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Orthogonal proteomics methods to unravel the HOTAIR interactome

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13 **MS, proximity labeling**

14 **Abstract**

15 Accumulating evidence highlights the role of long non-coding RNAs (lncRNA) in cellular
16 homeostasis, and their dysregulation in disease settings. Most lncRNAs function by interacting with
17 proteins or protein complexes. While several orthogonal methods have been developed to identify these
18 proteins, each method has its inherent strengths and limitations. Here, we combine two RNA-centric
19 methods ChIRP-MS and RNA-BioID to obtain a comprehensive list of proteins that interact with the
20 well-known lncRNA HOTAIR. Overexpression of HOTAIR has been associated with a metastasis-
21 promoting phenotype in various cancers. Although HOTAIR is known to bind with PRC2 and LSD1
22 protein complexes, only very limited unbiased comprehensive approaches to map its interactome have
23 been performed. Both ChIRP-MS and RNA-BioID data sets show an association of HOTAIR with
24 mitochondria, suggesting that HOTAIR has functions independent of its (post-)transcriptional mode-
25 of-action.

26 **1 Introduction**

27 Advances in high-throughput RNA-sequencing have shown that the human transcriptome is more
28 complex than previously anticipated. Specifically, the number of non-coding genes has skyrocketed,
29 which is unsurprising as protein-coding genes encompass only 2% of the human genome¹⁻³. lncRNAs

30 are transcripts that are over 200 nucleotides in length and do not code for a peptide or protein. LncRNAs
31 are the bulk of the non-coding transcriptome in terms of number of genes. Although some lncRNAs,
32 e.g. Xist and MALAT1, have been studied extensively and are functionally well characterized, most
33 lncRNAs remain to be characterized both functionally and mechanistically. Dysregulated expression
34 of lncRNAs has been shown for a wide spectrum of human diseases, making it important to better
35 understand the role lncRNAs play in the molecular pathology of these diseases⁴⁻⁶. In addition, the
36 highly tissue-specific expression profile of lncRNAs creates a novel source of potential targets for
37 diagnostic, prognostic, and therapeutic applications to identify and treat human diseases⁷.

38 A big hurdle to study lncRNAs remains the elucidation of the molecular mechanism linked to these
39 transcripts. Their generally low abundance makes it challenging to work with lncRNAs even in tissue
40 culture conditions with human cell lines. Nevertheless, insights in these mechanisms are crucial for the
41 translation towards clinical applications. Mechanistically, a lncRNA rarely acts as the sole effector
42 molecule, it rather interacts with other biomolecular entities such as DNA or proteins. In general, RNA-
43 centric RNA-protein interactomics methods are based on affinity purification using biotinylated
44 capture probes and various ways of RNA-protein crosslinking, e.g. iDRIP-MS⁸, ChIRP-MS⁹, or RAP-
45 MS¹⁰, to enrich the target RNA and its associated interacting proteins, which are identified by
46 subsequent mass spectrometry. Although conceptually very similar, methodological differences in
47 iDRIP-MS, ChIRP-MS, and RAP-MS technologies have shown remarkable differences in size and
48 content of the identified interactome of the lncRNA Xist, a crucial player in X-chromosome
49 inactivation. All these studies have revealed Xist interacting proteins using different methods, all
50 highlighting key interactors such as SPEN/SHARP and hnRNPU/SAF-A that are required for X-
51 chromosome inactivation. Following the success of proximity labeling (PL) enzymes, such as BioID¹¹
52 and APEX2¹², in protein-protein interactions (PPI) studies, recently RNA interactomics studies have
53 also implemented PL assays, e.g. RaPID¹³, RNA-BioID¹⁴, or CARPID¹⁵, to label RNA-associated
54 proteins in their cellular context. In these methods, the PL enzyme is recruited to a specific RNA
55 transcript using either an aptamer-based approach or a catalytically inactive RNA-targeting CRISPR
56 system. We argue that, similar as in PPI studies, RNA interactome studies would benefit from the
57 combination of orthogonal proteomics methods to generate a high confidence set of interacting
58 proteins^{16,17}.

59 HOTAIR (HOX Transcript Antisense Intergenic RNA) is a lncRNA expressed from the *HOXC* gene
60 cluster during limb patterning in early development^{18,19}. In addition, several studies have implicated an

61 oncogenic role for HOTAIR in the proliferation and metastasis of various cancers. Rinn *et al.*¹⁸ and
62 Tsai *et al.*¹⁹ showed that HOTAIR interacts with the polycomb repressive complex PRC2 as well as
63 LSD1, a core member of the CoREST/REST demethylase complex. More recently, however, Portoso,
64 *et al.*²⁰ have shown that PRC2 is dispensable for HOTAIR-mediated gene silencing, putting forth the
65 question whether HOTAIR specifically recruits PRC2 or whether PRC2 is recruited to target genes as
66 a consequence of HOTAIR-mediated gene silencing.

67 Although HOTAIR has been shown to have an oncogenic role in breast cancer cells, to our knowledge,
68 an unbiased screen of the HOTAIR interactome has not yet been performed in a breast cancer cell line.
69 Here, we set out to map the protein interactome of HOTAIR by combining data from both PL and
70 ChIRP-MS experiments. Overlapping the results of both methods shows that HOTAIR potentially
71 associates with MRPL proteins, although we demonstrate that this interaction does not occur within
72 mitochondria.

73 **2 Material and methods**

74 **2.1 Cell culture**

75 HEK293T and Flp-InTM T-RExTM 293 (ThermoFisher Scientific R78007) cells were cultured in
76 Dulbecco's Modified Eagle Medium (DMEM) supplemented with 10%. MCF7 (ATCC HTB-22) cells
77 were cultured in Minimum Essential Medium Eagle (MEM) supplemented with 10% FBS, 1% non-
78 essential amino acids, 1% HEPES, 1% sodium pyruvate, and 1% GlutaMAXTM (ThermoFisher
79 Scientific #35050038). Parental cell lines were maintained in antibiotic-free conditions, experiments
80 were performed in media supplemented with 30 U/mL Penicillin-Streptomycin. Cells were kept under
81 60-70% confluency and passaged twice a week. Cell lines were confirmed mycoplasma-free by using
82 a mycoplasma PCR detection kit.

83 To generate a genomically stable MCP-BirA* cell line, 6×10^5 FlpIn T-REx 293 cells were transfected
84 with 2.3 μ g pOG44 (ThermoFisher Scientific V600520) and 0.25 μ g pDEST-MCP-BirA*-FLAG using
85 Lipofectamine LTX according to the manufacturer's instructions. Twenty-four hours post-transfection,
86 cells were split to a confluency of 25% and the medium was supplemented with 15 μ g/mL blasticidin
87 and 50 μ g/mL hygromycin. Transfected cells were maintained and passaged as needed under selection
88 for two weeks until separate foci could be observed. Doxycycline-regulated expression of the MCP-
89 BirA*-FLAG fusion protein was validated by western blot.

90 **2.2 Molecular cloning**

91 The ORF of a tandem dimer MCP was amplified from pMS2-HB (Addgene #35573) with attB1 and
92 attB2 Gateway sites included in the primers. An additional SV40 NLS
93 (CCAAAGAAGAAGCGGAAGGTC) was included in the reverse primer. The MCP amplicon was
94 inserted in pDONR221 using Gateway BP Clonase II enzyme mix to generate an entry clone. The
95 MCP-NLS ORF was shuttled in pDEST-pcDNA5-BirA*-FLAG_Cterm²¹ using the Gateway LR
96 Clonase II enzyme mix to generate the pDEST-MCP-BirA*-FLAG vector.

97 To systematically tag lncRNAs with 12 tandem MS2 stemloops at their 3' end, we built a pUC19-
98 based cloning backbone containing an EF1 α core promoter (EFS) and a 12X MS2 tag followed by
99 bGH polyadenylation signal. A bacterial negative selection cassette containing a chloramphenicol
100 resistance gene and the ccdB toxin flanked by BsaI sites with unique overhangs was inserted in between
101 EFS and the MS2 tag to allow Golden Gate-based cloning of lncRNAs of interest. Amplified EFS,
102 ccdB-CmR, 12X MS2-pA, and PGK-Puro-pA fragments were assembled using the In-Fusion HD
103 cloning system according to the manufacturer's instructions. Plasmids were transformed in One Shot
104 ccdB Survival T21R competent cells which are insensitive to the ccdB negative selection.

105 lncRNAs were amplified using primer sequences that contained BsaI sites at their 5' end to allow
106 cloning in the above described backbone. SAMMSON, rcSAMMSON, HOTAIR, and rcHOTAIR were
107 amplified with either Pfu (Agilent 600250) or Q5 (NEB M0491S) polymerase using the following
108 primers with BsaI sites highlighted in italics:

109	SAMMSON_Fwd	TGAAGCTTGGTCTCAACAGGGTGAGGACAGGCGCTCCTGC,
110	SAMMSON_Rev	CGAGAATTCGGTCTCACGGGGTCCTAGAACTTAAAGTATA,
111	rcSAMMSON_Fwd	TGAAGCTTGGTCTCAACAGGGTCCTAGAACTTAAAGTATA,
112	rcSAMMSON_Rev	CGAGAATTCGGTCTCACGGGGTGAGGACAGGCGCTCCTGC,
113	HOTAIR_Fwd	TGAAGCTTGGTCTCAACAGGGACTCGCCTGTGCTCTGGAG,
114	HOTAIR_Rev	CGAGAATTCGGTCTCACGGGTTTGAAAATGCATCCAGATA,
115	rcHOTAIR_Fwd	TGAAGCTTGGTCTCAACAGGTTTGAAAATGCATCCAGATA,
116	rcHOTAIR_Rev	CGAGAATTCGGTCTCACGGGGACTCGCCTGTGCTCTGGAG

117 150 ng of each amplicon was mixed with 50 ng pEFS-ccdB-12X MS2, 10 U of BsaI-HFv2 (NEB
118 R3733), and 1X CutSmart buffer for 1 h at 37°C followed by 20 min at 80°C to stop the reaction. 1X
119 T4 ligase buffer and 1 U T4 DNA ligase (ThermoFisher Scientific 15224025) were spiked in the
120 digested reaction mixture and left overnight at room temperature. Plasmids were chemically

121 transformed and grown on LB agar plates containing 50 µg/mL carbenicillin. Colonies were verified
122 by restriction digest and Sanger sequencing.

123 **2.3 RNA-BioID**

124 For each condition, 20.1×10^6 T-REx 293 RNA-BioID cells were plated in triplicate. Next day, cells
125 were transfected with 17.4 µg of the corresponding lncRNA-12X MS2 constructs using PEI. Twenty-
126 four hours post-transfection, the culture medium was refreshed and 2 µg/mL puromycin and 2 ng/mL
127 doxycycline were supplemented to the fresh medium. Forty-eight hours post-transfection 50 µM
128 biotin was added to perform biotin labeling for 16 – 18 hrs. Three hours before harvesting, the culture
129 medium was refreshed with biotin-free medium to prevent saturation of the beads by free biotin still
130 present during the enrichment protocol. Cells were washed twice on the plate with 10 mL ice-cold
131 PBS, and were ultimately collected by scraping in 750 µL ice-cold PBS. Cells were pelleted by
132 centrifugation at 500 x g for 5 min at 4°C and were washed once more with 10 mL PBS. Cells pellets
133 were resuspended in 5 mL RIPA lysis buffer (50 mM Tris-HCl pH 8.0, 150 mM NaCl, 1% NP-40, 1
134 mM EDTA, 1 mM EGTA, 0.1% SDS, supplemented fresh with cOmplete protease inhibitor cocktail
135 (Roche 11697498001) and 0.5% sodium deoxycholate) and were incubated for 15 min on ice to allow
136 efficient lysis. To each lysate 250 U benzonase was added and incubated with by end-over-end rotation
137 for 1 hour at 4°C. Lysates were subsequently cleared of cellular debris by spinning at 15000 x g for 15
138 min at 4°C. The supernatant was transferred to a fresh tube and protein concentration of the lysates
139 was determined using the Bradford assay. A maximal shared protein amount across all samples was
140 calculated to ensure equal starting protein material for each sample. Ninety microliters of Streptavidin
141 Sepharose High Performance beads (GE Healthcare GE17-5113-01) per sample were equilibrated by
142 washing three times with 1 mL unsupplemented RIPA buffer, and were eventually resuspended in 90
143 µL of supplemented RIPA buffer per sample. Cleared lysates were incubated with equilibrated beads
144 by end-over-end rotation for 3 hr at 4°C to enrich for biotinylated proteins. After affinity purification,
145 beads were pelleted by centrifugation at 500 x g for 2 min. Beads were washed three times with
146 unsupplemented RIPA buffer, twice with 1 mL 50 mM ammonium bicarbonate pH 8.0, and three times
147 with 1 mL trypsin digest buffer (20 mM Tris-HCl pH 8.0, 2 mM CaCl₂). Beads were ultimately
148 resuspended in 20 µL 20 mM Tris-HCl pH 8.0, and 1 µg trypsin was added and samples were incubated
149 overnight at 37°C to allow on-bead protein digestion. Next day, another 500 ng of trypsin was added
150 and samples were incubated for 3 hr at 37°C, after which beads were pelleted and supernatant was
151 transferred to a MS vial. Peptide samples were acidified to a final concentration of 2% formic acid.

152 Quality control samples (input, flow through, and enriched fractions) to assess enrichment of
153 biotinylated proteins on Western Blot.

154 **2.4 ChIRP-MS**

155 Eight biotinylated probes complementary to HOTAIR were designed and ordered using the online
156 ChIRP Probe Designer tool available at the BioSearch Technologies website. A probe pool targeting
157 LacZ was designed as a negative control pool. Standard settings were kept as recommended by the
158 manufacturer. HOTAIR probe sequences are:

159 HOTAIR_1 CAGGACCTTTCTGATTGAGA
160 HOTAIR_2 TGGTGTAATTGCTGGTTTA
161 HOTAIR_3 ATCAATTAATTAGCGCCTCC
162 HOTAIR_4 CAAGTAGCAGGGAAAGGCTT
163 HOTAIR_5 TGCCAGTTAGAAAAGCGGTG
164 HOTAIR_6 GGGGTCTATATTTAGAGTGC
165 HOTAIR_7 AGGAGGAAGTTCAGGCATTG
166 HOTAIR_8 CCTGAGTCTATTTAGCTACA

167 Three replicates of 120×10^6 MCF7 cells were cultured per probe pool. The day after, medium was
168 aspirated and cells were washed using 10 mL ice-cold PBS on the plate. Subsequently 10 mL ice-cold
169 PBS was added and RNA-protein interactions were UV crosslinked using a Strategene Crosslinker at
170 254 nm up to an accumulating energy of 400 mJ/cm^2 . Cells were subsequently scraped and washed
171 once more with 10 mL PBS. Cell pellets were resuspended in 2 mL ChIRP lysis buffer (20 mM Tris-
172 HCl pH 7.5, 200 mM NaCl, 2.5 mM MgCl₂, 0.05% NP-40, 0.1% SDS, supplemented fresh with 0.1%
173 sodium deoxycholate, 60 U/mL SUPERase-In RNase inhibitor, 1 mM DTT, 0.5 mM PMSF, and
174 cOmplete protease inhibitor cocktail), and incubated on ice for 15 min to allow efficient lysis. Lysates
175 were sonicated using a Diagenode Bioruptor sonicator using 30 s ON and 45 s OFF per cycle at 4°C
176 until genomic DNA was fragmented in 500 bp fragments. Proper fragment size was assessed by
177 running 0.5% of the samples on a 1% agarose gel. Sonicated cell lysates were centrifuged at $16100 \times$
178 g for 15 min at 4°C and supernatant was transferred to a fresh tube. One hundred microliters of
179 Dynabeads MyOne Streptavidin C1 (ThermoFisher 65001) per replicate were rendered RNase-free as
180 by the manufacturer's instructions, and equilibrated by washing three times with unsupplemented
181 ChIRP lysis buffer. Beads were ultimately resuspended in 100 μL supplemented ChIRP lysis buffer
182 per sample, and 625 pmol of either HOTAIR or LacZ probe pool was added. Beads were then incubated

183 overnight at 4°C with end-over-end rotation. Next day, lysates were pre-cleared using 30 µL
184 equilibrated beads per sample by end-over-end incubation for 30 min at 4°C. Pre-cleared lysates were
185 subsequently incubated with 100 µL probe-bound beads for 3 hr at 4°C with end-over-end rotation.
186 After capture, beads were washed three times with 1 mL unsupplemented ChIRP lysis buffer, three
187 times with 1 mL trypsin digest buffer, and finally dissolved in 20 µL 20 mM Tris-HCl pH 8.0. Beads
188 were incubated with 1 µg trypsin overnight at 37°C. Next day, 500 ng additional trypsin was added
189 and samples were incubated another 3 hr at 37°C. Beads were magnetized and the supernatants
190 containing the peptide mixtures were transferred to an MS-vial and acidified to a final concentration
191 2% formic acid. Quality control samples (1% input and 10% of the enriched fraction) for all replicates
192 of both probe pools were taken to ensure HOTAIR enrichment in the HOTAIR probe pool replicates.
193 RNA was isolated using QIAzol-chloroform extraction.

194 **2.5 LC-MS/MS**

195 Peptide mixtures were run on a 50 cm µPAC (PharmaFluidics) column connected to a Q-Exactive HF
196 mass spectrometer. The mass spectrometer was operated in a data-dependent acquisition, positive
197 ionization mode, automatically switching between MS and MS/MS acquisition for the five most
198 abundant peaks.

199 Xcalibur raw files were analysed using the Andromeda search engine as implemented in MaxQuant
200 (v1.6.0.1). Identified spectra were searched against the human proteome (UniProt). Methionine
201 oxidation and N-terminal acetylation were set as variable modifications during the search. Fast LFQ
202 was disabled, and the minimum LFQ ratio was set at 2. LFQ intensities for identified proteins were
203 imported in Perseus (v1.5.8.5) for downstream analysis. In brief, LFQ intensities were log₂
204 transformed and filtered based on reverse hits, contaminant proteins, and proteins identified by site. At
205 least three valid values were needed for a protein to be retained in the analysis. Missing values were
206 imputed from a normal distribution. Finally, a two-sided t-test (FDR 0.05, 1000 randomizations) was
207 performed to find differential proteins as visualized by volcano plots. Default S0 values were kept
208 during the analysis. Proteomics data sets have been deposited to the ProteomeXchange Consortium
209 through the PRIDE repository (identifiers PXD029057 and PXD029058).

210 **2.6 RNA immunoprecipitation**

211 7.7×10^6 T-REx 293 RNA-BioID cells were transfected with 5.8 µg of lncRNA-12X MS2 construct
212 and 5.8 µg pSV-SPORT using PEI. Twenty-four hours post-transfection 2 µg/mL puromycin and 1
213 µg/mL doxycycline were added. Next day, cells were washed one on the plate with 5 mL PBS and

214 were collected by scraping in 1 mL PBS. Cell pellets were resuspended in polysome lysis buffer (PLB;
215 20 mM Tris pH 8.0, 200 mM NaCl, 2.5 mM MgCl₂, 0.05% Triton X-100) and incubated on ice for 15
216 min to promote lysis. Lysates were centrifuged at 15000 x g for 5 min at 4°C and the supernatant was
217 transferred to a fresh tube. 10 µg of FLAG M2 antibody (Sigma Aldrich F3165-1MG) or 10 µg of IgG
218 isotype control (Abcam ab18443) was conjugated to 100 µL of Dynabeads Protein G (ThermoFisher
219 Scientific 10004D) in 1 mL Tris wash buffer (20 mM Tris-HCl pH 7.5, 150 mM NaCl) for 30 min at
220 room temperature. After conjugation, beads were washed twice with 1 mL PLB and ultimately
221 resuspended in 100 µL PLB. Lysates were incubated with antibody-conjugated beads for 3 hours at
222 4°C with end-over-end rotation. Beads were washed three times with 1 mL PLB. Captured RNA
223 transcripts were eluted from the beads by adding 95 µL proteinase K digestion buffer (10 mM Tris-
224 HCl pH 7.5, 100 mM NaCl, 1 mM EDTA, 0.5% SDS) supplemented with 5 µL proteinase K. The
225 reaction was incubated at 50°C for 45 min, followed by 10 min at 95°C. Samples were cooled down to
226 room temperature and 500 µL QIAzol was added. After a 10 min incubation time at room temperature,
227 100 µL chloroform was added and samples were vigorously vortexed and centrifuged at 16000 x g
228 for 15 min at 4°C. The upper aqueous phase was transferred to a fresh tube. For each 200 µL RNA, a
229 1:1 mix of 300 µL RA1 (Macherey-Nagel 740961) and 300 µL 100% EtOH was added. RNA from the
230 mixture was isolated using the Nucleospin RNA mini kit (Macherey-Nagel 740955.250) according the
231 manufacturer's instructions. Input, flow through, and enriched fractions were isolated during
232 enrichment protocol both for Western Blot and RNA isolation.

233 **2.7 cDNA synthesis and RT-qPCR**

234 cDNA synthesis was performed using the PrimeScript RT kit (Takara Bio RR037A) using maximal
235 shared RNA input across samples for RIP experiments or maximal volume for ChIRP experiments.
236 Target transcripts were amplified using primers listed below using the SensiFAST SYBR No-ROX kit
237 (Meridian Bioscience BIO-98005) and signal was detected using a LightCycler 480.

238	SDHA_Fwd	TGGGAACAAGAGGGCATCTG
239	SDHA_Rev	CCACCACTGCATCAAATTCATG
240	YWHAZ_Fwd	ACTTTGGTACATTGTGGCTTCAA
241	YWHAZ_Rev	CCGCCAGGACAAACCAGTAT
242	UBC_Fwd	ATTTGGGTCGCGGTTCTTG
243	UBC_Rev	TGCCTTGACATTCTCGATGGT
244	HOTAIR_Fwd	GGTAGAAAAAGCAACCACGAAGC

245 HOTAIR_Rev ACATAAACCTCTGTCTGTGAGTGCC
246 SAMMSON_Fwd CCTCTAGATGTGTAAGGGTAGT
247 SAMMSON_Rev TTGAGTTGCATAGTTGAGGAA

248 Samples were measured in technical quadruplicates in a 384-well plate containing as described by the
249 manufacturer's instructions. The following cycling conditions were used: 1 cycle at 95°C for 5 min,
250 40 cycles at 95°C for 10 s, 60°C for 10 s and 72°C for 10 s, followed by melting curve analysis to
251 validate unique amplicons. Quantitation cycles (Cq) were normalized to housekeeping genes (SDHA,
252 UBC, YWHAZ) and subsequently relative to the corresponding input sample. All RT-qPCR analyses
253 were done in qbase+.

254 **2.8 RNAscope and MitoTracker staining**

255 Prior to seeding cells, each chamber of a 8-well glass chamber slide was incubated for 20 min at room
256 temperature with 2.8 µg Cell-Tak (Corning 354240) dissolved in 100 µL filter-sterilized 0.1 M
257 NaHCO₃ pH 8.0 to coat each chamber. After washes, 10000 MCF7 cells were seeded in each chamber
258 in serum-free growth medium to stimulate adhesion. After attachment, medium was refreshed to
259 complete growth medium and cells were grown to a confluency of 50-75%.

260 One microliter MitoTracker Orange CMTMRos (ThermoFisher Scientific M7510) was diluted in 10
261 mL serum-free and additive-free growth medium before use. Growth medium of the cells was removed
262 and cells were incubated with MitoTracker Orange CMTMRos containing growth medium for 30 min
263 on 37°C. Immediately afterwards, slides were fixed with 4% PFA for 30 min at room temperature and
264 stored in the dark until further processing. RNAscope for HOTAIR (Advanced Cell Diagnostics cat.
265 312341) was performed according to the manufacturer's instructions using the RNAscope Multiplex
266 Fluorescent V2 Assay (Advanced Cell Diagnostics cat. 323100) for adherent cells. Control probes used
267 were *B. subtilis* DapB (Advanced Cell Diagnostics cat. 310043) and *H. sapiens* PPIB (Advanced Cell
268 Diagnostics cat. 313901). DAPI stained was performed to stain nuclei. Slides were analysed with a
269 confocal laser scanning microscope. To overcome cross-excitation, the relative contribution of each
270 fluorophore for every pixel was determined by linear unmixing. Colocalization was determined by
271 intersect analysis of both fluorophores. Absolute counts of HOTAIR in each cellular compartment were
272 determined by simply counting the number the dots present in each compartment.

273 **3 Results**

274 **3.1 A straightforward assembly method to tag lncRNAs with MS2 stem loops**

275 To easily tag lncRNAs with MS2 stem loops, we generated an assembly vector (Fig. S1) that expresses
276 lncRNAs from an EF1 α core promoter (EFS) with a 12X tandem MS2 stem loop at the 3' end. To
277 perform scarless cloning of the lncRNA, we took advantage of the type IIS restriction enzyme BsaI
278 that is frequently used in Golden Gate assembly methods. We inserted BsaI recognition sites directly
279 downstream of the EFS sequence and upstream of the 12X MS2 tag that would eliminate themselves
280 during the cloning process. In between both BsaI sites, we inserted a *ccdB* negative selection cassette
281 to allow for a one-pot assembly of the lncRNA within the vector, effectively eliminating the need to
282 gel purify BsaI-cut vector and insert. As the 5' BsaI site downstream of the EFS promoter cuts within
283 the EFS promoter itself, we reconstituted the 5' end of the promoter sequence within the primer
284 sequence that we used to amplify the lncRNA. An additional puromycin resistance expression cassette
285 was inserted in the vector to perform selection of positively transfected clones. We efficiently cloned
286 the lncRNAs HOTAIR and SAMMSON, as well as their reverse complements (rcHOTAIR and
287 rcSAMMSON) scarlessly within this assembly vector using BsaI overhangs within the primer
288 sequences.

289 **3.2 Purification of HOTAIR-interacting proteins by ChIRP-MS**

290 To identify HOTAIR-interacting proteins in an unbiased way in whole cell lysates, we applied both
291 ChIRP-MS (Fig. 1A) on the endogenous HOTAIR in MCF7 breast cancer cells, a commonly used cell
292 line in HOTAIR research. Before advancing with LC-MS/MS analysis, we confirmed enrichment of
293 the HOTAIR transcript compared to the LacZ negative control probe pool (Fig. S2A). Pearson
294 correlation showed replicates correlated well between conditions (Fig. S2B). We identified 33 proteins
295 that were significantly (FDR 0.05, Table S1) enriched in the HOTAIR pulldown (Fig. 1B). Proteins
296 containing RNA binding domains (hnRNP, RRM) were significantly overrepresented (Fig. 1C) in the
297 enriched proteins showing the robustness of ChIRP-MS to enrich for RNA-binding proteins. GO
298 molecular function analysis also indicated that RNA binding was one of the main annotated functions
299 among the enriched proteins (Fig. 1D). Surprisingly, we did not identify any of the known HOTAIR-
300 interacting proteins, and 21 out of 33 identified proteins were mitochondrial proteins (MRPLs, Fig.
301 S2C) that are part of the 39S large mitochondrial (Fig. 1E, 1F). In addition, we identified HSP10,
302 LRPPRC, and GTPBP6, all of which have previously been implicated in mitochondrial import,
303 mitochondrial translation, or both.

304 **3.3 Proximity labeling of HOTAIR-interacting proteins by RNA-BioID**

305 To better understand our ChIRP-MS results, we opted to also perform RNA-BioID (Fig. 2A), an
306 orthogonal proteomic method to find HOTAIR-interacting proteins. Therefore, we integrated a tandem
307 MS2 coat protein dimer fused to the promiscuous biotin ligase BirA* (MCP-BirA*) in Flp-In T-REx
308 293 to regulate the expression of MCP-BirA* using doxycycline. A construct expressing HOTAIR, or
309 control plasmids expressing either rcHOTAIR or rcSAMMSON, with an 12X MS2 tag at the 3' were
310 transiently transfected. We confirmed binding of the MCP-BirA* protein to the MS2-tagged lncRNAs
311 by performing RIPs with the C-terminal FLAG-tag (Fig. S3) and biotinylation of the LC-MS/MS
312 samples was confirmed on WB (Fig. S4) before proceeding. Originally, we used both rcHOTAIR and
313 rcSAMMSON control conditions together to identify differential proteins. When doing so, however,
314 we were unable to find any significantly differential proteins (Fig. S5A). However, we argued that the
315 reverse complement of HOTAIR might act as a high-affinity trap for binding the, albeit lowly
316 expressed, endogenous HOTAIR transcripts. Recently, Balas *et al.*²² showed that *in vitro* titration of
317 HOTAIR with its reverse complement promoted PRC2 activity. This suggests that the reverse
318 complement of a lncRNA might be able to bind its endogenously expressed counterpart, and as such
319 bias the results. Therefore, we decided to only include the rcSAMMSON condition as a scrambled-like
320 control, as SAMMSON itself is not expressed in HEK293 cells and therefore its reverse complement
321 does not introduce bias in the analysis. Replicates between conditions correlated well as shown by
322 Pearson correlation, however the analysis also demonstrated that a considerable part of the identified
323 proteins were also identified in the rcSAMMSON replicates indicating a sizeable shared background
324 (Fig. S5B, S5C), which is expected for BioID experiments. We identified 317 significantly enriched
325 proteins (FDR 0.05, Table S2), including previously published interactors such as PRC2 complex
326 component SUZ12 and REST/CoREST components LSD1 and CoREST (Fig. 2B), demonstrating the
327 validity of RNA-BioID. Identified proteins were significantly overrepresented for helicase domains
328 (Fig. 2C) as well as RNA and chromatin binding functions (Fig. 2D) consistent with HOTAIR's
329 function as an epigenetical regulator. Indeed, most proteins seemed to be associated with the nucleus
330 as shown by GO analysis of the enriched proteins (Fig. 2E). As BioID is a proximity labeling method,
331 we looked also for other members of the PRC2 complex in our data set, and although not significant,
332 both EED and EZH2 were identified and trending towards the HOTAIR-interacting proteins. However,
333 GO analysis also showed an overrepresentation of proteins associated with various aspects of
334 mitochondrial translation (Fig. 2F). Indeed, similar as in ChIRP-MS, we identified 14 MRPLs
335 (MRPL3, MRPL9, MRPL11, MRPL12, MRPL17, MRPL18, MRPL19, MRPL22, MRPL23,
336 MRPL27, MRPL28, MRPL38, MRPL41, and MRPL47) to be significantly enriched in the HOTAIR
337 samples.

338 **3.4 The HOTAIR-MRPL interaction does not occur in mitochondria**

339 When overlapping the differential proteins of both orthogonal proteomic methods, we found that 6
340 proteins were shared between both data sets (Fig. 3A). All 6 proteins were MRPLs, suggesting
341 HOTAIR might bind these proteins to perform functions independently of its transcriptional mode-of-
342 action. MRPLs are the main protein constituents of the 39S subunit of the mitoribosome. Therefore,
343 we wondered whether it could be possible that HOTAIR is imported within mitochondria to be
344 translated by the mitoribosome. We reanalyzed public mass spectrometry data sets of the PRIDE
345 repository using Ionbot²³ to see if we could detect any peptide-spectrum matches (PSMs) of *in silico*
346 predicted peptides with the mitochondrial genetic code in all frames. The distribution of PSMs for
347 HOTAIR did not differ between target and decoy databases (Fig. S6A), indicating the transcript is not
348 translated using the mitochondrial genetic code. As a positive control, we reran the analysis with MT-
349 CO3, a mitochondrially translated mRNA. Here, as expected, the distribution of PSM to the target
350 database was highly distinct from the decoy distribution correctly indicating that MT-CO3 is translated
351 (Fig. S6B).

352 As MRPLs are mainly localized to mitochondria, we wondered whether the potential interaction
353 between these MRPLs and HOTAIR also takes place in mitochondria. We reanalyzed RNA-seq data
354 from Mercer *et al.*²⁴, where they performed RNA-seq on both full mitochondria (NCBI GEO:
355 GSM763529) and mitoplast RNA (NCBI GEO: GSM763530). We found only one read for HOTAIR
356 in mitochondrial RNA-seq, indicating HOTAIR is not present in mitochondria (Fig. 3B). To
357 corroborate on this for MCF7 specifically, we visualized the localization of HOTAIR in MCF7 cells
358 using RNAscope (Fig. 3C-F). We also stained PPIB mRNA as a positive control (Fig. 3G-J), as well
359 as the bacterial mRNA DapB (Fig. 2K-N) as a negative control. We determined that HOTAIR is present
360 at less than 10 transcripts per cell while PPIB is present at roughly 100 transcripts per cell (Fig. 3O),
361 which is consistent with RNA-seq data from the RNA Atlas²⁵ (Fig. S7). Our colocalization analysis
362 showed that HOTAIR is mainly present at the nucleus (80%), with no evidence for a mitochondrial
363 localization (Fig. 3P).

364 **4 Discussion**

365 In this work, we set out to screen for potential interaction partners of the lncRNA HOTAIR and
366 identified multiple MRPLs to be associated with HOTAIR. Although we did not identify PRC2
367 complex or REST/CoREST components in our ChIRP-MS screen, we did find SUZ12, LSD1, and
368 CoREST to be significantly enriched in the RNA-BioID setup. Interestingly, MCF7, and almost all

369 other breast cancer cell lines, does not express HOTAIR at the high levels seen in patient samples²⁶.
370 Indeed, we quantified HOTAIR copy number in MCF7 cells using RNAscope and found that it was
371 present at less than 10 transcripts per cell (Fig. 3O). During RNA-BioID, however, we overexpressed
372 HOTAIR to much higher levels, suggesting that the expression level of HOTAIR might be crucial to
373 detect PRC2 and LSD1 complexes. Li *et al.*²⁷ performed ChIRP-MS to identify HOTAIR-interacting
374 proteins in whole cell lysates of HeLa cells, which express even lower amount of endogenous HOTAIR
375 compared to MCF7. Similarly, they did not identify PRC2 or LSD1 complex subunits and attributed
376 this to highly abundant cytoplasmic proteins masking the LC-MS/MS signal of these known
377 interactors. They also did not identify any MRPLs to be among the HOTAIR interacting proteins.
378 Overlapping their ChIRP data with our data sets shows only 1 overlapping protein (NCL) with our
379 ChIRP data, and 9 overlapping proteins with RNA-BioID (DHX15, RPL12, RPL18, RPL18A,
380 RPL27A, RPL30, RPS21, RPS3A, and UBE2I). Differences in crosslinking might explain this small
381 overlap, which is also reflected in the number of proteins identified. Li *et al.* used paraformaldehyde
382 (PFA) to crosslink RNA-protein complexes and found 348 proteins to be significantly enriched in their
383 ChIRP-MS data. PFA is known to crosslink both RNA-protein and protein-protein complexes, strongly
384 increasing the number of proteins identified. We on the other hand performed UV crosslinking, which
385 is a ‘zero distance’ crosslinking strategy that only captures direct RNA-protein interactions, which
386 explains the lower number of proteins identified here. Interestingly, although not retained in their data
387 analysis, they also uniquely identify HSP10 (*HSPE1*) in all HOTAIR pulldown replicates while not
388 being identified in their negative control samples. We also find HSP10 to be a HOTAIR-interacting
389 protein in our ChIRP-MS data. HSP10 is a heat shock protein that together with HSP60 forms
390 multichaperonin complex that acts in the import and proper folding of mitochondrial proteins. Wu *et*
391 *al.*²⁸ analyzed changes in transcriptomic and proteomic profiles after HOTAIR knockdown. Their data
392 shows that HSP10 is upregulated at the protein level after HOTAIR depletion, yet its transcript level
393 remains unchanged. Interestingly, they also find MRPL12, MRPL41, and MRPL49 to be upregulated
394 at the protein level without changes in their transcript abundances. This suggest that HOTAIR might
395 play a role at the post-translational level of these MRPLs by affecting their stability, folding, import or
396 a combination of these processes. As most studies have used nuclear extracts to study the role of
397 HOTAIR in cancer cell lines, it might be interesting to have a look at the role that the cytoplasmic
398 HOTAIR fraction performs in these cell lines. Zheng *et al.*²⁹ demonstrated that silencing of HOTAIR
399 by RNAi induced mitochondrial dysfunction in HeLa cells. Phenotypically, they observed
400 mitochondrial swelling and loss of cristae, as well as a progressive disappearance of mitochondria in
401 general. They associated this with a decrease in membrane potential ($\Delta\Psi$). Similarly, Kong *et al.*³⁰

402 found a change in $\Delta\Psi$ after HOTAIR depletion in HNSCC cells. These studies highlight that HOTAIR
403 might function in different pathways and different subcellular locations next to its established function
404 as an epigenetic regulator in the nucleus. Indeed, Yoon *et al.*³¹ showed that HOTAIR can act as a
405 scaffold for the E3 ubiquitin ligases DZIP3 and MEX3B. HOTAIR overexpression promotes the
406 proteolysis of their targets ATXN1 and SNUPN, respectively. Interestingly, Zhang *et al.*³²
407 demonstrated that PRC2 and MEX3B occupancy on HOTAIR is mutually exclusive, which might
408 explain why we did not pick up DZIP3 or MEX3B in our RNA-BioID screen.

409 We did not find any evidence for a mitochondrial localization of HOTAIR in MCF7 cells, suggesting
410 that HOTAIR binds these MRPLs in another compartment of the cell. As MRPLs are nuclear-encoded
411 and therefore translated in the cytoplasm, it is not unlikely that HOTAIR binds these MRPLs after
412 being translated and before being imported in the mitochondria. Smirnov *et al.*³³ suggested that nuclear-
413 encoded 5S rRNA could bind cytosolic pre-MRPL18. The association between both molecules confers
414 a conformational change in the 5S rRNA allowing it to be imported in mitochondria. This shows that
415 MRPLs can interact with nuclear-encoded transcripts as well as interact with them in the cytosol.
416 Recently, although we did not highlight the location of the interaction, we showed that the melanoma-
417 specific lncRNA SAMMSON also interacts with MRPLs in uveal melanoma³⁴.

418 As MRPLs are highly abundant proteins present in the cell, we wondered if these are commonly found
419 in other ChIRP-MS experiments. Flynn *et al.*³⁵ performed ChIRP-MS to screen RNA-host protein
420 interactions with the RNA genomes (vRNAs) of SARS-CoV-2, Dengue virus (DENV), Zika virus
421 (ZIKV), and rhinovirus (RV). They identified specific MRPLs interacting with SARS-CoV-2 viral
422 RNA (vRNA), which were different from the multiple MRPLs that were shown to interact with RV
423 vRNA. No MRPLs were shown to interact with DENV and ZIKV vRNAs.

424 We believe there to be great merit in performing orthogonal proteomics methods to evaluate the
425 interactome of a lncRNA. However, even in the study presented here, biases attributed to differences
426 in cell lines might play an important role. Recently, Yu *et al.*³⁶ showed that the lncRNA Xist has a B-
427 cell-specific interactome with TRIM28 being a unique interactor in female B-cells, which demonstrates
428 that lncRNAs can have cell type and probably also cell line-specific interactomes. Therefore, it would
429 be interesting to see what RNA-BioID approaches in HOTAIR research would reveal when applied to
430 cell lines more relevant than HEK293 cells such as MCF7 cells. Similarly, HOTAIR expression levels
431 can contribute to differences in identified proteins. Optimally, an endogenously MS2-tagged lncRNA
432 would be the most relevant way forward for these kinds of approaches. However, endogenous tagging

433 of non-coding genes remains challenging. Endogenously engineering antisense genes in a locus might
434 influence the expression of the sense gene, which is concerning as lncRNAs have been shown to act *in*
435 *cis*. In addition, differences in RNA stability due to the introduction of the tag might change expression
436 levels compared to wild type levels.

437 In conclusion, we performed two independent methods to identify HOTAIR-interacting proteins.
438 Overlap of both methods revealed an association with mitochondrial proteins of the large 39S subunit,
439 although this association does not seem to happen within mitochondria. Future research to validate and
440 localize this interaction between MRPLs and HOTAIR is needed to show functionality of this potential
441 interaction.

442 **5 Competing Interests Statement**

443 The authors declare no competing interests.

444 **6 Author Contributions**

445 SE conceived and supervised the project; LD, EDB, and DDS performed molecular cloning; LD and
446 DDS performed ChIRP-MS experiments; LD and EDB performed RNA-BioID experiments, and
447 performed LC-MS/MS analysis; EDB performed MitoTracker staining, confocal microscopy, and
448 analysis; PJV, SDG, and LM reanalyzed PRIDE data using Ionbot; DF reanalyzed RNA-seq data from
449 Mercer *et al.* LD and EDB wrote the original draft of the manuscript; LD, PM, and SE edited the
450 original draft of the manuscript. All authors edited and contributed to the final manuscript.

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456 and Saskia Lippens and Eef Parthoens from the VIB BioImaging Core (VIB-UGent) for assisting in
457 the design of the staining experiments and in performing the confocal microscopy.

458 **8 Data Availability Statement**

459 Proteomics data sets have been deposited to the ProteomeXchange Consortium through the PRIDE
460 repository (identifiers PXD029057 and PXD029058). The pEFS-ccdB-12x MS2_mPGK-PuroR
461 assembly backbone has been submitted to Addgene.

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551 **10 Figure Captions**

552 **Figure 1:** Identification of HOTAIR-interacting proteins by ChIRP-MS. **(a)** Schematic overview of
553 ChIRP-MS. **(b)** Volcano plot showing the potential protein interactors of HOTAIR by ChIRP-MS
554 (FDR 0.05; s0 0.1). MRPLs are highlighted in blue. InterPro domains overrepresented in the data set
555 **(c)**. Gene Ontology analysis showing Molecular Function **(d)**, Cellular Component **(e)**, and Biological
556 Process **(f)**. GO was performed with David 6.8., the four most significant terms are shown. The vertical
557 dashed line represents the 0.05 cutoff used for the adjusted p-value. SA, streptavidin; RBP, RNA-
558 binding protein; LFQ, label free quantification

559 **Figure 2:** Identification of HOTAIR-interacting proteins by RNA-BioID. **(a)** Schematic overview of
560 RNA-BioID. **(b)** Volcano plot showing the potential protein interactors of HOTAIR by RNA-BioID
561 (FDR 0.05; s0 0.1). MRPLs are highlighted in blue, PRC2 complex members are highlighted in red,
562 LSD1-CoREST members are highlighted in green. InterPro domains overrepresented in the data set
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564 GO was performed with David 6.8., the four most significant terms are shown. The vertical dashed line
565 represents the 0.05 cutoff used for the adjusted p-value. MCP, MS2 coat protein; RBP, RNA-binding
566 domain; LFQ, label free quantification.

567 **Figure 3:** HOTAIR-MRPL interactions do not occur in mitochondria. **(a)** Overlap of ChIRP-MS and
568 RNA-BioID identified proteins. Proteins identified in both methods are shown. **(b)** Reanalysis of RNA-
569 sequencing data of Mercer *et al.* Nuclear-encoded genes are shown in green. Mitochondrial-encoded
570 genes are shown in red. HOTAIR is highlighted. Colocalization of HOTAIR **(c-f)**, PPIB mRNA

571 positive control (**g-j**), and DapB mRNA negative control (**k-n**) with mitochondria in MCF7 determined
572 by staining with RNAscope (FITC) and MitoTracker. (**o**) Determined transcript abundances per cell
573 for each of the targets based on RNAscope puncti. (**p**) Intersect analysis showing percentage of the
574 total transcript pool with mitochondria (hexagons) or nuclei (circles). Transcripts present in unstained
575 organelle are shown as other (squares). The scale bar depicts 7.5 μm .

Figures

Figure 1

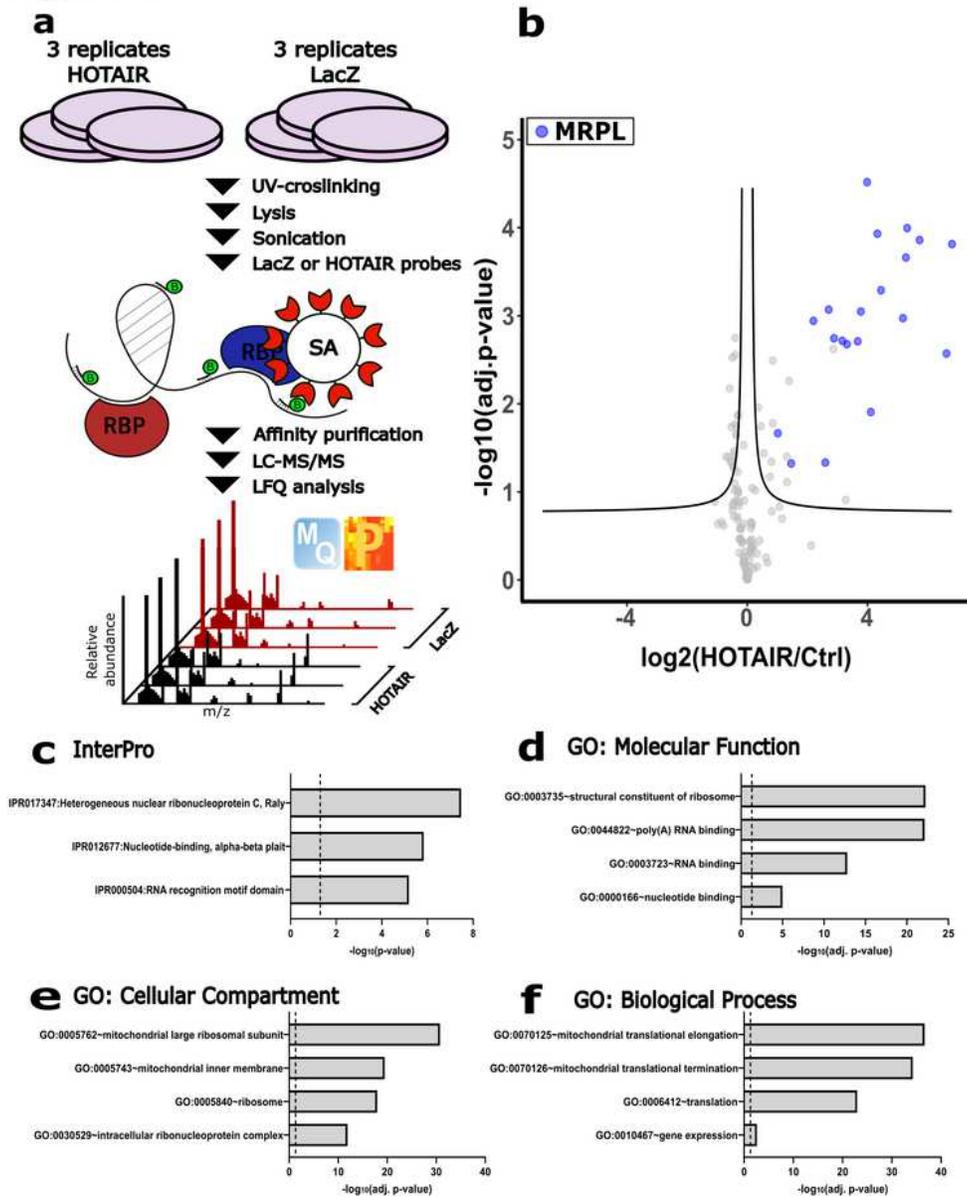


Figure 1

Identification of HOTAIR-interacting proteins by ChIRP-MS. (a) Schematic overview of ChIRP-MS. (b) Volcano plot showing the potential protein interactors of HOTAIR by ChIRP-MS (FDR 0.05; s0 0.1). MRPLs are highlighted in blue. InterPro domains overrepresented in the data set (c). Gene Ontology analysis

showing Molecular Function (d), Cellular Component (e), and Biological Process (f). GO was performed with David 6.8., the four most significant terms are shown. The vertical dashed line represents the 0.05 cutoff used for the adjusted p-value. SA, streptavidin; RBP, RNA binding protein; LFQ, label free quantification

Figure 2

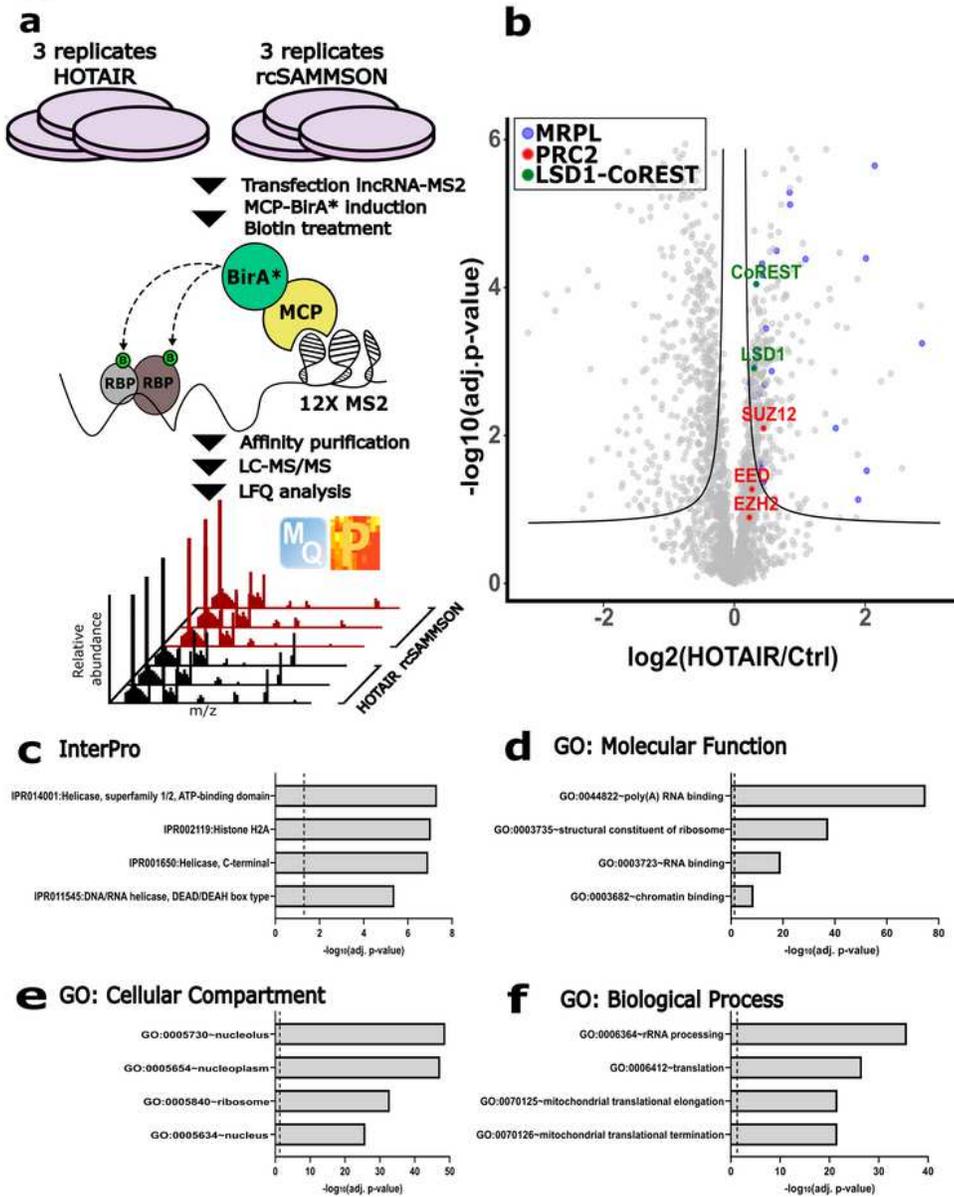


Figure 2

Identification of HOTAIR-interacting proteins by RNA-BioID. (a) Schematic overview of RNA-BioID. (b) Volcano plot showing the potential protein interactors of HOTAIR by RNA-BioID (FDR 0.05; s0 0.1). MRPLs are highlighted in blue, PRC2 complex members are highlighted in red, LSD1-CoREST members are highlighted in green. InterPro domains overrepresented in the data set (c). GO analysis showing Molecular Function (d), Cellular Component (e), and Biological Process (f). GO was performed with David 6.8., the four most significant terms are shown. The vertical dashed line represents the 0.05 cutoff used for the adjusted p-value. MCP, MS2 coat protein; RBP, RNA-binding domain; LFQ, label free quantification.

Figure 3

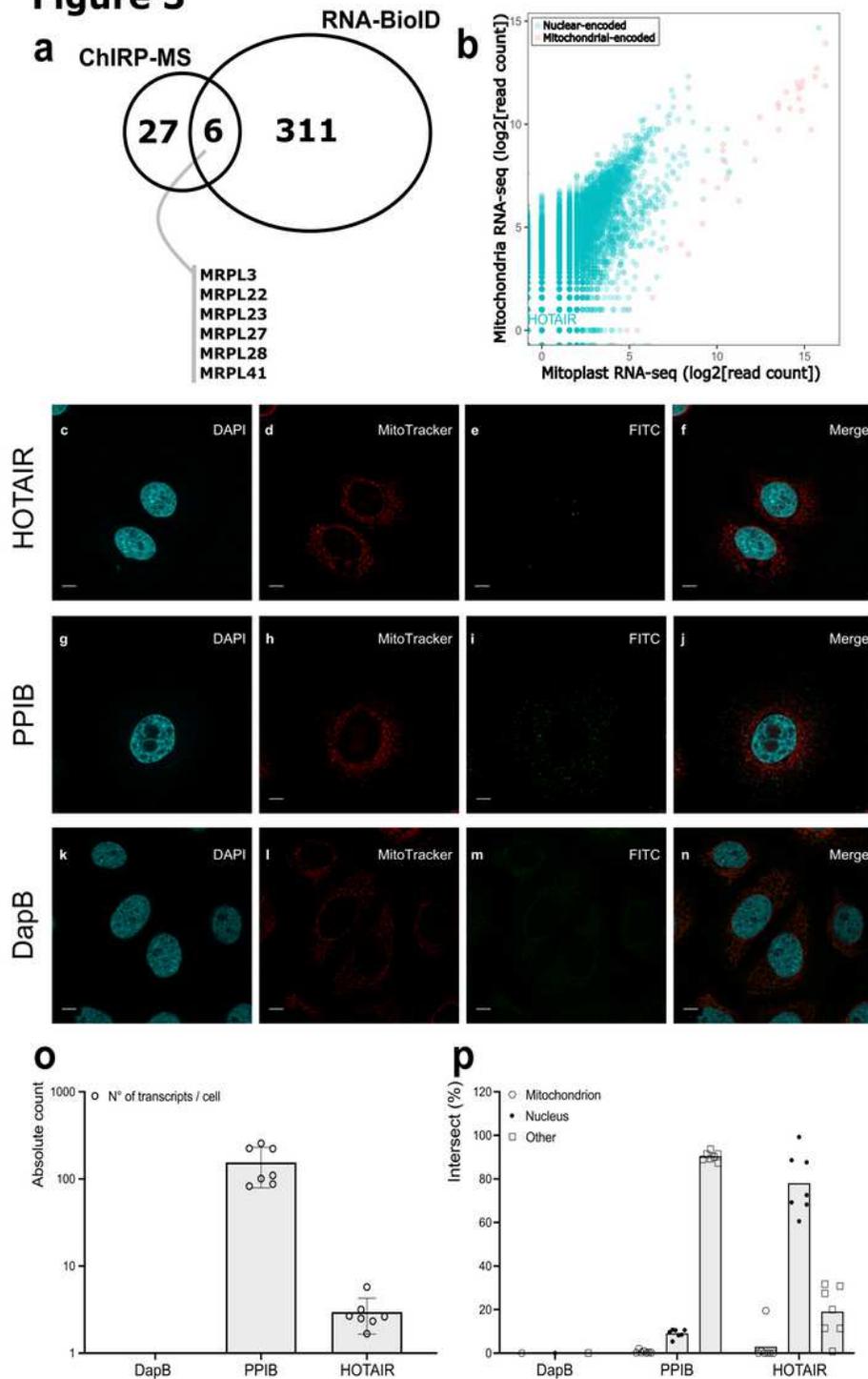


Figure 3

HOTAIR-MRPL interactions do not occur in mitochondria. (a) Overlap of ChIRP-MS and RNA-BioID identified proteins. Proteins identified in both methods are shown. (b) Reanalysis of RNA-sequencing data of Mercer et al. Nuclear-encoded genes are shown in green. Mitochondrial-encoded genes are shown in red. HOTAIR is highlighted. Colocalization of HOTAIR (c-f), PPIB mRNA positive control (g-j), and DapB mRNA negative control (k-n) with mitochondria in MCF7 determined by staining with RNAscope (FITC) and MitoTracker. (o) Determined transcript abundances per cell for each of the targets based on RNAscope puncti. (p) Intersect analysis showing percentage of the total transcript pool with mitochondria (hexagons) or nuclei (circles). Transcripts present in unstained organelle are shown as other (squares). The scale bar depicts 7.5 μm

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