

# Cloning and DNA sequence of the 5'-exonuclease gene of bacteriophage T5

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The nucleotide sequence of the *BalI-PstI* fragment of T5 DNA, 1347 bp in length, coding for 5'-exonuclease (D15 gene), has been determined. A coding region of the gene contains 873 bp and is preceded by a typical Shine-Dalgarno sequence. The D15 gene belongs to a cluster, consisting of at least 3 genes, in which a termination codon of a preceding gene overlaps an initiation codon of the following one. The sequence contains an open reading frame for 291 amino acid residues. The molecular mass of the 5'-exonuclease calculated from the predicted amino acid sequence is 33400 Da.

*Bacteriophage T5    DNA sequencing    D15 gene    IS1 element*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

During infection of *Escherichia coli* by bacteriophage T5, the gene D15-encoded nuclease is produced which belongs to early proteins [1]. Enzymatic studies of purified D15 nuclease showed that the enzyme possesses 5' → 3' exonuclease activity on both single- and double-stranded DNA and can function (in vitro) also as a T5 DNA specific endonuclease [2]. This product performs 2 functions essential for the phage T5 life cycle: it is necessary for T5 DNA replication [3] and initiation of late transcription [4]. However the exact role of 5'-exonuclease in this process is still obscure. The availability of this protein in the transcription-replication enzyme complex makes it possible to suggest its necessity for the formation and maintenance of the structural integrity of the complex or for the creation of a modified DNA template which serves as a site of nucleation for all the components of the complex [5]. In such a case, the effect of the D15 gene on the turn-on of late genes may be of an indirect character.

This paper deals with the nucleotide sequence of the T5 DNA *BalI-PstI* fragment, 1347 bp in

length, coding for 5'-exonuclease (D15 gene), and the amino acid sequence determined from its structure.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Construction and analysis of recombinant plasmids pBR322-T5 and pUC-T5 were performed as in [6,7]. The nucleotide sequence was determined according to Maxam and Gilbert [8]. Recombinational analysis of plasmids by marker rescue with amber mutants of T5 was performed as in [9]. Assay of exonucleolytic activity of T5 D15 nuclease in the crude cell extract and purification of 5'-exonuclease were as described in [2].

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Cloning of the bacteriophage T5 *PstI*-J fragment and mapping of intact genes D14 and D15 as well as a part of the D12 gene on this fragment were reported earlier [9].

To obtain material for determining the D15 gene sequence, we have selected from our collection of recombinant molecules 2 clones giving hybridiza-

tion with the *Pst*I-J fragment of bacteriophage T5. Restriction enzyme digestion and Southern blot analyses of the plasmids as well as partial determination of the primary structure showed that cloned T5 DNA corresponds to the *Pst*I-J fragment but contains an IS1 element inserted into p602 and p627 plasmids (fig.1).

The results of the recombinational analysis of these plasmids by the marker rescue method were generally the same as in [9], the only difference being that we showed additionally the presence of the D13 gene in the fragment and arrived at a different conclusion as to the size of gene D14. According to our results, a protein of 70 kDa, found in the maxi-cell system, corresponds to the D13 gene product and not to D14 as expected [10] (details of this part of our work will be published separately).

The left part of the cloned fragment was subcloned in the form of *Xba*I, *Bgl*II, *Hpa*I and *Bsp*RI subfragments in pUC9 and pUC19 plasmids, sequenced according to the Maxam-Gilbert method and analysed additionally by a marker rescue technique.

The nucleotide sequence of the *Bal*I (*Bsp*RI)-*Pst*I fragment is shown in fig.2. Analysis of this structure for the open reading frame showed that the major one is found only in the r-strand of DNA and corresponds to the protein consisting of 291

amino acid residues (33.4 kDa). This agrees well with 35 kDa reported by Moyer and Rothe [2] after the partial purification of 5'-exonuclease. The Shine-Dalgarno sequence AGGA is located 12 nucleotides upstream from the initiation codon ATG. There are no sequences typical of the consensus-promoter structure of *E. coli* or early promoters of bacteriophage T5 [11]. Moreover, in addition to gene D15, the sequence shown in fig.1 contains the open reading frames upstream and downstream from the D15 gene. The open reading frame, preceding the gene of 5'-exonuclease, corresponds to the C-terminal end of the D14 gene product, since it was shown that it is plasmid pBB3, not pXX12, which is efficient in the analysis for the D14 am H6b marker rescue. Therefore, the D14 am H5b amber mutation of bacteriophage T5 is located within the *Bal*I-*Xba*I fragment, 135 bp in length. Another open reading frame, adjacent to the C-terminal end of the D15 gene has the Shine-Dalgarno sequence and corresponds to the N-terminal end of the DX gene not identified hitherto, since no amber mutations have been described for the region in the bacteriophage T5 genetic map between the D15 and D17 genes.

All 3 genes are organized in such a way that a termination codon of the preceding gene overlaps an initiation codon of the following one. Similar

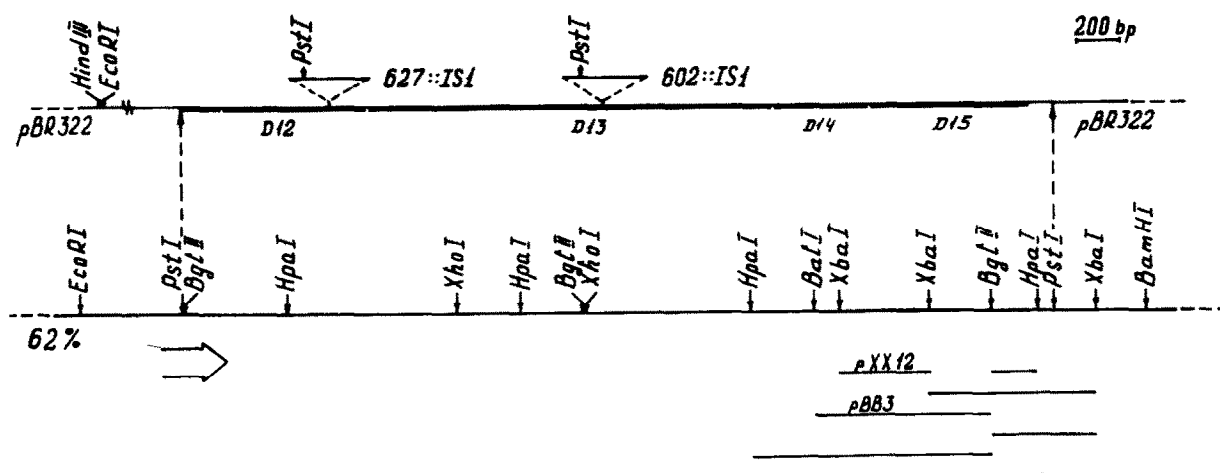


Fig.1. Restriction map of phage T5 *Pst*I-J fragment. In the upper part, the orientation of the cloned fragment in plasmid pBR322, the location of D12-D15 genes on the fragment and sites of IS1 element insertion in plasmids 627 and 602 are shown. In the lower part there are fragments which have been subcloned into plasmids pUC9 and pUC19 for the following determination of the nucleotide sequence. The arrow denotes the direction of gene transcription of this part of the genome.

BAL I  
 TGGCCAGAGCCACGGACTGAAAGGTGACATCTACCTTCCACCAAAAGTGACACAT 57  
 TAGTAATAATCGCTTCGAAGTTAAGTGGTATAAAGATGATAATATATCAAGTAATTTATTTAA 120  
 TGTGGTGAATCCACTCTAGAGAGTGGTGGCAGCAGTGCACGTGAAGTGAACAGATGAA 183  
 CTCCAAACCTGCATTATATTCAAAAACACAGAGGACAGTGGTTAATAGCTTTGGATAGCTC 246  
 AGACCCATGGTGGACAACTTAATGAGTCGTACCCATATGTTTAAATAAGAAAGACATGGA 309  
 AATCGTAATGGTTTATTTGAGCCCTGGCTACATCATGATCTGTTGAGGACTTAATTAATA 372  
 ATG AGT AAA TCC TGG GGA AAA TTT ATT GAA GAG GAG GAA GCT GAA ATG 420  
 MET SER LYS SER TRP GLY LYS PHE ILE GLU GLU GLU GLU ALA GLU MET 16  
 GCT TCC CGT CGT AAT CTA ATG ATT GTC GAT GGA ACT AAC TTA GGC TTT 468  
 ALA SER ARG ARG ASN LEU MET ILE VAL ASP GLY THR ASN LEU GLY PHE 32  
 CGC TTC AAA CAT AAC AAT AGT AAA AAA CCA TTT GCC TCA AGT TAT GTT 516  
 ARG PHE LYS HIS ASN ASN SER LYS LYS PRO PHE ALA SER SER TYR VAL 48  
 TCA ACT ATT CAA TCT CTG GCA AAA TCC TAC TCT GCC AGA ACT ACG ATT 564  
 SER THR ILE GLN SER LEU ALA LYS SER TYR SER ALA ARG THR THR ILE 64  
 GTT CTA GGT GAT AAG GGA AAA TCC GTA TTT GGT CTA GAA CAT CTA CCA 612  
 VAL LEU GAT ASP LYS LYS SER VAL PHE ARG LEU GLU HIS LEU PRO 80  
 GAG TAT AAA GGT AAT CGT GAT GAA AAG TAC GCA CCA CGT ACG GAA GAG 660  
 GLU TYR LYS GLY ASN ARG ASP GLU LYS TYR ALA GLN ARG THR GLU GLU 96  
 GAG AAA GGC CTA GAT GAG CAG TTC TTT GAG TAT TTT AAG GAT GCT TTT 708  
 GLU LYS ALA LEU ASP GLU GLN PHE PHE GLU TYR LEU LYS ASP ALA PHE 112  
 GAG TTG TGT AAA ACT ACA TTC CCA ACT TTT ACC ATT CGT GGT GTA GAA 756  
 GLU LEU CYS LYS THR THR PHE PRO THR PHE THR ILE ARG GLY VAL GLU 128  
 GCA GAC GAT ATG GCA GCT TAT ATT GTT AAG CTC ATC GGC CAT CTT TAT 804  
 ALA ASP ASP MET ALA ALA TYR ILE VAL LYS LEU ILE GLY HIS LEU TYR 144  
 GAT CAC GTT TGG CTA ATA TCT ACA GAT GGT GAG TGG GAT ACT TTA TYA 852  
 ASP HIS VAL TRP LEU ILE SER THR ASP GLY ASP TRP ASP THR LEU LEU 160  
 ACG GAT AAA GTT TCT CGT TTT TCT TTC ACA ACA CGT CRT GAG TAT CAT 900  
 THR ASP LYS VAL SER ARG PHE SER PHE THR THR ARG ARG GLU TYR HIS 176  
 CTT CGT GAT ATG TAT GAA CAT CAT AAT GTT GAT GAT CTT GAG CAG TTT 948  
 LEU ARG ASP MET TYR GLU HIS HIS ASN VAL ASP ASP VAL GLU GLN PHE 192  
 ATC TCC CTG AAA GCA ATT ATG GGA GAT CTA GGA GAT AAT ATT CGT CGT 996  
 ILE SER LYS LYS ALA ILE MET GLY ASP LYS GLY ASP ASN ILE ARG GLY 208  
 GTT GAA GGA ATA GGA GCA AAA CGC GGA TAT AAT ATT ATT CGT GAG TTT 1044  
 VAL GLU GLY ILE GLY ALA LYS ARG GLY TYR ASN ILE ILE ARG GLU PHE 224  
 GGT AAC GTA CTG GAT ATT ATT GAT CAG CTT CCA CTG CCT GGA AAG CAG 1092  
 GLU ASN VAL LEU ASP ILE ILE ASP GLN LEU PRO LEU PRO GLY LYS GLN 240  
 AAA TAT ATA CAG AAC CTG AAT GCA TCG GAA GAA CTG CTT TTC CGA AAC 1140  
 LYS TYR ILE GLN ASN LEU ASN ALA SER THR GLU GLU LEU LEU PHE ARG ASN 256  
 TTG ATT CTG GTT GAT TTA CCT ACC TAC TGT GTC GAT GCT ATT GCT GCT 1188  
 LEU ILE LEU VAL ASP LEU PRO THR TYR CYS VAL ASP ALA ILE ALA ALA 272  
 GTA GGT CAA GAT GTC TTA GAT AAG TTT ACA AAA GAT ATT TTG GAG ATT 1236  
 VAL GLY GLN ASP VAL LEU ASP LYS PHE THR LYS ASP ILE LEU GLU ILE 288  
 GCA GAA CAA TGA TTAATTAAGTTAACTCATCCAGATTGTATGCTTAAGATTGGATCT 1295  
 ALA GLU GLN \*\*\* 891  
 GAAGATGCCGACGATGATGATCTGCGAGATTCTTTGCTACTAATCTCTGAG 1347  
 PST I

Fig.2. DNA structure of the *BalI-PstI* fragment and the derived amino acid sequence of 5'-exonuclease of phage T5. Underlined is the Shine-Dalgarno sequence.

structures were reported for the genes of bacteriophage T7 [12], bacteriophage  $\lambda$  [13] and *E. coli* [14]. The availability of open reading frames throughout the sequence is indicative of the fact that the promoter of this group of genes is located outside the sequenced region. Preliminary results show that the DX gene is the last in this cluster of genes and a strong potential terminator occurs in the region of *Bam*HI site.

The study of codon usage in a number of genes [15] revealed a non-random pattern of their distribution, the sequence of 5'-exonuclease of phage T5 being no exception in this respect (table

Table 1

Codon usage in the 5'-exonuclease gene of bacteriophage T5

	T	C	A	G	
T	Phe 10	Ser 5	Tyr 9	Cys 2	T
	Phe 6	Ser 5	Tyr 3	Cys 0	C
	Leu 5	Ser 2	stop	stop	A
	Leu 4	Ser 1	stop	Trp 3	G
C	Leu 4	Pro 2	His 6	Arg 12	T
	Leu 1	Pro 0	His 1	Arg 2	C
	Leu 7	Pro 4	Gln 4	Arg 1	A
	Leu 7	Pro 0	Gln 5	Arg 0	G
A	Ile 16	Thr 6	Asn 7	Ser 3	T
	Ile 2	Thr 2	Asn 5	Ser 0	C
	Ile 3	Thr 5	Lys 15	Arg 1	A
	Met 6	Thr 3	Lys 6	Arg 0	G
G	Val 9	Ala 7	Asp 22	Gly 7	T
	Val 1	Ala 2	Asp 2	Gly 1	C
	Val 4	Ala 8	Glu 13	Gly 9	A
	Val 2	Ala 1	Glu 11	Gly 1	G

1). There is an obvious preference for the use of codons ending with T and A residues, which might reflect a high AT content of the phage T5 DNA. On the whole, 71.4% codons of the D15 gene end in T and A residues, with the greatest preference for codons ending in T residues (43.6%). Similar data obtained on prokaryotic phages on the whole and ribosomal genes of *E. coli* amount to 39 and 30%, respectively [16].

An important factor for codon usage and translation efficiency is the availability of no less than 20 tRNA genes in phage T5 [17,18]. Comparison between codons used in the gene D15 structure and anticodons of phage T5 tRNAs sequenced previously [19] shows that tRNAs evidently do not play an important role in the increase in efficiency of this gene translation. It is noteworthy that half of the phage T5 tRNAs studied have G in the first position anticodons, though C is the least occurring residue in the third position codons (11.3% of all the codons). One can suppose that a greater conformity between codons and anticodons coded for by phage T5 should be expected in the case of late genes since tRNA genes belong, similarly to gene D15, to early genes and their active expression coincides in time.

Cell-free extracts obtained from *E. coli* cells containing initial plasmids and their deletion derivatives exhibit increased 5'-exonuclease activity. Moreover, from *E. coli* W 3350 (p627) cells the enzyme was isolated identical to exonuclease from T5-infected cells. Therefore, early genes of phage T5 can also be transcribed by non-modified RNA polymerase. However the level of expression of the D15 gene cloned in pBR322 was not sufficiently high to promote the production of large quantities of homogenous protein necessary for a comprehensive study of its structure and function. We believe that knowledge of the D15 gene structure will help to construct a plasmid which can provide a high and regulated expression of the 5'-exonuclease gene of phage T5.

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