

1 **Dynamic regulation of HYL1 provides new insights into its multifaceted role in**  
2 **Arabidopsis**

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12 stability, *Arabidopsis thaliana*

13 **Running title:** Carboxyl-terminal of HYL1 regulates its cellular activities.

14

## 15 **Summary:**

16 MicroRNAs (miRNAs) are 21 to 24 nucleotide non-coding RNAs that regulate gene  
17 expression. Biogenesis of miRNAs is fine-tuned by specialized microprocessor complex, the  
18 regulation of which is being continuously understood. Recruitment of HYL1 to the  
19 microprocessor complex is crucial for accurate primary-miRNA (pri-miRNA) processing and  
20 accumulation of mature miRNA in *Arabidopsis thaliana*. HYL1 is a double-stranded RNA  
21 binding protein also termed as DRB1, has two double-stranded RNA binding domain at N-  
22 terminal and a highly disordered C- terminal region. Also, the biological activity of HYL1 is  
23 dynamically regulated through transition from hyperphosphorylation to hypophosphorylation  
24 state. HYL1 is known to be phosphorylated by a MAP kinase MPK3 and SnRK2. However,  
25 the precise role of its phosphorylation are still unknown. Recently, the stability of HYL1  
26 protein has been shown to be regulated by an unknown protease X. However, the identity of  
27 the protease and its molecular mechanisms are poorly understood. Here, we describe, three  
28 functionally important facets of HYL1, which provide a better picture of its association with  
29 molecular processes. First, we identified a conserved MPK3 phosphorylation site on HYL1  
30 and its possible role in the miRNA biogenesis. Secondly, the C-terminal region of HYL1  
31 displays tendencies to bind dsDNA. Lastly, the role of C- terminal region of HYL1 in the  
32 regulation of its protein stability and the regulation of miRNA biogenesis is documented. We  
33 show the unexplored role of C- terminal and hypothesize the novel functions of HYL1 in  
34 addition to miRNA biogenesis. We anticipate that the data presented in this study, will open a  
35 new dimension of understanding the role of double stranded RNA binding proteins in diverse  
36 biological processes of plants and animal.

## 37 **Introduction:**

38 MicroRNAs (miRNAs) are endogenous small regulatory RNA, known to regulate diverse  
39 functions during growth and development in both plants and animals (Reinhart et al., 2000;  
40 Voinnet et al., 2009; Rogers and Chen, 2013). In *Arabidopsis*, the biogenesis of mature  
41 miRNAs is tightly regulated by microprocessor complex consisting of HYPOPLASTIC  
42 LEAVES 1/Double-stranded RNA Binding protein (HYL1/DRB1) as one of the essential  
43 factor (Kurihara et al., 2006; Manavella et al., 2012). HYL1 along with Dicer-like 1 (DCL1)  
44 and SERRATE (SE) binds to the primary- and/or precursor-miRNA (pri-/pre-miRNA)  
45 structures and executes the accurate miRNA processing during miRNA biogenesis (Yang et  
46 al., 2006; Lobbes et al., 2006; Song et al., 2007; Dong et al., 2008). MicroRNA biogenesis is

47 very important in regulating various developmental and environmental responses of the plant,  
48 as *hyl1* mutant displays pleiotropic phenotype (Lu and Fedoroff, 2000). Post-translational  
49 regulation of HYL1 has recently gained much attention and it is known that the functions of  
50 HYL1 is regulated by the phosphorylation/dephosphorylation cycle (Manavella et al., 2012;  
51 Raghuram et.al. 2015; Yan et al., 2017; Su et al., 2017). It is known that HYL1/DRB1 are  
52 phosphorylated by mitogen-activated protein kinase-3 (MPK3) in Arabidopsis and rice  
53 (Raghuram et.al. 2015). MPK3 phosphorylation site on HYL1 as well as its biological  
54 significance is still not clear. It is also known that AtCPL1/2 (C-Terminal Phosphatase Like  
55 1/2) dephosphorylates HYL1 and regulates its functions in miRNA biogenesis (Manavella et  
56 al., 2012). Constitutive photomorphogenic 1 (COP1) protects HYL1 light-dark dependent  
57 manner (Cho et al., 2014). However, HYL1 phosphorylation and its role on HYL1 stability,  
58 its implications on light-dark regulation are still unknown. HYL1, as other dsRNA binding  
59 proteins possesses two double-stranded RNA binding domains (dsRBD) at its amino- (N-)  
60 terminal, which is responsible for interaction with miRNA transcript. However, the carboxyl-  
61 (C-) terminal region of HYL1 is being understood as of less importance in HYL1's functions  
62 (Wu et al., 2007; Yang et al., 2010; Liu et al., 2013; Baranauskė et al., 2015).

63 Here, we investigate the multifaceted role of HYL1/DRB1 by (i) domain fragmentation  
64 analysis, (ii) deciphering phosphorylation site by exploiting naturally occurring mutations in  
65 HYL1 orthologs and (iii) conditional subcellular localisation of HYL1. Our work also  
66 provides caution to the researchers who use the HYL1 antibody (Agrisera#AS06136) and its  
67 possible limitations to study the dynamically regulated HYL1 like proteins.

## 68 **Results and Discussion**

### 69 **MPK3 phosphorylates HYL1 at conserved sites**

70 To identify MPK3 phosphorylation site/s on HYL1, we generated the N- terminal (1-170 AA)  
71 and C- terminal (171-419 AA) constructs of HYL1, thus separating the RNA-binding  
72 domains fragment and the disordered C-terminal fragment (Fig. 1a). *In-vitro* phosphorylation  
73 assay using bacterially expressed AtHYL1N (1-170 AA), AtHYL1C (171-419 AA) and  
74 AtHYL1FL (Full-Length) indicated that AtMPK3 phosphorylates both N-terminal and C-  
75 terminal fragments as well as the full-length AtHYL1 protein (Fig. 1b). To further investigate  
76 the interaction specificity, we generated the fragmented constructs of the two RNA-binding  
77 domains (RBDs) at the N-terminal of HYL1 (AtHYL1R1 and AtHYL1R2). Yeast two-hybrid  
78 AD constructs harbouring AtHYL1FL, AtHYL1R1, AtHYL1R2, AtHYL1N and AtHYL1C

79 were used to determine the interaction specificity with AtMPK3. As shown in Fig. 1c,  
80 AtMPK3 interacts with all the analysed AtHYL1 fragments including the full-length, thus  
81 confirming our observations from *in-vitro* phosphorylation assay (Fig. 1b). Extending these  
82 observations to the previously known HYL1 interactors, CPL1/2 (Manavella et al., 2012) and  
83 SE (Baranauskė et al., 2015), and to analyse the observations in the context of the  
84 microprocessor complex, we performed a yeast two-hybrid assay using CPL1/2 and SE as  
85 baits. In addition to their observed interactions with full length HYL1 (Manavella et al.,  
86 2012; Fig. 1c), we found that CPL1/2 interacts with both N- and C-terminal regions of HYL1  
87 whereas SE specifically interacts with N-terminal region (Fig 1d and 1e). These observations  
88 clearly indicate that AtMPK3 phosphorylation sites as well as CPL1/2 dephosphorylation  
89 sites are present on both N- and C-terminal regions of AtHYL1.

90 Sequence analysis and comparison of the closest AtHYL1 orthologs in different Arabidopsis  
91 and other species revealed two interesting insights: (i) the two RBDs in the N-terminal region  
92 are highly conserved in all the analysed species whereas the extended C-terminal is not (Fig 2  
93 and Supp Fig. 1a) and (ii) the first RBD in all the analysed sequences contain a conserved  
94 ‘TP’ motif (Fig. 2, Supp Fig. 1a), that is a putative MAPK phosphorylation site (Sharrocks et  
95 al., 2000). This observation is in agreement with the conserved interactions between  
96 HYL1/DRB1 and MPK3 in Arabidopsis and rice (Raghuram et al., 2015) and interaction of  
97 CPL1/2 with HYL1. This indicated the high likelihood of the RBD1 ‘TP’ motif to be a  
98 conserved MPK3 phosphorylation site present in distantly related species (Supp Fig. 1b).

99 To investigate these aspects in more detail, we extended the observations to the monocot crop  
100 plant rice. We observed that one of the OsDRBs, OsDRB1-4 lacks the conserved ‘TP’ motif  
101 in its RBD1 (Supp Fig. 2a) and that T (Threonine) is replaced by L (Leucine). We exploited  
102 this naturally occurring mutation to investigate the phosphorylation site of MPK3 in RBD1.  
103 We generated the N- and C-terminal fragmented constructs of OsDRB1-1, OsDRB1-2 and  
104 OsDRB1-4 for bacterial expression and used the fragmented proteins in an *in-vitro*  
105 phosphorylation assay by OsMPK3. Excitingly, we observed the phosphorylation in both N-  
106 and C-terminal fragments of OsDRB1-1 and OsDRB1-2 and only in the C-terminal fragment  
107 of OsDRB1-4, but not in the N-terminal fragment (Fig. 3). These observations combined with  
108 yeast two-hybrid results (Fig. 1b and Fig. 1c) point out that the ‘TP’ motif in the RBD1 (T31  
109 of AtHYL1) is the MPK3 phosphorylation site conserved in distantly related species.

110

## 111 **The DNA binding properties of HYL1**

### 112 *The disordered and non-conserved C-terminal region of HYL1*

113 Earlier studies pointed out that the C-terminal repeat region has minimal biological functions  
114 (Wu et al., 2007). Our observation that MPK3 interacts and phosphorylates the non-  
115 conserved C-terminal region (Fig. 1b, Fig. 1c and Fig. 3) led us to question this assumption.  
116 Sequence analysis revealed the presence of non-conserved putative MAPK phosphorylation  
117 ‘TP’ motif in few of the analysed sequences but not all (Fig 2 and Supp Fig. 1a). In the  
118 sequences with the C-terminal ‘TP’ motifs, these motifs were present in different regions of  
119 the C-terminal domain (Fig 2 and Supp Fig. 1a). We hypothesize that the six C-terminal ‘TP’  
120 motifs present in AtHYL1 is responsible for its hyper- and hypo-phosphorylation status. Thus  
121 phosphorylation at multiple sites by MPK3 or other kinases, may accumulate the  
122 hyperphosphorylated isoform of HYL1 as reported earlier (Manavella et al., 2012).  
123 Dephosphorylation at any of these threonine residues by CPL1 may result into biologically  
124 active, hypophosphorylated HYL1. However, the absence of C-terminal repeats and ‘TP’  
125 motifs in other plant species and lesser number of 28 aa repeats in other members of  
126 Arabidopsis might hint to the evolutionary answers. It can be hypothesised that, during the  
127 evolution of these proteins, the C- terminal region has gone a very strict selection pressure by  
128 a series of elimination of repeats, one by one, as we can see their variable numbers in other  
129 Arabidopsis species (SI Fig. 1). Other possible explanation can be that the repeats region is  
130 duplicated several times in *A. thaliana*.

131 We asked, if there are any other proteins which are regulated by the phosphorylation-  
132 dephosphorylation cycle at repetitive regions by MAP kinases and phosphatases? We found a  
133 classical example of the CTD (C- terminal domain) repeats in RNA polymerase II (RNA pol  
134 II) in yeast, animals and plants. The heptad repeats (Y<sup>1</sup>S<sup>2</sup>P<sup>3</sup>T<sup>4</sup>S<sup>5</sup>P<sup>6</sup>S<sup>7</sup>) is present at the  
135 carboxyl terminal of the RNA pol II. The dynamic phosphorylation of two serine residues S<sup>2</sup>  
136 and S<sup>5</sup> has been observed in CTD repeats by MAP kinases ERK1/2 in human, yeast and  
137 *Xenopus laevis* Oocyte. In plants, MPK3 phosphorylates RNA pol II and regulates its activity  
138 (Bellier et al., 1997; Bonnet et al., 1999; Prelich et al., 2009; Glover-cutter et al., 2009; Zhang  
139 et al., 2016). The dephosphorylation of CTD by CPL1 is associated with transcription  
140 initiation by interaction of RNA pol II at the promoter with TATA binding proteins.  
141 Phosphorylation of CTD by MPK3 leads to disruption of preinitiation complex and transition  
142 to formation of elongation complex with other proteins. Hence the reversible phosphorylation

143 regulated by MAP kinase and CPL1 regulates the transcription process. These reports  
144 combined with the HYL1 literature (Manavella et al., 2012; Raghuram et al., 2014) points out  
145 that MPK3 and CPL1 are the regulators of HYL1 and RNA pol II, the two major regulators  
146 of RNA metabolism. The sharing of common regulators by these two major proteins,  
147 participating in the RNA metabolism may have some homologous role that is dependent on  
148 reversible phosphorylation. To analyse this proposed function, the carboxyl terminal of  
149 AtRPB1 (RNA polymerase II larger subunit 1) and AtHYL1 was further analysed for natural  
150 disorder regions in these proteins. The composition of amino acids in a protein makes  
151 naturally ordered/disordered regions on the protein surface which are proposed to participate  
152 in the protein –protein and protein – nucleic acid interactions (Jamsheer et. al., 2018). The *in-*  
153 *silico* analysis revealed that both proteins, HYL1 and RNA pol II have ordered regions in  
154 their N- terminals, however, C- terminal is highly disorder in both HYL1 (AtHYL1C) and  
155 AtRPB1 (1254 to 1839 amino acids includes CTD repeats, RBP1C) (SI Fig.3). We mutated  
156 the phosphorylation sites *in-silico* and analysed the C-terminal region of RNA pol II for its  
157 ordered/disordered properties. The mutated phosphorylation sites(phosphor-mimetic) display  
158 the changes in orderedness than the native versions. The dynamic phosphorylation sites are  
159 concentrated at the disordered regions at C- terminal which is true in case of AtRPB1 and  
160 AtHYL1. As the C-terminal repeats of both RNA binding proteins are phosphorylated by  
161 MPK3, we presume that AtHYL1C might function similar to the CTD repeats of AtRBP1.

### 162 *C-terminal region enhances DNA binding properties of HYL1*

163 The *in-silico* observations led us to hypothesize the comparable functions of the HYL1 C-  
164 terminal domain to that of RNA pol II CTD. HYL1 is known to recognise the dsRNA hairpin  
165 like structure that describes its specificity for secondary structure of RNA rather than the  
166 nucleotide specificity (Lu and Fedoroff, 2000). We argued that if the recognition is only  
167 dependent on the structure and not the sequence, then AtHYL1C might recognise the double-  
168 stranded DNA (dsDNA) hairpin loop. Such properties have been previously described and  
169 studied to function in a variety of processes (Hudson et al., 2014; Cassidy et al., 2002). To  
170 test this hypothesis, chemically synthesized hairpin forming single stranded DNA oligos (Fig.  
171 4a) were used for the electrophoretic mobility shift assay (EMSA) using AtHYL1-FL (full-  
172 length) and AtHYL1N protein. Surprisingly, we observed that AtHYL1-FL binds strongly to  
173 dsDNA hairpin loop than that of AtHYL1N (Fig. 4b). This observation is in contrast to the  
174 previous reports, where the authors have shown the positive EMSA interaction of HYL1 with

175 dsRNA but not with dsDNA (Lu and Fedroff., 2000). Interestingly, most of the studies since  
176 the first report used dsRNA and there is no evidence for HYL1 interaction with dsDNA.

177 The DNA binding ability of the full-length HYL1 protein suggests a possible role of its C-  
178 terminal repetitive regions (Fig. 4b). Judging by the amount of unbound free probe, we  
179 observe that the deletion of C- terminal domain in HYL1 protein drastically reduced its  
180 binding ability with dsDNA hair pin loop as compared the HYL1-FL (Fig. 4b). This clearly  
181 suggests that C-terminal disorder regions have the propensity for recognition for  
182 dsRNA/dsDNA together with the N-terminal double stranded RNA binding domains  
183 (dsRBD). This observation can be further substantiated by the previous reports where N-  
184 terminal of HYL1 was shown to be sufficient for complimenting the *hyl1* mutant phenotype  
185 and resumes the miRNA biogenesis (Wu et al.,2007). Therefore, even in the absence of C-  
186 terminal, the AtHYL1N binds the hairpin loop (Yang et al., 2010) but the strength of binding  
187 is low as compare to full length AtHYL1FL, even at higher concentrations of protein (Fig.  
188 4c).

189 While analysing the HYL1 interaction with dsDNA hairpin loop by EMSA, we observed a  
190 DNA- protein complex lower to the intense band at lower concentration of protein (Fig. 4b,  
191 lane 2). When we analysed the same experiment on higher percent gel, this complex was  
192 further resolved very clearly (Fig 4d, lane 2-7). We initially, thought it to be an intermediate  
193 complex. Dimerization analysis of the ssDNA also showed the probability for double –  
194 stranded DNA (dsDNA) formation. Thus to analyse the interaction with other forms of DNA  
195 i.e. dsDNA and ssDNA we again performed the EMSA with full length HYL1 protein (Fig.  
196 4b). Result clearly showed the interaction of HYL1 with both forms of DNA (Fig. 4d, lane 8 -  
197 11). These interactions were further strengthened by increasing the concentration of salt  
198 (NaCl) which established that these interactions are very strong (Fig. 4d, lane 12 - 15). The  
199 interaction of HYL1 with dsDNA and other forms lead us to suggest that HYL1 may have  
200 unknown multiple functions in nucleic acid metabolism and its regulation. One possible role  
201 could be its participation during the transcription of miRNA or mRNA primary transcript by  
202 interaction with DNA and other proteins at promoter regions along with the transcription  
203 initiation complex and RNA pol II as discussed above.

#### 204 **HYL1 stability and localisation**

205 *The unknown protease X is a Trypsin-like protease*

206 Recent studies show that an unknown protease regulates HYL1 stability by proteolytic  
207 degradation in the cytosol and that COP1 protects HYL1 from degradation (Cho et al., 2014)  
208 However, the identity of this protease and its implication on miRNA biogenesis is still  
209 unknown. Trypsin digestion has long been used to map the functional domains of proteins  
210 (Lorence et al., 1988 and Zvaritch et al., 1990). Trypsin is an endopeptidase and has higher  
211 specificity for peptide cleavage on C- terminal side of arginine (R) and lysine (K). The  
212 presence of acidic amino acid at either side of target residues slow down the rate of  
213 hydrolysis and merely presence of proline (P) on carboxyl side abolishes the cleavage. Our  
214 *in-silico* analysis of HYL1 protein sequence identified potential trypsin cleavage sites at the  
215 junction of the AtHYL1N and AtHYL1C region (bipartite NLS) and in every 28aa repeat  
216 region of AtHYL1C (Supp. Fig. 4). Further, the molecular weight of HYL1 cleaved product  
217 is known to be around 25 kDa (Cho et al., 2014), which matches exactly with *in-silico*  
218 prediction. We therefore, performed time-course trypsin digestion of bacterially expressed  
219 AtHYL1FL-His (Fig. 5a). Very interestingly, we observed two bands with time-dependent  
220 increase in intensity, which migrate at about 25 kDa. Time-course digestion reactions with  
221 AtHYL1N-His were unaltered, pointing out the stability of AtHYL1N from trypsin digestion.  
222 The lower band of AtHYL1FL-His digestion products matches the size of AtHYL1N-His,  
223 suggesting the upper band is AtHYL1C-His. Further, we tested the degradation of  
224 AtHYL1FL-His using protein extract from wildtype *A. thaliana* Col-0 tissue and  
225 AtHYL1N-His as reaction controls. As seen in Fig. 5b, we observed time-course dependent  
226 digestion of AtHYL1FL-His as observed by the increase in intensity of the band at 25 kDa,  
227 with matching size of unaltered AtHYL1N-His (Fig. 5b). These observations suggest that the  
228 unknown protease X (Cho et al., 2014) that cleaves AtHYL1 can presumably be a trypsin-like  
229 protease (TLP). To further validate our observations, western blotting was performed using  
230 anti-HYL1 antibody (Agriser) using the trypsin digestion reaction products, again by using  
231 AtHYL1N-His as reaction controls. To our surprise, we observed time-dependent decrease in  
232 intensities of both AtHYL1FL-His and its degraded products at 25 kDa (Fig. 5c). The  
233 absence of signal from AtHYL1N-His sample wells (Fig. 5c) prompted us to uncover that the  
234 anti-HYL1 antibody was specific to the C-terminal region of HYL1  
235 ([https://www.agrisera.com/en/artiklar/hyl1-hyponastic-leave-phenotype-ds-rna-binding-](https://www.agrisera.com/en/artiklar/hyl1-hyponastic-leave-phenotype-ds-rna-binding-protein.html)  
236 [protein.html](https://www.agrisera.com/en/artiklar/hyl1-hyponastic-leave-phenotype-ds-rna-binding-protein.html)) and does not recognise AtHYL1N-His. Furthermore, time-course trypsin  
237 digestion of upto five hours confirmed that longer incubation leads to decrease in intensities  
238 of the 25 kDa bands pointing out the digestion of the C-terminal region, where the potential  
239 trypsin cleavage sites were identified in each 28aa repeats (Fig. 5d). These results support,



240 HYL1 is degraded by TLP into N- and C- terminal cleaved products and that C-terminal  
241 region is further degraded.

242 As the TLP is known to be present in the cytoplasm (Cho et al., 2014), we hypothesized that  
243 cleavage by TLP will influence the observed AtHYL1 localisation, depending upon the  
244 terminal of GFP-tag. As the most probable TLP cleavage sites are present in NLS (Supp Fig.  
245 4: R-222, K-228 and K-250), cleavage at one of these residues should result into disruption of  
246 its nuclear localization, rendering the fluorescence outside of nucleus. We generated two  
247 versions of GFP-tagged HYL1 constructs – GFP-AtHYL1 and AtHYL1-GFP and performed  
248 tobacco agro infiltration to observe HYL1 localisations. Excitingly, the two constructs  
249 yielded two different localisation profiles of AtHYL1 (Fig. 6a and 6b). The N-terminal GFP-  
250 tagged GFP-AtHYL1 was localised in the nucleus and extra nuclear compartments like  
251 cytoplasm and membrane (Fig. 6a). Whereas, the C-terminal GFP-tagged AtHYL1-GFP was  
252 exclusively localised into the nucleus (Fig. 6b). This difference in localisation patterns  
253 explain two things: (i) the cytoplasmic TLP protease cleaves AtHYL1 so that the bipartite  
254 NLS is retained with the C-terminal region of AtHYL1 (Fig. 6b), meaning that it is highly  
255 likely that the cleavage site of TLP is R-222, K-228 (Supp fig. 4), (ii) the N-terminal GFP-  
256 tagged GFP-AtHYL1 is stable in the extranuclear region (Fig. 6a) as it does not possess any  
257 TLP cleavage sites (Supp fig. 4).

258 To obtain further insights into AtHYL1 degradation by TLP, we expressed AtHYL1FL  
259 protein GFP tagged either at N- or C- terminal ends, and transiently expressed in *Nicotiana*  
260 *benthamiana* as above. Proteins were extracted from the different cellular compartments  
261 including enriched cytoplasmic and membrane fractions along with total protein. These  
262 enriched fractions were immunoblotted with anti-GFP and anti-HYL1.

263 Immunoblotting using fractionated proteins confirmed the localisation of AtHYL1 to  
264 cytoplasm and membrane providing further insights (Fig. 6c and 6d). Most of the extra  
265 nuclear AtHYL1 protein was present in the form of cleaved products. Results clearly showed  
266 the expression of HYL1 at about 70 kDa and 55 kDa present in the total crude extract from  
267 GFP-HYL1. Additionally, there were other bands from 26 kDa to 55 kDa and appeared as  
268 smear with longer exposure time. Immunoblotting analysis of cytoplasmic HYL1 protein  
269 using anti-GFP, did not show any signal when protein was tagged at amino- terminal (GFP-  
270 HYL1) (Fig. 6c). However, using the anti- AtHYL1 antibody showed an intense band at 25  
271 kDa resembling truncated C- terminal of HYL1 (HYL1C) along with the other low intense  
272 bands which are likely the proteolytic cleaved products (Fig. 6d, lane 2). The membrane

273 fraction showed an intense band of the truncated HYL1 (GFP-HYL1N) at about 55 kDa with  
274 anti-GFP along with the degraded products with lower molecular weight (Fig. 6c, lane 3).  
275 Blotting with anti-AtHYL1 did not show any intense band suggesting that only N- terminal is  
276 relocated to membrane (Fig. 6d, lane 3). When protein was tagged at the C- terminal with  
277 GFP showed an intense band at 25 kDa, presumably the truncated GFP after protease  
278 cleavage and three bands in the range of 25 kDa to 37 kDa. These are the different proteolytic  
279 bands from C- terminal regions (Fig. 6c, lane 6) which was further confirmed by using anti-  
280 AtHYL1 (Fig. 6d lane 6). Based on these results, we concluded that after the cleavage by  
281 TLP, primarily at NLS, the N- terminal is sorted to the membrane and the C- terminal is  
282 quickly degraded in the cytosol. The membrane localized truncated GFP-HYL1 (GFP-  
283 HYL1N) may be further transported into nucleus as reported earlier (Wu et al., 2007).

284 The importance of unique C- terminal with bipartite NLS and 28 amino acid repeats indicates  
285 its biological importance in the regulation of HYL1 localization and stability. The stable  
286 protein finally regulates the miRNA biogenesis and its rate of processing by sorting its  
287 functional domain. To test the role of MPK3 phosphorylation at C- terminal repeats,  
288 AtHYL1FL-His protein was incubated with AtMPK3 in an *in-vitro* kinase reaction before the  
289 proteolytic cleavage by trypsin. The result shows that MPK3 phosphorylation does not alter  
290 the proteolytic cleavage by trypsin (Fig. 6e).

### 291 Interaction with MPK3 overrides light-dark transition dependent localisation of HYL1

292 To investigate the influence of MPK3 phosphorylation on localisation patterns of AtHYL1  
293 *in-vivo*, we co-expressed the GFP-AtHYL1 and AtMPK3-HA in the *N. benthamiana* leaves.  
294 To address the observation of light-dark transition dependent localisation (Achkar et al.,  
295 2018), we incubated the agro infiltrated plants either in light or in dark. Surprisingly, the  
296 localisation of MPK3 was restricted to the nucleus and no fluorescence was observed from  
297 cytoplasm and the membrane (Fig. 6a, 6b and Fig. 7). Specifically, the fluorescence was  
298 prominent from the nuclear bodies, presumably nuclear dicing or D bodies (Manavella et al.,  
299 2012). This suggests that MPK3 phosphorylation of HYL1 can override the light-dark  
300 transition dependent localisation as observed before (Achkar et al., 2018) These observations  
301 point out to a yet unknown mechanism of HYL1 regulation and portrays MPK3 as a major  
302 player in COP1 dependent HYL1 stability. It can be speculated that MPK3 overexpression  
303 retains COP1 in the cytoplasm, thus inhibiting TLP and protecting HYL1 from degradation.

304 However, further experiments in this direction will reveal many interesting insights and  
305 uncover the under lying regulatory mechanism of diverse function of HYL1 protein.

306

## 307 **CONCLUSIONS**

- 308 1. MPK3 phosphorylation site in N-terminal region of HYL1 is conserved in distantly  
309 related species.
- 310 2. The C-terminal region of HYL1 is disordered, non-conserved in other species and  
311 enhances the DNA-binding ability of HYL1
- 312 3. HYL1 also possess dsDNA binding property.
- 313 4. Trypsin-like protease (TLP) is responsible for the cytoplasmic degradation of HYL1  
314 and its regulation during light-dark transition
- 315 5. MPK3 overexpression renders nuclear localisation of HYL1

## 316 **OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS**

- 317 1. What is the evolutionary significance of N-terminal HYL1 phosphorylation by  
318 MPK3?
- 319 2. Does HYL1 C-terminal region has minimal functions and insignificant in the context  
320 of evolution?
- 321 3. What is the identity of Trypsin-like protease (TLP) and the gene it encodes for it?
- 322 4. How does MPK3 overexpression influence the nuclear localisation of HYL1?

## 323 **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### 324 **Plant growth conditions**

325 The *Arabidopsis thaliana Col-0* wild type seeds were surface sterilized and plated on half MS  
326 plate and incubated at 4°C for 2 to 3 days for stratification. The plates were further incubated  
327 at 22°C in the growth room with long day conditions. The rice (*Oryza sativa L. indica*  
328 cultivar group var. Pusa Basmati1) was grown at 28°C with 16 h light/ 8 h dark oscillation in  
329 a greenhouse at the National Institute of Plant Genome Research, New Delhi or in growth  
330 chamber (SCILAB instrument, Taiwan, China). The 7 to 10 days old seedling were harvested  
331 for RNA isolation and cDNA preparation.

### 332 **Yeast two-hybrid assay**

333 The full length CDS of AtMPK3, AtSE, AtCPL1 and AtHYL1 along with the deletion  
334 fragments were amplified from the above prepared cDNA using the primer sets (SI Table1)  
335 by Phusion DNA-polymerase (NEB, USA) in – frame with pGADT7 (AD) and pGBKT7  
336 (BD) (Clontech). Protein-protein interactions were performed according to manufacturer’s  
337 protocols. Briefly, the AD and BD constructs were co-transformed in yeast competent cells  
338 (Y2H gold) prepared and performed according to the G-bioscience (Fast – yeast  
339 transformation kit) and shredded on double dropout synthetic define(SD) medium lacking  
340 leucine and tryptophan (SD-LT) then interaction was monitored on Quadruple dropout  
341 medium lacking adenine, histidine, leucine and tryptophan (SD-AHLT) by incubating at 28-  
342 30°C. Whenever the interaction was measured with MPK3, 10-15 mM 3-amino-1,2,4-triazole  
343 (3-AT) was added in the medium. The picture was captured regularly from 2-4 days after  
344 serial dilution of respective yeast cells.

#### 345 ***In-vitro* phosphorylation assay**

346 To performed the *in- vitro* phosphorylation assay, the full length CDS of AtMPK3, OsMPK3  
347 and OsDRB1-1 were cloned in – frame with pGEXT42 vector. The AtHYL1, OsDRB1-2 and  
348 OsDRB1-4 were cloned in the pET series vectors (pET21c/pET28a) along with the all  
349 deletions constructs using the primer sets (SI Table1). After DNA sequencing, all constructs  
350 were transformed in *Escherichia coli* BL21 strain. The proteins were purified using the Ni-  
351 NTA and GST- beads. The in-vitro phosphorylation assay was performed according to the  
352 previously described (Raghuram et.al., 2014). Briefly, the purified proteins and kinase were  
353 incubated in the kinase reaction buffer (25 mM Tris/Cl, pH 7.5, 5 mM MgCl<sub>2</sub>, 25 mM ATP, 1  
354 mM EGTA, 1 mM DTT, 5  $\mu$ Ci of  $\gamma$ -<sup>32</sup>P-ATP) at 30°C for 30 minutes. The reaction was  
355 terminated by addition of SDS (sodium dodecyl sulfate)-sample loading buffer followed by  
356 heat denaturation at 95°C for 5 minutes. Samples were separated on 10-15 % SDS-  
357 polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE). The phosphorylation was detected and  
358 Coomassie Brilliant Blue (CBB) stained using phosphor imager, Typhoon (GE Healthcare,  
359 Life Sciences).

#### 360 **Electrophoretic Mobility Shift Assay (EMSA)**

361 The binding of AtHYL1-His and AtHYL1N-His was performed with chemically synthesized  
362 50 nucleotides single – stranded DNA (ssDNA) (3’-  
363 GTTGGCTCTGGTGCAGGGTCCGAGGTATTCGCACCAGAGCCAACGTCCCG-5’).  
364 The ssDNA was labelled with  $\gamma$ <sup>32</sup>P-ATP at 30°C for 30 minutes by PNK-T4 kinase (NEB).

365 The labelled ssDNA was purified and denatured at 95°C then allowed for formation of ds-  
366 DNA hairpin loop to mimic the dsRNA hairpin loop by subsequent cooling gradually at room  
367 temperature. The EMSA was performed as previously described (Kshirsagar et.al.,2017,  
368 Lorence et al, 1988 and Zvaritch et al, 1990). Briefly, increasing concentration of HYL1FL  
369 and HYL1N was added in the EMSA buffer containing 10 mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.5), 350 mM  
370 KCl, 2.5 mM EDTA, 10% glycerol, 5 mM DTT, and 10 mM MgCl<sub>2</sub> along with poly-dIdC at  
371 room temperature for 30 minutes. The samples were resolved on 5% to 8% of native  
372 polyacrylamide gels prepared and electrophoresed in 0.5% TBE (tris-boric acid and EDTA).  
373 The DNA- protein complex is visualized by phosphor imagers Typhoon. Similarly, EMSA  
374 was carried out with double – stranded DNA and ssDNA (SI table).

### 375 ***In-vitro* Protein sensitivity assay**

376 The protease sensitivity assay using bacterially purified AtHYL1 and AtHYL1N terminal  
377 was performed according to previously described (Reddy et al., 2001; Yamamoto *et.al.*,  
378 2014). Briefly, the 4-5µg proteins were partially digested in the digestion buffer (5 mM  
379 MgCl<sub>2</sub>, 100 mM KCl in 25 mM HEPES-KOH, pH 7.4) with trypsin (Sigma) at 37°C for  
380 indicated time. Reactions were stopped by addition of SDS- loading dye followed by heating  
381 at 95°C for 5 minutes. The samples were loaded on 12-15% SDS-PAGE and protein bands  
382 were visualized by Coomassie Brilliant Blue (CBB) staining. The western blotting of the  
383 same experiment set was further analysed by anti-AtHYL1 antibody (AS06136, Agrisera)  
384 according to Singh and Sinha. Briefly, after SDS-PAGE, the separated proteins were  
385 transferred to nitrocellulose blotting membrane (10600016, GE Healthcare life science). The  
386 membrane was blocked with 5% skimmed milk in TBS-T buffer (TBS0.1% and Tween 20) at  
387 room temperature for 2 hours, followed by incubation with primary antibody anti-AtHYL1  
388 (1:1000) over night at cold room. The following day, membrane was washed with TBS-T  
389 buffer and incubated with goat anti-rabbit IgG secondary antibody HRP conjugate (31463,  
390 Thermo Fisher scientific, USA) with 1: 10,000 dilutions in blocking solution at room  
391 temperature for 1 to 2 hours. The membrane was washed same as above 3 to 4 times followed  
392 by washing with water. The membrane was developed using clarity<sup>TM</sup> western ECL substrate  
393 (170-5061, Biorad).

### 394 ***In-vitro* protein degradation assay**

395 The in- vitro protein degradation assay was performed as described previously (Cho *et al.*,  
396 2014) with slightly modifications. Briefly, 2 to 5 microgram bacterially purified AtHYL1 full

397 length and AtHYL1N with his tagged proteins were incubated with the total crude extract  
398 from *Arabidopsis thaliana* wild type for indicated time periods at 37°C. The samples were  
399 harvested and reaction was stopped by adding SDS-sample loading dye, heated at 95°C for 5  
400 minutes and samples were loaded on 12-15% SDS-PAGE analysis. The protein gels were  
401 proceeded for both Coomassie Brilliant Blue (CBB) staining as well as immunoblotting using  
402 anti-AtHYL1 antibody as described above.

### 403 **Protein subcellular localization**

404 The localization of full length HYL1 was analysed by transient expression in 3 to 4 weeks old  
405 *N. benthamiana* leaves. The CDS was cloned in gateway pENTR/D-TOPO vector according  
406 to manufacturer's protocol (K240020, Invitrogen, USA). The positive constructs were  
407 sequenced and further transferred to destination vector in-frame with superfold-green  
408 fluorescence protein (sGFP) in pGWB5 and pGWB6, tagged at carboxyl- and amino-  
409 terminal of HYL1 respectively, using Gateay LR Clonase II enzyme mix (11791-020,  
410 Invitrogen, USA). The recombinant pGWB5 and pGWB6 (encoding HYL1-GFP and GFP-  
411 HYL1) were finally transformed into *Agrobacterium* GV3101. The agroinfiltration was  
412 performed according to previously described (Raghuram *et.al.*, 2014). Briefly, the overnight  
413 grown culture was used for secondary inoculation in YEB broth and further incubated in  
414 shaker incubator at 28°C. The bacterial cells were pelleted down and washed with infiltration  
415 medium (10 mM MgCl<sub>2</sub>, 10 mM MES, pH 5.7, 150 μM acetosyringone) and final OD of the  
416 culture was maintained to 0.5 at A<sub>600</sub>. The culture was keep in dark for 2 to 3 hours. The  
417 culture was infiltrated on the lower epidermis of *N. benthamiana* leaves by 1 ml needleless  
418 syringe. The fluorescence signal was monitored after 2 to 3 following day of post infiltration  
419 under a confocal laser scanning microscope to detect the sGFP fluorescence. To monitor the  
420 localization of GFP-HYL1 in the presence of AtMPK3, agrobacterium harbouring the  
421 AtMPK3 in pSPYCE(M) (AtMPK3-HA) (described by Raghuram *et.al.* 2014) were co-  
422 infiltrated in the leaves as above. The subcellular localized proteins were further prepared and  
423 analysed by subcellular fractions from the positive infiltrated leaves using Qproteome Cell  
424 Compartment kit (37502, QIAGEN). Immuno blotting were performed from subcellular  
425 enriched fractions by using anti-AtHYL1 and anti-GFP antibody (BB-AB0065, BioBharti,  
426 India) as described above.

### 427 **Multiple protein alignment analysis:**

428 To analyse the evolutionary relationship of dsRNA binding proteins (DRB1/HYL1) from  
429 *Arabidopsis thaliana* and other monocots and dicots by conserved dsRNA binding domain  
430 and putative MAP kinase sites. The protein sequences were downloaded from the National  
431 Centre for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) and Uniprot and multiple protein sequences  
432 were aligned by Uniprot align tool. First we aligned the HYL1 proteins from *Arabidopsis*  
433 *thaliana* with *Arabidopsis lyrata* (UniprotKB Identifier D7KJT2) and *Arabis alpine*  
434 (A0A087HMB7) and then with other close relative brassica members (*Brassica*  
435 *napus*/Q5IZK5, *Brassica oleracea*/A0A0D3DNR2, *Brassica\_rapa*/M4EPS2). To further  
436 analyse the evolutionary basis of conservation of amino acid residues, we performed multiple  
437 sequence alignment of few monocots (*Populus trichocarpa*/ B9H6U2, *Vitis vinifera*/  
438 A5BNI8-1, *Solanum lycopersicum*/ K4BU80) and dicots (*Zea mays*/B6TPY5-1, *Setaria*  
439 *italica*/ K3Y7A9, *Oryza sativa* subsp. *indica*/ I2DBG3, *Oryza sativa* subsp. *japonica*/  
440 Q0IQN6, *Brachypodium distachyon*/ A0A0Q3F254, *Musa acuminata*/ M0RRC4).

#### 441 **Prediction and evaluation of protein natural disordered regions**

442 The AtHYL1 and RNA polymerase II largest subunit AtRPB1 Protein disorder were  
443 predicted using the VL-XT Predictor (Romero et al., 1997; 2001; Li et al., 1999) at PONDR  
444 (Predictor of Natural Disordered Regions; [www.pondr.com](http://www.pondr.com)) server. First, we predicted the  
445 natural disordered regions in the wild type proteins of both HYL1 and RPB1 protein followed  
446 by disordered enhanced phosphorylation throughout the protein then we substituted the  
447 putative MAP kinase target sites with phospho - null (T/S>A) or phospho mimetic (T/P>E/D)  
448 in the C- terminal of the both proteins followed by their disorder prediction. We further  
449 analysed the natural disordered regions in other members of AtDRBs (AtDRB2, AtDRB3,  
450 AtDRB4, AtDRB5) and OsDRBs (OsDRB1-1, OsDRB1-2, OsDRB1-3 and OsDRB1-4). The  
451 results were obtained in both tabular as well as the graphical data. The tabular data were  
452 further processed by using the GraphPad Prism software. The PONDR VL-XT predictor  
453 integrates three feedforward neural networks: the VL1 predictor (Romero et al. 1997), the N-  
454 terminus predictor (XN), and the C-terminus predictor (XC) (both from Li et al. 1999). VL1  
455 was trained using 8 long disordered regions identified from missing electron density in x-ray  
456 crystallographic studies, and 7 long disordered regions characterized by NMR. The XN and  
457 XC predictors, together called XT, were also trained using x-ray crystallographic data, where  
458 the terminal disordered regions were 5 or more amino acids in length. Basically, the results  
459 are shown between 0 and 1 values. If the values for each residues exceeds or matches a  
460 threshold of 0.5 then the particular stretches are considered to be disordered.

## 461 **Prediction of Post-translational modification by Phosphorylation**

462 The phosphorylation of AtHYL1 and AtRPB1 were predicted by disordered associated  
463 phosphorylation were predicted using Disorder Enhanced Phosphorylation predictor (DEPP),  
464 with protein sequence as input. The data were obtained in the graphical images and  
465 phosphorylation at serine, threonine and tyrosine were predicted when a target amino acid has  
466 >0.5 prediction value. The DEPP discriminates between the phosphorylation and non-  
467 phosphorylation sites by using the disorder regions around the target sites.

## 468 **Evolutionary relationship of AtHYL1 with DRB from other plants**

469 The protein sequences were retrieved from the Uniprot database by BLAST search using  
470 AtHYL1 protein sequence as an input as described above. The phylogenetic tree was  
471 constructed using MEGA7 program for alignment of the sequences and construction of the  
472 phylogenetic tree by using maximum likelihood method based on the JTT matrix-based  
473 model. The tree with the highest log likelihood (-3606.13) is shown. Initial tree(s) for the  
474 heuristic search were obtained automatically by applying Neighbor-Join and BioNJ  
475 algorithms to a matrix of pairwise distances estimated using a JTT model, and then selecting  
476 the topology with superior log likelihood value. The tree is drawn to scale, with branch  
477 lengths measured in the number of substitutions per site. The analysis involved 14 amino acid  
478 sequences. All positions containing gaps and missing data were eliminated. There were a  
479 total of 244 positions in the final dataset. Evolutionary analyses were conducted in MEGA7.

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## 486 **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

487 PKB and AKS designed the experiments and overall study. PKB performed all the  
488 experiments and wrote first draft of the manuscript. RB prepared the deletion constructs and  
489 *in-vitro* phosphorylation assay. DV cloned the localization and Y2H constructs and  
490 conducted part of Y2H assay. PKB, RB and AKS participated in the discussion and progress  
491 of work. PKB, RB wrote the manuscript. Final draft was supervised by AKS.



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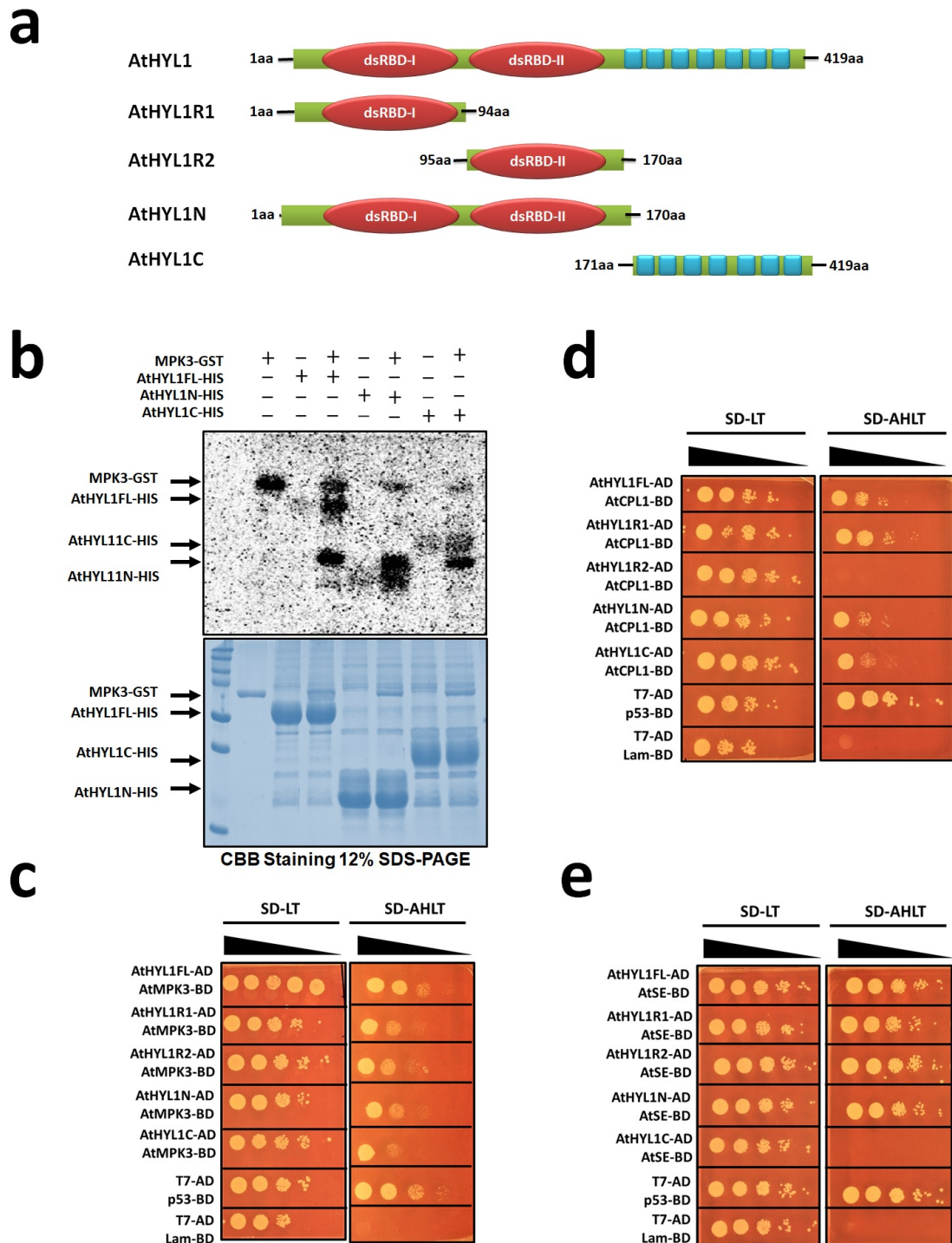
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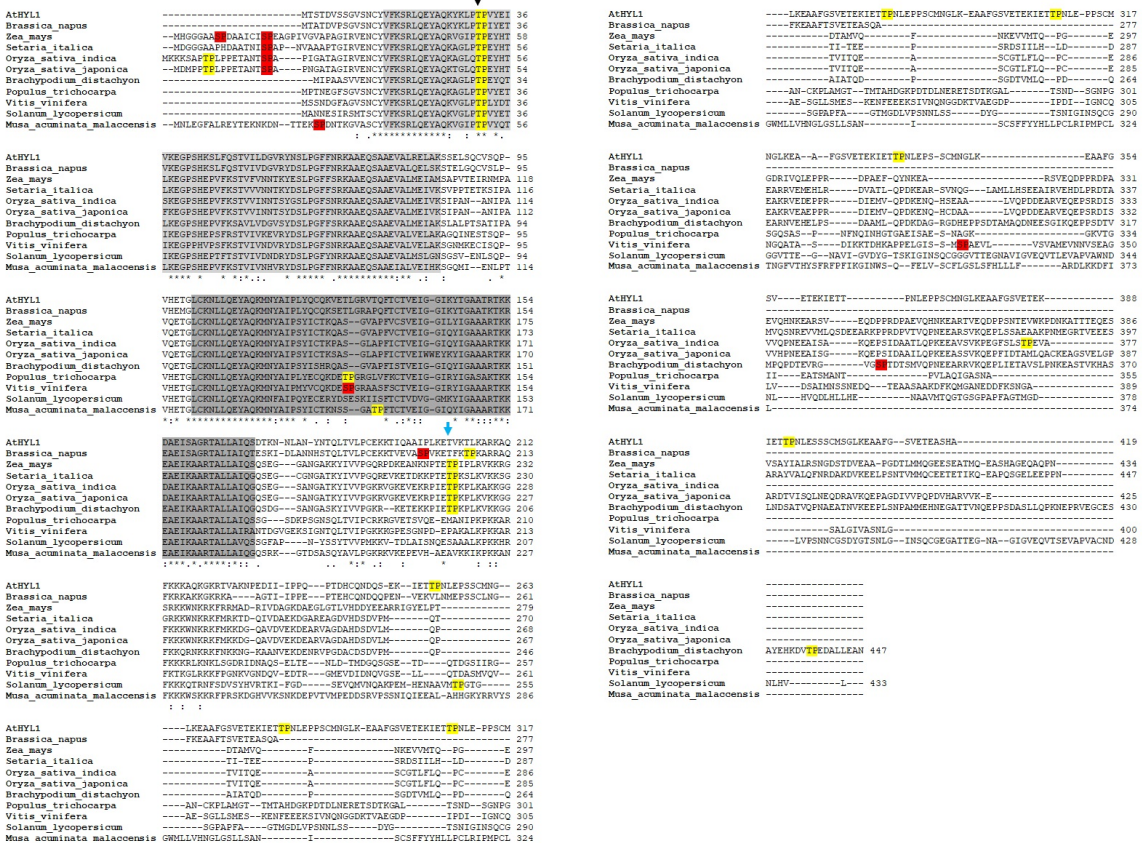
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**Figure 1. HYL1 is phosphorylated at multiple sites by MPK3.** **a**, Diagrammatic representation of AtHYL1 protein and its domain organisation. The N- terminal and C- terminal half used for protein expression, *in-vitro* experiments and Y2H are indicated by amino acid numbers. **b**, *in-vitro* phosphorylation assay showing the phosphorylation of HYL1 full length (AtHYL1FL), N- terminal (AtHYL1N) and C- terminal (AtHYL1C) regions by AtMPK3. **c to e**, Yeast two-hybrid assay showing the interaction of different versions of AtHYL1 (AtHYL1FL, AtHYL1N, AtHYL1C, AtHYL1R1 – first dsRBD and AtHYL1R2 – second dsRBD) **c**, with

599 AtMPK3 **d**, with CPL1 and **e**, with SE. Images were taken after growing the yeast on respective  
600 medium at 28°C for 3 to 4 days.  
601



**Figure 2. Putative MAP kinase site is evolutionarily conserved in plant kingdom.** The Amino acid sequence alignment of full-length HYL1/DRB1 proteins from *Arabidopsis thaliana* and other plant species as described in the method section. The domains are highlighted by light grey (dsRBD-I) and dark grey (dsRBD-II). The putative MAP kinase SP and TP motifs are highlighted by red and yellow respectively. The evolutionarily conserved TP motif present at dsRBD-I in N-terminal is indicated by black arrow whereas, newly evolved TP motif present in the *A. alpine* and all other monocots at C-terminal is indicated by sky blue arrow.

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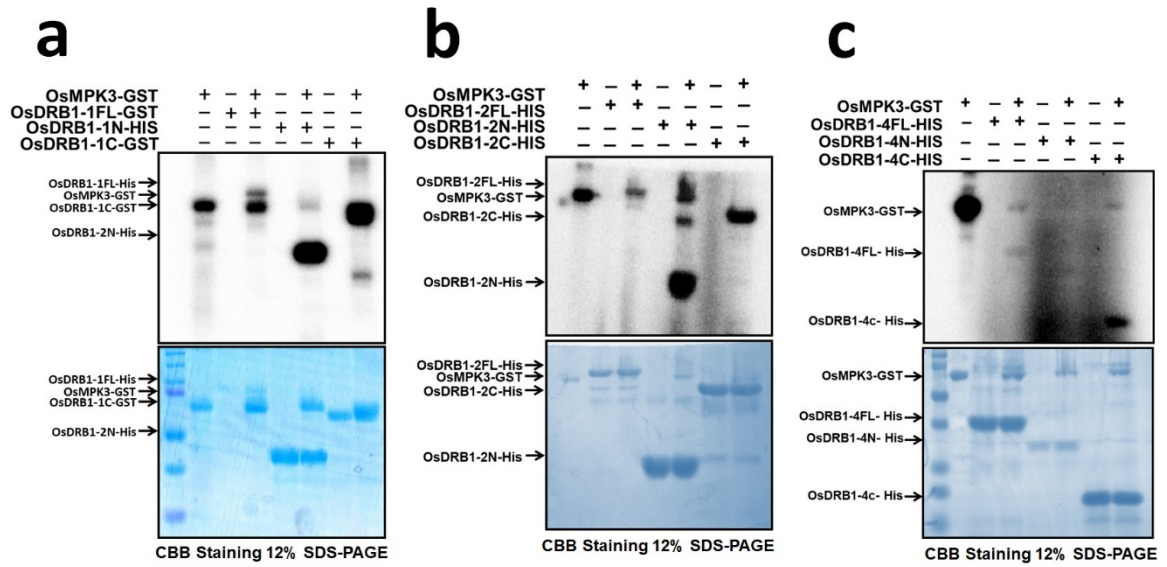
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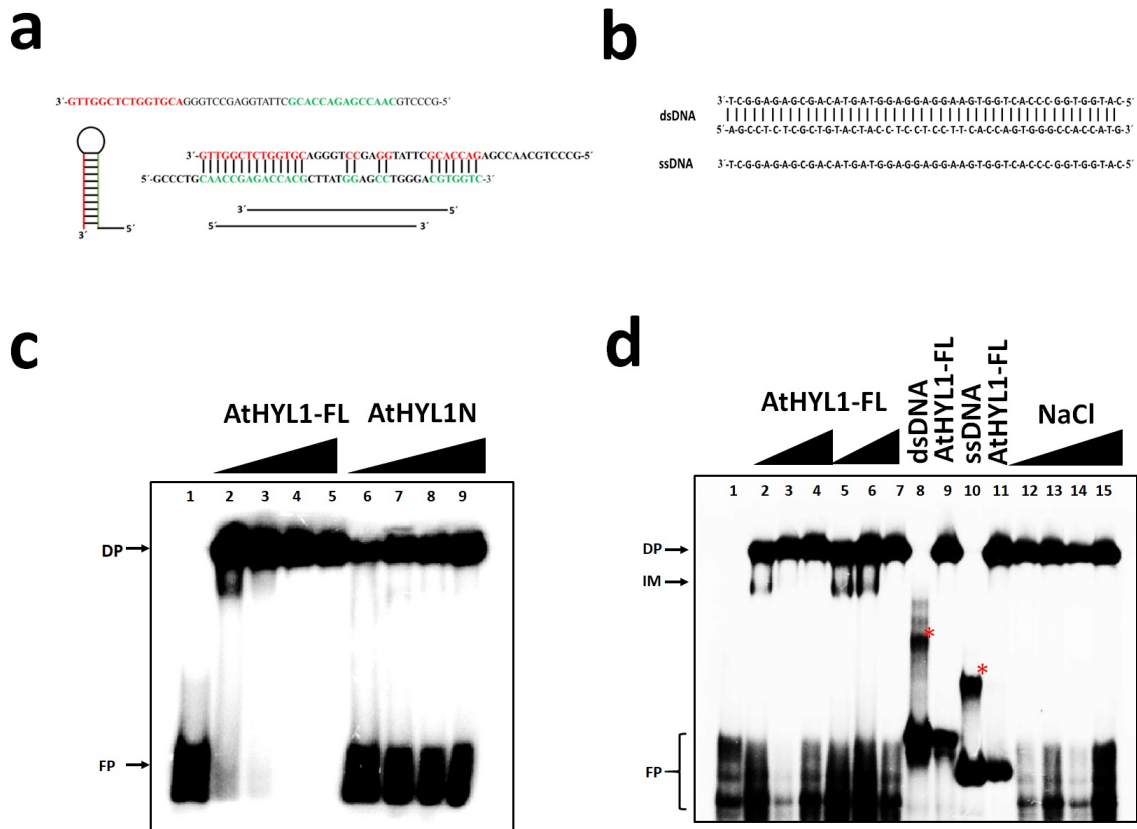
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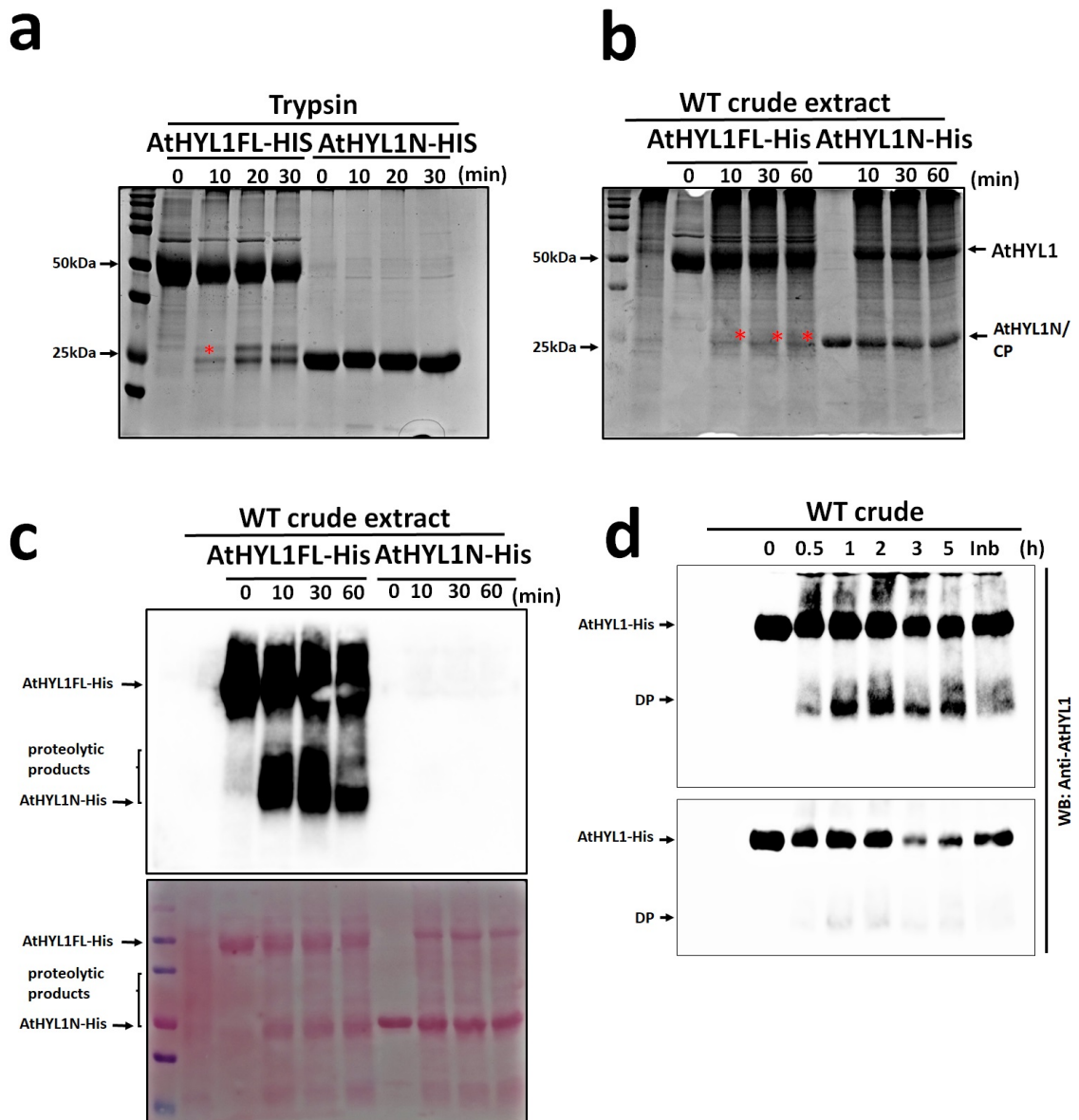
612 **Figure 3. The conserved threonine at dsRBD-I is phosphorylated by MPK3. a, *In-vitro***  
 613 **phosphorylation assay showing the phosphorylation of full length and truncated proteins of OsDRB1**  
 614 **b, OsDRB1-2 and c, OsDRB1-4 by OsMPK3. The upper images are the autoradiograph and lower are**  
 615 **CBB staining of respective gels. The positions of phosphorylated protein are indicated by arrows.**



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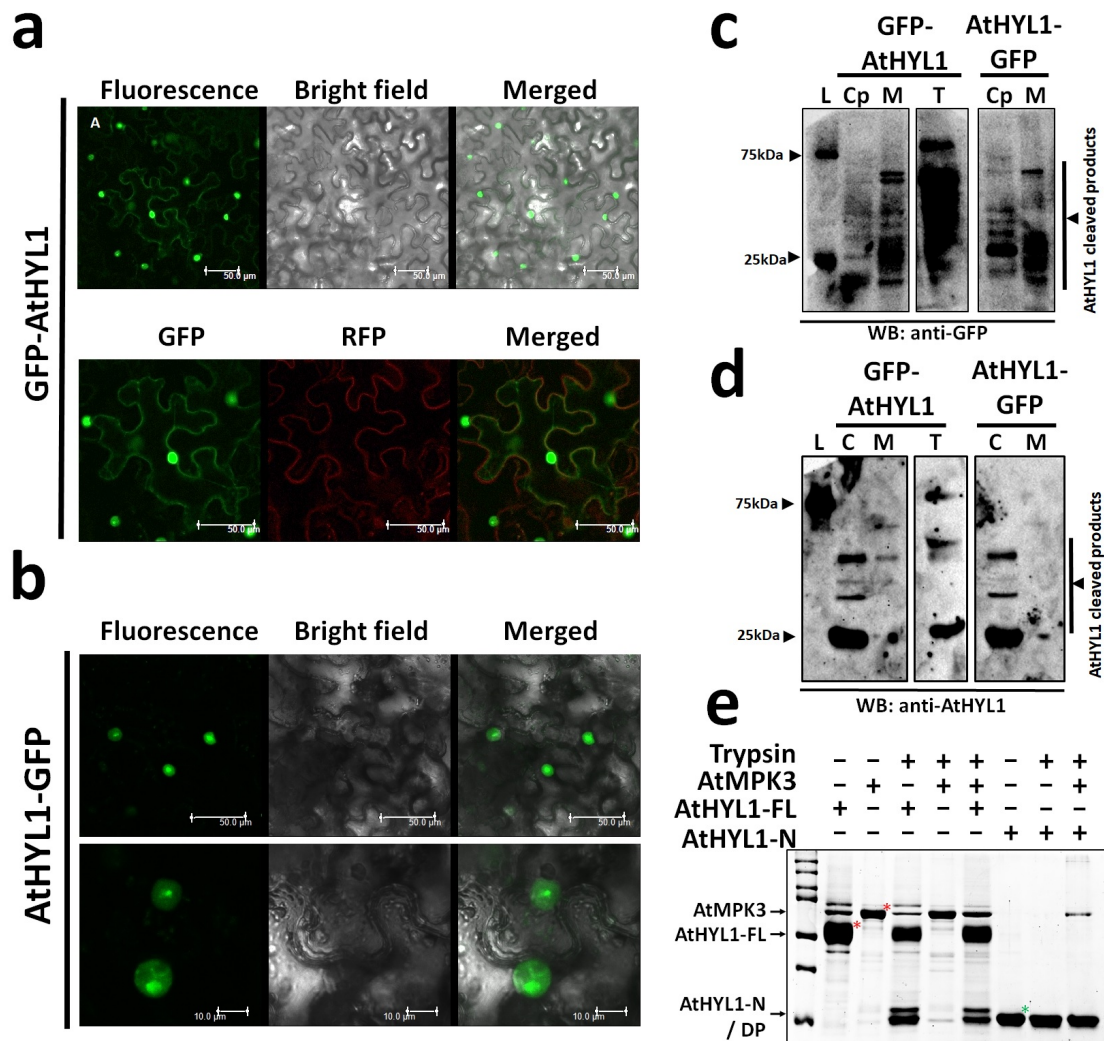
617 **Figure 4. The carboxyl terminal has the propensity to regulate the HYL1 interaction with**  
 618 **nucleic acid *in-vitro*.** **a**, The diagrammatic representation of chemically synthesised ssDNA and its  
 619 dsDNA hairpin loop and possible dimer. **b**, dsDNA and ssDNA. **c**, Gel mobility shift assay showing  
 620 the interaction of full length AtHYL1 and truncated AtHYL1N proteins with dsDNA hairpin loop in 5  
 621 % polyacrylamide gel prepared in TBE. Lane 1, the labelled probe alone, lane 2-5, the probe was  
 622 incubated with increasing concentration of HYL1FL protein. **d**, showing the gel mobility shift of  
 623 AtHYL1 full length proteins at higher gel percentage (10% PAGE). Lane 1, is the free probe alone,  
 624 lane 2-4 and 5-7, the increasing concentration of HYL1FL carried out from two separate protein batch  
 625 with dsDNA hairpin loop, lane 8, double-stranded DNA (dsDNA) probe alone, lane9, dsDNA with  
 626 HYL1FL, lane 10, ssDNA probe, lane 11, ssDNA with HYL1FL protein, lane 12-15, dsDNA hair pin  
 627 loop with HYL1FL protein with increasing concentrations of salt (NaCl). The free probe (FP) are at  
 628 the bottom and DNA-protein (DP) complex and intermediate (IM) are indicated by arrow. Red  
 629 asterisk indicates the intermediate forms of dsDNA and ssDNA without proteins.





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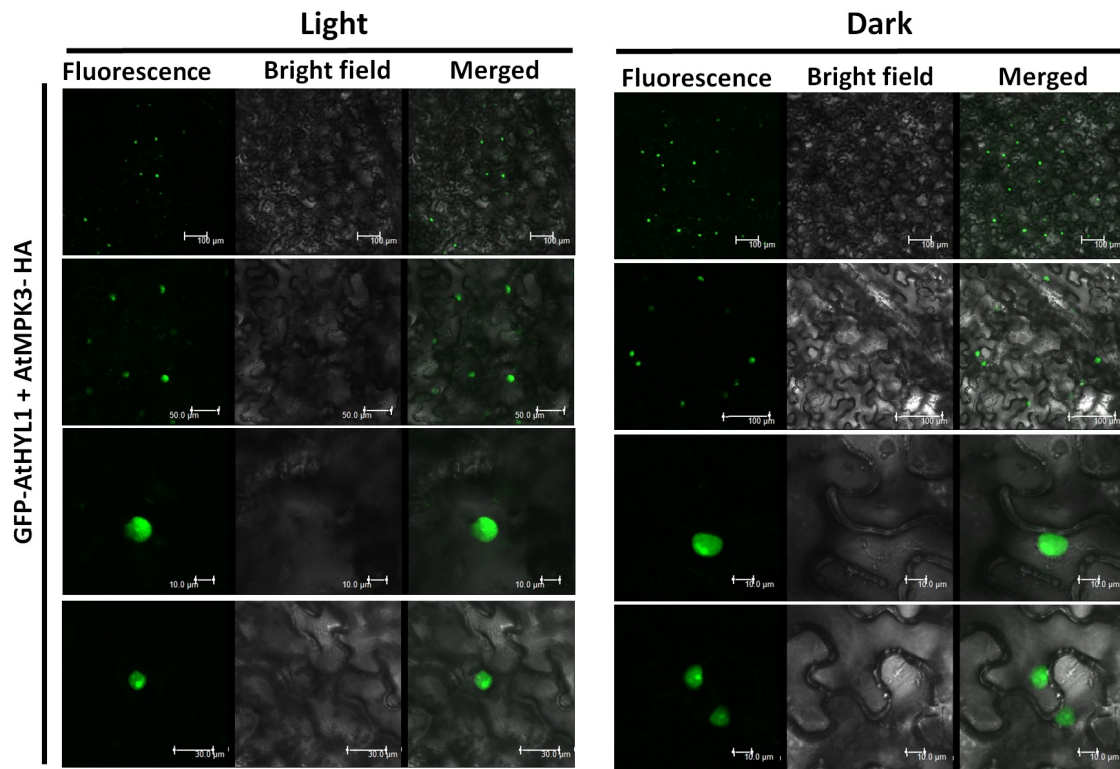
631 **Figure 5: AtHYL1 is cleaved by protease at multiple sites in the carboxyl terminal repeats.**  
 632 a, Protease sensitivity assay showing the cleavage of AtHYL1 full length and truncated  
 633 AtHYL1N by trypsin. The reactions were incubated for indicated times periods followed by SDS-  
 634 PAGE and gel was stained by CBB. b, in-vitro protein degradation assay of bacterially purified  
 635 AtHYL1 full length and truncated AtHYL1N incubated with crude protein extract from wild  
 636 type *A. thaliana* (*Col-0*) for indicated time periods followed by CBB staining of SDS-PAGE. c,  
 637 experiment was performed as in b, followed by western blotting with anti-AtHYL1 antibody.  
 638 Lower image is ponceau staining of the membrane. d, in-vivo degradation of AtHYL1FL with  
 639 crude extract (*Col-0*) with extended periods of incubation (0.5 hrs to 5 hrs) followed by western  
 640 blotting using anti-AtHYL1. The upper image represents the longer exposure and lower shorter  
 641 exposure during the western blotting detection. DP represents degraded products and PPI  
 642 indicates the plant protease inhibitor cocktail.



643

644 **Figure 6: AtHYL1 localization and stability is regulated by its C-terminal regions.** Subcellular  
 645 localization of HYL1 was monitored by tagging the protein with GFP either at amino terminal (GFP-  
 646 AtHYL1) (a) or at carboxyl terminal (AtHYL1-GFP) GFP-AtHYL1 (b) in the *N. benthamiana* leaves  
 647 under confocal laser scanning microscopy. The scale bar is indicated in each images. Membrane  
 648 marker tagged with RFP was used as positive control. The subcellular enriched fractions from above  
 649 experiments were further used for western blotting with anti-GFP (c) and anti- AtHYL1 antibody. The  
 650 C, M and T represents cytoplasmic, membrane and total crude extract respectively. (d). The protease  
 651 sensitivity test was performed after in-vitro phosphorylation of AtHYL1 by AtMPK3 with cold ATP  
 652 followed by trypsin digestion. Red asterisk indicates AtMPK3 (upper) and AtHYL1 (lower). Green  
 653 asterisk represents truncated AtHYL1N.

654

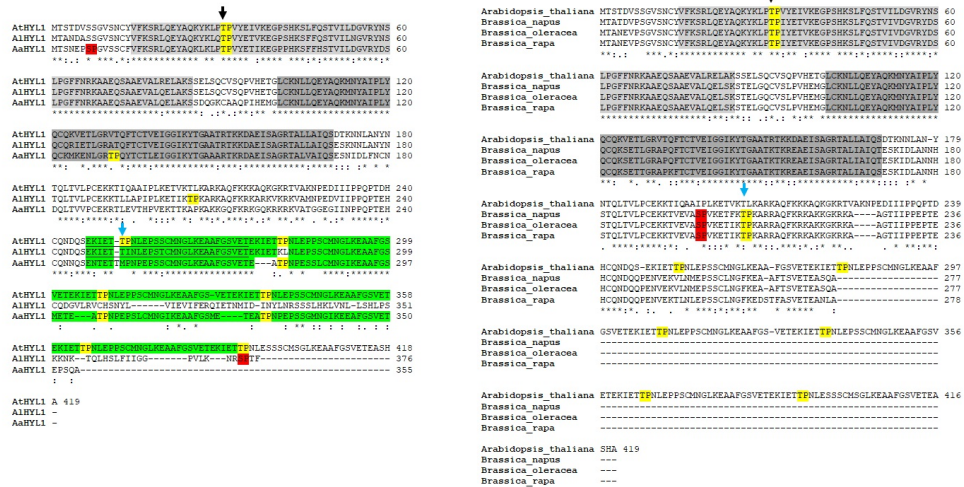


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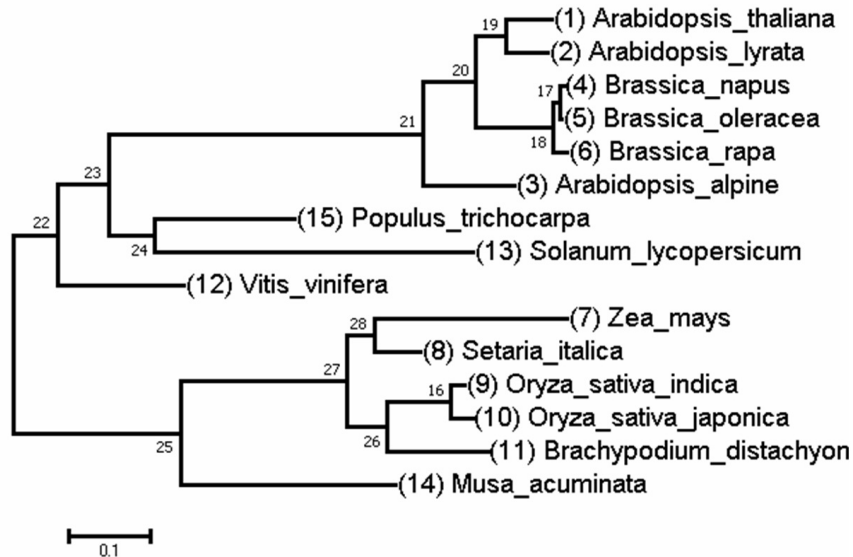
656 **Figure 7. AtHYL1 phosphorylation by AtMPK3 regulates its localization and stability in-vivo.**

657 The subcellular localization of GFP-AtHYL1 was monitored in the presence of AtMPK3-HA protein  
658 in *N. benthamiana* leaves in response to light and dark. Agrobacterium harbouring above constructs  
659 were co-infiltrated and the localization of GFP-AtHYL1 was monitored in leaf samples harvested  
660 from plants keep at light or dark for 8 to 10 hours, under confocal microscope. Scale bar is indicated  
661 in each images.

**a**



**b**



662

663 **Supplemental figure 1. Multiple protein sequence alignment and evolutionary analysis of**  
 664 **AtHYL1 and DRBs from plant kingdom. a,** (Left side) Protein alignment of HYL1 from *A.*  
 665 *thaliana* (At), *A. lyrata* (Al) and *A. alpine* (Aa). The C- terminal repeats (28a.a.) are highlighted  
 666 by green. The (right side) images represents the protein alignment of Arabidopsis close relative  
 667 brassica members. The conserved dsRBD-I and dsRBD-II are highlighted by light and dark grey  
 668 respectively. The conserved MAP kinase sites are highlighted and pointed by black head arrow  
 669 and newly emerged TP motif by sky blue arrow head. **b,** the phylogenetic tree was constructed by  
 670 using Maximum Likelihood method based on the JTT matrix-based model using MEGA7 and  
 671 representative image is shown.

672

**a**

```

AtHYL1 -----MTSDVSSGVSNVFKESRL 20
OsDRB1-1 -----MCKKAFTLPFFETATMRFPGATAGIRVENCVFKESRL 40
OsDRB1-2 -----MDMPFPFFETATMRFPGATAGIRVENCVFKESRL 38
OsDRB1-3 -----MDMPFPFPFFETATMRFPGATAGIRVENCVFKESRL 38
OsDRB1-4 MAATAAEPLAVAVAVHTATAGTDGAPLPLFFP-----FPCFKESRL 43
          * * * * *

AtHYL1 -----QEVAQYKLPFTVVEIVKRGPSKSLFGSTVILQVRYNSLPGFNKGAEGSAAEVALR 80
OsDRB1-1 -----QEVAQKGLQFPVHTKRGPSHEPVEKSTVVIINISVDSLPGFNKGAEGSAAEVALM 100
OsDRB1-2 -----QEVAQKAGLQFPVHTKRGPSHEPVEKSTVVIINISVDSLPGFNKGAEGSAAEVALM 98
OsDRB1-3 -----QEVAQKGLQFPVHTKRGPSHEPVEKSTVVIINISVDSLPGFNKGAEGSAAEVALM 98
OsDRB1-4 -----QEVAQKAGLQFPVHTKRGPSHEPVEKSTVVIINISVDSLPGFNKGAEGSAAEVALM 103
          * * * * *

AtHYL1 -----ELAKSSELSQC---VSPQVNETGLCNLLQVAQDNYALPLVQVQVETLGRVTOFT 136
OsDRB1-1 -----EIVKSI PANA-----NIPAVQETGLCNLLQVAQDNYALPSVICTKA--SGLAPFLC 153
OsDRB1-2 -----EIVKSI PANA-----NIPAVQETGLCNLLQVAQDNYALPSVICTKA--SGLAPFLC 151
OsDRB1-3 -----EIVKSI PANA-----NIPAVQETGLCNLLQVAQDNYALPSVICTKA--SGLAPFLC 151
OsDRB1-4 -----TLLERKETDDETVFELIQVVFKSILHEVTKTKTDQPEVSVTIE--QSVTFVVS 161
          : : : * * * * *

AtHYL1 -----IYEIGIKYIQAARTEKDAEIKAAITALLAQSDTFNNLANVHTQLVLFCEKTIQA 196
OsDRB1-1 -----IYEIGIQYIQAARTEKDAEIKAAITALLAQSDSGSANG-ATCYIVVQKRVGVEVE 212
OsDRB1-2 -----IYEIGIQYIQAARTEKDAEIKAAITALLAQSDSGSANG-ATCYIVVQKRVGVEVE 210
OsDRB1-3 -----IYEIGIQYIQAARTEKDAEIKAAITALLAQSDSGSANG-ATCYIVVQKRVGVEVE 210
OsDRB1-4 -----SYVFAQHTYIQAARTEKDAEIKAAITALLAQSDSGSANG-ATCYIVVQKRVGVEVE 214
          * * * * *

AtHYL1 -----IPLKETVTLKARKAQFFKRAQKSKET-----VAFMF--EDIII 233
OsDRB1-1 -----KRFIEIPLKARKAQFFKRAQKSKET-----KDGQAVVEKAEARVAGDAMDSDVLM 266
OsDRB1-2 -----KRFIEIPLKARKAQFFKRAQKSKET-----KDGQAVVEKAEARVAGDAMDSDVLM 263
OsDRB1-3 -----KRFIEIPLKARKAQFFKRAQKSKET-----KDGQAVVEKAEARVAGDAMDSDVLM 264
OsDRB1-4 -----KSGYNKQIDSNFTKGLFAPKIFKPSIFKLYDGE-----IDMLS 257
          * * * * *

AtHYL1 -----PPQITDCCNDQSEKIEITLLEPSSCMGLKEAAGFVSVEK-IETPHL---EPPFC 288
OsDRB1-1 -----QP--TVITQ-----EASCGTFLQPC--EAKR--VEAFPRDIEMVQPK 306
OsDRB1-2 -----QP--TVITQ-----EASCGTFLQPC--EAKR--VEAFPRDIEMVQPK 303
OsDRB1-3 -----QP--TVITQ-----EASCGTFLQPC--EAKR--VEAFPRDIEMVQPK 304
OsDRB1-4 -----VTE-----ALFVYAAEIEVYKAEAFNSSEQAVHW 291
          * * * * *

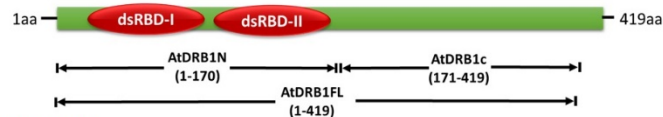
AtHYL1 -----ENQHSDAALV-QPDEARVQEPSRDLISVQFHEEAI SARQEPSIDAAILOFKEASVVK 365
OsDRB1-1 -----ENQHSDAALV-QPDEARVQEPSRDLISVQFHEEAI SARQEPSIDAAILOFKEASVVK 362
OsDRB1-2 -----ENQHSDAALV-QPDEARVQEPSRDLISVQFHEEAI SARQEPSIDAAILOFKEASVVK 363
OsDRB1-4 -----SKGKHNRVQGEVFEVRAVQ----- 312
          : : : * * * * *

AtHYL1 -----EAFGSV---ETEKIEITPLEP-----SSCMGLKEAAGFVSVEK---I 361
OsDRB1-1 -----PEGFSLSLEVA----- 377
OsDRB1-2 -----QEFFDIANGLQCAEAGSVELSPADTVISQLMEQDRVWVEPADTVFQEVVAVVY 422
OsDRB1-3 -----QEFFDIANGLQCAEAGSVELSPADTVISQLMEQDRVWVEPADTVFQEVVAVVY 423
OsDRB1-4 -----E-----ETEPNGEATNMC-----K--NSAVCN-----ETKEFGDITAMSDPFA 467
          * * * * *

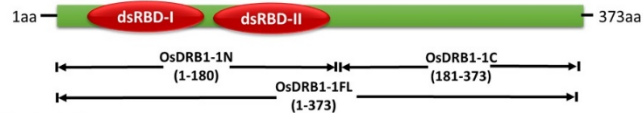
AtHYL1 -----ETPHEPSSCMGLKEAAGFVSVEKIEITLLEPSSCMGLKEAAGFVSVEKASHA-- 419
OsDRB1-1 -----E-----ETEPNGEATNMC-----K--NSAVCN-----ETKEFGDITAMSDPFA 467
OsDRB1-2 -----E-----ETEPNGEATNMC-----K--NSAVCN-----ETKEFGDITAMSDPFA 467
OsDRB1-3 -----E-----ETEPNGEATNMC-----K--NSAVCN-----ETKEFGDITAMSDPFA 467
OsDRB1-4 -----E-----ETEPNGEATNMC-----K--NSAVCN-----ETKEFGDITAMSDPFA 424
          * * * * *
    
```

**b**

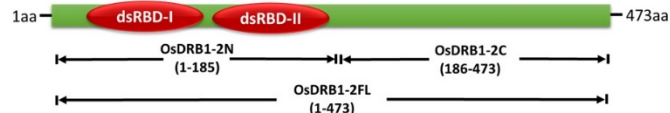
**AtDRB1/HYL1**



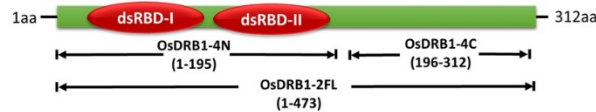
**OsDRB1-1**



**OsDRB1-2**



**OsDRB1-4**



673

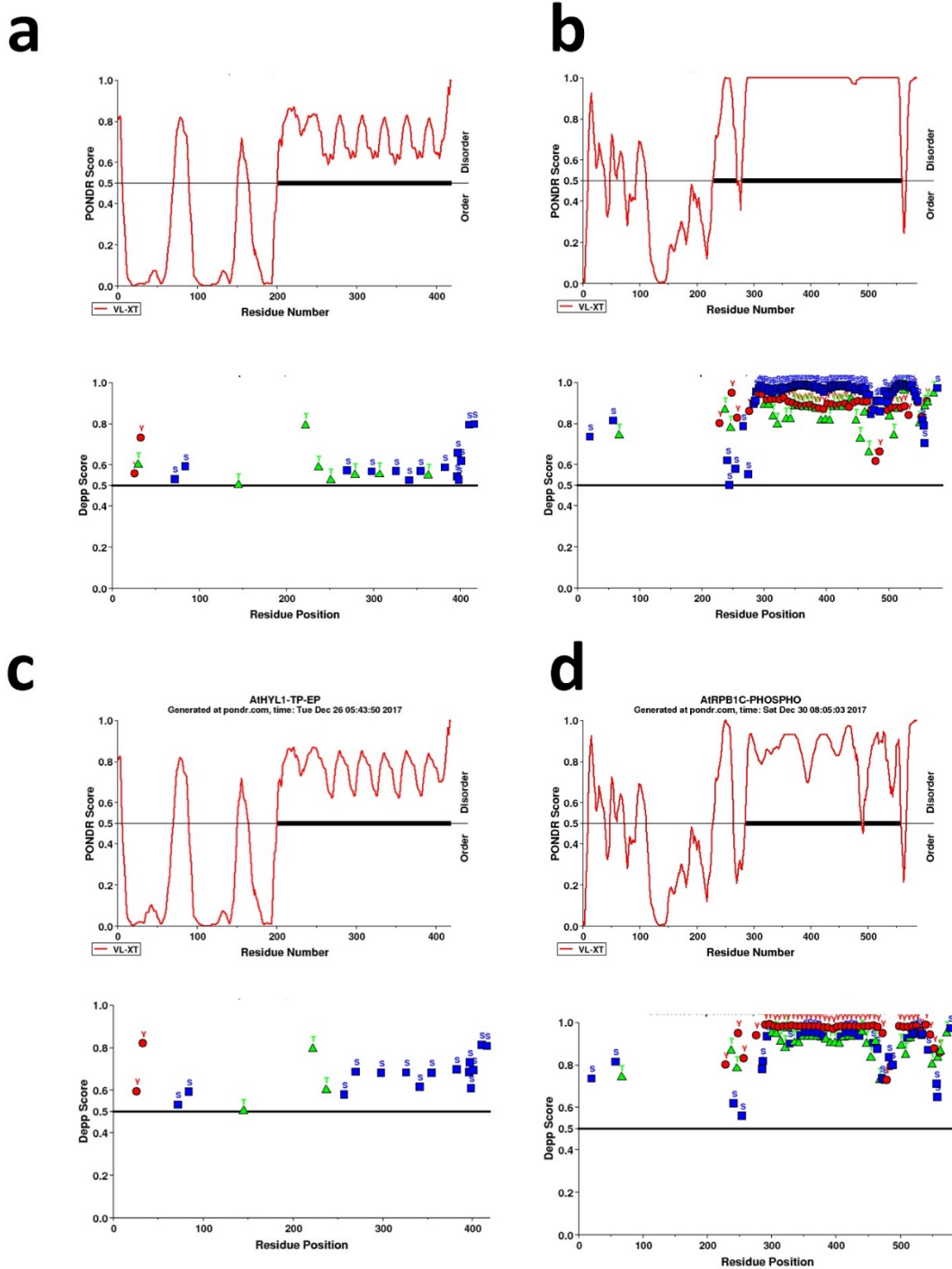
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**Supplemental figure 2. a.** Protein alignment of AtHYL1, OsDRB1-1, OsDRB1-2, OsDRB1-3 and OsDRB1-4. **b.** schematic representation of deletion constructs of OsDRBs and AtHYL1 for protein expression and in-vitro phosphorylation assay.



678  
679

680 **Supplemental figure 3. a & b.** Prediction of natural disordered regions in AtHYL1(AT1G09700)  
681 full length and AtRPB1(AT4G35800) C-terminal (1254 to 1839 amino acids) upper images and  
682 disorder enhanced phosphorylation lower images. **c & d.** Substitution of serine and threonine to  
683 aspartic acid or glutamic acid in the putative MAP kinase sites to mimic as phosphorylated  
684 isoform and their subsequent analysis as above. The procedure is described in the method  
685 sections.

1 MTSTDVSSGVSNCYVFKSRLQEYAQKY  
 28 KLPTPVVEIVKEGPSHKSLFQSTVILDGV  
 57 RYNSLPGFFNRKAAEQSAAEVALRELAK  
 85 SSELQCVSQPVHETGLCKNLLQEYAQK  
 112 MNYAIPLYQCQKVETLGRVTQFTCTVEIG  
 140 GIKYTGAATRTKKDAEISAGRTALLAIQS  
 171 DTKNNLANYNTQLTVLPCEKKTIIQAAIPL  
 200 KETVKTLLKARKAQFKKKAQKGRRTVAK  
 227 NPEDIIPPQPTDHCQNDQSEKIETTPNL  
 256 EPSSCMNGLKEAAFGSVETEKIETTPNL  
 284 EPPSCMNGLKEAAFGSVETEKIETTPNL  
 312 EPPSCMNGLKEAAFGSVETEKIETTPNL  
 340 EPSSCMNGLKEAAFGSVETEKIETTPNL  
 368 EPPSCMNGLKEAAFGSVETEKIETTPNL  
 396 ESSSCMSGLKEAAFGSVETEASHA

Cleavage site	N-terminal Native (kDa)	C-terminal Native (kDa)	GFP-HYL1N (kDa)	HYL1C-GFP (kDa)
<b>R-222</b>	24.6	20.9	50.6	46.9
<b>K-226</b>	25	20.5	51	46.5
<b>K-248</b>	27.5	18.4	53.5	44.4
K-265	29.3	16.2	55.3	42.2
K-276	30.4	15	56.4	41
K-293	32.3	13.2	58.3	39.2
K-304	33.4	12.1	59.5	38.1
K-321	35.2	10.2	61.4	36.2
K-332	36.4	9.1	62.5	35.1
K-349	38	7.3	64.3	33.3
K-360	39.4	6.1	65.4	32.1
K-377	41.2	4.3	67.2	30.3
K-388	42.3	3.1	68.3	29.1
K-405	44.1	1.4	70.1	27.4

686

687 **Supplemental figure 4. Properties of HYL1 protein sequence.** Representation of amino acid  
 688 sequence and post-translational modification and putative trypsin cleavage sites. The putative  
 689 bipartite NLS is underlined and coloured red. The putative MAP kinase sites coloured by sky blue  
 690 and C-terminal multiple cleavage sites are highlighted by green. The most probable site for  
 691 trypsin cleavage in the NLS are bold and larger in size. The size of different cleaved products of  
 692 HYL1 after proteolysis is predicted based on the site of cleavage and represented their expected  
 693 molecular weight with or without GFP for in-vivo localisation and western blotting purpose.  
 694

695 **Supplemental table 1:** List of primers used in the present study

SN	Gene	Sequence	Use
1	AtMPK3	For: ATCCGGAATTCATGAACACCGGCGGTGG Rev: ATCGCGGATCCCCTAACCGTATGTTGGATTGAGTGC	Y2H
2	AtHYL1/DRB1	For: CGGGAATTCATGACCTCCACTGATGTTTC Rev: CCGCTCGAGTGCGTGGCTTGCTTC	Protein Expression for in-vitro phosphorylation assay
	AtHYL1-N	For: CGCGGATCCGCATGACCTCCACTGATGTTTC Rev: ATCCGCTCGAGTGACTGGATCGCTAAAAGAG	
	AtHYL1-C	For: CGCGGATCCGCGACACTAAAACAACCTTG Rev: GTCCGGAATTCTTATGCGTGGCTTGCTTCTGTCTCC	
	AtHYL1-N	For: GAATTCATGACCTCCACTGATGTTTC Rev: CTCGAGAGGAAGTACAGTAAGCTGAGTG	Protein expression for in-vitro Protease assay and EMSA
	AtHYL1-RDM-I	For: CTGCATATGACCTCCACTGATGTTTC Rev: CGGGAATTCTTGTGAAACACATTGGCTTAG	Y2H
	AtHYL1-RDM-II	For: CTGCATATGTTACGAAACGGGATTATGC Rev: CGGGAATTCAGGAAGTACAGTAAGCTGAGTG	
	AtHYL1-C	For:CTGCATATG TGTGAGAAGAAGACAATACAG Rev: CGGGAATTC GACACTGTTATGCGTGGCTTG	
3	AtSE	For: ATCCGGAATTCATGGCCGATGTTAATCTTCCTCC Rev: ATCGCGGATCCCCTACAAGCTCCTGTAATCAATAACGG	
4	AtCPL1	For: ATCCGCTCGAGATTAAGAGTATCTTCCCGAAGATG Rev: ACGCGTCGACATTAAGAGTATCTTCCCGAAGATG	
5	OsMPK3	For: GGATCCATGGGGATGGACGGGGCGCCGGTG Rev:CGGAATTCGCTAGTACCGGATGTTTGGGTTTCATCTCGAT	
6	OsDRB1-1	For: ATCGCGGATCCATGAAGAAAAAAGTGCTCCC Rev: GTCCGGAATTCTCAGGCTACCTCAGGTGTTG	
	OsDRB1-1-N	For: CGCGGATCCGCATGAAGAAAAAAGTGCTC	



		Rev: ATCCGCTCGAGACCTTGGATTGCCAGAAGAG	Protein expression
	OsDRB1-1-C	For: CGCGGATCCGCCAATCAGAGGGTTCTGCAAATG Rev: GTCCGGAATTCTCAGGCTACCTCAGGTGTTG	
7	OsDRB1-2	For: CGCGGATCCGCATGGACATGCCGCCAC Rev: CCGCTCGAGTTCTTCGCTCATATTAGT	
	OsDRB1-2-N	For: CGCGGATCCGCATGGACATGCCGCCAC Rev: ATCCGCTCGAGACCTTGGATTGCCAGAAGAG	
	OsDRB1-2-C	For: CGCGGATCCGCCAATCAGAGGGTTCTGCAAATG Rev: CCGCTCGAGTTCTTCGCTCATATTAGT	
8	OsDRB1-4	For: CGCGGATCCGCATGGCGGCCGCCACCGCC Rev: CCGCTCGAGCTGTGCAACTCTTTCTTC	
	OsDRB1-4-N	For: CGCGGATCCGCATGGCGGCCGCCACCGCC Rev: ATCCGCTCGAGAGCTAAAAGTGA CTTGACCG	
	OsDRB1-4-C	For: CGCGGATCCGCACAAATTACACTTCCATG Rev: CCGCTCGAGCTGTGCAACTCTTTCTTC	
9	AtHYL1	For: CACCATGACCTCCACTGATGTTTC Rev: TGC GTGGCTTGCTTCTG	Gateway Cloning in pENTR

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697