The distinct translational landscapes of Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacteria.

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Abstract

Translational control in pathogenic bacteria is fundamental to gene expression and affects

virulence and other infection phenotypes. We used an enhanced ribosome profiling protocol

coupled with parallel transcriptomics to capture accurately the global translatome of two

evolutionarily distant pathogenic bacteria – the Gram-negative bacterium *Salmonella* and the

Gram positive bacterium *Listeria* We find that the two bacteria use different mechanisms to

translationally regulate protein synthesis. In *Salmonella,* in addition to the expected

correlation between translational efficiency and *cis*-regulatory features such as Shine-

Dalgarno (SD) strength and RNA secondary structure around the initiation codon, our data

reveal an effect of the 2nd and 3rd codons, where the presence of tandem lysine codons

(AAA-AAA) enhances translation in both *Salmonella* and *E. coli*. Strikingly, none of these

features are seen in efficiently translated *Listeria* transcripts. Instead, approximately 15% of

efficiently translated *Listeria* genes exhibit 70S footprints seven nt upstream of the authentic

start codon, suggesting that these genes may be subject to a novel translational initiation

mechanism. Our results show that SD strength is not a direct hallmark of translational

efficiency in all bacteria. Instead, *Listeria* has evolved additional mechanisms to control gene

expression level that are distinct from those utilised by *Salmonella* and *E. coli.*

Introduction

Global transcriptome quantification techniques (e.g. RNASeq) are powerful methods to study

the regulation of physiology and pathogenesis of *Salmonella*[40–45]. These studies have

revealed that, despite the close linkage between prokaryotic transcription and translation,

transcript levels often do not correlate with protein abundances[38,46–51].

Studies on translational control in bacteria have predominantly been based on the Gram-

negative bacterium *E. coli* as a model organism and have shown that a combination of

Shine-Dalgarno (SD) strength and optimal codon usage amongst other factors contribute to

efficient translation[1–3]. Despite these important studies, translational control in other Gram-

negative bacteria differs greatly, for example some phyla such as *Aquificota* and

Bacteroidota naturally lack SD sequences[4–6]. Gram-positive bacteria are even more

evolutionarily distant, and their translational control is poorly understood. Given that a

significant number of infection-related deaths in humans are associated with bacterial

pathogens (both resistant and susceptible to antimicrobials)[7], it is crucial that we have a

better understanding of bacterial translational regulation. We therefore investigated two

representative bacterial pathogens – the Gram-negative *Salmonella enterica* serovar

Typhimurium (*S.* Typhimurium) and the Gram-positive *Listeria monocytogenes* (*L.*

monocytogenes)*,* to understand the global translation landscape and its relationship with

transcriptional control, particularly for the virulence machinery.

Non-typhoidal serovars of *Salmonella* are the leading cause of food-borne gastroenteritis;

they infect millions and cause *c.* 230,000 fatalities each year[8]. *S.* Typhimurium is the most

common non-typhoidal *Salmonella* strain isolated from patients around the world and is used

in mouse models to study bacterial pathogenesis and host-microbe interactions by Gram-

negative pathogens[9,10]. In addition to infecting humans, *S.* Typhimurium is an important

pathogen in livestock including chickens, pigs and cattle[11,12]. It utilises a multitude of

virulence factors to reach and invade host cells, and to support its intracellular survival[13–16].

Most *Salmonella* virulence factors are encoded within horizontally acquired genomic regions

known as *Salmonella* pathogenicity islands (SPIs)[17–21]. SPI-1 encodes a type III secretion

system (T3SS), also known as an injectisome, which is responsible for the trigger-based

invasion mechanism utilised also by many other Gram-negative bacteria. The SPI-1 T3SS

penetrates host cells and secretes effector proteins through the needle to facilitate invasion

of intestinal cells[19,20,22–24]. A further four pathogenicity islands (SPI-2, 3, 4 and 5) encode

virulence factors required for infection and survival within host cells[20,21,25]. In addition to SPI-

encoded virulence factors, some virulence factors are encoded outside of SPIs. Key

examples are genes which encode additional effector proteins (e.g. SopA and SopE), which

promote bacterial entry into host cells, regulate bacterial survival within host cells and control

inflammatory responses[22,26,27]. Another key virulence factor is the bacterial flagellum, a large

macromolecular rotary motor that enables cell motility, including to sites of infection[28–30]. A

major component of the flagellum is the protein, flagellin, an important antigen which triggers

a range of immune responses in host cells[31–35].

The Gram-positive bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes*, the leading cause of listeriosis, is one

of the most virulent foodborne pathogens, with a high rate of death associated with infection.

Like *Salmonella*, *Listeria* encodes a range of virulence factors to promote entry and survival

within host cells. Upon invasion of host cells, these bacteria replicate within the phagosome

and produce listerolysin O (LLO), which lyses the phagolysosomal membrane, allowing the

bacteria to escape into the cytoplasm, where they proliferate. They use cell-surface

virulence factors to promote host actin polymerisation and thus mediate actin-based motility

within the cytoplasm and into neighbouring cells, allowing dissemination within host tissues.

Interestingly, listeriolysin O levels are translationally regulated to control virulence,

highlighting the role of this control mechanism on bacterial pathogenesis[36].

To investigate translational control in *Salmonella* and *Listeria*, we utilised ribosome profiling

(RiboSeq) which involves deep sequencing of ribosome protected mRNA fragments to

directly capture protein synthesis in a natural setting. Initially developed in yeast, RiboSeq is

a highly sensitive global method that reveals the translatome at the time of harvest[37]. The

technique determines the positions of ribosomes by exploiting the protection of a discrete

fragment of mRNA (~30 nucleotides) from nuclease digestion conferred by a translating

ribosome[37,38]. Deep sequencing of these ribosome-protected fragments (RPFs) generates a

high-resolution view of the location and abundance of translating ribosomes on different

mRNA species. The combination of RNASeq and RiboSeq datasets provides a global

picture of: (1) mRNA abundance; (2) total protein synthesis (i.e. total number of ribosome-

protected fragments on all mRNAs per gene – a direct measurement of the total amount of

proteins being synthesised at the time of harvest); and (3) translation efficiency, a

measurement of how well each mRNA is being translated (i.e. number of ribosome-protected

fragments per mRNA). However, obtaining high quality RiboSeq datasets from bacteria has

been problematic due to numerous technical difficulties and, so far, there are limited wild-

type bacterial ribosome profiling data of sufficient resolution to reflect the triplet periodicity of

decoding, which is instrumental to accurately identify short ORFs and non-canonical control

mechanisms[39]. Here, we optimised RiboSeq for both model intracellular pathogens

Salmonella enterica and *Listeria monocytogenes*. Our data display precise triplet phasing

and, for the first time, allow us to determined their global translatome, permitting an accurate

global characterisation of bacterial translational control.

Measurement of the steady-state translatomes of *Salmonella* and *Listeria* with high-

definition RiboSeq

To dissect the regulatory layers of virulence and pathogenicity of *Salmonella* and *Listeria*,

we generated highly phased RiboSeq and parallel RNASeq data (Fig. 1A, S1, see extended

material), allowing us to accurately uncouple RNA abundance from translation efficiency of

cellular components directly relevant to virulence. The total translation (protein synthesis) of

a given gene is dependent on both its mRNA abundance and the efficiency with which it is

translated. As we were interested in components immediately relevant to infection and

virulence, cells were harvested at OD_{600} of 1, when peak production of the SPI-1

transcriptional master regulator, HilA, occurs in *Salmonella*, and at mid-log growth phase for

Listeria[52,53]. These conditions allowed us to capture translation within *Salmonella* and

Listeria that are 'primed' for infection[54].

In addition, we also addressed a major obstacle in bacterial ribosome profiling: the removal

of rRNA species, which account for a significant proportion of the total reads (> 95%),

restricting analysis to highly abundant transcripts unless immense resources are dedicated

to sequencing[55]. We therefore utilised a combination of rRNA subtraction using subtraction

kits based on oligonucleotides anti-sense to bacterial rRNA, and duplex-specific nuclease

(DSN)-based depletion treatment, to substantially reduce the proportion of rRNA reads

within libraries, thereby substantially enriching libraries for reads corresponding to ribosome-

protected fragments of mRNAs[55,56] (Fig. 1B). While the combination of anti-sense rRNA-

based subtraction and one round of DSN treatment was effective at depleting reads

corresponding to non-coding RNAs (ncRNA) including rRNA from *Salmonella* RiboSeq

libraries, *Listeria* RiboSeq libraries required two further rounds of DSN treatment to

sufficiently enrich for reads corresponding to RPFs (Fig. 1B).

Upon obtaining substantial sequencing depth, ~97% (4543/4682) of *Salmonella* genes and

~99% (2768/2800) of *Listeria* genes passed our filtering criteria for downstream analysis

(see extended material). Quality control analysis was performed with particular attention to

commonly known artefacts in bacterial RiboSeq, which could lead to over-interpretation of

data[57]. First, artefacts in bacterial RiboSeq studies can arise due to the choice of nuclease

used to generate RPFs[48,58]. RNase I is typically used to generate RPFs from eukaryotes,

whereas its use in *E. coli* has been less successful, reportedly due to its inhibition by *E. coli*

ribosomes[59]. For this reason, bacterial RiboSeq studies tend to use S7 micrococcal

nuclease (MNase). However, S7 MNase exhibits significant sequence specificity, resulting

in RiboSeq data that contains high levels of noise and a lack of triplet phasing[57]. We titrated

S7 MNase and RNase I to determine the optimal nuclease concentration to generate RPFs

(Fig. S2). Metagene translatome analysis revealed accumulation of reads corresponding to

translation initiation, regardless of nuclease treatment (Fig. 1A, S2B). Similar to previous

reports, we found that treatment with S7 MNase resulted in data that do not reflect triplet

phasing[47,48,57,58] (Fig. S2). In contrary to previous work in *E. coli*, treatment with RNase I,

however, resulted in RPFs with a distinct size distribution that are highly phased, indicating

that the enzyme can be used to generate *Salmonella* and *Listeria* RiboSeq data with single

nucleotide resolution, visible at the individual gene level (Fig. 1A, 1D, S2, S3). Further,

despite, a correlation of protein synthesis levels of genes in libraries generated with S7

MNase and RNase I, it was apparent that S7 MNase-treated RiboSeq datasets tended to

over-estimate protein synthesis, especially for genes which are poorly translated (Fig. S2C).

We then focused on in-frame reads, i.e. reads that genuinely reflects ribosome occupation,

for all downstream analysis, complemented by parallel RNASeq to tease apart RNA

abundance (i.e. total RNASeq) from protein synthesis (i.e. total RiboSeq). We processed the

data in a similar manner to our previous studies[56,60,61], followed by correlation of protein

synthesis with RNA abundance. As expected, protein synthesis positively correlated with

RNA abundance. Importantly, we also observed that a large number of mRNAs were

synthesised but not translated (Fig. S2C, S2F, S2H). This supports the notion that RNASeq

alone does not accurately reflect global protein levels in bacteria despite close coupling of

transcription and translation[49].

We were also able to identify distinct features of *Salmonella* and *Listeria* translation. First,

while the quality of *Salmonella* and *Listeria* RiboSeq libraries are comparable (Fig. 1A, S2,

S3), a subset of genes in *Listeria* had a large number of ribosomal footprints where the

expected P-site maps to a position seven nucleotides upstream of the start codon; we

termed these 'out-of-frame upstream peaks' (OUP, Fig. 1A, right). These OUP reads are

absent in all *Salmonella* RiboSeq libraries. Sequence enrichment analysis revealed that

Listeria genes containing the OUP on average possess a slightly stronger SD sequence

than *Listeria* genes without the OUP (Fig. 1B). Secondly, we observed that RPFs of highly

abundant read sizes (24, 25, 28 and 29 nucleotides) in *Salmonella* are more phased than

other read sizes (Fig. S3), similar to previous reports of plant and algae (ribosome

profiles[56,60,62,63]. This observation was consistent with a library generated with a different

Salmonella strain as well as *Listeria* on a separate occasion (Fig. S3)[56], suggesting that the

accessibility to nucleases of the mRNA exit channel of *Salmonella* and *Listeria* ribosomes is

similar to that of *Arabidopsis* and *Chlamydomonas*, where they are less protected by

ribosomal proteins than for mouse and human ribosomes. In contrast to the RiboSeq

libraries, reads in our RNA-Seq datasets have the expected features, including broader

read-size distributions, are not phased, and are equally enriched in the untranslated regions

and coding regions of mRNAs[37,55,56,60,61,64] (Fig. S2, S3, S4).

The phased *Salmonella* and *Listeria* RiboSeq data also enabled direct visualisation of

intrinsic features of bacterial translation, as illustrated by the following examples. First, the

reading frames of individual genes were clearly visible, as exemplified by the *acrAB* operon

in *Salmonella* (Fig. 1C, left) and the *gatABC* operon in *Listeria* (Fig. 1C, middle left).

Secondly, we could detect ribosome pausing events such as following the ribosome arrest

motif in *Salmonella secM* (Fig. 1D, middle right). Thirdly, we could detect changes in

ribosome density at the known sites of programmed ribosomal frameshifting within the

Salmonella prfB and *dnaX* genes and the *Listeria prfB* gene[65–69] (Fig. S5, Fig. 1D, right).

Thus the translation of previously unannotated ORFs in *Salmonella* and *Listeria* is detected

with high confidence (Table 1, Fig. S6). Finally, we revealed that global distribution of

translation efficiency of *Salmonella* is more compressed than *Listeria* (Fig. 1E).

Stoichiometric production through coordinated translation of protein complexes

associated with virulence

We next assessed whether protein synthesis levels correlate with stoichiometry of

components in multiprotein complexes. Components within multiprotein complexes are

typically thought to be produced at levels which match their stoichiometry, as the excess

production of one or more components over another could result in incorrect assembly,

misfolding or aggregation, besides resource wastage[71,72]. Li *et al.* (2014) showed that ~55%

of components in multiprotein complexes in *E. coli* are produced at levels indistinguishable

from their stoichiometry [47]. In *Salmonella* too, overall protein copy number positively

correlates with translation efficiency, supported by the stronger correlation with protein

synthesis than RNA abundance, suggesting that correct stoichiometry for a significant

subset of proteins is determined translationally (Fig. S7, table 2).

We observed many of structural-component-related operons where protein copy number is

directly controlled during translation (i.e. via translation efficiency). We therefore further

investigated how these operons – many of which are associated with pathogenicity – are

translationally controlled, starting with ATPase complexes. We first looked at the F_1F_o

ATPase complex, which in *Salmonella* is encoded by the *atp* operon. It consists of 9 genes,

8 of which encode subunits that assemble to form the F_1F_o ATPase complex (Fig. 2A and

2B). The F_1F_o ATPase is expressed from a single polycistronic transcript and should require

individual genes within the operon to exhibit different translational efficiencies to reflect the

stoichiometry of the complex[47]. *atpE* was removed from these analyses due to an

overwhelming accumulation in read counts due to ligation bias in both the RNAseq and

RiboSeq libraries, (Fig. S8). Similar to *E. coli,* we also observed a positive correlation

between stoichiometry and translation efficiency in both *Salmonella* and *Listeria*, indicating

that utilisation of translational control as a mechanism for proportional protein synthesis and

stoichiometric assembly of the F_1F_o ATPase complex is a common feature of both Gram-

positive and Gram-negative bacteria[47] (Fig. 2B). We also found that stoichiometric

production of components of the multi-drug efflux components AcrAB and the iron-sulfur

assembly components SufBCD are primarily regulated at the level of translation (Fig. S9A–

C, S10). In contrast, stoichiometric production of components of the virulence T3SS ATPase

complex is regulated by both transcript abundance and translation efficiency (Fig. S9D).

To better understand expression strategies utilised for the production of virulence factors, we

assessed whether the stoichiometry of components within multiprotein complexes

associated with virulence correlates with RNA abundance (transcription or RNA turnover) or

translation efficiency and assessed whether the correlation is supported by the functions of

individual components (e.g. whether T3SS effectors are expressed in excess of the

injectisome structure through which they are secreted). We first examined the *Salmonella*

SPI-1 locus, which, unlike the F_1F_o ATPase, is composed of multiple operons, and we

focused specifically on the structural components that assemble to form the SPI-1

injectisome type III secretion system (vT3SS) – a large multiprotein complex of known

stoichiometry, ranging from one subunit copy to over 100 copies, that is essential for active

host invasion (Fig. 2C-D). In contrast to F_1F_o ATPase, stoichiometry for the majority of the

T3SS structural components correlates well with transcript abundance, likely due to the

expression derived from eight polycistronic transcripts, but more strongly with total protein

synthesis, thus positive correlation with TE, suggesting that stoichiometry of SPI-1 structural

components is co-transcription and translationally regulated (Fig. 2C-D).

Regulation of proportional protein synthesis in *Salmonella* and *Listeria*

As our ribosome profiling revealed that the stoichiometry of many subunits within protein

complexes in *Salmonella* and *Listeria* is translationally controlled, we reasoned that

translation efficiency could be controlled by a combination of one or more factors. One is the

strength of SD sequence, which provides an indication of initiation efficiency and is

calculated through a combination of base-paring between a SD sequence and the anti-SD

sequence on the 16S rRNA of the 30S ribosomal subunit, as well as the minimal free energy

of local secondary structure surrounding the SD sequence and start codon which can

interfere with 30S accessibility. The second factor is codon usage, which may affect

regulation during elongation, and a third is secondary structure throughout the mRNA. To

investigate these factors, we first determined the codon adaptation index (CAI) and SD

strength of all translated *Salmonella* and *Listeria* genes and compared either CAI or SD

strength score with transcript abundance, protein synthesis, or translation efficiency (Fig. 3A,

3B, S12, S13). Consistent with efficient initiation being the limiting factor for protein

synthesis, the correlation between translation efficiency and SD strength is stronger in both

Salmonella and *Listeria* than for transcript abundance or protein synthesis. This was

particularly marked in the case of *Salmonella.* In contrast, correlation between CAI and

translation efficiency is stronger in *Listeria* compared to *Salmonella.* As expected, little to no

correlation was seen between transcript abundance and SD strength for either *Salmonella* or

Listeria (Fig. 3A, 3B).

We next restricted the analysis to just *Salmonella* and *Listeria* virulence genes that encode

components of multiprotein complexes (Figure 3C–F, S8-S11). For the SPI T3SS genes of

Salmonella, we observed a significant positive correlation between SD strength and

translation efficiency for both SPI-1 and SPI-2 genes while correlation with CAI was poor,

suggesting that regulation for virulence machinery is largely determined through regulating

translational initiation efficiency (Fig. 3C). As for virulence genes of *Listeria*, we observed no

correlation between translation efficiency and either SD strength or CAI for *Listeria prfA* and

associated genes, which was expected as these genes are not part of a multiprotein

complex, although we also did not observe correlations for *Listeria* Type VII secretion

system genes (Fig. 3D).

We next focused on multiprotein complexes that exist in both *Salmonella* and *Listeria*,

starting with F_1F_o ATPase, *sufB-D* and flagella (Fig. 3G-H, Fig. S9-10, S14-15). While we

generally observed positive correlation between SD strength and translation efficiency in

Salmonella, we observed no correlation for either SD strength or CAI for any of these

complexes in *Listeria*, with the exception of flagella genes where translation efficiency

positively correlates with CAI (Fig. 3E). Finally, we examined one of the most evolutionarily

conserved multiprotein complexes, the ribosome (Fig. 3F). In *Salmonella,* we identified two

groups of ribosomal proteins where translation efficiency either strongly correlates with SD

strength, or not at all (Fig. 3F, Fig. S15). In contrast, while there are also two groups of

ribosomal proteins in *Listeria,* both groups display a positive correlation between SD

strength and translation efficiency with one group being more sensitive to the SD strength (in

blue, Fig. 3F and S16C). Further, the group of *Listeria* ribosomal proteins that are less

sensitive to SD strength positively correlate with CAI (in red, Fig 3F, S16B). Overall, these

results indicate that regulation of translation initiation in *Salmonella* is more directly

influenced by SD strength compared to *Listeria.*

Cis-regulatory elements that facilitate efficient translation in bacteria

SD strength is calculated through a combination of degree of base pairing between the SD

sequence and the anti-SD sequence of the 16S rRNA as well as local RNA secondary

structure. We therefore investigated the relationship between translation efficiency and both

factors. First, we hypothesised that transcripts that are inefficiently translated have a

preference to form stronger RNA secondary structure, which may impede accessibility of the

SD sequence to the 16S rRNA[73–76]. To test this, we grouped genes into four groups,

comprising the top 100 most or least abundant transcripts or efficiently translated genes (i.e.

2.2% and 3.6% of genes in _Salmonella_ and _Listeria_, respectively). We then predicted the

average minimum free energy (MFE) of RNA secondary structure throughout the transcript

for each group of genes within a 30-nt-wide sliding window[60] (Fig. 4A–B). These analyses

revealed that _Salmonella_ mRNAs that are efficiently translated tend to be less structured

around the start codon compared to transcripts that are not efficiently translated, as

predicted (Fig. 4A, S18). Interestingly, we also noted that weakly structured 3′ UTR is a

distinct feature for _Salmonella_ mRNAs that are low in abundance or inefficiently translated

(Fig. 4A, S18). In contrast to _Salmonella_, _Listeria_ transcripts are generally less structured

throughout the 5'UTR and CDS, with mfe ≈ -2 until 3'UTR. In addition highly abundant

Listeria transcripts tend to be more structured in the coding region and 3'UTR (Fig. 4B, S19).

However, we only saw a marginally weaker structure between the start codon and ~25 nt

upstream of the start codon and no significant difference in RNA secondary structure

throughout the rest of mRNA as a function of translation efficiency (Fig. 4B, S19), despite

the difference between the 100 most and least efficiently translated _Listeria_ transcripts being

much greater than _Salmonella_ (Fig. 1E).

Listeria genes containing Out-of-frame Upstream Peaks (OUPs) are more efficiently

translated.

While there is a lack of global preference for weak 5'UTR secondary structure in efficiently

translated _Listeria_ transcripts, we observed a highly unusual feature in a subset of such

genes in that they contain a high accumulation of out-of-frame 22-24 nt footprints where the

P-site is inferred to lie seven nucleotides upstream of the start codon. These out-of-frame

upstream peaks (OUPs) were observed in ~15% of all translated genes and were only

observed in *Listeria* RiboSeq libraries and not in *Salmonella* RiboSeq libraries (Fig. 1A, 4C

and D, S3B, S4A). Nucleotide sequence logos revealed that *Listeria* genes containing an

OUP contain on average a marginally stronger SD sequence and more often initiate with an

AUG codon compared to non-OUP *Listeria* genes (Fig. 4E, 4F and S20A). In addition, the

site of the OUP-footprint is not significantly less structured than in non-OUP genes (Fig.

S20F). Importantly, comparison between OUP and non-OUP genes showed that mRNAs of

OUP genes are more abundant and more efficiently translated than mRNAs of non-OUP

genes (Fig. 4F). Moreover, OUP genes generally encode proteins involved in regulation of

translation, transcription, response to stimulation or localisation/membrane transporters (Fig.

4G, Fig. S20D-E, and table 4). Despite comprising just 15% of genes (390/2768), OUP

genes were responsible for 40% of all protein production (Fig. 4G).

To gain further insight into OUP-mediated translation, we next investigated the read size

distribution of different classes of ribosome protected footprints, namely initiation (where

inferred P-site aligns to the start codon) and elongation footprints in both *Salmonella* and

Listeria and OUP in *Listeria* (Fig. 4H-J). As expected, the size distribution of *Salmonella*

initiation and elongation footprints peaks at 28-30nt, and 24nt, respectively (Fig. 4H). The

larger *Salmonella* initiation footprint is likely due to the presence of initiation factors 1 and 2

during initiation and/or alternative ribosome conformation present when the SD sequence

interacts with the anti-SD sequence within the 30S subunit, together with positioning of the

start codon at the P-site. Intriguingly, in *Listeria,* the size distribution of OUP footprints is

~22-24 nt, similar to elongation footprints for both OUP and non-OUP genes, as well as a

small proportion of non-OUP initiation footprints, while initiation footprints for OUP genes are

significantly larger at ~29-32 nt compared to initiation footprint for non-OUP genes (20, 23

and 27 nt) (Fig. 4I and J).

The sequence context surrounding the start codon has a greater impact on

Salmonella* translation than for *Listeria

To further investigate additional *cis*-regulatory elements that may contribute to translation

efficiency, whether during initiation or at the early stages of elongation, we investigated

sequences surrounding the start codons, both in terms of nucleotide and amino acid identity.

Conservation of sequences upstream of and flanking start codons of the most efficiently

translated genes in *Salmonella* revealed that the SD sequence has a preference for an

adenosine followed by two tandem guanosine nucleotides at positions -10 to -8 compared to

inefficiently translated genes (Fig. 5A). In contrast, efficiently translated *Listeria* genes have

a preference for adenosine at position -3 and -4, a feature similar to the eukaryotic Kozak

consensus sequence[77], but only minor differences in SD sequence compared to genes that

are inefficiently translated (Fig. 5B). This complements our analysis above where SD

strength is a major determinant of translation efficiency in *Salmonella*. In *Listeria*, however,

the less clear difference in nucleotide preference in the SD sequence as well as local

secondary structure between efficiently and inefficiently translated genes complements our

observation of poor correlation between SD strength, translation efficiency and stoichiometry

(Fig. 3). Furthermore, our *Salmonella* data revealed that SD sequences of inefficiently

translated transcripts tend to be further away from the start codon compared to those of

efficiently translated transcripts (Fig. S20B), consistent with previous reports in *E. coli*, and

supporting the notion of spacer length being an important modulator of initiation

efficiency[2,78,79]. However, we did not observe differences in spacer length for *Listeria,* except

perhaps for a small proportion of OUP-genes where the SD sequence is 1 nt further away

(S20B-C). These observations highlight the distinct differences in the regulation of

translation initiation between the two evolutionarily divergent bacteria.

Unexpectedly, we also detected an enrichment for adenosine at the 4th, 5th, 7th and 8th

nucleotides in the coding region of efficiently translated genes in *Salmonella*, which would

correspond to an enrichment of either asparagine (AAU, AAC) or lysine (AAA, AAG)

residues at the 2nd and 3rd amino acid positions (Fig. 5A). A similar enrichment for

adenosine nucleotides was observed in the coding region immediately following the start

codon in *Listeria*, although there is similar enrichment also for inefficiently translated genes

(Fig. 5B). Inspection of the amino acid sequences of genes that are efficiently translated

revealed an enrichment for lysine residues over asparagine residues at both sites (Fig. 5C,

5D, S21). As lysine residues contain positively charged side chains, we assessed whether

there is also a bias towards coding for positively charged arginine residues at the 2nd and 3rd

codon positions in efficiently translated genes. To do this we stratified all *Salmonella* and

Listeria genes based on whether they code for two tandem arginine, lysine or asparagine

residues at the 2nd and 3rd codon positions. We found that in *Salmonella*, genes coding for

two tandem lysine residues at the 2nd and 3rd positions were translated more efficiently than

average and, interestingly, genes coding for two tandem arginine residues at the 2nd and 3rd

positions were translated less efficiently than average, despite reported similar lysine and

arginine tRNA abundances and both amino acids containing positively charged side chains[80]

(Fig. 5C). The translation efficiency of genes encoding two tandem asparagine codons was

comparable to average. In contrast, we observed no significant difference in translation

efficiency depending on the presence of two tandem lysine, arginine or asparagine codons

at the 2nd and 3rd codon positions in *Listeria* (Fig. 5D, right).

To test whether the presence of lysine, arginine or asparagine codons at the 2nd and 3rd

codon positions influences translation efficiency we utilised a luciferase (LuxAB) translational

reporter assay where transcription is controlled by a tetracycline inducible promoter, in both

Salmonella and the Gram-negative *E. coli* (Fig. 5E). Strikingly we found that the presence of

two lysine codons (AAA-AAA) at the 5′ end of the *LuxA* coding region significantly increases

reporter luminescence, which was not observed for two arginine (CGU-CGU) nor for two

asparagine (AAU-AAU) codons (Fig. 5E). The luminescence increase for the di-lysine-

codon-containing reporter was apparent shortly after transcriptional induction, and transcript

levels remained similar between all constructs throughout the time course (Fig. S22).

To further investigate the effect on translation efficiency of di-lysine (AAA-AAA), di-

asparagine (AAU-AAU) or di-arginine (CGU-CGU) at the 2nd and 3rd codon positions, we

fused to *luxA* the first 10 codons of the wild-type *Salmonella* gene, *ynfB*, (which natively

begins with AUG-AAU-AAU) or its variants in which the tandem AAU-AAU are replaced with

AAA-AAA or CGU-CGU. Luciferase reporters containing the AAA-AAA replacement gave

significantly higher luminescence than reporters containing the arginine replacement or the

wildtype AAU-AAU sequence (Fig. 5F, left). Similarly, we fused to *luxA* the first 10 codons of

the wild-type *Salmonella* gene, *yceI*, (which natively begins with AUG-AAA-AAA) or its

variants in which the tandem AAA-AAA are replaced with AAU-AAU or CGU-CGU (Fig. 5F,

right). Reporter constructs where the wild type AAA-AAA sequence is replaced with tandem

AAU or CGU codons gave lower luminescence than reporters containing the wild type

sequence. Overall, these results are in agreement with our RiboSeq data whereby presence

of two lysine codons AAA-AAA at the 5' end of ORFs correlates with efficient translation and

show that this feature is functional in both *Salmonella* and *E. coli.*

Discussion

Through accurate determination of translation efficiency of all expressed mRNAs in

Salmonella and *Listeria*, we have identified multiple regulatory mechanisms that contribute

towards efficient translation and virulence factor production. Moreover, we have shown that

stoichiometric control of components of multiprotein complexes that drive virulence is

hardwired within the messenger RNAs to directly control differential translation in *Salmonella*

but not in *Listeria*.

We confirmed that a strong SD sequence as well as weak RNA secondary structure around

the start codon are instrumental for efficient translation in *Salmonella,* presumably to enable

efficient 30S subunit joining to the messenger RNA. In addition, we discovered that

presence of AAA at the 2nd and 3rd codons of ORFs drives efficient translation in both

Salmonella and *E. coli;* perhaps this sequence facilitates efficient transition of the 70S

ribosome from initiation to elongation (Fig. 5G and Fig. 6). However, regulation of translation

initiation differs substantially in *Listeria* (Fig. 5G). Besides greater variance than in

Salmonella, average SD sequences between efficiently and inefficiently translated

transcripts is almost indistinguishable , and there is also little difference in average

secondary structure throughout the mRNA. However, this is likely a consequence of low

GC% of the *Listeria* genome (37.8% compared to 52.2% in *Salmonella*), and therefore does

not need to select against structure around the start codon to achieve the same lack of

structure to promote efficient translation as in *Salmonella.*

Perhaps the most striking feature of efficiently translated *Listeria* genes are the OUPs,

potentially indicating a novel mechanism of bacterial initiation. Canonical bacterial initiation

begins with the 70S ribosome assembly with initiation factors 1 and 2, with the start codon

positioned in the P-site, results in larger initiation footprint due to presence of initiation

factors, as observed in *Salmonella* (Fig. S4D). It is possible that OUP footprints derive from

a 30S subunit associated with initiation factors; however this is unlikely as pre-initiation 30S

is thought not to sufficiently protect mRNA from nuclease digestion. Another possibility is that

in *Listeria,* for OUP-mediated initiation 70S formation occurs further upstream in the absence

of initiation factors 1 and 2, resulting in a similar footprint size as elongating ribosomes,

followed by progression of 7 nt and acquisition of initiation factors and fMet-tRNA to initiate

at the start codon, with a larger footprint size due to incorporation of initiation factors 1 and 2

(Fig. 6). A third possibility is that the ribosomes generating an OUP footprint have the start

codon in the P-site, but this would necessitate structural rearrangements to account for the

observed footprint size (22-24 nt). Additional factors and/or an unusual ribosome

conformation could lead to the protection of 18 nt 5' of the P-site rather than the normal 11

nt, and the conformation and/or empty A-site might make the mRNA 3' end accessible to

RNase1 cleavage closely downstream of the P-site AUG. Future work will investigate which

of these hypothesis, if any, is correct.

Translational regulation is a critical process that governs the rate and efficiency of protein

synthesis in all living cells. Our study has highlighted striking differences in translational

regulation between two evolutionarily divergent pathogenic bacteria. The intrinsic molecular

differences in translational regulation revealed by our analysis will provide new strategies for

specific targeting of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, most importantly with respect to Gram-

positive pathogens. Additionally, characterisation of these differences can lead to a better

understanding of the basic molecular biology of these organisms, which can inform broader

research in the field of microbiology.

Materials and methods

Please see Bryant_Lastovka_et_el_2023_Extended_Material.xlsx

Data availability.

Raw and processed data are available from RiboSeq/RNASeq series (ArrayExpression

accession E-MTAB-11527). Customised scripts used for this project are available upon

request.

Tables

See associated Bryant_Lastovka_et_el_2023_Tables.xlsx

Conflict of interest:

The authors declare no conflict of interest

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Authors contribution:

B.Y.W.C., O.J.B., F.L. conceived the research and designed experiments. B.Y.W.C., O.J.B.

and J.P. generated RiboSeq and RNA-Seq libraries, O.J.B. performed most molecular

experiments and *in vivo* functional assays. F.L. performed most of the bioinformatic analysis.

B.Y.W.C., O.J.B. and F.L. wrote the manuscript.

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Figure legends

Figure 1. Tandem-RNASeq and RiboSeq of *Salmonella* and *Listeria* cells.

A. Metagene translatome plots generated by aligning all coding sequences using the start

and stop codons as anchors. Reads from the *Salmonella* SL1344 RiboSeq library (left) or

Listeria 10403S RiboSeq library (right) that map to codon positions 1, 2 and 3 are coloured

in red, green and blue, respectively. The plot was produced with the R software package

riboSeqR[56]. **B**. Library composition of RiboSeq libraries from *Salmonella* (SL1344) or *Listeria*

(10403S) generated with RNase I that were subjected to oligonucleotide-based rRNA

subtraction, followed by one or three rounds of DSN treatment. **C**. The composition of

RNASeq libraries post oligonucleotide-based rRNA subtraction is on the right. Translation

visualisation of multi-cistronic transcripts: the *Salmonella acrA-acrB* operon, the *Listeria*

gatC-gatA-gatB operon; **D**. the *Salmonella secM* gene which utilises programmed ribosomal

pausing; and the *Listeria prfB* gene that utilises -1 programmed ribosome frameshifting. Red,

green and blue bars indicate RiboSeq reads mapping to phases 1, 2 and 3, respectively,

relative to the first nucleotide of the transcript. Grey shaded peaks show parallel RNASeq

data. **E**. Cumulative distribution of translation efficiency for all *Salmonella* (green) and

Listeria (purple) genes.

Figure 2. Proportional synthesis of protein complexes associated with virulence.

A. Translation visualization *of Salmonella* and *Listeria atp* operon which contains the genes

encoding components of the F_1F_o-ATPase complex (top and bottom, respectively). Red,

green and blue bars indicate RiboSeq reads mapping to frames 1, 2 and 3, respectively.

Grey shaded peaks show parallel RNASeq data. RiboSeq axis adjusted to enable

visualisation of less translated ORFs **B.** Relationship between stoichiometry of F_1F_0 ATPase

complex subunits and the corresponding transcript abundance, protein synthesis or

translation efficiency. The data point corresponding to the *atpE* gene is an outlier due to

significant ligation bias and was excluded from correlation analyses. **C**. Translation

visualization of the *Salmonella* SPI-1 regulon which is composed of 8 transcripts (annotated

with black arrows where arrow heads indicate the direction of transcription) and codes for

virulence genes, including structural components of the SPI-1 injectosome. Red, green and

blue bars indicate RiboSeq reads mapping to frames 1, 2 and 3, respectively. Grey shaded

peaks show parallel RNASeq data. **D**. Relationship between stoichiometry of SPI-1 vT3SS

structural genes and the corresponding transcript abundance, protein synthesis or

translation efficiency (Right). Schematic representation of the SPI-1 vT3SS highlighting

structural proteins (Left). Schematic modified from Wagner et al., 2018[13].

Figure 3. Regulation of proportional protein synthesis in *Salmonella* and *Listeria*

A and B. Histograms showing the Spearman's rank correlation coefficients for the

relationship between SD strength (left) or codon adaptation index (CAI, right) with transcript

abundance (TA), protein synthesis (PS) or translation efficiency (TE) of all *Salmonella* and

Listeria genes, respectively. **C**. The approximate p values have been calculated and are

displayed above each histogram. SD strength (left) or codon adaptation index (CAI, right)

plotted as a function of translation efficiency for *Salmonella* specific virulence factors:

Salmonella SPI-1 T3SS structural genes (left) or *Salmonella* SPI-2 regulon genes (right); **D.**

Listeria specific virulence factors: *Listeria prfA* and associated genes (left) or *Listeria* type

VII secretion system genes (right)**; E. Shared virulence factor:** *Salmonella* (left*)* and

Listeria (right) flagella genes; **F. Shared translation machinery**: *Salmonella* (left) and

Listeria (right) flagella ribosomal protein genes. Genes groups with distinct correlation

between translation efficiency and SD strength are coloured in red or blue.

Figure 4. RNA secondary structure and OUPs regulating translation efficiency of

genes in *Salmonella* and *Listeria*.

A and B. Sliding-window average MFE of predicted secondary structure at each nucleotide

of sequences surrounding the start and stop codons for the 100 most abundant (green) or

least abundant (red) transcripts (top) or the 100 most efficiently translated (green) or least

efficiently translated (red) transcripts (bottom) in *Salmonella* (A) or *Listeria* (B). Secondary

structure in the highlighted areas is further compared in Fig. S5 and S6. **C**. Metagene

translatome plots generated by aligning all open reading frames of Listeria containing the

abundant out-of-frame upstream peak (OUP) of at least ten reads (left) or without (right).

Reads that map to codon positions 1, 2 and 3 are coloured in red, green and blue,

respectively. **D.** Translation visualisation of an *Listeria* OUP-gene *rpsO*. Red, green and blue

bars indicate RiboSeq reads mapping to frames 1, 2 and 3, respectively. Grey shaded peaks

show parallel RNASeq data. **E**. Nucleotide sequence logos for all *Listeria* genes with an

upstream out-of-frame peak (OUP) of at least ten reads (top) and for all *Listeria* genes

without OUP (bottom). The OUP footprint is highlighted in blue whilst the P-site is highlighted

in magneta. **F**. The cumulative distribution for the translation efficiency of OUP genes (blue)

and non-OUP genes (black). **G**. Pie chart of gene ontology distribution for OUP-genes (left).

The 'response to stimulus' group excludes genes that also belongs to 'transcriptional

regulation', 'translation' and localisation'. Overlaps are illustrated in Fig. S16E. Pie chart on

right reflects proportion of all protein synthesised from OUP and non-OUP genes.

H. Read size distribution from *Listeria* RiboSeq libraries for initiating ribosomes (green) or

elongating ribosomes (orange). **I**. Read size distribution from *Listeria* RiboSeq libraries for

initiating ribosomes (green), elongating ribosomes (orange) or OUP genes at the initiation

site (blue). **J**. Read size distribution from *Salmonella* RiboSeq libraries for initiating

ribosomes (green) or elongating ribosomes (orange).

Figure 5. Sequence features regulating translation efficiency of genes in *Salmonella*

and *Listeria*.

A and B. Sequence logos of sequences surrounding the start (left) or stop codon

(right) of the top 100 most efficiently translated genes (top) or least efficiently translated

genes (bottom) in *Salmonella* (A) and *Listeria* (B), respectively. The SD sequence based on

the sequence of the *Salmonella* or *Listeria* 16S rRNA sequence is highlighted in green (top

left). **C and D**. Sequence logos of amino acid sequences surrounding the start codon of the

top 100 most efficiently translated genes (top left) or least efficiently translated genes

(bottom left) in *Salmonella* (A) and *Listeria* (B), respectively. The cumulative distribution of

translation efficiency for genes containing AAA-AAA, AAU-AAU or CGU-CGU after the start

codon is on the right. **E**. Induction time courses of LuxA luciferase expression measured by

luminescence. Constructs containing AAA-AAA (KK, blue), AAU-AAU (NN, orange) or CGU-

CGU (RR, green) or a construct lacking a promoter (grey) were expressed in *Salmonella*

(SL1344) or *E. coli* (MC4000)*.* **F**. Induction time courses of LuxA luciferase expression

measured by luminescence where LuxA is fused with the first 30 nt of *ynfB* (which natively

begins with AAU-AAU after the start codon) or the first 30 nt of *yceI* (which natively begins

with AAA-AAA, after the start codon) to LuxA, or their mutants (as indicated)**.**

Figure 6. Models of *Salmonella* and *Listeria* translation initiation

Summary model showing *cis*-elements utilised for efficient translation in *Salmonella* (top)

and *Listeria* (middle and bottom)*.* In *Salmonella*, translation initiation is directly modulated by

weak RNA secondary structure surrounding the start codon as well as interaction between

the SD and anti-SD sequence. In addition, decoding of di-lysine codons AAA-AAA soon after

initiation significantly enhances translation elongation. In contrast, in *Listeria,* there is no

obvious preference for weak RNA secondary structure nor SD sequence nor di-lysine

codons after the start codon for efficient translation. Instead, *Listeria* utilises two distinct

translation initiation mechanisms, a canonical mechanism where the assembly of the

ribosome occurs with the start codon at the P-site while a second distinct mechanism utilised

by significant number of efficiently translated genes involves assembly of the ribosome 7 nt

upstream of the start codon prior to migration of 7 nt until the P-site encounters the start

codon for translational initiation (bottom).

Figure S1. A schematic illustrating our revised RiboSeq and RNA sequencing method.

Translation was arrested by treating cells with highly concentrated chloramphenicol

immediately prior to harvesting cells by rapid cooling, followed by centrifugation and flash

freezing in liquid nitrogen for cryolysis. Clarified supernatants were used to generate

RiboSeq and RNASeq libraries.

Figure S2. Read length distribution of RiboSeq libraries from *Salmonella* generated with S7

MNase (750 U or 1000 U) and corresponding RNAseq library (left) or generated with RNase

I (500 U or 1000 U) (middle). The length distribution of RiboSeq libraries from *Salmonella*

generated with RNase I (500 U) treated with RiboZero or with RiboZero in combination with

DSN (right). **B**. Metagene translatome and metagene transcriptome plots generated by

aligning all open reading frames of LT2-derived *Salmonella* using the start and stop codons

as anchors. RiboSeq libraries were generated with S7 MNase I (500 U, left), RNase I (1000

U, middle). Reads that map to codon positions 1, 2 and 3 are coloured in red, green and

blue, respectively. The plot was produced with the R software package riboSeqR[56]. **C**.

Scatterplot showing the relationship between protein synthesis (i.e. RPF abundance) and

transcript abundance (i.e. mRNA abundance) for all transcribed and translated *Salmonella*

genes. **D**. Metagene transcriptome plot generated by aligning all open reading frames of

pathogenic *Salmonella* SL1344. **E**. Scatterplot showing the relationship between total protein

synthesis (i.e. RPF abundance) and transcript abundance (i.e. mRNA abundance) for all

transcribed and translated *Salmonella* genes from strain SL1344. **F**. Metagene

transcriptome plot generated by aligning all open reading frames of pathogenic *Listeria*

10403S. **G**. Scatterplot showing the relationship between protein synthesis (i.e. RPF

abundance) and transcript abundance (i.e. mRNA abundance) for all transcribed

and translated *Listeria* genes from strain 10403S.

Figure S3. **A**. RiboSeq and parallel RNASeq generated from LT2-derived *Salmonella* strain

or pathogenic SL1344 across different RPF sizes. Red, green and blue bars indicate

RiboSeq reads mapping to codon positions 1, 2 and 3, respectively. **B**. RiboSeq and parallel

RNASeq generated from *Listeria* strain 10403S across different RPF sizes. Red, green and

blue bars indicate RiboSeq reads mapping to codon positions 1, 2 and 3, respectively. **C**

and D. Read size distribution of RiboSeq (left) and RNA-Seq (right) in *Salmonella* and

Listeria.

Figure S4. **A**. Detailed metagene translatome plots of *Listeria* 10403S, *Salmonella* SL1344

and LT2-derived *Salmonella*. Reads that map to codon positions 1, 2 and 3 are coloured in

red, green and blue, respectively. **B**. Scatterplot showing the relationship between protein

synthesis (i.e. RPF abundance) and transcript abundance (i.e. mRNA abundance) for all

transcribed and translated *Listeria* genes from strain 10403S. Genes containing the out-of-

frame upstream peak (OUP) of at least ten reads are coloured in blue.

Figure S5.

Translation visualisation of *Salmonella prfB* (top), *dnaX* (middle), *secM* and *secA* (bottom).

Red, green and blue bars indicate RiboSeq reads mapping to codon positions 1, 2 and 3,

respectively. Grey shaded peaks show parallel RNASeq data.

Figure S6.

Translation visualisation of novel ORFs identified from the *Salmonella* RiboSeq data. Red,

green and blue bars indicate RiboSeq reads mapping to codon positions 1, 2 and 3,

respectively. Grey shaded peaks show parallel RNASeq data.

Figure S7. Transcript abundance (top), protein synthesis (middle) and translation efficiency

(bottom) plotted against the published copy number of proteins reported in the literature[81–95].

Figure S8. **A and B**. Relationship between stoichiometry of F_1F_0 ATPase complex subunits

for *Salmonella* and *Listeria,* respectively and the corresponding transcript abundance,

protein synthesis or translation efficiency. Far right panels present relationship of translation

efficiency with SD strength and codon adaptive index, respectively. Data points

corresponding to the *atpE* gene (blue) were outliers and included in the generation of these

charts (but excluded from the equivalent charts in Figure 2).

Figure S9. **A**. Structure of the bacterial AcrAB-TolC drug efflux pump complex[96]. Transcript

abundance, total protein synthesis and translation efficiency plotted as a function of the

stoichiometry of the AcrA/AcrB components of *Salmonella*. **B**. Transcript abundance, total

protein synthesis and translation efficiency of a representative range of bacterial drug efflux

pump components of *Salmonella*. **C**. Correlation between transcript abundance, protein

synthesis and translation efficiency plotted as a function of the stoichiometry of the

SufB/SufC/SufD components of *Salmonella* (left). SD strength and codon adaptation index

(CAI) plotted as a function of translation efficiency. **D**. Structural model of the *Salmonella*

SPI-1 ATPase complex. Transcript abundance, total protein synthesis and translation

efficiency plotted as a function of the stoichiometry of OrgB (green), InvC (blue) and InvI

(red).

Figure S10. **A-C.** Transcript abundance, total protein synthesis and translation efficiency

plotted as a function of the stoichiometry, and SD strength and codon adaptation index (CAI)

plotted as a function of translation efficiency, for components of flagella (**A**), SufB-D (**B)** and

components of F_1F_O-ATPase (**C**) genes.

Figure S11. Relationship between stoichiometry of SPI-1 vT3SS structural genes and the

corresponding transcript abundance, protein synthesis or translation efficiency. PrgJ and

PrgI are indicated on the chart.

Figure S12. Scatterplots showing the relationship between the codon adaptation index (CAI,

left) or SD strength (right) and the translation efficiency of ribosomal protein genes in

Salmonella and *Listeria*, respectively.

Figure S13. Scatterplots showing the relationship between the codon adaptation index (CAI,

left) or SD strength (right) and the translation efficiency of *Listeria* ribosomal protein genes

that are either OUP or non-OUP genes.

Figure S14. Scatterplots showing the relationship between the codon adaptation index and

translation efficiency for SPI-1 T3SS and SPI-2 T3SS genes (**A-B**); ribosomal protein and

flagella genes for *Salmonella* and *Listeria*, respectively (**C-F**); and *PrfA* and associated

genes as well as Type VII secretion system genes in *Listeria* (**G-H)**. Spearman's correlation

coefficient and the approximate p value have been calculated.

Figure S15 Scatterplot showing the relationship between the codon adaptation index and

translation efficiency for all *Salmonella* ribosome genes, highlighting the two classes of

genes (red or blue) (**A**) or the two classes of genes plotted separately (**B and C**).

Figure S16 Scatterplot showing the relationship between the codon adaptation index with

translation efficiency for all *Listeria* ribosome genes, highlighting the two classes of genes

(red or blue) (**A**) or the two classes of genes plotted separately (**B and C**).

Figure S17 Scatterplot showing the relationship between the codon adaptation index and translation efficiency for *Listeria* ribosome genes highlighting OUP genes (red) and non-OUP genes (blue).

Figure S18. Scatterplots showing the relationship between mRNA abundance, protein synthesis and translation efficiency and average MFE values for RNA secondary structure at the translation start site (left), translation stop site (middle) and in the 3′ UTR for all *Salmonella* genes. Spearman's correlation coefficient and the approximate p value have been calculated. A summary of the Spearman's rank coefficient for each plot is given at the bottom.

Figure S19.

Scatterplots showing the relationship between mRNA abundance, protein synthesis and translation efficiency and average MFE values for RNA secondary structure at the translation start site (left), translation stop site (middle) and in the 3′ UTR for all *Listeria* genes. Spearman's correlation coefficient and the approximate p value have been calculated. A summary of the Spearman's rank coefficient for each plot is given at the bottom.

Figure S20.

A. Nucleotide sequence logos generated from all *Listeria* genes containing an OUP of at least ten reads (left) or all other translated genes (right). **B.** Box and whisker plots showing distance in nucleotides between the SD sequence and the start codon for efficiently translated genes (top 100 genes by translation efficiency), inefficiently translated genes (bottom 100 genes by translation efficiency) and all genes (total) in *Salmonella* and **C.** *Listeria*. **C.** Histogram displaying the number of *Listeria* OUP (blue) or non-OUP (grey) genes that contain a specified distance between the SD and start codon.

D. Bar chart showing the enrichment strength of and the number of genes that belong to a

gene ontology group among *Listeria* OUP genes. These groups can overlap. **E**. Euler

diagram showing the overlap of selected gene ontology groups in *Listeria* OUP genes. **F**.

Sliding-window average MFE of predicted secondary structure at each nucleotide of

sequences surrounding the start codon of OUP containing genes that contain at least 10

reads of the OUP (blue), genes not containing an OUP (black), efficiently translated genes

(green, top 100 genes by TE) and inefficiently translated genes (pink, bottom 100 genes by

TE). The OUP footprint is coloured in pale blue whilst the P-site is highlighted in magenta.

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Figure S21.

A. Sequence logos of N-terminal amino acid sequences of the top 100 most efficiently

translated genes (top) or the top 100 least efficiently translated genes (bottom) in *Salmonella*

(left) and *Listeria* (right). **B**. Venn of genes contains following features: weak secondary

structure at the translation start site, strong secondary structure in the 3′ untranslated region,

high SD strength, or AAA-AAA codons following the start codon. **C**. Pie chart showing the

proportion of *Listeria* genes that either contain an OUP or do not (left). **D**. Pie chart of gene

ontology distribution for non-OUP-genes. The 'response to stimulus' group excludes genes

that also belong to 'transcriptional regulation', 'translation' and localisation'.

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Figure S22.

A. Transcript levels from induction time courses of luciferase expression from constructs

containing N-terminal fusions of methionine-lysine-lysine (MKK, blue), methionine-

asparagine-asparagine (MNN, yellow), methionine-arginine-arginine (MRR, green), or a

construct lacking a promoter (P-less, grey) in *Salmonella* SL1344. The relative transcript

abundance was determined by RT-qPCR with *lppA* (SL1344_1311) as a reference

housekeeping gene and MKK at time point 0 as the reference sample. Three biological

replicates were performed. The ribbons represent the standard error of the mean relative

transcript abundance.

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6

Efficient initiation (*Salmonella*)

Typical initiation (*Listeria*)

OUP mediated initiation (*Listeria*)