1	Chloroplast cold-resistance is mediated by the acidic domain of the RNA						
2	binding protein CP31A						
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- 23 Author contributions
- 24 C.S.-L. conceived the original research plan; D.L. supervised the experiments; A.O. generated the
- transgenic plant lines and performed their analysis. M.-K. L. performed the RIP-Seq and microarray
- 26 experiments; J.M.M. analyzed the RIP-Seq data. B.L. performed the SSMART analysis; T.R. performed
- 27 mutant analyses. C.S.-L., D.L. and U.O. supervised the project, designed the experiments and analyzed the
- 28 data; C.S.-L. wrote the article with contributions of all the authors; C.S.-L. agrees to serve as the author
- 29 responsible for contact and ensures communication.
- 30 One sentence summary:
- 31 Cold exposure induces increased RNA association of the RRM protein CP31A, which mediates cold-
- 32 resistance of Arabidopsis thaliana via its acidic domain
- 33

#### 34 Abstract

Chloroplast RNA metabolism is characterized by long-lived mRNAs that undergo a multitude of post-35 transcriptional processing events. Chloroplast RNA accumulation responds to environmental cues, foremost 36 37 light and temperature. A large number of nuclear-encoded RNA-binding proteins (RBPs) are required for 38 chloroplast RNA metabolism, but we do not yet know how chloroplast RBPs convert abiotic signals into 39 gene expression changes. Previous studies showed that the chloroplast ribonucleoprotein 31A (CP31A) is 40 required for the stabilization of multiple chloroplast mRNAs in the cold, and that the phosphorylation of CP31A at various residues within its N-terminal acidic domain (AD) can alter its affinity for RNA in vitro. 41 42 Loss of CP31A leads to cold sensitive plants that exhibit bleached tissue at the center of the vegetative 43 rosette. Here, by applying RIP-Seq, we demonstrated that CP31A shows increased affinity for a large 44 number of chloroplast RNAs in vivo in the cold. Among the main targets of CP31A were RNAs encoding 45 subunits of the NDH complex and loss of CP31A lead to reduced accumulation of *ndh* transcripts. Deletion 46 analyses revealed that cold-dependent RNA binding and cold resistance of chloroplast development both 47 depend on the AD of CP31A. Together, our analysis established the AD of CP31A as a key mediator of 48 cold acclimation of the chloroplast transcriptome.

#### 49 Introduction

50 Chloroplasts contain genetic information that is essential for photosynthesis. The expression of this 51 information is realized by a unique mixture of ancestral bacterial and derived eukaryotic features (Barkan, 52 2011). Chloroplast gene expression adapts to various environmental changes, including light and 53 temperature (e.g. Klein, 1991; Mentzen and Wurtele, 2008; Cho et al., 2009; Castandet et al., 2016). 54 Contributions to such acclimation processes have been described on the transcriptional level (Pfannschmidt, 55 2003; Tsunoyama et al., 2004), but post-transcriptional processes are likely to dominate (Deng and Gruissem, 1987; Eberhard et al., 2002; Udy et al., 2012). One key change in posttranscriptional processes 56 57 between chloroplast and their bacterial ancestors are the vastly increased RNA half lives in the organelle. 58 In bacteria, transcription and translation are usually directly coupled and mRNAs have short half-lives (in 59 the range of minutes; Selinger et al., 2003). In chloroplasts, the half-lives of mRNAs are long (in the range 60 of hours) and untranslated RNAs accumulate in large amounts (Klaff and Gruissem, 1991; Germain et al., 2012). The turnover rates of chloroplast RNAs change in response to developmental and environmental 61 cues, which is suggesting that RNA stability is regulated in chloroplasts (Deng et al., 1989; Klaff and 62 63 Gruissem, 1991; Biehl et al., 2005; Bollenbach et al., 2007; Germain et al., 2013; Manavski et al., 2018), 64 but the underlying regulatory factors are largely unknown. Possible candidates for regulators of RNA 65 stability are pentatricopeptide repeat (PPR) proteins and chloroplast ribonucleoproteins (cpRNPs). PPR proteins specifically associate with one or few RNAs (Barkan and Small, 2014), while cpRNPs are 66

generalists that bind to a large number of mRNAs (Kupsch et al., 2012; Teubner et al., 2017). Two cpRNPs
named CP29A and CP31A were previously shown to be required for the accumulation of chloroplast RNAs
in the cold, which makes them interesting candidates to be mediators of global RNA stability during the
acclimation to changing temperature conditions (Kupsch et al., 2012).

71 The cpRNP protein family consists of ten members in Arabidopsis thaliana (Ruwe et al., 2011). All cpRNPs 72 are targeted to the chloroplast post-translationally, and dedicated import receptors appear to be responsible 73 for their transport across the chloroplast envelope (Li and Sugiura, 1990; Grimmer et al., 2014). cpRNPs 74 are highly regulated proteins that react to various external and internal signals, particularly light, which 75 controls both their expression and their protein modification state (summarized in Ruwe et al., 2011). 76 Several cpRNPs have been identified as phosphoproteins (Reiland et al., 2009) and an N-terminally 77 acetylated isoform of CP29A was shown to respond rapidly to changes in light and developmental stages 78 (Wang et al., 2006). The phosphorylation of cpRNPs can alter their RNA-binding characteristics in vitro (Lisitsky and Schuster, 1995; Loza-Tavera et al., 2006), but evidence for condition-dependent RNA binding 79 80 of cpRNPs or any other chloroplast RBPs in vivo are lacking.

81 Several molecular functions have been suggested for cpRNPs. In vitro, a tobacco homolog of Arabidopsis 82 CP31A has been shown to support RNA editing of multiple sites (Hirose and Sugiura, 2001). Other cpRNPs 83 have been reported to be required for the 3'-end processing of several mRNAs (Schuster and Gruissem, 84 1991; Hayes et al., 1996; Schuster et al., 1999). They also support the ribozymatic maturation of a viroid 85 RNA genome (Daros and Flores, 2002). The most notable and general function of cpRNPs is however their 86 role in stabilizing mRNAs. In vitro, cpRNPs protect the mRNA encoding the D1 subunit of photosystem II 87 against degradation (Nakamura et al., 2001). In vivo, they are required for the accumulation of a multitude 88 of mRNAs (Kupsch et al., 2012; Teubner et al., 2017). Co-immunoprecipitation analyses have demonstrated 89 that cpRNPs are associated with multiple chloroplast RNAs (Kupsch et al., 2012; Teubner et al., 2017), and that they prefer unprocessed (unspliced) RNAs over mature forms (Nakamura et al., 1999). Together, the 90 91 data obtained from these functional analyses show that cpRNPs have a broad target range and contribute to 92 various RNA-processing events and to RNA stabilization.

All cpRNPs share a similar design with two RNA recognition motifs (RRMs) that are preceded by a domain
rich in acidic residues (acidic domain; AD). While the RRMs are well characterized RNA binding domains
(Li and Sugiura, 1991; Ye and Sugiura, 1992; Lisitsky et al., 1995), the role of the AD remains to be
determined. The cpRNP CP31A stands out from the family in having a particularly long acidic domain,
which contains two phosphorylated serine residues within a short repeat element of five amino acids
(Reiland et al., 2009). CP31A's AD was suggested to be important for RNA editing based on *in vitro* assays
(Hirose and Sugiura, 2001). The AD of the spinach homolog of CP31A is supportive of RNA binding *in*

100 vitro, but does not bind RNA itself (Lisitsky and Schuster, 1995). Recently, plastid casein kinase II (pCKII) 101 was demonstrated to phosphorylate the acidic domain of CP31A in vitro (Schonberg et al., 2014). Genetic 102 analyses have demonstrated that Arabidopsis CP31A supports RNA editing at multiple sites and modulates 103 the stability of multiple mRNAs (Tillich et al., 2009; Kupsch et al., 2012). An RNA strongly affected in 104 *cp31a* mutants was the *ndhF* mRNA, which encodes a subunit of the NDH complex. CP31A binds to the 105 3'-UTR of *ndhF* and is required for the generation of the *ndhF* 3'-terminus (Kupsch et al., 2012). Mutants 106 of CP31A display cold sensitivity: the germination rate of null mutants is reduced and their newly emerging 107 leaf tissue bleaches at 8°C (Kupsch et al., 2012). All analyzed proteins of the photosynthetic apparatus are 108 reduced in this defective tissue, which is at least in part due to multiple defects in RNA processing (e.g., 109 RNA splicing, RNA editing, and intercistronic processing), but is likely primarily caused by the strong 110 reduction of multiple chloroplast mRNAs (Kupsch et al., 2012). However, it remains unclear how CP31A 111 mechanistically confers cold resistance and whether it directly perceives cold as a signal. We hypothesized 112 that the AD could act as a regulatory domain for RNA binding and cold-responsiveness. We therefore 113 analyzed the ability of CP31A to associate with RNA in response to cold and assessed the role of the AD 114 for CP31A's ability to bind and process chloroplast RNA. Our results demonstrate that the AD of CP31A 115 is essential for plant cold acclimation, at least in part because of its supportive role for cold-dependent RNA 116 binding.

# 117 **Results**

#### 118 The RRM domains of CP31A are sufficient for RNA editing of CP31A-dependent sites

119 The binding of RBPs to their RNA targets can be altered by protein modifications. For several members of 120 the cpRNP family, phosphorylation has been demonstrated to alter RNA binding *in vitro* (Lisitsky and 121 Schuster, 1995; Loza-Tavera et al., 2006; Reiland et al., 2009). As phosphoproteomic analyses identified 122 several phosphorylation sites within the acidic N-terminal domain of CP31A (Reiland et al., 2009; 123 Schonberg et al., 2014), we decided to test the function of this acidic phosphodomain by deletion 124 mutagenesis. We designed three T-DNA based constructs to express CP31A variants in Arabidopsis (Fig. 125 1A). The first two expressed variants lack the AD. One was driven by the 35S promoter, while the other 126 was driven by the endogenous genomic region upstream of the transcriptional start site, presumably 127 encompassing the unknown CP31A promoter (12769646 to 12767953 of the Arabidopsis thaliana 128 chromosome 4 sequence; nucleotides -1 to -1694 relative to the CP31A start codon). These constructs were 129 introduced into a *cp31a*-deficient background (homozygous *cp31a*-1 null allele) by *Agrobacterium*-130 mediated gene transfer. In addition, the full-length protein driven by its native promoter was used as a positive control. All plant lines retrieved showed normal development and were indistinguishable from wt 131 132 plants under normal growth conditions (see below).

133

134 We assessed CP31A protein accumulation 135 in our transgenic lines by using an antibody 136 that reacts to two peptides: one situated in 137 the linker between the two RRM domains 138 and another at the C-terminus of the protein (Kupsch et al. 2012). The antibody thus 139 140 detects both the full-length as well as the 141 AD-deletion proteins. We observed accumulation of proteins that were of the 142 143 appropriate size for all transgenic lines (Fig. 1B). These data demonstrate that the full-144 length and AD-deficient proteins were 145 146 expressed and specifically detected by the 147 antibody. We quantified signals from three 148 independent transgenic lines for each 149 construct (Fig. 1B, C). As expected, there is 150 variability in expression between individual 151 lines, which can be attributed to position 152 effects of the transgene insertion site. In 153 sum, these analyses demonstrate that all 154 three constructs were successfully 155 expressed CP31A-deficient in а 156 background.





null mutants. bar = selectable marker; black arrows indicate promoters. TP = transit peptide. NosT = the terminator of the nos gene. LB/RB = borders of the *Agrobacterium* T-DNA.

B) Western analysis of transgenic lines. Blots were probed with a HSP70 antibody to control for loading and with an antiserum recognizing CP31A. The position of the full-length protein and the truncated, AD-less version are indicated by filled and open arrowheads, respectively.

C) Quantification of CP31A signals normalized to HSP70 signals (from (B)).

157 Since CP31A has been shown to support

RNA editing at 13 specific sites (Tillich et al., 2009), we investigated these and additional sites in our complementation lines by performing next-generation sequencing of cloned amplified cDNA (Bentolila et al., 2013), testing a total of 16 sites on 10 amplicons. This included sites that were previously shown not to be affected in *cp31a* mutants. Two wt and two *cp31a-1* null mutant plants served as controls. The lowest read coverage observed for any individual site was above 500 reads per site and was found for site *ndhD* 116281 (number refers to the position in the *Arabidopsis* chloroplast genome), while the average coverage for all sites and all genotypes analyzed was 3132 reads per site.

165 Of the 13 sites previously described to be dependent on CP31A, we confirmed that RNA editing of 11 sites 166 was reduced in cp31a-1 mutants (Fig. 2A). Additional defects were found for two previously unreported

sites in *ndhB* (94999, 96579), whereas no defect was observed for the previously reported sites, *petL* (65716)
and *ndhB* (95225). We speculate that these differences reflect differences in growth conditions: our plants
were grown under long-day conditions (16-h light/8-h dark), whereas the previous study used short-day
conditions (8-h light/16-h dark; Tillich et al., 2009). Importantly, all our complementation lines, irrespective
of the utilized promoter or the presence of the AD showed wt-like editing states at most analyzed sites (Fig.
2A).



173

# 174 Figure 2: Analysis of RNA editing sites in *cp31a* complementation lines.

A) Summary of results from amplicon sequencing of RNA editing sites in complementation lines. Editing sites were amplified by PCR and sequenced on an Illumina platform using barcoded adapters that allowed to eliminate duplicate amplifications. Each individual cDNA sequence is scored for its editing status and the frequency of edited versus non-edited cDNAs is shown. Error bars represent the standard deviation calculated from two replicate experiments with WT and *cp31a* mutants, respectively. Numbers refer to the position of the editing site in the *Arabidopsis thaliana* chloroplast genome.

B) Schematic overview of two genes with their editing sites that were assessed by Sanger sequencing of amplified
 cDNAs. Arrows indicate positions of primers used for cDNA amplification.

183 C) Excerpts from electropherograms showing fluorescence signals for base triplets with the editing site always at the

184 center. Bases marked by red arrows are targets of CP31A. Green traces refer to T signals, blue to C signals and red to 185 A signals. The expected edited (on cDNA) and unedited (on DNA) triplets are shown above. CR = control sites not

186 affected by CP31A according to Tillich et al (2009).

187

188 We confirmed this finding by independent amplification and Sanger sequencing of selected RNA-editing

189 sites of the *ndhD* and *rps14* mRNAs. The amplicons we sequenced harbored both, CP31A-dependent and

CP31A-independent editing sites (Fig. 2B). Our sequencing confirmed that in *cp31a* mutants, sites *ndhD*3, 4 and 5, *rps14*-2 show reduced editing efficiency when compared to wt. This defect is complemented in
the AD-less CP31A protein (Fig. 2C). The successful complementation demonstrates that the RRM domains
are sufficient for the RNA-editing function of CP31A.

# 194 The AD of CP31A is not essential for, but is 195 supportive of the stability of the *ndhF* mRNA

196 We next analyzed the RNA-stabilizing function of 197 CP31A by focusing on *ndhF*, which is its major 198 target under normal growth conditions (Tillich et 199 al., 2009). Using RNA gel-blot hybridization, we quantified the amount of ndhF mRNA in the 200 201 transgenic lines. The accumulation of this transcript 202 is at least partially restored in all complementing 203 lines relative to the *cp31a* mutant (Fig. 3A, B). Even 204 in a line with very little CP31A accumulation and 205 lacking the AD, a signal for *ndhF* is visible (#3-3-3. 206 Fig. 1, Fig. 3A,B). This indicates that the RRM domains were sufficient to stabilize the ndhF207 208 mRNA. However, we observed marked differences 209 in the efficiency of *ndhF* stabilization between the 210 full-length and AD-deficient proteins. Lines accumulating large amounts of the AD-less CP31A 211 protein had only little more *ndhF* mRNA than lines 212 expressing much less full-length CP31A protein 213 (compare for example line #3-1-3 with #4-17-1 in 214 Fig. 1B and Fig. 3A). This was visualized by 215 calculating the ratio of *ndhF* mRNA levels to 216 217 CP31A protein levels (i.e., the stabilization



Figure 3: Analysis of the accumulation of the *ndhF* mRNA in *cp31a* complementation lines.

A) RNA gel blot analysis of the *ndhF* mRNA in various *cp31a* complementation lines.  $4 \mu g$  total cellular RNA were separated by denaturing agarose gel electrophoresis, transferred to a nylon membrane and probed for *ndhF*. The transcript labelled with an arrowhead represents the full-length *ndhF* mRNA, whereas smaller signals correspond to degradation products (Kupsch et al. 2012). The nylon membrane was labeled with methylene blue to control for equal loading (excerpt with 23S rRNA shown below blot).

B) Quantification of the full-length ndhF transcript labeled with an arrowhead in (A).

C) Ratio of *ndhF* mRNA levels over CP31A protein levels (from Fig. 1C).

- efficiencies; Fig. 3C), which clearly showed that the full-length proteins outperformed the AD-less proteins
- in stabilizing the *ndhF* mRNA. Together, these results show that the AD supports but is not essential for
- stabilizing the *ndhF* mRNA and that the RRM domains are capable of performing this task by themselves.

221

### 222 The AD is required for cold-stress tolerance

To test the impact of the AD on CP31A-mediated cold 223 224 tolerance, we challenged 2-week-old plants from the 225 transgenic lines with low temperature (8°C) for 5 weeks. 226 Under this treatment, the *cp31a*-null lines are known to display 227 bleaching of the freshly emerging tissue at the center of the leaf rosette (Fig. 4A). Similar losses of pigment were also found in 228 the lines expressing the AD-less CP31A, but not in wt plants 229 230 or in mutant plants complemented with the full-length protein 231 (Fig. 4A). The pigment deficiency has been shown to be 232 paralleled by a global reduction of the chloroplast-encoded 233 proteins required for photosynthesis in *cp31a* mutants (Kupsch 234 et al., 2012). This reduction of photosynthetic proteins was 235 also observed in plants expressing the AD-less CP31A 236 while plants expressing full-length CP31A proteins. 237 accumulated protein amounts similar to those seen in wt plants (Suppl. Fig. 1). Next, we tested the accumulation of CP31A 238 239 and ndhF in these lines under cold exposure. We separately harvested full leaves, as well as the bleached center part of 240 241 rosettes in case molecular defects are restricted to the phenotypically conspicuous tissue. However, both tissues 242 243 showed the same tendency: In line with the findings at normal growth temperatures, the *ndhF*/CP31A ratio was consistently 244 245 higher for plants expressing full-length CP31A versus plants expressing the AD-less protein (Fig. 4B/C and Suppl. Fig. 2). 246

# Figure 4: Analysis of *cp31a* complementation lines during coldacclimation.

A) Phenotypes of complementation lines grown at  $23^{\circ}$ C or challenged with 8°C for five weeks. Note the bleached tissue in the center of the rosette in *cp31a* deficient plants and in plants lacking the AD.



B) Analysis of CP31A and HSP70 protein accumulation and *ndhF* mRNA accumulation in *cp31a* complementation
lines. Here, the entire rosette leaves were used for protein and RNA extraction. Panels from top to bottom: immunoblot
analysis of HSP70 proteins as loading control; immunoblot analysis of CP31A proteins; RNA gel blot analysis of *ndhF*; Methylene blue stain of cytosolic rRNA as loading control; Ratio of quantified *ndhF* and CP31A signals. Filled
and open arrowheads indicate full-length and AD-less CP31A, respectively, while the small arrowhead denotes the
full-length *ndhF* transcript.

259 C) Same analysis as in (B), but with tissue only from the center of the rosette (bleached area in *cp31a* null mutants).

These experiments show that the AD of CP31A supports the accumulation of chloroplast RNA and is essential for conferring cold resistance to emerging leaf tissue in *Arabidopsis*.

# CP31A associates with multiple mRNAs with a preference for transcripts encoding subunits of the NDH complex, and is required for *ndh* mRNA accumulation at standard growth temperatures

264 RBPs of various origins and organisms show differential expression under temperature changes, and genetic 265 studies indicate that they are important for temperature-dependent RNA processing (Lin et al., 2010; Malay 266 et al., 2011; Gotic et al., 2016). That said, few studies have examined whether the binding of RBPs to their 267 RNA targets is modified in response to external and internal cues in vivo. Since CP31A is required for cold 268 resistance, we tested whether its ability to bind RNA is modified at low temperature and also assayed the 269 importance of the AD for this response. Previous studies using low-resolution techniques could only identify 270 whole transcripts as targets of CP31A (Kupsch et al., 2012). We here used a RIP-Seq approach to obtain better resolution (Suppl. Fig. 3A). For this, wt Arabidopsis seedlings and plants expressing the AD-less 271 272 CP31A protein in a *cp31a* background were grown for 14 days under normal growth conditions and then 273 subjected to formaldehyde cross-linking. For cold tests, seedlings were grown for 13 days at standard growth 274 temperature (21°C), transferred to 4°C for 24 hours, and were then subjected to cross-linking and 275 immunoprecipitation (IP; Kupsch et al., 2012). We used such a short incubation time in the cold to avoid 276 pleiotropic effects that can be expected in the bleached tissue resulting from longer cold challenges. The 277 efficiency of precipitation was comparable between samples grown at normal and low temperatures (Suppl. 278 Fig. 3B). RIP-Seq libraries were prepared in duplicate from input and pellet samples (Suppl. Fig. 3C). We 279 tested the reproducibility of the RIP-Seq experiments by calculating pairwise correlation coefficients across 280 all samples (Suppl. Fig. 3D). We found strong correlations among the input samples (average Pearson 281 coefficient (R): 0.95), and the pellet samples from the IP (average Pearson coefficient (R): 0.97). As 282 expected, input and pellet samples formed separate clusters in our correlation analysis (Suppl. Fig. 3D). This 283 analysis demonstrates high reproducibility between biological replicates of our RIP-Seq assay.

For the analysis of RIP-Seq reads, we followed established procedures originally developed for ChIP-Seq 284 285 (Bardet et al., 2011; Muino et al., 2011). We started by identifying transcript regions with an enrichment of 286 RNA in pellet samples over input samples. In total, 75 different binding regions were identified as 287 significant in at least one of the four experiment, which are henceforth called binding sites (BSs). The 75 288 BSs of CP31A are located in 44 transcripts of diverse functionality. Of these 44 transcripts, 31 were also 289 identified by previous RIP-Chip experiments (Suppl. Tab. 1, Suppl. Fig. 4). The difference observed is likely 290 due to methodological dissimilarities. Purified chloroplast stroma was used for the previous RIP-Chip 291 experiments without a cross-link, while here, we used cross-linked frozen total leaf tissue in the RIP-seq. 292 Given these technical differences, it was gratifying to see a similar set of transcripts enriched in the two 293 types of RIP experiments (Suppl. Tab. 1). We next focused on those BSs located within a gene body and

294 thus can be clearly assigned to a specific gene. By contrast, binding sites within intergenic regions cannot 295 be easily assigned to individual genes due to the polycistronic nature of chloroplast transcripts. Assigned 296 BSs are found in genes for the photosynthetic complexes as well as for the gene expression apparatus (Tab. 297 1). We compared the actual distribution of BSs with the calculated numbers of BSs expected for each 298 functional category (if random binding in the transcriptome is assumed; Tab. 1). This demonstrated that the 299 NDH complex is the only functional category overrepresented among RIP-Seq targets (12 found versus 3 300 expected; Tab. 1). We also found an unexpected large number of binding sites antisense to coding regions 301 of known genes (Tab. 1). Although antisense RNAs are known to exist in chloroplasts, their levels do not 302 (with a few exceptions) reach those of sense RNAs and their functions (if any) remain unclear (Nakamura 303 et al., 2003; Hotto et al., 2010; Hotto et al., 2011; Sharwood et al., 2011). Consequently, the functional 304 significance of CP31A's association with antisense RNAs remains unclear as well.

	0			r r				
	Unique CP31A binding sites <sup>1</sup>		Unique CP31A target genes <sup>2</sup>		Length of potential target genes (bp) <sup>3</sup>		Expected unique binding sites <sup>4</sup>	
	sense	antisense	sense	antisense	sense	antisense	sense	antisense
NDH complex	12	0	6	0	13002	13002	3	3
Photosynthesis (except <i>ndh</i> genes)	6	3	5	3	23644	23644	6	6
Other metabolism	4	0	2	0	4580	4580	1	1
Ribosome	0	5	0	5	22778	22778	6	6
RNA polymerase	3	1	3	1	11170	11170	3	3
tRNA	2	1	2	1	10196	10196	2	2
Other	2	9	2	4	24177	24177	6	6
All BS	29	19	20	14			27	27
Total BSs in intergenic regions	27		NA		44931		21	
Total BSs	75		34				75	

305 Table 1: Summary of target sites of CP31A across all samples analyzed in RIP-Seq experiments

306

<sup>1</sup> this includes binding sites identified in all samples; rRNAs were excluded from calling binding sites

308 <sup>2</sup> gene annotations according to Araport11

309 <sup>3</sup> sum of the length of all genes within a category

<sup>4</sup> number of target sites expected in a gene class if the 75 binding sites are randomly distributed in the

entire chloroplast genome and if the abundance of transcripts is considered equal between all genes (i.e.

312 depends only on the combined length of all genes within a class)

313 It is however interesting that at least for the main target category, the *ndh* genes, a preference for sense sites

314 is evident (Tab. 1), suggesting that CP31A is relevant for *ndh* mRNA expression. We therefore analyzed

315 chloroplast RNA levels in cp31a versus wt samples at normal 316 temperatures using an oligonucleotide tiling array that 317 represents the entire chloroplast genome of Arabidopsis 318 thaliana. We scored only probes whose RNA levels were at least 319 one third lower in the mutant compared to wt. Of all exon probes 320 in the array, 16% represent *ndh* sequences. Importantly, among 321 exon probes whose signals were decreased by at least 0.6-fold in 322 the mutants, 75% contained ndh sequences (Fig. 5A, B). No 323 other functional category showed enrichment in this analysis. To 324 confirm these results, we performed RNA gel-blot hybridization 325 experiments for four *ndh* genes that represent the four *ndh* 326 operons in the chloroplast genome (Fig. 5C). We analyzed cp31a 327 mutant RNAs alongside RNAs from seedlings with impairment 328 in the expression of SIGMA FACTOR 4 (SIG4), which is 329 specifically required for the transcription of the *ndhF* mRNA 330 al., 2005), and **CHLORORESPIRATORY** (Favory et 331 REDUCTION 2 (CRR2), which is required for the accumulation 332 of monocistronic *ndhB* transcripts (Hashimoto et al., 2003). As 333 expected, the control mutants showed specific defects for their 334 known target RNAs (Fig. 5C). By contrast, the *ndhK* transcripts 335 accumulated to normal levels in these two control lines, and the 336 ndhD mRNA was only slightly decreased (Fig. 5C). In contrast 337 and consistent with our microarray results, the cp31a mutants 338 displayed reductions in all four *ndh* transcripts analyzed. The 339 decrease was most pronounced for *ndhF*, strong for *ndhK* and 340 *ndhB*, and somewhat weaker for *ndhD* (Fig. 5C). Collectively, 341 these findings indicate that CP31A stabilizes mRNAs from all four *ndh* operons, suggesting that CP31A regulates *ndh* mRNAs 342 343 as a group.

# 1%<sup>2%</sup> 3%\_2% A) B) 4% 8% 7% 10% 10% 32% 8% 75% 16% wt/cp31a > 1.5 All probes 119 probes 2274 probes NDH complex gene expression ycf1 ATP synthase ■ vcf2 Cytochrome b/f complex others PSII PSI C) cp31a sia4 wt(1/2) wt(1/4) crr2 wt Kb ndhF 2 ndhD 2ndhK 2 ndhB

### 344 Figure 5: Analysis of RNA accumulation in *cp31a* mutants.

A) Summary of microarray analyses of 14 days old wt and *cp31a* 

mutant seedlings. Relative abundance of exon probes showing at least 1.5 fold stronger signals in wt versus *cp31a* mutants. Three replicate microarray hybridizations were analyzed and assigned to different gene categories.

348 B) Relative distribution of all exon probes on the microarray to different gene categories.

C) RNA gel blot analysis of 14 days old Arabidopsis seedlings.  $4 \mu g$  RNA from from wt, *cp31a* mutants, and two control mutants (*crr2* and *sig4*) together with dilutions of wt samples (1/2 and 1/4) were probed with radiolabeled RNA probes against four different *ndh* genes. The resulting autoradiographs are always shown with the corresponding methylene blue stains of the membranes (below). The 2 kb marker band is shown as a reference.

# 353 Arabidopsis CP31A prefers U-rich sequences in vivo

354 Prior in vitro experiments showed that a CP31A homolog in tobacco prefers homopolymers of G and U (Li 355 and Sugiura, 1991). We asked whether a sequence preference can be identified in our dataset, i.e. in vivo, 356 as well. We used the SSMART motif finder (Munteanu et al., 2018) to query BSs in our RIP-Seq data for common sequences. This uncovered consensus motifs with a clear preference for Us (Fig. 6A; Suppl. Fig. 357 5). We next compared the frequencies of all possible trinucleotides within significant CP31A BSs against 358 359 those in all chloroplast coding sequences. Indeed, we found that UUU was the most strongly enriched 360 trinucleotide in this comparison, followed by a number of other U-rich trinucleotides (Fig. 6B). We therefore 361 conclude that CP31A preferentially binds U-rich sequences. As U-rich trinucleotides are the most common 362 trinucleotides in the AT-rich chloroplast genome, our findings suggest that CP31A has evolved to allow a 363 broad RNA target range in the chloroplast transcriptome.



Figure 6: Analysis of sequence elements in CP31A BSs

A) Top scoring consensus motifs identified in CP31A BSs. The SSMART RNA motif finder was run on all significant BSs detected in wt plants grown in cold conditions, as under these conditions, the number of BSs was the highest. The contribution of each BS to the consensus motifs was calculated according to its adjusted p-value - the more significant the BS, the stronger its impact on the consensus.

B) Overrepresentation of the UUU(TTT) trinucleotide in CP31A BSs. The scatterplot shows the frequency of all possible trinucleotide sequences in the CP31A BSs regions (y-axis) versus the trinucleotide frequency in all chloroplast coding sequences. Trinucleotides with significant enrichment in RIP-Seq BS regions are marked in red (p<0.01) or blue (p<0.05).

## 364 CP31A shows an increased association with RNA after cold exposure

365 We hypothesized that CP31A might impact cold resistance in Arabidopsis plants through temperature-

dependent changes in its affinity for some or all of its target RNAs, which could affect their stability,

367 processing, and/or translation. We therefore compared BSs according to how reliable their enrichment in a given dataset is, based on its FDR value. Using the FDR values, we first focuses on the effect of cold on 368 369 RNA binding of full-length CP31A and then analyzed the effect of the loss of the AD on binding (next 370 chapter). A majority of BSs were found with high significance in CP31A precipitates in the cold, but were 371 not significantly enriched at higher temperature. This was already visible for some sites in the coverage 372 graphs, as shown in Fig. 7A for binding sites within the *rpl2* mRNAs, or for a site in the intergenic region 373 between the rps14 and psbZ genes. Many BSs show at least some read coverage at both temperatures, but 374 the FDR analysis helped to separate significant from non-significant BSs. The FDR level is displayed for 375 all 75 binding sites as a heat map in Suppl. Fig. 6 and is summarized in Fig. 7B. Most importantly, 30 BSs 376 show significant enrichment with full-length CP31A at 4°C, but not at 21°C (Fig. 7B). Only 9 sites show 377 the opposite behavior, that is, significant enrichment only at 21°C, but not at 4°C. Thus many more sites 378 showed increased versus decreased association with CP31A after cold exposure. Three of the BSs gained in 379 the cold were located in the *ndhF* mRNA, which is known to be a prime target of CP31A (Kupsch et al., 380 2012). Four more CP31A BSs in *ndh* transcripts were cold-dependent as well (Suppl. Fig. 6). In general, 381 *ndh* mRNAs appeared to be important targets of CP31A under both temperature conditions (Suppl. Fig. 6). 382 Taken together, the results of our temperature-dependent RIP-Seq analysis demonstrate that RNA 383 association of full-length CP31A is higher under cold exposure than at normal temperature, and that *ndh* 384 mRNAs are prime targets under both normal and low temperatures.

# 385 The AD of CP31A supports cold-dependent RNA binding

386 The RRM domain is a highly versatile protein domain that functions in the context of adjacent protein 387 regions. Often, linkers between RRMs or protein domains outside the RRM domains support RNA 388 interactions in addition to the canonical RRM contacts (Lunde et al., 2007). Given this, we used RIP-Seq to 389 test whether the RNA-binding behavior of the AD-less CP31A protein differed from that of the full-length 390 protein. Using the same strategy described for our binding-site analysis with the full-length protein, we 391 scored significant BSs in plants expressing the AD-less variant grown under both normal and cold 392 conditions. We found that the AD-less version of CP31A bound far fewer RNAs than its full-length 393 counterpart (Fig. 7B, Suppl. Fig. 6). Under normal growth temperatures, we identified 41 significant BSs 394 (FDR < 0.05) for the full-length protein and only 10 for the AD-less version (Fig. 7B). Interestingly, the 395 AD-less protein is still responsive to cold: The AD-less protein associated with 18 sites in the cold that are 396 not found to co-precipitate significantly with the protein at normal temperatures (Fig. 7B). On the other 397 hand, AD-less CP31A bound 35 fewer sites than the full-length protein after cold exposure (Fig. 7B). This 398 demonstrates that the AD supports RNA binding under both conditions. Together, our results show (i) that 399 the two RRM domains still react to lowered temperatures in their ability to bind RNA, and (ii) that the AD 400 substantially supports but is not essential for RNA binding.



401

#### 402 Figure 7: RIP-Seq uncovers cold-induced RNA binding of CP31A.

A) Visualization of three examples of temperature-dependent CP31A binding sites. Top track shows the ratio of
precipitated versus input reads of RIP-Seq experiments of wt plants grown at 4°C (blue) or 21°C (orange, for two
biological replicates at each growth temperature). The track below represents in grey boxes the identified binding sites.
The bottom track shows the gene models in black and an intron in *rpl2* as a hatched line. The numbers on the thin
black line refer to positions on the *Arabidopsis* chloroplast genome. The red rectangles indicate temperature-dependent
CP31A BSs.

B) Venn diagram summarizing the occurrence of binding sites in the two genotypes and the two temperature regimes

410 used for growing the plants. For each genotype-temperature combination, only BSs with an FDR < 0.05 were counted.

# 411 Discussion

### 412 CP31A co-regulates *ndh* genes

413 During the evolution of chloroplasts from cyanobacterial ancestors, operon structures were disrupted and 414 operons were shuffled. Many chloroplast operons therefore include genes with different functions. The ndh 415 genes, for example, are separated into four transcriptional units in Arabidopsis and are mixed with genes 416 from other functional categories. This lack of conservation of operon structures suggests that transcriptional 417 units are less important than other processes for *ndh* gene regulation in the chloroplast context, giving way 418 to post-transcriptional processes. Translation plays an important role for regulation (Zoschke and Bock, 419 2018), but it remains unclear, how post-transcriptional co-regulation is achieved prior to translation. We 420 herein demonstrate that CP31A associates with many *ndh* mRNAs under both normal and low temperatures. All analyzed *ndh* mRNAs were reduced in *cp31a* mutants under normal growth conditions, indicating that 421 422 the CP31A-ndh interaction is functionally important. Since the loss of CP31A does not impede transcription 423 (Kupsch et al., 2012), we conclude that the protein is required for the stability of *ndh* mRNAs. An alternative explanation is that the loss of one RNA of the NDH complex has an indirect, hierarchical effect on the other 424 425 ndh RNAs that yields the observed reduction in all ndh mRNAs. This phenomenon has been well described for hierarchical protein synthesis cascades in chloroplasts (Choquet et al., 2001), but it has not been 426 427 previously shown to impact mRNA synthesis or stability. Moreover, the likelihood of this scenario is 428 weakened by our observation that the losses of *ndhF* or *ndhB* in the *sig4* or *crr2* mutants, respectively, were not followed by the loss of all *ndh* mRNAs. Taken together, our data indicate that CP31A combines ndh 429

430 mRNAs from different genomic loci into a post-transcriptional operon in the chloroplast. Similar post-431 transcriptional operons, or "RNA regulons", have been well-described in fruit flies, budding yeast, and 432 mammalian cells (Keene, 2007). In most cases, these RNA operons function in the combined translation 433 and/or stabilization of the participating RNAs (Gerber et al., 2004; Lykke-Andersen and Wagner, 2005; 434 Townley-Tilson et al., 2006). Given the RNA-stabilizing roles of cpRNPs in general and of CP31A in 435 particular, we propose that CP31A adjusts the stability of the *ndh* transcripts as a group.

# 436 The AD contributes to the ability of CP31A to recognize RNA

437 CP31A has two canonical RRM motifs, which contain the expected aromatic amino acid residues in the 438 RRM's RNP1 and RNP2 motifs known to be crucial for RNA binding (Ruwe et al., 2011). Here, we 439 show that these RRMs are sufficient to edit chloroplast RNAs and stabilize the *ndhF* mRNA. Still, compared 440 to the wt protein, more AD-less protein is needed to stabilize a similar level of *ndhF* mRNA. Moreover, loss 441 of the AD decreases the ability of CP31A to bind RNA. Thus, the AD domain supports but is not essential 442 for the RNA-binding and RNA-stabilizing functions of CP31A. We do not yet know how the AD achieves 443 its effects at the molecular level. Two non-exclusive possible modes of action are (i) a direct involvement 444 in protein-RNA interactions, and (ii) a role in protein-protein interactions for the recruitment of additional 445 RNA processing factors. Both modes of action were already described in non-plant systems for acidic 446 domains (Lunde et al., 2007). Such functional diversity of an AD has been described for two structural 447 relatives of CP31A, the non-plant RNA binding proteins hnRNP Q and hnRNP R, that also have an N-448 terminal AD and C-terminal RRM motifs (Geuens et al., 2016). The AD of hnRNP R was shown to support 449 RNA binding and is essential for the role of hnRNP R in the re-initiation of transcription (Fukuda et al., 450 2013). Similarly, the AD of hnRNP Q forms part of the RNA interaction surface (Hobor et al., 2018) and in 451 addition interacts with the editing factor Apobec (Quaresma et al., 2006). These examples show that it is 452 conceivable that the AD of CP31A contributes to protein-protein interactions (e.g., with other RNA-binding 453 proteins) and also contributes directly to RNA binding. This could serve to increase the affinity for RNA 454 and mediate RNA stabilization and RNA-processing events. A future structural analysis of CP31A bound 455 to RNA would greatly help to understand the mechanistic function of CP31A's AD.

#### 456 Cold-dependent RNA association of CP31A

457 Many RBPs show differential association with RNA depending on physico-chemical conditions *in vitro*, 458 but relatively little is known about how external and internal cues modulate the target spectrum and target 459 affinity of an RBP *in vivo*. Changed binding to RNA due to external signals has been shown for mammalian 460 RNA binding proteins (Rousseau et al., 2002; Cloutier et al., 2018), but even here, rarely on a genome-wide 451 scale (Benegiamo et al., 2018), and comparable data are missing for plants. Our present results on CP31A 462 show that plant RNA-binding proteins can change their RNA target profiles in response to an external signal,

463 here low temperatures, but it remains unclear how this differential RNA binding is induced. Cold is expected 464 to change RNA structures and CP31A can bind dsDNA in vitro, albeit with less affinity than ssDNA and 465 ssRNA (Li and Sugiura, 1991). It is also notable that spinach cpRNPs have been implicated in the 466 establishment of the structured 3'-ends of several mRNAs in vitro (Schuster and Gruissem, 1991; Lisitsky 467 et al., 1995; Hayes et al., 1996). These RNA termini require the formation of stem-loop RNA structures, 468 and cpRNP-like proteins have been found to associate with such stem-loops in UV cross-linking 469 experiments (Stern et al., 1989; Chen and Stern, 1991; Danon and Mayfield, 1991; Nickelsen and Link, 470 1993). Thus, the binding of CP31A to RNAs under cold exposure could reflect the emergence of RNA 471 structures that become more stable at lower temperatures. An *in vivo* analysis of the structure of CP31A 472 target sites under different temperatures could help address the question of why CP31A associates more 473 extensively with RNA in the cold.

474 What is the functional consequence of the increased RNA association of CP31A under cold exposure? Given 475 that chloroplast RNAs are lost in the bleached tissue of cp31a mutants, we propose that an increased 476 interaction with target transcripts could impact the resilience of these transcripts against RNases. An open 477 question however is, which of the many CP31A – transcript interactions in the cold is key to avoid bleaching. 478 Although it is likely that many of these interactions have an incremental effect on the phenotype, we can 479 make some guesses about major contributors. Loss of *ndh* mRNAs, although a prime target of CP31A, is 480 unlikely to be responsible for the bleaching phenotype, since *ndh* genes are downregulated in the cold in 481 Arabidopsis (Ivanov et al., 2012), and mutants devoid of the NDH complex do not show bleaching in the 482 cold (Li et al., 2004; Yamori et al., 2011). By contrast, there is a number of other CP31A target RNAs that 483 are known to be essential for chloroplast development and cold-dependent loss of their processing and 484 stabilization could well explain bleaching. This includes mRNAs for subunits of the ATP synthase (*atpA*, 485 atpB), of the cytochrome  $b_{of}$  complex (e.g. *petB*, *petD*), of the photosystems (e.g. *psaA*, *psbB*), as well as mRNAs for subunits of the plastid-encoded RNA polymerase (rpoB, rpoC2). Loss of the expression of any 486 487 of these genes leads to defective chloroplasts including pale phenotypes (Hajdukiewicz et al., 1997; 488 Rogalski et al., 2006; Stoppel et al., 2011; Manavski et al., 2015; Chen et al., 2016). Furthermore, many 489 mutants affected in chloroplast translation are more sensitive to cold than wt (Rogalski et al., 2008; 490 Fleischmann et al., 2011; Gu et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2016; Paieri et al., 2018; Pulido 491 et al., 2018). This includes mutants of chloroplast RNA binding proteins that affect translation and that show 492 cold-dependent bleaching of the center of the Arabidopsis rosette (Wang et al., 2016), which is strikingly 493 similar to the phenotype of *cp31a* mutants in the cold. CP31A binds to several mRNAs coding for ribosomal 494 proteins (e.g. *rps18*), thus being potentially important for the production of the translational machinery in 495 the cold. Taken together, we hypothesize that CP31A becomes important for the expression of a combination 496 of its target mRNAs in the cold; their compromised expression in cold-treated *cp31a* mutants leads to loss

497 of chloroplast development and thus bleaching. Complementation analyses and time-resolved analysis of
498 the accumulation of mRNAs in *cp31a* mutants during cold treatment could reveal, which mRNAs are key
499 targets for CP31A during cold acclimation.

#### 500 Methods

#### 501 **Plant growth**

502 *Arabidopsis thaliana* Columbia-0, *cp31a-1* T-DNA insertion mutants (Tillich et al., 2009) and AD-deletion 503 mutants were grown on soil with a 16-h-light/8-h-dark cycle at 23°C in a CLF growth cabinet at 120 504  $\mu$ mol·m<sup>-2</sup>·s<sup>-1</sup>. For cold stress application, temperatures were lowered to 8°C when plants reached an age of 505 two weeks. Cold exposure was then continued for another five weeks to allow the emergence of sufficient 506 new tissue prior to harvest. For RIP-seq experiments plants were grown on a soil/vermiculite 4:1 mixture at 507 21°C for 14 days (normal conditions). Cold stress was applied after 13 days at 21°C with a 24 h exposure 508 to 4°C.

#### 509 Vector construction and production of transgenic plants

510 A full length Arabidopsis CP31A cDNA clone was prepared from total Arabidopsis RNA. The genomic region encoding the acidic domain (+241 to +447 bp from the start codon of the open reading frame) was 511 512 deleted as follows: The 5' region of CP31A (1-240 bp) and the 3' region of CP31A (448-990 bp) were amplified with the primers 31A\_gateway\_for and A31-minusADrev and A31-minusAD\_for and 513 514 31A gateway rev, respectively. These 5' and 3' regions were joined by restriction-based ligation into a 515 pBluescript vector. The p35SP:31AAAD binary vector for constitutive expression of CP31A was constructed 516 as follows: The 31AAAD fragment was amplified with the primer set (SmaI-31AF01; 31A-SmaIR01) and 517 ligated into *pJET1.2* cloning vector (Thermo Scientific), and the *Sma*I digested product was integrated into 518 a SmaI site between the 35S promoter and Nos terminator sequences of the binary vector pGL1 (provided 519 by Dr. Boris Hedtke, HU Berlin), which also contains the bar expression cassette. For producing the 520 p31AP:31A vector, the CP31A 5' UTR and promoter region (1,694 bp of the 5' region of CP31A; 12769646 521 to 12767953 of the Arabidopsis thaliana chromosome 4 sequence; Acc. No. CP002687.1) was cloned with 522 the specific primer set (CP31A5'up-1694; CP31A-CDS5'\_rev). Then, the CP31A cDNA was combined with 523 the promotor by Gibson cloning using the primers (XhoI-31Apro F; Cp31A-CDS5' rev; CP31A-524 ADtest for; 31A-SmaIR01) and cloned into *pJET1.2*, yielding *pXhoI-31AP:31A-SmaI*. The 35S promoter 525 was removed and replaced with multi cloning site including *XhoI* and *SmaI* sites, yielding vector *pGL1*-526 MCS. XhoI/SmaI digestion products from pXhoI-31AP:31A-SmaI were inserted into XhoI/SmaI sites of 527 pGL1-MCS, yielding p31AP:31A vector. p31AP:31A\(DAD) was constructed in an analogous way. These three 528 vectors were introduced into the Agrobacterium GV3103 strain independently, and integrated into the 529 knock-out mutant cp31a-1 (SALK\_109613; Tillich et al., 2009) by the floral-dip method. The T<sub>0</sub> generation

- 530 was grown on 15 cm diameter plastic plates filled with soil (mixture of horticulture soil and vermiculite).
- 531 1/2000 diluted BASTA was sprayed on the plants several times in order to select for BASTA resistant plants.
- 532 BASTA resistant plants were transferred to plastic pots filled with soil and cultivated at 23°C, 8-h-dark/16-
- 533 h-light at a light intensity of  $120-130 \,\mu \text{mol} \cdot \text{m}^{-2} \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$ .

# 534 Immunoblot analysis

Total protein (15 µg) were extracted from fully developed leaves grown at normal conditions and
immunological analysis were carried out and antibodies were used as previously reported (Kupsch et al.,
2012). Immunoblot analysis for the RIP-seq experiments was performed in the same way with protein
samples taken from the input, supernatant and pellet fraction of the co-immunoprecipitations.

# 539 **RIP-Seq analysis**

540 For RIP-seq experiments Arabidopsis thaliana Columbia-0 and AD-deletion mutants under the native promoter (#5-7-1, #5-13-2) were harvested in duplicates after 14 days and flash-frozen in liquid nitrogen. 541 542 The flash-frozen plant material was grinded under liquid nitrogen to a homogeneous powder. Between 250 543 to 350 mg plant material was suspended in 3 ml RIP-seq lysis buffer containing formaldehyde (50 mM 544 HEPES-KOH pH 8.0, 200 mM KCl, 5 mM MgCl<sub>2</sub>, 5 mM CaCl<sub>2</sub>, 0.5% Nonidet P-40, 0.5% Sodium deoxycholate, 1x cOmplete<sup>TM</sup>, EDTA-free Protease Inhibitor Cocktail (Roche), 100 U RiboLock RNase 545 546 Inhibitor (ThermoFisher Scientific), 1% formaldehyde) per 1 g plant material. Crosslinking was performed 547 for 10 min under rotation at room temperature and stopped by the addition of 125 mM glycine and a 5 min 548 incubation. The plant extract was centrifuged for 10 min at 20,000xg and 4°C to remove insoluble plant 549 material and flash-frozen in liquid nitrogen.

550 For the co-immunoprecipitation (CoIP) 8 µl affinity-purified anti-CP31A antibody (Kupsch et al., 2012) 551 was bound to 50 µl Dynabeads ProteinG (Invitrogen) under rotation (15 rpm). The plant extract was thawed 552 and centrifuged for 10 min at 20,000xg and  $4^{\circ}$ C. 350 µl of the supernatant were diluted 1:1 with CoIP buffer 553 (150 mM NaCl, 20 mM Tris-HCl pH 7.5, 2 mM MgCl<sub>2</sub>, 0.5% Nonidet P-40, 5µg/ml Aprotinin) and 554 incubated with the antibody-coated magnetic beads for 75 min at 15 rpm and 4°C. An aliquot of the 555 antibody-bead solution was taken to serve as the input control. The beads were washed four times in CoIP 556 buffer and resuspended in Proteinase K buffer (100 mM NaCl, 10 mM Tris-HCl pH 7.0, 1 mM EDTA, 0.5% 557 SDS).

The crosslink was reversed with 0.1 mg/ml Proteinase K (ThermoFisher Scientific) at 50°C for 1 h and RNA
was extracted from input and pellet fractions using TRIzol and RNA Clean and Concentrator Columns
(Zymo Research) according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Library preparation was performed with the NEBNext® Multiplex Small RNA Library Prep Set for Illumina 561 (New England BioLabs) according to the manufacturer's instructions with few deviations. Library 562 preparation was performed for half the volume. Additionally, a 5' adaptor including unique molecular 563 564 identifiers (5'-(UMI) was used 565 rGrUrUrCrArGrArGrUrUrCrUrArCrArGrUrCrCrGrArCrGrArUrCGATCNNNNNNN-3'). PCR 566 amplification was performed using the KAPA HiFi HotStart ReadyMix with the cycling protocol for library 567 amplification for Illumina platforms and an annealing temperature of 62°C. The PCR amplified cDNA 568 construct was purified using the GeneJET PCR Purification Kit (ThermoFisher Scientific) according to the 569 manufacturer's instructions and then separated on 6% polyacrylamide gel. Library fragments between 570 160bp and 190bp were extracted from the gel according to the NEBNext<sup>®</sup> protocol and subjected to Illumina 571 sequencing. Read numbers and mapping results are summarized for all libraries in Supple. Table 3.

572 For the bioinformatic identification of the CP31A binding events the following steps were performed:

573 1) Mapping of the Illumina reads. First, reads were split depending on its barcode using 574 fastx\_barcode\_splitter (version 11sep2008) to identify to which sample they correspond, next the UMI 575 barcode was extracted for each read using *umi tools*, later, reads were trimmed using Trimmomatic version 576 0.36 with the next parameters: LEADING:3 TRAILING:3 SLIDINGWINDOW:4:15 MINLEN:10 in order to 577 eliminate Illumina adapters and bad quality sequence regions. The obtained trimmed reads were aligned to 578 the Arabidopsis thaliana genomes (Araport11) using STAR version 2.5.2a with parameter: --579 outFilterMultimapNmax 2 --outSAMtype BAM SortedByCoordinate --alignIntronMax 3000 580 outFilterIntronMotifs RemoveNoncanonical --outSAMstrandField intronMotif --outSAMattrIHstart 0. At 581 this point, duplicated reads were removed from the BAM file using *umi\_tools*. Only reads that mapped to 582 the chloroplast genome with a length bigger than 35 bp were used for downstream analysis.

583 2) Identification of candidate BSs in each condition studied. Reads mapped in rRNA were eliminated. 584 Remaining reads were used to identify BSs using CSAR (version 1.31.0; parameters: b=10, w=70, 585 *nper=100, test="Ratio"*) for each strand and sample/replicate independently. Only those regions that 586 showed a significant enrichment in mapped reads when comparing IP versus corresponding input samples 587 at a false discovery rate (FDR) < 0.05 were kept (Muino et al., 2011), which led to the discovery of 371 588 candidate BSs across all samples. In order to obtain a common set of candidate BSs for all samples, the list 589 of BSs for each sample/replicate were merged using the software *mergeBed* from the package *bedtools* 590 (v2.26.0). This resulted in 75 reference BSs.

591 3) Quantification of BSs. The program *featurecounts* (v1.6.0; parameters: -*s* 1 -*M*) was used to count the 592 number of reads strand-specifically mapping to the common set of candidate BSs obtained from the previous 593 step. DESeq2 (v1.14.1) was used with defaults parameters except *fitType="local"* to obtain normalized

number of mapped read in each sample, next it was used to calculate enrichment and significance of number
of the candidate BSs comparing IP vs control (two biological replicates). The normalized number of reads
were used to calculate Pearson correlation coefficients.

#### 597 SSMART analysis of CP31A RIP-seq data

598 SSMART analysis was carried out as described (Munteanu et al., 2018). We used all significant BSs 599 identified in wild type plants grown in cold conditions as input, as in this sequence set most binding events 600 were detected. The input sequences of the BSs were scored using their adjusted p-value according to the 601 actual binding site analysis of the RIP-seq data.

# 602 RNA extraction and editing analysis

603 Total RNA was extracted from fully developed leafs (0.1 g) powdered in liquid nitrogen using Trizol 604 (Thermo Fisher) according to the manufacturer's protocol. DNA was removed from RNA samples by three 605 consecutive DNase I treatments and Phenol/Chloroform/Isoamyl alcohol extractions. DNA removal was 606 checked by PCR with the chloroplast-specific rps14 primer set. cDNA synthesis was performed with 2 µg 607 RNA using SuperScript III first strand synthesis system (Invitrogen) according to the manufacturer's protocol. A one-to-ten dilution of cDNA was used as a template for amplifying ten cDNAs encompassing 608 609 16 editing sites (Fig. 2A) on nine plastid genes using primer sets previously reported (Tillich et al., 2009). 610 RT-PCR products were purified with MinElute PCR Purification Kit (Qiagen). Bulk RT-PCR products were 611 cloned into the barcoded cloning vector and sequenced using the Illumina MiSeq machine. Sequenced data 612 were sorted according to barcoding of vectors and analyzed with the CLC Genomics Workbench (CLC bio). 613 Selected RT-PCR products were directly analyzed by Sanger Sequencing and analyzed using the Geneious 614 software.

### 615 **RNA gel blot analysis**

616 Total RNA (4  $\mu$ g) was fractioned on 1.2% agarose gels containing 1.2% formaldehyde, blotted and 617 hybridized with radiolabeled RNA probes produced by T7 *in vitro* transcription from PCR products 618 generated with primer combinations described in Suppl. Tab. 2.

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