nascent mesoderm, LPM/Ex-meso: lateral plate mesoderm and Extra-

embryonic mesoderm, mesenchyme. PGC: primordial germs cells. MS: mid-streak, LS: late

streak, OB: no bud, EB: early bud.

**Fig 7. Model of early cardiac development** (**A**) Cells located in distal regions of the

primitive streak contribute first to the left ventricle (mid-streak stage), then to the right

ventricle (late-streak stage) and finally to the outflow tract (OB-EB stages). Although the

outflow and atria leave the primitive streak at similar stages they arise from different regions.

The outflow tract originates from distal locations in the primitive streak while atrial

progenitors are positioned more proximally. The distal primitive streak cells express *Foxa2*

when they contribute to the ventricles. They stop expressing *Foxa2* when they contribute to

the outflow tract. (**B**) Proposed location of the FHF, AHF and pSHF in comparison to the

hypothetical fate of these different cardiac regions at the pre-headfold stage in (A). (**C**)

Lineage tree of the primitive streak. Within the distal end of the primitive streak, independent

primitive streak cells contribute to the left ventricle, the right ventricle, the (at the mid-late

streak stage) and to the outflow tract (OB-EB stages). A common progenitor between the

right ventricle and the outflow tract exists. By contrast, atrial progenitors are located in the

proximal primitive streak. LV: left ventricle, RV: right ventricle, OFT: outflow tract, Pha:

Pharyngeal arches, hm: head mesenchyme, FHF: first heart field, AHF: anterior heart field,

pSHF: posterior second heart field. OB: no bud stage. EB: early bud stage.

**Supporting information**

**S1 Fig. Tamoxifen activity persists for at least 24 hours when administrated at a high**

**dose by oral gavage. (A)** The administration of a high dose of tamoxifen (0.08mg/bw by oral

gavage) at E5 in $T^{hGPF-CreERT2/+}$; $R26R^{tdtomato/+}$ mice leads to the presence of tdtomato positive-

cells in mesoderm derivatives including cardiomyocytes (see yellow arrow in inset), head

mesenchyme (red arrow), endothelium (green arrow) and allantois. hm: head mesoderm, ht:

heart tube, a: allantois. Mouse were mated for a two-hour period. Scale bar: 100 $\mu$m

**S2 Fig. *Foxa2*-expressing cells contribute to the outflow tract myocardium but not to**

**the atria. A)** Heart resulting from the administration of tamoxifen at E6+21h. View is

ventral. Tdtomato-positive cardiomyocytes are absent from the myocardium in the atria,

however, contribution to the epicardium (yellow arrow) and myocardium (yellow arrows) in

the ventricle and outflow tract is visible. (**B**) E8 embryo resulting from the administration of

tamoxifen at E6+21h in $Foxa2^{nGPF-CreERT2/+}$; $R26R^{tdtomato/+}$ mouse and immunostained for

Foxa2 (green). Tdtomato-positive cells are localised in the pericardium, cardiomyocytes and

endoderm but not in the endocardium. OFT: outflow tract, LA: left atria, RA: right atria, LV:

left ventricle, RV: right ventricle, CC: cardiac crescent, cardio: cardiomyocyte, endo:

endoderm, Scale bars: 200 $\mu$m in (A) and 100 $\mu$m in (B).

**S3 Fig. Outflow tract and atrial progenitors are located away from regions with high**

**BMP signalling activity. (A)** Tdtomato localisation in $T^{hGPF\text{-}CreERT2/+}$; $R26R^{tdtomato/tdtomato}$

embryos immunostained against P-Smad1/5/8 following tamoxifen administration at E7+7h.

Scale bar: 100 $\mu$m.

**S4 Fig.  Identification of the heart fields by scRNA-seq. (A)** UMAP plot showing the

ectodermal, epiblast and mesodermal cell populations coloured by cluster identity. (**B**)

UMAP showing the log normalised counts of selected genes. (**C**) Expression heat map of

marker genes (source data Figure 5) and tdtomato. Scale indicate z-scored expression values.

PS: primitive streak, ecto: surface ectoderm, inter-m: intermediate mesoderm, caudal-m:

caudal mesoderm, pSHF: posterior second heart field, AHF: anterior heart field, FHF: first

heart field, ex-m; extra embryonic mesoderm and mesenchyme, al.: allantois.

**S5 Fig. Bre-cerulean line report BMP signalling activity in the mesoderm.** (A-A'')

Colocalisation of the Cerulean signal and P-Smad1/5/8 in Bre-cerulean embryos at the

cardiac crescent stage. (A) z-max proj. (A') Single optical projection. (A'') Magnified view

form insets in A'. cc.: cardiac crescent. e: endoderm. p: pericardium. Scale bar: 100 $\mu$m

**S6 Fig. scRNA-seq analysis of the mid-late streak and OB/EB stages. (A** and **C)** UMAP

plot coloured by cluster identity from sc-RNA seq analysis of $T^{hGPF\text{-}CreERT2/+}$; $R26R^{tdtomato/tdtomato}$

embryos at the E6+21h, MS-LS stages (A) and at the E7+3h, OB-EB stages (C). (**B** and **D**)

984 UMAP showing the log normalised counts of selected genes. Colour intensity is proportional

985 to the expression level of a given gene. **(E)** Violin plots showing the normalized log2

986 expression value of *Radlh2*, *Cdx1* and *Cdx4*. DE: definitive endoderm, aPS: anterior

987 primitive streak, PS: primitive streak, Nascent meso: nascent mesoderm, LPM/Ex-meso:

988 lateral plate mesoderm and Extra-embryonic mesoderm, mesenchyme. PGC: primordial

989 germs cells. MS: mid-streak, LS: late streak, OB: no bud, EB: early bud.

990 **S1_raw image.** Related to Fig 1G

991 **S2_ source data.** Quantification of labelled surface area related to Fig1E

992 **S3_source data.** Single cell RNA sequencing data related to Fig. 5 and S4 Fig.

993 **S4_source data.** Single cell RNA sequencing data related to Fig 6 and S6 Fig.

**Figure 1**

**Figure 2**

A

Foxa2 | 2A | nGFP | 2A | CreERT2

X

Rosa26 | ▷ | STOP | ▷ | tdtomato

Following *Foxa2* expression and Tam administration

Rosa26 | ▷ | tdtomato

B

After a 2h mating period

E6+21h    E7+7h           E12.5

Foxa2 expression    analysis

● Tamoxifen administration
— Pulse-labeling of *T*-expressing cells

C

*Foxa2^nGFP-CreERT2/+^;R26R^tdtomato/+^*

tam@E6+21h

cTnnT tdtomato

i — RA, LA, OFT, RV, LV

ii

tam@E6+21h      tam@E7+7h

iii

iv — 11/13 (4)

D

| | | Myocardium | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Embryo ID | LV | RV | OFT | LA | RA |
| BRJH70.4b-1 | X | X | | | |
| BRJH70.4b-2 | X | X | X | | |
| BRJH70.4b-3 | X | X | | | |
| BRJH70.4b-4 | X | | | | |
| BRJH70.4b-5 | | | | | |
| BRJH70.4b-6 | X | X | X | | |
| BRJH82.1g-1 | X | X | X | | |
| BRJH75.4f-1 | X | | | | |
| BRJH75.4f-2 | X | X | X | | |
| BRJN58.1-1 | X | X | | | |
| BRJN58.1-2 | | | | | |
| BRJN58.1-3 | X | X | | | |
| BRJN59.2d-1 | X | X | X | | |
| BRJN59.2d-2 | | | | | |
| BRJN59.2d-3 | X | X | X | | |
| BRJH85.1e-1 | X | X | X | | |
| BRJH85.1e-2 | X | X | X | | |

Tam E6+21h (0.08mg/bw)

**Figure 4**

**A**

*Foxa2^nGFP-CreERT2/+;R26R^tdtomato/+* tam@E6+21h

T
tdtomato
Foxa2

**i** E7+7h
ant. post.
PS
max z-projection

**ii** Masked image
ant. post.
pro. PS
distal PS
node
Foxa2- Tdtomato+

**iii**

**iv**

**B**

i.

LS    EB-OB
→ time

**Distal PS**

RV    OFT

■ *Foxa2+*
□ *Foxa2-*

ii.

LS    EB-OB
→ time

**Proximal PS**

Atria

# Figure 5

**Figure 6**

**Figure 7**

A

*T*<sup>nGFP-CreERT2/+</sup>;*R26R*<sup>tdtomato/+</sup>
tam@E5

cTnnT tdtomato Dapi E8.5

A

*T*$^{nGFP-CreERT2/+}$;*R26R*$^{tdtomato/+}$
tam@E5

a.

hm.

ht.

cTnnT tdtomato Dapi E8.5

**A** *Foxa2^nGFP-CreERT2/+;R26R^tdtomato/+*

tam@E6+21h

cTnnT tdtomato

RA    LA

OFT

RV    LV

epicardium

LA

OFT

myocardium

**B** *Foxa2^nGFP-CreERT2/+;R26R^tdtomato/+*

tam@E6+21h

Foxa2 tdtomato

CC.

z-max projection

pericardium    cardio.

endo.

Foxa2

endo.

single optical section

$T^{nGFP-CreERT2/+};R26R^{tdtomato/+}$

Tam E7+7h

cc.

pm.

tdtomato  P-Smad1/5/8  GFP

Merge    tdtomato  GFP    P-Smad1/5/8  GFP

A
*Bre-Cerulean*

P-Smad1/5/8 Cerulean    Cerulean    P-Smad1/5/8

A′
*Bre-Cerulean*

P-Smad1/5/8 Cerulean

A″

Merge    P-Smad1/5/8    Cerulean