Two functionally distinct HEATR5 protein complexes are defined by fast-evolving co-factors in yeast

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Running title: Lft1 defines a second HEATR5 complex

Abstract:

The highly conserved HEATR5 proteins are best known for their roles in membrane traffic mediated by the adaptor protein complex-1 (AP1). HEATR5 proteins rely on fast-evolving co-factors to bind to AP1. However, how HEATR5 proteins interact with these co-factors is unknown. Here, we report that the budding yeast HEATR5 protein, Laa1, functions in two biochemically distinct complexes. These complexes are defined by a pair of mutually exclusive Laa1-binding proteins, Laa2 and the previously uncharacterized Lft1/Yml037c. Despite limited sequence similarity, biochemical analysis and structure predictions indicate that Lft1 and Laa2 bind Laa1 via structurally similar mechanisms. Both Laa1 complexes function in intra-Golgi recycling. However, only the Laa2-Laa1 complex binds to AP1 and contributes to its localization. Finally, structure predictions indicate that human HEATR5 proteins bind to a pair of fast-evolving interacting partners via a mechanism similar to that observed in yeast. These results reveal mechanistic insight into how HEATR5 proteins bind their co-factors and indicate that Laa1 performs functions besides recruiting AP1.

Introduction:

Membrane trafficking impacts nearly every aspect of cell physiology by regulating the proteomes of numerous organelles, including the Golgi, plasma membrane, endosomes, and lysosomes. Many trafficking pathways rely on soluble proteins that assemble into a proteinaceous coat on the cytosolic surface of membranes. The coat selects protein cargo, deforms the membrane, and ultimately pinches the membrane off into a spherical, tubular, or more complicated transport carrier. Consistent with this

43 fundamental role of coat proteins in maintaining organelle function, mutations in coat proteins can cause
44 devastating human diseases (Duncan, 2022; Sanger et al., 2019; Shin et al., 2021).

45 Despite decades of research, many coat components remain poorly characterized, including the highly
46 conserved HEATR5 protein family. This family includes Laa1 in budding yeast, Sip1 in fission yeast,
47 SOAP-1 in worms, HEATR5B in flies (also known as CG2747), HEATR5B and HEATR5A in mammals
48 (also known as p200a and p200b), and Sweetie in plants (Fernandez and Payne, 2006; Gillard et al., 2015;
49 Le Bras et al., 2012; Yu et al., 2012). HEATR5 is essential in flies, worms, and mice, and mutations in
50 HEATR5B cause severe disease in humans (Ghosh et al., 2021; Gillard et al., 2015; Le Bras et al., 2012).
51 However, our knowledge about the mechanisms and functions of HEATR5 proteins is limited.

52 HEATR5 proteins localize to the trans-Golgi network and endosomes and are mainly thought to promote
53 AP1 localization to membranes. HEATR5 proteins bind to AP1 indirectly via one or more fast-evolving
54 co-factors. In budding yeast, Laa1 forms a complex with the co-factor Laa2, which mediates the
55 interaction with AP1 (Kuznetsov et al., 2023; Zysnarski et al., 2019). In humans, HEATR5b
56 simultaneously binds two co-factors, aftiphilin, and γ-synergin, which interact directly with AP1 and are
57 thought to mediate its interaction with HEATR5b (Hirst et al., 2005; Kuznetsov et al., 2023). However, it
58 remains unknown how HEATR5 proteins bind these critical co-factors and whether HEATR5 proteins
59 perform functions in addition to promoting AP1 membrane localization.

60 In the present study, we sought to clarify the molecular mechanisms of the yeast HEATR5 protein Laa1
61 by identifying new co-factors. We identified a previously uncharacterized protein, Yml037c, as a novel
62 Laa1 co-factor. We refer to Yml037c as Lft1 for ***L****aa1* ***F****unction* ***T****wo 1.* We defined how Lft1 and Laa2
63 bind Laa1 and revealed that they form mutually exclusive complexes with Laa1. In addition, we showed
64 that the Lft1-Laa1 complex does not contribute to AP1 localization. These findings suggest that Laa1 has
65 functions besides promoting AP1 membrane localization. Finally, we determined that human HEATR5

66 proteins likely use an interface similar to that found in yeast to bind to a pair of mutually exclusive co-
67 factors. Together, these findings indicate that HEATR5 proteins likely play multiple roles in membrane
68 traffic.

69 **Identification of Lft1**

70 Laa1 is a large protein with the potential to make many physical interactions, however it is only known to
71 interact directly with Laa2. We hypothesized that if the yeast genome encoded additional Laa1 co-factors,
72 the deletion of such co-factors would have similar phenotypes to the deletion of *LAA1*. Therefore, we
73 examined the HOP-profile dataset, which contains information about the growth effect of ~1800 different
74 chemical treatments on gene deletion strains in the yeast deletion collection (Hoepfner et al., 2014). We
75 looked for gene deletions whose sensitivity and resistance profiles correlate with those of *laa1Δ*. Among
76 the top twenty-five correlated genes, we found several genes previously known to disrupt AP1 functions
77 and a single uncharacterized gene *YML037c*, which, based on the results described below, we refer to as
78 Lft1 (*Laa1 Function Two 1*).

79 Lft1 colocalizes with clathrin at the *trans*-Golgi Network (TGN) (Huh et al., 2003). We first determined
80 its localization by tagging the endogenous locus with mCherry and performing co-localization analysis
81 with several markers of the TGN. The TGN in yeast is a dynamically maturing compartment, and its
82 maturation state is associated with waves of traffic, each mediated by different coats (Casler et al., 2019;
83 Daboussi et al., 2012; Highland and Fromme, 2021; Tojima et al., 2019). The clathrin adaptor Gga2
84 mediates the earliest waves, whereas the clathrin adaptor Ent5 and AP1 mediate subsequent waves (Casler
85 et al., 2019). We found that Lft1 colocalized better with Ent5 and AP1 than with Gga2 (Fig. 1), suggesting
86 that it arrives at later stages of TGN maturation.

87 We then asked about the co-localization with Laa1, whose timing with relationship to the other adaptors
88 has not been investigated. Lft1 colocalized more strongly with Laa1 than it did with Ent5 or AP1. When
89 analyzed as Lft1 structures that were positive for Laa1, nearly 80% of Lft1 structures were also positive
90 for Laa1. This result suggests that Lft1 is localized to later-stage TGN, and these are enriched in Laa1
91 compared to other TGN coat components tested. The actual level of co-localization between Lft1 and
92 Laa1 may be slightly higher than reported here since the images were collected on live cells. Therefore,
93 movement or other dynamic behavior could occur during the ~700ms between images. When analyzed as
94 Laa1 structures that were also positive for Lft1, 60% of Laa1 puncta were positive for Lft1. The lower
95 percentage of Laa1 structures that contain Lft1 suggests that a fraction of Laa1 structures are likely devoid
96 of Lft1.

97 To determine whether Lft1 interacted with Laa1, we tagged Lft1 with the HA epitope at its endogenous
98 locus and performed co-immunoprecipitation with Laa1 tagged with the FLAG epitope at its endogenous
99 locus. We found that Lft1 interacted with Laa1 (Fig. 2A). We next asked whether Lft1 localization
100 depends on Laa1. We tagged Lft1 with GFP at its endogenous locus and compared its localization in wild-
101 type and cells lacking Laa1. In wild-type cells, Lft1-GFP localizes to multiple puncta. In cells lacking
102 Laa1, this localization is abolished (Fig. 2B, C). Because Lft1-GFP puncta were completely undetectable,
103 we sought to determine if Laa1 altered Lft1 abundance. To do this, we monitored Lft1-HA abundance in
104 cells lacking Laa1 by immunoblot analysis. Lft1-HA abundance was dramatically lower in cells lacking
105 Laa1 (Fig. 2D, E). This lower abundance suggests that Lft1 is destabilized in the absence of Laa1 and
106 indicates that Lft1 forms an obligate complex with Laa1.

107 **Lft1 and Laa2 are mutually exclusive for binding to Laa1**

108 Because Laa1 is known to form a complex with Laa2 and Laa2 is important for Laa1 localization
109 (Zysnarski et al., 2019), we asked whether loss of Laa2 disrupts Lft1 localization. In contrast to the effect

110 of Laa1, we found that the loss of Laa2 did not disrupt Lft1 localization. Instead, Lft1 puncta were slightly
111 brighter than in wild-type cells (Fig. 2B, C). In addition, Lft1 abundance was unaffected by the loss of
112 Laa2 as detected by immunoblot analysis (Fig. 2D, E). The localization results were surprising because
113 Laa1 localization is strongly affected by the deletion of Laa2 ((Zysnarski et al., 2019) Fig. 3A, B). One
114 possible explanation for this observation is that Lft1 and Laa2 interact with different pools of Laa1. To
115 explore this possibility, we examined the localization of Laa1 in cells lacking Lft1 or Laa2 and in cells
116 lacking both Lft1 and Laa2. We found that the loss of Lft1 alone did not cause a detectable effect on Laa1-
117 GFP localization as monitored by puncta intensity (Fig. 3A, B). As previously reported, the loss of Laa2
118 reduced Laa1-GFP puncta intensity by over one-half (Fig. 3A, B). Notably, simultaneous loss of both Lft1
119 and Laa2 reduced Laa1-GFP puncta intensity to nearly undetectable levels (Fig. 3 A, B). These findings
120 suggest that Laa1 may exist in two populations, one bound to Lft1 and one bound to Laa2. Moreover, it
121 indicates that Laa1 localization depends on these binding partners.

122 To further test whether two populations of Laa1 exist in cells, we asked whether Lft1 and Laa2 interact
123 by co-immunoprecipitation. We were unable to detect an interaction between Lft1 and Laa2 under
124 conditions where both bind to Laa1, indicating that the two form mutually exclusive complexes with Laa1
125 (Fig. 3C). To understand the structural basis of this observation, we predicted complexes between Laa1
126 and Lft1 or Laa2 using AlphaFold2-based structure prediction. Alphafold2 predicted several regions of
127 high-confidence contact between the C-terminus of Laa1 and both Lft1 and Laa2 (Fig. 4A & B,
128 Supplemental data folder 1-6). Surprisingly, despite little sequence similarity (Fig. 4C), the predicted
129 interactions are highly similar (Fig. 4D). Both Lft1 and Laa2 contain several small alpha-helical regions
130 separated by short disordered linkers; these alpha-helical regions interact with an extended interface within
131 the C-terminal 500 amino acids of Laa1. In the predictions, Lft1 binds to Laa1 via four alpha-helical
132 regions (HR 1-4), whereas Laa2 binds to Laa1 via only three (HR1-3). Notably, in the predictions, HR1-

133 3 of Lft1 and Laa2 superimpose almost exactly. This result suggests that Lft1 and Laa2 bind to Laa1 via
134 an overlapping interface and cannot simultaneously bind to Laa1.

135 We validated the interaction interface of Laa1 with Lft1 and Laa2 using Laa1 truncations. We found that
136 both Lft1 and Laa2 bound strongly to a fragment composed of the last 908 amino acids of Laa1 (pGal1-
137 GST-Laa1(1106)), which contains the entire predicted binding domain (Fig. 5A-C). Conversely, neither
138 protein bound to a Laa1 fragment that lacks the terminal 908 amino acids (Laa1(1106)-GST) (Fig. 5 D-F
139). These data indicate that C-terminal 908 amino acids of Laa1 are necessary and sufficient for binding to
140 both Lft1 and Laa2. We next tested truncations that split the predicted binding interface. We found that a
141 fragment composed of the last 304 amino acids of Laa1 (pGAL1-GST-Laa1(1710), which contains the
142 binding interface for HR1 and truncates the binding interface for HR2, failed to bind either Lft1 or Laa2
143 (Fig. 5A-C). Finally, we found that a fragment of Laa1 that lacked the last 304 amino (Laa1(1710)-GST)
144 bound weakly to Lft1, whereas it did not bind Laa2 (Fig. 5 D-F). Notably, this finding is consistent with
145 the more extensive binding interface in the region N-terminal to amino acid 1710 predicted for Lft1
146 (HR3&4) compared to Laa2 (HR3). The concordance of our experimental data with the predicted structure
147 strongly suggests the prediction accurately captures the binding interface on Laa1. Together these results
148 suggest that Lft1 and Laa2 cannot bind Laa1 simultaneously and indicate that Lft1 defines a second Laa1-
149 containing complex in budding yeast.

150 To validate the predicted interface on Lft1, we generated mutations in Lft1 that removed HR1, HR2, and
151 HR3 individually. We found that removing either HR1 or HR2 in Lft1 expressed from its endogenous
152 locus reduced the interaction of Lft1 with Laa1 to about 60% of wild-type levels (Fig. 6A, B). However,
153 removing HR3 reduced the interaction to undetectable levels (Fig. 6A, B). Together these results support
154 the prediction that the Lft1 binding interface is extended and utilizes contacts spanning the region
155 containing HR1-4.

156 Curiously, Lft1-ΔHR2 is 3-fold more abundant than wild-type Lft1, whereas the abundance of Lft1-ΔHR1
157 and Lft1-ΔHR3 is not significantly different from that of wild-type Lft1 (Fig. 6C, D). This finding is
158 surprising because Lft1 is less abundant in cells lacking Laa1 or in cells expressing truncations of Laa1
159 that do not bind Lft1, suggesting that Lft1 is destabilized when it does not bind Laa1. The increased
160 abundance of Lft1-ΔHR2 suggests that HR2 may play a role in destabilizing Lft1 when it is not bound to
161 Laa1.

162 **The Lft1-Laa1 complex does not bind AP1 or control its localization**

163 The only molecular function known for Laa1 is to recruit AP1, a function described for HEATR5 proteins
164 in many other species (Gillard et al., 2015; Le Bras et al., 2012; Yu et al., 2012; Zysnarski et al., 2019).
165 However, HEATR5-proteins are not thought to bind directly to AP1. Instead, they rely on accessory
166 proteins that contain AP1 binding sites that mediate the interaction between the HEATR5 protein and
167 AP1. The AP1 binding site often takes the form of a small peptide motif with the consensus FXXφ (where
168 F is phenylalanine, X is any amino acid, and φ is a hydrophobic residue) in a region rich in acidic amino
169 acids (Duncan et al., 2003; Duncan and Payne, 2003; Mattera et al., 2004). We previously reported that a
170 mutation of the FXXφ in Laa2 eliminated the interaction between Laa1 and AP1 (Zysnarski et al., 2019).
171 However, Lft1 contains one potential AP1 binding motif in its unstructured C-terminus
172 (^{298}DDGDGFEQV), raising the possibility that it too binds AP1. Therefore, we tested whether Lft1 binds
173 AP1. Surprisingly, we were unable to detect an interaction between Lft1 and AP1 using 2-hybrid analysis,
174 or co-immunoprecipitation, suggesting that if Lft1 interacts with AP1, the interaction is weak or depends
175 on other factors that are not recapitulated in our assays (Fig. 7 A-C).

176 To investigate whether the Lft1-Laa1 complex participates in AP1 recruitment, we examined AP1
177 localization in cells lacking Lft1. We found that the loss of Lft1 did not affect AP1 localization as
178 monitored by puncta intensity, and Lft1 did not enhance the AP1 localization defect caused by the loss of

179 Laa2 (Fig. 7 D, E). These results argue that, unlike the Laa2-Laa1 complex, the Lft1-Laa1 complex is not
180 important for recruiting or stabilizing AP1 on membranes. We next asked whether the Lft1-Laa1 complex
181 depends on AP1 for its localization. We found that loss of the AP1 subunit Apl4 elevated Lft1 puncta
182 intensity, similar to the effect of Laa2 (Fig. 2B). The similar effect of *apl2Δ* and *laa2Δ* may indicate that
183 the elevated intensity of Lft1 puncta is due to loss of AP1 function, for example by delaying TGN
184 maturation, rather than competition between Laa2 and Lft1. In any case, these results argue that AP1 does
185 not recruit the Lft1-Laa1 complex to membranes. These findings suggest that Lft1-Laa1 performs at least
186 one function besides recruiting AP1 to membranes.

187 **The Lft1 complex mediates recycling in the TGN**

188 To better understand the function of the Laa1-Lft1 complex, we examined the effect of the loss of Lft1
189 alone or in combination with Laa2 on phenotypes associated with the loss of Laa1. We first examined
190 Sertraline sensitivity. Sertraline is a cationic amphiphilic drug that causes severe growth defects when
191 combined with mutations that impair traffic at the TGN or in the early endosomal system (Rainey et al.,
192 2010). We previously determined that cells lacking Laa1 or Laa2 are sensitive to Sertraline (Zysnarski et
193 al., 2019). However, cells lacking Laa2 were slightly less sensitive than those lacking Laa1.

194 Moreover, in a high throughput study, cells lacking Laa1, Laa2, or Lft1 were all more sensitive to
195 Sertraline than wild-type cells, however, cells lacking Laa1 were far more sensitive than cells lacking
196 either Laa2 or Lft1. When ranked in order of the growth defect caused by *laa1Δ* 12.5 μM Sertraline was
197 ranked 16th out of 4198, whereas *laa2Δ* was the 54th most sensitive, and *lft1Δ* was the 606th most sensitive
198 to Sertraline (Ericson et al., 2008). These differences in sensitivity suggest the Laa2-Laa1 and Lft1-Laa1
199 complex might both contribute to the Sertraline sensitive function of Laa1. To confirm this, we examined
200 the Sertraline sensitivity of cells lacking Laa1, Lft1, Laa2, or a combination of Lft1 and Laa2. Consistent
201 with the prior results, the *laa1Δ* cells were more sensitive than the single deletion of either *LFT1* or *LAA2*

202 as monitored by the IC50 of Sertraline for each of the mutant genotypes (Fig. 8A). Importantly, consistent
203 with the hypothesis that both the Lft1-Laa1 and Laa2-Laa1 complexes contribute to Sertraline sensitivity,
204 the double *lft1Δ laa2Δ* genotype was nearly as sensitive to Sertraline as the *laa1Δ* genotype (Fig. 8A).

205 The growth defect of the double *lft1Δ laa2Δ* mutation in Sertraline suggests that both complexes contribute
206 to Laa1 functions. However, although Sertraline sensitivity is a quantitative metric of defects, the
207 mechanism of Sertraline sensitivity is unclear. Therefore, we examined the effect of Lft1 and Laa2 in
208 traffic at the TGN. To do this, we monitored the localization of Drs2, an aminophospholipid translocase
209 that localizes to the TGN. The TGN in yeast is a maturing compartment. Therefore, the steady-state
210 localization of TGN-resident proteins like Drs2 requires their retrieval from late-stage compartments to
211 early-stage compartments. This 'intra-Golgi' recycling mechanism depends on the clathrin adaptors AP1
212 and Ent5 (Casler et al., 2022). When intra-Golgi recycling is impaired, Drs2 is transported to the plasma
213 membrane. It is then rapidly endocytosed and sorted to the TGN (Liu et al., 2008). Therefore, to visualize
214 defects in Drs2 intra-Golgi recycling, we inhibited endocytosis by treating cells with Latrunculin A as
215 previously described (Liu et al., 2008). Under these conditions, in wild-type cells, a substantial fraction
216 of Drs2 remained localized to the TGN as assessed by co-localization with Sec7 (Fig. 7B). In contrast, in
217 cells lacking either AP1 or Laa1, most of the Drs2 is at the cell surface under these conditions. In cells
218 lacking either Lft1 or Laa2, the phenotype was intermediate (Fig. 7B).

219 To quantify the phenotype, we performed a blinded analysis of whether Drs2 localized to puncta or the
220 plasma membrane in the different samples. In wild-type cells treated with Latrunculin A, approximately
221 60% of the cells were classified as punctate using this analysis. In contrast, in *apl4Δ* or *laa1Δ* cells treated
222 with Latrunculin A, this number was 20% and 15%, respectively (Fig. 7C). Loss of Laa2 alone had little
223 effect on the percent of cells with punctate Drs2 in cells treated with Latrunculin A. In contrast, loss of
224 Lft1 caused a variable outcome. However, in cells lacking both Ltf1 and Laa2, the percent of cells with

225 punctate localization was significantly lower than wild-type and reached a level similar to *laa1Δ* cells.
226 These data suggest that both the Lft1-Laa1 and the Laa2-Laa1 complexes participate in intra-Golgi
227 recycling to maintain Drs2 at the TGN, even though Lft1-Laa1 does not impact AP1 localization.

228 **Human proteins are predicted to bind to Heatr5b via a conserved mechanism.**

229 Although HEATR5 proteins themselves are slowly evolving, their binding partners are fast-evolving
230 (Kuznetsov et al., 2023). For example, clear homologs of Lft1 and Laa2 can be identified only in other
231 fungi (Huerta-Cepas et al., 2019). Similarly, clear homologs to the human Heatr5b binding proteins
232 Aftiphilin and γ-synergin can be identified only in animals (Huerta-Cepas et al., 2019). Since Lft1 and
233 Laa2 bear little sequence similarity yet bind Laa1 in a similar manner, we asked whether other known or
234 suspected HEATR5 binding proteins might share a binding mechanism. To do this, we used AlphaFold2
235 to predict interactions between Heatr5b and its known binding proteins Aftiphilin and γ-synergin, as well
236 as Clba1, an uncharacterized protein with weak similarity to a region of Aftiphilin and Laa2 (Zysnarski et
237 al., 2019). We also predicted interactions between Heatr5a, a paralog of Heatr5b of unknown function.
238 Alphafold2 did not yield high-confidence interactions between Heatr5a or Heatr5b and γ-synergin
239 (Supplemental data folder 7). However, Alphafold2 predicted high-confidence interactions between the
240 C-termini of Heatr5a and Heatr5b and both Aftiphilin and Clba1 (Fig. 9A, Supplemental data folder 8-
241 12). Aftiphilin and Clba1 are predicted to bind over an extended interface in the C-termini of Heatr5a and
242 Heatr5b via three short alpha-helical regions analogous to HR1-3 in Lft1/Laa2. These regions in Aftiphilin
243 and Clba1 have weak but identifiable sequence similarity to one another and to Laa2 (Fig. 9B, (Zysnarski
244 et al., 2019)). Indeed, an area overlapping with HR2 and HR3 has been annotated as the Clba (clathrin
245 binding of Aftiphilin) domain for which Clba1 was named by the HUGO Gene Nomenclature Committee
246 at the European Bioinformatics Institute (Thomas et al., 2022). As with the budding yeast proteins, the
247 human proteins superimpose almost exactly with one another, suggesting that they cannot bind to

248 HEATR5 proteins simultaneously (Fig. 9c). We also compared the predicted interaction surfaces between
249 the budding yeast and human complexes. When aligning the predicted complexes based on the similarity
250 of Laa1 and HEATR5b, we found that Lft1 and Aftiphilin superimposed well, particularly in HR2 and
251 HR3 (Fig. 9d). Together, these results suggest that multiple HEATR5 binding proteins compete for the
252 same interface in both budding yeast and humans and suggest that human HEATR5 proteins may form
253 two or more biochemically distinct complexes.

254 **Discussion**

255 In this study, we report the discovery that the yeast HEATR5 protein, Laa1, participates in two distinct
256 biochemical protein complexes. This is the first report of any HEATR5 protein participating in distinct
257 biochemical complexes with mutually exclusive binding partners. Our discovery challenges previous
258 models for Laa1 functions and introduces the concept that HEATR5 proteins may participate in multiple
259 distinct complexes in other organisms.

260 Our findings indicate that the Lft1-Laa1 and Laa2-Laa1 complexes are at least partially redundant. The
261 source of this redundancy is currently known. Multiple models could explain this redundancy. The two
262 complexes may function interchangeably at the same step (Fig. 10A). Alternately, the two complexes
263 could act in different recycling pathways that emerge from different domains of the TGN or different
264 stages of TGN maturation (Fig. 10B, C). Future work is needed to distinguish these possibilities.

265 Considering our findings that Laa1 performs a function besides recruiting AP1, a re-reading of the prior
266 literature, particularly analysis of high-throughput studies, reveals that other HEATR5 proteins may also
267 have functions besides recruiting AP1. In human cells, knocking down Heatr5b or Aftiphilin causes
268 endocytosed transferrin to accumulate in peripheral endosomes, a phenotype not observed with AP1
269 knockdown (Hirst et al., 2005). In worms, HEATR5, but not AP1, was identified in a screen for genes

270 important for endocytosis (Balklava et al., 2007). In addition, the obligate Heatr5b interaction partners
271 Aftiphilin and γ-synergin were found in the interactome of AP2 and AP3 in human cells, and the plant
272 HEATR5 protein, Sweetie, was found in the interactome of the endocytic T-plate complex (Burman et al.,
273 2005; Dragwidge et al., 2023; Stockhammer et al., 2022). These studies suggest HEATR5 proteins in
274 other organisms have roles outside the AP1 pathway. Whether these additional roles involve two or more
275 distinct HEATR5 complexes remains to be determined.

276 This study also defines the common molecular binding interface between the yeast HEATR5 protein and
277 its co-factors using high-confidence structure predictions and biochemical analyses. Notably, we report
278 high-confidence predictions of the human proteins binding Aftiphilin and Clab1, which are highly similar
279 to the experimentally verified interface in the yeast proteins. Although the interactions between Aftiphilin
280 and Heatr5a and Clba1 and Heatr5a or Heatr5b have yet to be experimentally verified, the concordance
281 of the predicted interaction interfaces with the experimentally verified yeast interaction interfaces suggests
282 the predicted interfaces likely reflect the native situation.

283 The interaction between Laa1 and Lft1, and Laa2 is stable enough to be maintained during
284 immunoprecipitations (Fig. 2,(Zysnarski et al., 2019)). However, it remains unclear how stable the
285 interactions are in vivo. Laa1 binding protects both wild-type Lft1 and Laa2 from degradation, as seen by
286 the lower abundances of both in cells lacking Laa1 (Fig. 2,(Zysnarski et al., 2019)). This lower abundance
287 argues that if Lft1-Laa1 and Laa2-Laa1 complexes dynamically assemble and disassemble, free Lft1 and
288 Laa2 are likely short-lived either because the released protein is rapidly bound to a new Laa1 molecule or
289 degraded. Notably, Lft1 and Laa2 have different degradation kinetics. In a genome-wide analysis of
290 protein stability, Laa2 has a half-life of 10.1 hours, similar to the half-life of Laa1 (10.5 hr) and the bulk
291 of the budding yeast proteome (>8 hr), whose abundance is regulated by synthesis rate rather than
292 degradation rate (Christiano et al., 2014). This half-life is consistent with Laa2 either binding stably to

293 Laa1 or rapidly rebinding such that Laa2 is not actively degraded even if it engages in dynamic assembly
294 cycles. In contrast, Lft1 has a half-life of 5.7 hours, placing it in the 15% budding yeast proteome
295 specifically targeted by degradation pathways. Future work will be needed to assess whether Lft1-Laa1
296 or Laa2-Laa1 complexes assemble and disassemble dynamically in vivo and, if so, whether targeted
297 degradation of Lft1 plays a vital role under normal conditions.

298 The extended nature of the Laa1 binding site on Lft1 and Laa2 may be significant for their molecular
299 mechanism. The Lft1 and Laa2 binding sites for Laa1 are composed of a series of alpha-helical regions
300 separated by unstructured segments (Fig. 4). Our studies using truncations of Laa1 and HR deletion
301 mutations of Lft1 indicate that multiple areas of this extended interface contribute to the binding
302 mechanism (Fig. 5, 6). We speculate that this interface may allow Lft1 and Laa2 to remain bound to Laa1
303 even if the conformation of Laa1 changes. Based on its predicted structure, Laa1 is likely to be
304 conformationally dynamic. The predicted C-terminus of Laa1 is almost entirely tandem HEAT repeats.
305 The HEAT repeat is a simple fold composed of two alpha helices separated by a short linker. This
306 arrangement is common in biology. Tandem HEAT repeats appear in diverse proteins, including kinases,
307 importins, transcription factors, and vesicular coat proteins (Kobe et al., 1999). In these proteins, the
308 tandem HEAT repeats form an alpha-solenoid that can display an extraordinary level of conformational
309 flexibility, in some cases elastically stretching by 2-fold (Forwood et al., 2010; Kappel et al., 2010;
310 Yoshimura and Hirano, 2016). In addition, Laa1 contains an unstructured loop between amino acids 1711-
311 1733, which lies near the binding sites for HR2 on Lft1 and Laa2. If Laa1 undergoes elastic stretching or
312 other conformational changes, the extended binding interface may play a role in maintaining the
313 interaction between Laa1 and its binding partners.

314 In summary, these findings reveal that Laa1 participates in two biochemically distinct complexes. The
315 complexes are defined by the mutually exclusive binding of two fast-evolving binding partners. The

316 binding mechanism is characterized by an extended surface on both Laa1 and its binding partners. Overall,
317 the binding mechanism may provide a paradigm for HEATR5 binding proteins in many organisms. The
318 two Laa1 complexes function at least partially redundantly in intra-Golgi recycling, however, their exact
319 mechanistic function remains unknown. Given the large size of Laa1, there are likely additional protein-
320 protein or protein-lipid interactions mediated by Laa1 that remain undiscovered. Future studies are needed
321 to elucidate these additional interactions and reveal a complete picture of the molecular mechanism of
322 Laa1 function in membrane traffic in budding yeast.

323 **Materials and Methods**

324 The strains, plasmids, and oligonucleotides used for this study are listed in Tables 1-3 (James et al., 1996;
325 Noguchi et al., 2008; Plemel et al., 2021). pFA6A-mcherry::His6Mx was generated by replacing GFP in
326 pFA6a-GFP::His6Mx with mCherry from pRSETB-mcherry (Shaner et al., 2004). pMD397(pGAD-C1-
327 Lft1) and pMD380 (pGEX4T1-Lft1) was generated by amplifying *LFT1* from genomic DNA using
328 oligonucleotides FJ064 and FL065 and subcloning into pGADC1 between the BamHI and SalI sites.
329 pMD394-396 were generated by amplifying from pMD380 with oligo pairs described in Table 3 and using
330 3-piece assembly reactions to generate the deletion alleles (Gibson et al., 2009). Tags and deletions were
331 integrated into the genome using a one-step PCR-based method (Longtine et al., 1998; Noguchi et al.,
332 2008). Mutations in *LFT1* were generated by a two-piece PCR-mediated gene replacement strategy, the
333 *LFT1* wild-type or mutant open reading frames were amplified from pMD380 and pMD394-pMD396
334 using oligonucleotides MD1258 and MD1259 for wild-type and all mutations except the deletion of helix
335 1 which was amplified with MD1269b and MD1259. The open reading frame fragment was co-
336 transformed with a fragment amplified from pFA6a-6His-TEV-Flag-His6Mx using MD902 and MD904
337 into cells carrying a deletion of *LFT1*. Combinations of tags, mutations, and deletions were performed
338 using manual tetrad dissection. Yeast cells were grown in yeast/peptone medium supplemented with 2%

339 glucose and a mixture of adenine, uracil, and tryptophan (YPD+AUT), or yeast/peptone medium
340 supplemented with 2% galactose and a mixture of adenine, uracil, and tryptophan (YPG+AUT) or
341 synthetic medium SD supplemented with 2% glucose and an amino acid mix as previously described
342 (Lang et al., 2014). Sertraline was from Fisher Scientific. Sertraline (10 mm) was prepared in DMSO.
343 FM4-64 (SnaptoRed C2) was prepared in DMSO. Antibodies against Myc (9E10, RRID:CVCL_L708)
344 were from Biolegend, PGK1 (22C5D8,RRID:AB_2532235) was from Novex, HA (12CA5,
345 RRID:AB_514505) and Flag (M2, RRID:AB_439685) were from Sigma. GST-antibody was described
346 previously (Hung et al., 2012). Alexa Fluor 647-conjugated goat anti-mouse (RRID:AB_141698) and
347 Alexa Fluor 647 goat anti-rabbit (RRID:AB_141663) antibody were from Life Technologies.

348 Graphs were generated and statistical analysis was performed with GraphPad Prism v7.00-9.00 (GraphPad
349 Software, La Jolla, CA).

350 Imaging and analysis was performed as described previously (Hung and Duncan, 2016). Briefly, unless
351 indicated otherwise cells were cultured to logarithmic phase in SD medium, centrifuged briefly, and
352 mounted on an uncoated coverslip in growth medium. Images were collected with a Nikon Ti-E inverted
353 microscope with a 1.4 numerical aperture/100× oil immersion objective. The Lumencor LED light engine
354 (472/20 nm for GFP and 575/20 nm for mCherry) was used for fluorophore excitation. Filters were
355 ET/GFP-mCherry (59,002×), excitation dichroic (89019bs), and emission-side dichroic (T560lpxr), and
356 for emission filters, ET525/50 m and ET595/50 m(Chroma).

357 The intensity of fluorescence puncta in cells was quantified as previously described (Martinez-Marquez
358 and Duncan, 2018). Z-stack images were first compressed to a single maximum-intensity image using
359 ImageJ. The resulting image was denoised using the "Denoise image" menu from the SpatTrackV2
360 software (Lund et al., 2014). Image analysis was performed in ImageJ. To define regions of GFP
361 localization, the denoised image was thresholded using Otsu's method with ImageJ with the stacked

362 histogram option selected. GFP positive regions of interest were defined using the "Analyze Particles"
363 menu from ImageJ on the binary thresholded image. The GFP-positive regions of interest were then used
364 to measure fluorescence intensity from a background subtracted Z-stack compressed but non-denoised
365 image. Fluorescence intensity was determined from at least eight fields of view per sample, each
366 containing at least five cells. Experiments were repeated as indicated in the figures using at least two
367 different strains for the same genotype.

368 For co-localization analysis, GFP and mCherry positive regions of interest were defined using the same
369 process used for puncta intensity analysis. GFP structures that contain mCherry, were defined as structures
370 for which at least 30% of the GFP positive area of the structure was also mCherry positive and vice versa
371 for mCherry structures that contain GFP. At least eight fields of view were analyzed per sample, each
372 containing at least five cells. Experiments were repeated as indicated in the figures using two different
373 strains for each genotype.

374 For Drs2 localization, cells were transferred to a tube roller at 25C at least 3 hours before treating with 76
375 µg/ml Latrunculin or 2% DMSO. Cells were incubated for 30 min at 25C in microfuge tubes with
376 punctured lids in a shaking heating block, before images were collected. Z-stack images were first
377 compressed to a single maximum-intensity image using ImageJ. Files were copied and renamed to obscure
378 genotype information and cells were manually scored as having punctate or cell surface localization. At
379 least five fields of view were analyzed per sample, each containing at least five cells.

380 FM4-64 staining of yeast vacuoles was performed as previously described (Buelto et al., 2020).

381 For immunoblotting, after SDS-PAGE, samples were transferred to nitrocellulose, blocked with 5% milk
382 in TBS-T (137 mm NaCl, 15.2 mm Tris-HCl, 4.54 mm Tris, 0.896 mm Tween 20), and then probed with

383 primary and fluorescent secondary antibodies. Fluorescence signals were detected on an Azure 600
384 imaging system (Azure Biosciences). Image analysis was performed in ImageJ.

385 Whole-cell yeast extracts for protein abundance assessment were generated using glass bead lysis in SDS
386 sample buffer as previously described (Aoh et al., 2011). Cell lysates for immunoprecipitation and GST-
387 pulldowns were generated by glass-bead lysis in HEKG5 (20 mm Hepes, pH 7.5, 1 mm EDTA, 150 mm
388 KCl, 5% glycerol) with protease inhibitor mixture without EDTA (Promega), followed by the addition of
389 0.3% CHAPS. The lysates were clarified by centrifugation at 13,000 rpm for 10 min at 4 °C. Protein
390 concentrations were determined using Biorad Protein Assay (Biorad) and protein concentrations were
391 adjusted to 2ml in 500 µl HEKG5. For Flag-IP, 6 µls of EZview™ Red ANTI-FLAG® M2 Affinity Gel
392 (Sigma). For GST-pull downs, 20µls 50% Glutathione agarose (G-Biosciences) was added. For myc-IP,
393 20 µls 20% Protein A Sepharose (Cytvia) and 0.5 anti-myc antibodies were added. The lysates were
394 incubated two hours at 4 °C. For immunoprecipitations, the beads were washed three times with ice-cold
395 HEKG5 with 0.3% CHAPS, and the bound proteins were eluted with SDS sample buffer. For GST-
396 pulldowns, the beads were wash twice with HEKG5 with 0.3% CHAPS and once with HEKG5 without
397 CHAPS. The beads were resuspended in 50 µl 100 mm Tris, pH 9, 200 mm NaCl, 5 mm DTT, 20 mm
398 reduced GSH, and incubated for 10 min at room temperature. The supernatants were reserved. A second
399 elution was then performed the two supernatants were combined. For all samples, cells were cultured to
400 mid-log phase in YPD+AUT except for samples described in Figure 6 A and Figure 7 A which were
401 grown in YPG+AUT.

402 Two-hybrid interactions were monitored as previously described (Duncan et al., 2003).

403 IC50 values were determined as previously described (Hung et al., 2018).

Structure predictions were performed using alphafold2_multimer_v3 version 1.5.2 with the following settings: mas_mode mmseqs2_uniref_env, 5 models, 6 recycles, 1 ensemble (Mirdita et al., 2022)

Structure comparisons and alignments were performed in UCSF ChimeraX version 1.4 with the following settings: Sequence alignment algorithm Needleman-Wunsch, Matrix Blosum-62, Gap extension penalty 1, iterate by pruning long atom pairs was selected and cutoff distance was set at 2 (Goddard et al., 2018; Pettersen et al., 2021).

Tables of strains, plasmids, and oligonucleotides used are available as supplemental documents. Structure predictions and accompanying documents are available as supplemental materials.

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Author contributions: L.J. Marmorale, H. Jin, T. Reidy, and M.C. Duncan conceived of the experiments. L.J. Marmorale, H. Jin, T. Reidy, C. Zysnarski, F. Jordan-Javed, and S. Lahiri generated the reagents. L.J. Marmorale, H. Jin, T. Reidy, C. Zysnarski, B. Palomino-Alonso, and M.C. Duncan performed the experiments and analyzed the data. M.C. Duncan wrote the manuscript and secured funding.

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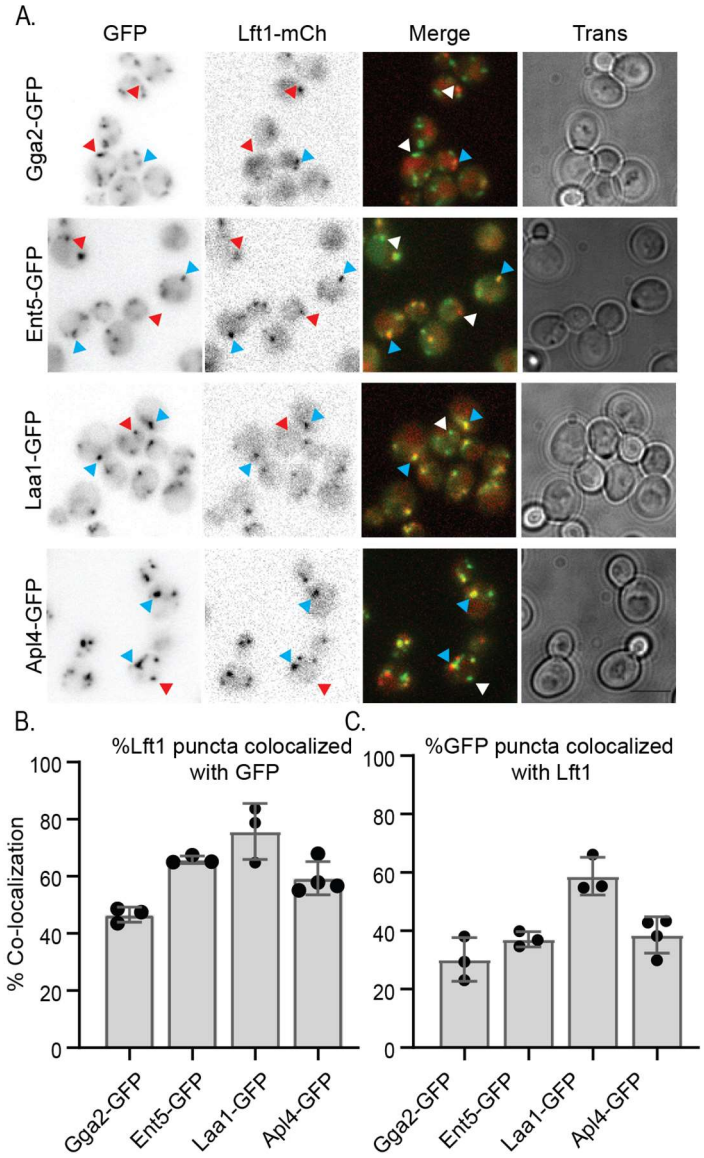

Figure 1. Lft1 shows a high level of co-localization with Laa1. A. Indicated gene fusions were expressed from their endogenous loci and cells were imaged as described in the materials and methods. Scale bar is 5 µm. Blue arrowheads indicate regions of co-localization. Red/White arroweads indicate regions where co-localization was not observed. B. Percent of Lft1 structures that contained indicated GFP protein and C. Percent of structures labeled with indicated GFP-protein that contained Lft1 were determined as described in materials and methods. Charts show percentages from individual replicates, error bars indicate standard deviation.

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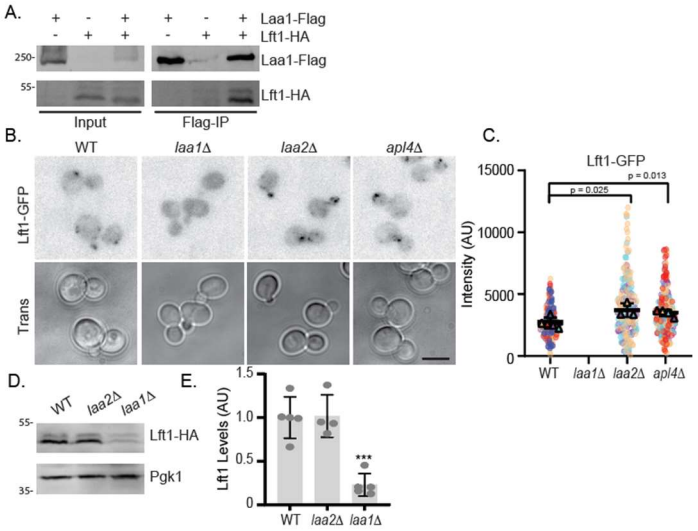

Figure 2. Lft1 binds Laa1 and depends on Laa1 for protein stability. A. Lft1 binds Laa1 as detected by immunoprecipitation. Flag-tagged proteins were immunoprecipitated from cells expressing indicated gene fusions expressed from their endogenous loci and probed for Flag and HA. B. Lft1-GFP is not detectable in cells lacking Laa1. Cells with indicated genotypes were imaged as described in materials and methods. Scale bar is 5 µm C. Quantification of Lft1 puncta intensity in indicated cells. Charts show super-plots of mean values from replicate experiments plotted over individual intensity measurements which are color coded for each replicate experiment. The standard deviations of the mean values are shown. P-values derive from unpaired T-tests of the mean values of replicate experiments D. Lft1 is abundance is lower in cells lacking Laa1 but not Laa2. Lysates of cells of indicated genotypes were probed for HA or PGK1, used as a lysis control. E. Charts of intensity values from D. The standard deviations are shown. P-values derive from Dunnett's multiple comparisons test. Chart shows standard deviations.

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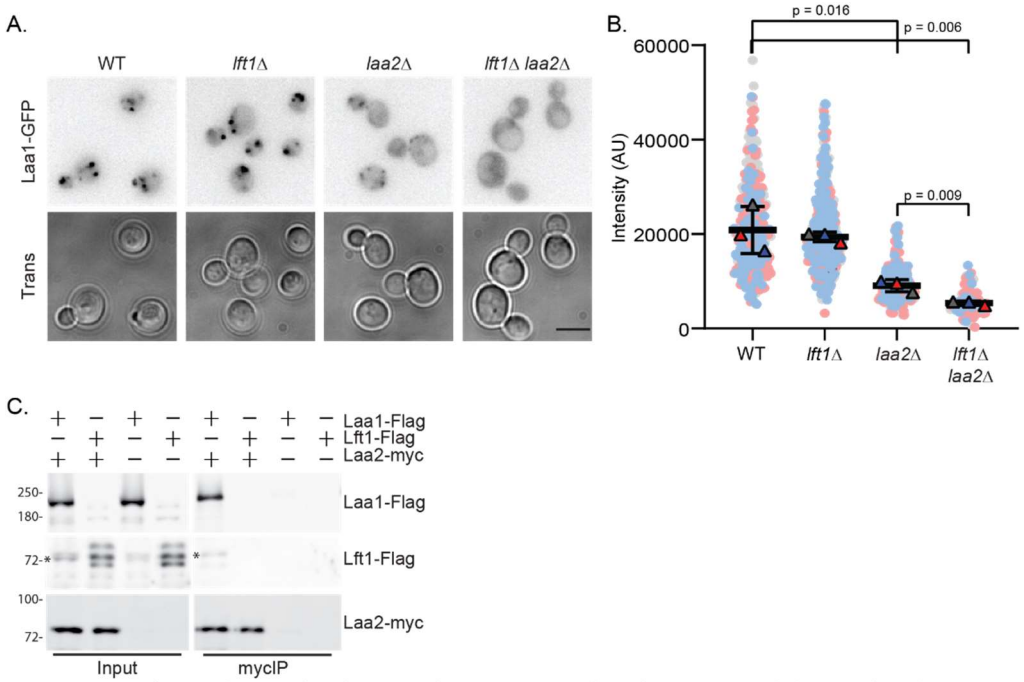

Figure 3. Lft1 and Laa2 both contribute to Laa1 localization and do not bind to one another. A. Cells with indicated genotypes were imaged as described in materials and methods. Scale bar is 5 µm B. Quantification of puncta intensity as described in Fig. 2C. C. Laa2 does not bind Lft1 as detected by immunoprecipitation. Myc-tagged proteins were immunoprecipitated from cells expressing indicated gene fusions from their endogenous loci and probed for myc and Flag. * indicates a degradation product from Laa1 migrating near the size of Lft1. Lft1-Flag migrates as a triplet under the conditions used for the myc IP

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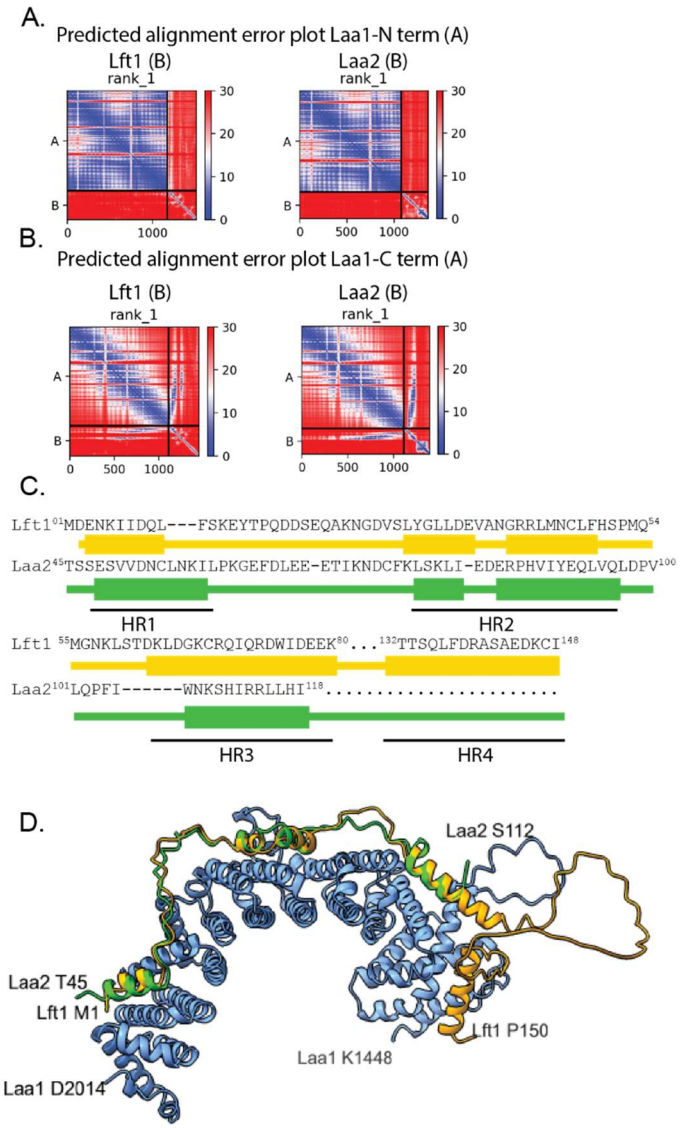

Figure 4. Lft1 and Laa2 are predicted to bind to an overlapping interface on the Laa1 C-terminus. A. No high-confidence interactions are predicted between the N-terminus of Laa1 and either Lft1 or Laa2, suggesting neither protein interacts with the N-terminus. Graphs show predicted alignment error for the top models of alpha fold prediction of dimer. Blue indicates the highest confidence. B. High confidence interactions are predicted between the C-terminus of Laa1 and both Lft1 or Laa2, suggesting both proteins interact with the C-terminus. Graphs as in A. C. Lft1 and Laa2 bear little sequence identity in predicted Laa1 interacting regions. The illustration shows sequence alignment of Lft1 and Laa2 based on overlay generated with ChimeraX matchmaker tool aligning the Laa1 C-terminus from the predicted dimeric structures. Helixes are indicated as boxes. The helical regions (HR) 1-4 are indicated below. D. Lft1 and Laa2 are predicted to adopt a similar fold when binding to Laa1. Illustration shows overlay of predicted structures described in C. Lft1 is orange, and Laa2 is green. Laa1 is in blue, the last 304 amino acids are indicated in a darker blue.

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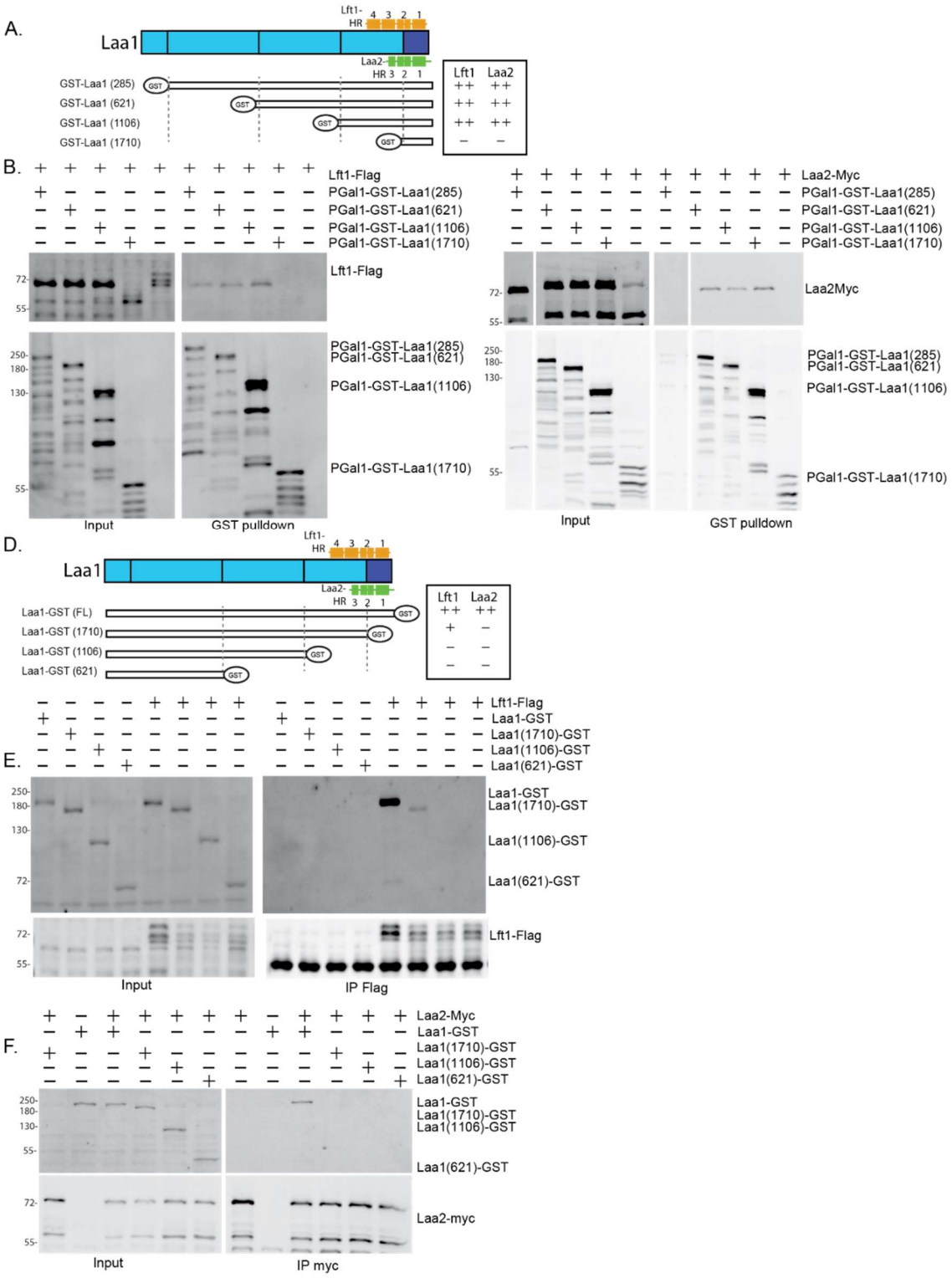

Figure 5. Lft1 and Laa2 bind to the C-terminus of Laa1. (cont)

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Figure 5. Lft1 and Laa2 bind to the C-terminus of Laa1. A. Schematic of Laa1 fragments used in B and C, and approximate orientation to Lft1 and Laa2 HRs. Strength of binding to Lft1 and Laa2 is indicated to the right. B & C Lft1 and Laa2 bind to Laa1 fragments that encompass the last 908 amino acids of Laa1 (pGAL1-GST-Laa1(1106). GST-tagged proteins were isolated using Glutathione beads from cells expressing indicated gene fusions expressed from their endogenous loci and probed for GST and Flag or Myc. Note that Lft1-Flag migrates as a single band under conditions where Laa1 is overexpressed and can bind Lft1, it migrates as a triplet when Laa1 is not overexpressed. D. Schematic of Laa1 fragments used in E and F and approximate orientation to Lft1 and Laa2 HRs. Strength of binding to Lft1 and Laa2 is indicated to the right. E. Lft1 binds weakly to Laa1 missing the last 304 amino acids (Laa1(1710)-GST), but not larger deletions. Flag-tagged proteins were immunoprecipitated from cells expressing indicated gene fusions expressed from their endogenous loci and probed for GST and Flag. F. Lft1 Laa2 does not bind to any C-terminal truncations tested. Myc-tagged proteins were immunoprecipitated from cells expressing indicated gene fusions expressed from their endogenous loci and probed for GST and myc.

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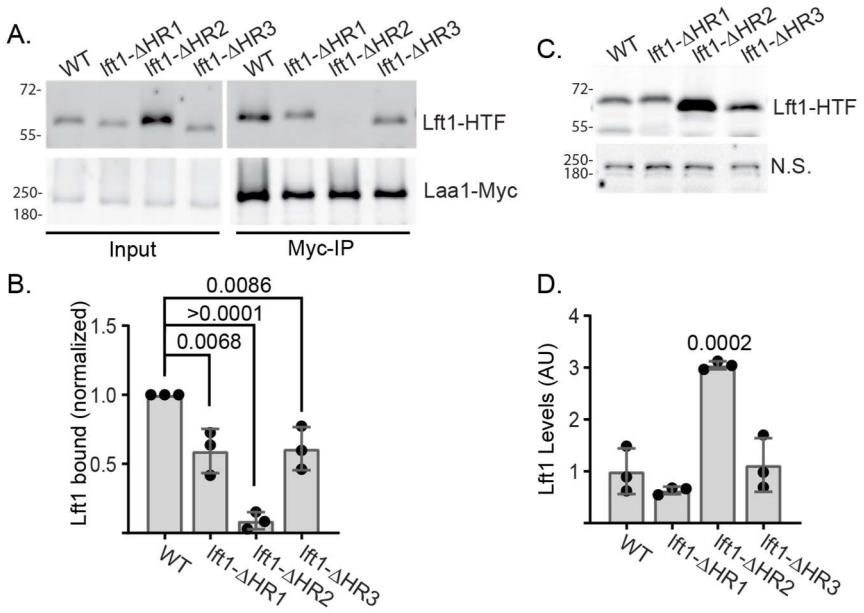

Figure 6. Multiple Lft1 helical regions contribute to binding. A. Indicated *LFT1* mutations were tagged with 6-HIS-TEV-3FLAG (HTF) and expressed from the endogenous locus in cells expressing Laa1-myc from the endogenous locus. Myc-tagged proteins were immunoprecipitated and probed for Myc and Flag B. Lft1 bound was quantified. Lft1 signal was normalized to the amount of Laa1 in each sample and then to the normalized signal for wild-type reactions on the same immunoblot. C. lft1-ΔHR2 is more abundant than wild-type Lft1. Lysates from strains described in A were generated and immunoblotted for Flag. Equal loading was confirmed with an endogenous protein that cross-reacts with the flag antibody (N.S.) D. Lft1 abundance was quantified. Signal intensity was normalized to the average of the wild-type signal. P-values derive from Dunnett's multiple comparisons test. Charts show standard deviations.

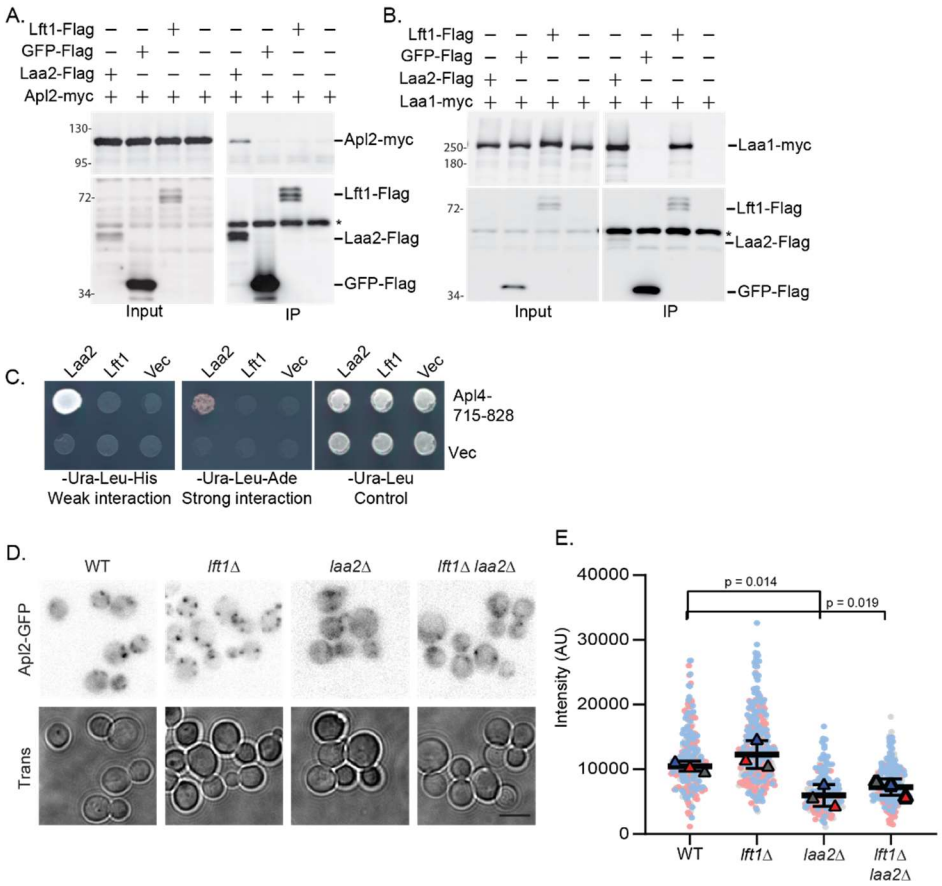

Figure 7. Lft1 does not detectably bind to AP1 or contribute to its localization. A. AP1 was not detected in coimmunoprecipitation samples with Lft1 under conditions where Laa2 binds AP1 and B. under conditions where Lft1 binds Laa1. Myc-tagged proteins were immunoprecipitated from cells expressing indicated gene fusions expressed from their endogenous loci and probed for Myc and Flag. *indicates antibody band. C. An interaction between Lft1 and AP1-γ ear (Apl4-a.a.715-828) was not detected by 2-hybrid under conditions where AP1- γ ear bind Laa2. D. Loss of Lft1 does not impact AP1 localization. Cells with indicated genotypes were imaged as described in materials and methods. Scale bar is 5 µm E. Quantification of puncta intensity as described in Fig. 2C.

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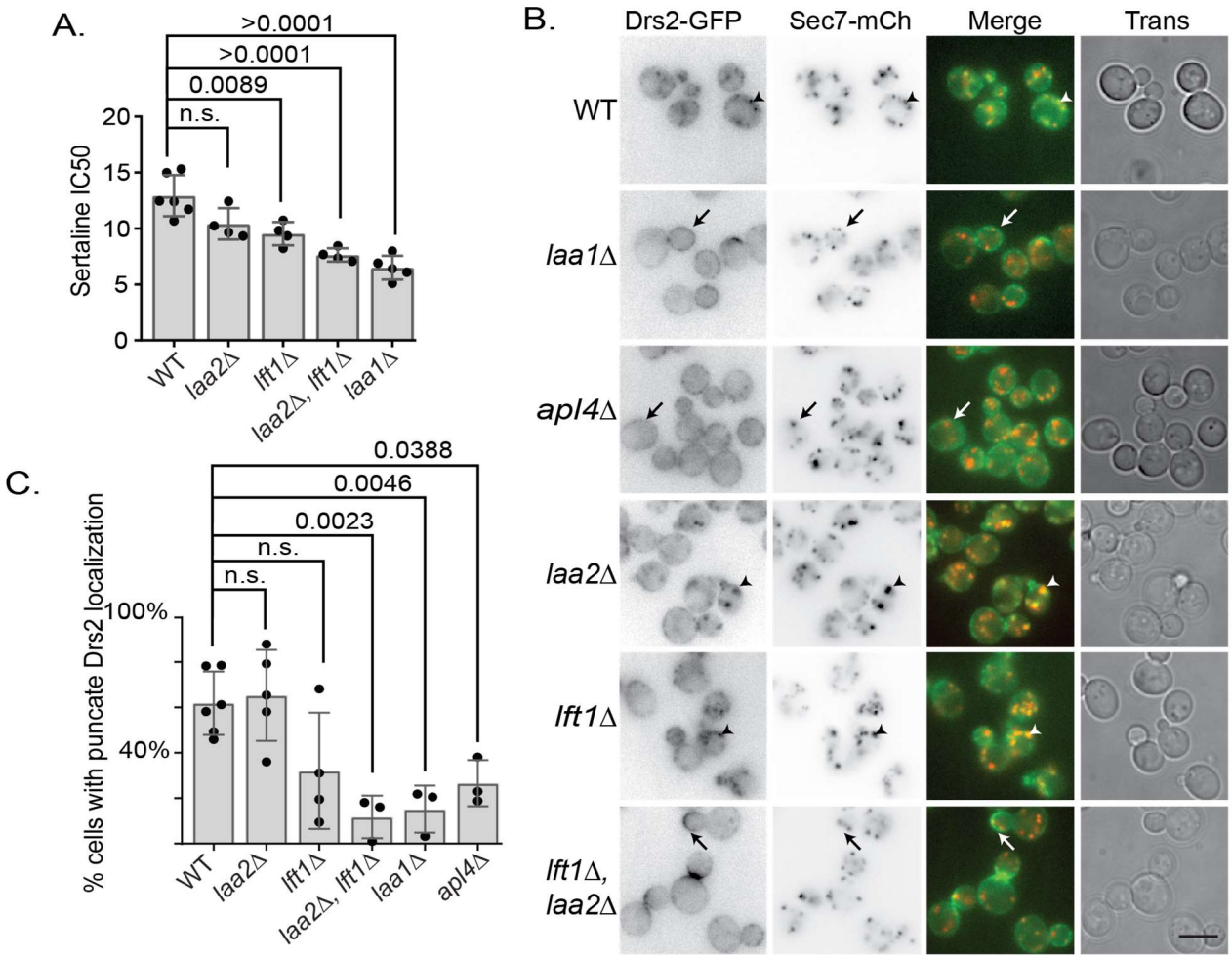

Figure 8. The Lft1-Laa1 and Laa2-Lft1 complexes both mediate intra-Golgi recycling. A. Cells lacking both Lft1 and Laa2 are sensitive to Sertraline at levels similar to cells lacking Laa1. Charts show IC50 values from replicate experiments and standard deviations. P-values are from a student t-test.
B. Cells lacking both Lft1 and Laa2 are severely defective in Drs2 recycling. Drs2 recycling was monitored. Cells with defective recycling accumulate Drs2 at the cell surface after latrunculin A treatment (arrows), whereas those with normal recycling have Drs2 in Sec7-positive puncta (arrowheads) C. Quantification cells with punctate Drs2 localization as described in the materials and methods. Charts show percent of cells scored as having defects in Drs2 localization from replicate experiments and standard deviations. P-values are from a student t-test. Scale bar is 5 µm.

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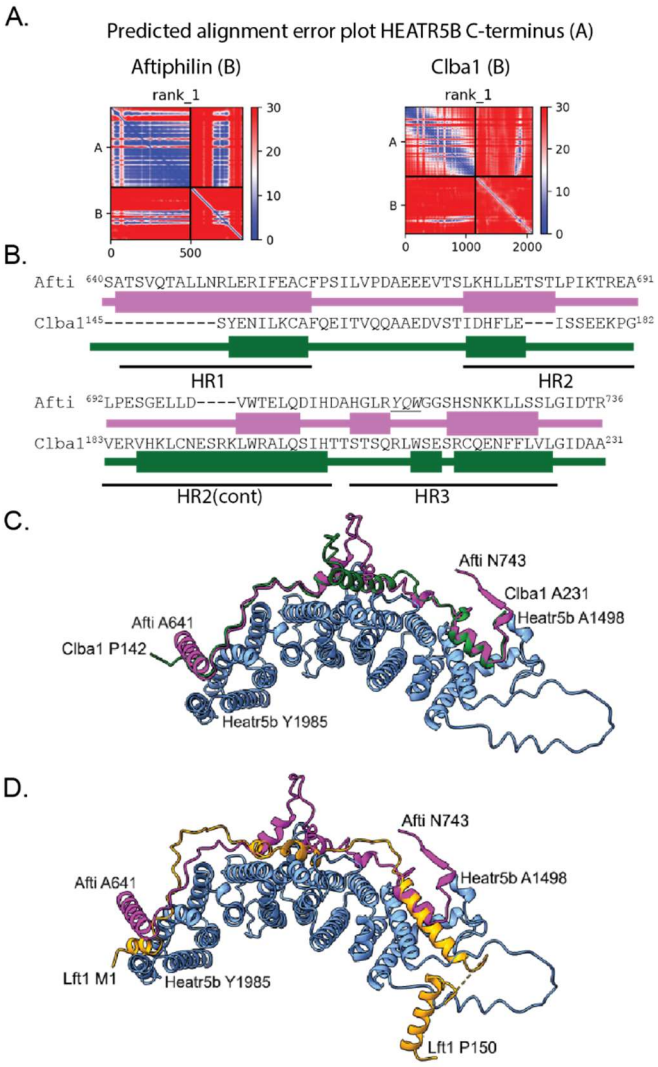

Figure 9. Human proteins are predicted to bind an overlapping interface in the c-terminus of Heatr5b similar to the Laa1-Lft1/Laa2 binding interface. A. High confidence interactions are predicted between the C-terminus of Heatr5b and aftiphilin and Clba1. Charts are as described in Figure 4. B. Aftifphilin and Clba1 display weak similarity in the predicted Heatr5 interacting regions. Diagrams are as described in Figure 4, based on matchmaker tool aligning Aftiphilin and Clba1 in the predicted structures. C. Aftilphilin and Clba1 are predicted to adopt a similar fold and interact with the same regions of Heatr5b. Illustration shows structure alignment as described in panel B. D. Aftiphilin and Lft1 are predicted to bind HEATR5 proteins via a related interface. Illustration shows structure alignment based on matchmaker tool aligning Laa1 and HEATR5b. Laa1/HEATR5b are in blue, Aftiphilin is in magenta, Clba1 is in dark green and Lft1 is in orange

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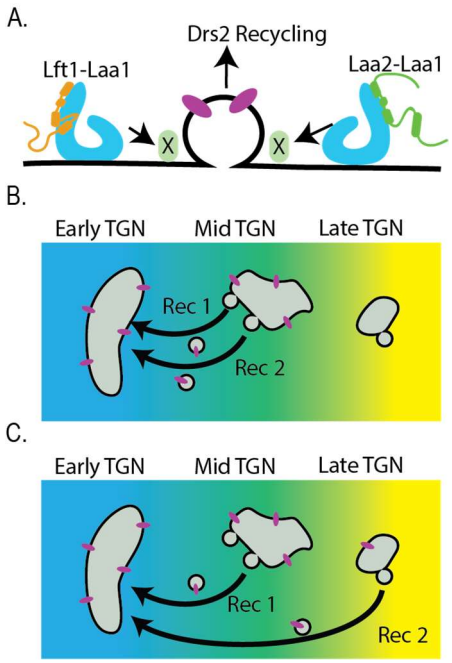

Figure 10. Models of potential roles of Lft1-Laa1 and Laa2-Laa1 complexes in intra-Golgi recycling. A. The two complexes redundantly perform an activity needed to recycle Drs2 from a late-stage TGN to an early-stage TGN. B and C. The two complexes act in two different pathways (Rec 1 and Rec 2) that emerge from different domains of the TGN (B) or that act on sequential stages of TGN maturation (C). Drs2 can recycle by either pathway. When both are disrupted Drs2 is transported to the cell surface.

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