**CryoEM Structure and Assembly Mechanism   
of a Bacterial Virus Genome Gatekeeper**

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**Figure legends for Extended Data figures**

**Extended Data Fig. 1 |Overall diagram of the image processing protocol. a**. A representative cryo-EM micrograph of the SPP1 connector. **b**. representative 2D classes of cryo-EM images of the connector (side views and one end view). **c**. The workflow of the cryo-EM image analysis, blue arrows show the link of the first steps from data collection to 2D classification and initial reconstruction. The green arrows show the work flow of the entire data set processing. The refined map of the connector complex was calculated using ~402,000 particle images.

**Extended Fig. 2| Assessment of the map resolution. a.** Fourier shell correlation (FSC) curves for the SPP1 connector map. The FSC curves are calculated using different types of masks: the curve in blue is the FSC between two cryo-EM maps without any mask; the curve in green with a spherical mask; the curve in red with a loose mask; the curves in purple and cyan are FSCs between two cryo-EM maps using tight masks, and the fitted, generated, atomic model. At the threshold of 0.143 resolution was 2.38 Å, at the threshold of 0.5 it was 2.7 Å. **b.** Angular distribution of particle images used at the reconstruction. The colours indicate the number of images that have such orientations according to the bar shown on the right. **c.** The EM map of the SPP1 connector coloured according to local resolution. The middle panel displays a cut-away view of the map allowing to see the details and resolution within the connector channel. Regions at higher resolution are in cyan, regions at lower resolution are in orange. Colour bar is shown in the right panel**. d.** Examples of fitting of the atomic models into EM densities. The left panel shows fitted helix α3 of the gp6 stem domain with side chains into the EM density (grey mesh). A fitted β-hairpin of the wing domain is shown in the upper right panel. A region of gp15 with fitted residues is shown in the bottom right panel.

**Extended Data Fig. 3 |** **The binding interface of gp6 and gp15 at the clip bottom. a**, Surface (left) and cartoon (right) views of three gp6 subunits in the assembly-naïve 13-mer. Secondary structure elements are labelled on the right panel and subunits are color-coded as in Fig. 1b. The 13-mer inter-subunit interface forms a groove in the clip (outlined by dashed curve in yellow). **b**, The pocket cavity is formed by three adjacent gp6 subunits *i, i+1*, and *i+2.* The area of interactions between the connector gp6 12-mer and gp15 is outlined by dashed yellow curve. **c**, Gp15 carboxyl terminus bound to the gp6 clip pocket of the connector. The last seven residues of gp15 are rendered as surface (left) and sticks (right) in magenta. All views are shown form the tail side.

**Extended Data Fig. 5 | Electrostatic potential at the gp6-gp15 and gp15-gp16 interfaces. a,** Slab of the local electrostatic potential of the gp6 clip bottom region (left) and its interacting gp15 interface (centre). The slab through the two proteins (right) highlights electrostatic potential complementarity and shape match. Electrostatic potentials are rendered in red and blue from -5.0 kT/e (red) to 5.0 kT/e (blue); see the scale bar in the middle of the figure on the right side. Residues establishing gp6-gp15 saline bridges are labelled in bold and charged residues are also identified. **b,** Slab of the local electrostatic potential complementarity of the gp15 (left) and gp16 (centre) demonstrates interaction interfaces at the level of Arg73 in the β-barrel of gp15 (right panel). The positions of slabs in **a** and **b** are shown in the connector view in the centre of the figure. All views are shown from the tail side.

**Extended Data Fig. 6 | Gp15 homologous proteins conformational landscape. a,** SPP1 gp15 structural homologues detected with DALI1 (Z-scores are indicated) or identified by inspection of available structures of connector complexes in cases of more distant homologues. The state of oligomerisation, structure determination method and the PDB coordinates code are shown in the table. **b,** Atomic models of monomers (twenty superimposed NMR structures of SPP1 gp15 and of skin element YqbG), and of single subunits from oligomers of assembly-naïve (HK97 gp6) and assembled viral particles SPP1 gp15, T7 gp11, P68 lower collar protein and φ29 gp11. The structures are aligned with SPP1 gp15 of the connector through helices α1, α2 and α3. Their secondary structure elements are labeled according to the SPP1 gp15 structure and colored from blue (α0) to red (helix α3 and C-terminus). Structural elements that do not present in gp15 are shown in grey. The regions extending β1-β2 outwards from the protein core of phages P68 and φ29 are truncated.

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**Extended Data Fig. 7 | Gp15 homologous oligomers.** Left panels show side views of the oligomers; right panels demonstrate end views (from the capsid) accordingly. The position of zoomed in regions are identified by rectangles in the inserts. Equivalent structural elements are shown in similar colors. The flexible C-termini that anchor these proteins to the portal complexes are shown in orange, helices corresponding to α0 are in green, and the β-barrels formed upon folding of loop α2-α3 into the β1-β2 hairpin are in blue.

**a,** Siphophage HK97 assembly-naïve gp6 13-mer purified from an overproducing strain1 (PDB 3JVO), showing an anti-parallel β-like interchain interaction at the position similar to the β-barrel of structures in **b-d**. **b,** Siphophage SPP1 gp15 structure in the connector. **c,** Podophage P68 lower collar protein structure in the phage particle2 (PDB 6IAC). The β-barrel forms the short tail DNA conduit. Its bottom part is truncated in the figure. **d,** Podophage φ29 gp11 in the phage particle3 (PDB 6QZF). In **c** and **d** the β-barrel forms the short tail DNA conduit bottom parts of which are truncated in the figure.

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**Extended Data Fig. 8 | Gp16 homologous proteins conformational landscape. a,** SPP1 gp16 structural homologues detected with DALI1 (Z-score displayed) or identified by inspection of available phage particle (sub-)structures in case of the distantly related domain of the tail knob protein gp9 from phage φ29. The oligomerisation state, structure determination method and the PDB code are indicated in the table. **b,** Atomic models of monomers (twenty superimposed NMR structures of SPP1 gp15 and of *Shigella flexneri* 2a SF1141) and of subunits from oligomers of assembled SPP1 and φ29 viral particle complexes.The structures are aligned with SPP1 gp16 through the β-barrel core. Structural elements are colored as in Fig. 4a. The N-terminal domain of φ29 gp9, which interacts with the β-barrel region of gp11 (Extended Data Fig. 7d) distal from the capsid4, is shown in grey.

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