
DIEGO RIVERA GELSINGER

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PROFESSIONAL STATUS

Johns Hopkins University - Baltimore, MD

2015–2020

PhD Research Assistant, Department of Biology, Program in Cellular, Molecular, Developmental, and Biophysics

Advisor: Dr. Jocelyne DiRuggiero

Research focus: Mechanistic insight into small non-coding RNA (sRNA)-mediated regulation of stress response in halophilic archaea from desiccated environments and metatranscriptomic discovery of sRNAs in halophilic microbial communities from the Atacama Desert. High throughput profiling of translation in Archaea.

San Francisco State University - San Francisco, CA

2012–2014

Undergraduate Research Fellow, Department of Biology

Advisor: Dr. José de la Torre.

Research focus: Physiology and ecological interactions of thermophilic archaea and bacteria in geothermal hot springs across the globe.

EDUCATION

Johns Hopkins University - Baltimore, MD

Completed Spring 2020

Ph.D. Molecular biology and Microbiology

San Francisco State University - San Francisco, CA

Completed Spring 2014

B.Sc. Microbiology, minor in French

PUBLICATIONS

- **Gelsinger, D.R.**, Dallon, E., Reddy, R., Mohammed, F., Green, R., Buskirk, A., and DiRuggiero, J. **2020**. “*Ribosome profiling in Archaea reveals leaderless translation, novel translation initiation sites, and ribosome pausing at single codon resolution*”. *Nucleic Acids Res.*
 - Selected as a NAR **Breakthrough Article**.
- Urtskiy, G., Tisza, M.T., **Gelsinger, D.R.**, Munn, A., Taylor, J., and DiRuggiero, J. **2020**. “*Cellular life from the three domains and viruses are transcriptionally active in a hypersaline desert community*”. *Environ Microbiol.*
- **Gelsinger, D.R.***, Urtskiy, G.*, Reddy, R., Munn, A., Farney, S.K., and DiRuggiero, J. **2020**. “*Regulatory non-coding RNAs are diverse and abundant in an extremophilic microbial community*”. *mSystems*.
- **Gelsinger, D.R.** and J. DiRuggiero. **2018**. “*The non-coding regulatory RNA revolution in Archaea*”. *Genes*; 9(3), 141 <https://doi.org/10.3390/genes9030141>
- **Gelsinger, D.R.** and J. DiRuggiero. **2018**. “*Transcriptional landscape and regulatory roles of small non-coding RNAs in the oxidative stress response of the haloarchaeon Haloferax volcanii*”. *J Bacteriol*; 200:e00779-17 doi: 10.1128/JB.00779-17
- Crits-Christoph, A., **Gelsinger, D.R.**, Ma, B., Wierzechos, J., Ravel, J., Davila, A.F., Casero, M.C., and DiRuggiero, J. **2016**. “*Functional interactions of archaea, bacteria and viruses in a hypersaline endolithic community*”. *Env Microbiol*; 18:2064 PMID: 26914534
- Davila, A.F., Hawes, I., Araya, J.G., **Gelsinger, D.R.**, DiRuggiero, J., Ascaso, C., Osano, A., and Wierzechos, J. **2015**. “*In situ metabolism in halite endolithic microbial communities of the hyperarid Atacama Desert*”. *Front. Microbiol*; 6:1035 PMID: 26500612

- Trujillo, G., Aguinaldo, P., Anderson, C., Bustamante, J., **Gelsinger, D.R.**, Pastor, M.J, Wright, J., Marquez-Magaña, L., and Riggs, B. **2015** “*Near-peer STEM Mentoring Offers unexpected benefits for mentors from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds*”. *PURM*.

In preparation

- **Gelsinger, D.R.**, Reddy, R., Whittington, K., and DiRuggiero, J. **2020**. “*Post-transcriptional regulation of redox homeostasis during oxidative stress in haloarchaea by the small RNA SHOxi*”.

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

2019	Travel award for invited speakers to the International Workshop on Geo-Omics of Archaea (IWGOA)
2019	Invited Discussion Leader for the Gordon Research Seminar Archaea, RNA biology section
2017	Best poster award, Gordon Research Conference Archaea
2017	Trends in Microbiology best presentation award, Gordon Research Conference Archaea
2015	1 st place award for JHU CMDDB Annual Retreat Poster Competition, The Johns Hopkins University
2015	Institution Nominee for HHMI Gilliam Fellowship, The Johns Hopkins University
2014–2015	Wyche Fellowship, The Johns Hopkins University
2013	Instructional Related Activities (IRA) Grant, San Francisco State University
2013–2014	CSU Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP), San Francisco State University
2013–2014	NIH Minority Access to Research Careers (MARC), San Francisco State University
2013 & 2014	NSF University of Nevada, Las Vegas-China PIRE Undergraduate Research Experience
2012	Institutional Nominee for HHMI Exceptional Research Opportunities Program (EXROP), San Francisco State University
2012–2013	NIH MBRS Research Initiative for Scientific Enhancement (RISE), San Francisco State University

PRESENTATIONS

September 2019	<i>International Workshop on Geo-Omics of Archaea (IWGOA), SUSTech University, Shenzhen, China</i> Ribosome profiling reveals translation dynamics and alternative reading frame usage in Archaea (Invited speaker)
September 2019	<i>JHU CMDDB Annual Research Retreat, Liberty Mountain, PN</i> Ribosome profiling in Archaea reveals leaderless translation, novel translation initiation sites, and ribosome pausing at single codon resolution (poster)
July 2019	<i>Gordon Research Conferences Archaea: Ecology, Metabolism & Molecular Biology, Les Diablerets, Switzerland</i> SHOxi: a small RNA post-transcriptional regulator in the oxidative stress response of <i>Haloferax volcanii</i> (Poster)
January 2019	<i>Mid-Atlantic Microbiome Meetup (M³), Baltimore, Maryland</i> Novel insight in identifying and monitoring regulatory small non-coding RNAs in halophilic microbial communities from the Atacama Desert (Poster)
October 2018	<i>JHU CMDDB Annual Research Retreat, Rocky Gap, MD</i> Profiling global translational effects and translation regulation in an oxidative stress-resistant haloarchaea (Talk)
March 2018	<i>5th Meeting of Regulating with RNA in Bacteria & Archaea, Seville, Barcelona</i> Intergenic sRNA277.2: a post-transcriptional regulator of the oxidative stress response of the haloarchaeon <i>Haloferax volcanii</i> (Poster)
August 2017	<i>Gordon Research Conferences Archaea: Ecology, Metabolism & Molecular Biology, Waterville valley, New Hampshire</i> Transcriptional landscape and regulatory roles of small non-coding RNAs in the oxidative stress response of the haloarchaeon <i>Haloferax volcanii</i> (Poster)

October 2015	<i>JHU CMDB Annual Research Retreat, Saint Michaels, Maryland</i> Surviving in Extreme Environments by Regulating the Oxidative Stress Response in Haloarchaea (Poster)
July 2015	<i>Gordon Research Conferences Archaea: Ecology, Metabolism & Molecular Biology, Sunday River, Maine</i> Small RNA-mediated Regulation of Stress Response in Haloarchaea (Invited Talk)
April 2014	<i>ASBMB Annual Meeting, San Diego, California</i> Chemical inhibition of ammonia oxidation in the thermophilic nitrifying archaeon <i>Nitrosocaldus yellowstonii</i> (Poster)
January 2014	<i>CSUPERB Annual Meeting, Santa Clara, California</i> Chemical inhibition of ammonia oxidation in the thermophilic nitrifying archaeon <i>Nitrosocaldus yellowstonii</i> (Poster)
June 2013	<i>Symposium: China-US Collaborative Research on Life in Terrestrial Geothermal Springs, Yunnan University, Kunming, China</i> Inhibition of Ammonia Oxidation in the Thermophilic Ammonia-Oxidizing Archaeon <i>Nitrosocaldus yellowstonii</i> (Poster)
May 2013	<i>15th Annual COSE Student Project Showcase, San Francisco State University</i> Inhibition of Ammonia Oxidation in the Thermophilic Ammonia-Oxidizing Archaeon <i>Nitrosocaldus yellowstonii</i> (Poster)
August 2012	<i>SFSU Undergraduate Summer Research Symposium, San Francisco State University</i> <i>Nitrosocaldus yellowstonii</i> : Ammonia Oxidation at Low NH ₃ Concentrations (Talk)

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

PhD Research Assistant – Johns Hopkins U. RNA biology, molecular biology, & genomics 2015–2020

I used high throughput sequencing techniques (metagenomics/transcriptomics/ribosome profiling) to probe microbial dynamics of hypersaline endolithic communities in the Atacama Desert, Chile. I used bioinformatic approaches to identify novel small non-coding RNAs that regulate stress response in haloarchaea found in these endolithic communities to confer adaptation to such extreme environments. This was done using a two-pronged approach: (1) studying the regulation of the oxidative stress response of a cultured representative of the endolithic communities, *Haloferax volcanii*, in order to use genetics to elucidate mechanistic actions of sRNAs, and (2) development of a bioinformatic program, SnapT (<https://github.com/dgelsin/SnapT>), to identify and track sRNAs *in situ* over temporal scales in endolithic microbial communities. After *in silico* analysis, results were validated with *in vivo* experiments such as qPCR, northern blots, genetic manipulations (knockout, overexpression), and mRNA-sequencing. The majority of this work focused on the most up-regulated sRNA during oxidative stress in *H. volcanii*. I found that this sRNA, SHOxi, is highly specific to oxidative stress conditions, that it is required for increased survival, and that its mechanistic function is to post-transcriptional degrade a messenger RNA involved in redox homeostasis through RNA-RNA interactions, effectively reducing the amount of damage during oxidative stress. This work culminated into three publications (see PUBLICATIONS), and one more in preparation. Future work includes establishing the direct mechanistic action of SHOxi in *Haloferax volcanii* on all its potential targets and whether RNA-binding proteins are involved.

A second project I worked on was the first highly resolved view of translation in Archaea. This involved the adaptation and development of ribosome profiling for an extremophile with 2-3M intracellular salt concentrations. Coupling ribosome profiling with inhibitors and stress conditions I found evidence that many genes not only initiate on alternative translation start sites (aTSS) around and within open reading frames (ORFs) but that these aTSS may be regulated translationally during stress. This work demonstrates how a microbe with a gene dense genome can potentially produce proteins with distinct functions (isoforms) using the same gene. This work culminated into a publication (see PUBLICATIONS).

Undergraduate Research Scholar – San Francisco State U. Microbial ecology

2012–2014

I employed molecular, microbiological, and bioinformatic techniques to investigate the physiology and microbial interactions of nitrifying thermophilic archaea in geothermal springs. Major projects included: 1) transcriptional response to low and high substrate (NH₃) concentrations in AOA, 2) chemical inhibition of thermophilic AOA ammonia oxidation activity, and 3) exploring the physiology, genomics, and evolutionary relationship between novel thermophilic AOA from Chinese hot springs.

Summer Research Scholar – Tongji U. Shanghai, China, Biogeochemistry

August 2013 & 2014

I employed organic chemistry and isotopic techniques to investigate carbon metabolism of AOA. Used a variety of ¹³C-labeled carbon compounds in hot spring microcosms and extracted lipid biomarkers to use in conjunction with Liquid Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry and Gas Chromatography-Infrared-Mass Spectrometry.

FIELD WORK

Atacama Desert, Chile (2 trips)

January 2016 & February 2017

In collaboration with the NASA ARADS team we tested the capabilities of new rover technology to drill and collect deep subsurface samples for microbial phylogenetic and functional analysis. In addition, I did independent research on the dynamic metabolic capabilities of the endolithic microbial communities occupying halite nodules using *in situ* RNA acquisition and sequencing approaches.

Tengchong, Yunnan, China

July 2013

Participated in a collaborative NSF research project, Partnerships in International Research and Education (PIRE), to assess the ammonia oxidizing archaeal (AOA) diversity and investigate their metabolism and physiology in high temperature hydrothermal environments.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

CMDB Bioinformatics Bootcamp, Johns Hopkins University

Fall 2014

Week intensive course on big data analysis, Python scripting, and biostatistics taught by Galaxy founder Dr. James Taylor.

Bioinformatics Programming Group, San Francisco State University

Fall 2013

Learned Unix and became familiar with regular expressions, scripting, Python, and R.

SYNERGISTIC ACTIVITIES (EDUCATIONAL AND OUTREACH)

2017	Designed and taught lectures on microbial genomics and bioinformatics to undergraduates in the Microbiology course at the Johns Hopkins University Homewood Biology Department
2017	Laboratory Sustainability Representative of a pilot sustainability project at JHU to make laboratories greener and more sustainable
2016–present	Lead member of the graduate student group Teachers and Researchers United (TRU) in order to promote better conditions for graduate students at JHU
2016	Invited and taught a bioinformatics lecture at the Halophiles 2016 meeting
2016	Invited and taught Quantitative Biology Bootcamp to Master Students at the University of Puerto Rico Mayaguez Campus
2016	Mentor for an undergraduate (Aldo Salazar Morales) recipient of the NSF REU
2016	Teacher's Assistant in Cell Biology
2015–present	Executive lead position of the Mentoring to Inspire Diversity in Science (MInDS) group at the Department of Biology, the Johns Hopkins University. MInDS is a peer-mentorship and outreach group for graduate students the in the CMDB program at JHU

2015 Mentor in STEM Achievement in Baltimore Elementary Schools (SABES)

2015 Teacher's Assistant in Biochemistry

2012–2014 Mentor in Biology Undergraduate Mentoring Program (BUMP) which partners successful upper division biology majors with entering biology majors to provide them with guidance and advice. Influential in shaping the direction of the program and bringing other students into research

STUDENT MENTORSHIP

Rahul Reddy	Undergraduate student	09/2014 – 05/2019
Kevin Maciuba	CMDB PhD rotation student	Fall 2015
Gherman Uritskiy	CMDB PhD rotation student	Spring 2016
Aldo Morales	REU undergraduate student	Summer 2016
Ariel Parker	CMDB PhD rotation student	Fall 2016
Neta Shwartz	CMDB PhD rotation student	Winter 2016
Katherine Huffer	CMDB PhD rotation student	Fall 2017
Michelle Biederman	CMDB PhD rotation student	Winter 2017
Anthony Mclean	CMDB PhD rotation student	Spring 2018
Kathleen Whittington	Undergraduate student	03/2018 – 05/2019
Diego Tanton	Undergraduate student	03/2018 – 08/2018
Emma Dallon	CMDB PhD rotation student	Fall 2018
Grace Tamoeolau	CMDB PhD rotation student	Fall 2018
Sara Debic	CMDB PhD rotation student	Fall 2019
Dylan Taylor	CMDB PhD rotation student	Winter 2020
Rima Sakhawala	CMDB PhD rotation student	Winter 2020

LANGUAGES

Fluency in Spanish (mother tongue), English, and French (intermediate to advanced).