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**COMPARISONS OF GENOMIC AND PATHOLOGICAL FEATURES AMONG BARLEY  
AND GRAPEVINE INFECTING-ISOLATES OF ARABIS MOSAIC VIRUS**

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### Summary

A new virus disease, named barley yellowing, has been identified in the 90's in Switzerland on winter barley. This disease has been associated to a strain of *Arabis mosaic virus*. In this study, virulence properties, host range, genetic composition and organization, sequences were determined and compared to known ArMV isolates.

### INTRODUCTION

In the 1990's, striking yellows has been observed on the winter barley varieties Express and Mannitou, in five locations in the Swiss cantons of Fribourg and Bern (Gugerli *et al.*, 1996). This disease, propagated by ectoparasitic nematodes, differs from the aphid-transmissible barley yellow dwarf disease, widespread in Switzerland, by the absence of mortality in the cereal crops. Biological, serological analyzes and partial nucleotide sequences indicate that a nepovirus, *Arabis mosaic virus-barley strain* (ArMV-ba), is the etiological agent.

ArMV belongs to the genus *Nepovirus* within the family *Comoviridae*. The genome of ArMV consists of two single-stranded positive-sense RNAs (ssRNA), RNA1 and RNA2 displaying a covalently attached small viral genome-linked protein (VPg) at their 5' end and a poly(A) stretch at their 3' end. Each genomic RNA encodes for a polyprotein from which functional proteins are released by proteolytic processing. A third component of variable length, characterized as the satellite RNA3, can be observed in some cases (Mayo & Robinson, 1996). ArMV, which is specifically transmitted by the ectoparasitic nematode *Xiphinema diversicaudatum*, has a wide natural host range including a number of economically important crop plants: grapevine, raspberry, strawberry, cucumber, sugar beet, lettuce, apple, cherry, rose, hop, petunia, narcissus, lilac, privet, etc. (Murant *et al.*, 1990).

ArMV-ba is the only ArMV strain known to naturally infect a graminaceous host. It causes more severe symptoms on *Chenopodium* and *Nicotiana spp* than most of the ArMV isolates from grapevine. The aim of our study was to collect data about the genome organization and pathological features of this nepovirus-infecting Gramineae. To address this issue, viral RNAs were extracted, cDNA were synthesized, amplified by PCR, subsequently cloned and sequenced. Biological assays were performed through grapevine natural inoculation by *in vitro* heterologous grafting and nematodes transmission.

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

ArMV-ba was propagated on *Chenopodium quinoa* by mechanical inoculation. Viral RNA extractions were performed from purified virus particles and analyzed on denaturing formaldehyde gel.

To determine the genetic organization of ArMV-ba, total RNA was extracted from infected leaves of *C. quinoa* using RNeasy Plant Mini Kit (Qiagen, GmbH, Hilden, Germany). Viral RNA1 and -2 were characterized by RT-PCR with random, or specific and degenerate primers designed from available ArMV sequences. The 5' and 3' ends of the RNAs were determined using 5'/3' RACE kit (Roche Diagnostics, Germany). DNA products were cloned into pGEM-T plasmid (Promega Corporation, USA). Nucleotide sequences obtained from ABI 373 sequencing device, were then analyzed using the Vector NTI (Invitrogen, USA) bioinformatics software package. The program SiScan was used to confirm suspected recombination events (Gibbs *et al.*, 2000).

*In vitro* heterologous grafting was done between scions from healthy grapevines cuttings of *V. berlandieri* x *V. riparia* cvs Kober 5BB and rootstocks from *C. quinoa* previously mechanically inoculated with ArMV-ba as described by Belin *et al.*, 2001. After 3 weeks of contact, grapevines were separated from *C. quinoa* stems. After 6 weeks of *in vitro* culture, grapevine plants were acclimatized to greenhouse conditions. The presence of ArMV in these grapevines was assessed by DAS-ELISA with specific anti-ArMV  $\gamma$  globulins and by Immuno-Capture-RT-PCR (IC-RT-PCR).

The nematode transmission assay relies on a two-steps approach. First, aviruliferous *X. diversicaudatum* feeding on roots of ArMV-ba infected *C. quinoa* plants, were allowed for an acquisition access period of 6 weeks. Then, infected *C. quinoa* plants were removed and replaced by healthy bait grapevine for virus inoculation. At the end of the inoculation access period (6 weeks), the presence of virus was monitored in the bait grapevine roots by DAS-ELISA and IC-RT-PCR.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Viral ssRNAs analyzed by denaturing gel electrophoresis, exhibited three distinct bands. Lengths of genomic RNA1 (7.4 kb) and -2 (3.8 kb) are in accordance with those of other ArMV isolates (Dupuis *et al.*, 2008,

Imura *et al.*, 2008, Loudes *et al.*, 1990, Vigne *et al.*, 2008, Wetzel *et al.*, 2001; 2004). The smallest band of about 0.3 kb could correspond to the small circular satellite RNA3 already described for hop-infecting ArMV isolate (Kaper *et al.*, 1988), thus differing from most ArMV satellites of c.a. 1.1 kb long (Liu *et al.*, 1990; Wetzel *et al.*, 2005). The sequence of the ArMV-ba RNA3 satellite exhibits a length of 301 nucleotides (nt) and shows 81,1 % identity with RNA3 of ArMV-hop strain, which is 300 nt long.

To determine complete sequences of RNA1 and -2, several overlapping DNA fragments were produced by RT-PCR. Several clones were sequenced from each cDNA fragment. Some of them showed nt identities around 90%, suggesting a strong complexity for genome organization of ArMV-ba. Indeed, the ArMV-ba genome harbors two RNA2 and three RNA1 molecules genetically distinct. Even if a doublet of RNA2 has been already described for the ArMV-S isolate (Loudes *et al.*, 1990), this is the first molecular characterization of a nepovirus encompassing multi RNA1 molecules.

The complete nt sequences of the two RNA2 molecules were 3811 and 3812 long. Both RNA2 sequences shared 93% identity. Each RNA2 contains a single open reading frame (ORF) encoding for a polyprotein P2 of a unique size of 1119 amino acids fitting with others P2 sizes encoded by the RNA2 of the ArMV isolates described by Dupuis *et al.* (2008), Imura *et al.* (2008), Loudes *et al.* (1990), Vigne *et al.* (2008) and Wetzel *et al.* (2001).

85 % of the full-length of the three RNA1 molecules was determined. The nt sequence comparisons pointed out variable regions (with 87% nt identity) and also regions displaying high level of identities (up to 98%).

Interestingly, two intra-specific recombination events were shown within the ArMV-ba RNAs: one that corresponds to a cross-over site within the RNA1-encoding putative helicase gene and another one within the RNA2-encoding coat protein gene. Recombination is a natural mechanism involved in genetic drift of plant viruses. It has been already described for RNA2 of *Grapevine fanleaf virus* (GFLV), a closely-related nepovirus also responsible for fanleaf disease of grapevine (Vigne *et al.*, 2004), but not yet for ArMV isolates. Our preliminary results indicate, for the first time, that recombination events could occur on RNA1 and -2 molecules of ArMV.

Complete sequence analyzes and phylogenetic relationships will be presented and discussed regardless of the genetic evolution and host adaptation of ArMV. A keypoint question to address, will be the ability of ArMV-ba isolate to infect grapevine, while keeping in mind its original genetic organization. Attempts to inoculate grapevine by *in vitro* heterologous grafting approach and by *X. diversicaudatum* transmission experiments will be also presented.

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