Cross-kingdom conservation of Arabidopsis RPS24 function in 18S rRNA maturation

Adrián Cabezas-Fuster, Rosa Micol-Ponce, Raquel Sarmiento-Mañús, and María Rosa Ponce

Instituto de Bioingeniería, Universidad Miguel Hernández, Campus de Elche, 03202 Elche, Alicante, Spain.

Running title: RPS24A and RPS24B function in 18S rRNA maturation

Corresponding author: María Rosa Ponce (telephone: +34 96 665 8503; fax: +34 96 665 8511; e-mail: mrponce@umh.es)

ABSTRACT

All 81 ribosomal proteins (RPs) that form the Arabidopsis (*Arabidopsis thaliana*) 80S ribosome are encoded by several paralogous genes. For example, the nearly identical RPS24A and RPS24B proteins are encoded by *RPS24A* and *RPS24B*, respectively. Here we explored the functions of RPS24A and RPS24B in Arabidopsis. Their encoding genes exhibit combined haploinsufficiency, as at least two wild-type copies of either *RPS24A* or *RPS24B* are required for plant viability and at least three are required for normal plant development. Loss-of-function of either gene caused a pointed-leaf phenotype, a typical phenotype of null or hypomorphic recessive alleles of genes encoding ribosome biogenesis factors (RBFs) or RPs. We also found that RPS24A and RPS24B act as RBFs during early stages of 18S ribosomal RNA (rRNA) maturation, as loss of RPS24A or RPS24B function reduced the 18S/25S rRNA ratio. An RPS24B-GFP fusion protein predominantly localized to the nucleolus, as expected. The *rps24b-2* mutation strengthened the phenotypes of the RBF mutants *mRNA transporter4-2* and *small organ4-3*, which are defective in 5.8S rRNA maturation. This synergistic interaction might be an effect of increased 45S rDNA transcription, which we also observed in the *rps24* mutants. Therefore, the Arabidopsis RPS24 proteins act as RBFs during 18S rRNA maturation, like their human and yeast putative orthologs. Only two plant RPs were previously shown to act not only as structural components of the ribosome but also as RBFs. We provide evidence that RPS24 proteins also regulate 45S rDNA transcription, which has not been described for their yeast or human orthologs.

KEYWORDS

RPS24; ribosome biogenesis; Arabidopsis; pre-rRNA processing; 45S rDNA expression, 18S rRNA maturation.

INTRODUCTION

The 80S cytoplasmic ribosome (hereafter, the ribosome) of Arabidopsis (*Arabidopsis thaliana*) is composed of four ribosomal RNAs (rRNAs) and 81 ribosomal proteins (RPs; Wilson and Cate, 2012), consisting of 33 RPs in its small (40S) subunit and 48 in its large (60S) subunit (Barakat et al., 2001). In plants, rRNAs are encoded by 5S and 45S rDNA genes, which are transcribed in the nucleoplasm and the nucleolus by RNA polymerase III or RNA polymerase I, respectively. All eukaryotic genomes include hundreds of rDNA genes arranged in tandem in several loci. Each 45S rDNA gene is composed (from its 5′ to 3′ end) of a promoter and a transcriptional unit that contains the 5′ external transcribed spacer (5′-ETS), the 18S, 5.8S and 25S rRNA sequences (in plants and yeast; 28S in animals), and a 3′-ETS. These three regions encoding rRNAs are separated by two internal transcribed spacers: ITS1 is located between the sequences of the 18S and 5.8S rRNAs, while ITS2 is located between the sequences of the 5.8S and 28S/25S rRNAs (Supplemental Figure 1).

The processing of 45S (47S in animals and 35S in yeast [*Saccharomyces cerevisiae*]) pre-rRNA is a multistep procedure involving more than 100 ribosome biogenesis factors (RBFs), which carry out endo- and exo-nucleolytic cleavages and chemical modifications to generate 28S/25S, 18S and 5.8S mature rRNAs. This intricate rRNA production consists of two partially redundant pathways, which are named according to the region of the early 35S(P) pre-rRNA in which the first endonucleolytic cleavage occurs: the 5′-ETS-first and ITS1-first pathways. There is an additional pathway in plants, the ITS2-first pathway (Supplemental Figure 1; Palm et al., 2019). The functions of many RBFs are partially or fully conserved across animals, fungi and plants (reviewed in Sáez-Vásquez and Delseny, 2019).

Yeast mRNA transport4 (Mtr4) is an ATP-dependent RNA helicase that acts as a cofactor of the nucleolar exosome, which has 3′→5′ exonuclease activity. Loss-of-function mutations of the yeast *Mtr4* gene impairs 5.8S and 25S rRNA maturation through the ITS1-first pathway and leads to an imbalance in the ratio of 40S/60S ribosomal subunits (Thoms et al., 2015). Arabidopsis MTR4 is required for 18S and 5.8S rRNA maturation and to eliminate 5′-ETS processing by-products produced in the ITS1-first pathway (Lange et al., 2011). Yeast Mtr4 interacts with Nucleolar protein 53 (Nop53), which has orthologs in humans (Glioma Tumor-Suppressor Candidate Region 2; GLTSCR2) and Arabidopsis (SMALL ORGAN 4; SMO4), all of which are involved in equivalent steps of 5.8S rRNA maturation (Tafforeau et al., 2013; Micol-Ponce et al., 2020). Ribosomal RNA processing protein 7 (Rrp7) is another yeast RBF involved in 18S rRNA processing that functions in the ITS1-first pathway, as do its human

(RRP7A) and Arabidopsis (RRP7) orthologs (Micol-Ponce et al., 2018; Farooq et al.,

2020; Supplemental Figure 1).

Most RPs that form part of the 40S ribosomal subunit also function as RBFs in

the nuclear and cytoplasmic steps of 18S rRNA maturation in yeast, including

Ribosomal protein S24 (Rps24; Ferreira-Cerca et al., 2005). Human RPS24 and yeast

Rps24 play analogous roles in 5′-ETS processing. Loss-of-function mutations of the

yeast *Rps24* and human *RPS24* orthologs lead to the accumulation of 23S and 30S

pre-rRNAs, respectively (which are equivalent to Arabidopsis P-A$_3$ pre-rRNA) and a

reduction in the amounts of human 21S and 18S-E, and yeast 21S and 20S pre-

rRNAs, which are equivalent to Arabidopsis 18S-A$_3$ and 20S, respectively. All of these

pre-rRNAs are precursors of the 18S rRNA produced by the ITS1-first pathway

(Supplemental Figure 1). Since this pathway is the major contributor to 18S rRNA

production, its level is reduced by human and yeast *rps24* loss-of-function mutations

(Ferreira-Cerca et al., 2005; Choesmel et al., 2008).

Arabidopsis *MORPHOLOGY OF ARGONAUTE1-52 SUPPRESSED 2* (*MAS2*)

is the ortholog of the human gene encoding NF-κ-B-activating protein (NKAP), which

functions in transcriptional repression and splicing in animals (Pajerowski et al., 2009;

Burgute et al., 2014; Sánchez-García et al., 2015). We previously identified physical

interactors of MAS2 in a yeast two-hybrid assay (Sánchez-García et al., 2015),

including RRP7 (Micol-Ponce et al., 2018), SMO4 (Micol-Ponce et al., 2020) and

RPS24B. Here, we studied the functions of the Arabidopsis co-orthologs of yeast

Rps24 and human *RPS24*: AT3G04920 and AT5G28060, which encode RPS24A and

RPS24B, respectively. We established that both RPS24A and RPS24B act as RBFs in

the ITS1-first pathway, like their human and yeast orthologs. Our results also suggest

that RPS24A and RPS24B participate in the transcriptional repression of 45S rDNA, a

role that has not been proposed for any of their orthologs.

RESULTS

Arabidopsis *RPS24A* and *RPS24B* show combined haploinsufficiency

The Arabidopsis *RPS24A* (AT3G04920) and *RPS24B* (AT5G28060) genes are very similar in structure, with 5 exons, and their protein products sharing 96% sequence identity (Supplemental Figure 2). We initially focused our study on RPS24B, since we previously showed that it interacted with MAS2 in a Y2H assay (Sánchez-García et al., 2015). Two putatively null alleles of *RPS24B*, *rps24b-1* and *rps24b-2*, were previously identified as mutants with impaired leaf development; *rps24b-1* harbors a 72-bp deletion in the coding region of its fifth exon (Horiguchi et al., 2006; 2011), and *rps24b-2* carries a T-DNA insertion in its third intron (Figure 1A; Horiguchi et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2018). Both mutants exhibited an almost identical mild pointed-leaf phenotype (Figure 1F; Horiguchi et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2018).

The *apiculata6* (*api6*) mutant was previously isolated in a large-scale screen for leaf morphological mutants from an EMS mutagenized population in the L*er* background (Berná et al., 1999). Using iterative linkage analysis (Ponce et al., 1999; Ponce et al., 2006), we mapped the *api6* mutation to a genomic region containing 49 genes flanked by the molecular markers cer449133 (between AT5G27905 and AT5G27910) and cer451402 (in AT5G28200; Supplemental Table 1). Sanger sequencing of AT5G28060 (*RPS24B*), the most plausible candidate gene, revealed an EMS-type G→A transition in the last nucleotide of the first intron (Figure 1A). Since this nucleotide forms part of a 3′ splicing site (3′SS) of the first intron, the *api6* mutation is predicted to cause the absence of the second exon of the gene—which is 42-nt in length—from the mature mRNA of *api6* (Figure 1B and C). The protein produced by the *api6* mutant is predicted to lack 14 residues present in wild-type RPS24B (amino acids 25-38; Supplemental Figure 2). An *api6* × *rps24b-2* cross confirmed that these mutants are allelic (Figure 1E, F, H-J). Like many mutants in the L*er* genetic background, the leaf phenotype of *api6* was stronger than that of *rps24b-1* or *rps24b-2*, which are in the Col-0 background (Pérez-Pérez et al., 2009).

We also studied SALK_126799, a line that carries a T-DNA insertion in the third intron of *RPS24A,* which we named *rps24a-1* (Figure 1D and G). Homozygous *rps24a-1* plants were viable and exhibited a pointed-leaf phenotype, which was milder than that of *rps24b-2* and *api6* (Figure 1E-I). RPS24A and RPS24B exhibited similar protein abundance patterns, as determined in the Arabidopsis THaliana ExpressioN Atlas (Athena) database (http://athena.proteomics.wzw.tum.de:5002/master_arabidopsisshiny/; Mergner et al., 2020), with similar levels throughout all organs and developmental stages, with a few exceptions (Supplemental Dataset 1 [highlighted in red]). The almost constitutive

expression of *RPS24A* and *RPS24B* (at a lower level compared to other genes
encoding RPs) was also described by Savada and Bonham-Smith (2014) using
microarray data from the GENEVESTIGATOR platform (Hruz et al., 2008).

Since the mutant phenotypes of *rps24a-1* and *rps24b-2* pointed to the functional
redundancy of *RPS24A* and *RPS24B*, we performed *rps24a-1* × *rps24b-2* reciprocal
crosses. All *RPS24A/rps24a-1;RPS24B/rps24b-2* F_1 plants exhibited a mutant
phenotype indistinguishable from that of their parents, suggesting non-allelic non-
complementation (Figure 2A-D). Selfing of such diheterozygotes generated F_2 progeny
with only two phenotypic classes: 221 wild-type and 161 mutant (indistinguishable from
their parents) plants. We genotyped 59 F_2 phenotypically mutant plants, finding 10
rps24a-1/rps24a-1 RPS24B/RPS24B, 17 *RPS24A/RPS24A rps24b-2/rps24b-2* and 32
RPS24A/rps24a-1;RPS24B/rps24b-2 plants. We identified no *rps24a-1/rps24a-*
1;RPS24B/rps24b-2 or *RPS24A/rps24a-1;rps24b-2/rps24b-2* sesquimutants or double
mutants among the F_2 progeny (Figure 2A-D); the absence of these genotypes
suggests their conditional lethality. In agreement with the proposed early lethality of the
genotypes with fewer than two wild-type doses of either *RPS24A* or *RPS24B* (expected
to be 31.25% of seeds), the siliques of several diheterozygous F_1 plants exhibited a
rate of 27% aborted or unfertilized ovules compared to Col-0 (Figure 2E-H).

To determine whether *rps24a-1*, *rps24b-2* and *api6* were hypomorphic or null
mutants and to test the existence of any dosage compensation mechanism for the
expression of *RPS24A* or *RPS24B*, we analyzed *RPS24B* mRNA levels by RT-PCR.
We used primers upstream and downstream of the T-DNA insertion of *rps24b-2*
(Supplemental Figure 3 and Supplemental Table 2). *RPS24B* mRNA levels were very
similar in *api6* and L*er*, but *RPS24B* mRNA levels were undetectable in *rps24b-2* and
were not higher in *rps24a-1* than in the wild type (Supplemental Figure 3). We did not
determine whether *rps24a-1* was null, because it was impossible to design RT-PCR
primers specific for this allele that would amplify the region flanking its T-DNA insertion,
due to its sequence similarity with *rps24b-2*. However, the phenotype of the single
mutants and the lethality of the reciprocal sesquimutants strongly suggest that *rps24a-*
1 and *rps24b-2* are null alleles.

RPS24B predominantly localizes to the nucleolus
Since ribosomal subunits are synthetized and assembled in the nucleolus and the
nucleoplasm, but their final maturation occurs in the cytoplasm, not few RPs have been
detected in all three subcellular compartments (Pendle et al., 2005; Palm et al., 2016;
Montacié et al., 2017; Ayash et al., 2021). As expected from their known roles as
structural components of the ribosome, Arabidopsis RPS24A and RPS24B have been

found in the cytoplasm in several proteomic studies (Chang et al., 2005; Giavalisco et

al., 2005; Carroll et al., 2008; Hummel et al., 2015), and their abundances appear to be

similar, at least in ribosomes purified from cell cultures (Salih et al., 2020). RPS24A

and RPS24B have also been localized to the nucleolus and nucleoplasm (Pendle et al.,

2005; Palm et al., 2016; Montacié et al., 2017; Ayash et al., 2021).

To visualize the subcellular localization of RPS24B, we generated the

$35S_{pro}$:RPS24B:GFP construct and used it to transform Col-0 plants. We primarily

detected green fluorescent protein (GFP) fluorescence in the nucleolus, but also in the

cytoplasm (Figure 3), as observed for other duplicated Arabidopsis RPs of the small

and large subunits: RPS3aA/B, RPS8A/B, RPL7aA/B, RPL15A/B and RPL23aA/B

(Savada and Bonham-Smith, 2014). Three protein-localization predictor tools provided

in silico support to our experimental findings with the $35S_{pro}$:RPS24B:GFP transgenic

plants. LOCALIZER (https://localizer.csiro.au/; Sperschneider et al., 2017) identified a

putative nuclear localization signal (NLS) in the C-terminal regions of RPS24A and

RPS24B, which matches the nucleolar localization signal (NoLS) found using Nucleolar

localization sequence Detector (NoD) software (Supplemental Figure 2;

http://www.compbio.dundee.ac.uk/www-nod/index.jsp; Scott et al., 2011). MULocDeep

(https://www.mu-loc.org; Jiang et al., 2021), which is able to predict the localization of

any protein in 44 suborganellar compartments, clearly predicted a nucleolar localization

for both RPS24 proteins, in addition to a lower-likelihood prediction for a cytoplasmic

and mitochondrial localization (Supplemental Figures 4 and 5). The predicted nucleolar

localization of RPS24A and experimental confirmation for RPS24B suggest that both

proteins function in early steps of ribosome biogenesis. However, although the

subcellular localization of the RPS24B-GFP fusion protein was the same in transgenic

plants in the Col-0 or rps24b-2 background, the $35S_{pro}$:RPS24B:GFP transgene did not

rescue the morphological defects caused by the rps24b-2 mutation.

45S pre-rRNA processing is delayed in the *rps24* mutants

As previously mentioned, human and yeast RPS24 act as RBFs in 18S rRNA

maturation. In both species, depletion of RPS24 results in inhibited 5′-ETS processing,

the accumulation of pre-rRNAs that include 5′-ETS (human 30S and yeast 23S pre-

rRNAs) and reduced levels of 21S and 18S-E pre-rRNAs in humans and their

corresponding 21S and 20S pre-RNAs in yeast (Supplemental Figure 1), all of which

are 18S rRNA precursors (Ferreira-Cerca et al., 2005; Choesmel et al., 2008; Robledo

et al., 2008).

Taken together, the current identification of RPS24B as a predominantly

nucleolar factor and the previous finding of RPS24A and RPS24B in the Arabidopsis

nucleolar proteome via large-scale analysis (Pendle et al., 2005; Palm et al., 2016)

point to a conserved role for these proteins as RBFs. To test this hypothesis, we

analyzed 45S pre-rRNA processing in the *rps24* mutants. We carried out gel blot

analysis of total RNA extracted from *rps24a-1*, *rps24b-2* and *api6*, which was

hybridized with the S2, S7 and S9 probes. These probes are complementary to

segments of the 5′-ETS, ITS1, and ITS2 of 45S pre-rRNA, respectively, allowing

several 25S, 18S and 5.8S rRNA precursors to be detected (Figure 4A). We used the

smo4-3 and *mtr4-2* mutants as controls (Lange et al., 2011; Micol-Ponce et al., 2020).

Loss of SMO4 function causes nucleolar hypertrophy and the accumulation of P-A$_3$, a

precursor of 18S rRNA, and perturbs 5.8S rRNA maturation (Micol-Ponce et al., 2020).

MTR4 is an exosome cofactor involved in the processing of 5.8S pre-rRNA (like SMO4)

but also in the degradation of P-P′, a by-product derived from 5′-ETS processing

(Lange et al., 2011).

Using the S7 probe, we detected the accumulation of P-A$_3$ and 35S$_{A123B}$/35S(P)

pre-rRNAs in *rps24a-1*, *rps24b-2* and (especially) *api6* plants compared to their

respective wild types. We also detected the depletion of 33S(P′)/32S pre-rRNA and to a

lesser extent P′-A$_3$/18S-A$_3$/18S-A$_2$ species, which result from the processing of

35S$_{A123B}$/35S(P) and P-A$_3$ precursors, respectively (Figure 4B). P-A$_3$ pre-rRNA is

generated by the cleavage of the A$_3$ site in 35S(P) pre-rRNA, the first 18S rRNA

precursor in the ITS1-first pathway [Figure 4A and Supplemental Figure 1; reviewed in

Sáez-Vásquez and Delseny (2019)]. We confirmed the accumulation of

35S$_{A123B}$/35S(P) and P-A$_3$ pre-rRNAs using the S2 probe, but we only observed the

accumulation of the P-P′ species in *mtr4-2* (Figure 4C), as previously described (Lange

et al., 2011). Using the S9 probe, we did not find any alteration in 5.8S rRNA

maturation in any of the three mutants studied (Figure 4D).

Reduced levels of the 21S and 18S-E precursors of 18S pre-rRNA

(Supplemental Figure 1) associated with the lack of RPS24 activity in human cells

result in a 40% reduction in mature 18S rRNA levels (Choesmel et al., 2008; Robledo

et al., 2008). Similar effects were found in the absence of RPS24 function in yeast:

35S, 32S and 23S pre-rRNAs accumulated, 20S pre-rRNA could not be detected, and

the levels of mature 18S rRNA were reduced by 95% compared to the wild type

(Ferreira-Cerca et al., 2005). The impaired 18S pre-rRNA processing due to the loss of

RPS24A and RPS24B function in Arabidopsis suggests that the levels of mature 18S

rRNA might be reduced in these mutants. Therefore, we analyzed the rRNA profiles of

the mutants using a bioanalyzer. The 18S/25S rRNA ratio was reduced by 4% in the

rps24a-1 mutant, by 27% in *rps24b-2* and by 32% in *api6* compared to their

corresponding wild types (Supplemental Figure 6). These results provide further

evidence for a conserved role for RPS24A and RPS24B in the early steps of 18S rRNA maturation, particularly in the cleavage of sites internal to the 5′-ETS, as already observed for their yeast and human putative orthologs (Ferreira-Cerca et al., 2005; Choesmel et al., 2008).

The *rps24b-2* mutation enhances the morphological and molecular defects of mutants in genes encoding RBFs that function in 18S and 5.8S rRNA maturation

To genetically confirm the involvement of RPS24 in ribosome biogenesis, we obtained double mutant combinations between *rps24b-2* and mutant alleles of *SMO4* and *MTR4*, which participate in 5.8S rRNA maturation (Lange et al., 2011; Micol-Ponce et al., 2020) and *RRP7* and *PARALLEL1* (*PARL1*; also named *NUCLEOLIN1*), which act in 18S rRNA maturation (Pontvianne et al., 2007; Micol-Ponce et al., 2018).

All of the double mutants showed synergistic phenotypes (Figure 5). Leaves of *rps24b-2 smo4-2* plants exhibited increased serration and took on a twisted appearance into a spiral (Figure 5F). *rps24b-2 mtr4-2* plants exhibited delayed growth, lanceolate leaves and strong drops in rosette size and plant height (Figure 5G). *rps24b-2 parl1-2* plants strongly accumulated anthocyanins, exhibiting dark, serrated, pointed leaves and small, compact rosettes (Figure 5H). The *rps24b-2 mtr4-2* and *rps24b-2 parl1-2* double mutants completed their lifecycles but had poor fertility (Figure 5I, J, M-P). We sowed 108 F_2 seeds from an *rps24b-2 × rrp7-1* cross and isolated two double mutants, which exhibited very strong mutant phenotypes (Supplemental Figure 7). Only one plant completed its lifecycle and produced 20 F_3 seeds, only one of which germinated, but the seedling died a few days later, suggesting early postembryonic lethality of the *rps24b-2 rrp7-1* genotype.

We analyzed 45S pre-rRNA maturation in the viable double mutants, finding similar levels of P-A_3 or P′-A_3/18S-A_3/18S-A_2 pre-rRNAs in *rps24b-2 smo4-3*, *rps24b-2 mtr4-2* and *rps24b-2 parl1-2* compared to the single mutants using the S2 and S7 probes (Figure 6A and B). The *smo4-3* and *mtr4-2* single mutants accumulate 7S and 5.8S+10 pre-rRNAs, respectively (Lange et al., 2011; Micol-Ponce et al., 2020). Unexpectedly, using the S9 probe, we detected higher levels of 7S pre-rRNA in *rps24b-2 smo4-3* and of 5.8S+10 pre-rRNA in *rps24b-2 mtr4-2* compared to the *smo4-3* and *mtr4-2* single mutants, even though *rps24b-2* did not accumulate either of these pre-rRNA species (Figure 6C and D).

To assess the subcellular localization of 5.8S pre-rRNA in the *rps24b-2 smo4-3* and *rps24b-2 mtr4-2* double mutants, we performed an RNA-FISH assay. We used the 23-nt long S9 probe, which hybridizes to the ITS2 region adjacent to the 5.8S rRNA coding sequence, and allows detection of all 5.8S pre-rRNA, but not mature 5.8S rRNA

(Figure 4A). In agreement with the results of RNA gel blot analysis (Figure 6C and D), we observed very low fluorescence in the nucleoli of wild-type Col-0 and L*er*, higher fluorescence in the *api6*, *rps24a-1*, *rps24b-2*, *smo4-3* and *mtr4-2* single mutants, and much higher fluorescence in the *rps24b-2 smo4-3* and *rps24b-2 mtr4-2* double mutants (Supplemental Figure 8). The enhanced fluorescence that we observed in the nucleoli of *rps24* mutants compared to Col-0 and L*er* is likely due to the accumulation of the $35S_{A123B}$/35S(P) species that we detected in RNA gel blots using the S7 and S9 probes (Figure 4B-D).

In the RNA-FISH assays, we also observed enlarged nucleoli in *rps24b-2* and (especially) *smo4-3 rps24b-2* and *mtr4-2 rps24b-2* double mutant plants compared to Col-0 (Supplemental Figure 8). Perturbations in the size and organization of the nucleolus are hallmarks of nucleolar stress, which occurs when ribosome biogenesis is defective, as previously observed in the nucleoli of *smo4* plants (Micol-Ponce et al., 2020). Therefore, we measured the areas of the nucleolus and nucleoplasm using the fluorescence of the S9 probe and of nuclei stained with DAPI. Both the nucleus and nucleolus of *api6* and *rps24b-2* (but not *rps24a-1*) were larger than those of the respective wild types (Supplemental Figure 8A2 and A3). Moreover, the nucleus and nucleolus were greatly enlarged in both the *smo4-3 rps24b-2* and *mtr4-2 rps24b-2* double mutants (Supplemental Figure 8D-F, J-L, P-R, V-A3).

To determine whether the organization of the nucleolus was perturbed in the *rps24* mutants, we used an antibody against the nucleolar marker fibrillarin to examine the roots of Col-0, *rps24a-1* and *rps24b-2* seedlings. We did not observe differences in nucleolar organization between the wild type and mutants (Supplemental Figure 9), suggesting that the defective 45S pre-rRNA processing in the *rps24* mutants causes the enlargement but not disorganization of the nucleolus.

Taken together, these results suggest that RPS24B participates (directly or indirectly) in the maturation of 5.8S rRNA. Since the *rps24a-1* and *rps24b-2* single mutants do not accumulate any 5.8S pre-rRNA, RPS24B might play a lesser role in 5.8S maturation compared to SMO4 and MTR4; therefore, the absence of RPS24B is only perceived in the absence of SMO4 and MTR4. Another interpretation is that RPS24 participates in the repression of 45S rDNA transcription. Under this second scenario, the accumulation of 5.8S pre-rRNAs would be more evident in the *rps24b* background than in the *smo4-3* and *mtr4-2* single mutant backgrounds due to the presence of more 5.8S pre-rRNAs to process.

45S pre-rRNAs accumulate in the *rps24* mutants

Kinetic analysis of Arabidopsis 45S pre-rRNA processing has revealed three rate-limiting steps: the processing of 35S, 32S, and P-A$_3$ pre-rRNAs; 32S and P-A$_3$ pre-rRNAs are the first two precursors in the two alternative pathways, the 5'-ETS first pathway and the ITS1-first pathway, respectively (Supplemental Figure 1). The level of 35S pre-rRNA is the major indicator of the transcription rate of 45S rDNA (Shanmugam et al., 2021). Our results show that a reduction in RPS24 activity lower the rate of 45S pre-rRNA processing, as shown by the accumulation of pre-rRNAs produced by two of the rate-limiting steps, 35S$_{A123B}$/35S(P) and P-A$_3$. Our results also suggest that 45S rDNA transcription is upregulated in the *rps24* mutants.

Therefore, we performed RT-PCR to investigate the presence of the four different 45S rDNA variants (*VAR*s), which differ in their 3′-ETS (Figure 8A), using the p3+p4 primer pair (Figure 7A and B; Supplemental Table 2). We did not detect any differences in the intensities of the PCR bands using genomic DNA as a template (Figure 7C). However, the intensities of the PCR bands corresponding to *VAR4*, *VAR2* and *VAR3* were higher in *rps24a-1*, and those corresponding to all four *VARs* were higher in *rps24b-2*, compared to the wild type (Figure 7D). Since changes in the relative abundance of 45S rRNA variants are usually interpreted as changes in 45S rDNA transcription (Kojima et al., 2007; Pontvianne et al., 2010; Durut et al., 2014), these results suggest that RPS24B represses 45S rDNA expression.

To confirm these results, we carried out RT-qPCR analysis using the 45S pre-rRNA-45S-F and 45S pre-rRNA-45S-R primers, which hybridize to the 5′-ETS (Supplemental Table 2; Zhu et al., 2016). We detected higher levels of 45S pre-rRNA in the *rps24* mutants than in wild-type plants (Figure 7E).

RPS24B-GFP co-precipitates with nucleolar factors involved in ribosome biogenesis and pre-mRNA splicing

To identify nucleolar interactors of RPS24B, we carried out co-immunoprecipitation (Co-IP) assays with an anti-GFP antibody in Col-0 plants harboring the *35S$_{pro}$:RPS24B:GFP* transgene. The raw list of 2,635 proteins that co-purified with RPS24B-GFP was filtered by considering only those classified as high-confidence proteins (q-value <0.01) with at least two peptide spectra matches (PSMs) in each of the three biological replicates (Supplemental Dataset 2). Several additional filters were used, which discarded proteins that co-immunoprecipitated with all four other proteins examined (none related to ribosome biogenesis), as we considered these to be spurious interactions. We analyzed the predicted suborganellar localizations of the interactors using MuLOCDeep (Jiang et al., 2021), discarding those that were not predicted to be nucleolar proteins, which reduced the list of putative interactors to 25

proteins (Supplemental Dataset 2). We refined the annotations of these proteins using the TAIR or Aramemnon database and those identified in two independent nucleolar proteomic analyses (Palm et al., 2016; Montacié et al., 2017). In addition, we added the pathways that were enriched in genes that were co-expressed with the genes encoding the 25 putative interactors of RPS24B obtained from the ATTEDII database (Obayashi et al., 2022).

We found ten proteins encoded by genes whose co-expression was enriched in ribosome components, which included six RPs, six whose co-expression was enriched in genes involved in ribosome biogenesis, three in spliceosome components, and two in RNA transport, but that were components of the spliceosome: PRE-MRNA PROCESSING FACTOR 8 (PRP8), the main component of the spliceosome, and one of its major interactors during pre-mRNA splicing, the putative RNA helicase BAD RESPONSE TO REFRIGERATION2 (BRR2; Nguyen et al., 2013).

Among the putative interactors identified by co-immunoprecipitation that were encoded by genes that are co-expressed with genes involved in ribosome biogenesis, we found AT3G05060 (*NOP58-2*) and AT5G27120 (*NOP58-1*); these genes encode the co-orthologs of *NOP58* in yeast and humans, which are putative components of the C/D small nucleolar ribonucleoprotein (snoRNP) complex. AT1G31970 and AT1G77030, encoding DEA(D/H)-box RNA helicases, were two other co-expressed genes that are putative orthologs of yeast *DEAD-box protein 3* (*DBP3*) and *DBP10*, respectively, both of which are involved in 60S subunit biogenesis. DBP3 functions in the endonucleolytic cleavage of site A_3 in ITS1, upstream of 5.8S rRNA (Weaver et al., 1997), and DBP10 functions in the cleavage of sites C_1 and C_2 in the ITS2 (Burger et al., 2000). AT1G31970 encodes STRESS RESPONSE SUPPRESSOR 1 (STRS1), a nucleolar- and chromocenter-localized protein that undergo stress-mediated relocalization and is involved in epigenetic gene silencing at heterochromatic loci; its mutants show reduced DNA methylation at these loci (Khan et al., 2014). AT1G77030 encodes the putative DEAD-box ATP-dependent RNA HELICASE 29 (RH29), which has not been studied in Arabidopsis. AT3G56510, AT5G04600 and AT5G57120 have not been studied either. AT3G56510 is annotated at the Aramemnon database (Schwacke et al., 2003) as the putative ortholog of yeast Eighteen S rRNA Factor 2 (Esf2), a nucleolar component of the small subunit processsome (SSU) involved in early steps of 18S rRNA maturation. Yeast Esf2 associates with 5′-ETS and is required for SSU assembly and compaction. The *esf2* mutants show defective cleavage of sites A0 (within the 5′-ETS) through A2 (within the ITS1), therefore exhibiting reduced 18S rRNA production (Hoang et al., 2005). AT5G04600 encodes the putative ortholog of human NUCLEOLAR PROTEIN INTERACTING WITH THE FHA DOMAIN OF MKI67 (NIFK),

399   an RBF involved in endonucleolytic ITS2 cleavage that is required for 28S and 5.8S

400   rRNA maturation (Pan et al., 2015). Finally, AT5G57120 encodes the putative ortholog

401   of yeast serine rich protein 40 (SRP40) and human nucleolar and coiled-body

402   phosphoprotein 1 (NOLC1), also named Nopp140 (140 kDa nucleolar phosphoprotein),

403   which might function as chaperones of snoRNP complexes (Yang et al., 2000).

DISCUSSION

The Arabidopsis *RPS24A* and *RPS24B* paralogs exhibit combined haploinsufficiency

The ribosome has traditionally been considered to be a highly conserved housekeeping machinery, as it is present in all cells of all organisms. In prokaryotic and eukaryotic ribosomes, the number of RPs is almost identical, i.e., 55 and 79, respectively. However, proteomic analyses of animals, plants and fungi have revealed the existence of different ribosomes with heterogeneous compositions and stoichiometry, suggesting that specialized ribosomes might translate different sets of mRNAs. Such heterogeneity in composition results from the existence of different paralogous genes produced by gene duplications. These genes, with similar architectures and variable numbers among species, encode quasi-identical RPs [reviewed in Martinez-Seidel et al. (2020; Petibon et al. (2021)].

Plants have undergone more frequent gene and genomic duplications during evolution compared to metazoans, leading to families of RPs with two to seven paralogs in Arabidopsis (Carroll et al., 2008). In Arabidopsis, the RPs of the cytoplasmic ribosome appear to be encoded by 234 functional genes, whereas the ribosomes of humans and yeast include proteins encoded by 85 and 137 genes, respectively (Barakat et al., 2001; Chang et al., 2005; Carroll et al., 2008). In the quasi-identical RP pairs studied to date, one of the two paralogous genes is sometimes expressed at a higher level and contributes more to ribosome structure than the other gene. In other cases, their levels of expression and contributions to the ribosome are equivalent [reviewed in Petibon et al. (2021)]. Loss of function of either gene of a pair produces a similar mutant phenotype, indicating that both paralogs are required for normal development (Savada and Bonham-Smith, 2014; Salih et al., 2020; Xiong et al., 2021).

Haploinsufficiency describes the requirement for more than one wild-type allele for normal development or viability for single-copy genes. Combined haploinsufficiency describes a situation in which two paralogous genes behave as a single haploinsufficient unit with four alleles. *RPS24A* and *RPS24B* provide such an example of combined haploinsufficiency, since three wild-type doses of *RPS24* are required for proper plant development and two for viability. It is worth noting that the single-copy human *RPS24* gene is a haploinsufficient locus. Haploinsufficiency is observed in several human genetic diseases, such as Diamond-Blackfan anemia (DBA), a ribosomopathy (Gazda et al., 2006) associated with the loss-of-function of *RPS24*, as well as other genes encoding RPs (Tyagi et al., 2020). Ribosomopathies are diseases

caused by mutations in genes encoding components of the ribosome, with tissue-specific effects and an increased risk of cancer [reviewed in Kang et al. (2021)].

RPS24A and *RPS24B* have similar expression patterns and contributions to the composition of Arabidopsis ribosomes, pointing to their functional equivalence and partial redundancy. However, the mRNA levels of *RPS24A* and *RPS24B* are lower than those of other genes encoding RPs (Savada and Bonham-Smith, 2014). Here we demonstrated that these genes do not show dosage compensation; i.e., *RPS24A* is not more expressed in the absence of *RPS24B*. A proper stoichiometry of ribosome structural components is crucial for ribosome function (Warner, 1999; Slavov et al., 2015; Ni and Buszczak, 2023), and our results suggest that the amount of RPS24A and RPS24B produced in Arabidopsis cells is limiting for ribosome production. Indeed, reduction in the wild-type doses of either protein in *rps24a* and *rps24b* single mutants and diheterozygous plants (Figures 1 and 2) decreases the number of productive ribosomes, resulting in an inadequate rate of protein synthesis. This phenomenon of non-allelic non-complementation is also observed in mutants affected in other Arabidopsis genes encoding RPs, including *RPS6*, *RPL5*, *RPL23* and *RPL36* (Degenhardt and Bonham-Smith, 2008; Fujikura et al., 2009; Creff et al., 2010; Casanova-Sáez et al., 2014).

RPS24A and RPS24B function as RBFs during 18S rRNA maturation, like their yeast and human orthologs

Gene duplications have allowed some RPs to acquire additional functions that might or might not be related to translation. In Arabidopsis, besides their functions as structural proteins of the ribosome, only RPS2 was shown to function as an RBF during the maturation of 25S and 18S rRNA and RPS6 in the transcriptional regulation of 45S rDNA (Kim et al., 2014; Hang et al., 2021). PROTEIN ARGININE METHYLTRANSFERASE 3 (PRMT3) and RPS2B (one of the six paralogs encoded in the Arabidopsis genome) facilitate the assembly and disassembly of the SSU processome (or 90S) and repress nucleolar stress (Hang et al., 2021). RPS6, encoded by two functionally equivalent paralogs, interacts with HISTONE DEACETYLASE 2 (HDA2) in the nucleus and nucleolus and binds to the promoter of 45S rDNA, controlling its transcription (Kim et al., 2014). Furthermore, RPL10 is related to responses to ultraviolet light stress and viral infection, and RPL24 is involved in microRNA biogenesis (Carvalho et al., 2008; Ferreyra et al., 2010a; Ferreyra et al., 2010b; Li et al., 2017).

Our results show that both Arabidopsis RPS24A and RPS24B function as RBFs in the early steps of 45S pre-rRNA processing, specifically at the P′ site of the 5′-ETS.

In the *rps24b-2*, *api6* and *rps24a-1* mutants, we detected the accumulation of

$35S_{A123B}$/35S(P) pre-rRNA (the first intermediate in 45S pre-rRNA processing) and a

reduction in the levels of 33S(P′)/32S species (the second intermediates in this

processing; Supplemental Figure 1). We also detected defects in the processing of 18S

pre-rRNA: the *rps24b-2*, *api6* and *rps24a-1* mutants accumulated P-A_3 pre-rRNA and

showed reduced levels of P′-A_3/18S-A_3/18S-A_2 pre-rRNAs (Figure 4). These results

suggest that the loss-of-function of *RPS24A* and *RPS24B* globally reduces the

processing of 5′-ETS, as occurs in response to the loss-of-function of yeast and human

RPS24 (Ferreira-Cerca et al., 2005; Choesmel et al., 2008; Robledo et al., 2008).

Moreover, the *rps24b* mutant showed an imbalance in the 25S/18S ratio, suggesting

that alterations in the processing of pre-rRNAs of the ITS1-first pathway lead to a

decrease in 18S rRNA levels.

RPS24B* genetically interacts with *NOP53* (*SMO4*) and *MTR4

We obtained double mutant combinations of *rps24b-2* with mutant alleles of genes

involved in different steps of 45S pre-rRNA processing. Two such double mutants

exhibited synergistic phenotypes: *rps24b-2 rrp7-1* was embryonic lethal, and *rps24b-*

2 mtr4-2 had a dwarf stature, with poor fertility. The phenotypes of *rps24b-2 smo4-3*

were also synergistic, as this mutant was also nearly fully sterile (Figure 5).

We previously demonstrated that RRP7 is involved in 18S rRNA maturation and

acts as a repressor of 45S rDNA transcription. The *rrp7* mutant has a reduced 18S/25S

rRNA ratio and accumulated P-A_3 pre-rRNA (Micol-Ponce et al., 2018), similar to

findings for the *rps24* mutant. Moreover, we reasoned that RRP7 might function as a

repressor of 45S rDNA, as *rrp7* showed heterochronic expression of *VAR1* and

increased *VAR3* expression (Micol-Ponce et al., 2018). Here, we determined that

rps24a-1 and *rps24b-2* contained increased levels of 45S pre-rRNA (Figure 7), which

might explain the synergistic phenotype of the *rps24b-2 rrp7-1* double mutant.

However, due to the lethality of *rps24b-2 rrp7-1*, we were unable to examine the effects

of the combination of both mutations on the maturation of 18S rRNA and/or the

transcription of 45S rDNA.

NOP53 (SMO4 in Arabidopsis) and MTR4 are RBFs that function in the

maturation of 5.8S rRNA (Lange et al., 2011; Micol-Ponce et al., 2020). MTR4 is a

cofactor of the exosome, which also functions in the degradation of P-P′, the by-product

of 5′-ETS (Lange et al., 2011). Loss-of-function of *SMO4* or *MTR4* leads to the

accumulation of 7S or 5.8S + 70-nt pre-rRNAs, respectively (which are precursors of

5.8S rRNA that are processed in the nucleolus) but not 6S rRNA (the final precursor of

5.8S rRNA maturation that is processed after its export to the cytoplasm; Lange et al.,

2011; Micol-Ponce et al., 2020). In the current study, we did not detect the accumulation of P-P′ or any 5.8S pre-rRNA in the *rps24a* or *rps24b* mutant, suggesting that RPS24A and RPS24B do not participate in these steps of 45S pre-rRNA processing. However, we unexpectedly detected the over-accumulation of specific 5.8S pre-rRNAs in *smo4-3* and *mtr4-2* and in the double mutants *rps24b-2 smo4-3* and *rps24b-2 mtr4-2* (Figure 6). Such over-accumulation may explain their synergistic phenotypic defects of these mutants. Our RNA-FISH analysis with the S9 probe confirmed these results, revealing strong fluorescent signals in the nucleoli of the double mutants (Supplemental Figure 8).

One possible explanation of these results is that RPS24B (and possibly RPS24A) functions in 5.8S rRNA maturation, albeit to a lesser extent than SMO4 and MTR4. An alternative hypothesis is that the over-accumulation of 7S and 5.8S + 70-nt pre-rRNAs, which we detected in *rps24b-2 mtr4-2* and *rps24b-2 smo4*-3 plants, respectively, is due to an increase in rDNA transcription caused by the *rps24b-2* mutation. If more pre-rRNAs are available for processing, the steps involving MTR4 and SMO4 are likely to be more strongly affected in the double mutants. We consider this second explanation to be more plausible, as it also might explain the synergistic phenotype of the *rps24b-2 rrp7-1* and *rps24b-2 parl1-2* double mutants.

The predominant nucleolar localization of RPS24B and its putative interactors also support its role as an RBF

Our results using the RPS24B-GFP fusion protein indicate that RPS24B is primarily located in the nucleolus, with some presence in the cytoplasm; these observations are consistent with previous predictions and the results of proteomic analyses. This distribution reflects the dual role of RPS24B as both a structural protein of the ribosome and an RBF involved in early steps of ribosome biogenesis and the transcriptional repression of 45S rDNA.

Using different filters that included sub-organellar localization, we identified 25 nucleolar proteins that co-immunoprecipitated with RPS24B-GFP, which we considered to be the most likely interactors. Among these were RBFs involved in the synthesis of the 60S and 40S subunits, including STRS1 (AT1G31970), AT1G77030 and AT3G56510, putative orthologs of yeast DBP3, DBP10 and ESF2 respectively, putative ortholog of yeast, as well as NIFK. We speculate that STRS1 might also be involved in repressing 45S rDNA, which would be difficult in the *rps24* background if RPS24A, RPS24B, or both proteins facilitate access to the epigenetic silencing machinery at the promoter of 45S rDNA. In fact, STRS1 localized with HDA2 in the nucleolus (Khan et al., 2014). Like RPS6, another RP that plays extra-ribosomal roles in the maturation of

18S rRNA and the transcriptional regulation of 45S rDNA (Kim et al., 2014), RPS24A
and RPS24B might also act in this capacity.

We also identified At5g57120 as an RPS24B-GFP interactor. At5g57120 is the
putative ortholog of human NOLC1, which colocalizes with RNA Pol I in the nucleolus
at 47S rDNA and might activate its transcription (Chen et al., 1999). The interaction
between the protein encoded byAT5G57120 and RPS24B might inhibit access of the-
encoded protein to the 45S rDNA promoter. RPS24B, and probably RPS24A, might
also act as chaperones to facilitate the incorporation of RBFs into their rRNA
substrates, as observed for other RPs. Although we did not find SMO4 or MTR4 among
the RPS24B-GFP interactors, we cannot exclude the possibility that RPS24B and
RPS24A function in the maturation of 5.8S rRNA. However, we consider this possibility
unlikely, as previously argued. Interestingly, we also identified two well-known splicing
factors among the proteins that co-immunoprecipitated with RPS24B-GFP: PRP8 and
the RNA helicase BRR2. PRP8 was previously identified in a U3 snoRNA
ribonucleoprotein complex isolated from cauliflower (*Brassica oleracea*) inflorescences
(Samaha et al., 2010) and was identified in a proteomic analysis of the Arabidopsis
nucleolus (Palm et al., 2016). We cannot exclude the possibility that PRP8 and BRR2
function in ribosome biogenesis, as the expression of *RPS24B-GFP* was unable to
rescue the mutant phenotype of *rps24b-2* plants, suggesting that many RNA helicases
act in more than one pathway. Indeed, yeast Prp43p and its human ortholog DDX5 are
multifunctional RNA helicases that participate in ribosome biogenesis and pre-mRNA
splicing, among other RNA metabolic steps [reviewed in Bohnsack et al. (2022)].
However, our assay may have generated false positives, since expressing *RPS24B-*
GFP, which whose encoded protein we used for co-immunoprecipitation, was unable to
rescue the mutant phenotype of *rps24b-2* plants.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Plant material and growth conditions

The wild-type Arabidopsis (*Arabidopsis thaliana*) (L) Heynh. Columbia-0 (Col-0) and Landsberg *erecta* (L*er*) accessions were provided by the Nottingham Arabidopsis Stock Centre (NASC) and propagated in our laboratory. The *api6* mutant in the L*er* background was isolated in the laboratory of J.L. Micol after ethyl methanesulfonate (EMS) mutagenesis (Berná et al., 1999). Seeds of *rps24b-2* (SALK_000766; Wang et al., 2018), *rps24a-1* (SALK_126799), *smo4-3* (SALK_071764; Micol-Ponce et al., 2018), *mtr4-2* (SAIL_50_C11; Lange et al., 2011), *rrp7-1* (SAIL_628_F08; Micol-Ponce et al., 2018) and *parl1-2* (SALK_002764; Petricka and Nelson, 2007) were also provided by NASC. Seed sterilization, sowing, plant culture and crosses were performed as previously described (Berná et al., 1999; Ponce et al., 1999).

Positional cloning of the *api6* mutation and genotyping of single and double mutants

Genomic DNA extraction and mapping of the *api6* mutation were performed as previously described (Ponce et al., 1999; 2006). The primers used for fine-mapping are listed in Supplemental Table 1. The *api6* point mutation was identified by Sanger sequencing using the primers listed in Supplemental Table 2. The presence of T-DNA insertions in *RPS24A*, *RPS24B*, *SMO4*, *RRP7, MTR4* and *PARL1* was verified by PCR using the primers shown in Supplemental Table 2.

Most Sanger sequencing reactions and electrophoreses were carried out in our laboratory with ABI PRISM BigDye Terminator Cycle Sequencing kits and an ABI PRISM 3130xl Genetic Analyzer (Applied Biosystems). Some Sanger sequencing reactions were carried out by the Stab Vida company (Portugal).

Construction of transgenic lines

The constructs used in this study were generated by Gateway cloning as described in Sánchez-García et al. (2015) using the pGEM-T Easy221 entry vector and the pMDC83 destination vector (Curtis and Grossniklaus, 2003). To generate the $35S_{pro}$:*RPS24B*:*GFP* transgene, the full-length coding region (without the stop codon) of *RPS24B* was amplified by PCR using genomic DNA from Col-0 as a template and primers that included the *att*B1 and *att*B2 sequences (Supplemental Table 2). The integrity of the constructs was verified by Sanger sequencing. Chemically competent *Escherichia coli* DH5α cells were transformed with the Gateway cloning products by the heat shock method, and Agrobacterium (*Agrobacterium tumefaciens*) C58C1 cells

were transformed by electroporation with the individual destination vectors carrying

each insert of interest.

Plant morphological and histochemical analyses

The rosettes of plants were photographed under a Nikon SMZ1500 stereomicroscope

equipped with a Nikon DS-Ri2 digital camera. For large rosettes, several photographs

from the same plant were assembled with the Photomerge tool of Adobe Photoshop

CS3 software (Adobe). The backgrounds of the photographs were homogenized using

Adobe Photoshop CS3 software without modifying the rosettes.

Fluorescence and confocal laser-scanning microscopy images were taken

under a Leica STELLARIS microscope (Leica) and processed using Leica Application

Suite X (LAS X) software (Leica). For nuclear staining, the roots of seedlings at 5 days

after stratification (das) were immersed in 0.5 µg/mL 4′,6-diamidino-2-phenylindole

(DAPI) for 5 min and washed two times with water. DAPI, GFP, tetramethylrhodamine-

5-isothiocyanate (TRITC) and cyanine 3 (Cy3) were excited at 405, 488, 503 and 506

nm, respectively, and their emissions collected at 425/727, 515/730, 530/732 and

511/726 nm, respectively.

RT-PCR and RNA gel-blot analysis

Genomic DNA was extracted from the samples using a DNeasy Plant mini kit (Qiagen)

from three biological replicates per genotype (leaves from a pool of three seedlings

collected 15 das from three different Petri plates). Total RNA was extracted from the

samples using TRIzol Reagent (Invitrogen) for RT-PCR and semiquantitative RT-PCR

and an RNeasy Plant Mini Kit (Qiagen) for RT-qPCR RNA gel blots. Three biological

replicates per genotype were used for RT-PCR and end-point RT-PCR, and eight were

used for RT-qPCR. Each biological replicate included the aerial tissues from a pool of

three seedlings collected 15 das from three different Petri plates. In all RT-PCR

assays, RNA was treated twice with Turbo DNase (Invitrogen), and reverse

transcription was carried out using random hexamer primers and Maxima Reverse

Transcriptase (Invitrogen). The *ORNITHINE CARBAMOYLTRANSFERASE* (*OTC*) and

ACTIN2 (*ACT2*) housekeeping genes were used as internal controls: *OTC* for RT-PCR

and semiquantitative RT-PCR, and *ACT2* for RT-qPCR assays. Primers for all RT-PCR

assays and those used as controls for genomic DNA amplification in the analysis of

45S rDNA variant expression are listed in Supplemental Table 2.

For RNA gel-blot analysis, four digoxigenin (DIG) labeled probes were used,

whose sequences were obtained from Lange et al. (2011); the S6, S7 and S9 probes

were oligonucleotides labeled at both the 3′ and 5′ ends, synthetized by Sigma-Aldrich.

The S2 probe was synthetized by PCR using genomic DNA as a template, DIG-11-

dUTP (Roche) and the S2-Fw and S2-Rv primers (Supplemental Table 2). Two µg of

total RNA per sample were loaded onto 1.2% (w/v) agarose and 2.12% (v/v)

formaldehyde or 6% (w/v) polyacrylamide gels. Electrophoresis, hybridization and

detection were performed as described in Micol-Ponce et al. (2018; 2020).

RNA-FISH and immunolocalization

RNA fluorescence *in situ* hybridization (RNA-FISH) was performed as described by

Parry et al. (2006) and modified in Micol-Ponce et al. (2020) using the S9 probe labeled

with Cy3 dye (Eurofins Genomics) at a concentration of 0.5 µg/mL. Leaves were

mounted onto slides with Vectashield antifade mounting medium (Vector Laboratories)

containing 0.01 µg/mL DAPI, which was used as a nuclear marker.

Fibrillarin immunolocalization was performed following Pasternak et al. (2015),

as modified by Micol-Ponce et al. (2020). In brief, roots of seedlings were collected at 5

das and fixed for 40 min at 37°C in a solution containing 2% (w/v) paraformaldehyde in

1× microtubule-stabilizing buffer (50 mM PIPES, 5 mM $MgSO_4$, and 5 mM EGTA, pH

6.9) and 0.1% (v/v) Triton X-100. An anti-fibrillarin [38F3] (Abcam) primary antibody

was used at a 1:250 dilution, and a TRITC-conjugated anti-mouse IgG (Sigma Aldrich)

secondary antibody was used at a 1:500 dilution. Nuclei were stained for 10 min with

0.2 µg/mL DAPI and washed for 5 min before mounting the samples on slides with

water. Nuclei and nucleoli areas were measured as described in Micol-Ponce et al.

(2020) using the NIS Elements AR3.1 (Nikon) image-analysis package.

Co-immunoprecipitation assay

For co-immunoprecipitation assays, three biological replicates were used, each

consisting in 1 g of rosettes of *35S_{pro}:RPS24B:GFP* transgenic plants in the Col-0

background collected at 15 das. The tissue was manually ground and proteins were

extracted as described in Navarro-Quiles et al. (2022). Co-immunoprecipitation was

carried out using a µMACS GFP Isolation kit (Milteny Biotec). The effectiveness of the

immunoprecipitation of RPS24B-GFP was checked by immunoblotting using anti-GFP-

HRP antibody (Milteny Biotec).

The co-immunoprecipitated proteins were identified at the Centro Nacional de

Biotecnología (CNB) Proteomics facility (Madrid, Spain) by liquid chromatography

followed by tandem mass spectrometry (LC-MS/MS) using an Orbitrap Exploris 240

mass spectrometer. Tandem mass peptide spectra were searched against Arabidopsis

protein sequences in the Araport11 database using the MASCOT search engine

(Matrix Science). Peptide sequences identified with a false discovery rate (FDR) < 1%

were considered to be valid. To increase the confidence of the results, only the proteins

identified with at least two peptides in each of the three biological replicates were
considered for analysis.

Accession numbers

Sequence data from this article can be found at The Arabidopsis Information Resource
(https://www.arabidopsis.org/) under the following accession numbers: *RPS24A*
(AT3G04920), *RPS24B* (AT5G28060), *RRP7* (AT5G38720), *SMO4* (AT2G40430),
MTR4 (AT1G59760), and *PARL1* (AT1G48920). Although AT3G04920 and
AT5G28060, which encode RPS24A and RPS24B, have been renamed as ES24Z and
ES24Y, respectively, according to a new nomenclature for RPs (Scarpin et al., 2022),
we used their old names in this work, since the *rps24b-1* and *rps24b-2* alleles of
RPS24 were previously studied (Horiguchi et al., 2011).
698

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710

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

712 M.R.P. obtained funding and conceived, designed and supervised research; all authors
713 performed research and wrote the paper.

 FIGURE LEGENDS

Figure 1. Alleles of the *RPS24A* and *RPS24B* genes studied in this work. (A)

Schematic representation of the *RPS24B* locus, with the positions and nature of its

mutations indicated. Exons and introns are depicted as black boxes and lines,

respectively, and white boxes represent untranslated regions (UTRs). A red arrow and

a triangle mark the point mutation of *api6* and the T-DNA insertion of *rps24b-2*,

respectively. The molecular changes caused by *api6* and *rps24b-2* are shown in red in

the corresponding cDNAs and predicted proteins. (B and C) Electropherograms

showing the cDNA sequences of *RPS24B* in L*er* (B) and *api6* (C)*.* Total RNA was

extracted from seedlings collected 15 das. (D) Structure of the *RPS24A* gene,

represented as described in A. (E-J) Rosettes of Col-0 (E), *rps24b-2* (F), *rps24a-1* (G),

L*er* (H), *api6* (I) and *api6/rps24b-2* F$_1$ seedlings (J). Scale bars, 2 mm. Photographs

were taken 14 days after stratification (das).

Figure 2. Genetic evidence for the combined haploinsufficiency of *RPS24A* and

RPS24B. (A-D) Representative photographs of rosettes of Col-0 (A), *rps24b-2* (B),

rps24a-1 (C) and (D) *RPS24B/rps24b-2;RPS24A/rps24a-1* plants. (E-H) Siliques of (E)

Col-0, (F) *rps24b-2*, (G) *rps24a-1* and (H) *RPS24B/rps24b-2;RPS24A/rps24a-1* plants.

Scale bars, 2 mm (A-D), or 1 mm (E-H). Photographs were taken (A-D) at 14 or 39 (E-

H) das.

Figure 3. Subcellular localization of RPS24B. (A-G) Confocal laser-scanning

micrographs of root cells from transgenic *35S$_{pro}$:RPS24B:GFP* seedlings in the Col-0

background, collected at 5 das. Fluorescent signals correspond to GFP (A, C, F), 4′,6-

diamidino-2-phenylindole (DAPI) (B, E), and their overlay (D, G). Scale bars, 100 μm

(A), 50 μm (B-D), or 10 μm (E-G).

Figure 4. rRNA maturation in the *rps24a* and *rps24b* mutants. (A) Diagram of 45S pre-

rRNA processing intermediates detected in RNA gel blots. The regions hybridizing to

each probe are highlighted in green (S2 probe), yellow (S7 probe) or blue (S9 probe).

Vertical bars in 45S rRNA indicate the endonucleolytic cleavage sites in pre-rRNAs that

are relevant to this analysis. ETS and ITS indicate external and internal transcribed

spacers, respectively. (B-D) Visualization of the processing of the 5.8S, 18S and 25S

rRNA precursors by gel blot analysis. Total RNA from seedlings collected at 15 das

was separated on a formaldehyde-agarose gel, transferred to a nylon membrane and

hybridized with the S7 (B), S2 (C), or S9 probe (D). EtBr, ethidium bromide-stained

gels, visualized before blotting, serving as loading controls. Similar results were obtained in at least two independent experiments.

Figure 5. Genetic interactions between *rps24b-2* and mutant alleles of genes encoding RBFs. Representative photographs of rosettes of Col-0 (A), *smo4-3* (B), *mtr4-2* (C), *parl1-2* (D), *rps24b-2* (E), *rps24b-2 smo4-3* (F), *rps24b-2 mtr4-2* (G) and *rps24b-2 parl1-2* plants (H). From left to right, adult plants of Col-0 (I), *rps24b-2* (J), *smo4-3* (K), *rps24b-2 smo4-3* (L), *mtr4-2* (M), *rps24b-2 mtr4-2* (N), *parl1-2* (O) and *rps24b-2 parl1-2* (P). Photographs were taken at 21 das (A-H) or 57 das (I-P). Scale bars, 2mm (A-H), or 5 cm (I-P).

Figure 6. rRNA maturation in double mutants between *rps24b-2* and alleles of genes encoding RBFs. (A-D) Visualization of the processing of the 5.8S, 18S and 25S rRNA precursors using gel blot analysis. Total RNA from seedlings collected 15 das was separated on (A-C) formaldehyde-agarose or (D) polyacrylamide-urea gels, transferred to a nylon membrane and hybridized with the S7 (A), S2 (B), or S9 probe (C and D). EtBr, ethidium bromide-stained gels, visualized before blotting, serving as loading controls. Similar results were obtained in at least two independent experiments.

Figure 7. 45S rDNA expression in the *rps24a-1* and *rps24b-2* mutants. (A and B) Schematic representation of 45S pre-rRNA (A) and its 3′-ETS polymorphic region (B), modified from Micol-Ponce *et al.* (2018). (C and D) PCR analysis of the relative abundance of 45S rDNA variants using genomic DNA (C) and cDNA templates (D) from three biological replicates obtained from Col-0, *rps24a-1* and *rps24b-2* plants. The analysis was performed twice with similar results. (E) RT-qPCR analysis of 45S rRNA abundance. Eight biological replicates were performed per genotype (Col-0, *rps24a-1*, and *rps24b-2*), with three technical replicates in each experiment, resulting in 24 amplifications per genotype. The analyses were carried out using ExpressionSuite Software. Asterisks indicate a significant difference with Col-0 in a Mann-Whitney U test (n = 8) (*$P < 0.05$).

 SUPPLEMENTAL FIGURE LEGENDS

Supplemental Figure 1. Overview of 45S pre-rRNA processing in Arabidopsis.

Colored boxes represent the sequences of the three mature rRNAs transcribed from

the 45S rDNA genes. Vertical arrows indicate endonucleolytic cleavages; letters

indicate the cleavage site in the corresponding pre-rRNA. Only the relevant factors and

the human (H) and yeast (Y) 18S pre-rRNAs related to this study are represented.

Based on information from Sáez-Vasquez and Delseny (2019).

Supplemental Figure 2. Sequence conservation between the RPS24A and RPS24B

paralogs. Amino acid sequence alignment of Arabidopsis RPS24B and RPS24A. The

14 amino acids that are absent from the RPS24B variant produced by the expression

of the *api6* allele are highlighted in red letters. Identical and similar residues are shaded

in black and gray, respectively. Asterisks and dots in the consensus line indicate

identical and conserved residues, respectively. Numbers indicate residue positions.

The alignment was obtained using ClustalW2 and shaded with Boxshade 3.21

(http://www.ch.embnet.org/software/BOX_form.html). Nuclear and nucleolar

localization sequences predicted with LOCALIZER (https://localizer.csiro.au/) and NoD

software (http://www.compbio.dundee.ac.uk/www-nod/index.jsp) are underlined in

black and green, respectively.

Supplemental Figure 3. *RPS24B* expression analysis. (A) Schematic representation

of *RPS24B* and its mutant alleles used in this study. Gene structure is represented as

described in the Figure 1 legend. Black arrows represent the primers used for

semiquantitative RT-PCR amplifications in (B). (B) Semiquantitative RT-PCR analysis

of *RPS24B* in the *rps24a* and *rps24b* mutants used in this study. The bands for each

PCR were visualized after 25, 30 and 35 cycles of amplification. Total RNA was

extracted from seedlings collected at 15 das. Transcripts from the *OTC* gene were

used as an internal control. The primer sequences used are shown in Supplemental

Table 1.

Supplemental Figure 4. Predicted localization of RPS24A. (A-B) Predicted subcellular

(A) and sub-organellar (B) localization of RPS24A using MULocDeep software

(https://mu-loc.org/).

Supplemental Figure 5. Predicted localization of RPS24B. (A-B) Predicted subcellular

(A) and sub-organellar (B) localization of RPS24B protein using MULocDeep software

(https://mu-loc.org/).

Supplemental Figure 6. Relative amounts of 18S and 25S RNA in the *rps24* mutants. Agilent 2100 Bioanalyzer electropherogram profiles of total RNA from Col-0, *rps24a-1*, *rps24b-2*, L*er* and *api6*. Total RNA was extracted from seedlings collected at 15 das.

Supplemental Figure 7. Genetic interactions between *rps24b-2* and *rrp7-1*. (A-D) Representative photographs of rosettes of Col-0 (A), *rps24b-2* (B), *rrp7-1* (C) and *rps24b-2 rrp7-1* plants (D). Photographs were taken from seedlings collected at 14 das. Scale bars, 2 mm.

Supplemental Figure 8. Subcellular localization of 5.8S rRNA precursors. (A-A1) RNA-FISH assay in palisade mesophyll cells from first-node leaves of L*er* (A-C), *smo4-3* (D-F), *api6* (G-I), *rps24b-2 smo4-3* (J-L), Col-0 (M-O), *mtr4-2* (P-R), *rps24a-1* (S-U), *rps24b-2 mtr4-2* (V-X) and *rps24b-2* plants (Y-A1). Fluorescent signals correspond to DAPI (in blue; A, D, G, J, M, P S, V, and Y), used as a nuclear marker; the S9 probe labeled with Cy3 (in red; B, E, H, K, N, Q, T, W, and Z); and (C, F, I, L, O, R, U, X, and A1) their overlay. Plants were collected at 21 das. Scale bars, 49 μm. (Ab and AC) Nucleus (AB) and nucleolus (AC) areas measured as DAPI and S9 probe fluorescence, respectively. Asterisks indicate significant differences from the wild type and parental lines (indicated by color) in a Student's *t*-test (*$P < 0.0001$).

Supplemental Figure 9. Nucleolus organization in *rps24* root cells. (A-I) Visualization (by immunolocalization) of the fibrillarin nuclear marker in root cells of Col-0 (A, D, and G), *rps24a-1* (B, E, and H) and *rps24b-2* plants (C, F, and I). Fluorescent signals correspond to DAPI (A-C), the secondary antibody conjugated with TRITC for fibrillarin detection (D-E) and their overlay (G-I). Immunolocalization was performed in at least 5 seedlings per genotype, collected at 5 das.

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Cabezas-Fuster *et al*., Figure 1

Figure 1. Alleles of the *RPS24A* and *RPS24B* genes studied in this work. (A) Schematic representation of the *RPS24B* locus, with the positions and nature of its mutations indicated. Exons and introns are depicted as black boxes and lines, respectively, and white boxes represent untranslated regions (UTRs). A red arrow and a triangle mark the point mutation of *api6* and the T-DNA insertion of *rps24b-2*, respectively. The molecular changes caused by *api6* and *rps24b-2* are shown in red in the corresponding cDNAs and predicted proteins. (B and C) Electropherograms showing the cDNA sequences of *RPS24B* in L*er* (B) and *api6* (C). Total RNA was extracted from seedlings collected 15 das. (D) Structure of the *RPS24A* gene, represented as described in A. (E-J) Rosettes of Col-0 (E), *rps24b-2* (F), *rps24a-1* (G), L*er* (H), *api6* (I) and *api6/rps24b-2* F_1 seedlings (J). Scale bars, 2 mm. Photographs were taken 14 days after stratification (das).

Figure 2. Genetic evidence for the combined haploinsufficiency of *RPS24A* and *RPS24B* (A-D) Representative photographs of rosettes of Col-0 (A), *rps24b-2* (B), *rps24a-1* (C) and (D) *RPS24B/rps24b-2;RPS24A/rps24a-1* plants. (E-H) Siliques of (E) Col-0, (F) *rps24b-2*, (G) *rps24a-1* and (H) *RPS24B/rps24b-2;RPS24A/rps24a-1* plants. Scale bars, 2 mm (A-D), or 1 mm (E-H). Photographs were taken (A-D) at 14 or 39 (E-H) das.

Figure 3. Subcellular localization of RPS24B. (A-G) Confocal laser-scanning micrographs of root cells from transgenic *35S_{pro}:RPS24B:GFP* seedlings in the Col-0 background, collected at 5 das. Fluorescent signals correspond to GFP (A, C, F), 4′,6-diamidino-2-phenylindole (DAPI) (B, E), and their overlay (D, G). Scale bars, 100 µm (A), 50 µm (B-D), or 10 µm (E-G).

Figure 4. rRNA maturation in the *rps24a* and *rps24b* mutants. (A) Diagram of 45S pre-rRNA processing intermediates detected in RNA gel blots. The regions hybridizing to each probe are highlighted in green (S2 probe), yellow (S7 probe) or blue (S9 probe). Vertical bars in 45S rRNA indicate the endonucleolytic cleavage sites in pre-rRNAs that are relevant to this analysis. ETS and ITS indicate external and internal transcribed spacers, respectively. (B-D) Visualization of the processing of the 5.8S, 18S and 25S rRNA precursors by gel blot analysis. Total RNA from seedlings collected at 15 das was separated on a formaldehyde-agarose gel, transferred to a nylon membrane and hybridized with the S7 (B), S2 (C), or S9 probe (D). EtBr, ethidium bromide-stained gels, visualized before blotting, serving as loading controls. Similar results were obtained in at least two independent experiments.

Figure 5. Genetic interactions between *rps24b-2* and mutant alleles of genes encoding RBFs. Representative photographs of rosettes of Col-0 (A), *smo4-3* (B), *mtr4-2* (C), *parl1-2* (D), *rps24b-2* (E), *rps24b-2 smo4-3* (F), *rps24b-2 mtr4-2* (G) and *rps24b-2 parl1-2* plants (H). From left to right, adult plants of Col-0 (I), *rps24b-2* (J), *smo4-3* (K), *rps24b-2 smo4-3* (L), *mtr4-2* (M), *rps24b-2 mtr4-2* (N), *parl1-2* (O) and *rps24b-2 parl1-2* (P). Photographs were taken at 21 das (A-H) or 57 das (I-P). Scale bars, 2mm (A-H), or 5 cm (I-P).

Figure 6. rRNA maturation in double mutants between *rps24b-2* and alleles of genes encoding RBFs. (A-D) Visualization of the processing of the 5.8S, 18S and 25S rRNA precursors using gel blot analysis. Total RNA from seedlings collected 15 das was separated on (A-C) formaldehyde-agarose or (D) polyacrylamide-urea gels, transferred to a nylon membrane and hybridized with the S7 (A), S2 (B), or S9 probe (C and D). EtBr, ethidium bromide-stained gels, visualized before blotting, serving as loading controls. Similar results were obtained in at least two independent experiments.

Figure 7. 45S rDNA expression in the *rps24a-1* and *rps24b-2* mutants. (A and B) Schematic representation of 45S pre-rRNA (A) and its 3′-ETS polymorphic region (B), modified from Micol-Ponce *et al.* (2018). (C and D) PCR analysis of the relative abundance of 45S rDNA variants using genomic DNA (C) and cDNA templates (D) from three biological replicates obtained from Col-0, *rps24a-1* and *rps24b-2* plants. The analysis was performed twice with similar results. (E) RT-qPCR analysis of 45S rRNA abundance. Eight biological replicates were performed per genotype (Col-0, *rps24a-1*, and *rps24b-2*), with three technical replicates in each experiment, resulting in 24 amplifications per genotype. The analyses were carried out using ExpressionSuite Software. Asterisks indicate a significant difference with Col-0 in a Mann-Whitney U test (n = 8) (*P < 0.05).

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