Polycomb Repressive Complex 2 antagonizes linker DNA methylation and chromatin

compaction in *Arabidopsis thaliana*

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<u>Abstract</u>

In plants and mammals, DNA methylation is a hallmark of transposable element (TE)

sequences that contributes to their epigenetic silencing. In contrast, histone H3 lysine 27

trimethylation (H3K27me3), which is deposited by the Polycomb Repressive Complex 2

(PRC2), is a hallmark of repressed genes. Nevertheless, there is a growing body of evidence for

a functional interplay between these pathways. In particular, many TE sequences acquire

H3K27me3 when they lose DNA methylation and it has been proposed that PRC2 can serve as

a back-up silencing system for hypomethylated TEs. Here, we show in the flowering plant

Arabidopsis thaliana that hundreds of TEs gain H3K27m3 in the mutant *ddm1*, which is

defective in the maintenance of DNA methylation specifically over TE and other repeat

sequences. Moreover, this gain depends solely on CURLY LEAF (CLF), which is one of two

otherwise partially redundant H3K27 methyltransferases active in vegetative tissues. Finally,

our results challenge the notion that PRC2 can be a compensatory silencing system for

hypomethylated TEs, as the complete loss of H3K27me3 in *ddm1 clf* double mutant plants was

not associated with further reactivation of TE expression nor with a burst of transposition.

Instead, *ddm1 clf* plants exhibited a partial suppression of *ddm1* molecular phenotypes with

with TE silencing, chromatin recompaction and hypermethylation of linker DNA compared to

ddm1. Thus, we have uncovered a novel role for PcG in antagonizing both chromatin

compaction and linker DNA methylation at pericentromeric TEs, which could be particularly

important during the reproductive stage, when TE become hypomethylated in the pollen and

the endosperm.

Introduction

DNA methylation is an epigenetic mark involved in the stable silencing of transposable

elements (TEs) as well as the regulation of gene expression in plants and mammals. When

present over TE sequences, it is usually associated with the di- or trimethylation of histone H3

lysine 9 (H3K9me2/H3K9me3) and, in plants, positive feedback loops between the two marks

exist, which maintain TE sequences in the heterochromatic state (Johnson *et al*, 2002; Du *et al*,

2015). In *A. thaliana*, DOMAINS REARRANGED METHYLASE 2 (DRM2) establishes DNA

methylation in all three sequences contexts (i.e. CG, CHG and CHH) in a pathway referred to

as RNA-directed DNA methylation (RdDM) that involves small RNAs (Cao & Jacobsen, 2002;

Chan, 2004). Maintenance of DNA methylation over TEs is achieved by the combined and

context-specific action of RdDM (CHH methylation), CHROMOMETHYLASES 2 and 3

(CMT2 and CMT3, for CHH and CHG methylation, respectively) (Zemach *et al*, 2013; Stroud

et al, 2014) and METHYLTRANSFERASE1 (MET1) (CG methylation) (Kankel *et al*, 2003).

In addition, the SNF2 family chromatin remodeler DECREASE IN DNA METHYLATION 1

(DDM1) is necessary for DNA methylation of most TE sequences in all cytosine sequence

contexts.

In contrast to DNA methylation, histone H3 lysine 27 trimethylation (H3K27me3), which is

targeted by the highly conserved Polycomb Group (PcG) proteins, in particular Polycomb

Repressive Complex 2 (PRC2), is a hallmark of transcriptional repression of protein-coding

and microRNA genes in plants as well as in animals (Marasca *et al*, 2018; Förderer *et al*, 2016;

Chica *et al*, 2017; Prete *et al*, 2015) ; it is thought to act by promoting a local compaction of the

chromatin that antagonizes the transcription machinery (Prete *et al*, 2015) in order to maintain

transcriptional silencing (Holoch & Margueron, 2017). Thus, H3K27me3 and DNA

methylation are generally considered as mutually exclusive chromatin marks.

Nonetheless, there is a growing body of evidence of an interplay between the two silencing

pathways. In particular, in both plants and mammals, many TE sequences gain H3K27me3

upon their loss of DNA methylation (Mathieu *et al*, 2005; Deleris *et al*, 2012; Saksouk *et al*,

2014; Reddington *et al*, 2013). Moreover, in the filamentous Neurospora, H3K27me3 is

redistributed from gene to TE-rich constitutive heterochromatin when the heterochromatic

mark H3K9me3 or the protein complexes that bind to it are lost (Basenko *et al*, 2015).

The fact that H3K27me3 can mark TE sequences upon their demethylation led to the idea that

PcG could serve as a back-up silencing system for hypomethylated TEs (Deleris *et al*, 2012).

Consistent with this notion, subsequent work in mammals showed that H3K27me3 re-
established the repression of thousands of hypomethylated TEs in embryonic stem cells
subjected to rapid and extensive DNA demethylation (Walter *et al*, 2016).

In a previous study, we provided evidence supporting a role of PcG in the transcriptional
silencing of *EVD* (Zervudacki *et al*, 2018), an *A. thaliana* retroelement of the *ATCOPIA93*
family that is tightly controlled by DNA methylation and which transposes in plants mutated
for the chromatin remodeler *DDM1* (Tsukahara *et al*, 2009). We observed that silencing of *EVD*
is dependent on both DNA methylation and H3K27me3, which, at this locus, depends on the
SET-domain protein CURLY LEAF (CLF) (Zervudacki et al., 2018). Whether the dual control
observed at *EVD* is also present at other plant TEs is unknown.

In the present work, we integrated genetics, epigenomics and cell imaging to show that
numerous TEs gain H3K27me3 in response to *ddm1*-induced loss of DNA methylation. We
demonstrate also that this gain is mediated by CLF, with no role for the SET-domain H3K27
methyltransferase SWINGER (SWN), which is also active in vegetative tissues and otherwise
partially redundant with CLF (Chanvivattana *et al*, 2004; Wang *et al*, 2016; Yang *et al*, 2017).
Unexpectedly, the combination of *ddm1* and *clf* mutations was not associated with further
reactivation of TE expression or transposition as compared to *ddm1,* except for *EVD*. Instead
there was partial recompaction of heterochromatin in the double mutant. Accordingly, we also
observed DNA hypermethylation in *ddm1 clf* versus *ddm1,* prominently in linker DNA,
indicating that in the absence of *DDM1* activity, H3K27me3 antagonizes DNA methylation and
heterochromatin formation.

Hundreds of hypomethylated TEs gain H3K27me3 in *ddm1*

We previously showed that in *met1* mutants impaired for CG methylation, hundreds of TEs
gain H3K27me3 methylation in Arabidopsis (Deleris *et al*, 2012). While *met1* and *ddm1*
mutants are both globally hypomethylated, the later, in contrast to the former, affects almost
exclusively TE and other repeat sequences, and in the three sequence contexts. Thus, the *ddm1*
mutant appeared to be a more relevant background to directly explore the interplay between
DNA methylation and Polycomb at TE sequences and we conducted a H3K27me3 ChIP-seq
experiment in this mutant. Like in *met1*, hundreds of TEs showed increased accumulation of
H3K27me3 in *ddm1* (**Figure 1A-C**). A stringent subset of 672 TEs showed no H3K27me3
ChIP-seq signal in wild-type plants and significantly gained H3K27me3 over their full length
in *ddm1* (**Figure 1D**). Moreover, the vast majority of those 672 TEs are located in
pericentromeric regions (**Figure 1E**) and were included in the subset of TEs that gain

Figure 1. A mutation in _DDM1_ leads to a gain of H3K27me3 on some heterochromatic TEs.
(**A**) Representative genome browser view of H3K27me3 levels in a 100 kb heterochromatic region of chromosome 1 in wild-type (WT) and two biological replicates (BR) of _ddm1_ (blue bar: TE; orange bar: gene). (**B,C,D**) H3K27me3 enrichment in WT, _ddm1_-BR1 and _ddm1_-BR2 over TEs located in euchromatin (**B**), heterochromatin (**C**) and TEs with a significant positive fold change (FC) of H3K27me3 in _ddm1_ (Pval<0,1 ; Log 2FC>2) (**D**). The upper graph shows the mean enrichment of H3K27me3 over a given TE subset; the corresponding heatmap below ranks them from top to bottom according to the average enrichment in all genotypes. (**E**) Chromosomal distribution of the 672 TEs that significantly gain H3K27me3 (Pval<0,1 ; Log2FC>2) and the 61 TEs that significantly lose H3K27me3 in _ddm1_ (Pval<0,1 ; Log2FC<-2). (**F**) Table showing the occurences of Polycomb Response Elements (PRE) (Xiao et al., 2017) among the 672 TEs with a gain of H3K27me3 in _ddm1_. (**G**) Graph showing the proportion of TEs (TEs with a gain of H3K27me3 in _ddm1_ compared to heterochromatic TEs) with a given PRE.

H3K27me3 in *met1* (Deleris *et al*, 2012) (**Figure supplement 1A**). Four major TE super

families were overrepresented among the 672 TEs (LTR/Gypsy, LTR/Copia, DNA/En-Spm,

DNA/others) (**Figure supplement 1B**), suggesting the existence of sequence-specific targeting.

Indeed, PRC2 can be targeted to specific genes by the recognition of short sequence motifs

(Xiao et al., 2017). Consistent with this motif-based targeting, we detected a significant

enrichment of the Telobox, CTCC, GA-repeat and AC-rich motifs in the 672 TEs compared to

the rest of the heterochromatic TEs (**Figure 1F-G**). These results suggest the presence of an

instructive mechanism of PRC2 recruitment at TEs with particular motifs used as nucleation

sites. In addition, the detection of continuous blocks of H3K27me3, in particular on

chromosomes 1 and 4 (**Figure supplement 1C**), may suggest that, once nucleated, H3K27me3

domains spread over entire TE sequences and even beyond, into nearby TEs, in a fashion similar

to what was described at genic sequences (Yang *et al*, 2017; Wang *et al*, 2016).

The gain of H3K7me3 over hypomethylated TEs depends on CLF

To test whether CLF is required for the gain of H3K7me3 over TEs we performed a second set

of ChIP-seq experiments in *ddm1 clf*. Because total levels of H3K27me3 are strongly reduced

in both *clf* and *ddm1 clf* mutants (**Figure supplement 2A**) compared to wild-type, we spiked-

in exogenous Drosophila chromatin in the chromatin extracts for normalization (Orlando *et al*,

2014). Levels of H3K27me3 at genes were similar between *ddm1 clf* and *clf* mutant (**Figure**

supplement 2B), consistent with *DDM1* affecting TE and other repeat sequences specifically

(Lippman *et al*, 2004). Conversely, the gain of H3K27me3 observed over TEs in *ddm1* was

completely abolished in *ddm1 clf* (**Figure 2A-C**). Together, these results show that deposition

of H3K27me3 at most TEs in *ddm1* is fully dependent on *CLF*. This is in contrast with the well-

established, partial dependency of H3K27me3 deposition at genes on CLF (Wang *et al*, 2016;

Yang *et al*, 2017), which has been proposed to be due to a specialization of this factor in

mediating amplification and spreading of H3K27me3 marks after their establishment by SWN

(Yang *et al*, 2017). Thus, at least over *ddm1*-dependent hypomethylated TEs, CLF is required

for the nucleation, and perhaps, additionally, spreading of H3K27me3.

TE activation in *ddm1* is partially suppressed in *ddm1 clf*

We previously described the phenotype of *ddm1 clf* plants at the rosette stage (4.5 weeks-old).

By observing the plants at the seedling stage (15 days-old), we could observe additional

phenotypes in two out of three independent *ddm1 clf* lines (chlorosis in one line, growth arrest

in another) that segregated 1:3 and thus evoked the segregation of recessive mutations (**Figure**

Figure 2. The gain of H3K27me3 in *ddm1* is completely lost in *ddm1 clf*.
(**A**) Genome browser view of H3K27me3 levels on the same region as Figure 1 (**B**) H3K27me3 enrichment in *ddm1* and two *ddm1 clf* replicates over TEs with a H3K27me3 domain in *ddm1* with corresponding heatmap ranking TEs according to the H3K27me3 mean value. (**C**) Metagene representing H3K27me3 enrichment in *ddm1*-BR3, *ddm1 clf*-BR1 and *ddm1 clf*-BR2 of the 672 TEs previously shown to gain H3K27me3 in *ddm1.*

3A). We previously showed that there is an enhanced accumulation of *ATCOPIA93* mRNAs in

ddm1 clf double mutant as compared to *ddm1* (Zervudacki et al., 2018), thus we hypothesized

that these segregating phenotypes were caused by the transposition of TEs activated in *ddm1*

clf.

To test whether *ATCOPIA93* activity is increased and whether additional copies of this TE

family accumulate in *ddm1 clf*, we performed Southern blot analysis (**Figure 3B**) using a probe

specific of *ATCOPIA93 EVD/ATR* (*ATR* is an almost identical copy of *EVD*). In the wild-type

as well as the *ddm1* and *clf* single mutants, we could only observe one copy of *EVD* and *ATR*.

By contrast, we observed linear extrachromosomal DNA in all the *ddm1 clf* double mutant lines

tested (progenies of individual F2), consistent with previous results (Zervudacki *et al*, 2018).

In addition, in two out of three double mutant lines, we detected numerous additional bands

corresponding to *EVD/ATR* new insertions (**Figure 3B**), indicating that transposition occurs in

the double mutant, although to various extents which may reflect different dynamics of

mobilization following the initial event (Quadrana *et al*, 2019). Pyrosequencing performed on

the mutants showed that *ATCOPIA93* DNA (extrachromosomal and integrated) was mostly

contributed by *EVD* (**Figure 3C**). Thus, DNA methylation and H3K27me3 act in synergy to

negatively control *EVD* activity and prevent its transposition, in accordance with the dual

control they exert on its transcription (Zervudacki *et al*, 2018). To test whether more TEs are

activated in *ddm1 clf*, we performed TE-sequence capture (Quadrana *et al*, 2016), which

enables sensitive detection of new TE insertions at the genome wide-level, in about 100

seedlings of wild-type, *ddm1* (2nd generation inbred mutants) and *ddm1 clf* (F3 progenies). No

new insertions were detected for any of the 250 TEs tested in this manner, except for *EVD*,

which had accumulated more copies in *ddm1 clf* than in *ddm1* (**Figure 3D**)*,* although this

difference was not statistically significant in average — this was presumably because the *ddm1*

clf line (#1), where only ecDNA accumulates, was included in the experiment along lines #2

and #3 (**Figure supplement 3A**).

To investigate further the relationship between H3K27me3 and TE silencing, we performed

RNA-seq experiments in three and four biological replicates of *ddm1* and *ddm1 clf*,

respectively. In all *ddm1*, about a thousand TEs (929) were upregulated, the large majority of

which (865) did not show a significant gain of H3K27me3 marks in this background. We found

that a similar (*ddm1 clf*-BR3/4) or even lower (*ddm1 clf*-BR1/2) number of TEs were

transcriptionally active in *ddm1 clf* compared to *ddm1* (**Figure 3E**) in keeping with the lack of

enhanced transposition in *ddm1 clf*. Moreover, among the 1957 TEs that lose H3K27me3 in

ddm1 clf, we found only 14 TEs that were upregulated in all *ddm1 clf* lines versus *ddm1* (**Figure**

Figure 3. Transposons activation in *ddm1* and *ddm1 clf*.
(**A**) Representative picture of 15 days-old *ddm1 clf* F3 seedlings coming from two independent F2 lines; the white arrows show two different phenotypes segregating 1:3, growth arrest (left) and chlorosis (right) respectively. (**B**) Southern blot analysis on a pool of leaves (8 rosettes for each genotype), using an *ATCOPIA93* probe that recognizes both *EVD* and *ATR* copies; epiRIL454 (Mari-Ordonez et al., 2013) was used as a positive control for activation of *ATCOPIA93* and three independent *ddm1 clf* lines were tested. (**C**) Qualitative analysis of genomic DNA by pyrosequencing. The position interrogated corresponds to the discriminating SNP between *EVD* (C/G) and *ATR* (A/T) and the % indicated represent the % of G (*EVD*, white bar) or T (*ATR*, grey bar) (**D**) Heatmap showing the transposition rates of 40 potentially mobile TEs as determined by TE-capture (Quadrana et al., 2016) using 100 seedlings for each genotype. (**E**) Table showing up-regulated and down-regulated TEs compared to WT as identified by RNA-seq analyses on seedlings. (**F**) Venn diagram showing the overlap between TEs with a loss of H3K27me3 in *ddm1 clf* and TEs up-regulated in the 4 different *ddm1 clf* lines.

3F). Thus, with the exception of *EVD* case study, which supports our initial hypothesis of a

dual epigenetic control by DNA methylation and H3K27me3, it appears that *ddm1*-induced

activation of TEs is partially suppressed in *ddm1 clf*, with some heterogeneity between the lines

used.

H3K27me3 antagonizes *ddm1*-induced chromatin decompaction and DNA methylation

loss

To understand the mechanisms underlying the antagonism between DNA methylation and

CLF-dependent H3K27me3 deposition, we performed cytogenetic analyses on nuclei from

single and double mutants for *DDM1* and *CLF*. Chromocenters formation and DNA compaction

were unchanged in *clf* but strongly impacted in *ddm1* as previously published (Soppe *et al*,

2002). By contrast, they were only partially affected in the double mutant, indicating that

H3K27me3 loss induces chromatin recompaction specifically in the *ddm1* background (**Figure**

4A). In addition, immunofluorescence experiments showed that this chromatin recompaction

was associated with the recovery of H3K9me2 distribution (**Figure 4B**).

In order to assess whether chromatin recompaction associates with DNA methylation gain, we

compared the DNA methylomes of *ddm1* and *ddm1 clf* mutant plants. Consistent with the

cytogenetic analyses, hundreds of loci exhibited higher DNA methylation in all three sequence

contexts in *ddm1 clf* compared to *ddm1* (**Figure 5A**), with gains being most pronounced at

CHH sites and variable from one line to the other (**Figure 5B**). Furthermore, TEs with increased

CG methylation in *ddm1 clf* versus *ddm1* were slightly but statistically significantly less

expressed compared to those that did not show such an increase in this mutant background

(**Figure supplement 5A**).

To test whether H3K27me3 antagonizes *ddm1*-induced DNA methylation loss in *cis*, we

searched for differential methylated regions (DMRs) using non-overlapping 100bp windows.

There were few hyper DMRs and these tended to be inconsistent across replicates, suggesting

that they were the result of stochastic variation of DNA methylation (Becker *et al*, 2011).

Moreover, TEs showing clear DNA methylation gain in *ddm1 clf* compared to *ddm1* (**Figure**

5A) were not identified by our DMR detection. Visual inspection of these DNA

hypermethylated TEs revealed that increased DNA methylation was in fact confined to short

sequences (~20bp), typically separated by ~140 bp (**Figure supplement 5B**). Indeed, we

identified 1208 TE-specific short (20bp) sequences with higher CG methylation in *ddm1 clf*

compared to *ddm1*. These small-size hyper-DMRs were distributed over 759 TEs, most of

which (N= 571) are pericentromeric, and they were associated with a reduction of H3K27me3

Figure 4. The double mutant *ddm1 clf* displays a partial recompaction of DNA and more visible H3K9me2 compared to *ddm1*.
(**A**) Representative picture of DAPI stained nuclei extracted from 50 fixed 10 days-old Arabidopsis seedlings for each genotype (three independent F3 lines from *ddm1 clf*) (**B**) Representative picture of DAPI staining and H3K9me2 immunodetection of nuclei extracted from 50 fixed 10 days-old Arabidopsis seedlings for each genotype.

levels (**Figure 5C,** H3K27me3 profiles centered on CG-DMRs), consistent with an antagonism between H3K27me3 and DNA methylation. Among these 759 TEs hypermethylated in *ddm1 clf* compared to *ddm1*, 61 showed a significant gain of H3K27me3 in *ddm1:* this is a significant 3.8 representation factor enrichment ($p<3.644e^{-19}$) compared to the number of TEs in the genome that would be both CG-hypermethylated (in *ddm1 clf*) and H3K27me3-marked (in *ddm1*) by chance. This observation suggests that there is a direct antagonism between H3K27me3 marks in *ddm1* and DNA methylation gains in *ddm1 clf,* at least at a subset of pericentromeric TEs. However, we do not exclude an additional and/or alternative indirect antagonism mediated for instance by H3K27me3-dependent chromatin decompaction.

Finally, the ~140 bp distance between DMRs at discrete loci —which is roughly the size of nucleosomal DNA— prompted us to test whether DNA hypermethylation in *ddm1 clf* versus *ddm1* occurred preferentially between nucleosomes. Analysis of publicly available MNase data obtained for *ddm1* (Lyons & Zilberman, 2017) indicated that the periodic DNA hypermethylation in *ddm1 clf* associate with linker DNA (**Figure 5C)**, consistent with *in vitro* and *in vivo* data showing that inter-nucleosomal DNA is more accessible to DNA methyltransferases than DNA bound to the nucleosome core particle (Lyons & Zilberman, 2017). These findings suggest therefore that CLF-dependent H3K27me3 marks limit the accessibility of DNA methyltransferases to linker DNA.

Discussion

In this study, we have shown that hundreds of TEs gain H3K27me3 when hypomethylated by *ddm1*. This phenomenon has two important mechanistic implications, the first one being that DNA methylation can globally exclude H3K27me3. We and others previously showed that loss of DNA methylation induced by another hypomethylation mutant, *met1*, rather than loss of H3K9me2, allows for H3K27me3 deposition at TEs (Mathieu *et al*, 2005; Deleris *et al*, 2012). However, another commonality between *met1* and *ddm1* mutants is the decompaction of their DNA, which could also contribute to favor the access of PRC2 to chromatin, a possibility that could be further investigated by identifying and using genetic backgrounds impaired for chromatin compaction but not DNA methylation. The second mechanistic implication of our observations is that PRC2 can be recruited to TEs. Here, we have characterized the transposons marked by H3K27me3 in *ddm1* and found some motifs recently described in the genic targets of PRC2 and functionally involved in the recruitment of this complex at genes (Xiao *et al*, 2017). Thus, while some TEs could be marked by H3K27me3 due to spreading from adjacent

Figure 5. Periodic hypermethylation is observed in *ddm1 clf* compared to *ddm1*.
(**A**) Representative genome browser view of H3K27me3 and methylation of a TE (blue bar) showing hypermethylation in *ddm1 clf* compared to *ddm1*. (**B**) Meta-TEs showing average DNA methylation levels on all TEs, in the three different contexts, in all the genotypes of interest, with a zoom on *ddm1* and *ddm1 clf* methylated TEs. (**C**) Plot showing average DNA methylation, H3K27me3 and nucleosome occupancy (every peak in *ddm1* Mnase data shows the position of a nucleosome) 1Kb upstream ans downstream of "small" CG DMRs (20bp) in the three different sequence contexts.

PcG targets as it is the case for *EVD* (Zervudacki et al., 2018), the presence of these motifs as
well as the localization of many TEs far away from any H3K27me3 domain, suggests a
sequence-based, instructive mode of *cis*-recruitment for PRC2. Alternatively, this recruitment
could also be promoted by the enrichment of H2A.Z over demethylated TEs (Zilberman *et al*,
2008) since a mechanistic link was found between H2A.Z and H3K27me3 (Carter *et al*, 2018).
These non mutually exclusive scenarios will deserve future investigation.

Subsequently, the compound mutant of DNA methylation and PRC2, *ddm1 clf*, uncovered
unexpected and interesting molecular phenotypes. First, PRC2 targeting of TEs in the *ddm1*
background depends almost completely on CLF. This requirement of CLF contrasts with the
partial dependency on CLF and SWN at H3K27me3 marked genes, where SWN plays a major
role, presumably in nucleating H3K27me3 (Yang *et al*, 2017). A possible explanation for this
result could be that the transcription factors implicated in the nucleation of H3K27me3 (Xiao
et al, 2017) at TEs in *ddm1* recruit a FIE-EMF2-PRC2 complex that does not contain SWN.
Secondly, and from a functional point of view, our results challenge the idea that PRC2 acts as
a back-up silencing system in the absence of DNA methylation. Rather, they are reminiscent of
the observations made in Neurospora where the gain of H3K27me3 in constitutive
heterochromatin domains is not compensatory for gene silencing upon loss of H3K9
methylation (or its reader HP1) but rather leads to growth defects and altered sensitivity to
genotoxic agents (Basenko *et al*, 2015). In our study, in *ddm1 clf*, the loss of H3K27me3 did
not enhance the number of *ddm1*-activated TEs. Instead, molecular phenotypes of partial *ddm1*
suppression were observed: same or lesser number of activated TEs and partial compaction of
DNA compared to *ddm1* associated with hypermethylation of the DNA in the three sequence
contexts, which presumably results in transcriptional TE silencing. Thus, H3K27me3 appears
to antagonize DNA methylation and compaction in a *ddm1* background, which is reminiscent
of the described role of PcG in promoting hypomethylation of DNA methylation valleys in
mammals (Li *et al*, 2018). We propose two possible mechanisms for partial hypermethylation
of *ddm1 clf* compared to *ddm1* that could be explored in future work. Firstly, it is likely that in
ddm1 mutant, like in *met1* (Zilberman *et al*, 2008), H2AZ is incorporated at TEs. H2AZ is
known to be antagonistic to DNA methylation and given that a mutation of *CLF* leads to loss
of H2AZ (Carter *et al*, 2018), this may favor the reestablishment of DNA methylation.
Secondly, we envision that DNA compaction in *ddm1 clf* promotes DNA methylation in a non-
specific manner thus providing an explanation for the widespread DNA hypermethylation of
TEs compared to *ddm1*. In a non-exclusive manner, small RNAs could also participate in either
of these processes. What favors DNA compaction upon loss of H3K27me3, and, accordingly

what antagonizes chromocenters formation in *ddm1* in the presence of H3K27me3 is also

unclear. It could be linked to the replacement of H3.1, the substrate for ATRX5 and 6 and

H3K27 monomethylation (a modification associated with chromatin condensation) (Jacob *et*

al, 2009, 2010) by H3.3 and H3K27me3 in *ddm1*, and the subsequent reincorporation of H3.1

in the absence of CLF. In this respect, the *ddm1 clf* mutant represents a valuable system to test

the causal and functional relationship between DNA methylation and DNA compaction, which

is elusive.

Finally, our work in *ddm1 clf* mutant could have important implications for biological situations

where TEs are naturally hypomethylated, DDM1 absent and/or chromatin decompacted. First,

in the pollen vegetative nucleus, where thousands of TEs are DNA-demethylated due to the

activity of DEMETER glycosylases (Ibarra *et al*, 2012), where DDM1 is not detected (Slotkin

et al, 2009). TE activation in this cell type is contributed by chromatin decondensation and

DNA demethylation-dependent and independent mechanisms (He *et al*, 2019) and has been

proposed to reinforce silencing in the gamete through production of small RNAs that could

transit into the sperm cell (Slotkin *et al*, 2009; Calarco *et al*, 2012; Ibarra *et al*, 2012; Martínez

et al, 2016). Whether PRC2 targets some of the demethylated TE-sequences and whether this

could antagonize chromatin decondensation and modulate TE activation and small RNA

production in this context is an open question. In this scenario, the mechanisms we have

described in this work could play an important role in the reinforcement of silencing in the

gametes and its modulation. Similarly, in the endosperm, the nutritive terminal tissue

surrounding the seed and derived from the central cell, the chromatin is less condensed than in

other types of nuclei (Baroux *et al*, 2007). In addition, thousands of TEs of the maternal genome

are naturally hypomethylated forming primary imprints and many of these hypomethylated TEs

are targeted by PRC2 forming secondary imprints (Weinhofer *et al*, 2010; Rodrigues &

Zilberman, 2015). These secondary imprints cause, for instance, the silencing of the maternal

PHERES locus while the cognate paternal allele is activated (Makarevich *et al*, 2008; Rodrigues

& Zilberman, 2015). The interplay between DNA methylation and PRC2 that we have

evidenced could thus be particularly relevant in this cell type and modulate the imprinting of

some genes. Finally, an exciting possibility is that PRC2 could target transposons after their

mobilization and integration and this could slow down the establishment of their DNA

methylation-based transgenerational and stable epigenetic silencing.

Material and methods

Plant material and growth condition

14 day-old seedlings grown on MS plates and with an 8h light/16h dark photoperiod were used throughout the study except for Southern Blot where analyses were performed on 5-week-old rosette leaves grown in the same conditions.

Mutant lines

We used the *ddm1-2* allele (Vongs *et al*, 1993) and the *clf-29* allele (Bouveret *et al*, 2006). Double *ddm1 clf* mutants were generated by crossing the above-mentioned mutants (Zervudacki *et al*, 2018). Experiments were performed on F3 progenies using *ddm1*-2 2nd generation plants as controls.

SDS-PAGE and Western blotting

Chromatin-enriched protein fraction was extracted from 10-days-old seedlings as described in (Bourbousse *et al*, 2012), quantified by standard BCA assay and 20 µg were resolved on SDS/PAGE. After electroblotting the proteins on a Polyvinylidene difluoride (PVDF) membrane, H3K27me3 analysis was performed using an antibody against the H3K27me3 (Millipore, 07-449) at a 1:1000 dilution and a secondary antibody against rabbit coupled to HRP (Promega W4011) at a 1:20 000 dilution.

BS-seq libraries

DNA was extracted using a standard CTAB protocol. Bisulfite conversion, BS-seq libraries and sequencing (paired-end 100 nt reads) were performed by BGI Tech Solutions (Hong Kong). Adapter and low-quality sequences were trimmed using Trimming Galore v0.3.3. Mapping was performed on TAIR10 genome annotation using Bismark v0.14.2 (Krueger & Andrews, 2011) and the parameters: --bowtie2, -N 1, -p 3 (alignment); --ignore 5 --ignore_r2 5 --ignore_3prime_r2 1 (methylation extractor). Only uniquely mapping reads were retained. The methylKit package v0.9.4 (Akalin *et al*, 2012) was used to calculate differential methylation in 100 bp or 20bp non-overlapping windows (DMRs). Significance of calculated differences was determined using Fisher's exact test and Benjamin-Hochberg (BH) adjustment of p-values (FDR<0.05) and methylation difference cutoffs of 40% for CG, 20% for CHG and 20% for CHH. Differentially methylated windows within 100bp or 20bp of each other were merged to

form larger DMRs. 100bp windows with at least six cytosines covered by a minimum of 6 (CG

and CHG) and 10 (CHH) reads in all libraries were considered.

RNA extraction and 3'quant-seq (RNA) analyses

Total RNA was extracted using Trizol followed by clean-up on RNeasy Plant Mini kit columns

(Macherey-Nagel). 3'end librairies were prepared using the QuantSeq 3' Fwd library prep kit

(Lexogen). Libraries were sequenced to acquire 150 bp-reads on a NextSeq Mid output flow

cell (Fasteris, Geneva). Expression level was calculated by mapping reads using STAR v2.5.3a

(Dobin *et al*, 2013) on the *A. thaliana* reference genome (TAIR10) with the following

arguments --outFilterMultimapNmax 50 --outFilterMatchNmin 30 --alignSJoverhangMin 3 --

alignIntronMax 10000. Counts were normalized and annotations (genes and TEs) were declared

differentially expressed between samples using DESeq2 (Love *et al*, 2014).

Chromatin immunoprecipitation and ChIP-seq analyses

ChIP experiments were conducted in two to four biological replicates of WT, *ddm1*, *clf* and

ddm1 clf using an anti-H3K27me3 antibody (Millipore, 07-449). For each biological replicate,

two IPs were carried out using 80 μg of Arabidopsis chromatin mixed with 5 μg of Drosophila

chromatin, as quantified using BiCinchoninic Acid assay (Thermo Fisher Scientific). DNA

eluted and purified from the two technical replicates was pooled before library preparation

(Illumina TruSeq ChIP) and sequencing (Illumina sequencing single-reads, 1 × 50 bp) of the

resulting input and IP samples performed by Fasteris (Geneva, Switzerland).

Reads were mapped using Bowtie2 v2.3.2 (Langmead & Salzberg, 2012) onto TAIR10

Arabidopsis thaliana and Drosophila melanogaster (dm6) genomes. Normalization factor (Rx)

for each sample using spiked-in *D. melanogaster* chromatin was calculated (Nassrallah *et al*,

2018) using the following formula Rx = r/Nd_IP, where Nd_IP corresponds to the number of

reads mapped on *D. melanogaster* genome in the IP and r corresponds to the percentage of

Drosophila-derived reads in the input. Genomic regions significantly marked by H3K27me3

were identify using MACS2 (Zhang *et al*, 2008) and genes or TEs overlapping these regions

were obtained using bedtools (Quinlan & Hall, 2010). The number of reads over marked genes

or TEs were normalized by applying the normalization factor and differentially marked genes

between samples were calculated using DESeq2 (Love *et al*, 2014).

TE-sequence capture

TE sequence capture was performed on around 100 seedlings in all cases except *ddm1-clf*#23 NOchl were only 12 seedlings were recovered. Seedlings were grown in plates under control (long-day) conditions and genomic DNA was extracted using the CTAB method (Murray & Thompson, 1980). Libraries were prepared as previously described (Quadrana *et al*, 2019) using 1μg of DNA and TruSeq paired-end kit (Illumina) following manufacturer instructions. Libraries were then amplified through 7 cycles of ligation-mediated PCR using the KAPA HiFi Hot Start Ready Mix and primers AATGATACGGCGACCACCGAGA and CAAGCAGAAGACGGCATACGAG at a final concentration of 2μM. 1μg of multiplexed libraries were then subjected to TE-sequence capture exactly as previously reported (Quadrana *et al*, 2016). Pair-end sequencing was performed using one lane of Illumina NextSeq500 and 75bp reads. About 42 million pairs were sequenced per library and mapped to the TAIR10 reference genome using Bowtie2 v2.3.2 (Langmead & Salzberg, 2012) with the arguments --mp 13 --rdg 8,5 --rfg 8,5 --very-sensitive. An improved version of SPLITREADER (available at https://github.com/LeanQ/SPLITREADER) was used to detect new TE insertions. Briefly, split-reads as well as discordant reads mapping partially on reference and consensus TE sequences (obtained from RepBase update) were identified, soft clipped and remapped to the TAIR10 reference genome using Bowtie2 (Langmead & Salzberg, 2012). Putative insertions supported by at least one split- and/or discordant-reads at each side of the insertion sites were retained. Insertions spanning centromeric repeats or coordinates spanning the corresponding donor TE sequence were excluded. In addition, putative TE insertions detected in more than one library were excluded to retain only sample-specific TE insertions.

Southern blot

DNA from 5 week-old rosette leaves was extracted using a standard CTAB protocol. 1,5 μg of genomic DNA was digested overnight with SSpI restriction enzyme. The digestion was run on a 1% agarose gel, transferred to Hybond N+ membranes, blocked and washed according to manufacturer instructions (GE Healthcare). Membranes were probed with a PCR product (corresponding to a fragment of *EVD* GAG sequence,) radiolabeled with alpha 32P-dCTP using the Megaprime DNA Labeling System. EVD PCR product was generated with the same primers as in (Marí-Ordóñez *et al*, 2013).

Pyrosequencing

ATCOPIA93 DNA from gDNA (same extraction as used in Southern Blot) was analyzed as in (Zervudacki *et al*, 2018).

Cytology

DAPI staining on fixed nuclei was performed as described in Bourbousse et al., 2015 using 10-days-old chopped cotyledons to avoid developmental defects due to accumulation of transposition. For immuno-detection, a primary antibody against H3K9me2 (Abcam 1220) at a 1:200dilution was used, followed by a secondary antibody (Alexa Fluor 488 mouse) at a 1:400 dilution and DAPI staining. Images were acquired with a confocal laser scanning microscope and processed using ImageJ (https://imagej.nih.gov/ij/).

Data availability

Sequencing data has been deposited in the European Nucleotide Archive (ENA) under project PRJEB34363.

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Sup Fig.1A Overlap between TEs marked by H3K27me3 in *met1* (Deleris et al., 2012) and TEs with a gain of H3K27me3 in *ddm1.*

Sup Fig.1B Distribution of the different TE families among the TEs that significantly gain H3K27me3 in *ddm1* compared to the family distribution of all TEs.

Sup Fig.1C Genome browser view of chromosomes 1 and 4 showing the two largest H3K27me3 domains in *ddm1* (BR=biological replicate).

Sup Fig.2A Immuno detection of H3K27me3 in chromatin extracts (H4 is used as a loading control), two biological replicates are shown.

H3K27me3 profiles on genes marked at least in one genotypes (N=6571)

Sup Fig.2B Metagene showing H3K27me3 levels on genes marked in at least one genotype

Sup Fig.3A Number of *EVD* neo-insertions revealed by TE-capture in several lines per genotype, all derived from a cross between *ddm1* and *clf* mutants.

Sup Fig.5A Graph showing expression changes of TE hypermethylated or not in *ddm1 clf* in different genetic backgrounds.

Sup Fig.5B Representative view of a TE with a periodic DNA hypermethylation every 140bp; the bottom panel is a zoom of the top pane and the double arrow represents a distance of 140bp.

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