

1 Universal temporal rate of DNA 2 replication origin firing: A balance 3 between origin activation and 4 passivation

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12
13 **Abstract** The time-dependent rate $I(t)$ of origin firing per length of unreplicated DNA presents a
14 universal bell shape in eukaryotes that has been interpreted as the result of a complex
15 time-evolving interaction between origins and limiting firing factors. Here we show that a normal
16 diffusion of replication fork components towards localized potential replication origins (*p-oris*) can
17 more simply account for the $I(t)$ universal bell shape, as a consequence of a competition between
18 the origin firing time and the time needed to replicate DNA separating two neighboring *p-ori*. We
19 predict the $I(t)$ maximal value to be the product of the replication fork speed with the squared *p-ori*
20 density. We show that this relation is robustly observed in simulations and in experimental data for
21 several eukaryotes. Our work underlines that fork-component recycling and potential origins
22 localization are sufficient spatial ingredients to explain the universality of DNA replication kinetics.

24 Introduction

25 Eukaryotic DNA replication is a stochastic process (Hyrien *et al.*, 2013; Hawkins *et al.*, 2013; Hyrien,
26 2016). Prior to entering the S(ynthesis)-phase of the cell cycle, a number of DNA loci called potential
27 origins (*p-oris*) are *licensed* for DNA replication initiation (Machida *et al.*, 2005; Hyrien *et al.*, 2013;
28 Hawkins *et al.*, 2013). During S-phase, in response to the presence of origin *firing* factors, pairs
29 of replication *forks* performing bi-directional DNA synthesis will start from a subset of the *p-oris*,
30 the active replication origins for that cell cycle (Machida *et al.*, 2005; Hyrien *et al.*, 2013; Hawkins
31 *et al.*, 2013). Note that the inactivation of *p-oris* by the passing of a replication fork called origin
32 *passivation*, forbids origin firing in already replicated regions (de Moura *et al.*, 2010; Hyrien and
33 Goldar, 2010; Yang *et al.*, 2010).

34 The time-dependent rate of origin firing per length of unreplicated DNA, $I(t)$, is a fundamental
35 parameter of DNA replication kinetics. $I(t)$ curves present a universal bell shape in eukaryotes
36 (Goldar *et al.*, 2009), increasing toward a maximum after mid-S-phase and decreasing to zero at
37 the end of S-phase. An increasing $I(t)$ results in a tight dispersion of replication ending times,
38 which provides a solution to the random completion problem (Hyrien *et al.*, 2003; Bechhoefer and
39 Marshall, 2007; Yang and Bechhoefer, 2008).

40 Models of replication in *Xenopus* embryo (Goldar *et al.*, 2008; Gauthier and Bechhoefer, 2009)
41 proposed that the initial $I(t)$ increase reflects the progressive import during S-phase of a limiting
42 origin firing factor and its recycling after release upon forks merge. The $I(t)$ increase was also
43 reproduced in a simulation of human genome replication timing that used a constant number of
44 firing factors having an increasing reactivity through S-phase (Gindin *et al.*, 2014). In these 3 models,
45 an additional mechanism was required to explain the final $I(t)$ decrease by either a subdiffusive
46 motion of the firing factor (Gauthier and Bechhoefer, 2009), a dependency of firing factors' affinity
47 for p -oris on replication fork density (Goldar *et al.*, 2008), or an inhomogeneous firing probability
48 profile (Gindin *et al.*, 2014). Here we show that when taking into account that p -oris are distributed
49 at a finite number of localized sites then it is possible to reproduce the universal bell shape of
50 the $I(t)$ curves without any additional hypotheses than recycling of fork factor components. $I(t)$
51 increases following an increase of fork mergers, each merger releasing a firing factor that was
52 trapped on DNA. Then $I(t)$ decreases due to a competition between the time t_c to fire an origin and
53 the time t_r to replicate DNA separating two neighboring p -ori. We will show that when t_c becomes
54 smaller than t_r , p -ori density over unreplicated DNA decreases, and so does $I(t)$. Modeling random
55 localization of active origins in *Xenopus* embryo by assuming that every site is a (weak) p -ori, previous
56 work implicitly assumed t_r to be close to zero (Goldar *et al.*, 2008; Gauthier and Bechhoefer, 2009)
57 forbidding the observation of a decreasing $I(t)$. Licensing of a limited number of sites as p -ori thus
58 appears to be a critical property contributing to the observed canceling of $I(t)$ at the end of S-phase
59 in all studied eukaryotes.

60 Results

61 Emergence of a bell-shape $I(t)$

62 In our modeling of replication kinetics, a bimolecular reaction between a firing factor and a p -ori
63 results in an origin firing event; then the diffusing element is trapped and travels with the replication
64 forks until two converging forks merge (termination, Fig. 1 (a)). Under the assumption of a well-
65 mixed system, for every time step dt , we consider each interaction between the $N_{FD}(t)$ free diffusing
66 firing factors and the $N_{p-ori}(t)$ p -oris as potentially leading to a firing with a probability $k_{on}dt$. The
67 resulting simulated firing rate per length of unreplicated DNA is then:

$$I_S(t) = \frac{N_{fired}(t, t + dt)}{L_{unrepDNA}(t)dt}, \quad (1)$$

68 where $N_{fired}(t, t + dt)$ is the number of p -oris fired between times t and $t + dt$, and $L_{unrepDNA}(t)$ is
69 the length of unreplicated DNA a time t . Then we propagate the forks along the chromosome
70 with a constant speed v , and if two forks meet, a free firing factor is released. Finally we simulate
71 the chromosomes as 1D chains where prior to entering S-phase, the p -oris are precisely localized.
72 For *Xenopus* embryo, the p -ori positions are randomly sampled, so that each simulated S-phase
73 corresponds to a different positioning of the p -oris. We compare results obtained with periodic
74 or uniform p -ori distributions. For *S. cerevisiae*, the p -ori positions, identical for each simulation,
75 are taken from the OriDB database (Siow *et al.*, 2012). As previously simulated in human (Löb
76 *et al.*, 2016), we model the entry in S-phase using an exponentially relaxed loading of the firing
77 factors with a time scale shorter than the S-phase duration T_{phase} (3 mins for *Xenopus* embryo,
78 where $T_{phase} \sim 30$ mins, and 10 mins for *S. cerevisiae*, where $T_{phase} \sim 60$ mins). After the short loading
79 time, the total number of firing factors N_D^T is constant. As shown in Fig. 1 (b) (see also Fig. 2), the
80 universal bell shape of the $I(t)$ curves (Goldar *et al.*, 2009) spontaneously emerges from our model
81 when going from weak to strong interaction, and decreasing the number of firing factors below the
82 number of p -oris. The details of the firing factor loading dynamics do not affect the emergence of a
83 bell shaped $I(t)$, even though it can modulate its precise shape, especially early in S-phase.

84 In a simple bimolecular context, the rate of origin firing is $i(t) = k_{on}N_{p-ori}(t)N_{FD}(t)$. The firing rate
85 by element of unreplicated DNA is then given by

$$I(t) = k_{on}N_{FD}(t)\rho_{p-ori}(t), \quad (2)$$

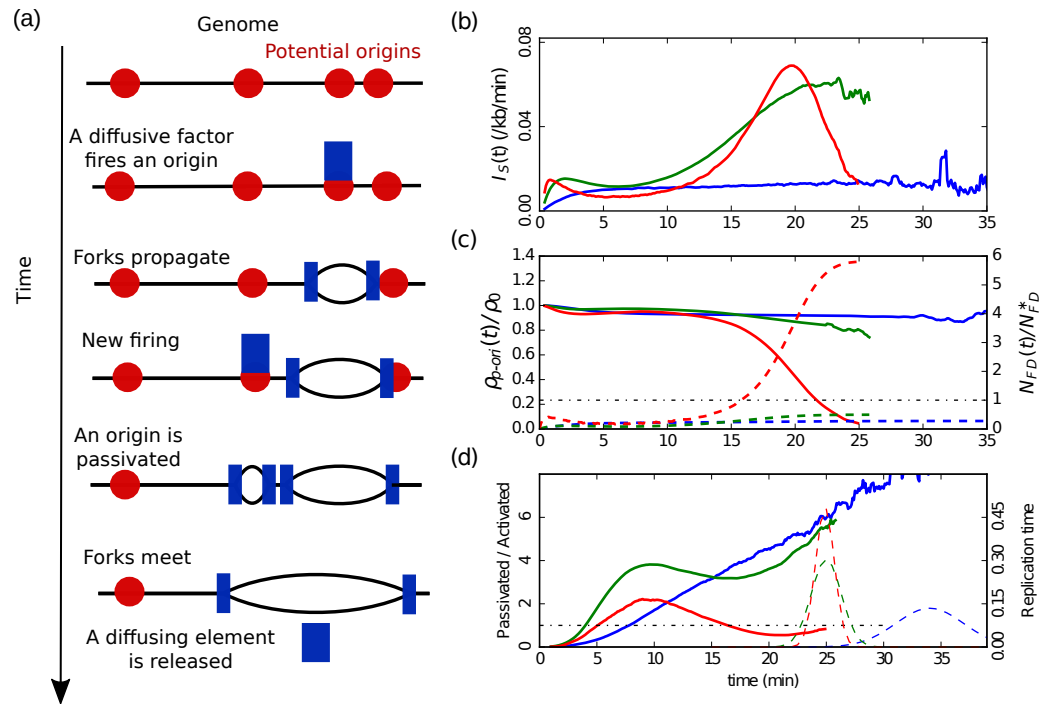


Figure 1. (a) Sketch of the different steps of our modeling of replication initiation and propagation. (b) $I_S(t)$ (Eq. (1)) obtained from numerical simulations of one chromosome of length 3000 kb, with a fork speed $v = 0.6$ kb/min. The firing factors are loaded with a characteristic time of 3 mins. From blue to green to red the interaction is increased and the number of firing factors is decreased: blue ($k_{on} = 5 \times 10^{-5} \text{ min}^{-1}$, $N_D^T = 1000$, $\rho_0 = 0.3 \text{ kb}^{-1}$), green ($k_{on} = 6 \times 10^{-4} \text{ min}^{-1}$, $N_D^T = 250$, $\rho_0 = 0.5 \text{ kb}^{-1}$), red ($k_{on} = 6 \times 10^{-3} \text{ min}^{-1}$, $N_D^T = 165$, $\rho_0 = 0.28 \text{ kb}^{-1}$). (c) Corresponding normalized densities of p -ori (solid lines), and corresponding normalized numbers of free diffusing firing factors (dashed line): blue ($N_{FD}^* = 3360$), green ($N_{FD}^* = 280$), red ($N_{FD}^* = 28$); the light blue horizontal dashed line corresponds to the critical threshold value $N_{FD}(t) = N_{FD}^*$. (d) Corresponding number of passivated origins over the number of activated origins (solid lines). Corresponding histograms of replication time (dashed lines).

86 where $\rho_{p\text{-ori}}(t) = N_{p\text{-ori}}(t)/L_{unrepDNA}(t)$. In the case of a strong interaction and a limited number of
 87 firing factors, all the diffusing factors react rapidly after loading and $N_{FD}(t)$ is small (Fig. 1 (c), dashed
 88 curves). Then follows a stationary phase where as long as the number of p -ori is high (Fig. 1 (c),
 89 solid curves), once a diffusing factor is released by the encounter of two forks, it reacts rapidly,
 90 and so $N_{FD}(t)$ stays small. Then, when the rate of fork mergers increases due to the fact that
 91 there are as many active forks but a smaller length of unreplicated DNA, the number of free firing
 92 factors increases up to N_{FD}^* at the end of S-phase. As a consequence, the contribution of $N_{FD}(t)$ to
 93 $I(t)$ in Eq. (2) can only account for a monotonous increase during the S phase. For $I(t)$ to reach a
 94 maximum I_{max} before the end of S-phase, we thus need that $\rho_{p\text{-ori}}(t)$ decreases in the late S-phase.
 95 This happens if the time to fire a p -ori is shorter than the time to replicate a typical distance between
 96 two neighboring p -ori. The characteristic time to fire a p -ori is $t_c = 1/k_{on}N_{FD}(t)$. The mean time for a
 97 fork to replicate DNA between two neighboring p -ori is $t_r = d(t)/v$, where $d(t)$ is the mean distance
 98 between unreplicated p -ori at time t . So the density of origins is constant as long as:

$$\frac{d(t)}{v} < \frac{1}{k_{on}N_{FD}(t)}, \quad (3)$$

99 or

$$N_{FD}(t) < N_{FD}^* = \frac{v}{k_{on}d(t)}. \quad (4)$$

100 Thus, at the beginning of the S-phase, $N_{FD}(t)$ is small, $\rho_{p\text{-ori}}(t)$ is constant (Fig. 1 (c), solid curves)
 101 and so $I_S(t)$ stays small. When $N_{FD}(t)$ starts increasing, as long as Eq. (4) stays valid, $I_S(t)$ keeps

102 increasing. When $N_{FD}(t)$ becomes too large and exceeds N_{FD}^* , then Eq. (4) is violated and the
 103 number of p -oris decreases at a higher rate than the length of unreplicated DNA, and $\rho_{p-ori}(t)$
 104 decreases and goes to zero (Fig. 1 (c), red solid curve). As $N_{FD}(t)$ tends to N_D^T , $I_S(t)$ goes to zero,
 105 and its global behavior is a bell shape (Fig. 1 (b), red).

106 Let us note that if we decrease the interaction strength (k_{on}), then the critical N_{FD}^* will increase
 107 beyond N_D^T (Fig. 1 (c), dashed blue and green curves). $I_S(t)$ then monotonously increase to reach a
 108 plateau (Fig. 1 (b), green), or if we decrease further k_{on} , $I_S(t)$ present a very slow increasing behavior
 109 during the S-phase (Fig. 1 (b), blue). Now if we come back to strong interactions and increase the
 110 number of firing factors, almost all the p -oris are fired immediately and $I_S(t)$ drops to zero after
 111 firing the last p -ori.

112 Another way to look at the density of p -oris is to compute the ratio of the number of passivated
 113 origins by the number of activated origins (Fig. 1 (d)). After the initial loading of firing factors, this
 114 ratio is higher than one. For weak and moderate interactions (Fig. 1 (d), blue and green solid curves,
 115 respectively) this ratio stays bigger than one during all the S-phase, where $I_S(t)$ was shown to be
 116 monotonously increasing (Fig. 1 (b)). For a strong interaction (Fig. 1 (b), red solid curve), this ratio
 117 reaches a maximum and then decreases below one, at a time corresponding to the maximum
 118 observed in $I_S(t)$ (Fig. 1 (d), red solid curve). Hence, the maximum of $I(t)$ corresponds to a switch of
 119 the balance between origin passivation and activation, the latter becoming predominant in late
 120 S-phase. We have seen that up to this maximum $\rho_{p-ori}(t) \approx cte \approx \rho_0$, so $I_S(t) \approx k_{on}\rho_0 N_F(t)$. When
 121 $N_{FD}(t)$ reaches N_{FD}^* , then $I_S(t)$ reaches its maximum value:

$$I_{max} = k_{on}\rho_0 N_{FD}^* \approx \frac{\rho_0 v}{d(t)} \approx v\rho_0^2, \quad (5)$$

122 where we have used the approximation $d(t) \approx d(0) = 1/\rho_0$ (which is exact for periodically distributed
 123 p -oris). I_{max} can thus be predicted from two measurable parameters, providing a direct test of the
 124 model.

125 Comparison with different eukaryotes

126 *Xenopus* embryo. Given the huge size of *Xenopus* embryo chromosomes, to make the simulations
 127 more easily tractable, we rescaled the size L of the chromosomes, k_{on} and N_D^T to keep the duration
 128 of S-phase $T_{phase} \approx L/2vN_D^T$ and $I(t)$ (Eq. (2)) unchanged ($L \rightarrow \alpha L$, $N_D^T \rightarrow \alpha N_D^T$, $k_{on} \rightarrow k_{on}/\alpha$). In Fig. 2
 129 (a) are reported the results of our simulations for a chromosome length $L = 3000$ kb. We see that
 130 a good agreement is obtained with experimental data (Goldar et al., 2009) when using either a
 131 uniform distribution of p -oris with a density $\rho_0 = 0.70$ kb⁻¹ and a number of firing factors $N_D^T = 187$,
 132 or a periodic distribution with $\rho_0 = 0.28$ kb⁻¹ and $N_D^T = 165$. A higher density of p -oris was needed for
 133 uniformly distributed p -oris where $d(t)$ (slightly) increases with time, than for periodically distributed
 134 p -oris where $d(t)$ fluctuates around a constant value $1/\rho_0$. The uniform distribution, which is the
 135 most natural to simulate *Xenopus* embryo replication, gives a density of activated origins of 0.17 kb⁻¹
 136 in good agreement with DNA combing data analysis (Herrick et al., 2002) but twice lower than
 137 estimated from real time replication imaging of surface-immobilized DNA in a soluble *Xenopus* egg
 138 extract system (Loveland et al., 2012).

139 *S. cerevisiae*. To test the robustness of our minimal model with respect to the distribution of
 140 p -oris, we simulated the replication in *S. cerevisiae*, whose p -oris are known to be well positioned
 141 as reported in OriDB (Siow et al., 2012). 829 p -oris were experimentally identified and classified
 142 into three categories: confirmed origins (410), likely origins (216), and dubious origins (203). When
 143 comparing the results obtained with our model to the experimental $I(t)$ data (Goldar et al., 2009)
 144 (Fig. 2 (b)), we see that to obtain a good agreement we need to consider not only the confirmed
 145 origins but also the likely and the dubious origins. However in regard to the uncertainty in the
 146 value of the replication fork velocity and the possible experimental contribution of the p -oris in
 147 the rDNA part of chromosome 12 (not taken into account in our modeling), this conclusion needs
 148 to be confirmed in future experiments. It is to be noted that even if 829 p -oris are needed, on

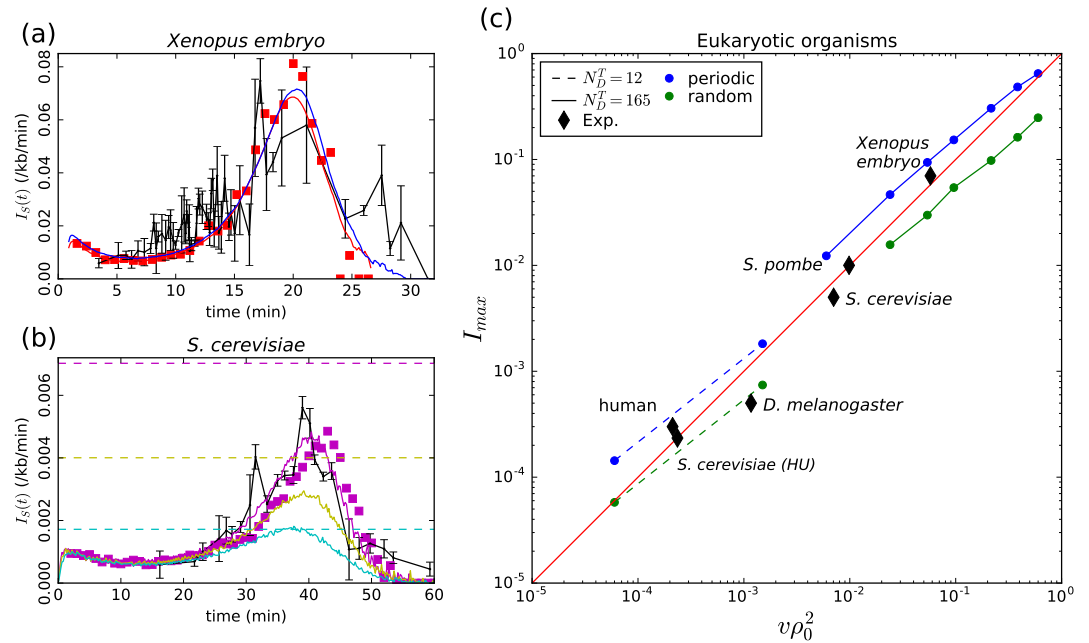


Figure 2. (a) *Xenopus* embryo: Simulated $I_S(t)$ (Eq. (1)) for a chromosome of length $L = 3000$ kb and a uniform distribution of p -oris (blue: $v = 0.6$ kb/min, $k_{on} = 3. \times 10^{-3}$ min $^{-1}$, $N_D^T = 187$, $\rho_0 = 0.70$ kb $^{-1}$) or a periodic distribution of p -oris (red: $v = 0.6$ kb/min, $k_{on} = 6 \times 10^{-3}$ min $^{-1}$, $N_D^T = 165$, $\rho_0 = 0.28$ kb $^{-1}$); (red squares) 3D simulations with the same parameter values as for periodic p -ori distribution; (black) experimental $I(t)$: raw data obtained from [Goldar et al. \(2009\)](#) were binned in groups of 4 data points; the mean value and standard error of the mean of each bin were represented. (b) *S. cerevisiae*: Simulated $I_S(t)$ for the 16 chromosomes with the following parameter values: $v = 1.5$ kb/min, $N_D^T = 143$, $k_{on} = 3.6 \times 10^{-3}$ min $^{-1}$, when considering only confirmed origins (light blue), confirmed and likely origins (yellow) and confirmed, likely and dubious origins (purple); the horizontal dashed lines mark the corresponding predictions for I_{max} (Eq. (5)); (purple squares) 3D simulations with the same parameter values considering confirmed, likely and dubious origins; (black) experimental $I(t)$ from [Goldar et al. \(2009\)](#). (c) *Eukaryotic organisms*: I_{max} as a function of $v\rho_0^2$: (squares and bullets) simulations performed for regularly spaced origins (blue) and uniformly distributed origins (green) with two sets of parameter values: $L = 3000$ kb, $v = 0.6$ kb/min, $k_{on} = 1.2 \times 10^{-2}$ min $^{-1}$ and $N_D^T = 12$ (dashed line) or 165 (solid line); (black diamonds) experimental data points for *Xenopus* embryo, *S. pombe*, *S. cerevisiae*, *S. cerevisiae* grown in Hydroxyurea (HU), *D. melanogaster*, human (see text and Table 1).

149 average only 352 origins have fired by the end of S-phase. For *S. cerevisiae* with well positioned
 150 p -oris, we have checked the robustness of our results with respect to a stochastic number of firing
 151 factors N_D^T from cell to cell (Poisson distribution, [Iyer-Biswas et al. \(2009\)](#)). We confirmed the $I(t)$
 152 bell shape with a robust duration of the S-phase of 58.6 ± 4.3 min as compared to 58.5 ± 3.3 min
 153 obtained previously with a constant number of firing factors. Interestingly, in an experiment where
 154 T_{phase} was lengthened from 1 h to 16 h by adding hydroxyurea (HU) in yeast growth media, the
 155 pattern of activation of replication origins was shown to be conserved ([Alvino et al., 2007](#)). HU
 156 slows down the DNA synthesis to a rate of ~ 50 bp min $^{-1}$ corresponding to a 30 fold decrease
 157 of the fork speed ([Sogo et al., 2002](#)). In our model with a constant number of firing factors,
 158 $T_{phase} \sim 1/vN_D^T$: a two fold increase of the number N_D^T of firing factors is sufficient to account
 159 for the 16 fold increase of T_{phase} , which is thus mainly explained by the HU induced slowdown of
 160 the replication forks. In a model where the increase of $I(t)$ results from the import of replication
 161 factors, the import rate would need to be reduced by the presence of HU in proportion with
 162 the lengthening of S-phase in order to maintain the pattern of origin activations. Extracting $I(t)$
 163 from experimental replication data for cells grown in absence (HU $^-$) or presence (HU $^+$) ([Alvino
 164 et al., 2007](#)), we estimated $I_{max}^{HU^-} \sim 6.0$ Mb $^{-1}$ min $^{-1}$ and $I_{max}^{HU^+} \sim 0.24$ Mb $^{-1}$ min $^{-1}$ for HU $^-$ and HU $^+$ cells,
 165 respectively. The ratio $I_{max}^{HU^-}/I_{max}^{HU^+} \simeq 24.8 \sim v^{HU^-}/v^{HU^+}$ is quite consistent with the prediction of the

Table 1. Experimental data for various eukaryotic organisms with genome length L (Mb), replication fork velocity v (kb/min), number of p -oris ($N_{p\text{-ori}}(t=0)$), $\rho_0 = N_{p\text{-ori}}(t=0)/L$ (kb⁻¹) and I_{max} (Mb⁻¹min⁻¹). All I_{max} data are from [Goldar et al. \(2009\)](#), except for *S. cerevisiae* grown in presence or absence of hydroxyurea (HU) which were computed from the replication profile of [Alvino et al. \(2007\)](#). For *S. cerevisiae* and *S. pombe*, confirmed, likely, and dubious origins were taken into account. For *D. melanogaster*, $N_{p\text{-ori}}(t=0)$ was obtained from the same Kc cell type as the one used to estimate I_{max} . For *Xenopus* embryo, we used the experimental density of activated origins to estimate $N_{p\text{-ori}}(t=0)$ which is probably lower than the true number of p -oris. For human, we averaged the number of origins experimentally identified in K562 (62971) and in MCF7 (94195) cell lines.

	L	v	$N_{p\text{-ori}}$	ρ_0	I_{max}	Ref.
<i>S. cerevisiae</i>	12.5	1.60	829	0.066	6.0	Sekedat et al. (2010) ; Siow et al. (2012)
<i>S. cerevisiae</i> in presence of HU	12.5	0.05	829	0.066	0.24	Alvino et al. (2007) . Same $N_{p\text{-ori}}$ and ρ_0 as <i>S. cerevisiae</i> in normal growth condition.
<i>S. pombe</i>	12.5	2.80	741	0.059	10.0	Siow et al. (2012) ; Kaykov and Nurse (2015)
<i>D. melanogaster</i>	143.6	0.63	6184	0.043	0.5	Ananiev et al. (1977) ; Cayrou et al. (2011)
<i>Xenopus</i> embryo	2233.0	0.52	744333	0.333	70.0	Loveland et al. (2012)
human	6469.0	1.46	78000	0.012	0.3	Conti et al. (2007) ; Martin et al. (2011)

166 scaling law (Eq. (5)) for a constant density of p -oris.

167 *D. melanogaster* and human. We gathered from the literature experimental estimates of I_{max} , ρ_0
 168 and v for different eukaryotic organisms (Table 1). As shown in Fig. 2 (c), when plotting I_{max} vs $v\rho_0^2$,
 169 all the experimental data points remarkably follow the diagonal trend indicating the validity of the
 170 scaling law (Eq. (5)) for all considered eukaryotes. We performed two series of simulations for fixed
 171 values of parameters k_o , N_D^T and v and decreasing values of ρ_0 with both periodic distribution (blue)
 172 and uniform (green) distributions of p -oris (Fig. 2 (c)). The first set of parameters was chosen to cover
 173 high I_{max} values similar the one observed for *Xenopus* embryo (bullets, solid lines). When decreasing
 174 ρ_0 , the number of firing factors becomes too large and $I(t)$ does no more present a maximum.
 175 We thus decreased the value of N_D^T keeping all other parameters constant (boxes, dashed line) to
 176 explore smaller values of I_{max} in the range of those observed for human and *D. melanogaster*. We
 177 can observe that experimental data points' deviation from Eq. (5) is smaller than the deviation due
 178 to specific p -oris distributions.

179 Discussion

180 To summarize, we have shown that within the framework of 1D nucleation and growth models of
 181 DNA replication kinetics ([Herrick et al., 2002](#); [Jun and Bechhoefer, 2005](#)), the sufficient conditions
 182 to obtain a universal bell shaped $I(t)$ as observed in eukaryotes are a strong bimolecular reaction
 183 between localized p -oris and limiting origin firing factors that travel with replication forks and are
 184 released at termination. Under these conditions, the density of p -oris naturally decreases by the
 185 end of the S-phase and so does $I_S(t)$. Previous models in *Xenopus* embryo ([Goldar et al., 2008](#);
 186 [Gauthier and Bechhoefer, 2009](#)) assumed that all sites contained a p -ori implying that the time t , to
 187 replicate DNA between two neighboring p -oris was close to zero. This clarifies why they needed
 188 some additional mechanisms to explain the final decrease of the firing rate. Moreover our model
 189 predicts that the maximum value for $I(t)$ is intimately related to the density of p -oris and the fork
 190 speed (Eq. (5)), and we have shown that without free parameter, this relationship holds for 5 species
 191 up to a 300 fold difference of I_{max} and $v\rho_0^2$ (Table 1, Fig. 2 (c)).

192 In contrast with models where replication kinetics is explained by properties specific to each
 193 p -oris ([Bechhoefer and Rhind, 2012](#)), our model assumes that all p -oris are governed by the same
 194 rule of initiation resulting from physicochemically realistic particulars of their interaction with
 195 limiting replication firing factors. To confirm this simple physical basis of our modeling, we used
 196 molecular dynamics rules as previously developed for *S. cerevisiae* ([Arbona et al., 2017](#)) to simulate
 197 S-phase dynamics of chromosomes confined in a spherical nucleus. We added firing factors that
 198 are free to diffuse in the covolume left by the chain and that can bind to proximal p -oris to initiate

199 replication, move along the chromosomes with the replication forks and be released when two
200 fork merges. As shown in Fig. 2 (a, b) for *Xenopus* embryo and *S. cerevisiae*, results confirmed
201 the physical relevance of our minimal modeling and the validity of its predictions when the 3D
202 diffusion of the firing factors is explicitly taken into account. This opens new perspectives for
203 understanding correlations between firing events along chromosomes that could result in part
204 from the spatial transport of firing factors. For example in *S. cerevisiae* (Knott *et al.*, 2012) and in *S.*
205 *pombe* (Kaykov and Nurse, 2015), a higher firing rate has been reported near origins that have just
206 fired (but see Yang *et al.* (2010)). In mammals, megabase chromosomal regions of synchronous
207 firing were first observed long ago (Huberman and Riggs, 1968; Hyrien, 2016). Recently, profiling of
208 replication fork directionality obtained by Okazaki fragment sequencing have suggested that early
209 firing origins located at the border of Topologically Associating Domains (TADs) trigger a cascade
210 of secondary initiation events propagating through the TAD (Petryk *et al.*, 2016). Early and late
211 replicating domains were associated with nuclear compartments of open and closed chromatin
212 (Ryba *et al.*, 2010; Boulos *et al.*, 2015; Goldar *et al.*, 2016; Hyrien, 2016). In human, replication
213 timing U-domains (0.1-3 Mb) were shown to correlate with chromosome structural domains (Baker
214 *et al.*, 2012; Moindrot *et al.*, 2012; Pope *et al.*, 2014) and chromatin loops (Boulos *et al.*, 2013, 2014).

215 Understanding to which extent spatio-temporal correlations of the replication program can
216 be explained by the diffusion of firing factors in the tertiary chromatin structure specific to each
217 eukaryotic organism is a challenging issue for future work.

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