Base-pairing requirements for small RNA-

mediated gene silencing of recessive self-

incompatibility alleles in *Arabidopsis halleri.*

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Abstract

Small RNAs (sRNA) are central regulators of gene expression, yet identifying the molecular alphabet of sRNA-target interactions remains challenging. Here, we take advantage of the dominance hierarchy among self-incompatibility alleles in *Arabidopsis halleri* to evaluate the base-pairing requirements for effective transcriptional silencing by a highly diversified set of sRNA-target interactions. We used RT-qPCR to follow temporal expression of the pollen (*SCR*) and pistil (*SRK*) determinants of self-incompatibility in numerous heterozygous combinations. *SCR* and *SRK* had sharply distinct expression dynamics through flower development. Recessive *SCR* alleles were transcriptionally silenced in all heterozygote combinations examined, bringing levels of *SCR* transcripts below detection limits regardless of the position of the sRNA target along the *SCR* sequence. A simple threshold model of base-pairing for the sRNA-target interaction captures most of the variation in *SCR* transcript levels. In contrast, both *SRK* alleles were expressed at similar levels in all heterozygote genotypes. We show that the base-pairing requirements for effective transcriptional silencing by these sRNAs are broadly similar to those of canonical microRNAs, even though they are believed to function in sharply different ways. We discuss the implications for the evolutionary processes associated with the

42 origin and maintenance of the dominance hierarchy among self-

43 incompatibility alleles.

Author summary

Small non-coding RNAs are important regulatory molecules that

achieve their function through sequence similarity with their target

sites. In many cases however, the precise base-pairing

requirements for effective regulation are poorly known. At the self-

incompatibility (SI) locus in Arabidopsis, dominance between

alleles is pervasive and is controlled in pollen by small non-coding

RNAs produced by dominant alleles that target specific sequence

motifs on recessive alleles. Here we use a large number of

heterozygote combinations of SI alleles to show that dominance is

tightly associated with strong transcriptional silencing of the

recessive alleles in presence of a more dominant allele. We take

advantage of this highly diversified system of multiple sRNAs and

their diversified target sites to determine the base-pairing

requirements for successful small-RNA mediated transcriptional

silencing. The threshold model that we identify has important

functional and evolutionary implications for this complex

regulatory mechanism.

Introduction

Small non-coding RNAs are short RNA molecules (20-25nt) with

a range of regulatory functions whose central importance has

constituted a major discovery in the last 20 years (Vazquez *et al.*,

2010; Aalto & Pasquinelli, 2012). The best-known members of this

class of molecules are microRNAs, which are typically involved in

post-transcriptional gene silencing and regulate the activity of their

target gene in *trans* by either mRNA cleavage (quickly followed

by degradation) or by blocking translation (Li *et al.*, 2014). In

some cases, the action of microRNAs leads to the production of

secondary phased short interfering RNAs (pha-siRNAs) by their

target coding or non-coding sequence, which in turn can regulate

downstream targets (Fei *et al.*, 2013). Another major set of small

RNAs is heterochromatic short interfering RNAs (hc-siRNAs)

which are mediating transcriptional silencing of repeat sequences

in the genome through epigenetic modification by the RNA-

dependent DNA methylation pathway (RdDM, Matzke *et al.*,

2009).

Both microRNAs and siRNAs guide their effector molecules

(members of the ARGONAUTE gene family: AGO1 and AGO4,

respectively) to their target sites by sequence similarity through

base-pairing. For plant microRNAs, sequence similarity with the

target sequence is typically very high and appears to be a shared

feature of all functionally verified interactions (Wang *et al.*, 2015).

Total base-pairing complementarity, however, is not the sole

determinant of target specificity, and the position of the

mismatches along the microRNA:target duplex is also important.

Indeed, expression assays showed that while individual

mismatches typically have limited functional consequences, they

can also entirely inactivate the interaction when they hit specific

positions such as e.g. the 10th and 11th nucleotide, corresponding to

the site of cleavage (Jones-Rhoades *et al.*, 2006). Furthermore, the

position of mismatches along the microRNA:target duplex also

seems to be crucial, with a greater tolerance in the 3' than the 5'

region of the microRNA (up to four mismatches generally have

limited functional consequences in the 3' region, while only two

mismatches in the 5' region seem sufficient to abolish the target

recognition capability; Liu *et al.*, 2014, Mallory *et al.*, 2004;

Parizotto *et al.*, 2004; Schwab *et al.*, 2005). These observations

have led to the formulation of general "rules" for microRNA

targeting (Axtell & Meyers, 2018), but in the same time they also

revealed a large number of exceptions. As a result, *in silico*

prediction of microRNA target sites currently remains a difficult

challenge (Ding *et al.*, 2012; Axtell & Meyers, 2018). For other

types of small RNAs (pha-siRNAs and hc-siRNAs), even less is

known about the base-pairing requirements for targeting, mostly

because of the absence of experimentally confirmed examples of

discrete, single siRNA target sites either in *cis* or in *trans* (Wang *et*

al., 2015).

In this context, the recent discovery by Tarutani *et al.* (2010),

Durand *et al.* (2014) and Yasuda *et al.*, (2016) of a highly

diversified set of small non-coding RNAs at the gene cluster

controlling self-incompatibility (SI) in Brassicaceae, provides an

experimentally tractable model to evaluate the base-pairing

requirements for silencing by a set of sRNAs that are regulating

expression of a single gene. Sporophytic SI is a genetic system that

evolved in several hermaphroditic plant lineages to enforce

outcrossing by preventing self-fertilization, hence avoiding

inbreeding depression (De Nettancourt, 2001). In the Brassicaceae

family, SI is controlled by a single genomic region called the "S-

locus", which contains two tightly linked genes, namely *SCR* and

SRK, that encode the pollen S-locus cysteine-rich and the stigma S-

locus receptor kinase recognition proteins, respectively. This

system involves a polymorphism in which multiple deeply

diverged allelic lines are maintained, and accordingly a large

number of S-alleles is typically found in natural populations of

self-incompatible species (Castric & Vekemans, 2004). With such

a large allelic diversity and the very process of self-rejection, most

individual plants are heterozygotes at the S-locus. Yet in most

cases, only one of the two S-alleles in a heterozygous genotype is

expressed at the phenotypic level in either pollen or pistil, as can

be revealed by controlled pollination assays on pollen or pistil

tester lines (Llaurens *et al.*, 2008; Durand *et al.*, 2014). Which of

the two alleles is expressed is determined by their relative position

along a dominance hierarchy, whose molecular basis for the pollen

phenotype has been initially studied in the genus Brassica. In this

genus, dominance is controlled at the transcriptional level in pollen

(Schopfer 1999, Kakizaki et al. 2003). Transcriptional silencing of

recessive alleles by dominant alleles is caused by 24nt-long trans-

acting small RNAs produced by dominant S-alleles and capable of

targeting a DNA sequence in the promoter sequence of the *SCR*

gene of recessive S-alleles, provoking DNA methylation (Shiba et

al. 2006). Details of how these sRNAs achieve their silencing

function remains incompletely understood (Finnegan *et al.*, 2011),

but it is clear that their biogenesis is similar to that of microRNAs

(*i.e.,* they are produced by a short hairpin structure), while their

mode of action is rather reminiscent of that of siRNAs (*i.e.,* the

transcriptional gene silencing functions through recruitment of the

methylation machinery). Strikingly, the full dominance hierarchy

in the Brassica genus seems to be controlled by just two small

RNAs called *Smi* and *Smi2* (Tarutani *et al.*, 2010, Yasuda *et al.*

2016). *Smi* and *Smi2* target distinct DNA sequences, but both are

located in the promoter region of *SCR*, and both seem to involve

DNA methylation and 24-nt active RNA molecules.

The dominance hierarchy in Brassica is however peculiar in that

only two ancestral allelic lineages segregate in that genus (the class

I and class II alleles referred to above, see *e.g.* Leducq *et al.*,

2014), whereas self-incompatible species in Brassicaceae typically

retain dozens of highly divergent ancestral allelic lineages (Castric

& Vekemans, 2004). A recent study showed that in *Arabidopsis*

halleri, a Brassicaceae species with multiple allelic lineages at the

S-locus, the dominance hierarchy among S-alleles in pollen is

controlled by not just two but as many as eight different sRNA

precursor families and their target sites, whose interactions

collectively determine the position of the alleles along the

hierarchy (Durand *et al.*, 2014). In that genus, much less is known

about the mechanisms by which the predicted sRNA-target

interactions translate into the dominance phenotypes. First, the

expression dynamics of the *SCR* gene across flower development

stages is poorly known. Indeed, Kusaba et al. (2002) measured

expression of *SCR* alleles in *A. lyrata,* but focused on only two S-

alleles (*SCRa* and *SCRb,* also known as *AlSCR13* and *AlSCR20,*

respectively, in Mable et al. 2003) and showed striking differences

in their expression dynamics in anthers. Hence, the developmental

stage at which the transcriptional control of dominance in pollen

should be tested is not clear. Second, while they did confirm

monoallelic expression, consistent with the observed dominance

relationship between the two alleles (*SCR*b > *SCR*a, Kusaba et al.

2002), the fact that only a single heterozygote combination was

measured among the myriad possible combinations given the large

number of S-alleles segregating in that species (at least 38 S-

alleles: Castric *et al.*, 2008) prevents generalization at this step.

Hence, a proper experimental validation of the transcriptional

control of dominance in Arabidopsis is still lacking. Third, Durand

et al., (2014) observed rare sRNA-target interaction predictions

that did not agree with the observed dominance phenotype. In

particular, they identified cases where no sRNA observed as being

produced by a dominant allele was predicted to target the *SCR*

gene of a recessive allele, while the dominance phenotype had

been well established phenotypically by controlled crosses (*e.g.*

Ah04>Ah03) suggesting the possibility that mechanisms other than

transcriptional control may be acting. Conversely, in other rare

cases, sRNAs produced by a recessive S-allele were predicted to

target the *SCR* gene of a more dominant allele, suggesting

exceptions to the set of base-pairing rules used to predict target

sites. Fourth, although the target sites for the two sRNAs in

Brassica were both located in the promoter sequence, and can thus

be reasonably expected to prevent transcriptional initiation through

local modification of the chromatin structure associated with DNA

methylation, many of the predicted sRNA target sites in *A. halleri*

are rather mapped to the *SCR* intron or the intron-exon boundary

(beside some in the promoter as well), which suggests that distinct

silencing pathways might be acting (Cuerda-Gil & Slotkin, 2016).

It thus remains to be determined whether transcriptional control is

also valid when the targets are at other locations along the *SCR*

gene structure. Finally, the dominance hierarchy at the female

determinant *SRK* differs from that at *SCR*, co-dominance being

more frequent than on the pollen side both in Brassica

(Hatakeyama *et al.*, 2001) and in *A. halleri* (Llaurens *et al.*, 2008).

Limited transcriptional analysis in Brassica and Arabidopsis

suggests that dominance in pistils is not associated with *SRK*

expression differences, but again the number of interactions tested

has remained limited (Suzuki et al. 1999; Kusaba et al. 2002).

Here, we take advantage of the fact that dominance interactions in

Arabidopsis SI are controlled in pollen by a diversity of sRNAs

and the diversity of their target sites to determine the base-pairing

requirements for successful small-RNA mediated transcriptional

silencing of recessive *SCR* alleles in plants with controlled S-locus

genotypes. We first developed and validated a protocol for qPCR

expression analysis of a set of *SCR* and *SRK* alleles in *A. halleri*.

We then analysed the expression dynamics across four flower

developmental stages of nine *SCR* and five *SRK* alleles and tested

the transcriptional control of dominance for both genes in many

heterozygote combinations. We quantified the strength of silencing

of recessive *SCR* alleles and propose a quantitative threshold

model for how sequence identity between the small non-coding

RNAs and their target sites results in silencing. We discuss the

implications of this model on the evolutionary processes associated

with the origin and maintenance of the S-locus dominance

hierarchy in Brassicaceae.

Material & Methods

Plant material

We used a collection of 88 *A. halleri* plants containing nine

different S-alleles (S1, S2, S3, S4, S10, S12, S13, S20, and S29) in

a total of 37 of all 45 possible homozygous and heterozygous

combinations. Each plant was genotyped at the S-locus using the

PCR-based protocol described in Llaurens et al. (2008). The plants

were obtained by controlled crosses (Llaurens *et al.*, 2008; Durand

et al., 2014; Leducq *et al.*, 2014) and in a few instances were

cloned by cuttings. Hence, a given S-locus genotype can be either

represented in the collection by different clones (identical genetic

background) or by offspring from crosses of distinct parental

origins (different genetic backgrounds). Below we refer to these

two levels of experimental replicates as "clone replicates" and

"biological replicates", respectively. On average, the collection

comprises $n= 2.05$ biological replicates per S-locus genotype and

clone replicates were available for three different S-locus

genotypes (Table S1 & S2). The pairwise dominance interactions

between these alleles as determined by pollen and pistil

compatibility phenotypes of heterozygote plants are reported in

Table S3.

RNA extraction and reverse transcription

On each plant, we collected flower buds at four developmental

stages: 1) five highly immature inflorescence extremities (more

than 2.5 days before opening, buds below 0.5mm, stages 1-10 in *A.*

thaliana according to Smyth *et al.*, 1990), 2) ten immature buds

(2.5 days before opening, between 0.5 and 1mm, approximately

stage 11), 3) ten mature buds (one day before opening, longer than

1mm, approximately stage 12), and 4) ten open flowers

(approximately stages 13-15). These stages were characterized by

establishing the size distribution within each stage and measuring

the time to flower opening based on ten buds. Samples collected

were flash-frozen in liquid nitrogen, then stored at - 80°C before

RNA extraction. Tissues were finely ground with a FastPrep-24 5G

Benchtop Homogenizer (MP Biomedicals, Model #6004-500)

equipped with Coolprep 24 x 2mL adapter (6002-528) and

FastPrep Lysis Beads & Matrix tube D. Total RNAs were

extracted with the Arcturus "Picopure RNA isolation" kit from

Life Science (PN: KIT0204) according to the manufacturer's

protocol, including a step of incubation with DNAse to remove

gDNA contamination. We normalized samples by using 1 mg of

total RNA to perform reverse-transcription (RT) using the

RevertAid Fermentas enzyme following the manufacturer's

instructions.

Primer design

A major challenge to study expression of multiple S-alleles is the

very high levels of nucleotide sequence divergence among them,

precluding the possibility of designing qPCR primers that would

amplify all alleles of the allelic series (both for *SRK* and *SCR*).

Hence, we rather designed qPCR primers specifically targeted

towards each of the *SCR* and *SRK* alleles, and for each

heterozygote genotype we independently measured expression of

both alleles of each gene. Primers were designed based on genomic

sequences from BAC clones (Goubet et al 2012; Durand et al.

2014; Novikova et al. 2017), with a length of ~20 nucleotides, a

GC content around 50% and a target amplicon size of 200nt.

Whenever possible, we placed primers on either side of the *SCR*

intron to identify and discard amplification from residual gDNA.

However, because the coding sequence of the *SCR* gene is short,

the number of possible primers was limited and this was not

always possible. In two cases (*SCR01* and *SCR20*), both primers

were thus located in the same exon. For *SRK* alleles, the primers

were designed on either side of the first intron. To obtain relative

expression levels across samples, we used *actin 8* as a

housekeeping gene for standardization after we verified that the *A.*

thaliana and *A. halleri* sequences are identical at the primer

positions (An et al. 1996). Primer sequences are reported in Table

S4.

Quantitative real-time PCR

On each cDNA sample, at least three qPCR reactions (referred to

below as "technical" replicates) were performed for *actin 8* and for

each of the S-alleles contained in the genotype (one S-allele for

homozygotes, two S-alleles for heterozygotes). The runs were

made on a LightCycler480 (Roche) with iTaq Universal SYBR

Green Supermix (Bio-rad, ref 172-5121). Amplified cDNA was

quantified by the number of cycles at which the fluorescence signal

was greater than a defined threshold during the logarithmic phase

of amplification using the LightCycler 480 software release 1.5.0

SP3. The relative transcript levels are shown after normalisation

with actin amplification through the comparative $2^{-\Delta Ct}$ method

(Livak & Schmittgen, 2001). The Ct_{SCR} and Ct_{SRK} values of each

technical replicate were normalized relative to the average Ct_{actin}

measure across three replicates.

Validation of qPCR primers at the dilution limits

Given the very large nucleotide divergence between alleles of

either *SCR* or *SRK*, cross-amplification is unlikely. However, to

formally exclude that possibility, we first performed cross-

amplification experiments by using each pair of *SCR* primers on a

set of cDNA samples that did not contain that target *SCR* allele but

instead contained each of the other *SCR* alleles present in our

experiment.

In order to evaluate our ability to measure expression of *SCR*

alleles in biological situations where they are expected to be

transcriptionally silenced, we then used a series of limit dilutions

to explore the loss of linearity of the relationship between *Ct* and

the dilution factor. We used six to eight replicates per dilution level

to evaluate the linearity of the amplification curve. Then we

examined the shape of the melting curves to determine whether our

measures at this limit dilution reflected proper PCR amplification

or the formation of primer dimers. Finally, we used water in place

of cDNA to evaluate the formation of primer dimers in complete

absence of the target template DNA.

Expression dynamics and the effect of dominance

We used generalized linear mixed models (lme4 package in *R*;

Bates *et al.*, 2014) to decompose *Ct* values normalized by the *actin*

8 control (as the dependent variable) into the effects of five

explanatory variables: biological and clone replicates -reflecting

the hierarchical structure of our dataset-, developmental stage,

dominance phenotype and allelic identity (Table S5). Because

expression of the different *SCR* (and *SRK*) alleles was quantified

by different primer pairs with inevitably different amplification

efficiencies, *Ct* values cannot be directly compared across alleles.

Most analyses were thus performed by comparing expression

levels of a given focal allele in different contexts (e.g. different

genotypic contexts, different developmental stages) and

accordingly we considered the identity of *SCR* or *SRK* alleles as

nuisance parameters in our statistical model by including them as

random effects. We visually examined normality of the residuals of

the model under different distributions of $2^{-\Delta Ct}$, including Gaussian,

Gamma and Gaussian with logarithmic transformations. We then

tested the effect of developmental stages and dominance on *SCR*

and *SRK* expression by considering them as fixed effects.

Phenotypic pairwise dominance relationships were obtained from

Llaurens *et al.*, (2008) and Durand *et al.*, (2014), and a set of

additional controlled crosses performed following the same

protocol (Table S3). Pollen and pistil dominance relationships

were used to assess the effect of dominance on *SCR* and *SRK*,

respectively. To test whether the different S-alleles have distinct

expression profiles across developmental stages, as suggested by

Kusaba *et al.* (2002) in *A. lyrata,* we used ANOVA to compare

nested models in which a random effect for the interaction between

the "allelic identity" and "stage" effects was introduced.

Target features and silencing effect.

We then sought to determine how the expression of *SCR* alleles

was affected by specific features of the small RNA-target

interactions between alleles within heterozygote genotypes. We

first used the small RNA sequencing data in Durand *et al.* (2014)

and Novikova *et al.* (2017) to identify the populations of 18-26nt

small RNA molecules produced by the small RNA precursors

carried at the S-locus by each of the nine S-alleles. For each

heterozygote combination, we then predicted the presence of

putative target sites of the small RNAs produced by one S-allele on

the genomic sequence of the *SCR* gene of the other S-allele

including 2kb of nucleotide sequence upstream and downstream of

SCR using a dedicated alignment algorithm and scoring matrix, as

described in Durand *et al.* (2014). The reciprocal analysis was also

performed regardless of the dominance relationship. Briefly,

alignment quality was assessed by a scoring system based on the

addition of positive or negative values for properly paired

nucleotides (+1), mismatches and gaps (-1), taking into account the

non-canonical G:U interaction (-0.5). For each pair of alleles

considered, only the sRNA/target combination with the highest

score was selected for further analysis (Table S6). We used Akaike

Information Criteria (AIC) to compare how well different base-

pairing scores for target site identification predicted the level of

SCR expression (and hence the silencing phenomenon), varying

the threshold from 14 to 22. Lower values of AIC are associated

with a best fit of the model. We then added a new fixed effect in

our model to test whether targets in the promoter or in the intron of

the *SCR* gene were associated with different strengths of silencing.

For this analysis, we included only targets above the threshold

identified (score >= 18).

To determine whether the base-pair requirement for silencing were

identical between Brassica and Arabidopsis, we calculated the

alignment score with our method between *Smi & Smi2* sRNAs and

their targets sites in the class II alleles in *Brassica rapa* (Tarutani

et al., 2010, Yasuda *et al.*, 2016).

Finally, we used the phylogeny in Durand *et al.* (2014) to classify

sRNA/target interactions into "ancient" (mir867 and mirS4) and

"recent" (mirS1, mirS2 mirS3, mirS5, mir1887 and mir4239).

Based on this classification, we used a linear regression to compare

the alignment score for recent and ancient sRNAs in order to test

the hypothesis that interactions with base-pairing scores above the

threshold at which silencing was apparently already complete

correspond to recently emerged interactions that did not yet have

time to accumulate mismatches.

Results

Validation of the qPCR protocol and the allele-

specific primers

Melting curves confirmed proper amplification and low primer

dimers formation unless template DNA concentration was very

low (data not shown). The specificity test confirmed the absence of

cross-amplification between alleles, as the *Ct* measures for water

control and cross amplification were comparably high (around

Ct=34) and both were higher than the positive controls (median

Ct=22, Figure S1). For each allele tested, we then evaluated the

linearity of *Ct* values through serial dilutions of the template

cDNA. Overall, the range of variation of *Ct* values spanned by a

given allele across the different developmental stages or

dominance status was generally well within the range over which

Ct varied mostly linearly with template cDNA concentration,

suggesting high power to detect these effects. For *SCR*, linearity

was good throughout most of the dilution range, but was lost as

expected at very low concentration (in particular for alleles *SCR01*,

SCR02, *SCR04*, *SCR13* and *SCR20*, Figure S2a). We note that

comparing levels of expression for a given allele between different

recessive contexts (*e.g.* when silenced by different sRNAs) should

therefore be challenging, especially for the above-mentioned

alleles. Linearity was good for most *SRK* alleles (Figure S2b)

except for *SRK12* (data not shown)*,* so this allele was excluded

from further analyses.

SCR and *SRK* expression dynamics across flower

development stages

In total, we performed 344 RNA extractions and RT-PCR from the

37 different S-locus genotypes sampled at four developmental

stages and measured 1,838 Ct_{SCR}/Ct_{actin} expression ratios, resulting

in an average of 26.9 measures of each S-allele for each diploid

genotype when combining clone, biological, and technical

replicates and 480 Ct_{SRK}/Ct_{actin} (Table S1, Table S2). Distribution

of the residues of the generalized mixed linear model was closest

to normality after log-transformation of the ratios (Figure S3). As

expected, measured expression levels were more highly repeatable

across clones than across biological replicates for a given S-locus

genotype, but these sources of variation were minor as compared

to the technical error and the allele's expression dynamic in our

experiment (deviance estimates of 0.40, 1.07 and 6.08 and 4.56

449 respectively, Table S5a) after taking allele identity, developmental

450 stage and dominance status into account. To determine the

451 expression dynamics of the different *SCR* alleles, we focused on

452 genotypes in which a given focal allele was known to be dominant

453 at the phenotypic level (Figure 1a). Overall, we observed a

454 consistent pattern of variation among stages (F-value: 13.805, p-

455 value: 1.107e-05, Table S5c) with a very high expression in buds

456 at early developmental stages (<0.5 to 1mm), and low level of

457 expression in late buds right before opening and in open flowers,

458 consistent with degeneration in these stages of the anther tapetum

459 where *SCR* is expected to be expressed. Accordingly to Kusaba *et*

460 *al.*, (2002), we found evidence that the expression dynamics varied

461 across alleles (Chi²: 217.32, p-value < 2.2e-16, Table S5b). The

462 *SRK* alleles had sharply distinct dynamics of expression, with

463 monotonously increasing expression in the course of flower

464 development (Chi²: 6.9103, p-value 0.00857, Table S5g), with

465 lowest expression in immature buds (<0.5mm) and highest

466 expression in open flowers (Figure 1b).

467   Transcriptional control

468 Based on these results, we compared expression of *SCR* alleles

469 across genotypes by averaging $2^{-\Delta Ct}$ values across <0.5mm to 1mm

470 stages. Beside a few exceptions (see below), our expression data

471 were largely consistent with the hypothesis of transcriptional

control of the dominance hierarchy in pollen (31 of 37 genotypic

combinations, Figure 2). In the four S-alleles for which

homozygote genotypes were available (S1, S2, S3 and S20), *SCR*

alleles had substantial expression in homozygotes and this was the

only case where expression of the most recessive allele (*SCR*01)

could be detected. One of the two biological replicates for the

S1S1 homozygote genotype had consistently low expression across

two clone replicates (Figure S4), so we carefully confirmed

homozygosity of these two samples by analysing segregation after

crossing to plants that did not carry S1 (all of 58 tested progenies

indeed carried S1 as determined by PCR on gDNA). Climbing up

the dominance hierarchy from most recessive to most dominant,

the S-alleles measured were expressed in an increasing number of

heterozygous combinations. At the top of the dominance hierarchy,

the two most dominant alleles, *SCR*13 and *SCR*20, were expressed

in all heterozygous contexts, including when they formed a

heterozygote combination with one another (S13S20), as expected

given the codominance observed between them at the phenotypic

level (Durand *et al.*, 2014). This general rule had a few exceptions

however (Figure 2). For instance, we detected some expression for

both *SCR02* and *SCR*29 in heterozygote combination even though

phenotypic data indicate that S2>S29 in pollen (Table S3). We also

observed low expression for *SCR*10 and *SCR*12 when they were in

heterozygote combination with *SCR*01 and the absence of

expression for both *SCR*10 and *SCR*12 in the heterozygote

combination they formed together, which is not consistent with the

documented phenotypic dominance of these two alleles over

*SCR*01 and between them (*SCR*12>*SCR*10; see Table S3). We

confirmed proper phenotypic expression of S12 in pollen produced

by the S10S12 genotype, as five replicate pollinations on a S1S12

plant produced no silique.

Overall, in spite of these six exceptions, we observed a striking

contrast in transcript levels for a given allele according to its

relative phenotypic dominance status in the genotype, with at least

an overall 145-fold increase in transcript abundance in genotypes

where a given focal allele was phenotypically dominant as

compared to genotypes in which the same focal allele was

recessive at stages when *SCR* is expressed (F-value: 38.582; p-

value: < 2.2e-16, Table S5c). In most cases, the recessive allele

came close to or even below the detection limits of our method as

determined by the break of linearity of the dilution experiment

(Figure S1), so this fold-change value is probably under-estimated.

In strong contrast, we found no significant effect of dominance in

pistils on *SRK* expression (F-value: 6.8884 p-value: 0.068244;

Figure 3, Table S5h), confirming the absence of transcriptional

control of dominance for *SRK*.

Target features and silencing effect

Levels of *SCR* expression of any given focal allele varied sharply

with the alignment score of the "best" target available for the

repertoire of sRNAs produced by the other allele present in the

genotype (Figure 4a). Specifically, we observed high and variable

expression of *SCR* when the score of its best predicted target was

low, but consistently low *SCR* expression when the score of the

best target was high (Figure 4a, Table S5d). Strikingly, the

transition between high expression and low expression was very

abrupt (around an alignment score of 18), suggesting a threshold

effect rather than a quantitative model for transcriptional silencing.

In three cases, the presence of a target with a high score within the

SCR gene of the dominant allele was associated with high relative

SCR expression (in agreement with the dominant phenotype),

suggesting the absence of silencing in spite of the presence of a

target with high sequence similarity to the sRNA produced by the

recessive allele (sRNA from Ah03 on *SCR29*, score =18.5; sRNA

from Ah04 on *SCR20*, score=20; and sRNA from Ah10 on *SCR20*,

score =21; Figure 5a). Examining these targets in detail did not

reveal mismatches at the 10-11th nucleotide position, suggesting

that mismatches at other positions have rendered these sRNA-

target interactions inactive (Figure 5a). Another exception

concerns the observed low score (15.5) for the best match between

a sRNA from the dominant allele Ah04 and a target at *SCR* from

the recessive Ah03 allele (Figure 5b). Whether Ah04 silences *SCR*

from Ah03 through this unusual target or through another elusive

mechanism remains to be discovered. In spite of the generally very

low expression of all recessive alleles, we found some evidence

that the strength of silencing experienced by a given *SCR* allele

may vary across genotypic combinations for a given allele (F-

value=2.222, p-value = 0.0756, Table S5i). However, we found no

evidence that the position of the target site on the measured allele

(promoter; intron; intron-exon boundary *vs.* upstream/downstream)

could explain this variation (F-value=1.4432, n.s, TableS5e). The

alignment scores obtained in Brassica for *Smi* & *Smi2* on *SCR*

sequences show that dominant interactions are also strictly distinct

from recessive interactions, but at a threshold score of 16.5, hence

lower than that we observed in Arabidopsis (Table S6). Finally, we

found no effect of the inferred age of the miRNA on the mean

alignment score (mean= 20.41 and 20.22 for recent or ancient

miRNAs, respectively; F-value: 0.0362; ns, Table S5j).

Discussion

Our main objective was to evaluate the base-pairing requirement of

the sRNA-target interactions controlling dominance/recessivity

interactions between alleles of the allelic series controlling SI in *A.*

halleri. Determining the base-pairing requirement for sRNA

silencing in plants has remained challenging because the "rules"

used for target prediction have typically been deduced from

observations that conflate distinct microRNA genes and their

distinct mRNA targets over different genes. Moreover, detailed

evaluations of the functional consequences of mismatches have

relied on heterologous reporter systems (typically GFP in transient

tobacco assays), hence limiting the scope of the phenotypic

consequences that can be studied. Here, we used a genetic system

(plant self-incompatibility) where multiple sRNAs regulate target

sites on a single gene (*SCR*), and in which we are able to make a

direct link between the sRNA-target interactions, the level of *SCR*

transcript and the encoded phenotype (dominance/recessivity

interaction).

The first step was to clarify several aspects of the expression

pattern of the genes controlling SI in *A. halleri,* as earlier accounts

had suggested that alleles of the allelic series may differ from one

another in their expression profile (Kusaba *et al.*, 2002). In line

with Kakizaki *et al.*, (2003), Suzuki *et al.*, (1999); Schopfer *et al.*,

(1999); Takayama *et al.*, (2000); Shiba *et al.*, (2002),we found

maximal expression of *SCR* in early buds but low or no expression

at the open flower stage. This expression pattern is consistent with

in situ hybridization experiments showing that *SCR* transcripts are

localized in the tapetum, a specialized layer of cells involved in

pollen grains coating (Iwano *et al.*, 2003), which undergoes

apoptosis and is quickly degraded as the development of pollen

grains inside the anther progresses (Murphy & Ross, 1998;

Takayama *et al.*, 2000). We confirmed that differences exist in the

temporal dynamics of expression among alleles, as suggested by

Kusaba *et al.* (2002) in *A. lyrata*, possibly as the result of strong

sequence divergence of the promotor sequences of the different

SCR alleles. Finally, we confirmed that *SCR* and *SRK* have sharply

distinct expression dynamics throughout flower development.

Indeed, transcript levels of *SRK* increased steadily along

development and were very low in early buds, consistent with the

observation that SI can be experimentally overcome to obtain

selfed progenies by "bud-pollination" (Llaurens et al. 2009).

Based on this clarified transcriptional dynamics, we confirmed the

generality of the transcriptional control of dominance for *SCR*. In

particular, we observed that even in the few heterozygote

genotypes where in our previous study (Durand *et al.*, 2014) no

sRNA produced by the phenotypically dominant allele was

predicted to target the sequence of the phenotypically recessive

SCR allele, transcripts from the recessive *SCR* allele were

undetected. This suggests either that some functional sRNAs or

targets have remained undetected by previous sequencing and/or

by our *in silico* prediction procedures, or that mechanisms other

than sRNAs may cause transcriptional silencing for some S-allele

combinations. In contrast, we confirmed the absence of

transcriptional control for *SRK*, for which both alleles were

consistently expressed at similar levels in all heterozygote

genotypes examined, irrespective of the (pistil) dominance

phenotype. For *SRK*, other dominance mechanisms must therefore

be acting, which are yet to be discovered (*e.g.* Naithani *et al.*,

2007).

An important feature of the silencing phenomenon is that the

decrease of transcript levels for recessive *SCR* alleles was very

strong in heterozygous genotypes, bringing down transcript levels

below the limits of detection in most cases. This is in line with the

intensity of transcriptional silencing by heterochromatic siRNAs

(typically very strong for transposable element sequences, see

Marí-Ordóñez *et al.*, 2013), while post-transcriptional gene

silencing by microRNAs is typically more quantitative (Liu *et al.*,

2014). As a result of this strong decrease of transcript levels, the

strength of silencing appeared independent from the position of the

sRNA target along the *SCR* gene (promoter *vs.* intron), although

we note that our power to distinguish among levels of transcripts

of recessive alleles, which were all extremely low, is itself fairly

low. It remains to be discovered whether the different positions of

the sRNA targets do indeed imply different transcriptional

silencing mechanisms (Durand *et al*., 2014).

Based on the many allelic combinations where we could compare

the agnostic prediction of putative target sites with the level of

transcriptional silencing, we find that a simple threshold model for

base-pairing between sRNAs and their target sites captures most of

the variation in *SCR* expression in heterozygotes. This result

provides a direct experimental validation of the *ad-hoc* criteria

used in Durand *et al.*, (2014). However, our results also indicate

that this quantitative threshold is not entirely sufficient to capture

the complexity of targeting interactions. Indeed, in two cases for

which the dominance relationship is known, this simple threshold

model would inappropriately predict that sRNAs from recessive

alleles should be able to target more dominant *SCR* alleles, yet the

dominant *SCR* alleles were expressed at normal levels with no sign

of silencing in these heterozygote genotypes (Figure 5a). The

position of the mismatches on these sRNAs (at position 15 and 18

of the sRNA for Ah03 on Ah29, and position 3 and 12 for the

others) therefore appear to be sufficient to abolish the function of

the targeting interaction. Similarly, a mismatch at position 10 in

the *Smi* interaction in Brassica (Tarutani *et al.*, 2010) and in other

microRNA-targets interactions (Franco-Zorrilla *et al.*, 2007) was

shown to result in loss of function of the interaction (Table S6).

Interestingly, quantitative differences may exist between

Arabidopsis and Brassica, as the experimentally validated targets

in Brassica (Tarutani *et al.*, 2010; Yasuda *et al.*, 2016) correspond

to base-pairing threshold below the one that we find in Arabidopsis

(*i.e.* a target score of 16.5 seems sufficient for silencing in Brassica

vs. 18 in Arabidopsis). For Brassica, both class I and class II alleles

have *Smi*, but a mismatch at the 10th position was proposed to

explain why the class II *Smi* is not functional. Here, we found that

this mismatch drives the alignment score under the 16.5 threshold

and could be sufficient to explain the loss of function, regardless of

its position. Overall, although these small RNAs achieve their

function in a way that is sharply different from classical

microRNAs (DNA methylation *vs.* mRNA cleavage), our results

suggest that the sRNA-target complementarity rules for silencing

in both cases are qualitatively consistent (Liu *et al.*, 2014). Better

understanding the molecular pathway by which these sRNAs

epigenetically silence their target gene (*SCR*) will now be key to

determine whether this threshold model can be generalized to more

classical siRNAs found across the genome, as evidence is still

missing for such classes of sRNAs.

The existence of a threshold model has important implications for

how the dominance hierarchy can evolve. In fact, our model

suggests that a single SNP can be sufficient to turn a codominance

interaction into a dominance interaction (and vice-versa), making

this a relatively trivial molecular event. This is actually what

Yasuda *et al.*, (2016) observed in *B. rapa*, where the combination

of single SNPs at the sRNA *Smi2* and its *SCR* target sequences

resulted in a linear dominance hierarchy among the four class II S-

alleles found in that species. Strikingly, in some cases, we

observed base pairing at sRNA-target interactions with very high

alignment scores (up to 22), *i.e.* above the threshold at which

transcriptional silencing was already complete (score =18). Under

our threshold model, such interactions are not expected since

complete silencing is already achieved at the threshold, and no

further fitness gain is therefore to be expected by acquiring a more

perfect target. A first possibility is that these interactions reflect the

recent emergence of these silencing interactions. In fact, one of the

models for the emergence of new microRNAs in plant genomes

involves a partial duplication of the target gene, hence entailing

perfect complementarity at the time of origin that becomes

degraded over time by the accumulation of mutations (Allen *et al.*,

2004). Under this scenario, the higher-than-expected levels of

sRNA-target complementarity could reflect the recent origin of

these sRNAs but we found no evidence of a difference in

alignment score for young *vs.* old microRNAs (Table S5j). A

second possibility is that selection for developmental robustness is

acting to prevent the phenotypic switch from mono- to bi-allelic

expression of *SCR* (especially during stress events, Boukhibar &

Barkoulas, 2016) that could be devastating for the plant

reproductive fitness. Indeed, we do observe strong variation in

overall *SCR* expression when the sRNA target score of the

companion allele is below the threshold, and it is possible that

under stress conditions the epigenetic machinery may be less

efficient, hence requiring stronger base-pairing to achieve proper

silencing than in the greenhouse conditions under which we

observed them in the present study. Finally, a third possibility is

that sRNA-target complementarity above the threshold reflects the

pleiotropic constraint of having a given sRNA from a dominant

allele control silencing of the complete set of target sequences

from the multiple recessive alleles segregating, and reciprocally of

having a given *SCR* target in a recessive allele maintaining

molecular match with a given sRNA distributed among a variety of

dominant alleles. Comparing the complementarity score of

sRNA/target interactions among sRNAs or targets that contribute

to high versus low numbers of dominance/recessive interactions

will now require a more complete depiction of the sRNA-target

regulatory network among the larger set of S-alleles segregating in

natural populations.

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Author Contribution

NB, SS, SB, ACH performed the molecular biology experiments. CP and ES obtained and took care of the plants. SS, IFL and XV provided advice on the experimental strategy and interpretations. NB performed the statistical analyses. VC supervised the work. NB and VC wrote the manuscript.

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Figure legends

Figure 1: Expression dynamics of **a.** *SCR* and **b.** *SRK* during

flower development, from early buds (<0.5mm) to open flowers.

For *SCR*, only genotypes in which a given allele was either

dominant or co-dominant were included (recessive *SCR* alleles

were strongly silenced at all stages and were therefore not

informative here). For each allele, $2^{-\Delta Ct}$ values were normalized

relative to the developmental stage with the highest expression. For

each stage, the thick horizontal line represents the median, the box

represents the 1st and 3rd quartiles. The upper whisker extends from

the hinge to the largest value no further than 1.5 * Inter Quartile

Range from the hinge (or distance between the first and third

quartiles). The lower whisker extends from the hinge to the

smallest value at most 1.5 * IQR of the hinge and the black dots

represents outlier values.

Figure 2: Expression of individual *SCR* alleles in different

genotypic contexts. Pollen dominance status of the S-allele whose

expression is measured relative to the other allele in the genotype

as determined by controlled crosses are represented by different

letters (**D**: dominant; **C**: codominant; **R**: recessive; **U**: unknown;

H: Homozygote, Table S3). In a few instances, relative dominance

status of the two alleles had not been resolved phenotypically and

were inferred from the phylogeny (marked by asterisks). Thick

horizontal bars represent the median of $2^{-\Delta Ct}$ values, 1st and 3rd

quartile are indicated by the upper and lower limits of the boxes.

The upper whisker extends from the hinge to the largest value no

further than 1.5 * Inter Quartile Range from the hinge (or distance

between the first and third quartiles). The lower whisker extends

from the hinge to the smallest value at most 1.5 * IQR of the hinge

and the black dots represents outlier values. We normalized values

relative to the highest median across heterozygous combinations

within each panel. Alleles are ordered from left to right and from

top to bottom according to their position along the dominance

hierarchy, with SCR01 the most recessive and SCR13 and SCR20

the most dominant alleles. Under a model of transcriptional control

of dominance, high expression is expected when a given allele is

either dominant or co-dominant and low expression when it is

recessive. Exceptions to this model are marked by black vertical

arrows and discussed in the text. "Na" marks homozygote or

heterozygote genotypes that were not available.

Figure 3: Expression of individual *SRK* alleles in different

genotypic contexts. Putative pistil dominance status of the S-allele

whose expression is measured relative to the other allele in the

genotype is represented by different letters (**D**: dominant; **R**:

recessive; **U**: unknown; **H**: Homozygote). Note that the pistil

dominance hierarchy of the S-allele have been less precisely

determined than the pollen hierarchy, and so many of the pairwise

dominance interactions were indirectly inferred from the

phylogenetic relationships (and marked by an asterisk) rather than

directly measured phenotypically. Thick horizontal bars represent

the median of $2^{-\Delta Ct}$ values, 1st and 3rd quartile are indicated by the

upper and lower limits of the boxes. The upper whisker extends

from the hinge to the largest value no further than 1.5 * Inter

Quartile Range from the hinge (or distance between the first and

third quartiles). The lower whisker extends from the hinge to the

smallest value at most 1.5 * IQR of the hinge and the black dots

represents outlier values.. We normalized the values for each allele

relative to the higher median across heterozygous combination. We

normalized values relative to the highest median across

heterozygous combinations within each panel. Alleles are ordered

from left to right and from top to bottom according to their position

in the pistil dominance hierarchy, with SRK01 the most recessive

and SRK04 the most dominant allele in our sample, based on the

phenotypic determination in Llaurens *et al.* (2008).

Figure 4: Base-pairing requirements for the transcriptional control

of *SCR* alleles by sRNAs suggest a threshold model. **a.** Relative

expression of *SCR* alleles as a function of the alignment score of

the "best" interaction between the focal allele (including 2kb of

sequence upstream and downstream of *SCR*) and the population of

sRNAs produced by sRNA precursors of the other allele in the

genotype. For each allele, expression was normalized relative to

the genotype in which the $2^{-\Delta Ct}$ value was highest. Dots are

coloured according to the dominance status of the focal *SCR* allele

in each genotypic context (black: dominant; white: recessive; grey:

undetermined). The black line corresponds to a local regression

obtained by a smooth function (loess function, span=0.5) in the

ggplot2 package (Wickham, 2009) and the grey area covers the

95% confidence interval. Vertical arrows point to observations that

do not fit the threshold model of transcriptional control and are

represented individually on Figure 5. **b.** Barplots of the Akaike

Information Criteria (AIC) quantifying the fit of the generalized

linear model for different target alignment scores used to define

functional targets. Lower AIC values indicate a better fit.

Figure 5: Predicted sRNA/target interactions that do not fit with

the documented dominance phenotype or the measured expression.

For each alignment, the sequence on top is the sRNA and the

bottom sequence is the best predicted target site on the *SCR* gene

sequence (including 2kb of sequence upstream and downstream of

SCR). **a.** sRNA targets with a score above 18, while the S-allele

producing the sRNA is phenotypically recessive over the S-allele

containing the *SCR* sequence. **b.** sRNA target with a score below

18, while the S-allele producing the sRNA (Ah04) is

phenotypically dominant over the S-allele containing the *SCR*

sequence and transcript levels of the *SCR03* allele is accordingly

very low. This is the best target we could identify on SCR03 for

sRNAs produced by Ah04.

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Supplementary figures

Figure S1. Validation of the *SCR* qPCR primers. "Positive

control**"** corresponds to amplification with the Master Mix

containing primers for *SCR* alleles that are present in the cDNA

used. For the "Cross Amplification" assay, we used a Master Mix

on cDNAs that do not contain alleles corresponding to the primer

pair used. "Water**"**: master mix with water instead of cDNA. Thick

horizontal bars represent the median of $2^{-\Delta Ct}$ values, 1st and 3rd

quartile are indicated by the upper and lower limits of the. The

upper whisker extends from the hinge to the largest value no

further than 1.5 * Inter Quartile Range from the hinge (or distance

between the first and third quartiles). The lower whisker extends

from the hinge to the smallest value at most 1.5 * IQR of the hinge

and the black dots represents outlier values.

Figure S2: qPCR amplification (non-transformed *Ct* values) in

serial dilutions for each *SCR* (**a**) and *SRK* (**b**) allele. Solid lines are

the linear regressions over all *Ct* values. Dashed lines are linear

regressions excluding the highest dilution level.

Figure S3. Generalized linear mixed model used to test the effect

of developmental stage and dominance status on the expression of

SCR alleles (*Ct* values). The distribution shows that the residues of

the full model are approximately normally distributed when taking

allele identity, developmental stage and dominance status into

account and using a logarithmic transformation of the Ct_{SCR}/Ct_{actin}

ratios.

Figure S4. Expression of individual *SCR* alleles in different

genotypic contexts, representing each biological and clone

replicate separately. Symbols on top of the boxes indicate

measures from identical clone replicates. See legend of Figure 2

for a full description.

Table S1. *SCR* samples analysed for each S-locus genotype,

showing the number of biological and clone replicates over the

four developmental stages sampled. "Allele 1" refers to the first

allele noted in the genotype (for example in the S1S2 genotype,

"allele 1" is S1 and "allele 2" is S2).

Table S2: *SRK* samples analysed for each S-locus genotype,

showing the number of biological and clone replicates over the

four developmental stages sampled. The alleles are named

accordingly to the Table S1.

Table S3: Dominance relationships between alleles from the

different genotypes included in this study as determined by

controlled crosses.

Table S4: qPCR primer sequences for each *SCR* and *SRK* alleles

studied.

Table S5: Detailed results from the generalized linear mixed

models. **a**. Decomposition of the sources of variance across allele

identity and the hierarchical levels biological, clones and technical

replicates for *SCR*. **b**. Test of the variation of expression dynamic

across *SCR* alleles. **c**. Test of the dominance and stage effects on

SCR transcript levels, showing a significant interaction. **d**.

Comparison of the fit of the model under different base-pairing

score thresholds. **e**. Test of the effect of the position of the target

on the strength of silencing. **f**. Decomposition of the source of

variance across the technical replicates and the allele identity for

SRK. **g**. Test of the variation of expression dynamic across *SRK*

alleles. **h.** Test of the effect of stage and dominance on *SRK*

transcript levels. **i**. Test of the effect of the identity of the

companion allele on *SCR* transcript levels. **j**: Test of the effect of

age on alignment score above the threshold of 18.

Table S6: sRNA and target identified as the best match for every

pair of alleles for *SCR*. Ct_{SCR}/Ct_{actin} ratios are given for the target

allele in the interaction, calculated from the mean of Ct_{SCR}/Ct_{actin}

ratios across the two earliest developmental stages (buds below

1mm, see Figure 1). The positions of the targets are given relative

to the beginning of the closest exon of *SCR* for targets upstream

from the gene or in the intron), and relative to the stop codon for

downstream targets. R: Recessive; D: dominant; H: homozygote.

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

a

```
Ah03 MirS3      3'  UACAAGUCCAUUAUAUAAUCGAA  5'
                    |||||||||||||||||x||x||o||
Ah29 target     5'  ATGTTCAAGGTAATTACTAGTTT  3'
Score = 18.5
```

```
Ah04 Mir4239    3'  CCUCGUACCUUUAUUGCCUUUG  5'
                    |||x||||||x|||||||||||
Ah20 target     5'  GGAACATGTGGCAATAACGGAAAC  3'
Score = 20
```

```
Ah10 Mir4239    3'  CCUCGUACACCUUUAUUGCCUUUGU  5'
                    |||x|||||x|||||||||||||
Ah20 target     5'  GGAACATGTGGCAATAACGGAAACA  3'
Score = 21
```

b

```
Ah04 MirS4      3'  GUAUGAUUCUGUUAGAUUCA  5'
                    ~~|||||||o|||||||||~
Ah03 target     5'  ACTACTAAGAATAATCTAAGA  3'
Score = 15,5
```

Figure S1

Figure S2

Figure S3

Figure S4

lmer(log(s1$Ct_SCR.actine) ~ (1|allele_measured:stage)
+stage*dom_phenotype+
(1|replicatBiol_genotype/replicat_Techclone), na.action=na.omit)

Table S1. SCR samples analysed for each S-locus genotype, showing the number of biological and clone replicates over the four developmental stages sampled. "Allele 1" refers to the first allele noted in the genotype (for example in the S1S2 genotype, "allele 1" is S1 and "allele 2" is S2).

	number of biological replicates	number of expression measure		
		allele 1	allele 2	actin
S1S1	2$^{\$}$	48	48	48
S1S2	1	12	12	12
S1S3	2	24	24	24
S1S4	3	36	36	36
S1S10	1$^{\$}$	24	24	24
S1S12	3	36	36	36
S1S13	2	24	24	24
S1S20	3$^{£}$	60	60	60
S1S29	3	36	36	36
S2S2	2	24	24	24
S2S3*	2	18	18	18
S2S10	2	24	24	24
S2S12	2	24	24	24
S2S13	2	24	24	24
S2S20	2	24	24	24
S2S29	2	24	24	24
S3S3	2	24	24	24
S3S4	1	12	12	12
S3S12	2	24	24	24
S3S20*	3	30	30	30
S3S29	1	12	12	12
S4S10	1	12	12	12
S4S12	2	24	24	24
S4S13	2	24	24	24
S4S20	2	24	24	24
S4S29	1	12	12	12
S10S12	1	12	12	12
S10S13	2	24	24	24
S10S20	2	24	24	24
S10S29	1	12	12	12
S12S13	4	48	48	48
S12S20	4	48	48	48
S12S29	2	24	24	24
S13S20	4	48	48	48
S13S29	1	12	12	12
S20S20	4	48	48	48
S20S29	3	36	36	36

*: only the stages C and D were sampled for one of the biological replicates

$: two clone replicates per biological replicate

£: two of the three biological replicates are represented by two clone replicates

Table S2: SRK samples analysed for each S-locus genotype, showing the number of biological and clone replicates over the four developmental stages sampled. The alleles are named accordingly to the Table S1.

	number of expression measure		
	allele 1	allele 2	actin
S1S1	12	-	11
S1S2	10	-	12
S1S3	11	-	12
S1S10	9	12	11
S1S12	11	12	12
S1S13	11	-	12
S1S20	8	-	9
S1S29	10	-	9
S3S3	12	-	12
S3S4	8	-	12
S3S12	12	11	12
S3S20	12	-	12
S3S29	12	12	12
S4S10	12	12	12
S4S12	12	9	9
S4S13	8	-	12
S4S29	12	11	12
S10S2	12	-	12
S10S12	11	-	12
S10S13	12	-	12
S10S20	12	-	12
S10S29	12	12	12
S12S20	12	-	12
S12S29	11	12	12
S29S2	12	-	12

Table S3: Dominance relationships between alleles from the different genotypes included in this study as determined by controlled crosses.

pollen genotype	pistil phenotype	number of compatible crosses	dominance phenotype in pollen	reference	dominance phenotype in pistil	reference
S1S1	-	-	-	Durand et al. 2014	-	-
S1S2	[S1]	-	S2>S1	Llaurens et al. 2008	S2>S1	Llaurens et al. 2008
S1S2	[S2]	-		Llaurens et al. 2008		
S1S3	[S1]	-	S3>S1	Durand et al. 2014	-	-
S1S3	[S3]	-		Durand et al. 2014		-
S1S4	[S1]	-	S4>S1	Durand et al. 2014	S4>S1	Llaurens et al. 2008
S1S4	[S4]	-		Durand et al. 2014		
S1S10	[S1]	-	NA	-	-	-
S1S10	[S10]			-		-
S1S12	[S1]	-	S12>S1	Durand et al. 2014	S12>S1	Llaurens et al. 2008
S1S12	[S12]	-		Durand et al. 2014		
S1S13	[S1]	-	S13>S1	Durand et al. 2014	-	-
S1S13	[S13]	-		Durand et al. 2014		-
S1S20	[S1]	-	S20>S1	Durand et al. 2014	S20>S1	Llaurens et al. 2008
S1S20	[S20]	-		Durand et al. 2014		
S1S29	[S1]	-	NA	-	-	-
S1S29	[S29]			-		-
S2S3	[S2]	-	NA	-	-	-
S2S3	[S3]	-		-		-
S2S4	[S2]	-	S4>S2	Llaurens et al. 2008	S4>S2	Llaurens et al. 2008
S2S4	[S4]	-		Llaurens et al. 2008		
S2S10	[S2]	-	NA	-	-	-
S2S10	[S10]	-		-		-
S2S12	[S2]	-	S12>S2	Llaurens et al. 2008	S12>S2	Llaurens et al. 2008
S2S12	[S12]	-		Llaurens et al. 2008		
S2S13	[S2]	-	NA	-	-	-
S2S13	[S13]	-		-		-
S2S20	[S2]	-	NA	-	-	-
S2S20	[S20]	-		-		-
S2S29	[S2]	0/5	S2>S29	This study	-	-
S2S29	[S29]	4/7		This study		-
S3S4	[S3]	-	S4>S3	Durand et al. 2014	-	-
S3S4	[S4]	-		Durand et al. 2014		-
S3S10	[S3]	-	S10>S3	Durand et al. 2014	-	-
S3S10	[S10]	-		Durand et al. 2014		-
S3S12	[S3]	-	S12>S3	Durand et al. 2014	-	-
S3S12	[S12]	-		Durand et al. 2014		-
S3S13	[S3]	-	S13>S3	Durand et al. 2014	-	-
S3S13	[S13]	-		Durand et al. 2014		-
S3S20	[S3]	-	S20>S3	Durand et al. 2014	-	-
S3S20	[S20]	-		Durand et al. 2014		-
S3S29	[S3]	-	S29>S3	-	-	-
S3S29	[S29]	-		-		-
S4S10	[S4]	-	S4>S10	Durand et al. 2014	-	-
S4S10	[S10]	-		Durand et al. 2014		-
S4S12	[S4]	-	S12>S4	Durand et al. 2014	S12>S4	Llaurens et al. 2008
S4S12	[S12]	-		Durand et al. 2014		
S4S13	[S4]	-	S13>S4	Durand et al. 2014	-	-
S4S13	[S13]	-		Durand et al. 2014		-
S4S20	[S4]	-	S20>S4	Durand et al. 2014	S20>S4	Llaurens et al. 2008
S4S20	[S20]	-		Durand et al. 2014		

S4S29	[S4]	-	S4>S29	Durand et al. 2014	-	-
S4S29	[S29]	-		Durand et al. 2014		-
S10S12	[S10]	5/5	S12>S10	This study	-	-
S10S12	[S12]	0/5		This study		-
S10S13	[S10]	-	S13>S10	Durand et al. 2014	-	-
S10S13	[S13]	-		Durand et al. 2014		-
S10S20	[S10]	-	S20>S10	Durand et al. 2014	-	-
S10S20	[S20]	-		Durand et al. 2014		-
S10S29	[S10]	1/5	S10>S29	This study	-	-
S10S29	[S29]	3/3		This study		-
S12S13	[S12]	-	S13>S12	Durand et al. 2014	-	-
S12S13	[S13]	-		Durand et al. 2014		-
S12S20	[S12]	-	S20>S12	Durand et al. 2014	S20>S12	Llaurens et al. 2008
S12S20	[S20]	-		Durand et al. 2014		
S12S29	[S12]	-	S12>S29	Durand et al. 2014	-	-
S12S29	[S29]	-		Durand et al. 2014		-
S13S20	[S13]	-	S13=S20	Durand et al. 2014	-	-
S13S20	[S20]	-		Durand et al. 2014		-
S13S29	[S13]	-	S13>S29	Durand et al. 2014	-	-
S13S29	[S29]	-		Durand et al. 2014		-
S20S29	[S20]	-	S20>S29	Durand et al. 2014	-	-
S20S29	[S29]	-		Durand et al. 2014		-

Table S4: qPCR primer sequences for each *SCR* and *SRK* alleles studied.

		5' Primer Sequence 3'
SCR01	F	AAGTGGAAGCTTGGACGAGA
	R	AAAAGTCGTATCTGCGATTG
SCR02	F	GTCTTTCCTTATAAGCCATGG
	R	GGGGACCCAAGAGATTATGC
SCR03	F	CACATAAAAGAATCATGAAGTCTGC
	R	AATGACAGTGGCAAAGTCGC
SCR04	F	GACGTGTTGTTTTGTTCATGGG
	R	GGCGAGAGGGTCTGAAATTC
SCR10	F	CTCATTGTTTTCTTCACAAGCC
	R	GCGAATGTAAAGATGTTGATGGGG
SCR12	F	CGCTTGTTTTGTGTCACG
	R	GCTTTTAACAGAAACCAGGG
SCR13	F	AGACGTGCTACATTGTTCATAGT
	R	GAGACGGAAACTACAACTGCA
SCR20	F	GACATAGAAGTTCAGAAGGCGC
	R	TGCCGCTGTCAAGTTAATAGAG
SCR29	F	CATGTCTTTGCTTATAAGCC
	R	GCTGGTCGTCGATATTGCCG
SRK01	F	TCAGATTGGCGGCTTCTGAG
	R	TGGAAACAGAAGCAAGCAAGG
SRK03	F	AGGAATGTGAGGAGAGGTGC
	R	GGGCAACAACAACAGTAGGA
SRK04	F	CGGAGAGTTTCGAGATATCCG
	R	GGGTGGTAATGTCAAGTGGG
SRK10	F	ACTTGGGCTGGAAGAATGTG
	R	AGGAAACACAAGCGAGCAAG
SRK12	F	ATGGATGCGATTGTGGACAG
	R	CATTGGTTTGGTAGTTGGAATCA
SRK29	F	CCGAAATTATGCTGCCGATGG
	R	CTTGTGAGTTTCATCATGTACTGGT

Table S5: Detailed results from the generalized linear mixed models.

a. Decomposition of the sources of variance across allele identity and the hierarchical levels biological, clones and technical replicates for *SCR*.

lmer(log(Ct_SCR.actine) ~ stage*dom_sRNA_prediction+(1|allele_measured:stage)+(1|replicatBiol_genotype)+(1|replicat_Techclone), na.action=na.omit)

Random effects:

Groups	Name	Variance	Std.Dev.
replicat_Techclone	(Intercept)	0.4091	0.6396
replicatBiol_genotype	(Intercept)	1.0795	1.0390
allele_measured:stage	(Intercept)	4.5674	2.1372
Residual (Technical replicates)		6.0815	2.4461

---

b. Test of the variation of expression dynamic across *SCR* alleles.

model 1: lmer(log(Ct_SCR.actine) ~ stage*dom_phenotype+(1|replicatBiol_genotype/replicat_Techclone))
model 2 : lmer(log(Ct_SCR.actine) ~ stage*dom_phenotype+(1|allele_measured:stage)+(1|replicatBiol_genotype/replicat_Techclone))

	Df	AIC	BIC	logLik	deviance	Chisq Chi	Df	Pr(>Chisq)	
model 1:	11	6946.0	7004	-3462.0	6924.0				
model 2:	12	6730.6	6794	-3353.3	6706.6	217.32	1	< 2.2e-16	***

---

c. Test of the dominance and stage effects on *SCR* transcript levels, showing a significant interaction.

lmer(log(Ct_SCR.actine) ~ stage*dom_phenotype+(1|allele_measured:stage)+(1|replicatBiol_genotype/replicat_Techclone), na.action=na.omit

	Sum Sq	Mean Sq	NumDF	DenDF	F.value	Pr(>F)	
stade	213.51	71.17	3	27.53	13.805	1.107e-05	***
dom_phenotype	814.70	814.70	1	302.35	158.025	< 2.2e-16	***
stade:dom_phenotype	596.73	198.91	3	1358.37	38.582	< 2.2e-16	***

---

d. Comparison of the fit of the model under different base-pairing score thresholds.

lmer(log_SCR.actine) ~ (1|allele_measured:stage) +stage+Dom_score_based_xx+(1|replicatBiol_genotype/replicat_Techclone), na.action=na.omit)

	Df	AIC	BIC	logLik	deviance	Chisq	Df	Pr(>Chisq)	
Dom_score_based_14	23	4064.9	4175.5	-2009.5	4018.9				
Dom_score_based_15	24	4066.1	4181.5	-2009.0	4018.1	0.8294	1	0.3624	
Dom_score_based_16	24	4056.0	4171.5	-2004.0	4008.0	10.0691	0	<2e-16	***
Dom_score_based_17	24	4040.2	4155.6	-1996.1	3992.2	15.8111	0	<2e-16	***
Dom_score_based_18	24	4025.9	4141.3	-1988.9	3977.9	14.3695	0	<2e-16	***
Dom_score_based_19	24	4045.7	4161.1	-1998.9	3997.7	0.0000	0	1.0000	
Dom_score_based_20	24	4054.9	4170.3	-2003.5	4006.9	0.0000	0	1.0000	
Dom_score_based_21	24	4063.4	4178.8	-2007.7	4015.4	0.0000	0	1.0000	
Dom_score_based_22	24	4064.9	4180.3	-2008.5	4016.9	0.0000	0	1.0000	

---

e. Test of the effect of the position of the target on the strength of silencing.

lmer(log(Ct_SCR.actine)~allele_measured:stage+stage+position_target+(1|allele_measured:stage/replicatBiol_genotype/replicat_Techclone), na.action=na.omit)

	Sum Sq	Mean Sq	NumDF	DenDF	F.value	Pr(>F)
position_target	27.019	6.755	4	33.275	1.4432	0.241609

---

f. Decomposition of the source of variance across the technical replicates and the allele identity for *SRK*.

```
lmer(log(Ct_SRK.actine) ~ stade*dom_phenotype+(1|allele_measured:stade)+(1|replicat_Techclone), na.action=na.omit)
```

Random effects:

Groups	Name	Variance	Std.Dev.
allele_measured:stade	(Intercept)	3.1451	1.7734
replicat_Techclone	(Intercept)	0.6974	0.8351
Residual		0.8089	0.8994

---

g. Test of the variation of expression dynamic across *SRK* alleles.

```
model 1 :lmer(log(Ct_SRK.actine) ~ stade*dom_phenotype+(1|replicatBiol_genotype/replicat_Techclone), na.action=na.omit)
model 2 :lmer(log(Ct_SRK.actine) ~ (1|allele_measured:stade)+stade*dom_phenotype+(1|replicatBiol_genotype/replicat_Techclone), na.action=na.omit)
```

	Df	AIC	BIC	logLik	deviance	Chisq Chi	Df	Pr(>Chisq)
model 1:	11	280.74	307.07	-129.37	258.74			
model 2:	12	275.82	304.56	-125.91	251.82	6.9103	1	0.00857 **

---

h. Test of the effect of stage and dominance on *SRK* transcript levels.

```
lmer(log(Ct_SRK.actine) ~ (1|allele_measured:stade)+stade*dom_phenotype+(1|replicatBiol_genotype/replicat_Techclone), na.action=na.omit)
```

	Sum Sq	Mean Sq	NumDF	DenDF	F.value	Pr(>F)
stade	2.0520	0.6840	3	3.346	0.8456	0.546472
dom_phenotype	5.5723	5.5723	1	3.442	6.8884	0.068244 .
stade:dom_phenotype	10.7038	3.5679	3	64.867	4.4107	0.006943 **

---

i. Test of the effect of the identity of the companion allele on *SCR* transcript levels.

```
lmer(log(Ct_SCR.actine) ~ (1|allele_measured:stade)+stade+Other_allele_inGenot+(1|replicatBiol_genotype/replicat_Techclone), na.action=na.omit)
```

	Sum Sq	Mean Sq	NumDF	DenDF	F.value	Pr(>F)
Other_allele_inGenot	52.061	10.412	5	32.843	2.2217	0.07558 .

---

j. Test of the effect of age on alignment score above the threshold of 18.

```
lm(score ~ age)
```

	Df	Sum Sq	Mean Sq	F value	Pr(>F)
age	1	0.066	0.06586	0.0362	0.8504
Residuals	29	52.708	1.81753		

Table S6: sRNA and target identified as the best match for every pair of alleles for SCR. CtsSCR/Ctactin ratios are given for the target allele in the interaction, calculated from the mean of CtsSCR/Ctactin ratios across the two earliest developmental stages (buds below 1mm, see Figure 1). The positions of the targets are given relative to the beginning of the closest exon of SCR for targets upstream from the gene or in the intron), and relative to the stop codon for downstream targets. R: Recessive; D: dominant; H: homozygote.

targeting allele	targeting sRNA precursor	targeted allele	dominance phenotype	sRNA/target	Best predicted sRNA/target interaction	score	CtsSCR /Ctactin	target location	from	to
Ah01	Ah01_Mir4239	Ah01	H	sRNA 3' target 5'	5' AAAAAUAAAAGCAAAAACGACGUA ~~~|||||||--|||||×||||||| 3' TATTATTTT--TTTTTACTGCAT	14	1.1342E-02	promotor	-598	-581
	Ah01_Mir4239	Ah02	D	sRNA 3' target 5'	5' AAAAU-AAAAGCAAAAACGAC-GUA ~~~||-|||||-|||||||o||-||~ 3' UAUUACUUUUC-UUUUUGUGUCAA	13.5	1.3053E-01	intron	-196	-177
	Ah01_Mir4239	Ah03	D	sRNA 3' target 5'	5' AAAAUA-AAAGCAAAAAC-GACGUA ||||-|-||||||||||--||~~~ 3' UUUU-UCUUUCGUUUUUGUCUAUUU	15	2.8473E-02	promotor	-505	-486
	Ah01_Mir4239	Ah04	D	sRNA 3' target 5'	5' AAAUAAAAAGCAAA-A-ACGACGUAC-UA ||||×||||-||-|-|-||||||-|~ 3' UUUACUUUC-UUUAUAU-CU-CAUGUAU	14	1.2298E-01	promotor	-517	-493
	Ah01_Mir4239	Ah10	D	sRNA 3' target 5'	5' AGCAAAAAACG-A-CGUAC-UAGGU--UCC ||×||||||-|-o||-||||||-||| 3' UCAUUUUUGCAUCGUAUGUAUCCAUCAGG	15.5	2.8487E-04	exon	103	131
	Ah01_Mir4239	Ah12	D	sRNA 3' target 5'	5' AAAAUAAA-AGCAAA-AA-CGACGUA |||||||||-|×|||-||-|o|-||| 3' UUUUAUGUUGUAGUUAUAGUU-CAU	14.5	2.1209E-02	2	530	554
	Ah01_Mir4239	Ah13	D	sRNA 3' target 5'	5' AG-CAAAAAACGACGUACUAGGUCC ||-||||||||||×|o||---||||| 3' UCUGUUUUUGCUACGUG--CAAGG	13.5	2.0399E-02	downstream	1940	1961
	Ah01_Mir4239	Ah20	D	target 5' sRNA 3'	5' UCGUACGCCGUUUUUGCCUAUGUU ~~~||o|||×|||||||| 3' CACAUGUGGCAAUAACGGAAAACAA	16.5	2.0770E-01	exon	55	76
	Ah01_Mir4239	Ah29	D	sRNA 3' target 5'	5' AGCAAAAAACGACGUACUA-GGUCC ~~~|||||×|||||||||~ 3' UUUUUUUUUCUGCAU-AUGCCAAGA	15	4.9834E-02	downstream	910	929
Ah02	Ah02_Mir1887	Ah01	R	sRNA 3' target 5'	5' GUGAAUCUAACAAGAAUCAUACUC ~~~||||||||||||||×||||| 3' CUCUUAGAUUGUUCUUACUAUGAA	19	5.4584E-05	promotor	-59	-39
	Ah02_MirS3	Ah02	H	target 5' sRNA 3'	5' AACUAACCAAUGAGCAUUUU-CA ||||||||||||||||×|||||| 3' UUGAUUGGCUAC-CGUAAAACGU	15	2.3912E-01	upstream	-1545	-1524
	Ah02_Mir1887	Ah03	R	sRNA 3' target 5'	5' GUGAAUCUAACAAGAAUCAUACUC ~~|||||||×||||||||||o|||| 3' CUCUUAGAUUAUUCUUAGUGUAAG	16.5	1.8790E-03	promotor	-108	-87

Summary table (sequence-alignment predictions of sRNA–target pairs):

sRNA	target	D/R/H		score	p-value	region	pos1	pos2
Ah02_MirS3	Ah04	D	sRNA 3′ / target 5′	14	Na	intron	-60	-43
Ah02_MirS3	Ah10	D	target 5′ / sRNA 3′	15.5	4.1045E-02	intron	-56	-37
Ah02_MirS3	Ah12	D	sRNA 3′ / target 5′	16	9.6584E-02	intron	-601	-578
Ah02_Mir1887	Ah13	D	target 5′ / sRNA 3′	14	3.4676E-02	downstream	203	221
Ah02_MirS3	Ah20	D	sRNA 3′ / target 5′	14	6.9471E-02	downstream	1611	1636
Ah02_Mir1887	Ah29	R	sRNA 3′ / target 5′	16	8.1926E-02	promotor	-53	-33
Ah03_MirS3	Ah01	R	target 5′ / sRNA 3′	22	4.2927E-05	exon	59	82
Ah03_MirS5	Ah02	D	sRNA 3′ / target 5′	17.5	1.9047E-01	intron-exon boundary	-19	5
Ah03_MirS3	Ah03	H	target 5′ / sRNA 3′	16.5	3.6834E-02	exon	-21	1
Ah03_MirS5	Ah04	D	target 5′ / sRNA 3′	16	Na	exon	84	107
Ah03_MirS3	Ah10	D	sRNA 3′ / target 5′	15	5.0001E-01	intron	-1221	-1199
Ah03_MirS3	Ah12	D	target 5′ / sRNA 3′	16	1.8389E-01	promotor	-569	-549
Ah03_MirS3	Ah13	D	sRNA 3′ / target 5′	18.5	Na	intron-exon boundary	63	88
Ah03_MirS5	Ah20	D	target 5′ / sRNA 3′	16	6.2263E-02	downstream	1478	1502

```
Ah02_MirS3  Ah04  D
  sRNA   3' AACUAACCAAUGAGCAUUUUCA   5'
            |||||||||||o-|--|||||~~
  target 5' UUGAUUGGUUACUUAG-AAAACU  3'   14   Na          intron                 -60  -43

Ah02_MirS3  Ah10  D
  target 5' AAAUUAUUCAGAAUAAGCCAAUCAGA 3'
            ~-||||-|-|||-|-|||||~~~~
  sRNA   3' UUUAA-ACG-CUUAUU-GGUUAGUGU 5'   15.5 4.1045E-02  intron                 -56  -37

Ah02_MirS3  Ah12  D
  sRNA   3' GUGAAUCUAA-CA-AGAAUCAUACUC 5'
            ~-|||-||-|||-||||||||~~~~
  target 5' AACU-GAUUAGUAGUCUUACACAA   3'   16   9.6584E-02  intron                 -601 -578

Ah02_Mir1887 Ah13 D
  target 5' AAAUUUAGCCAAUAUAUGCUCAAUCAAA 3'
            |-|||||-|-||-|-|--|||||~~
  sRNA   3' UUUAAA-CGUUAU-U--G-GUUAGUGU   5'   14   6.9471E-02  downstream             203  221

Ah02_MirS3  Ah20  D
  sRNA   3' GUGAAUCUAACAAGAAUCAUACUC   5'
            |o||||||x|||||||||||o|~~
  target 5' CGCUAGAUAGUUCCUUAGUGUAAU   3'   14   3.4676E-02  downstream             1611 1636

Ah02_Mir1887 Ah29 R
  target 5' UACAAGUUCCAUUAUAUAAUCGAA   3'
            ||||||||x|||||||||||x||||
  sRNA   3' AUGUUCAAGGUAAUAUAUGAGCUU   5'   16   8.1926E-02  promotor               -53  -33

Ah03_MirS3  Ah01  R
  target 5' AGUUCCAUUAUAUAAUC-GAAGAAA  5'
            ||||||||x|x|||-|-o||||||
  sRNA   3' UCAAGGUAAUAUUACUAGUUUUCUU  3'   22   4.2927E-05  exon                    59   82

Ah03_MirS5  Ah02  D
  sRNA   3' AUACGAAAGUACAGA--AAAAAAAG  5'
            |||o|||||||||-||-|||||||~
  target 5' UAUGUUUUCAUGU-UGGUUUUUUA   3'   17.5 1.9047E-01  intron-exon boundary   -19  5

Ah03_MirS3  Ah03  H
  target 5' ACA-AGUU-CCAUUAUAUAAUCGAAG 5'
            |||-||||-|-|-||x||-|-|||
  sRNA   3' UGUGUCAAUGG-AAUAUACUA-CUUU 3'   16.5 3.6834E-02  exon                    -21  1

Ah03_MirS5  Ah04  D
  sRNA   3' AAAA-AAG-GUUCAGUACAAUUUC   5'
            ||||-|||-||x|||x|||||||~
  target 5' UUUCUUCACAAGCCAUAUUAAAG    3'   16   Na          exon                    84   107

Ah03_MirS3  Ah10  D
  target 5' ACAAGUUCCAUUAUAUAAAUCGAAG  5'
            ||||||||||||-||-x|-|-|||
  sRNA   3' UGUUCAAGGUAAU-U-CUA-CUUC   3'   15   5.0001E-01  intron                 -1221 -1199

Ah03_MirS3  Ah12  D
  sRNA   3' AGUUCCAUUAUAUAAUCGAAG      5'
            ||||||||-|-x|||-|-|||
  target 5' UCAAGGUAAUAUAUUAACACUUUUU  3'   16   1.8389E-01  promotor               -569 -549

Ah03_MirS3  Ah13  D
  sRNA   3' AUACGAAAGUACAGAA-AAA--AAAG 5'
            |||-|||||||||||-||--|||
  target 5' AUACGAAAGUACAGAA-AAA--AAAG 3'   18.5 Na          intron-exon boundary   63   88

Ah03_MirS5  Ah20  D
  target 5' UAU-CUUUAAAUGUCUGUUUAAUUUC 5'
            |||-|||||x||||||-||--||||
  sRNA   3' UAU-CUUUAAAUGUCUGUUUAAUUUC 3'   16   6.2263E-02  downstream             1478 1502
```

Small RNA / target duplex predictions

sRNA	Sample	Type	Duplex (sRNA 3′→5′ / alignment / target 5′→3′)	Score	p-value	Region	Start	End
Ah03_MirS3	Ah29	R	sRNA 3′ `UACAAGUUCCAUUAUAAUCGAA` 5′ `          ||||||||||x|x||||o|` target 5′ `AUGUUCAAGGUAAUUUACUAGUUU` 3′	18.5	3.3086E-02	intron-exon boundary	-8	15
Ah04_MirS4	Ah01	R	target 5′ `UAU-ACUUUUUC-UUUUUCU-UU` 3′ `         ||-||-|-||||||-|` sRNA 3′ `AUAUUG-AAAAAGUAAAAAAGAGAA` 5′	17	1.7497E-04	upstream	-1173	-1150
Ah04_Mir867	Ah02	R	sRNA 3′ `ACAGAAAGGAUUAUUUGGUACAAGUU` 5′ `         ||||||||||||||x|||||` target 5′ `UGUCCUUUCCUUAUAAGCCAUGGUCAA` 3′	20.5	Na	exon	2	27
Ah04_MirS4	Ah03	R	target 5′ `GUAGAUCUGUUAGAUUCA` 3′ `         ~~~||||||||o||||||` sRNA 3′ `ACUACUAAGAAAUAAUCUAAGA` 5′	15.5	1.8947E-05	intron-exon boundary	-20	3
Ah04_MirS4	Ah04	R	sRNA 3′ `AUAGGUCUUGUCGCUAACAAUGA` 5′ `         |||||||x|||||o|||||` target 5′ `UAUCCAAAAAAUAGUUGAUUGUACU` 3′	19	6.6149E-04	promotor	-273	-250
Ah04_MirS4	Ah10	H	sRNA 3′ `UAUAC-UUU-UUUC-UUUUUUCUUU` 5′ `         ~|||x|-|||-|-|||-||||||` target 5′ `UUAAGAAAAAUAGUGAUUUGUACU` 3′	18.5	Na	intron	-872	-849
Ah04_MirS4	Ah12	R	sRNA 3′ `UCUUACUUUGAUCAUAAUUACUAUUUAU` 5′ `         ||-||-||||||-|||||||o|||||||` target 5′ `AA-AA-GAAAC-AGUAUGUGAUAAAAGA` 3′	16	Na	intron	-2057	-2032
Ah04_MirS4	Ah13	D	sRNA 3′ `UAUACUUUUUU--C-UUUUU--UCUUU` 5′ `         ~-||||||||||--|-|||||--||||` target 5′ `UUAUGAAAAAAGUGUAAAAAGUAGAAA` 3′	16	6.5069E-02	downstream	1024	1049
Ah04_Mir4239_copy1	Ah20	D	target 5′ `GGAACAUGUGGCAAUAACGGAAAC` 3′ `         ||×||||||×|||||||` sRNA 3′ `CCUCGUACACCUUAUGCCUUUG` 5′	20	9.5550E-02	exon	51	74
Ah04_Mir867	Ah29	R	sRNA 3′ `ACAGAAAGGAUAUAUUGGUACAAGUU` 5′ `         |||||||||||o||||×|||` target 5′ `UGUCCUUUCGUUAUAAGCCAUGGUCAA` 3′	20.5	8.0761E-04	exon	40	65
Ah10_Mir1887	Ah01	R	sRNA 3′ `GGAGAUGGAUUCUUGUUAGAUUCA` 5′ `         |o|||||×||||||||||||` target 5′ `CUUCAUAGUAAGAACAAUCUAAGA` 3′	19.5	2.5148E-05	promotor	-61	-39
Ah10_Mir867	Ah02	R	target 5′ `AGAAAGGAAUAUUCGGUACAAGUU` 5′ `         |||||||||||||×|||` sRNA 3′ `UCUUUCCUUAUAAGCCAUGGUCAA` 3′	22	2.0406E-03	exon	2	25
Ah10_Mir1887	Ah03	R	sRNA 3′ `GGAGAUGAUUCUUGUAGAUUCA` 5′ `         ||o|||||||||||o|||` target 5′ `CCUUACACUAAGAAUAAUCUAAGA` 3′	18	Na	promotor	-109	-87
Ah04_Mir867	Ah04	R	target 5′ `GCAACUUUUAACAAAAUCCU-UU` 5′ `         ~~||×||||×|||||||||` sRNA 3′ `UUUUCAAAAUGGUUUAUAAGGAGAGA` 3′	17	3.7813E-01	exon	90	112
Ah10_Mir4239		R	`UUGUUUC-UUACGUUGUUCUG-GAA`					

Sequence alignment / target prediction table (page rotated 90°):

miRNA	Target	Type	Score	p-value	Region	Start	End
Ah10_Mir867	Ah10	H	14.5	Na	dowstream	136	158
Ah10_Mir4239	Ah12	D	15	4.2743E-03	promotor	-555	-533
Ah10_Mir4239	Ah13	D	15	1.1520E-02	downstream	714	736
Ah10_Mir867	Ah20	D	21	8.7536E-02	exon	51	75
Ah12_Mir4239	Ah29	R	22	4.2462E-04	exon	42	65
Ah12_Mir4239	Ah01	R	21	1.8177E-04	intron	-238	-215
Ah12_MirS3	Ah02	R	21	6.0314E-05	intron	-940	-916
Ah12_MirS3	Ah03	R	21.5	4.1965E-04	intron	-211	-187
Ah12_MirS3	Ah04	R	20	1.6505E-03	intron	-79	-55
Ah12_MirS3	Ah10	R	19	3.2426E-04	intron	-74	-51
Ah12_MirS3	Ah12	H	15.5	Na	downstream	123	123
Ah12_MirS3	Ah13	D	14	3.5946E-02	promotor	-179	-159
Ah12_MirS3	Ah20	D	15.5	9.0139E-02	intron	-193	-168
Ah12_MirS3	Ah29	R	20	5.8038E-04	intron	-225	-201
Ah13_MirS3	—	—	22	—	intron	—	—

Alignments (target 5'→3' top strand, match line, sRNA 3'→5' bottom strand):

```
Ah10_Mir867 / Ah10  (dowstream, 136-158)
target 5' AACAAAGAAAUG--AACAA-AUGCUU
          ||||||||||-|||-|--||--|o-|||

Ah10_Mir4239 / Ah12  (promotor, -555/-533)
target 5' AGAAAAGGAUAUAUCGGUACAAGUU
          ||||o|-|||xox|||||||||
sRNA   3' UCUUUCUUU-UAAAUGAUGUUCAA

Ah10_Mir4239 / Ah13  (downstream, 714/736)
target 5' CCUCGUACACCUUUAUUGCCUUUGU
          ||-||||||-|-||o||-||x||o||~
sRNA   3' UUGUUCUUAC-GUUGGUUCUGGAA

Ah10_Mir867 / Ah20  (exon, 51/75)
target 5' GGAACAUGUGGCAAUAACGGAAAACA
          ||||-||||x||||||||
sRNA   3' AAC-AAGAAUGACGAACACGAUCUC

Ah12_Mir4239 / Ah29  (exon, 42/65)
target 5' AGAAAGGAUAUUCGGUACAAGUU
          ||||x||||||||||||||
sRNA   3' UCUUUGCUUAUAAGCCAUGUUCAA

Ah12_Mir4239 / Ah01  (intron, -238/-215)
target 5' UUAGUUUUGGAUUUCUCCAACUAU
          ||||||||||x|||||||||
sRNA   3' AAUCAAAAACCAAAAAGGAUGUUGAUA

Ah12_MirS3 / Ah02  (intron, -940/-916)
target 5' UUAGUUUUGGAUUUCUCCAACUAU
          ||||||||||x|||||||
sRNA   3' AAAUCAAAAA-CUAAAAAGGACGUUGAUA

Ah12_MirS3 / Ah03  (intron, -211/-187)
target 5' UUAGUUUUGGAUUUCUCCAACUAU
          ||||||||||o|||||||||x||||
sRNA   3' AAUCAAAAACUAAAAAGGAUGUUGAUA

Ah12_MirS3 / Ah04  (intron, -79/-55)
target 5' UUAGUUUUGGA-UUUCUCCAACUA
          |||||||||-|-|||x||||||||
sRNA   3' AAUCAAAAA-CUAAAAAGGAUGUUGAUA

Ah12_MirS3 / Ah10  (intron, -74/-51)
target 5' GACGAAAG-AAAAUCGAAAACUAAGC
          ~~~~|||-|||||||||~
sRNA   3' UUUCUUUUUGGCUUUGAUUGG

Ah12_MirS3 / Ah12  (downstream, 123/123)
target 5' UUUA-GUUUUGGAUUCUCUCCAACUA
          ~~-|||||||||x|||||||
sRNA   3' AUAUCCAAAA-AUAAAAGGA--UUGAU

Ah12_MirS3 / Ah13  (promotor, -179/-159)
target 5' UUUAGUUUUGGA-UUCC--UCCAACUA
          ~-|||||||-|-|||x||||o|
sRNA   3' AAAUCAAAAA--CUAAAAAGGAUAGUUGGU

Ah12_MirS3 / Ah20  (intron, -193/-168)
target 5' UUAGUUUUGGA-UUUCCUCCAACUAU
          |||||||-|-|||x|||||o|
sRNA   3' AAAUCAAAAA-CUAAAAGGACGUUGGU

Ah13_MirS3 / Ah29  (intron, -225/-201)
target 5' AAUCAAAAA-CUGAAAAGGACGUUGAUA
          ~|||||||||||||||||||x|||||
sRNA   3' CUCAUGGUUAGUUUUGGAUUUCCU
```

Row group labels (left margin): Ah10, Ah12, Ah13

Ah20

sRNA	Target	Type	Score	Expectation	Region	Start	End
Ah13_MirS3	Ah01	R	20.5	6.6402E-05	intron	-231	-208
Ah13_MirS3	Ah02	R	20	7.0608E-05	intron	-938	-915
Ah13_MirS3	Ah03	R	Na	Na	intron	-211	-188
Ah13_MirS3	Ah04	R	20	7.3639E-04	intron	-71	-49
Ah13_MirS2	Ah10	R	21	4.9442E-04	intron	-59	-34
Ah13_MirS3	Ah12	R	22	3.5373E-03	promotor	-470	-449
Ah13_MirS3	Ah10	R	15	Na	intron	-95	-75
Ah13_MirS3	Ah13	H	17.5	3.1419E-02	intron	-193	-168
Ah13_MirS3	Ah20	D	19	1.4935E-04	intron	-229	-205
Ah20_MirS3	Ah29	D	22	1.3491E-04	intron	-239	-216
Ah20_MirS3	Ah01	R	22	1.9359E-05	intron	-938	-915
Ah20_MirS3	Ah02	R	18	6.3463E-04	intron	-211	-188
Ah20_MirS3	Ah03	R	20	3.0334E-04	intron	-79	-56
Ah20_MirS3	Ah04	R	19	9.5621E-04	intron	-74	-52
Ah20_MirS2	Ah12	R	21.5	1.4779E-03	promotor	-501	-479

Ah13_MirS3 → Ah01
```
target 5' AAGUAACCAUCAAAAACCAAAAGGA 3'
          |||||||×||||||×|||||||||
sRNA   3' UAGUUUUGGAUUUCCUUCAACUAU  5'
```

Ah13_MirS3 → Ah02
```
target 5' AUCAAAAACCAAAAGGAUGUUGAUA 3'
          |||||||×||||||×||||||
sRNA   3' UAGUUUUGGAUUUCCUUCAACUAU  5'
```

Ah13_MirS3 → Ah03
```
target 5' AUCAAAAACUUAAAGGAUGUGAUA  3'
          ||||||||||o|||||×||||||
sRNA   3' UAGUUUUGGAUUUCCUUCAACUAU  5'
```

Ah13_MirS3 → Ah04
```
target 5' GUGUAACCAAUCAAAA-CUAAAAGGA  3'
          |-|||-|-||||||||
sRNA   3' CU-AAAACGACUCAUUGGUUAGUUUUG 5'
```

Ah13_MirS2 → Ah10
```
target 5' GAGUUUU-CUAAGUAACCAAUCAAAAC  3'
          ~~|||||||||||||-|-|-||||||
sRNA   3' CUCAUUGGUUAGUUUUGGA-UUUCCU   5'
```

Ah13_MirS3 → Ah12
```
target 5' UAUAUAUGCGUAAAUGACAUAAAAAA  3'
          ||||||-|||||||||-|||||||~
sRNA   3' AUAUAUACGCAUUACUGUAUUUGU    5'
```

Ah13_MirS3 → Ah10
```
target 5' AAGAAAAA-UCGAA-ACUAACCAAU  3'
          |-|||||-|-||-||||||||
sRNA   3' UU-UUUUGAG-UUCUGAUUGGUUG   5'
```

Ah13_MirS3 → Ah13
```
target 5' UUAGUUUUGGA-UUUCCU-U-CAACUA  3'
          |||||||||-|||-|-|-||||o
sRNA   3' AAUCAAAAA-CUAAAAGGAUAUGUGGU  5'
```

Ah13_MirS3 → Ah20
```
target 5' UUUGGA-UUUCCUUCAAACUAUAUAU  3'
          ||×|-||||-||||||||||
sRNA   3' AAAACUGAAAAGGACGUUGAUAUAUA  5'
```

Ah20_MirS3 → Ah29
```
target 5' AUAGUUGAAGGAAAAACCAAAACUAG  3'
          ||||||×|||||||||||||
sRNA   3' UAUCAACAUCCUUUUGGUUUUUGAUU  5'
```

Ah20_MirS3 → Ah01
```
target 5' AUAGUUGAAGGAAAAACCAAAACUAG  3'
          ||||||×|||||||||||||
sRNA   3' UAUCAACAUCCUUUUGGUUUUUGAUU  5'
```

Ah20_MirS3 → Ah02
```
target 5' AUAGUUGAAGGAAAAACCAAAACUAG  3'
          ||||||×||||||||xx||||||
sRNA   3' UAUCAACAUCCUUUUGGUUUUUGAUU  5'
```

Ah20_MirS3 → Ah03
```
target 5' AUAGUUGAAGGAAAAACCAAAACUAG  3'
          ||||||×|||||||||||||
sRNA   3' UAUCAACAUCCUUUUGGUUUUUGAUU  5'
```

Ah20_MirS3 → Ah04
```
target 5' UAGUUGAAGGAAAAACCAAAACUAG  3'
          |||||×|||||||||||||
sRNA   3' AUCAACGUCCUUUUAGUUUUGAUU  5'
```

Ah20_MirS2 → Ah12
```
target 5' CGUCGUAUUGUGCAUUUGUGUAU   3'
          |||||×||||||||||o||||
sRNA   3' GCAGCAUUACACGUAAAACGCCAUA 5'
```

sRNA	target	type	score	p‑value	location	start	end
Ah20_MirS2	Ah13	D	16	2.1991E-02	downstream	1322	1343
Ah20_MirS3	Ah20	H	17.5	8.6244E-02	intron	-191	-167
Ah20_MirS2	Ah29	R	18	6.2265E-04	promotor	-205	-185
S44_Smi2	S29-pro	R	17	—	—	—	—
S44_Smi2	S40-pro	R	16.5	—	—	—	—
S44_Smi2	S60-pro	R	16.5	—	—	—	—
S44_Smi2	S44-pro	H	13.5	—	—	—	—
S60_Smi2	S40-pro	R	18	—	—	—	—
S60_Smi2	S60-pro	H	15	—	—	—	—
S60_Smi2	S29-pro	R	18	—	—	—	—
S60_Smi2	S44-pro	D	14	—	—	—	—
S40_Smi2	S60-pro	R	17	—	—	—	—
S40_Smi2	S29-pro	R	17	—	—	—	—
S40_Smi2	S40-pro	H	14.5	—	—	—	—
S40_Smi2	S60-pro	R	14.5	—	—	—	—
S40_Smi2	S44-pro	D	14.5	—	—	—	—

Alignments

Ah20_MirS2 / Ah13 (D)
```
sRNA   3' CACAAAUAC-ACAAAUUCACAAUAC 5'
          ||-||||||-|-|||||||x||||||~
target 5' GU-UUUAUGAU-UUUAAGCGUUAUU 3'
```

Ah20_MirS3 / Ah20 (H)
```
sRNA   3' GUUG-A-AGGAAAACCAAAACUAGCC 5'
          ||||-|-||||||x|||||||o|~
target 5' CAACAUAUCCUUUUAGUUUUGAUUGU 3'
```

Ah20_MirS2 / Ah29 (R)
```
sRNA   3' CACAAAUACAGAAAACACAUAUACA 5'
          |||||||||-|-|||||||x||||||~
target 5' GUGUUUAUGUGUUU-UGUAUAUUC 3'
```

Brassica S44 / S44_Smi2
```
target 5' AGGAAAACACGAAUAAGGUGUGU 3'
          |o|||x||||||||||o||||||
sRNA   3' UUCGUAUGUGCUUAUUUCCACACA 5'

target 5' AAGUACACACACGAAUAAGGUGUGA 3'
          ~|-|-|||x||||||||||o||||||
sRNA   3' UUCGUAUGUGCUUAUUUCCACACA 5'

target 5' UACAUACACACGAAUAAGGUGUGA 3'
          ~~|||x||||||||||o||||||~
sRNA   3' UUCGUAUGUGCUUAUUUCCACACA 5'

target 5' AGGAUUACACGCGAA-AAAG-GUGU 3'
          |o|||o|||||-||||-|||
sRNA   3' UUCGUGUGUGCUUAUUUCCACACA 5'
```

Brassica S60 / S60_Smi2
```
target 5' AAGUACACACACGAAUAAGGUGUGU 3'
          ~|-|-|||x||||||||||o||||||
sRNA   3' UUC-UAUAUGUGGUUUAUUCCACACA 5'

target 5' UUCUAUAUGUGU--UUAUUCCACACA 3'
          ~~~|||x||||-|||||||||||||~
sRNA   3' UACAUACACACGAAUAAGGUGUGA 5'

target 5' UUCUAUAUGUGCUUAUUUCCACACA 3'
          |o|||x|||||-|||||||||||
sRNA   3' AGGAUACACGGAAA-AAGGUGUAU 5'

target 5' UUCCUAUAUGUGG--UUAUUCCACACA 3'
          |o|||o|||||-|||-|||||||
sRNA   3' AGGAUACACGCGAAA-AAGGUGUAU 5'
```

Brassica S40 / S40_Smi2
```
target 5' UUCUAUAUGUGCUUAUUUCCACACA 3'
          |o|||x||||||||||o||||||
sRNA   3' AGGAAAACACGAAUAAGGUGUGU 5'

sRNA   3' UUC-UAUAUGUGCUUAUUUCCACACA 5'
          ~|-|-|||x|||||||||o||||||
target 5' AGGAAAACACGAAUAAGGUGUGU 3'

target 5' UUCUAUAUGUGCUUAUUUCACACA 3'
          ~|-|-|x|||||||||o|||||||~
sRNA   3' AAGUACACACACAAAAUAAGGUGUGU 5'

sRNA   3' UUCUAUAUGUGCUUAUUUCCACACA 5'
          ~~~~~~~||||||||||o|||||~
target 5' ACACGAAACACGAAUAAGGUGUGA 3'
```

Alignments of small RNA (sRNA) and target sequences. For each pairing the group, sRNA sample, target, class (D/H/R) and score are given.

Brassica S29 — S40_Smi2 / S44-pro (D) — 15 / – / –
```
sRNA   3' UUCUAUAUGUGCUAUUUCACACA 5'
          |o|||||x||o|||-|-||||-|||
target 5' AGGAUACACGCGAA-AAAG-GUGU 3'
```

S44_Smi2 / S29-pro (H) — 16.5 / – / –
```
sRNA   3' UUCUAUGUGCUAUUGCCACACA 5'
          |o||x|x||||||x||||||
target 5' AGGAAAACACGAAUAAGGUGUGU 3'
```

S29_Smi2 / S29-SP11 (H) — 14 / – / –
```
target 5' UUC-UAUAUGUGCUAUUUCACACA 3'
          ~||-|x|x|||x||||||x||||||
sRNA   3' AAGUACACACAAAAUAAGGUGUGU 5'
```

S29_Smi2 / S40-pro (D) — 14 / – / –
```
target 5' UUCUAUGUGCUAUUGCCACACA 3'
          ~~~~~~~~|||||||||x|||||~
sRNA   3' ACACGAAACACGAAUAAGGUGUGA 5'
```

S29_Smi2 / S40-pro (D) — 13 / – / –
```
target 5' UUCUAUAUGUGCUAUUGCCACACA 3'
          |o|||||x||o|||||x||||~~
sRNA   3' AGGAUACACGCGAAAAAGGUGUAU 5'
```

S29_Smi2 / S60-pro (D) — 14 / – / –
```
sRNA   3' ACACGAUAAAAUGUGCAUUUGUA 5'
          ~~~~~|||||x|||||||||||
target 5' CUAUUCUAUUUCACACGUAAACAA 3'
```

Brassica S9 — S9-Smi / S60-SP11 (R) — 17 / – / –
```
sRNA   3' ACAUUGAUAAAAUGUGCAUUUGUA 5'
          ~~~~~|||||x|||||||||||||
target 5' CUAUUCUAUUUCACACGUAAACAU 3'
```

S9-Smi / S40-SP11 (R) — 18 / – / –
```
sRNA   3' ACAUUGAUAAAAUGUGCAUUUGUA 5'
          ~~~~~|||||x||||||||||||~
target 5' CUAUUCUAUUUCACACGUAAACAA 3'
```

S9-Smi / S9-SP11 (R) — 17 / – / –
```
target 5' ACAUUGAUAAAAUGUGCAUUUGUA 5'
          ~~~~~|||||x|||||||||||
sRNA   3' CUAUUCUAUUUCACACGUAAACAU 3'
```

S9-Smi / S29-SP11 (R) — 17 / – / –
```
sRNA   3' ACAUUGAUAAAAUGUGCAUUUGUA 5'
          ~~~~~|||||x||||||||||||
target 5' CUAUUCUAUUUCACACGUAAACAU 3'
```

S9-Smi / S44-pro (R) — 15 / – / –
```
target 5' ACAUUGAUAAAAUGAGCAUUUGUA 3'
          ~~~~~|||||x|||||||||||
sRNA   3' CUAUUCUAUUUCACACGUAAACAU 5'
```

Brassica S60 — S60-smi / S60-pro (D) — 16 / – / –
```
sRNA   3' ACAUUGAUAAAAUGAGCAUUUGUA 5'
          ~~~~~|||||x||||||||||||
target 5' CUAUUCUAUUUCACACGUAAACAU 3'
```

S60-smi / S44-SP11 (R) — 15 / – / –
```
sRNA   3' ACAUUGAUAAAAUGAGCAUUUGUA 5'
          ~~~~~|||||x||||||||||||
target 5' CUAUUCUAUUUCACACGUAAACAU 3'
```

S60-smi / S29-SP11 (R) — 15 / – / –
```
sRNA   3' ACAUUGAUAAAAUGAGCAUUUGUA 5'
          ~~~~~|||||x|||||||||||
target 5' CUAUUCUAUUUCACACGUAAACAU 3'
```

S60-smi / S40-SP11 (R) — 15 / – / –
```
target 5' ACAUUGAUAAAAUGAGCAUUUGUA 5'
          ~~~~~|||||x||||||||||||
sRNA   3' CUAUUCUAUUUCACACGUAAACAA 3'
```

S60-smi / S60-SP11 (H) — 15 / – / –
```
target 5' ACAUUGAUAAAAUGAGCAUUUGUA 3'
          ~~~~~|||||x|||||||||||~
sRNA   3' CUAUUCUAUUUCACACGUAAACAA 5'
```

S60-smi / S44-SP11 (D) — 15 / – / –
```
target 5' ACAUUGAUAAAAUGAGCAUUUGUA 5'
          ~~~~~|||||x|||||||||||||
sRNA   3' CUAUUCUAUUUCACACGUAAACAU 3'
```