

Bisubstrate Kinetics and Processivity Measurements on *Escherichia Coli* DNA Ligase A

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This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of
Portsmouth.

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January 2012

Acknowledgements

I first must thank my husband Overio for his support and encouragement throughout the years. Even when he has been thousands of miles away, he has always given me the strength to continue with my Ph.D. I also want to thank my son Ben, who has been my inspiration since his arrival in 2009.

I would like to thank my Director of Studies Dr Darren Gowers, mainly for the encouragement he has given me, especially when real life has been difficult, I have always been able to depend on his understanding and support. I thank you for all the time you have dedicated to getting me to finish this thesis. Thank you for believing in me, I will always appreciate it.

There are so many others that I want to thank, my family and my friends, too many to mention. Thank you for all your advice and guidance throughout my Ph.D.

I finally thank Dr Richard Bowater and his group who kindly gave up their time and taught me how to make the Ligase I used in this thesis.

Abstract

DNA ligases are essential repair enzymes required for maintaining genomic integrity in cells. The first ligase to be discovered was *Escherichia coli* DNA ligase; a 670 amino acid, 74 kDa, NAD⁺ dependent ligase. This work reports a series of studies into the behaviour of His-tagged *E.coli* ligase.

Order-of-addition studies on singly-nicked oligoduplexes under steady state conditions revealed that ligase undergoes an obligatory off-step from the DNA after sealing a break in a phosphodiester strand before readenylation in solution. These results corroborate the findings of Lehman that a sequential model is the normal mode of Ligase operation. Ligase affinity for its substrates NAD⁺ and DNA were 3.5 μ M and 3.5 nM respectively.

Length dependency studies on singly-nicked PCR substrates revealed that when two different DNA lengths were in the same solution, the initial association rate was always faster for the longer DNA substrate. For example, 40 bp versus 902 bp gave initial rate values 0.06 nM/min (40 bp) and 0.28 nM/min (902 bp); increasing the length 22 fold increased the initial rate 4 fold. This hints that Ligase uses DNA flanking a nick to locate its specific site.

Processivity studies were achieved to determine the one- or three-dimensional pathway of Ligase using doubly-nicked DNA. Nicks were either directly repeated (on the same DNA strand) or inverted (opposite strands). Results revealed Ligase is weakly processive; 32% processive. However, when beta-clamp and gamma-loader were added to the reaction processivity significantly increased.

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Abbreviations and notations

Units, prefixes, parameters

1D, 3D	one or three-dimensional motion
Å	Angstrom (1×10^{-10} m)
A_{260} , A_{280}	UV absorbance at 260 or 280 nm
bp	base pair(s)
Da	Daltons (kDa)
f_p	fractional processivity
g	gram (mg, μ g, ng)
hr, min, sec	hour(s), minutes(s), second(s)
k , k_{cat}	rate constant (s^{-1} , min^{-1})
K_d , K_m	dissociation/Michaelis constant (μ M, nM)
l	litres(s) (ml, μ l)
M	molar concentration (mM, μ M, nM)
psi	pounds per square inch (15 psi \sim 1 kg/cm ²)
rpm	revolutions per minute
RT	room temperature
T_m	melting temperature (50% annealing)
V_{max}	maximal enzyme velocity

Reagents

AMPS	ammonium persulphate
BSA	bovine serum albumin
DTT	dithiothreitol
DW	distilled water (>16 M Ω m)
<i>E. coli</i>	<i>Escherichia Coli</i> strain HB101
EDTA	ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid
EtBr	ethidium bromide
EtOH	ethanol
IPTG	isopropyl- β -D-thiogalactopyranoside

SDS	sodium dodecyl sulphate
TAE	Tris-acetate EDTA buffer
TBE	Tris-borate EDTA buffer
TE	Tris-EDTA buffer
TEMED N,N,N',N'	tetramethylethylenediamine
Tris	2-amino-2-hydroxymethylaminomethane

Techniques

EMSA	electrophoretic mobility-shift assay
HPLC	high-pressure liquid chromatography
PAGE	polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis
PCR	polymerase chain reaction

Nucleic acids

³³ P	³³ P-labelled phosphorous atom
A, T, C, G	adenine, thymine, cytosine, guanine
AMP	adenosine 5'-monophosphate
ATP	adenosine 5'-triphosphate
DNA	deoxyribonucleic acid
dNTP	deoxynucleotide triphosphate
dsDNA	double-stranded DNA
MCS	multiple-cloning site
NAD ⁺	Nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (oxid)
RNA	ribonucleic acid

Enzymes

β-clamp	<i>E.coli</i> beta-sliding clamp
BRCT	BRCA1-C-terminal domain
HhH	Helix-turn-helix
His-tag	N-terminal polyhistidine tag
LigA	<i>E.coli</i> DNA ligase A
OB	oligomer binding
PNK	polynucleotide kinase
Zn	zinc finger motif

Plasmids

Details of all plasmids used in this work, including sequences, are given in the Appendices (page 175 onwards). Brief details are given below:

- pL1 Plasmid with one BbvCI site cloned into the multiple cloning site of pUC19. This was used to make PCR fragments containing a single nick (Chapters 3 and 4).
- pL2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 Plasmids with two BbvCI sites (21, 30, 36, 40, 45, 75 b apart respectively), derived from plasmid pL1. Following PCR, each BbvCI site was cut in one strand only to give a defined DNA nick. These Ligase substrates had two directly-repeated nicks, so were termed dir substrates. These plasmids were used in processivity experiments (Chapter 5).
- pL5, 7, 9, 11, 13 Plasmids with two BbvCI sites (24, 30, 34, 39, 69 b apart respectively), derived from plasmid pL1. Following PCR, each BbvCI site was cut in one strand only to give a defined DNA nick. These Ligase substrates had two inverted repeated nicks, so were termed inv substrates. These plasmids were used in processivity experiments (Chapter 5).
- pRB20 *EcoLigA* over-expression plasmid to produce His-tagged DNA ligase. This plasmid was a kind gift from Dr Richard Bowater (UEA).

Declaration

Whilst registered as a candidate for the above degree, I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award.