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Visualizing translation dynamics at atomic detail inside a bacterial cell

[Liang Xue](#), [Swantje Lenz](#), [Maria Zimmermann-Kogadeeva](#), [Dimitry Tegunov](#), [Patrick Cramer](#), [Peer Bork](#), [Juri Rappsilber](#) & [Julia Mahamid](#) 

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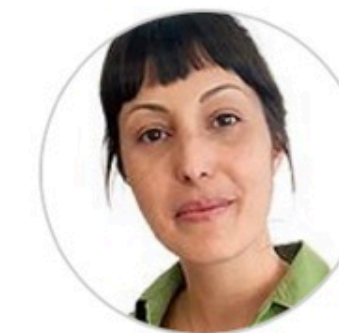
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Our group brings together two disciplines in structural and cell biology, namely the emerging field of biomolecular condensates and state-of-the-art cellular cryo-electron tomography, to advance our understanding on the functional organisation of the cytoplasm.



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Group Leader and Senior Scientist

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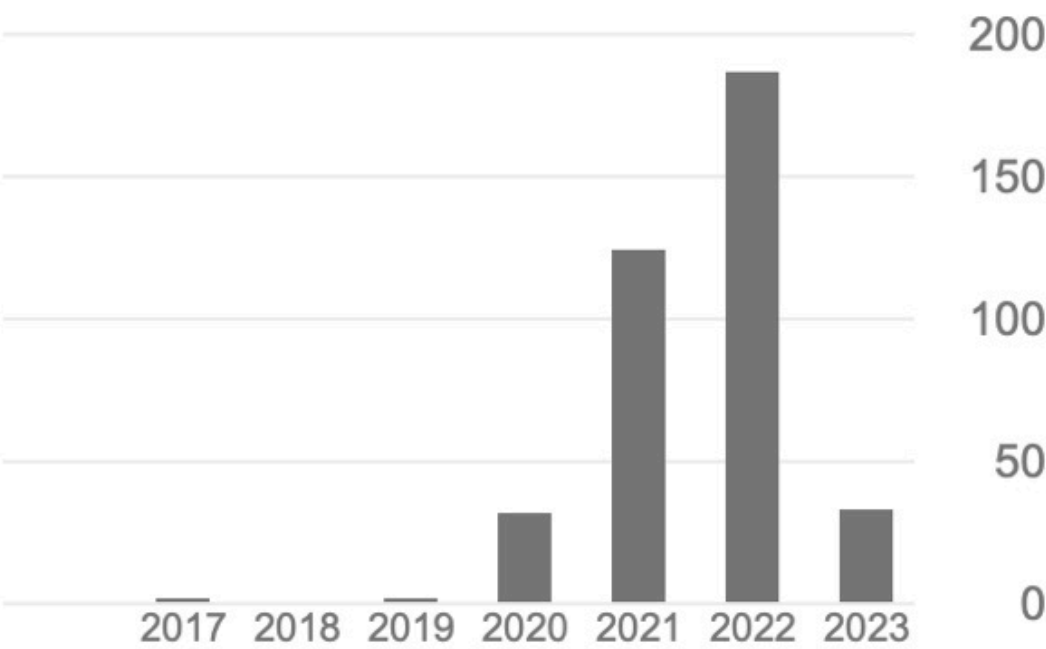
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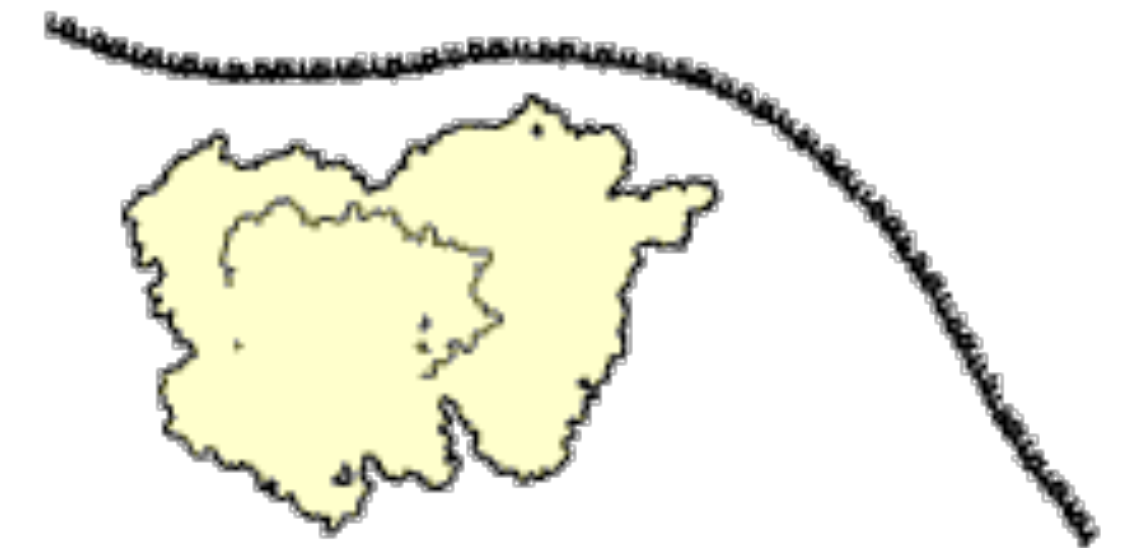
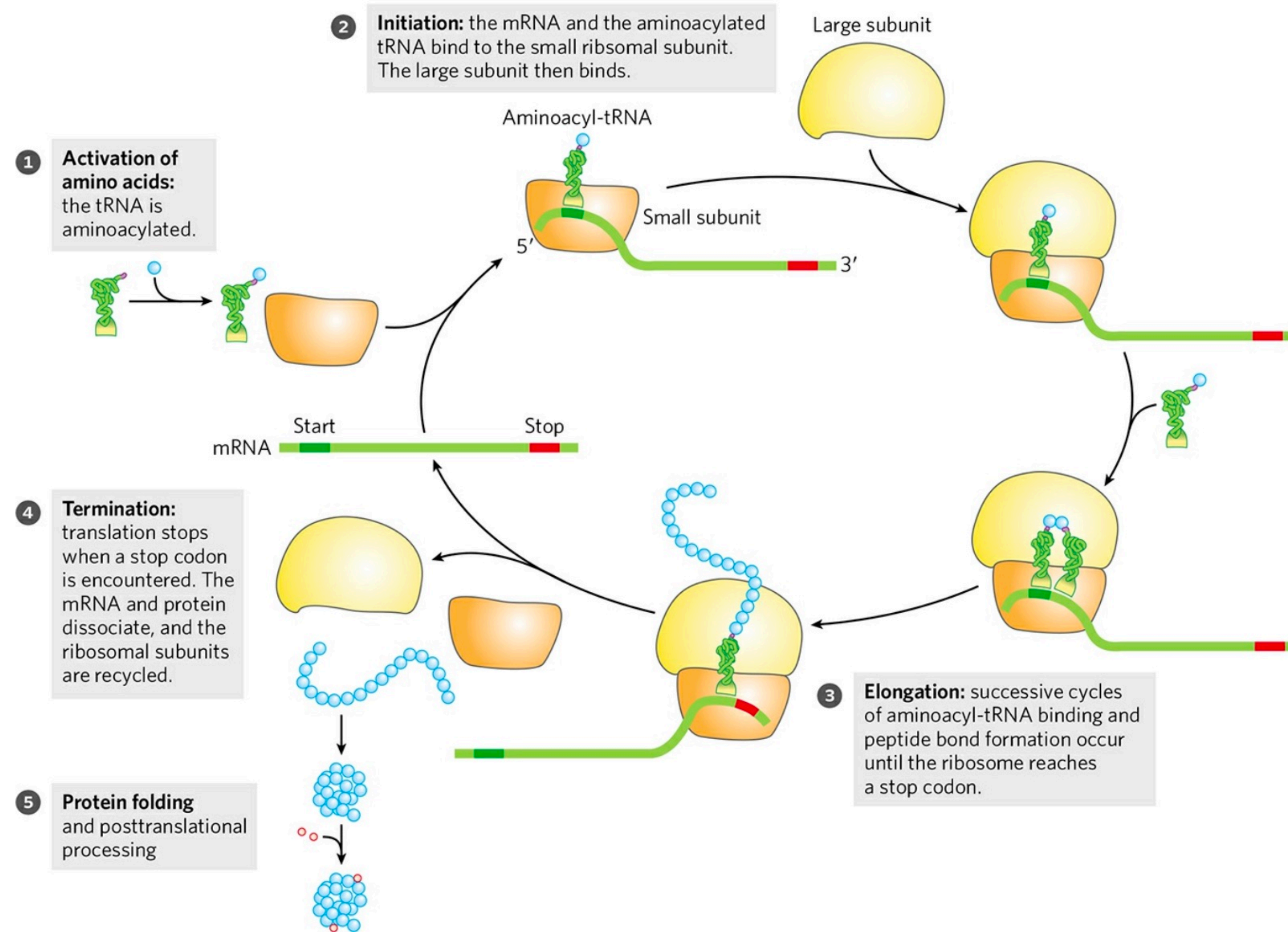
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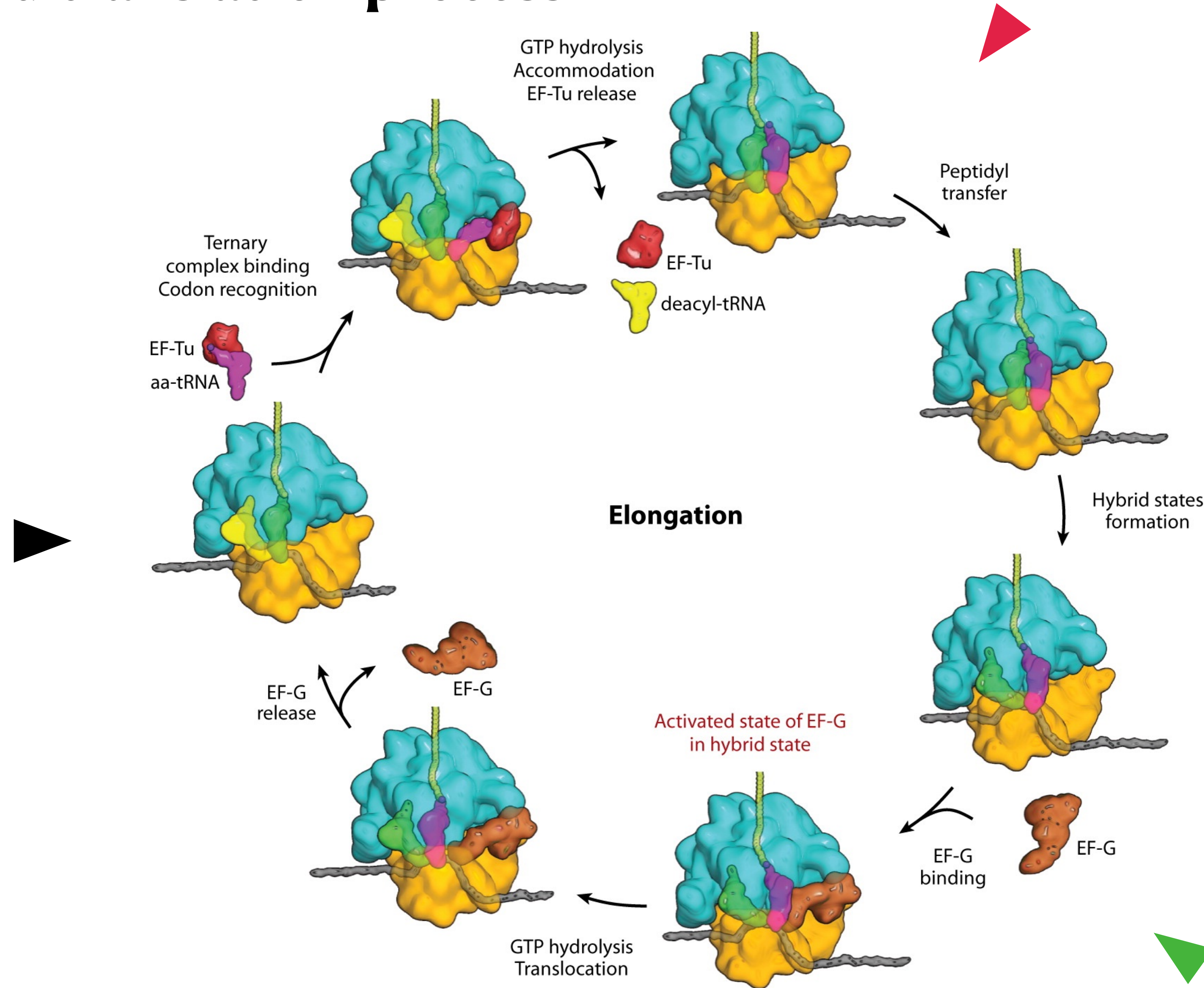
Background

Ribosome and translation process



An overview of the five stages of protein synthesis.
(Lehninger Principles of Biochemistry, 7th edition)

Ribosome and translation process



Unsolved problems ?

Q1: The maps generated in previous studies were limited to resolutions on the nanometre scale

- o The resolution is not high enough to see the details in translating ribosomes

Q2: A detailed structural description of the translation process within the native cellular context is lacking

- o Most available structures are resolved from **model bacteria**
- o Often **trapped in specific states** by antibiotics/GTP analogues/mutations

Objects and Subjects of this study

Q1: The maps generated in previous studies were limited to resolutions on the nanometre scale

- The resolution is not high enough to see the details in translating ribosomes

Q2: A detailed structural description of the translation process within the native cellular context is lacking

- Most available structures are resolved from **model bacteria**
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Build an in-cell native atomic model for the translating ribosomes



Analyze the native cellular translation landscape(different states and organization of translating ribosomes)

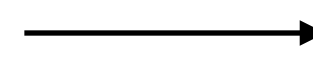
Objects and Subjects of this study

Build an in-cell **native atomic**
model for the translating
ribosomes



cryo-electron microscopy
cryo-ET & Subtomogram Average(STA)

Analyze the **native** cellular
translation landscape(**different**
states and **organization** of
translating ribosomes)



cryo-ET classification methods
use antibiotics to reshape the landscape
project back the structure into the tomogram
...

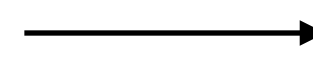
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cryo-electron microscopy
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cryo-ET classification methods
use antibiotics to reshape the landscape
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...

How to choose prokaryotic cell model ?

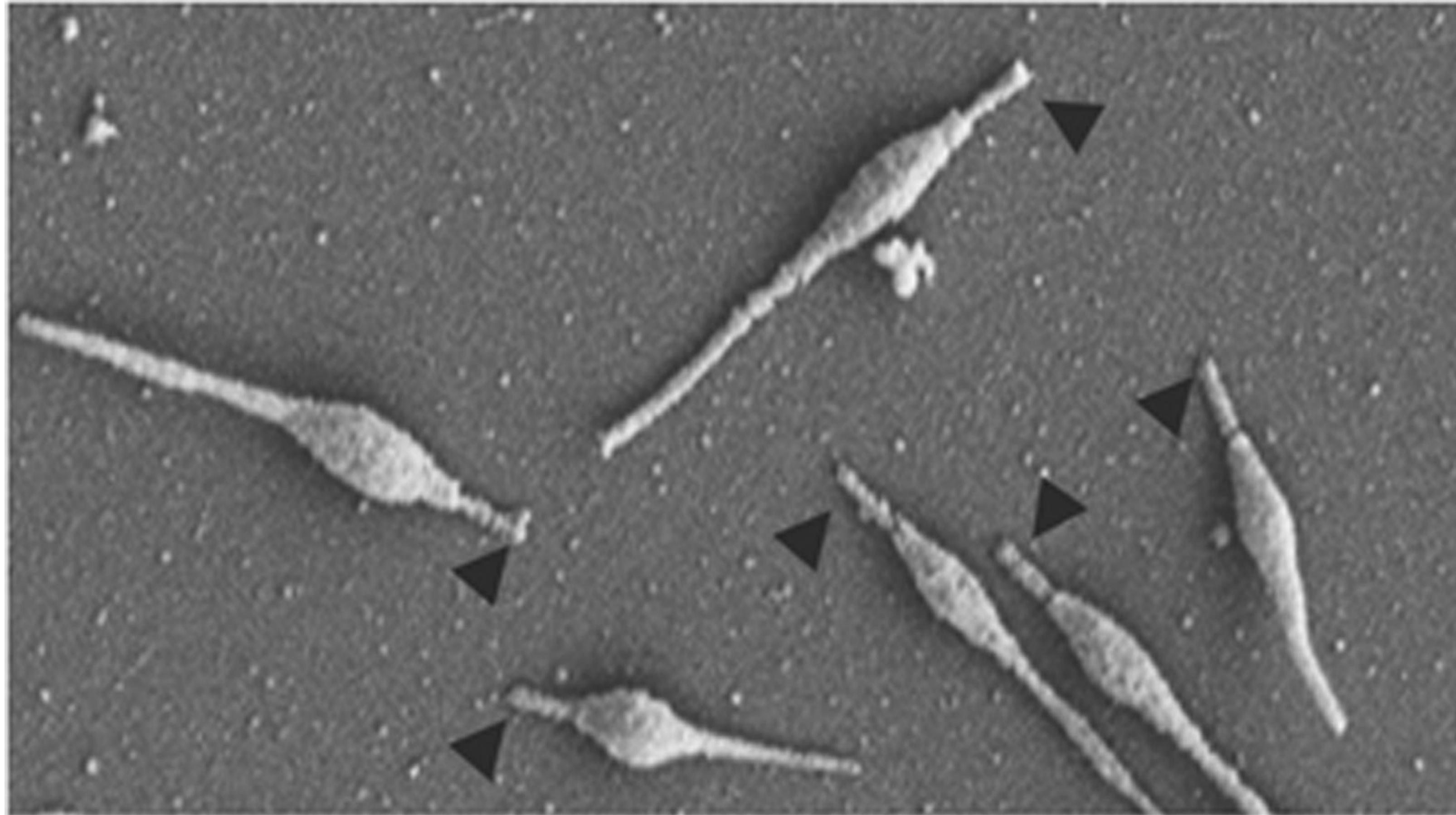
- o Cell size - small enough
- o Genome - reduced enough

Objects and Subjects of this study

How to choose prokaryotic cell model ?

- o Cell size - small enough
- o Genome - reduced enough

Mycoplasma pneumoniae (肺炎枝原体)

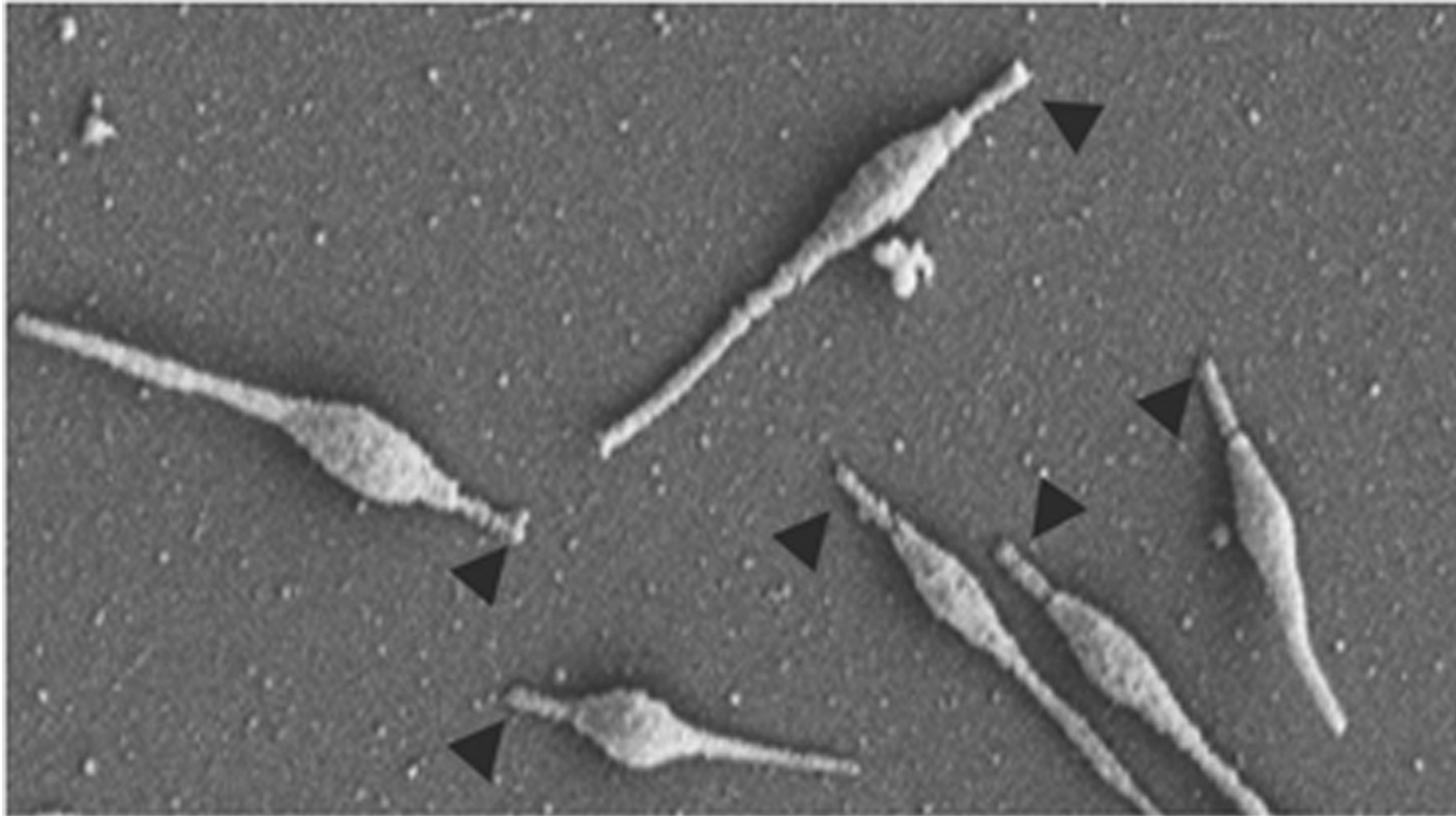


Objects and Subjects of this study

How to choose prokaryotic cell model ?

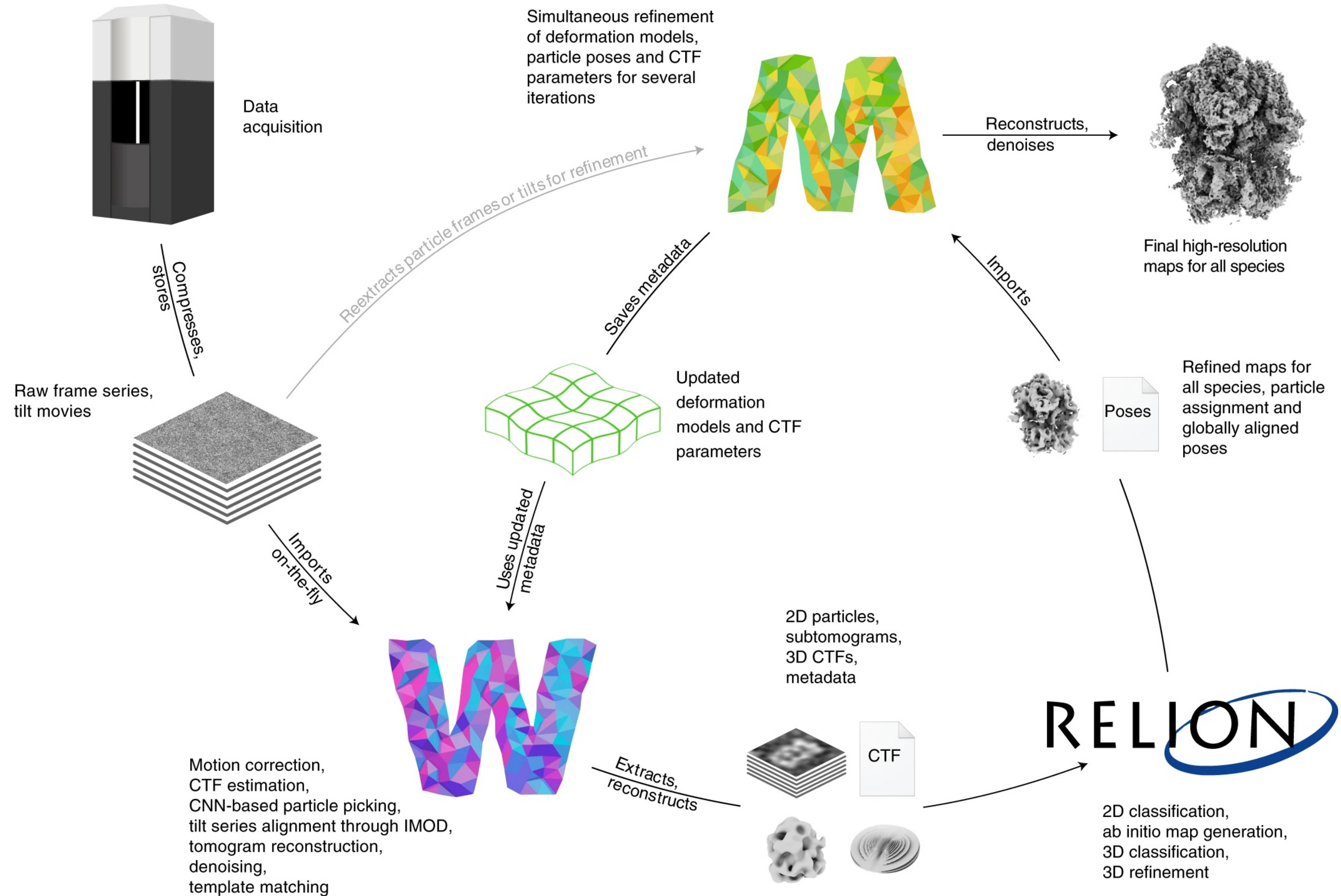
- Cell size - small enough
- Genome - reduced enough

Mycoplasma pneumoniae (肺炎枝原体)



- among the **smallest** self-replicating organisms
- Parasitic
- no cell wall and periplasmic space
- reduced genomes
- limited metabolic activity

Materials & Methods



(Tegunov, D., Xue, L., Dienemann, C. et al. 2021)

Results

1 In-cell structure of the *M.pneumoniae* ribosome

1.1 High-resolution in-cell consensus maps

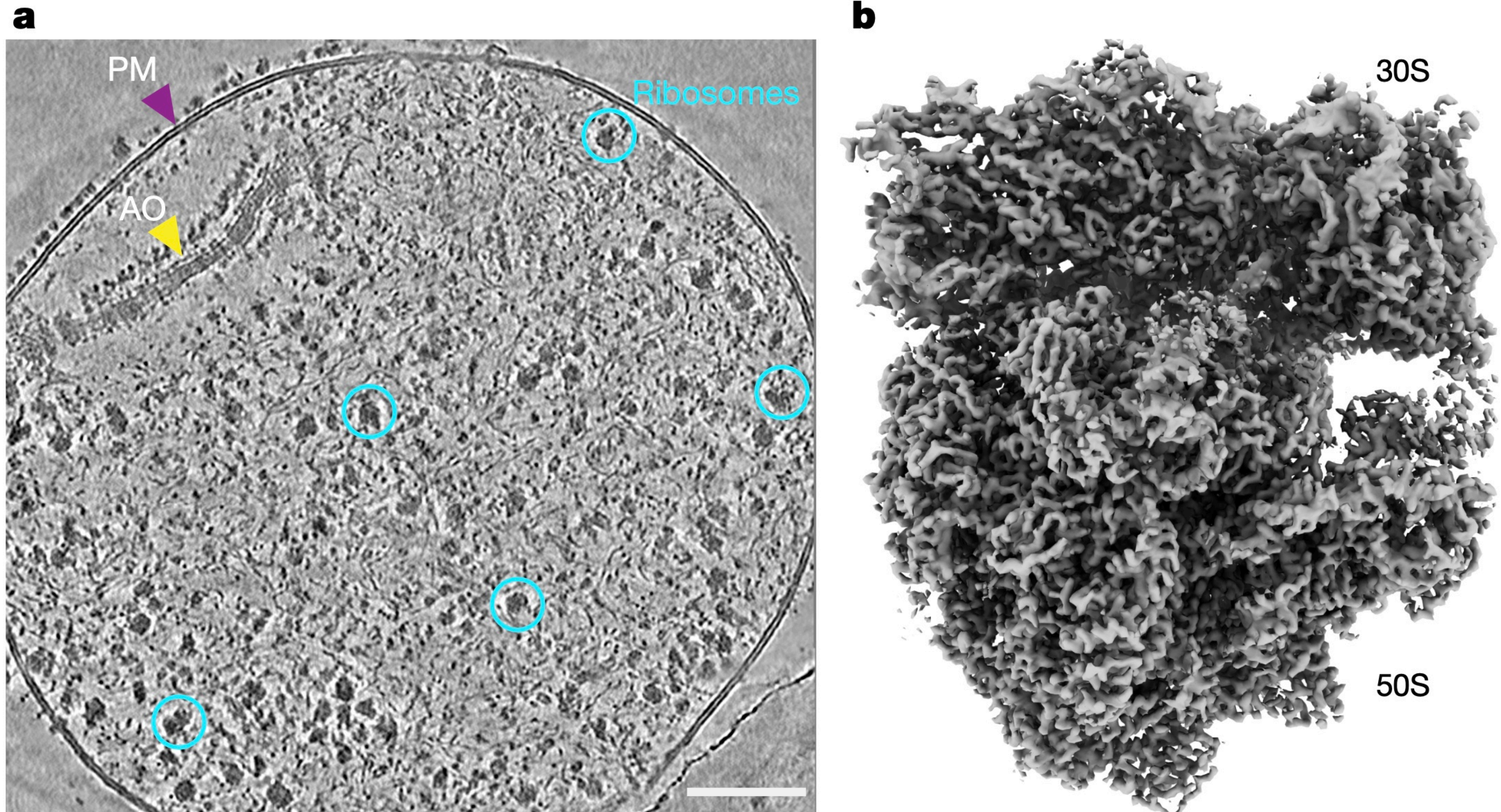
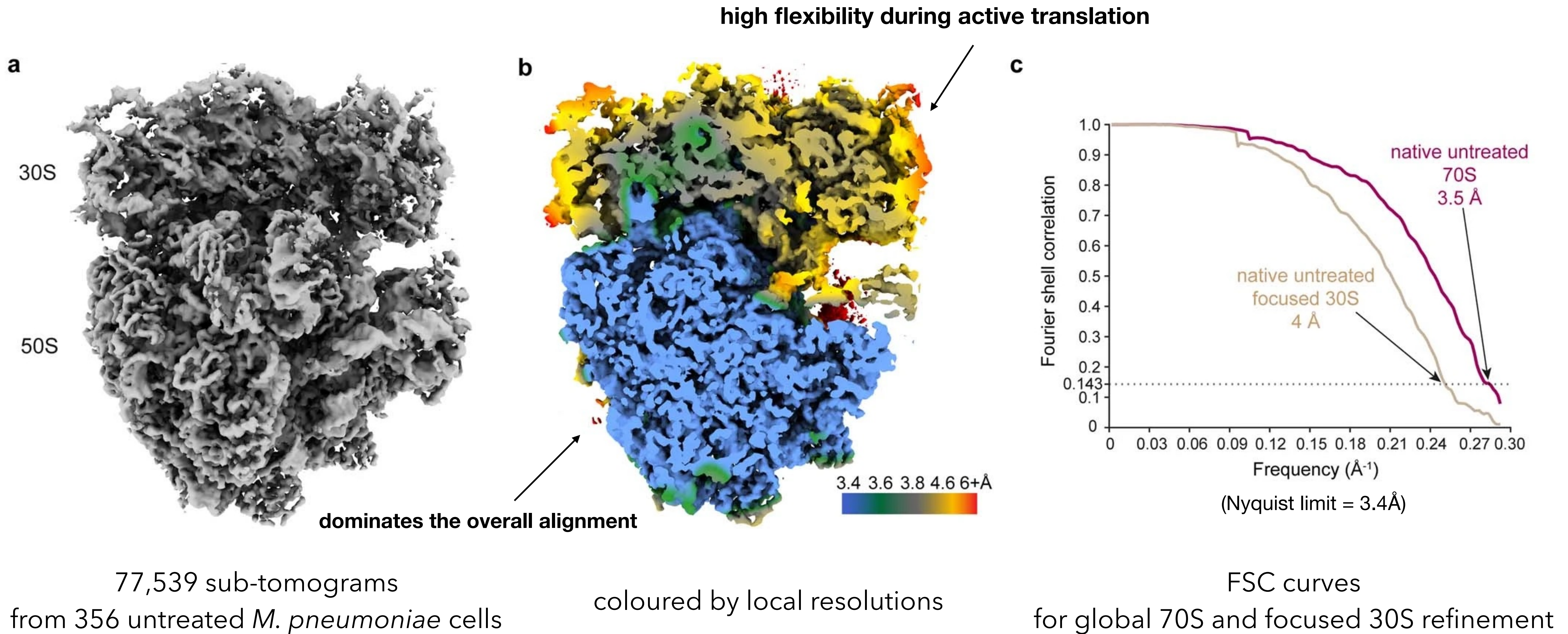


Figure 1

1 In-cell structure of the *M.pneumoniae* ribosome

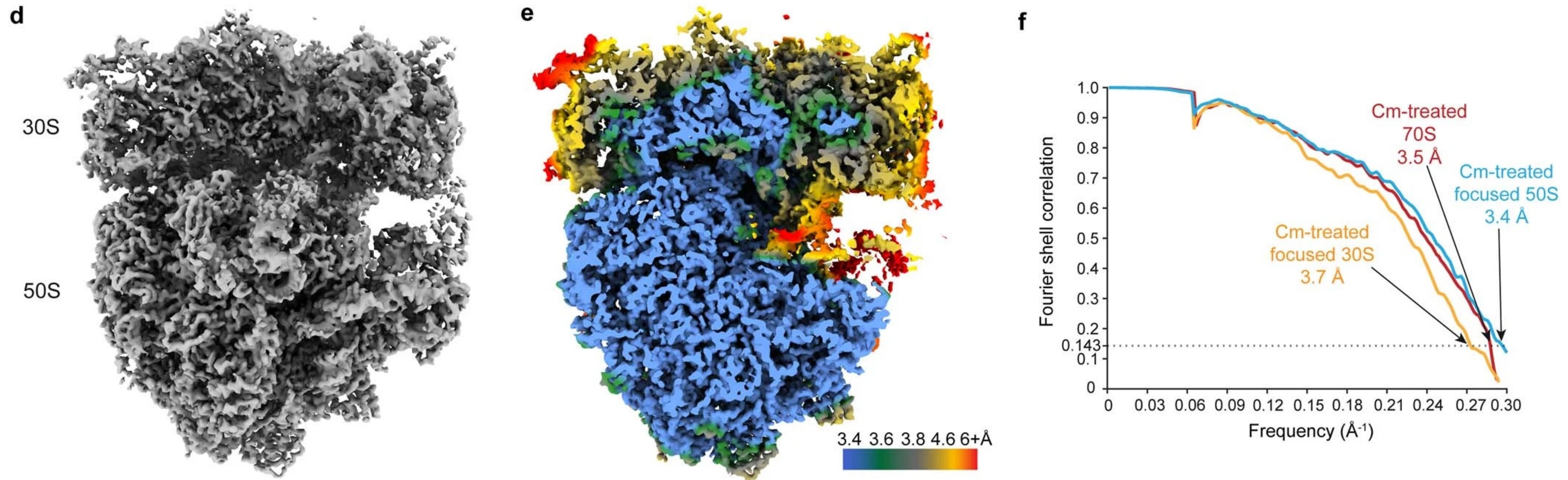
1.1 High-resolution in-cell consensus maps



Extended Data Figure 1

1 In-cell structure of the *M.pneumoniae* ribosome

1.1 High-resolution in-cell consensus maps



18,987 sub-tomograms
from 65 Cm-treated cells

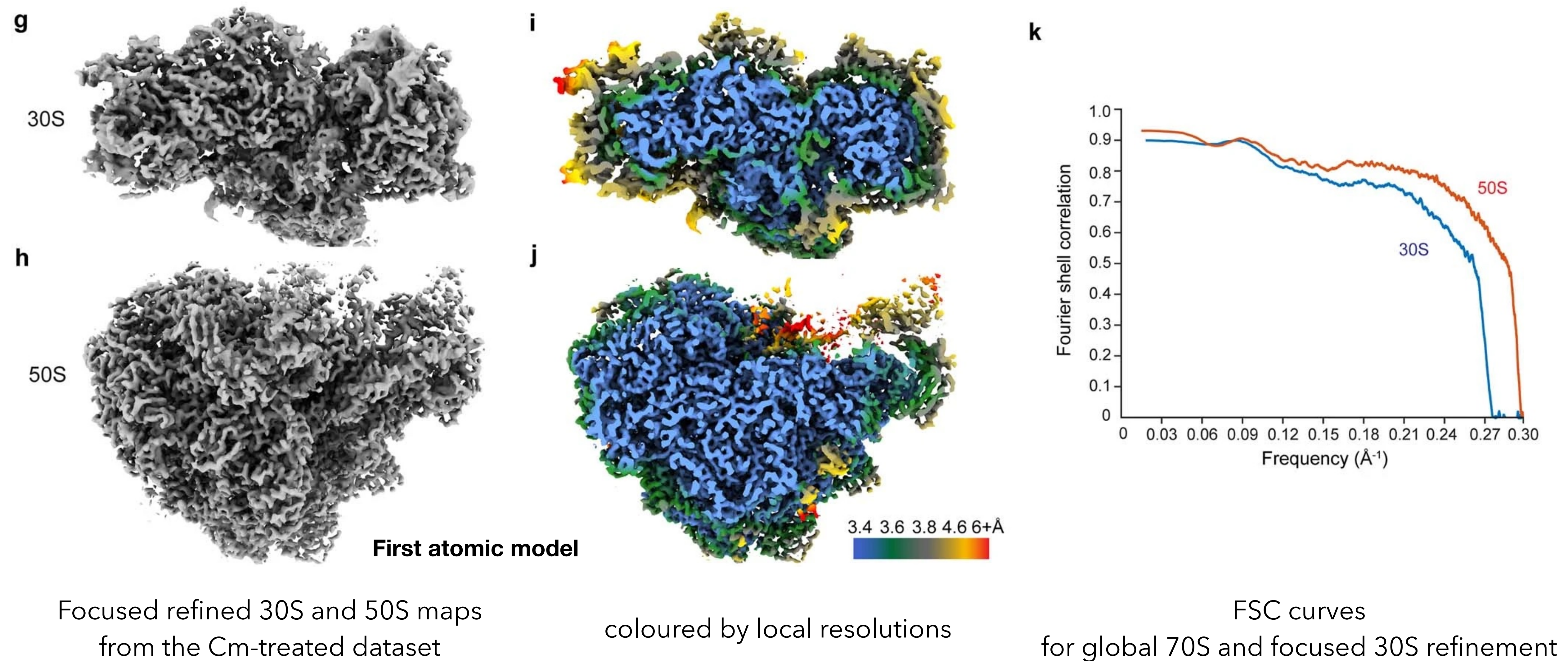
coloured by local resolutions

FSC curves
for global 70S and focused 30S refinement

Extended Data Figure 1

1 In-cell structure of the *M.pneumoniae* ribosome

1.1 High-resolution in-cell consensus maps

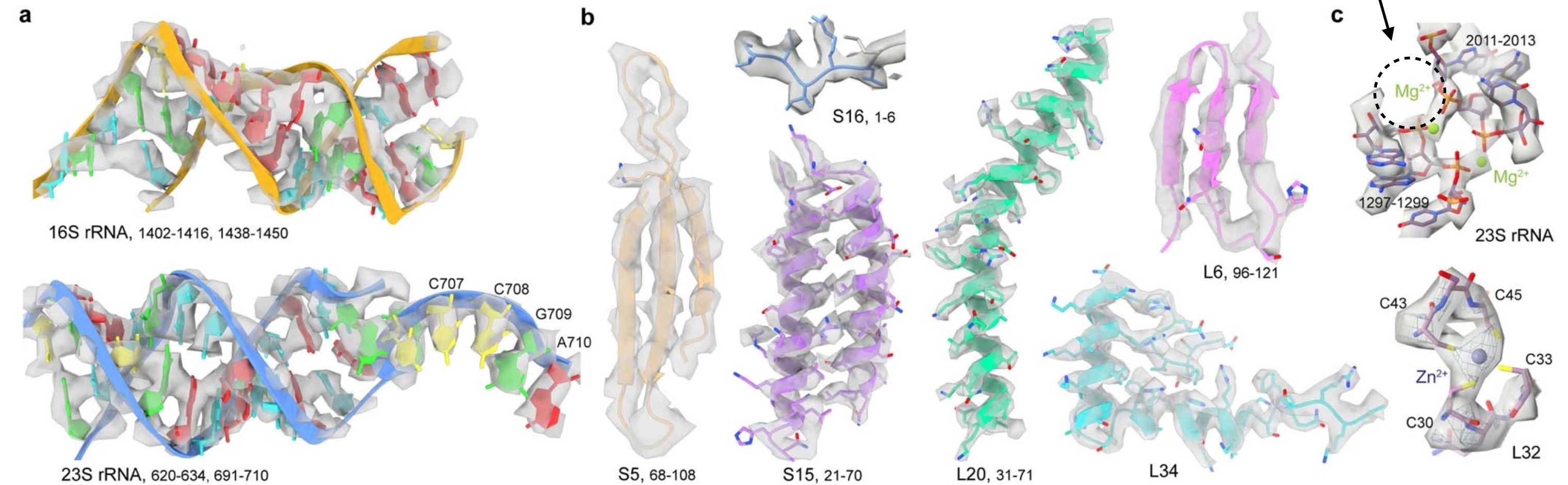
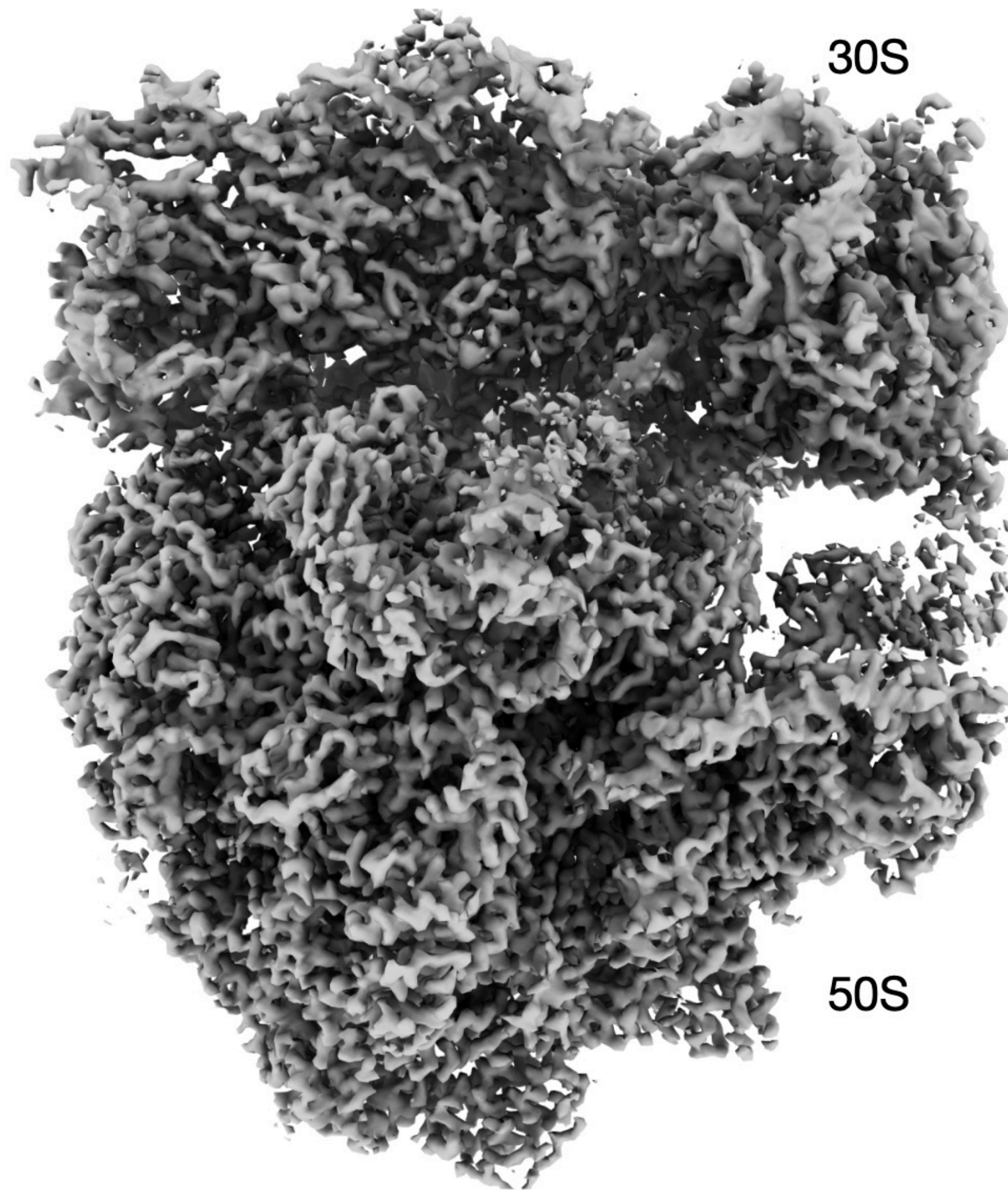


Extended Data Figure 1

1 In-cell structure of the *M.pneumoniae* ribosome

1.2 Focused refinements and atomic model

b



Extended Data Figure 2

Focused refinements revealed rRNA bases and AA side chains

Figure 1

1 In-cell structure of the *M.pneumoniae* ribosome

1.3 Ribosomal protein extensions

c

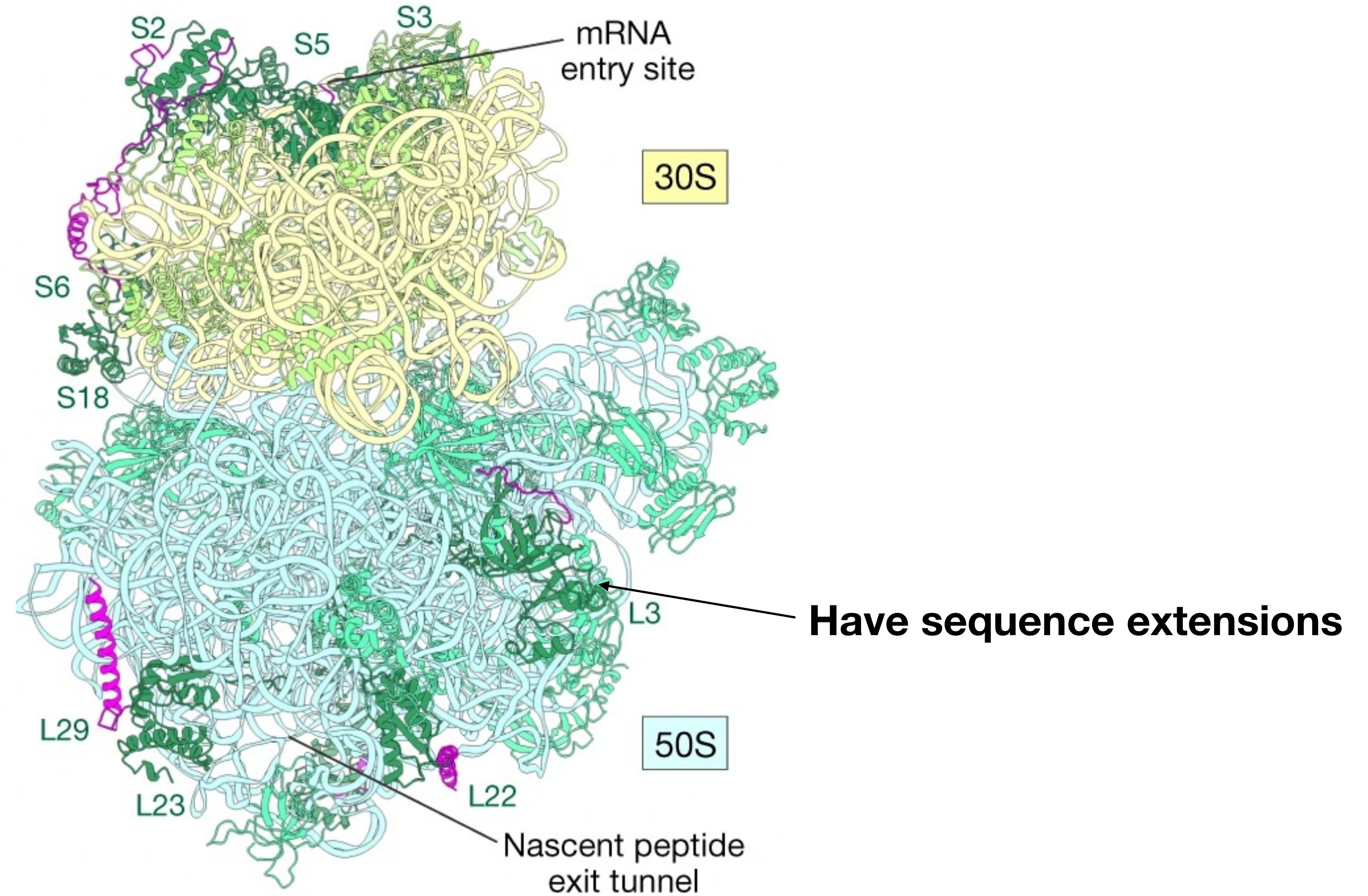
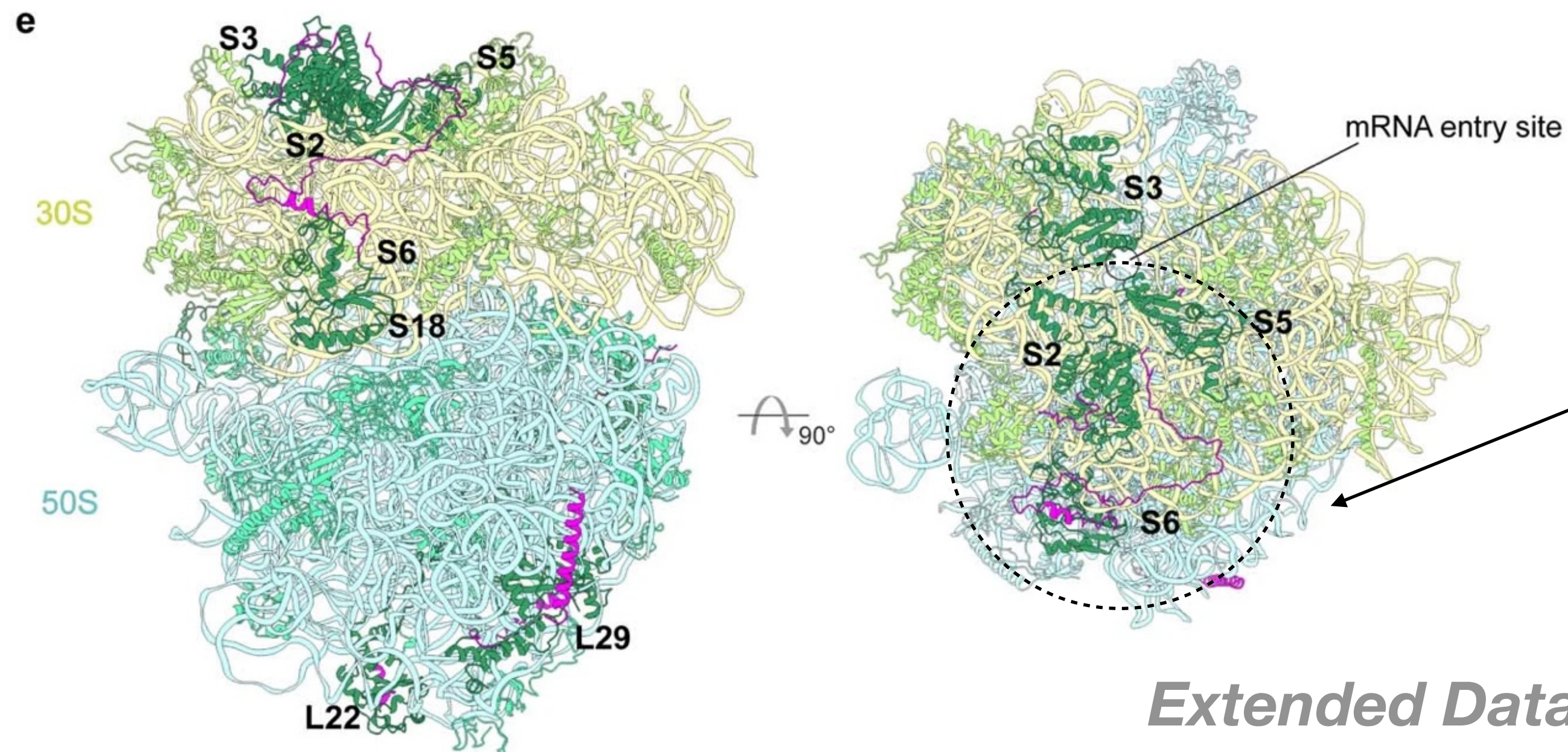
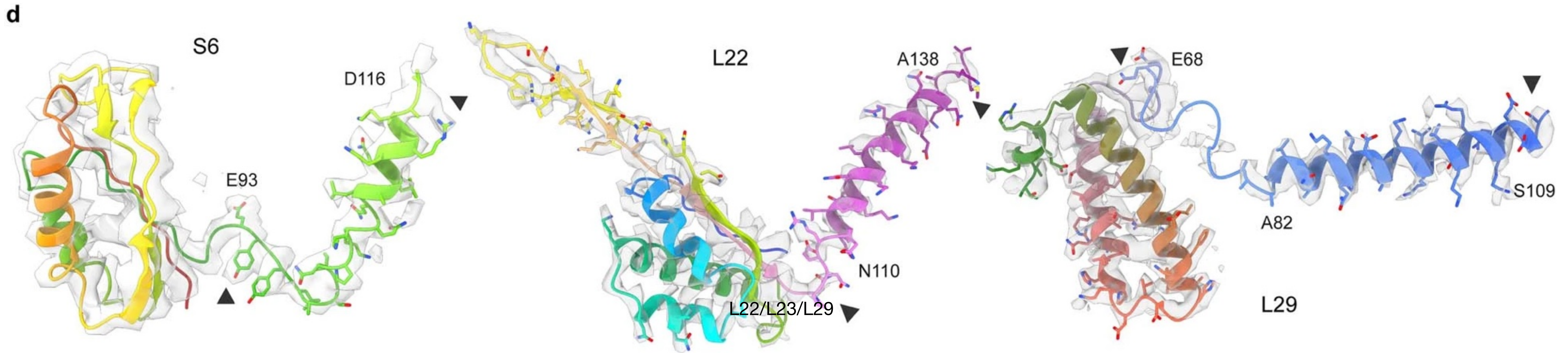


Figure 1

1 In-cell structure of the *M.pneumoniae* ribosome

1.3 Ribosomal protein extensions



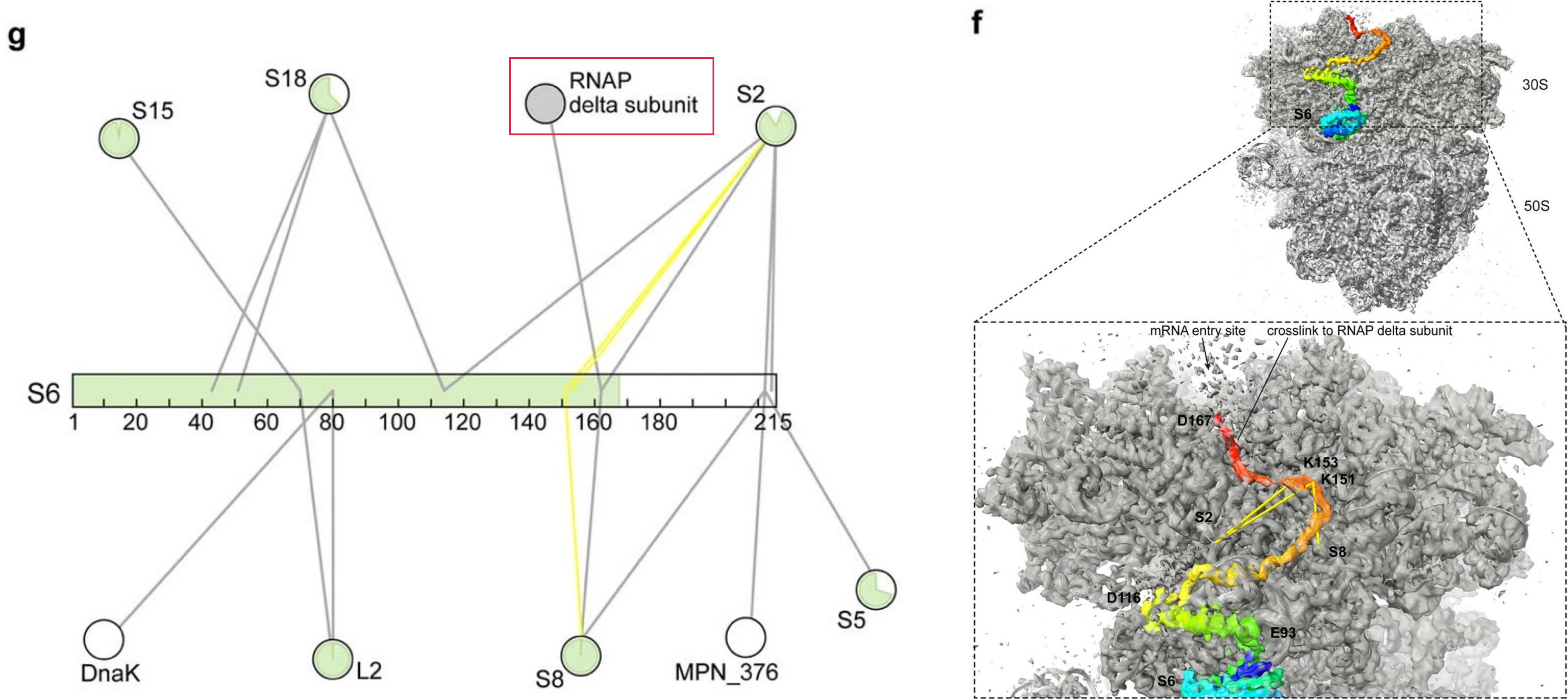
Extensions of ribosomal proteins S6, L22 and L29 form secondary structures

the long C-terminal loop of S6

Extended Data Figure 2

1 In-cell structure of the *M.pnuemoniae* ribosome

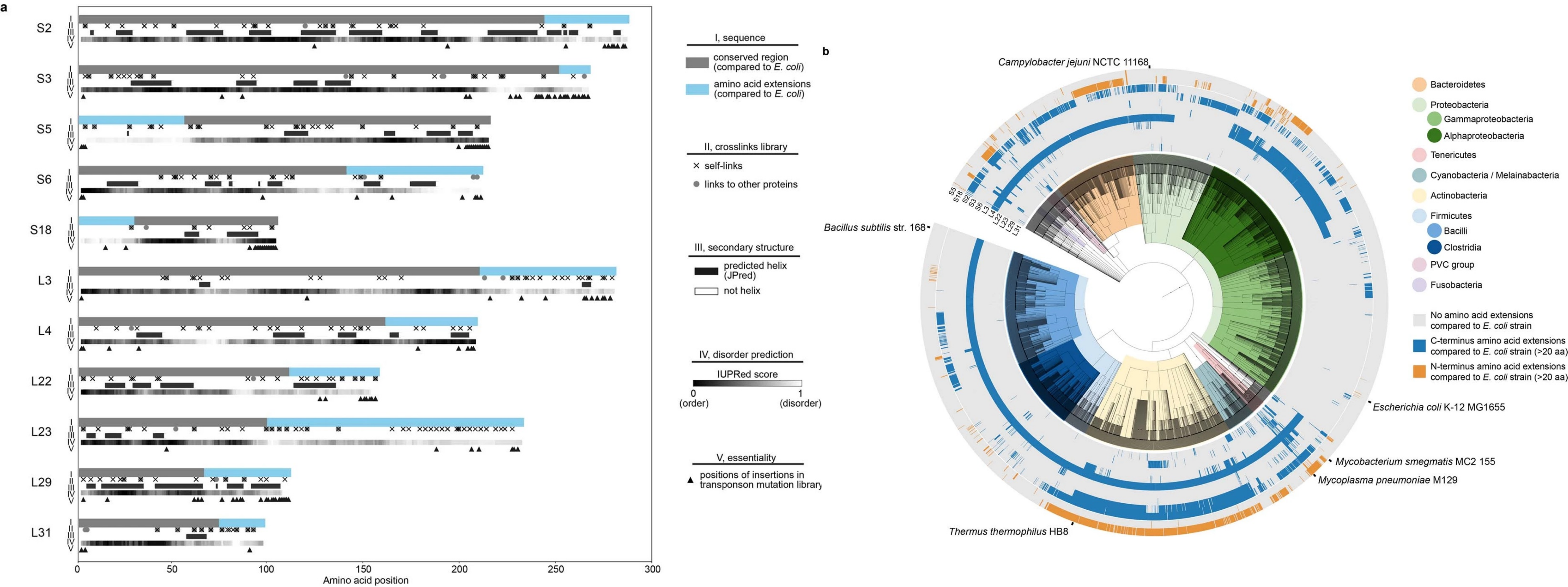
1.3 Ribosomal protein extensions



Extended Data Figure 2

1 In-cell structure of the *M.pneumoniae* ribosome

1.3 Ribosomal protein extensions

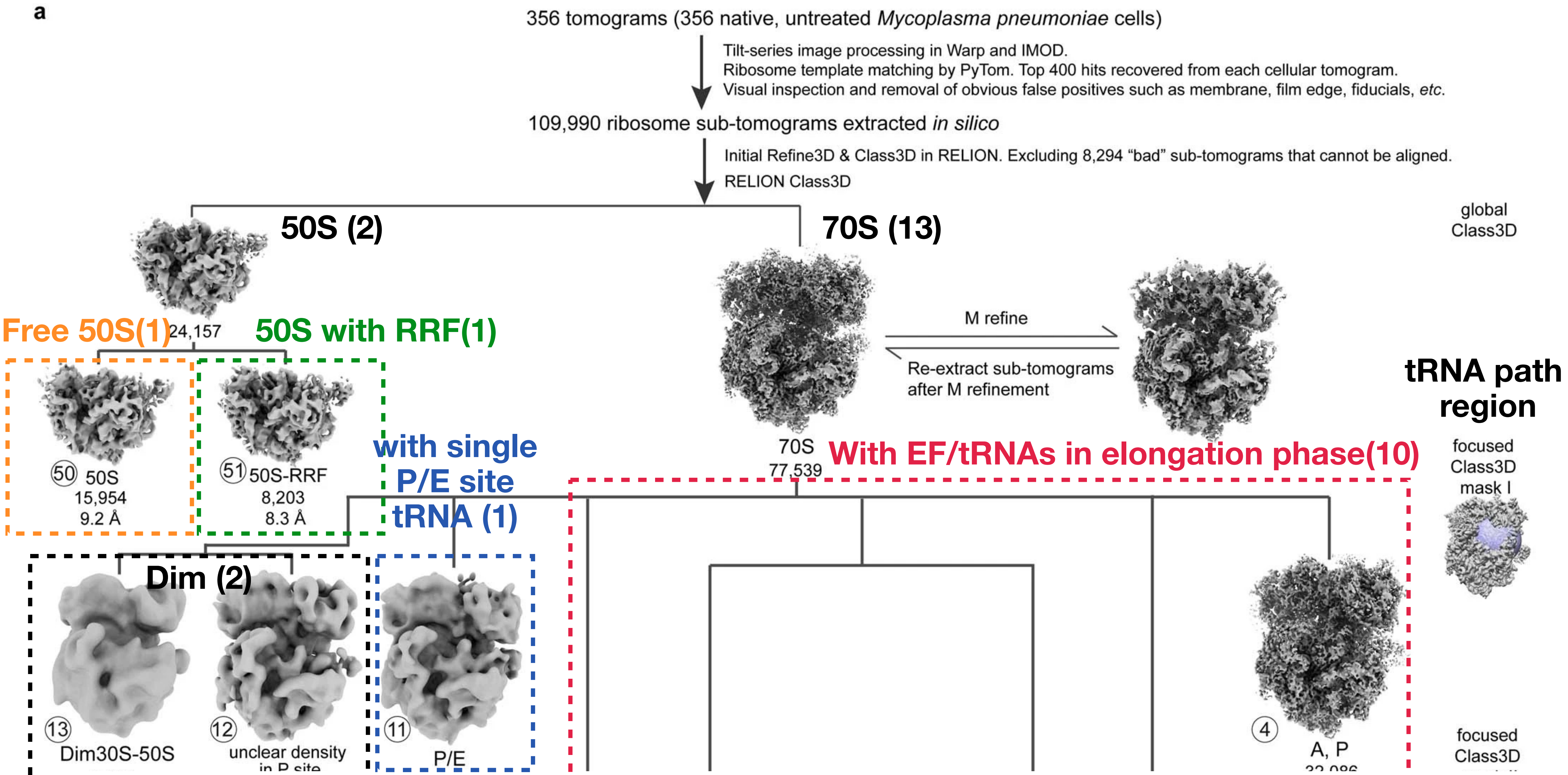


Ribosome diversity possibly in adaption to different environments and lifestyles

Extended Data Figure 3

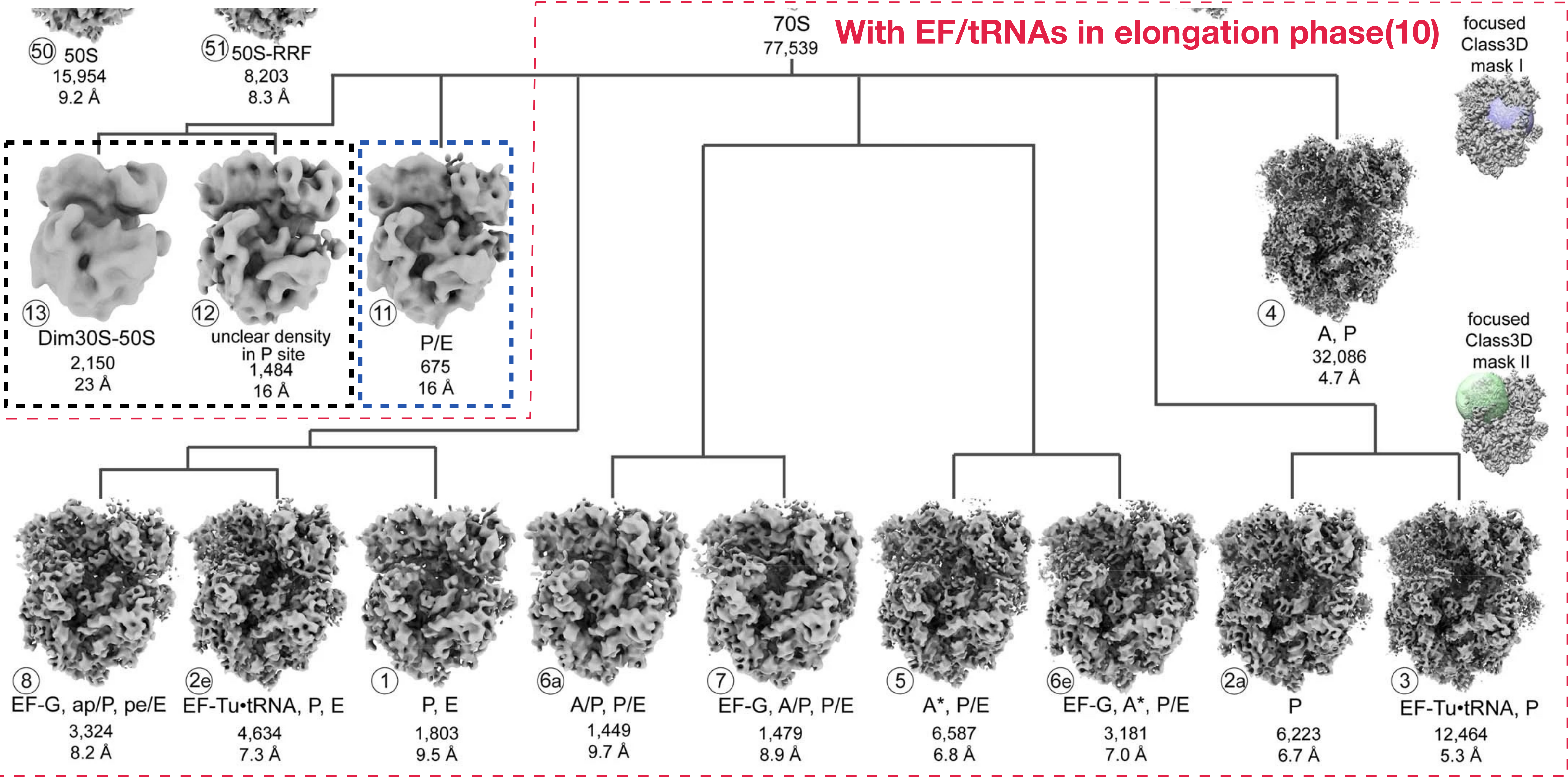
2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

2.1 Classification and refinement of ribosomes in native untreated cells



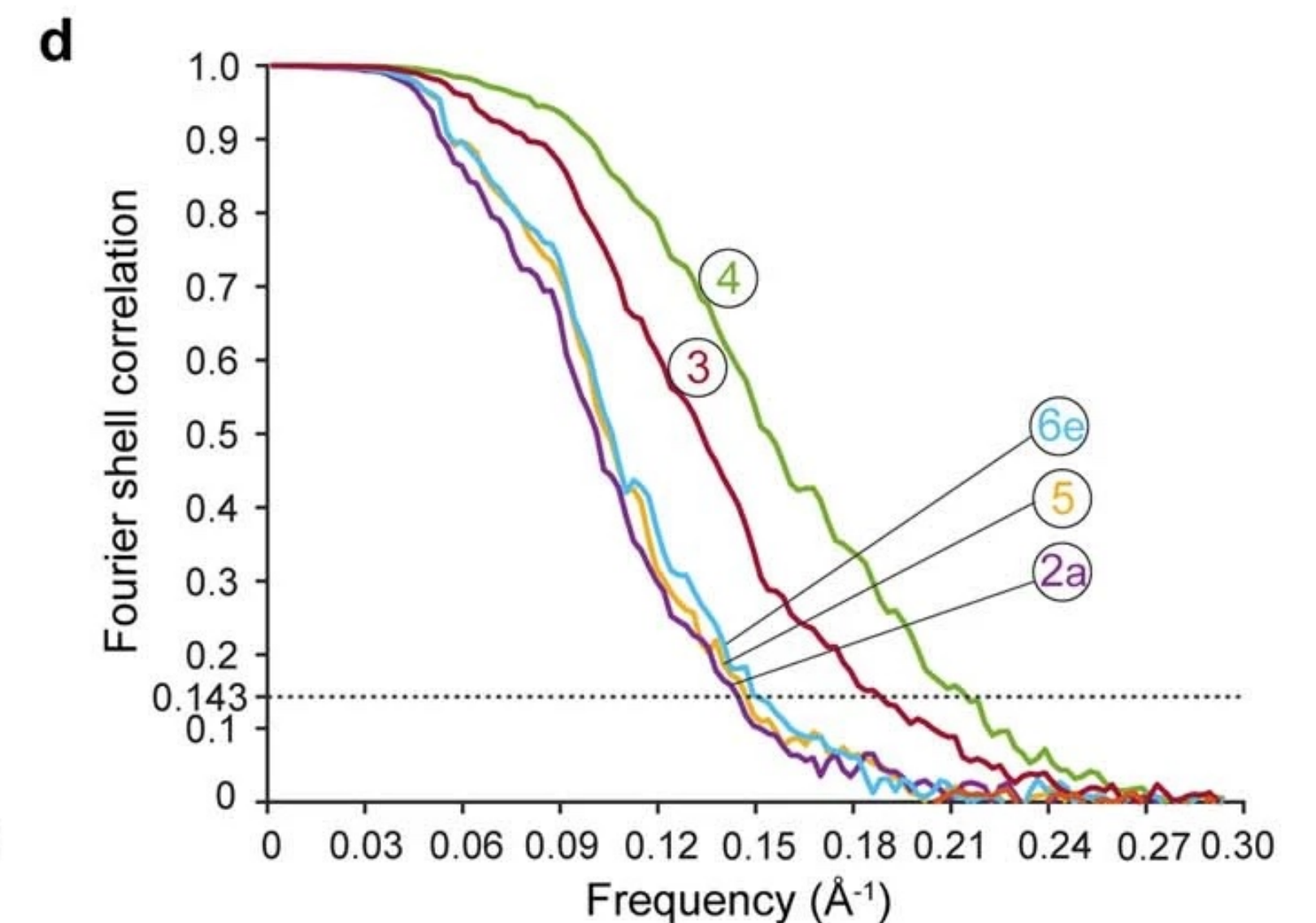
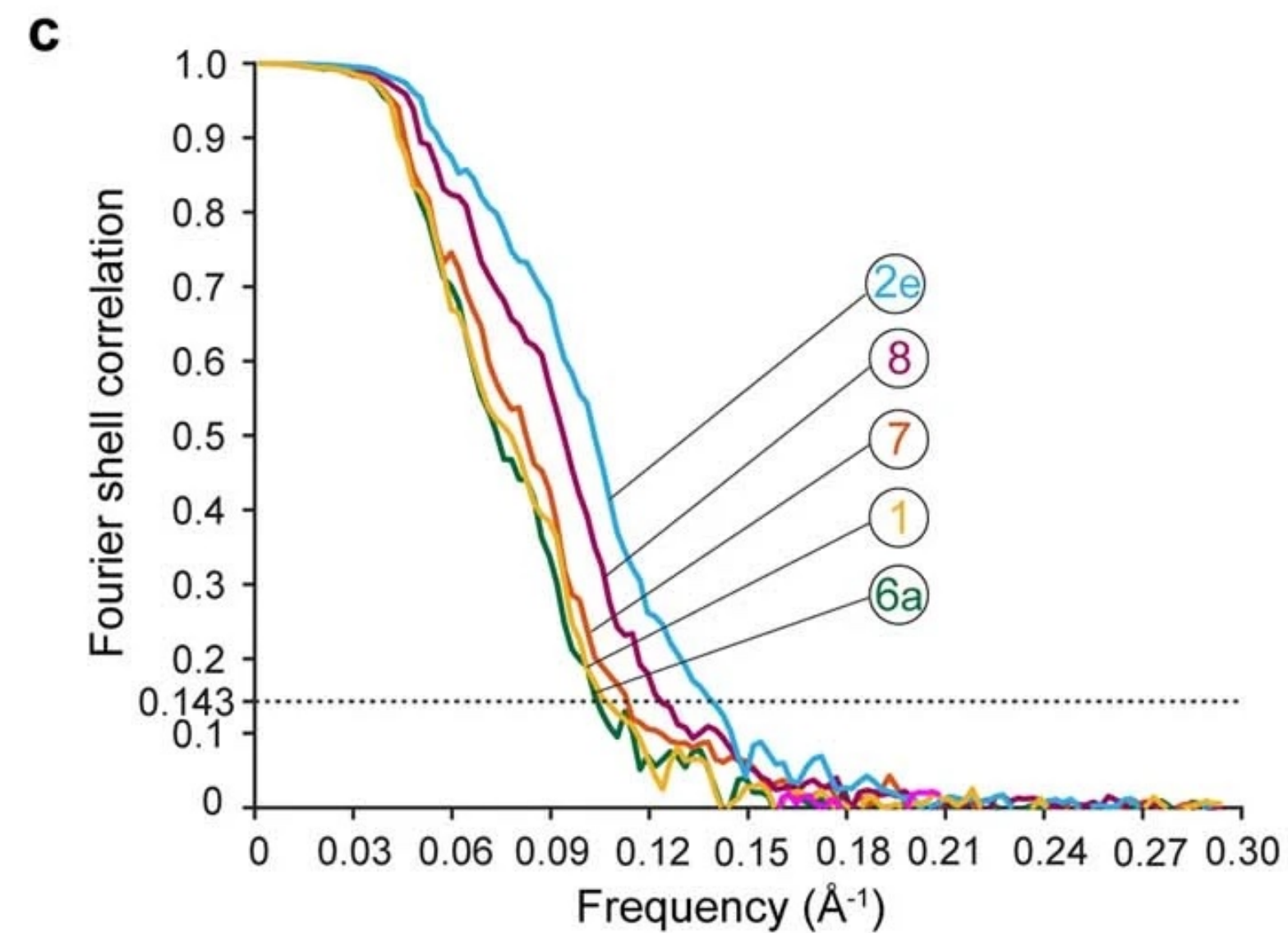
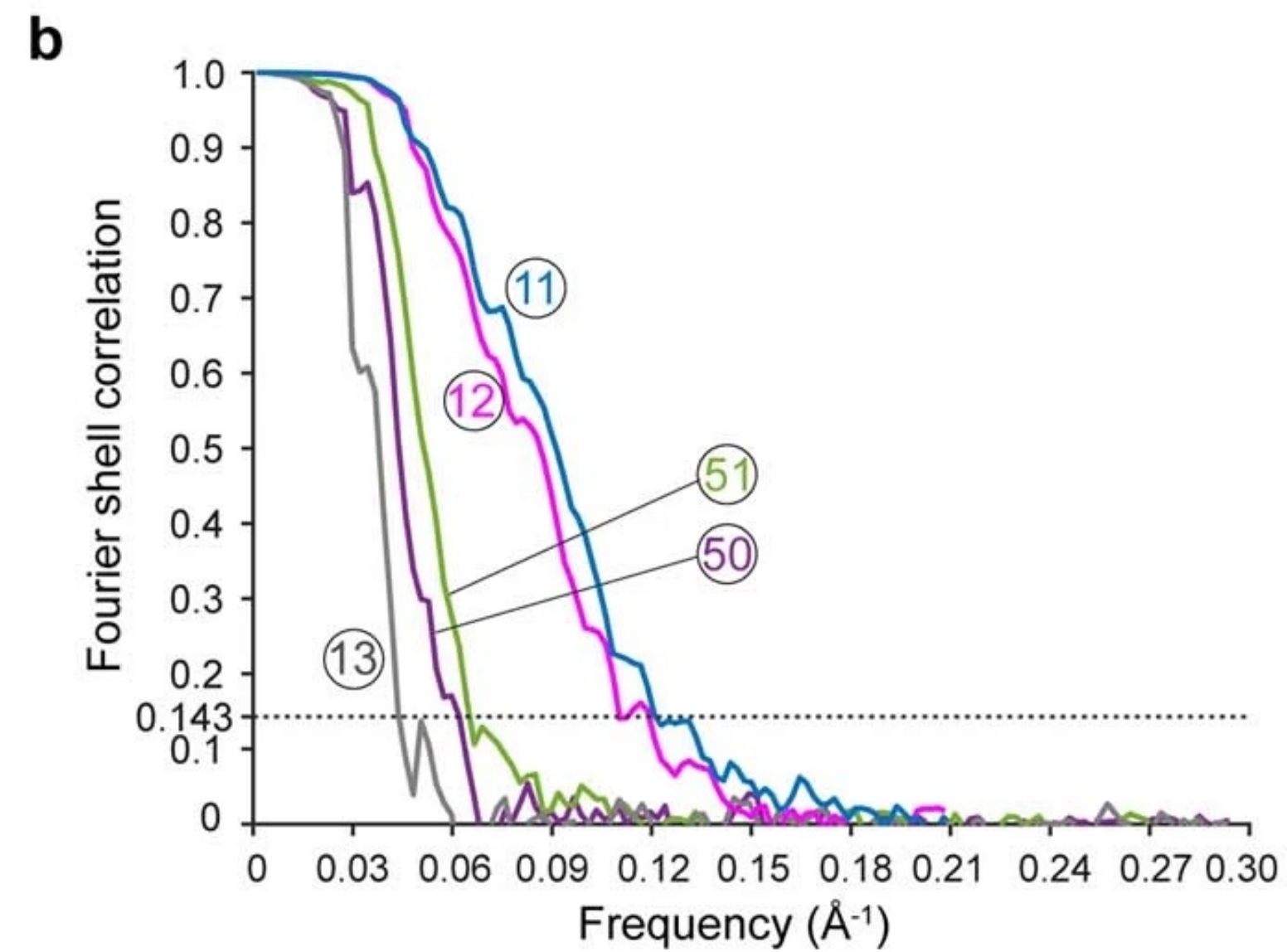
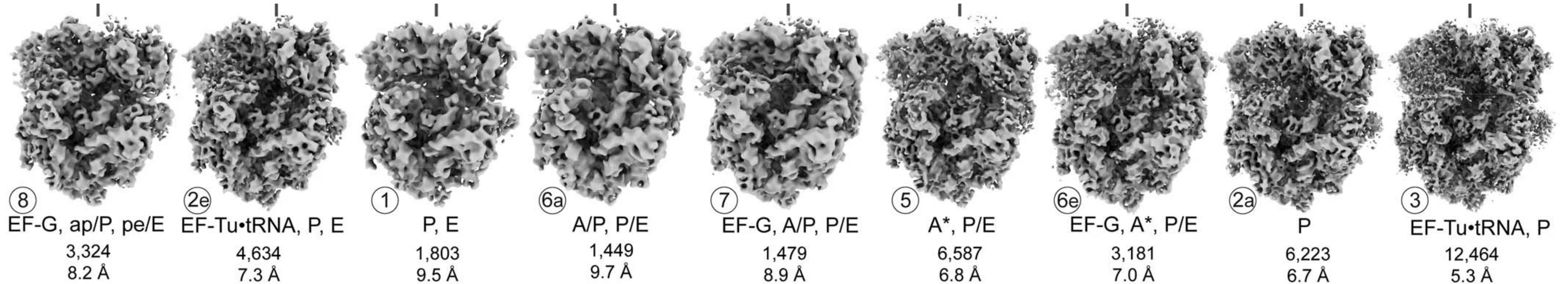
2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

2.1 Classification and refinement of ribosomes in native untreated cells



2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

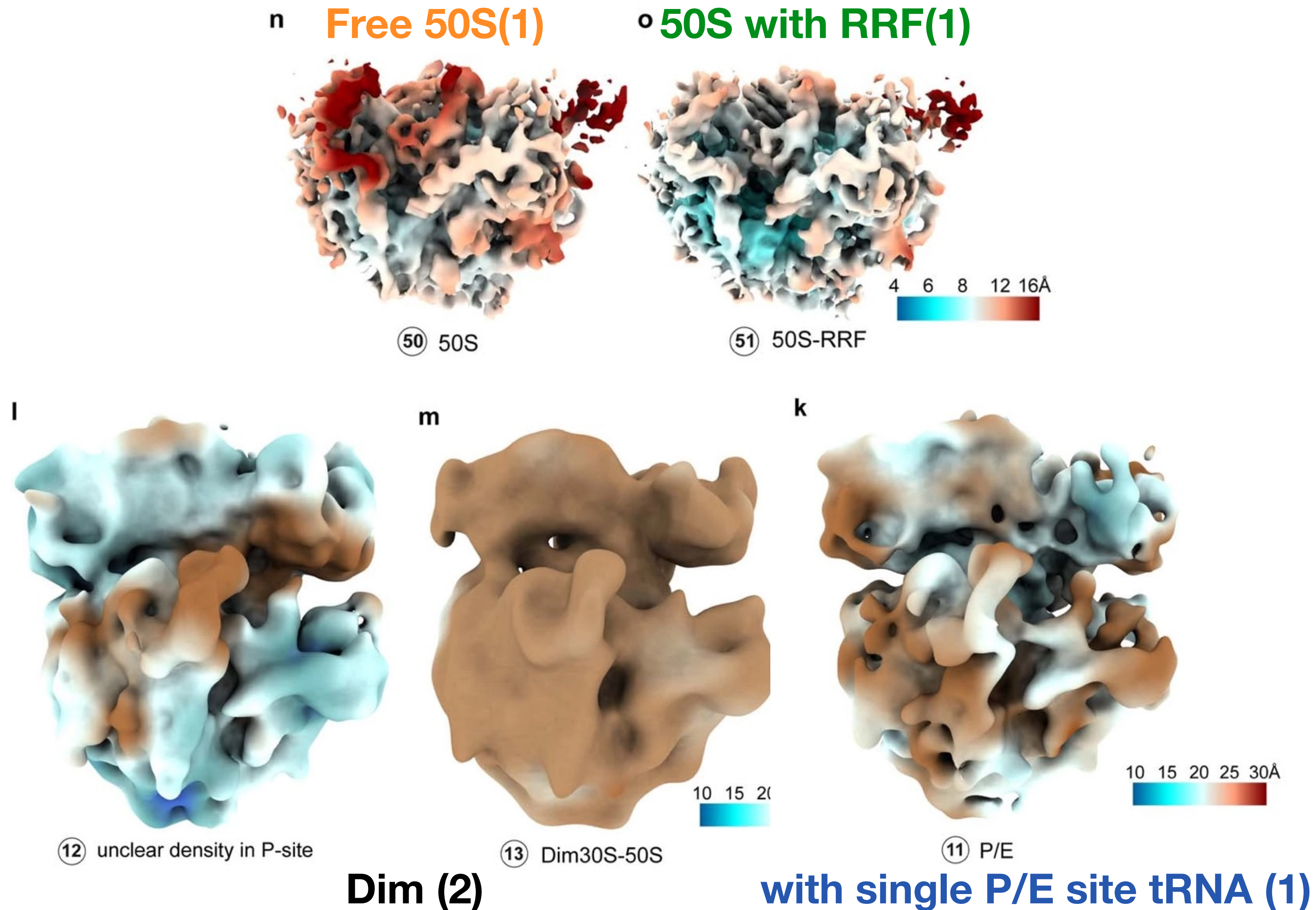
2.1 Classification and refinement of ribosomes in native untreated cells



Extended Data Figure 4

2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

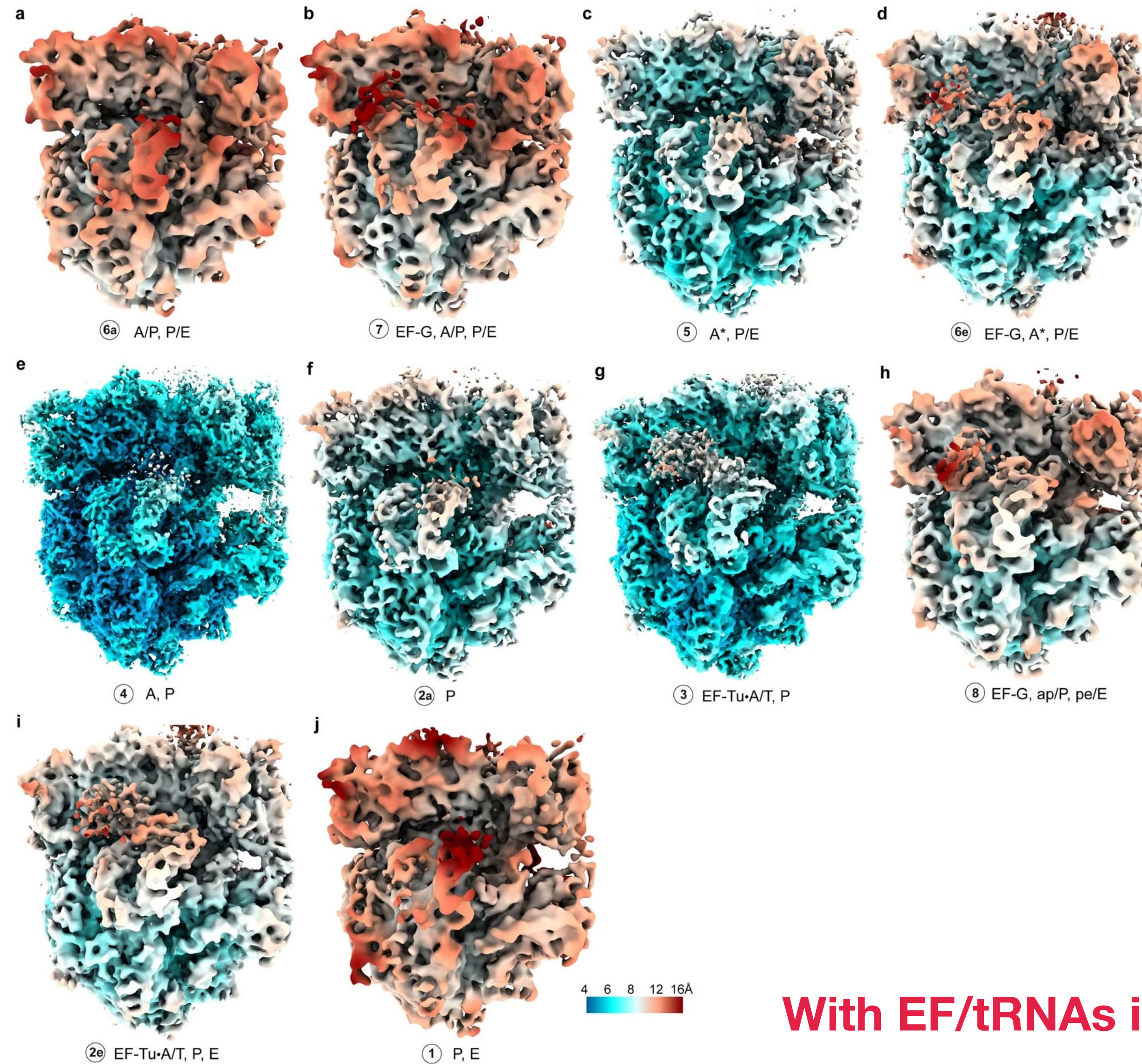
2.1 Classification and refinement of ribosomes in native untreated cells



Extended Data Figure 6

2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

2.1 Classification and refinement of ribosomes in native untreated cells



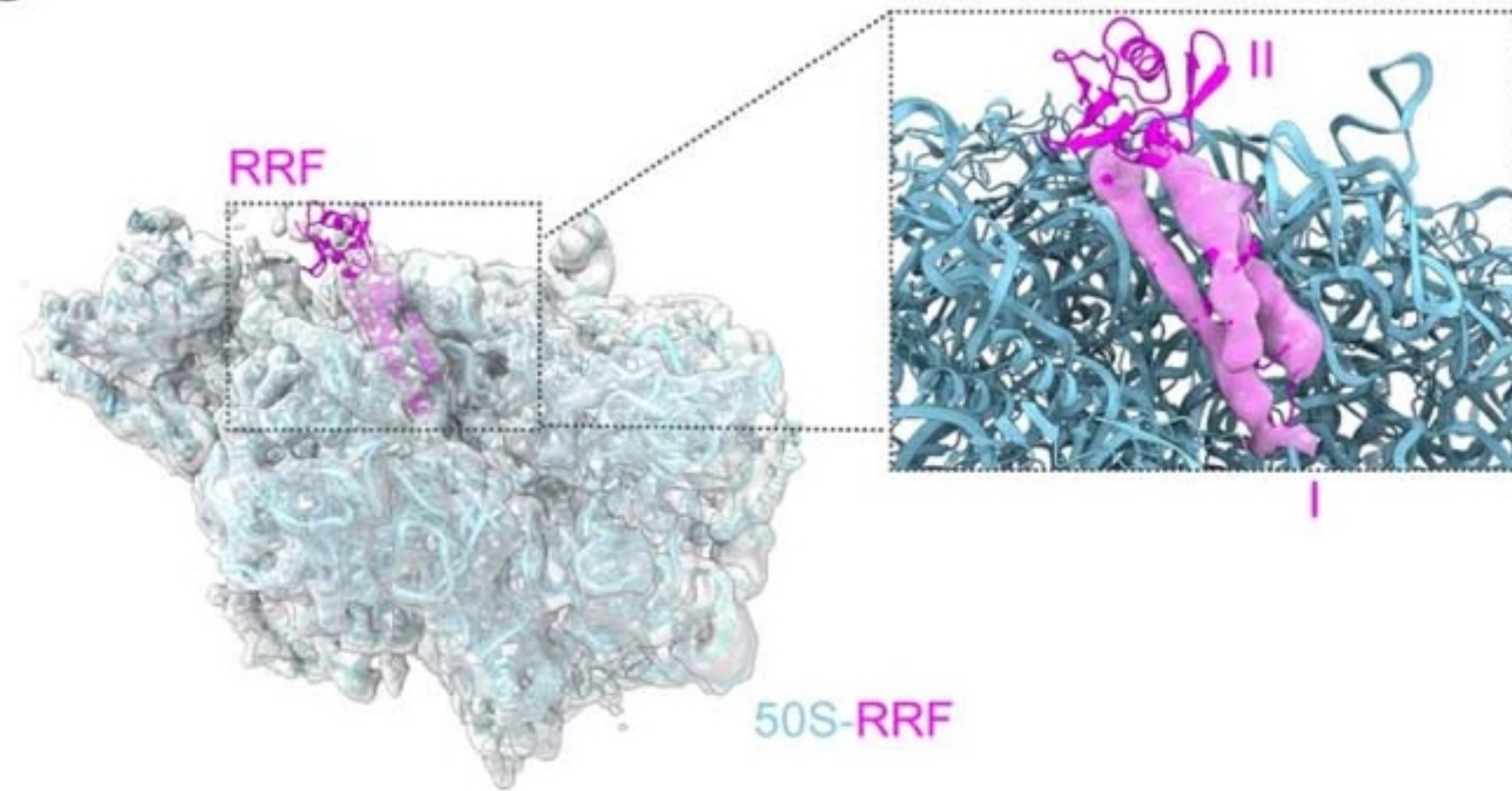
Extended Data Figure 6

2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

2.1 Classification and refinement of ribosomes in native untreated cells

I

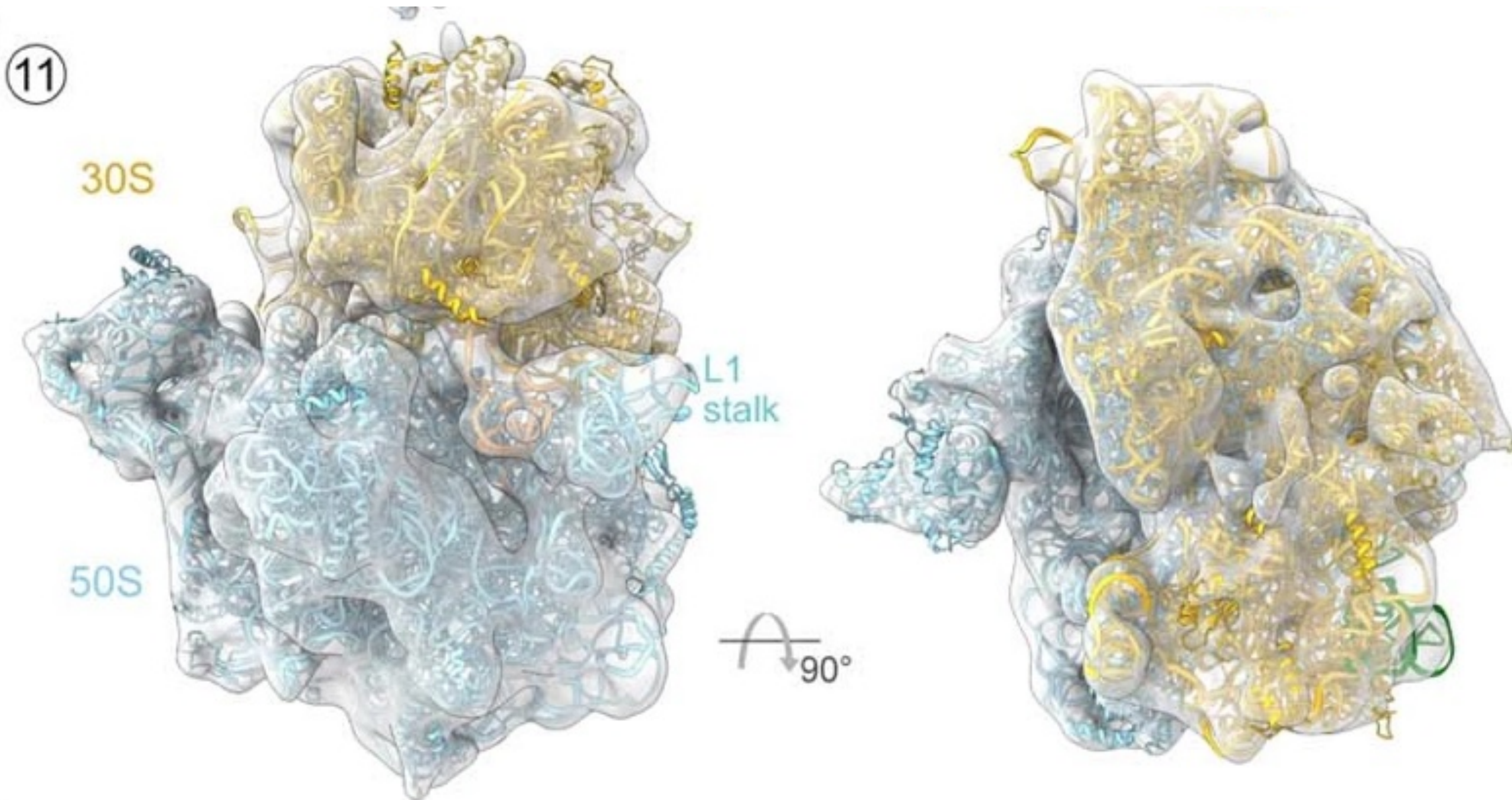
51



50S with RRF(1)

k

11



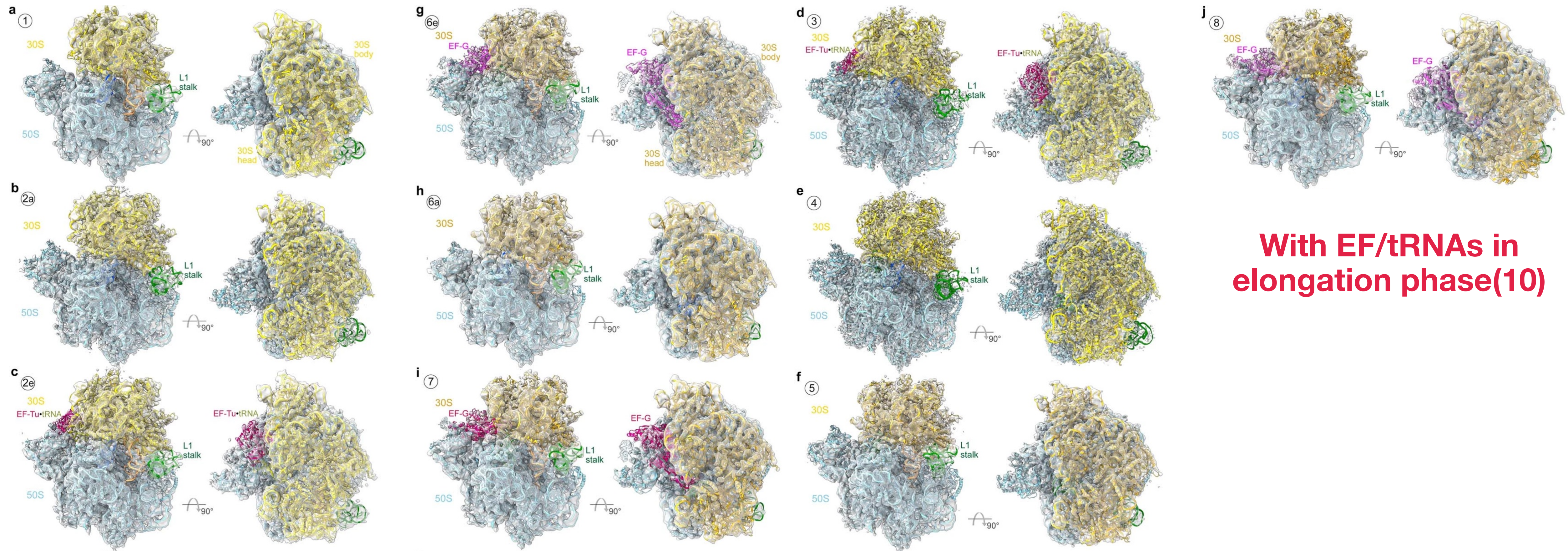
with single P/E site tRNA (1)

Models constructed by flexible fitting

Extended Data Figure 7

2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

2.1 Classification and refinement of ribosomes in native untreated cells



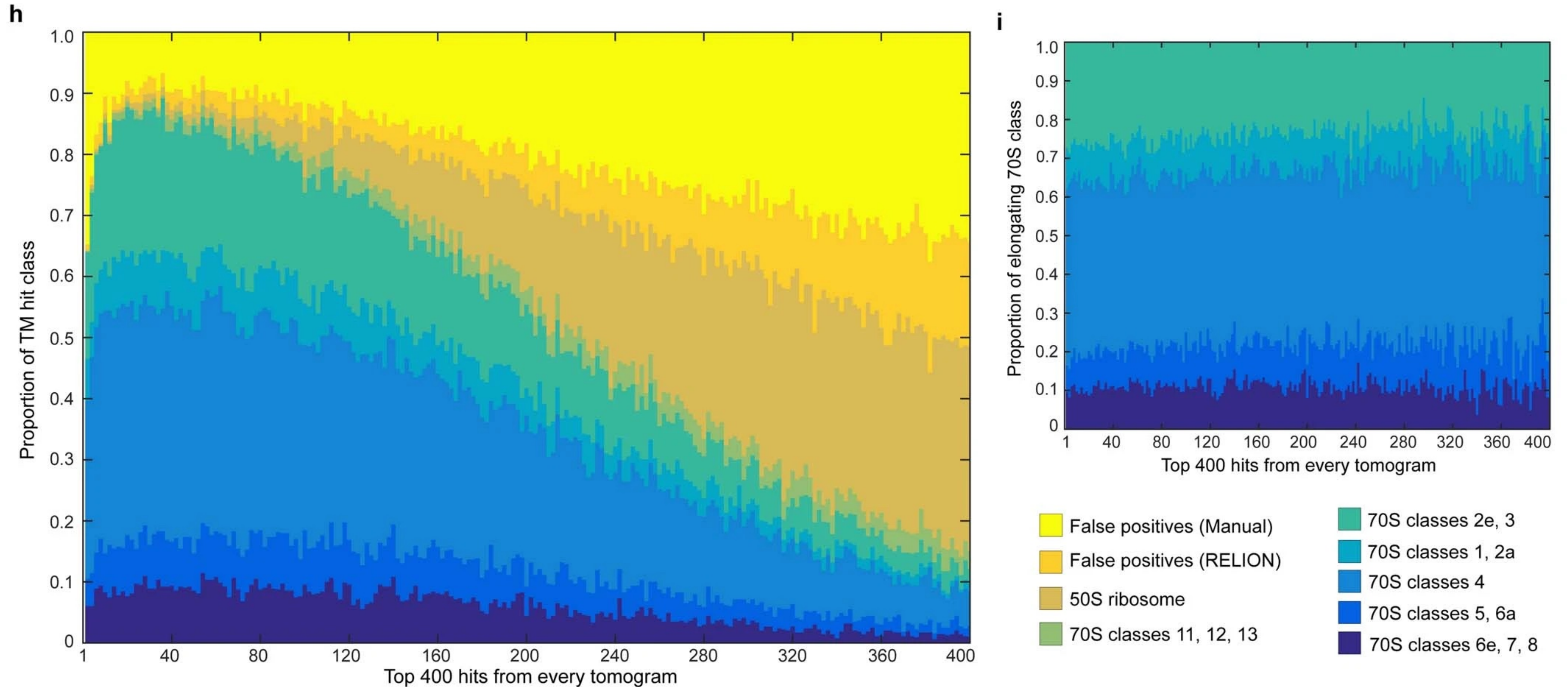
With EF/tRNAs in elongation phase(10)

Models constructed by flexible fitting

Extended Data Figure 7

2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

2.1 Classification and refinement of ribosomes in native untreated cells

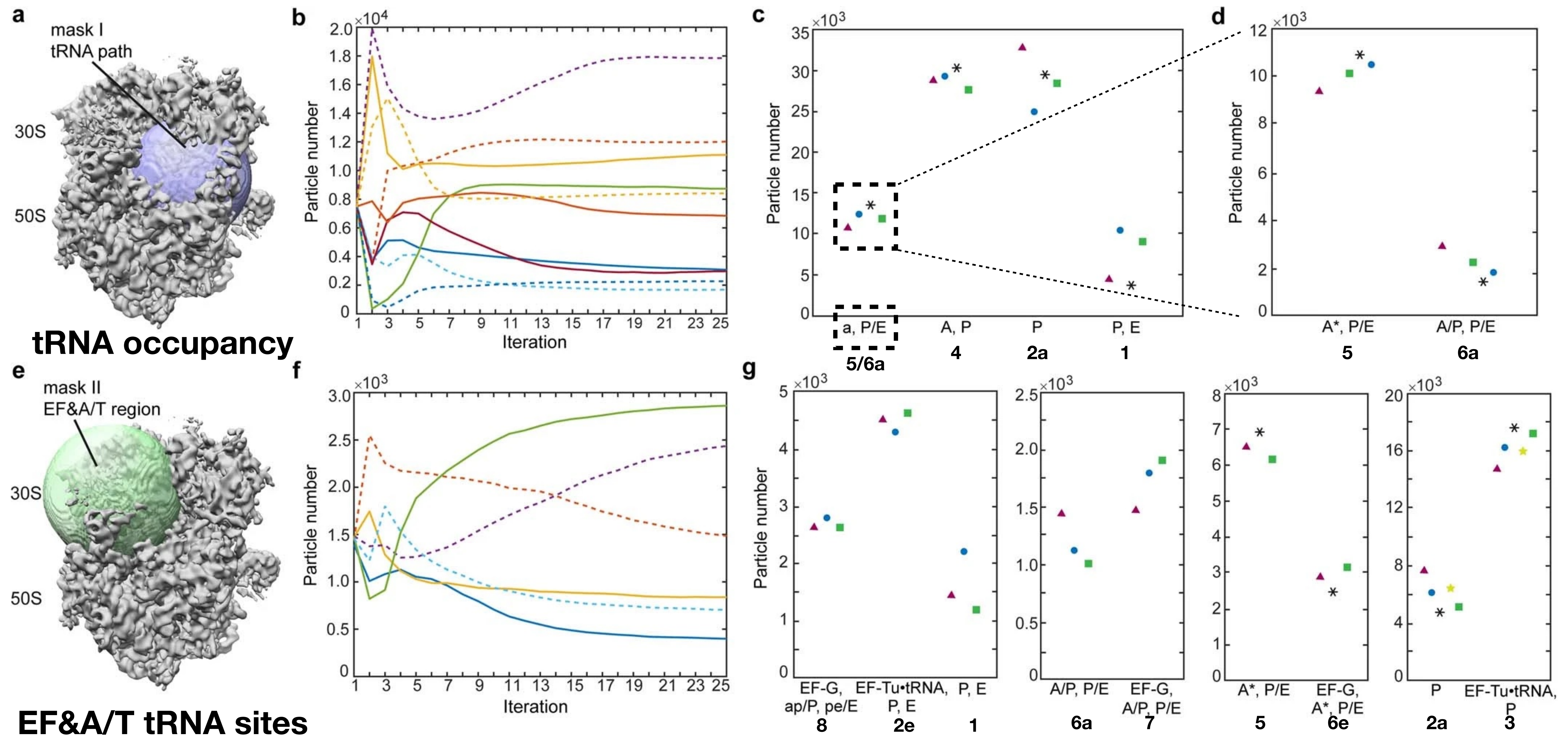


the classification results are not biased by the ribosome picking

Extended Data Figure 5

2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

2.2 Ribosome classification reconstructs the elongation cycle



Extended Data Figure 5

2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

2.2 Ribosome classification reconstructs the elongation cycle

tRNA occupancy

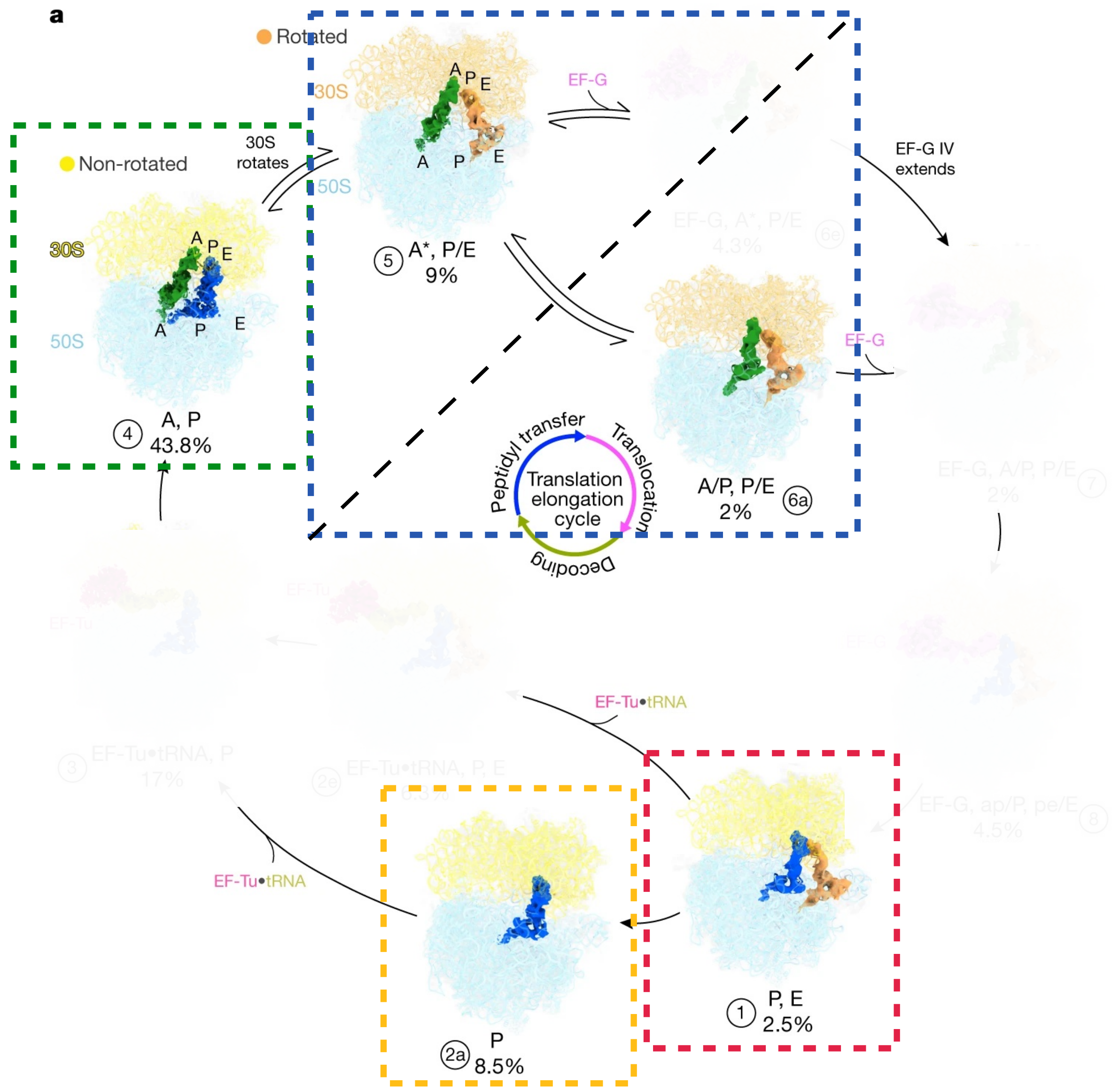
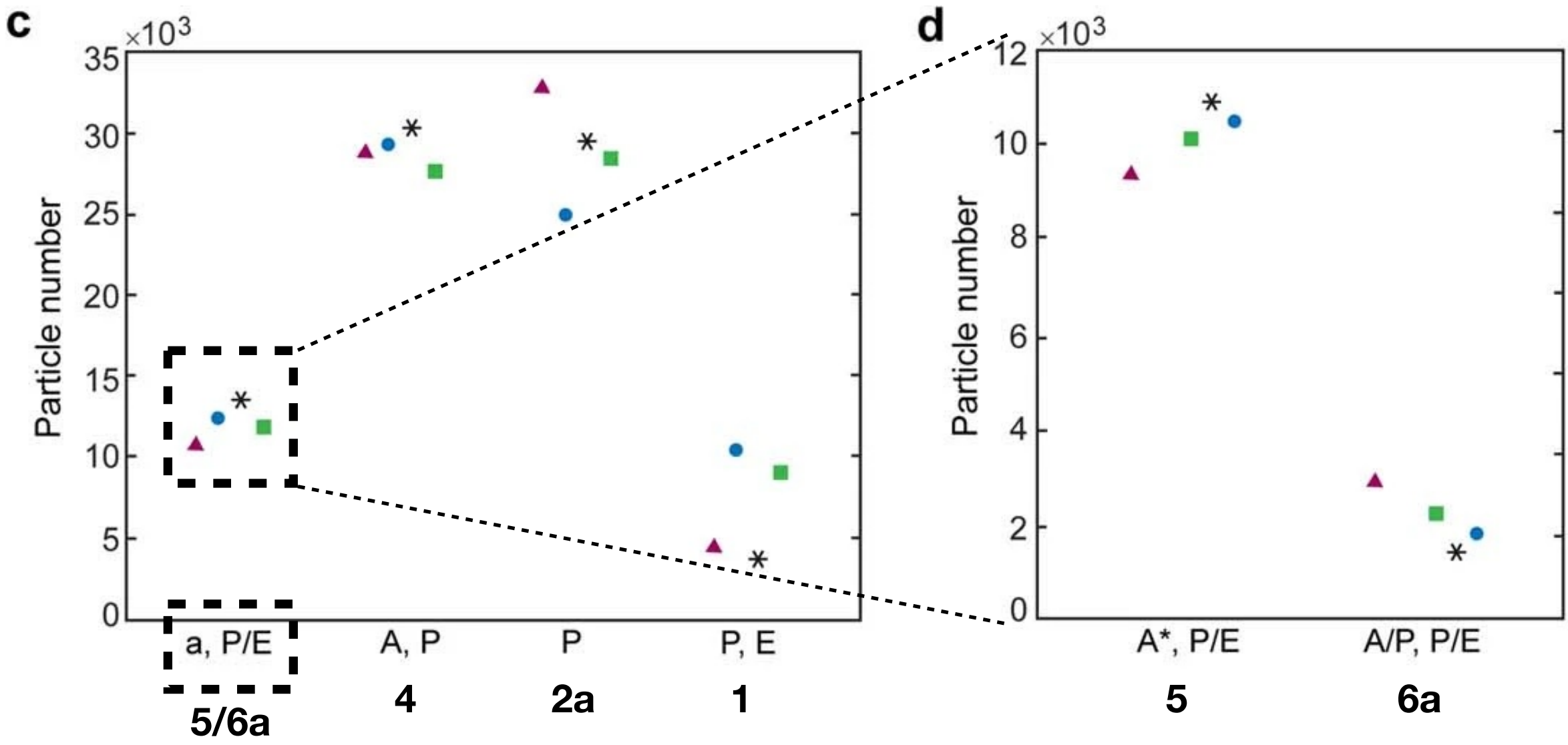


Figure 2

2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

2.2 Ribosome classification reconstructs the elongation cycle

EF&A/T tRNA sites

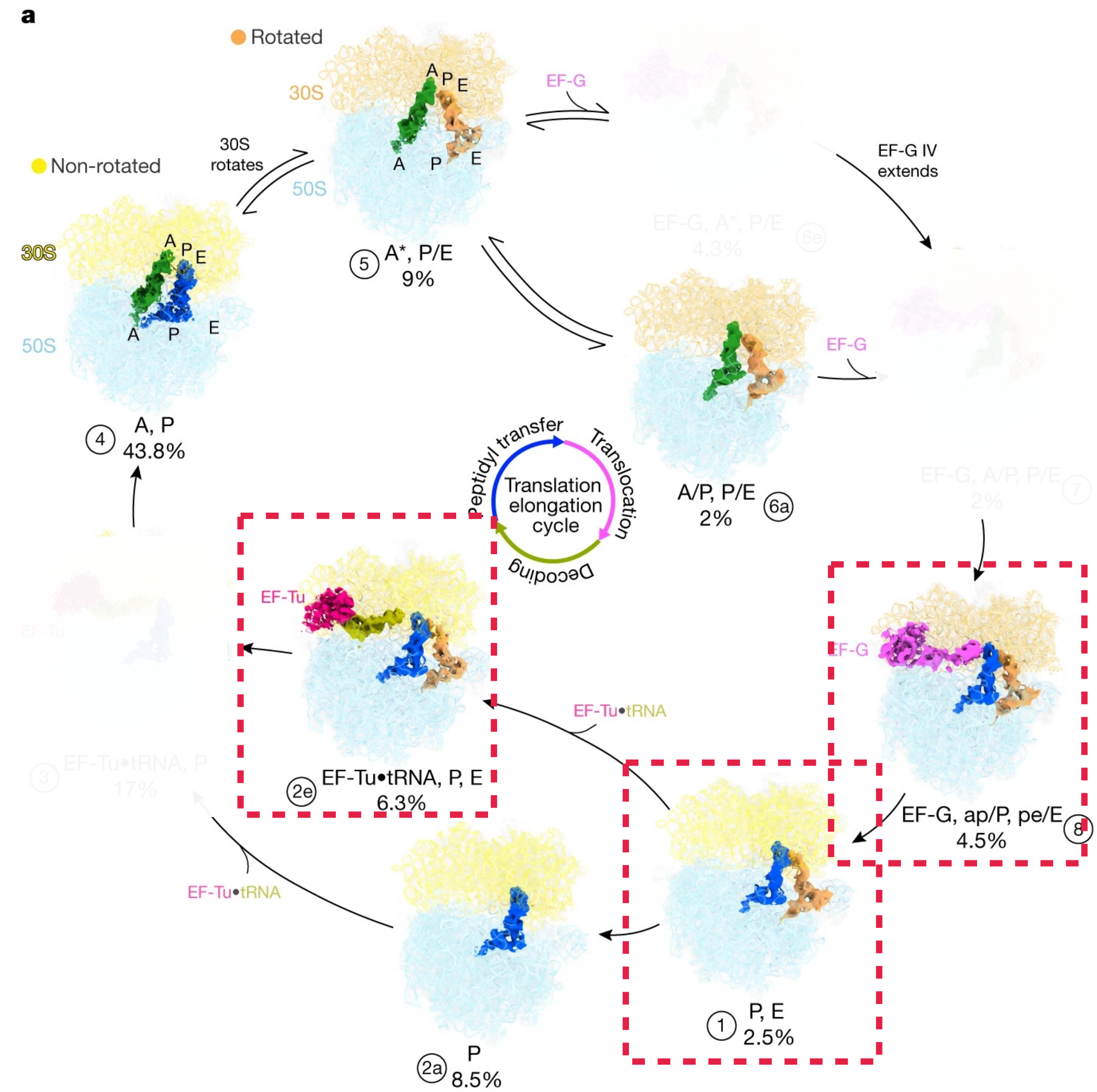
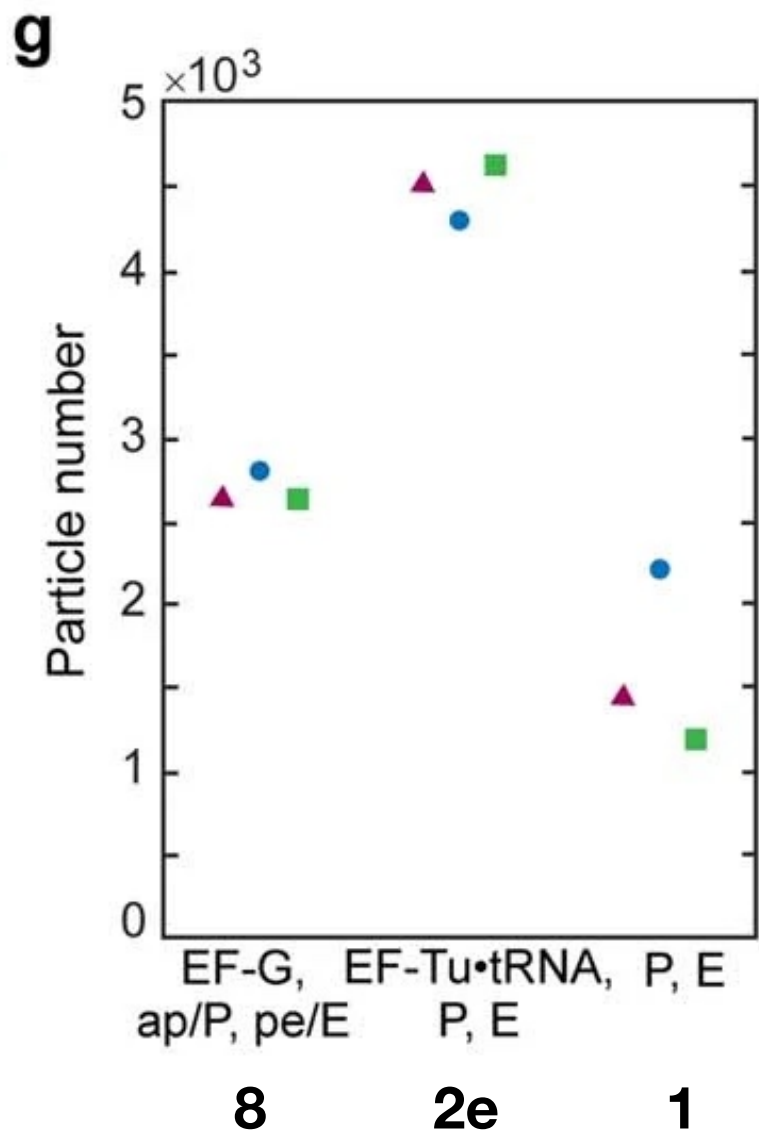


Figure 2

2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

2.2 Ribosome classification reconstructs the elongation cycle

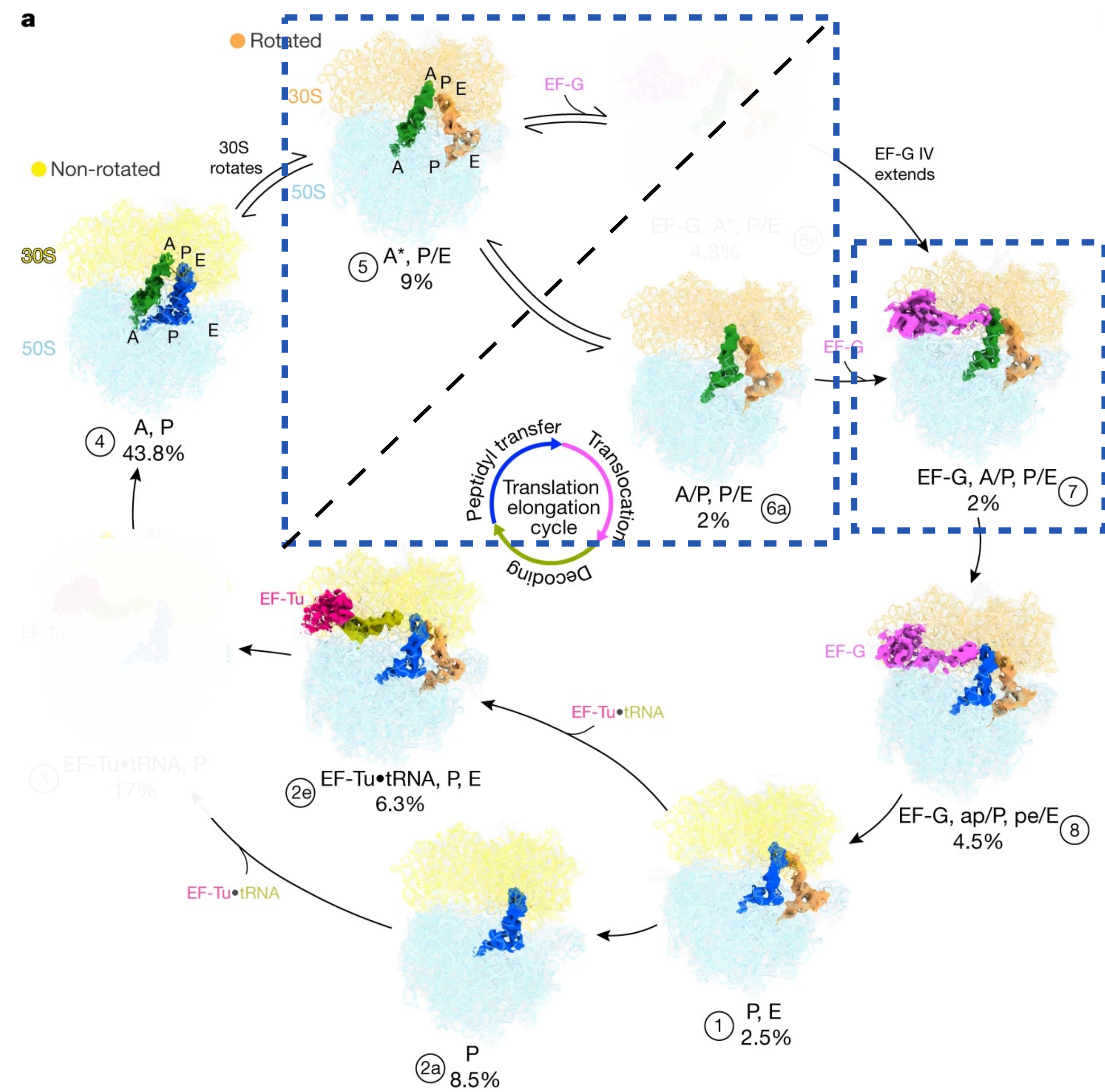
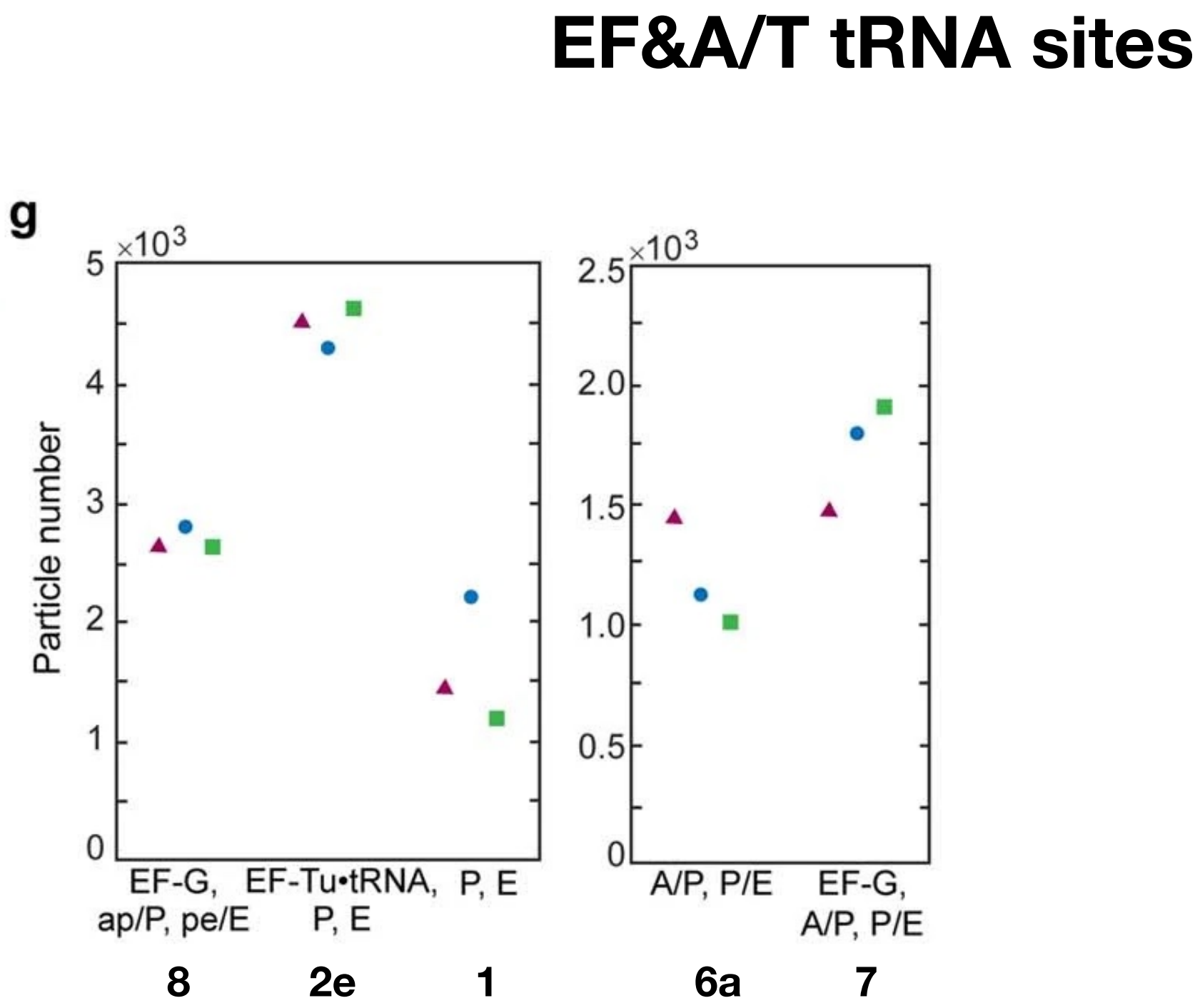


Figure 2

2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

2.2 Ribosome classification reconstructs the elongation cycle

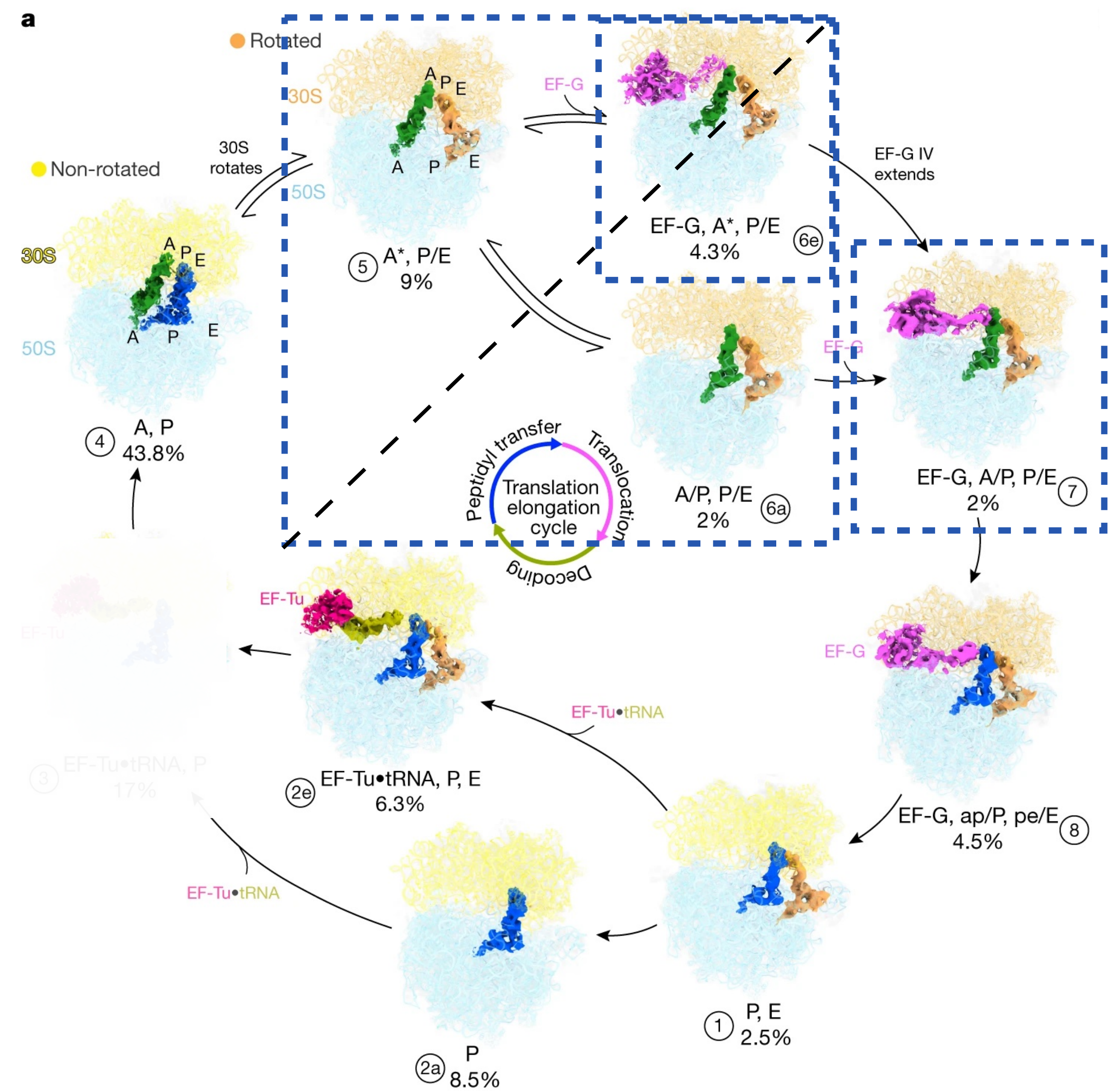
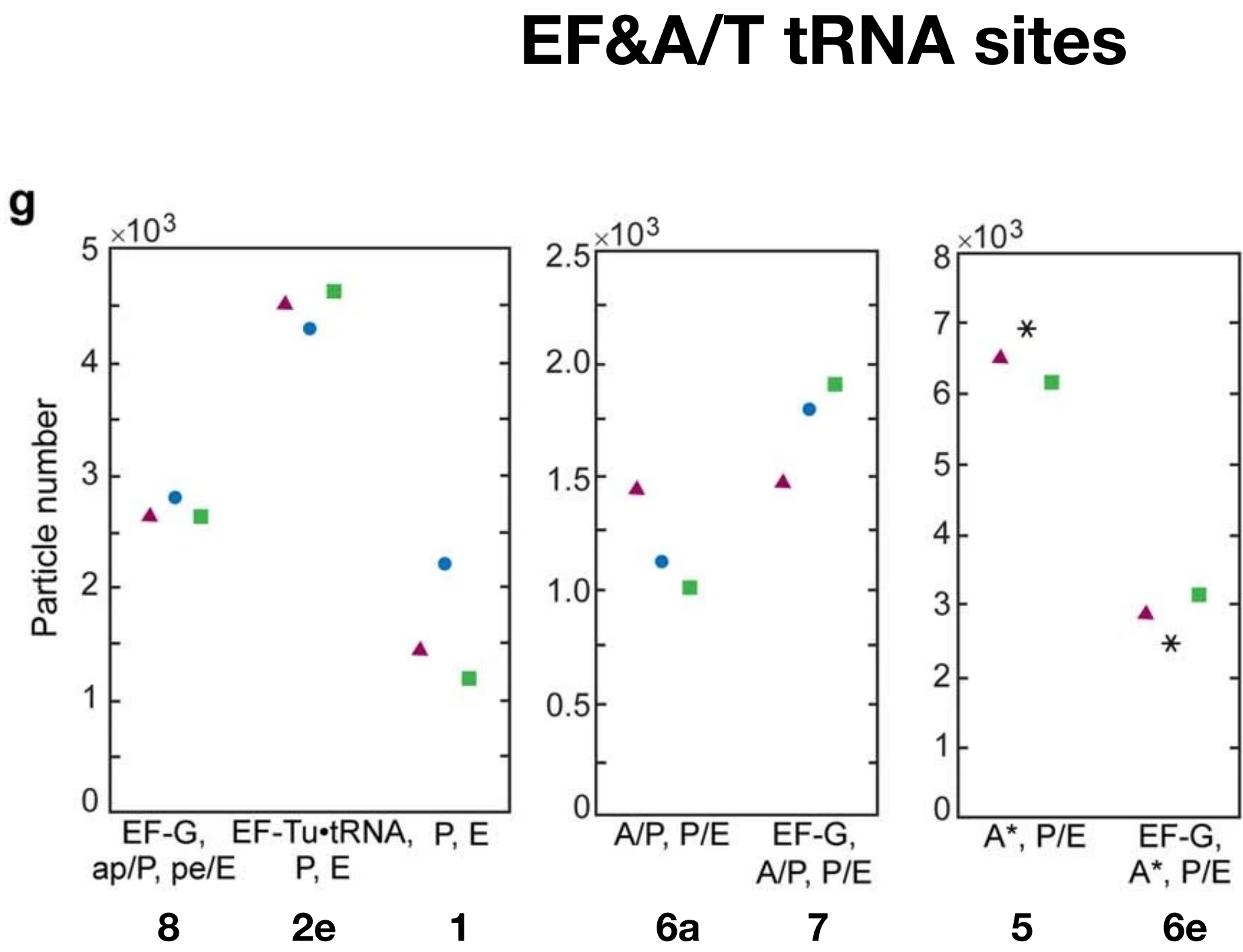


Figure 2

2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

2.2 Ribosome classification reconstructs the elongation cycle

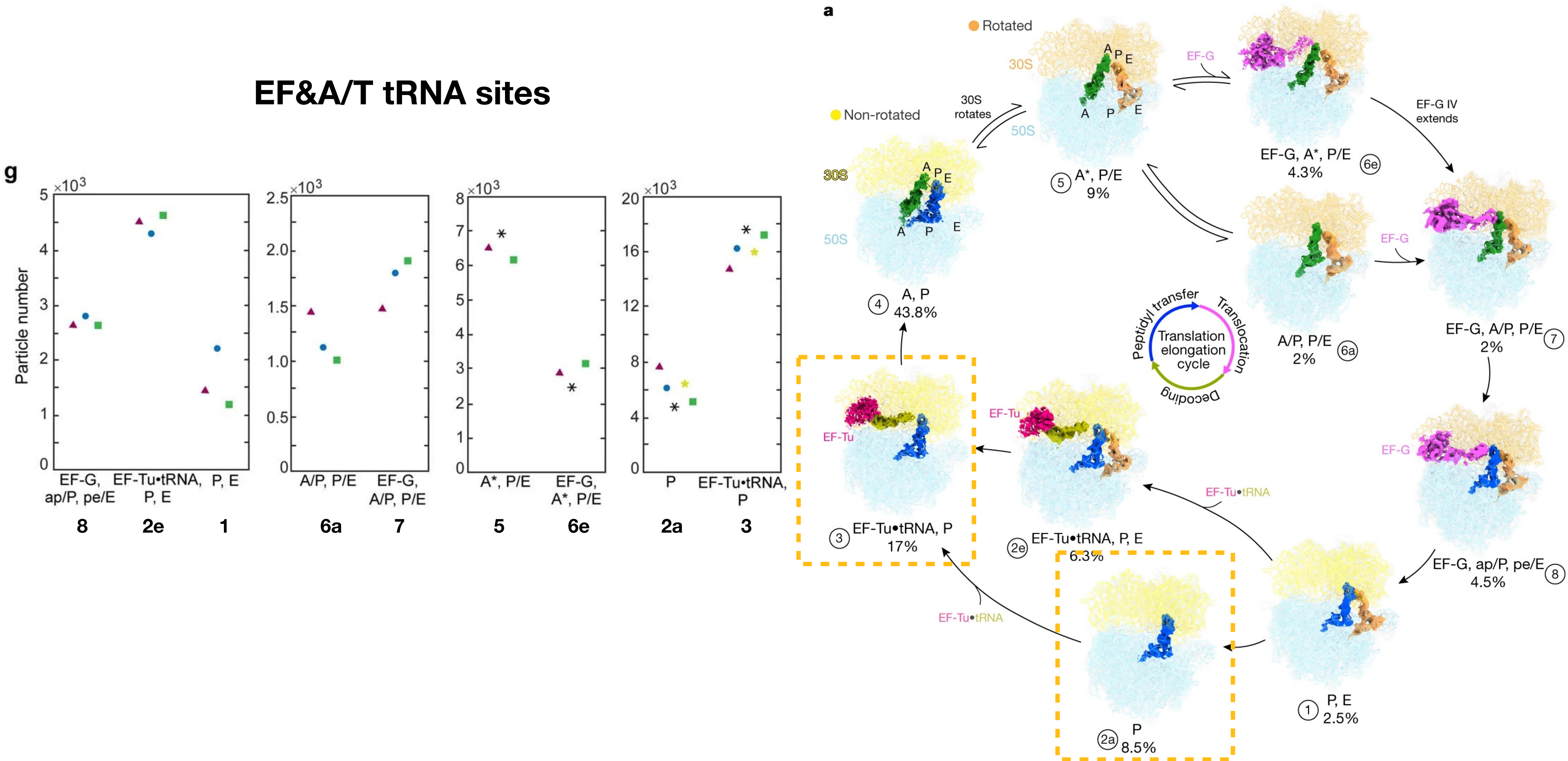
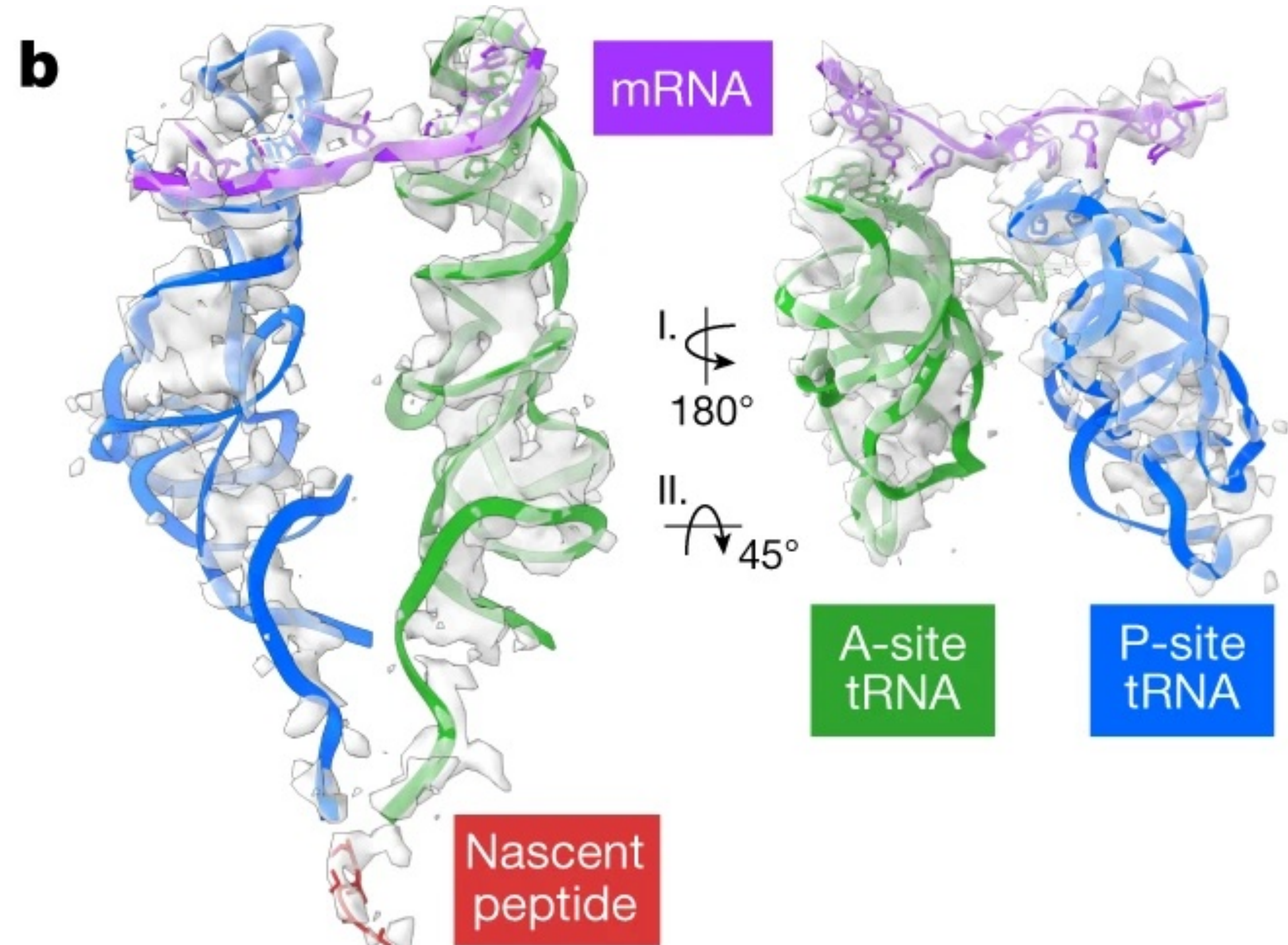
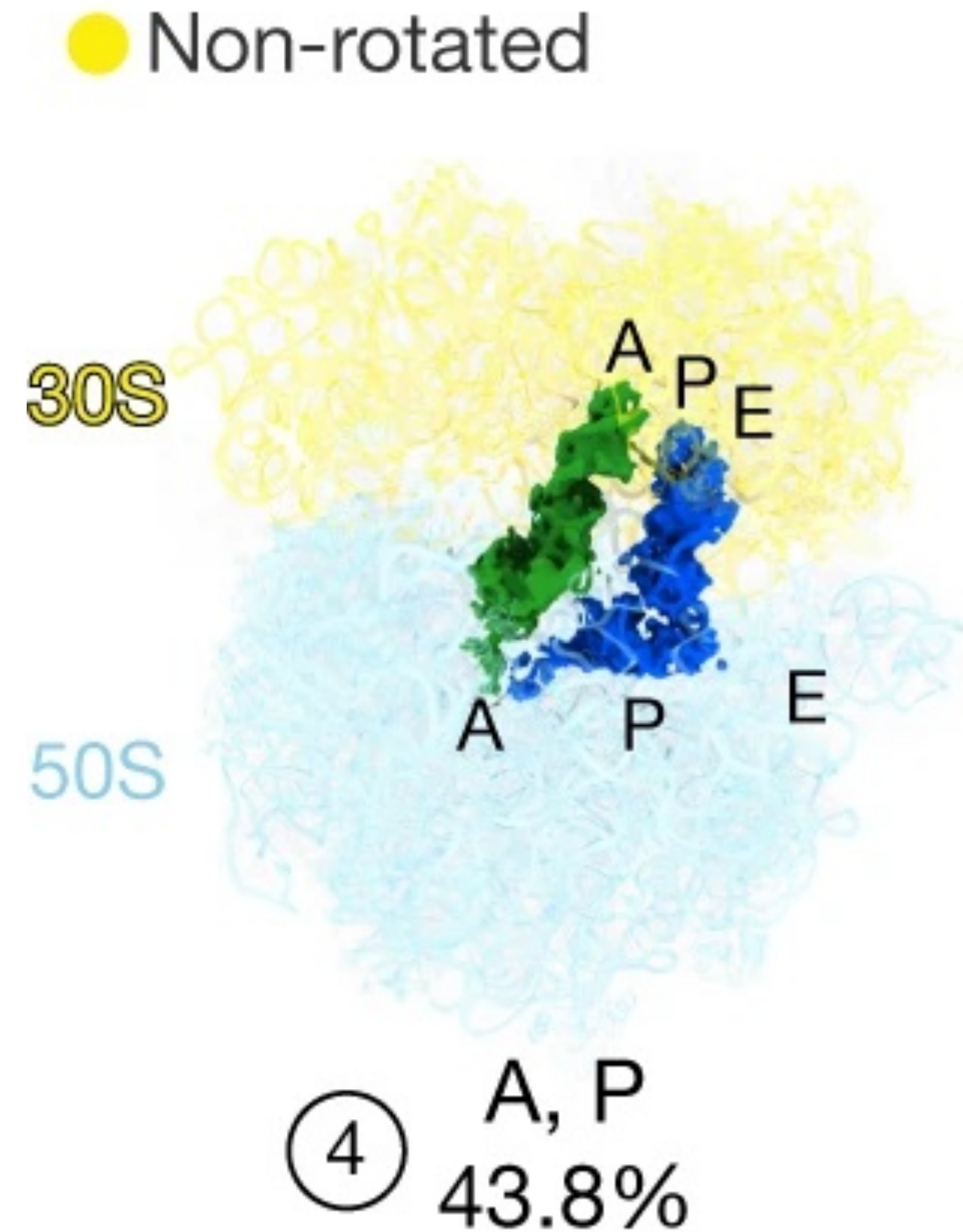


Figure 2

2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

2.3 'A, P' state was the most populated

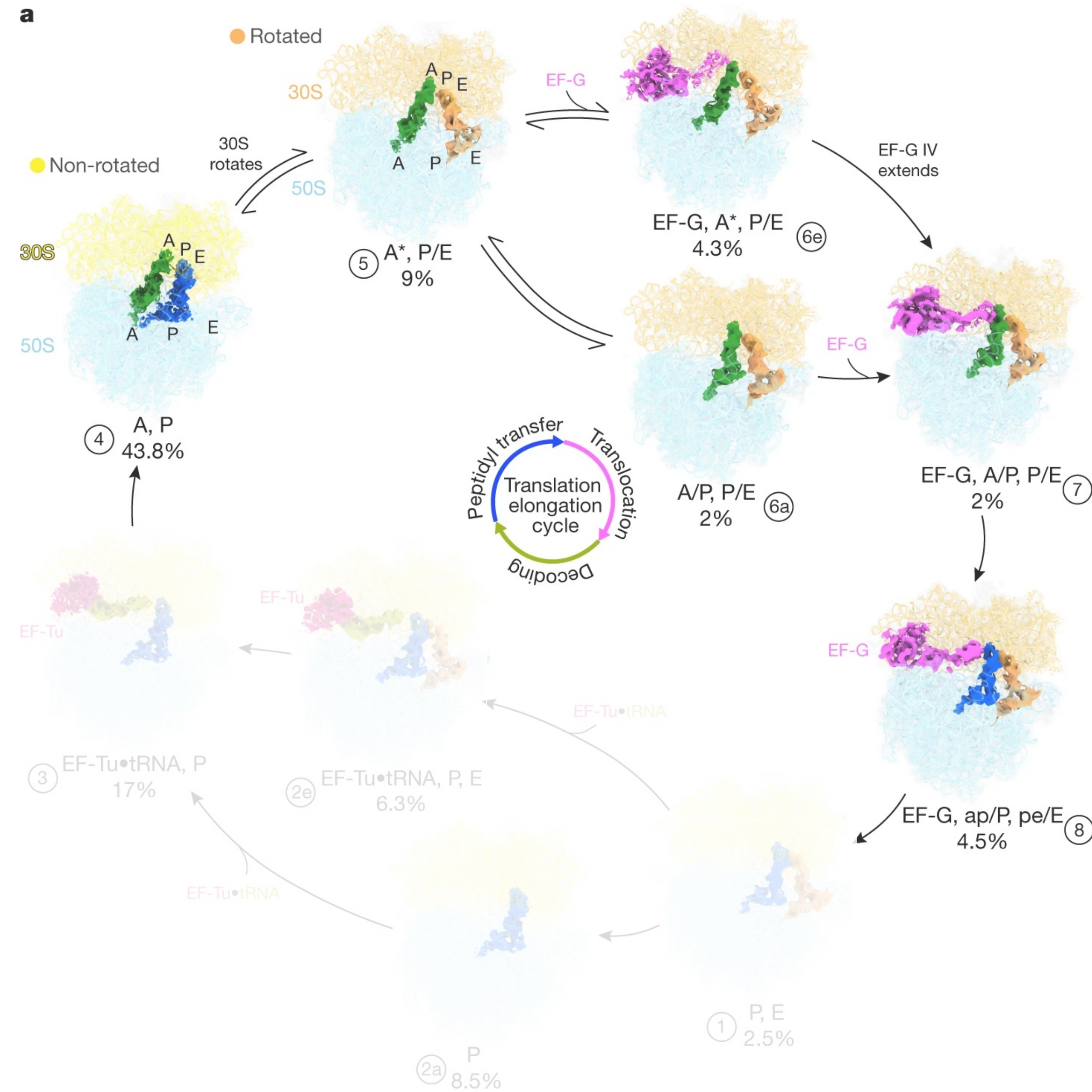


At the highest resolution and showing mRNA, tRNAs and the nascent peptide

Figure 2

2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

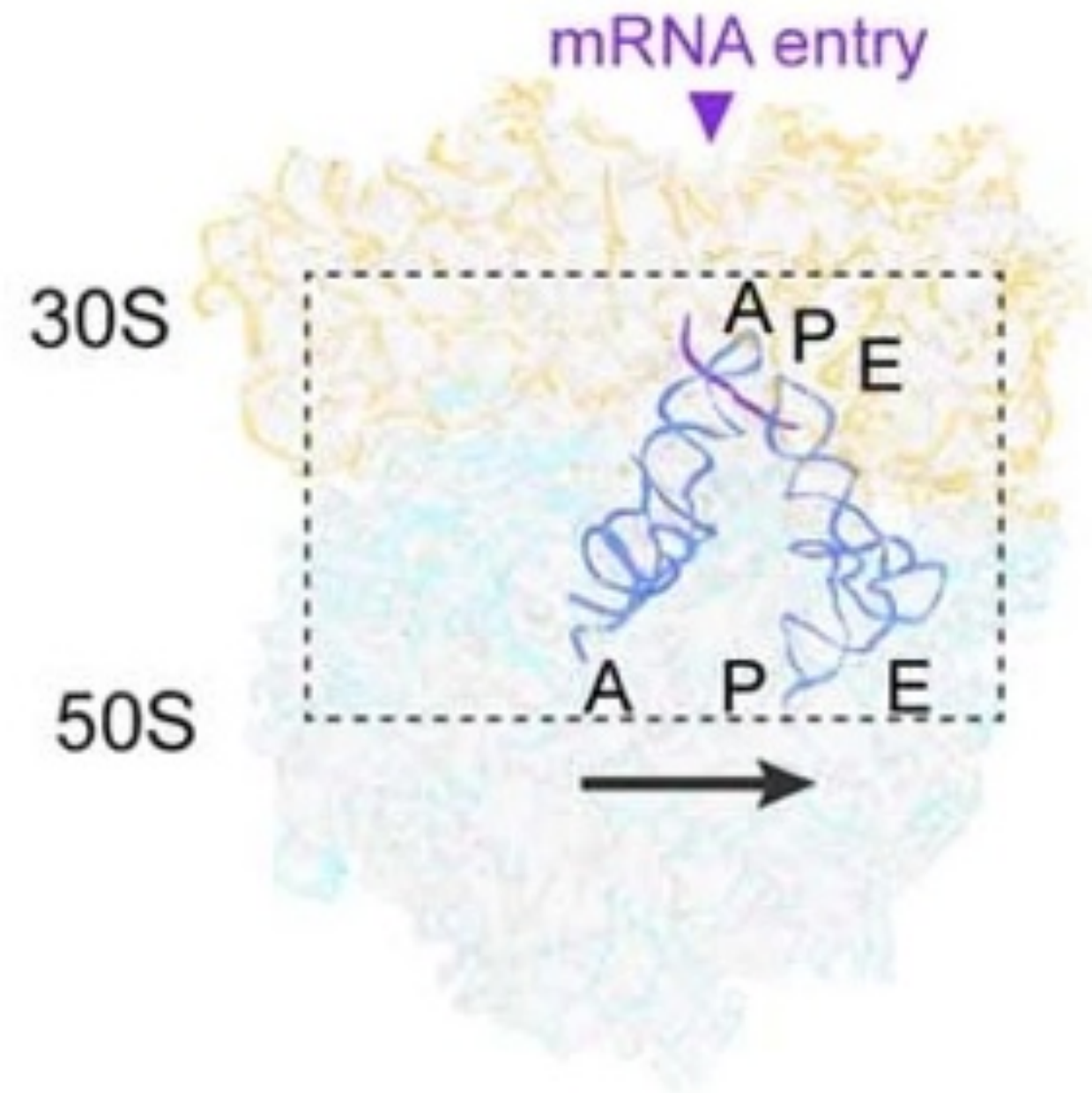
2.4 Early-to-late translocation intermediates



2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

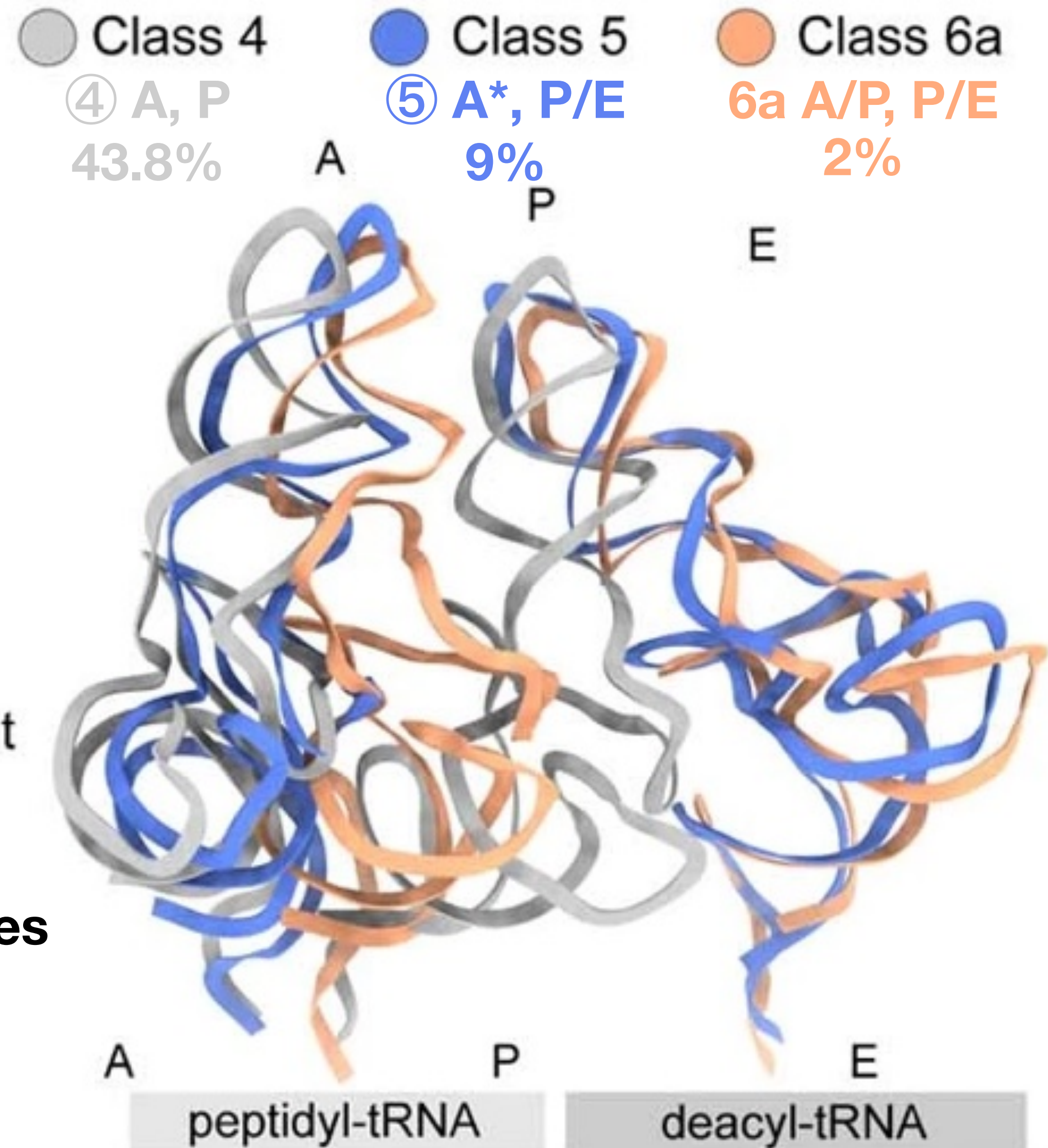
2.4 Early-to-late translocation intermediates

a



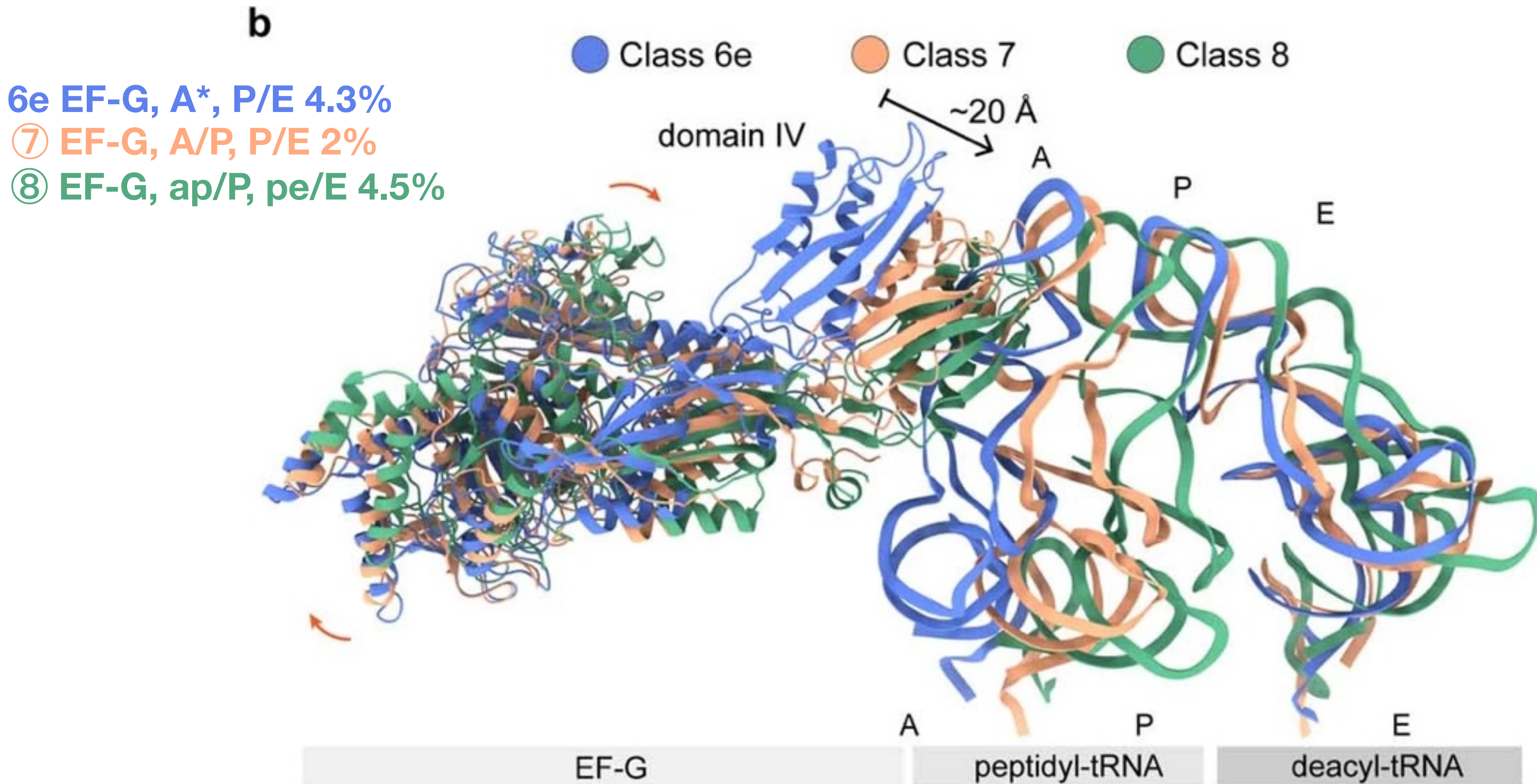
Structures aligned on 50S subunit

**Early translocation intermediates
prior to EF-G binding**



2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

2.4 Early-to-late translocation intermediates

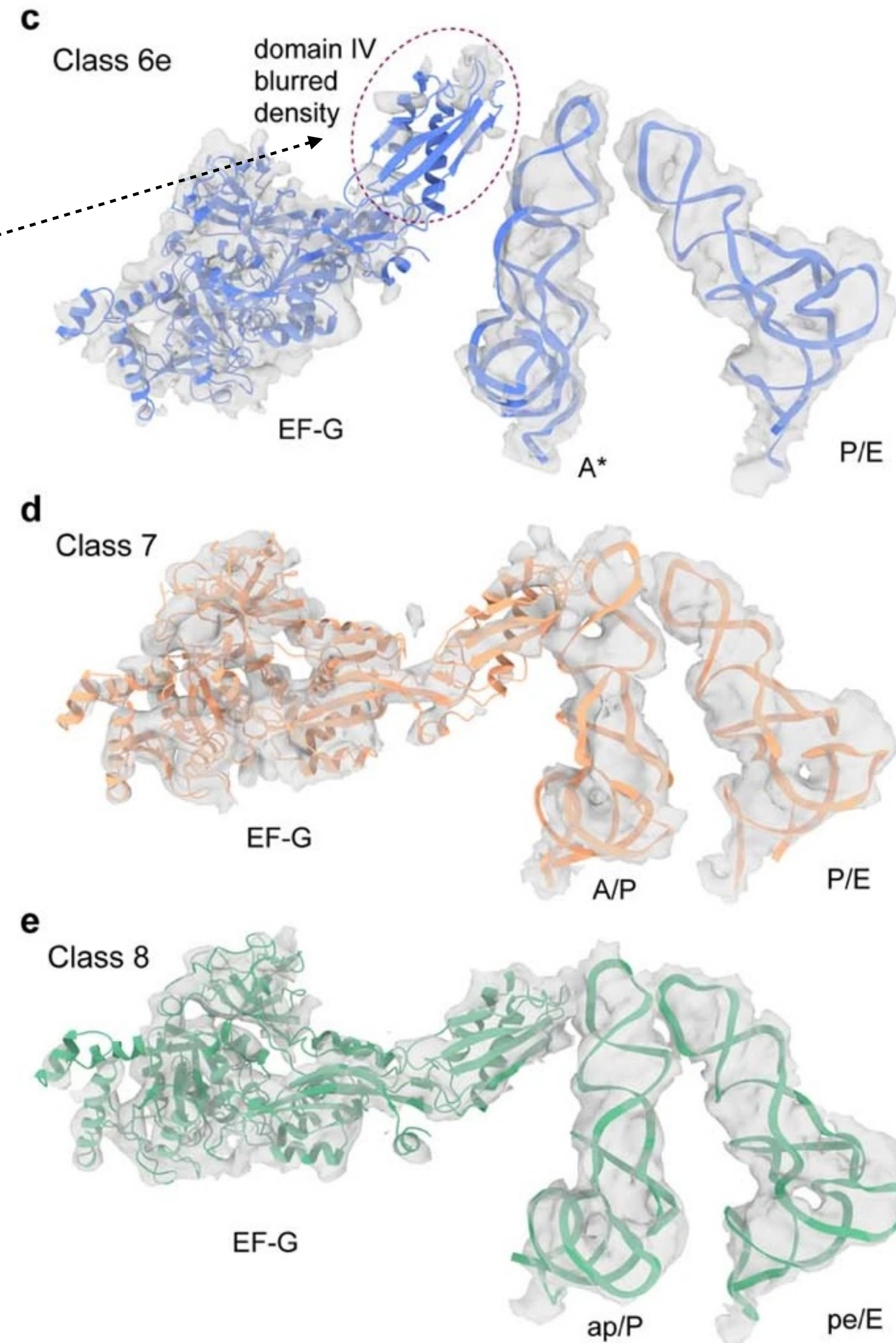


Early-to-late translocation intermediates in the presence of EF-G

2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

2.4 Early-to-late translocation intermediates

may contain a mixture of intermediate states with domain IV moving toward the A site



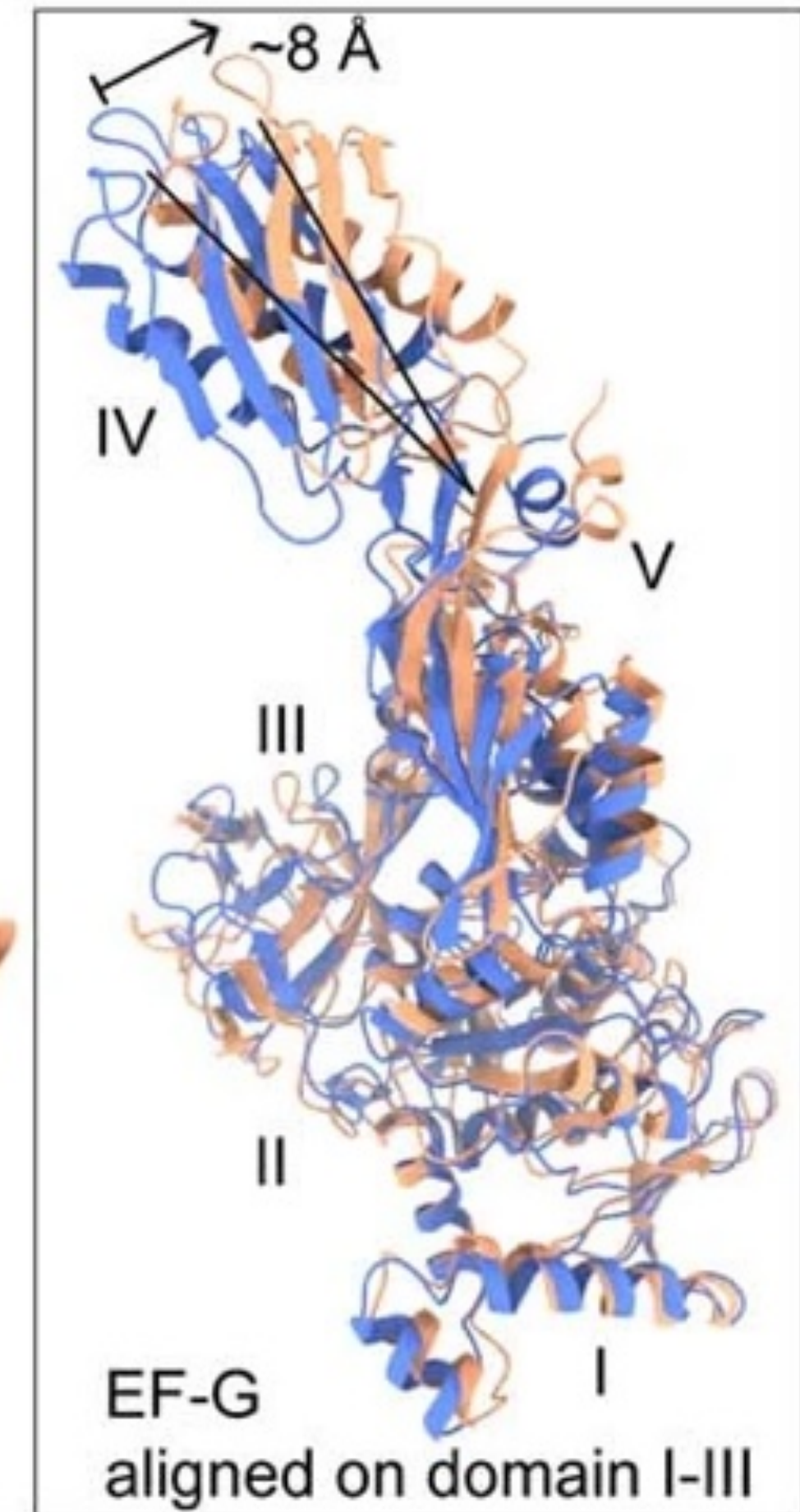
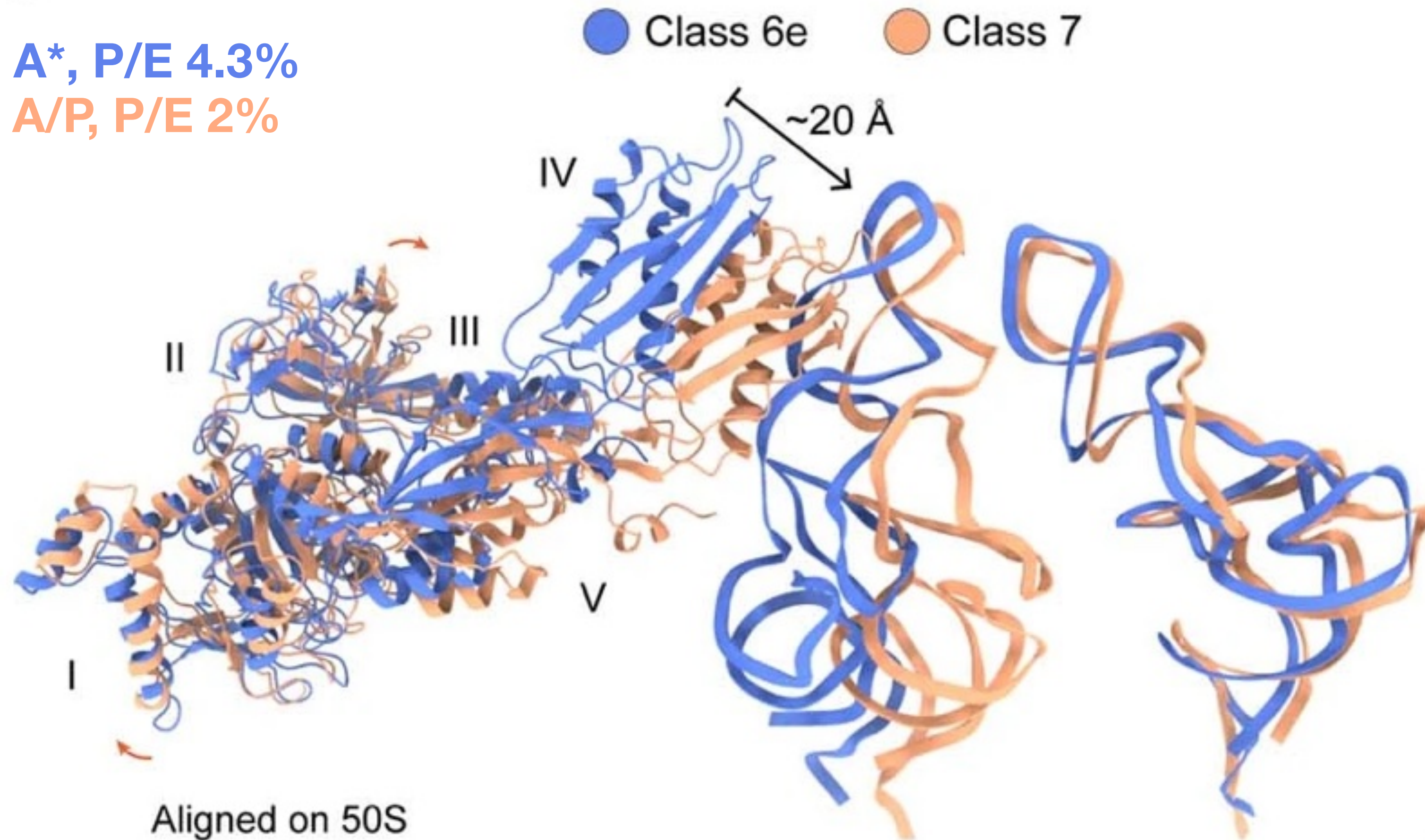
2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

2.4 Early-to-late translocation intermediates

f

6e EF-G, A*, P/E 4.3%

⑦ EF-G, A/P, P/E 2%



- a small overall rotation of EF-G
- an inter-domain rearrangement

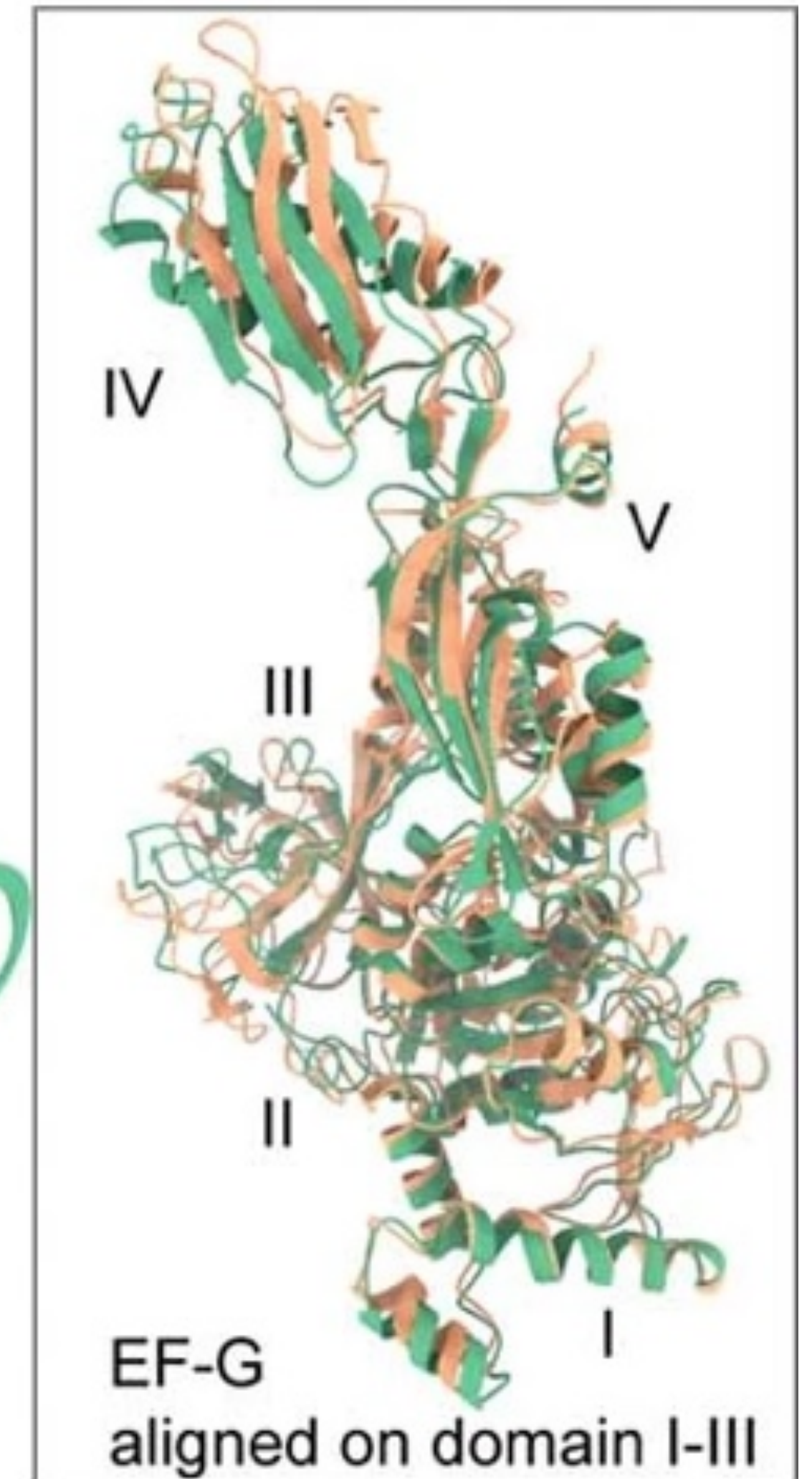
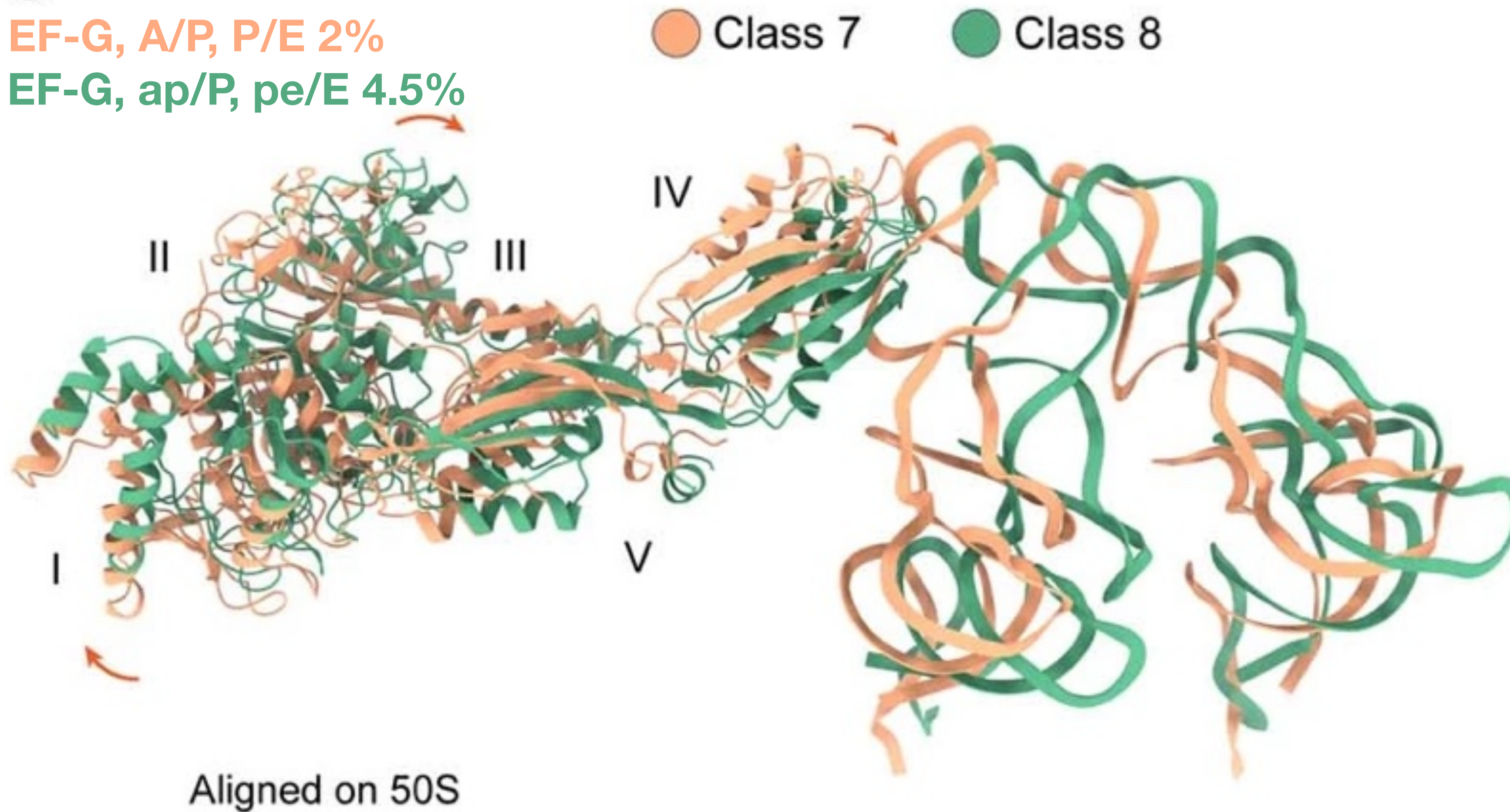
2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

2.4 Early-to-late translocation intermediates

g

⑦ EF-G, A/P, P/E 2%

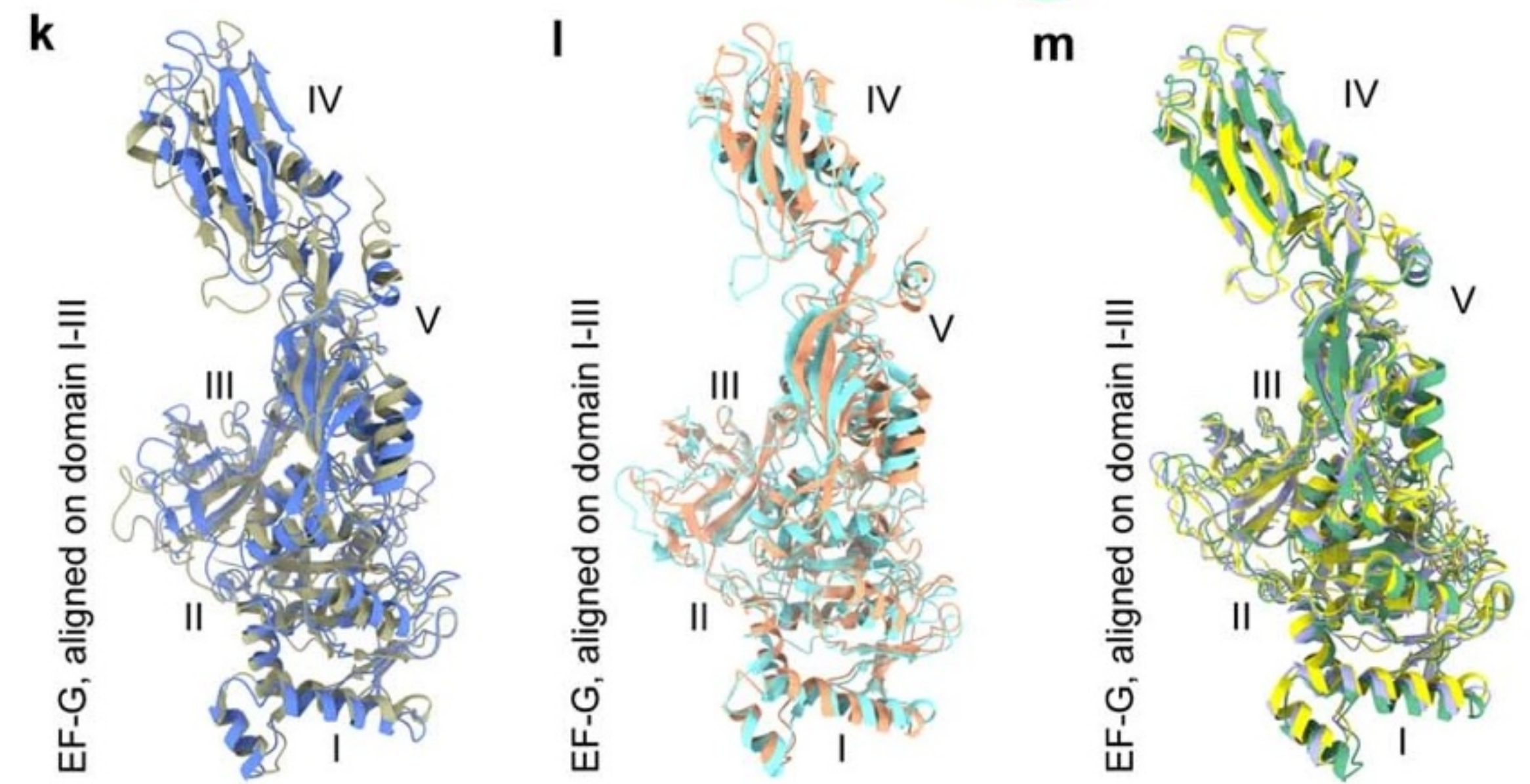
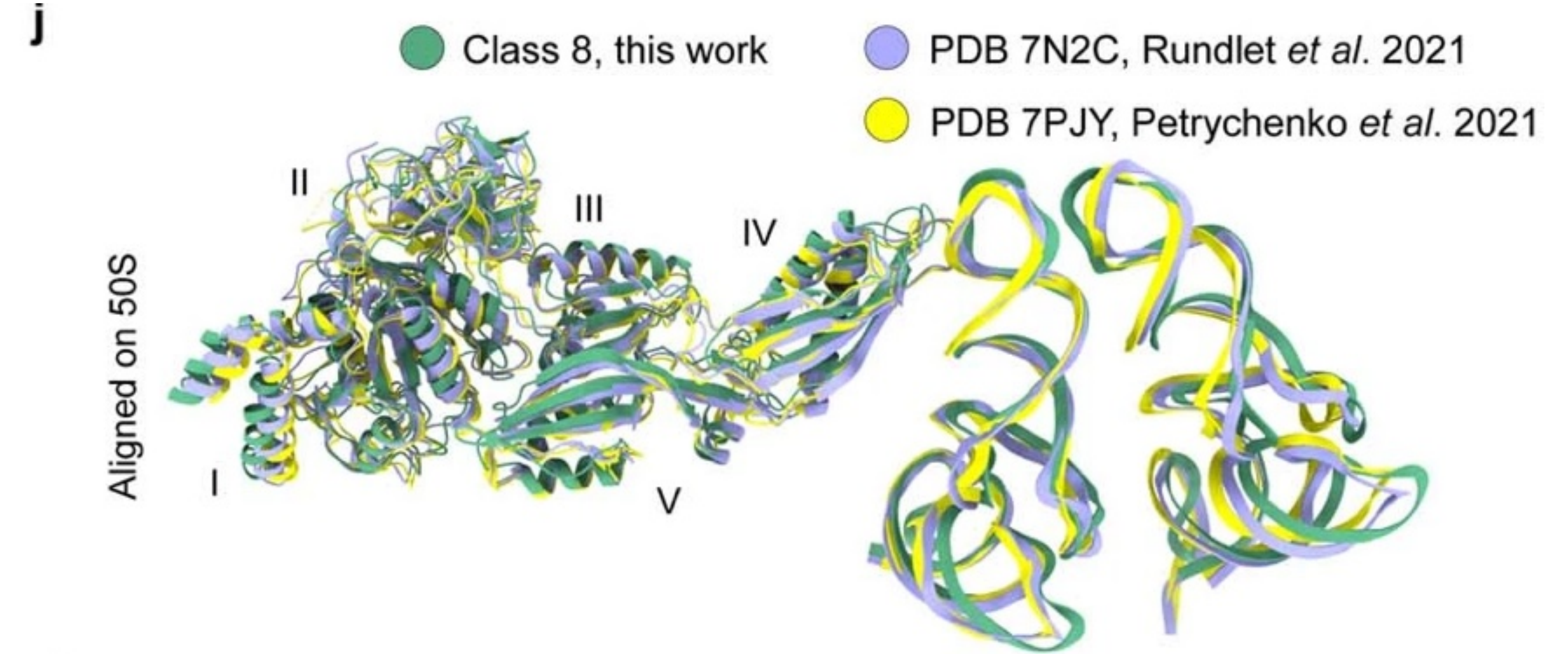
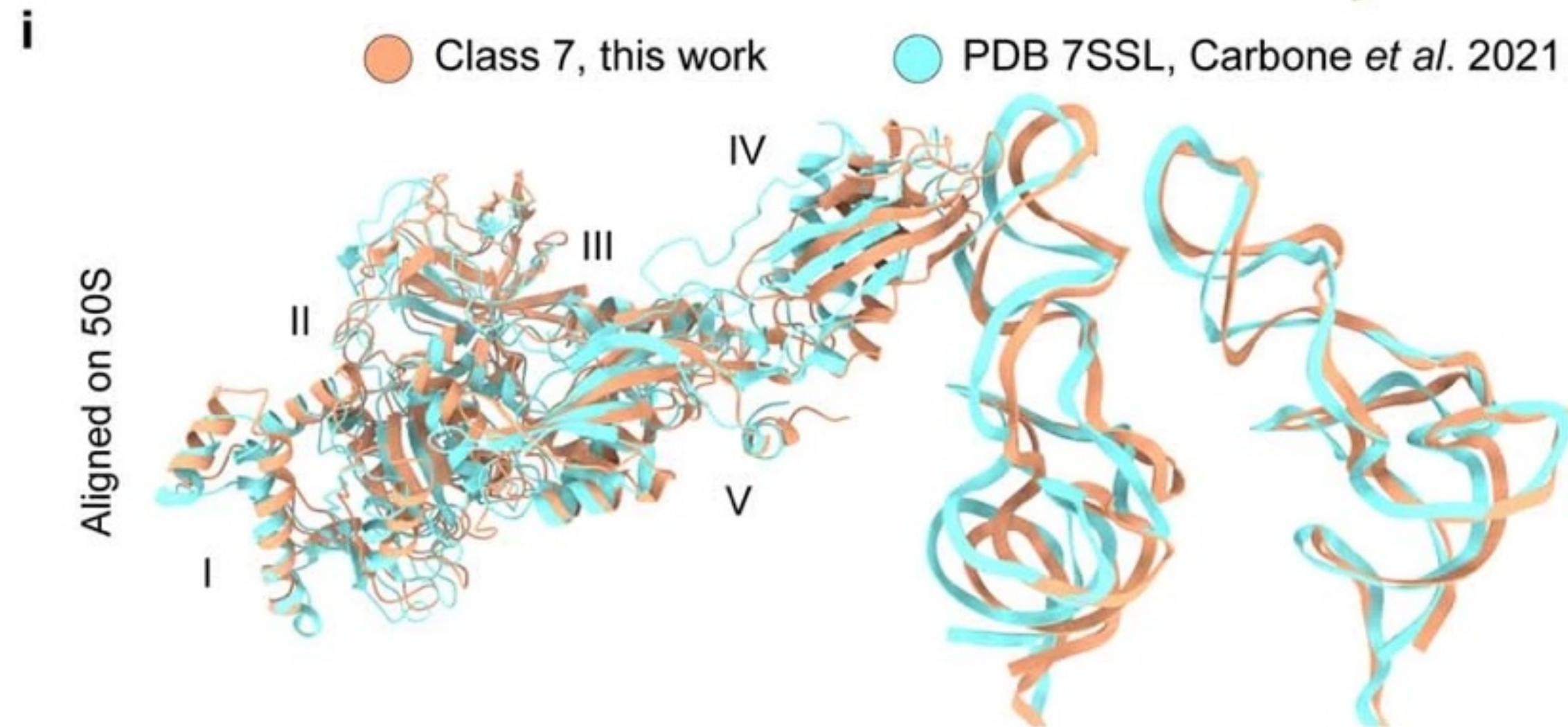
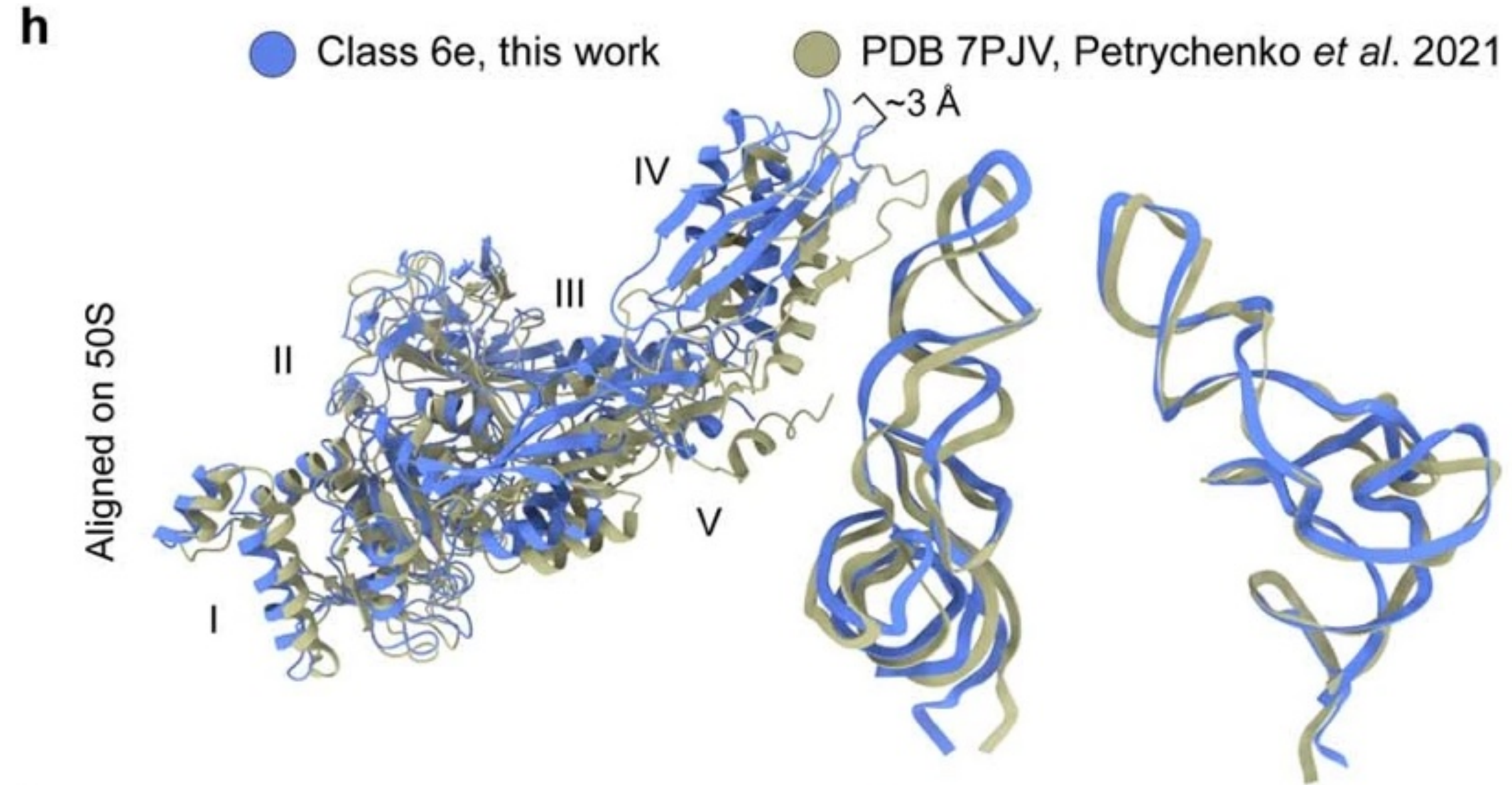
⑧ EF-G, ap/P, pe/E 4.5%



- EF-G rotates as one body without significant inter-domain rearrangement

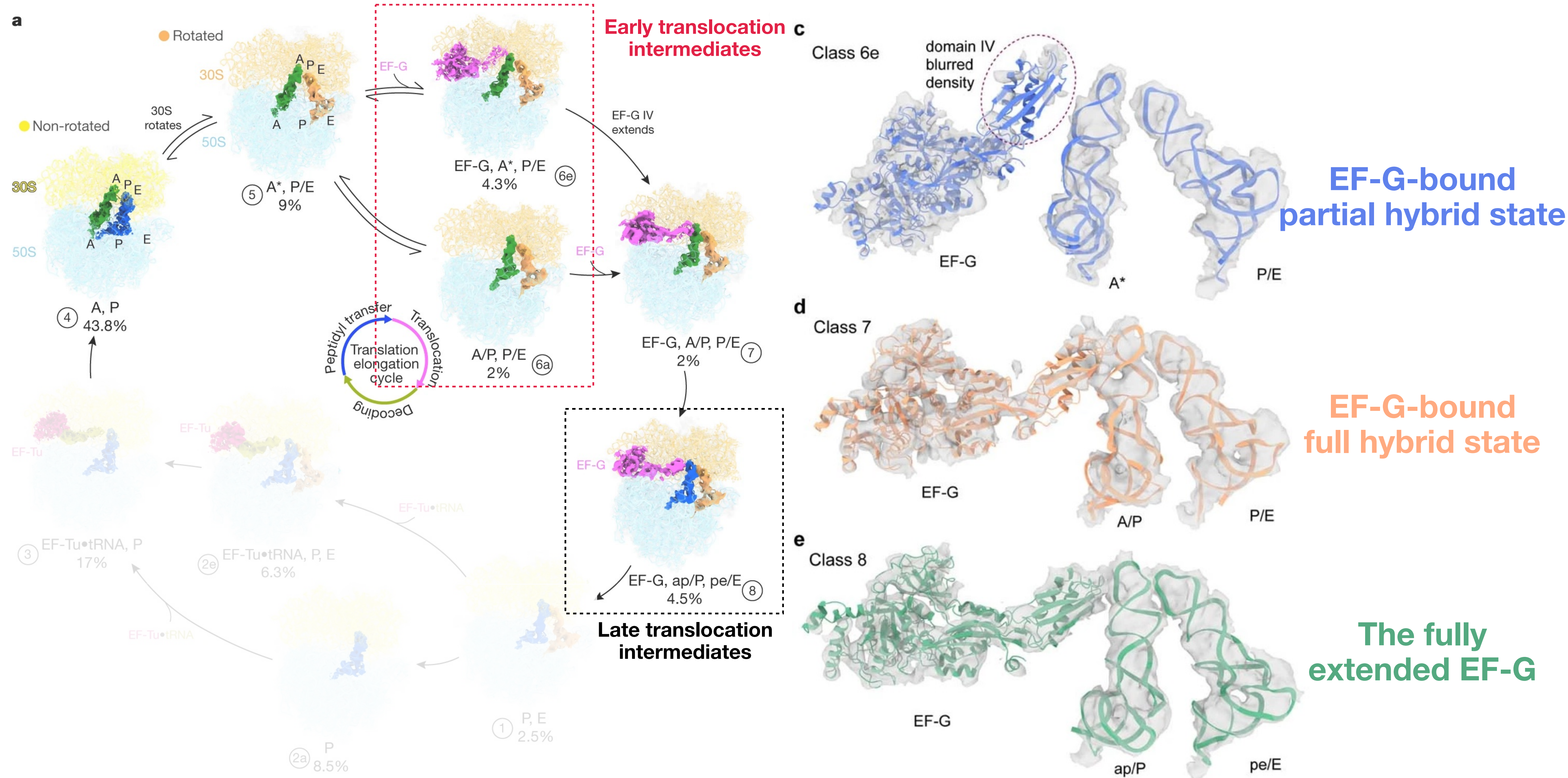
2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

2.4 Early-to-late translocation intermediates



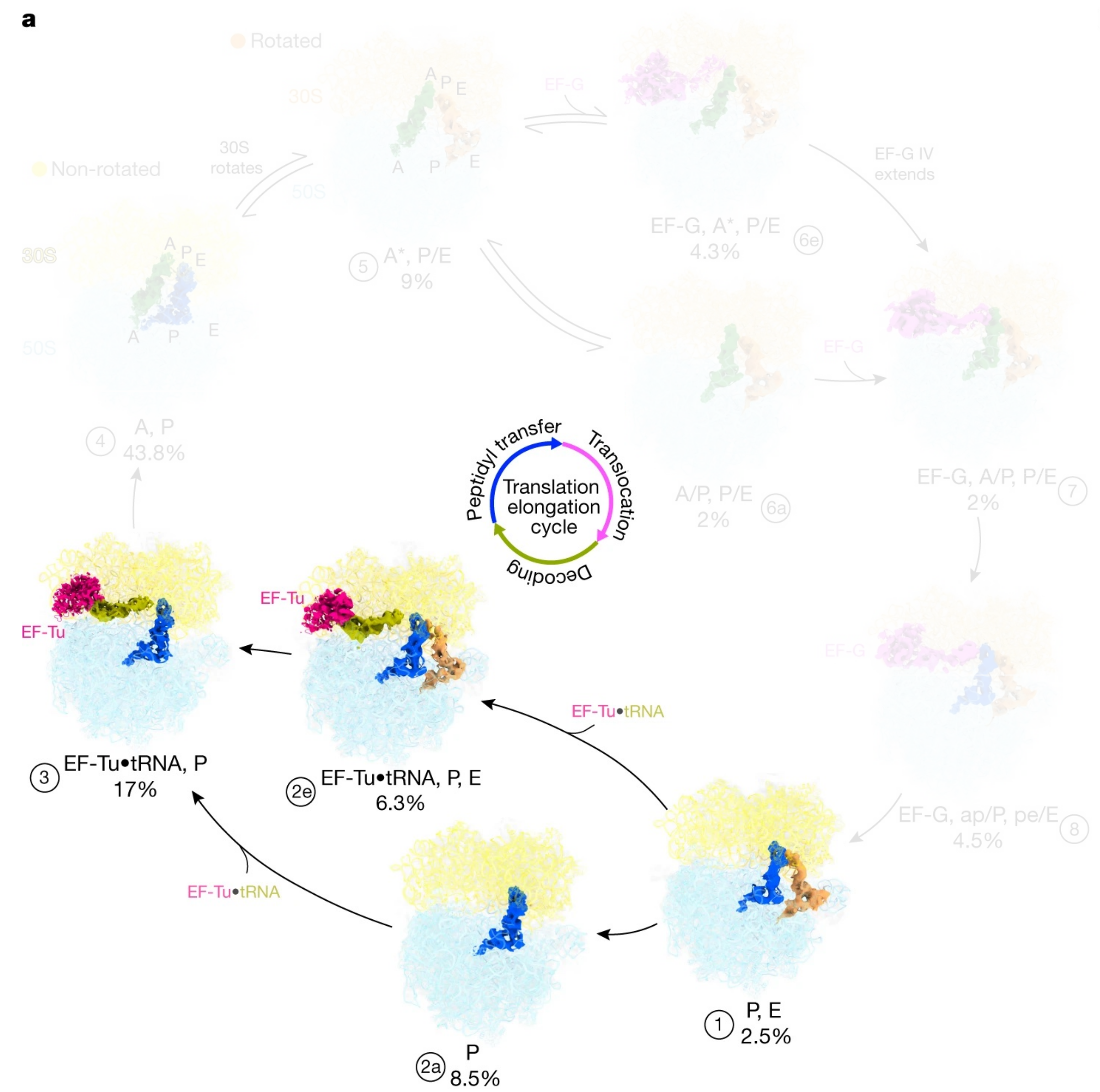
2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

2.4 Early-to-late translocation intermediates



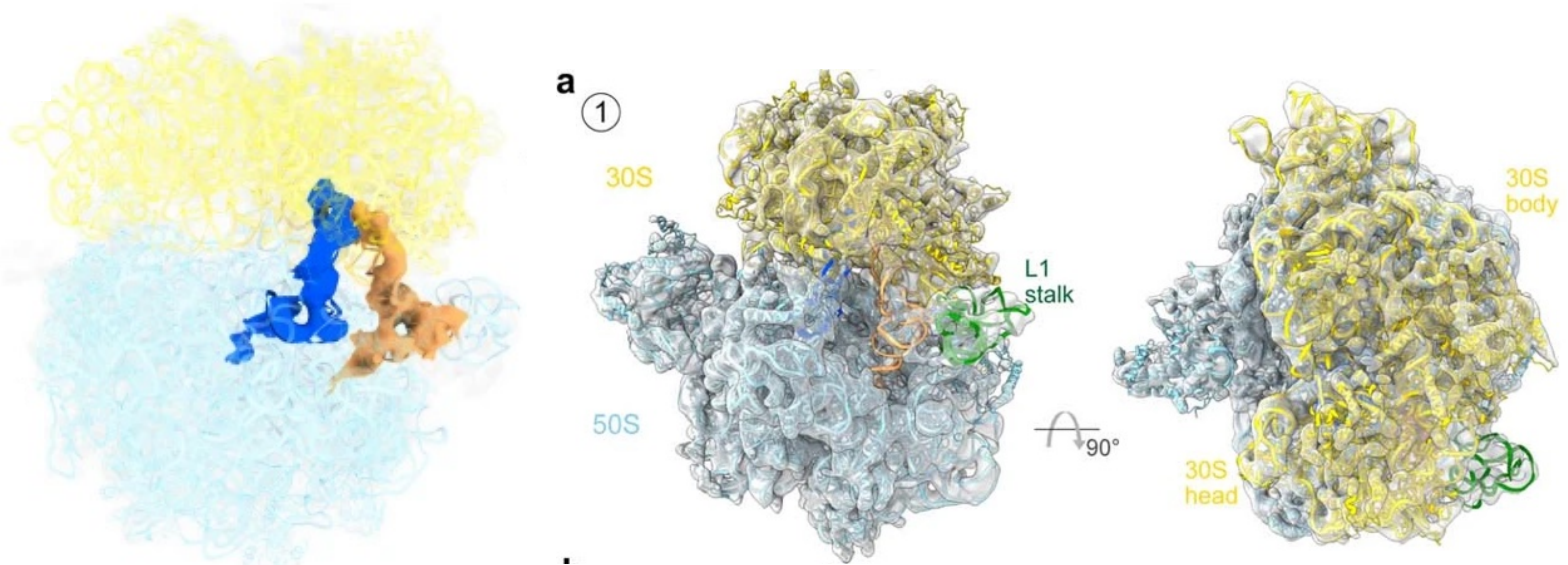
2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

2.5 Decoding and EF-Tu-associated structures



2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

2.5 Decoding and EF-Tu-associated structures

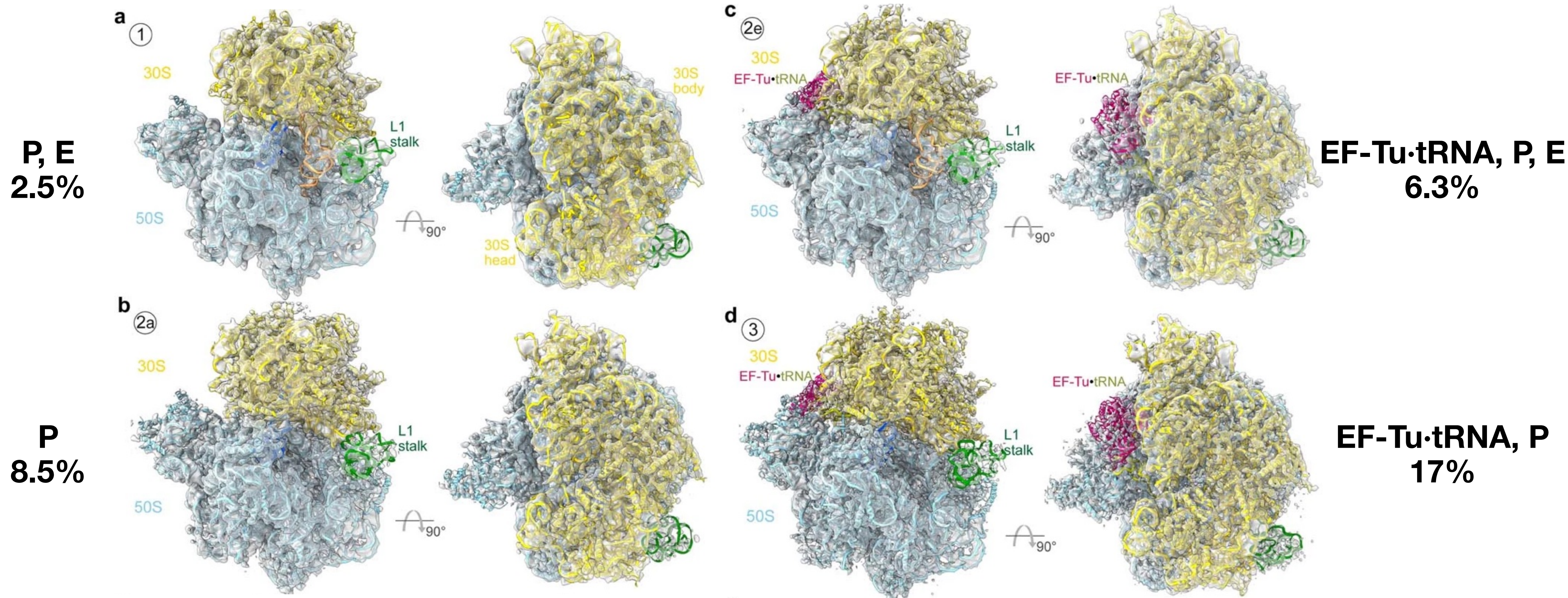


① P, E
2.5%

E-site tRNA is not stable
and tend to disassociate
quickly after translocation

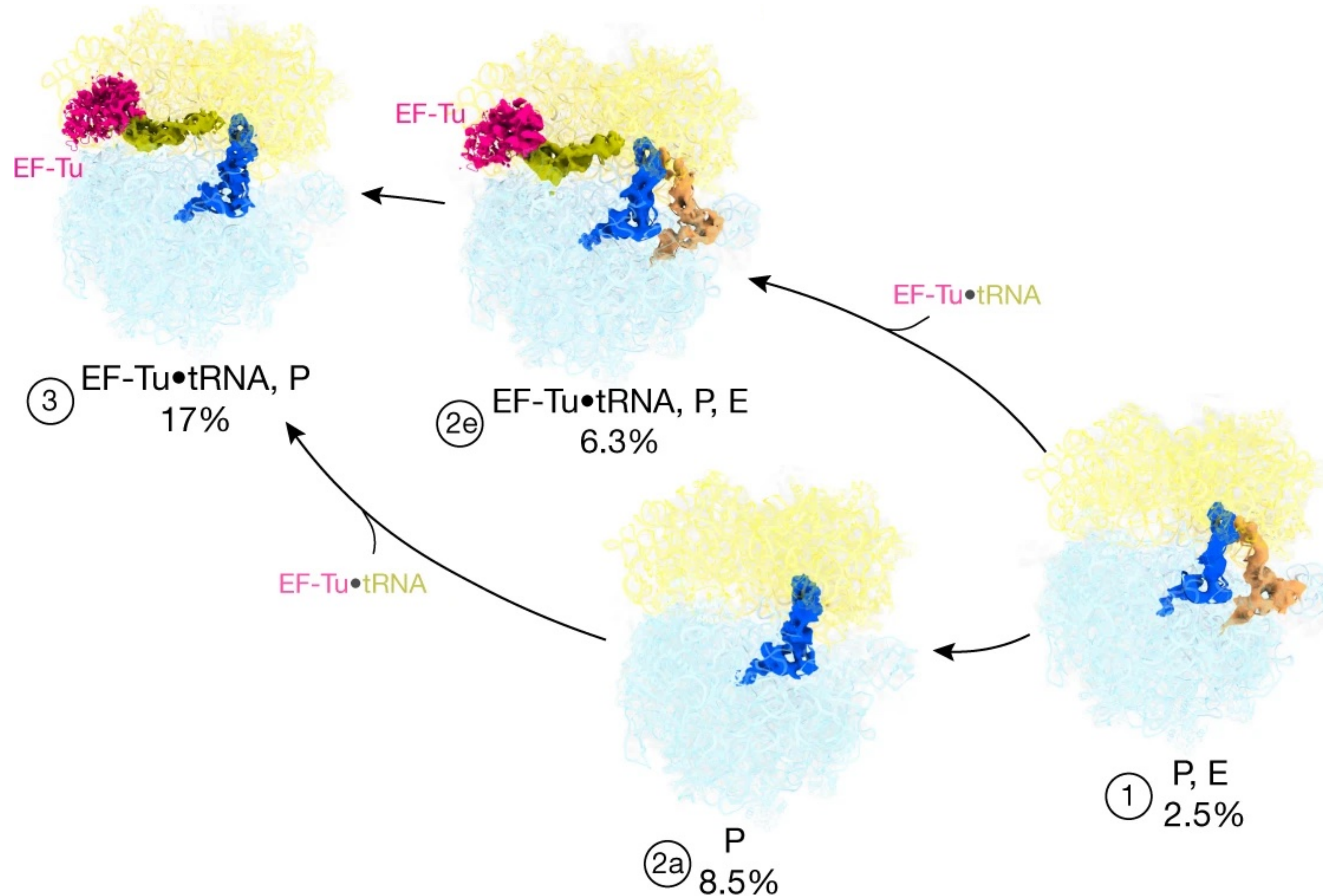
2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

2.5 Decoding and EF-Tu-associated structures



2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

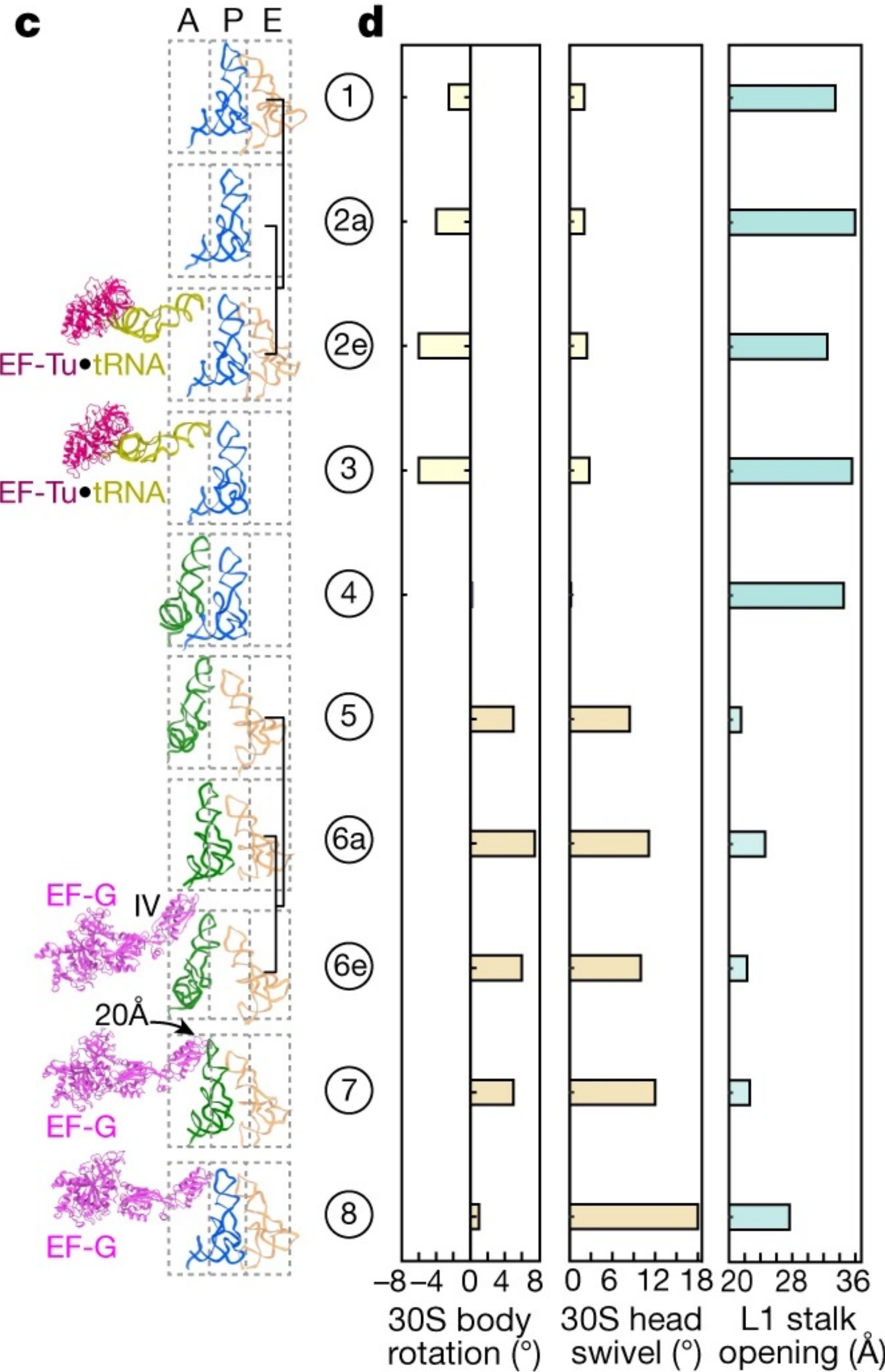
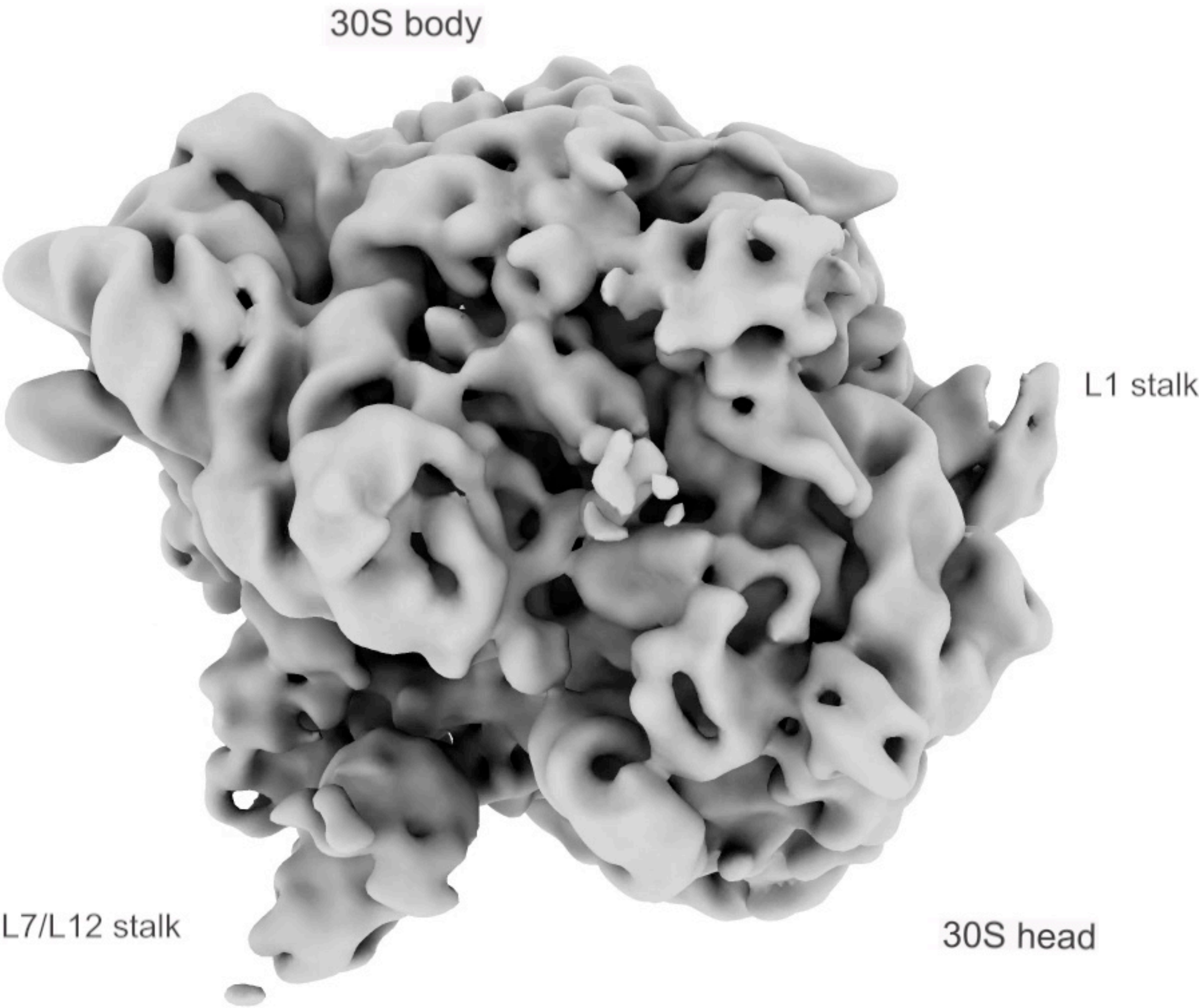
2.5 Decoding and EF-Tu-associated structures



EF-Tu•tRNA binding and the dissociation of E-site tRNA are independent

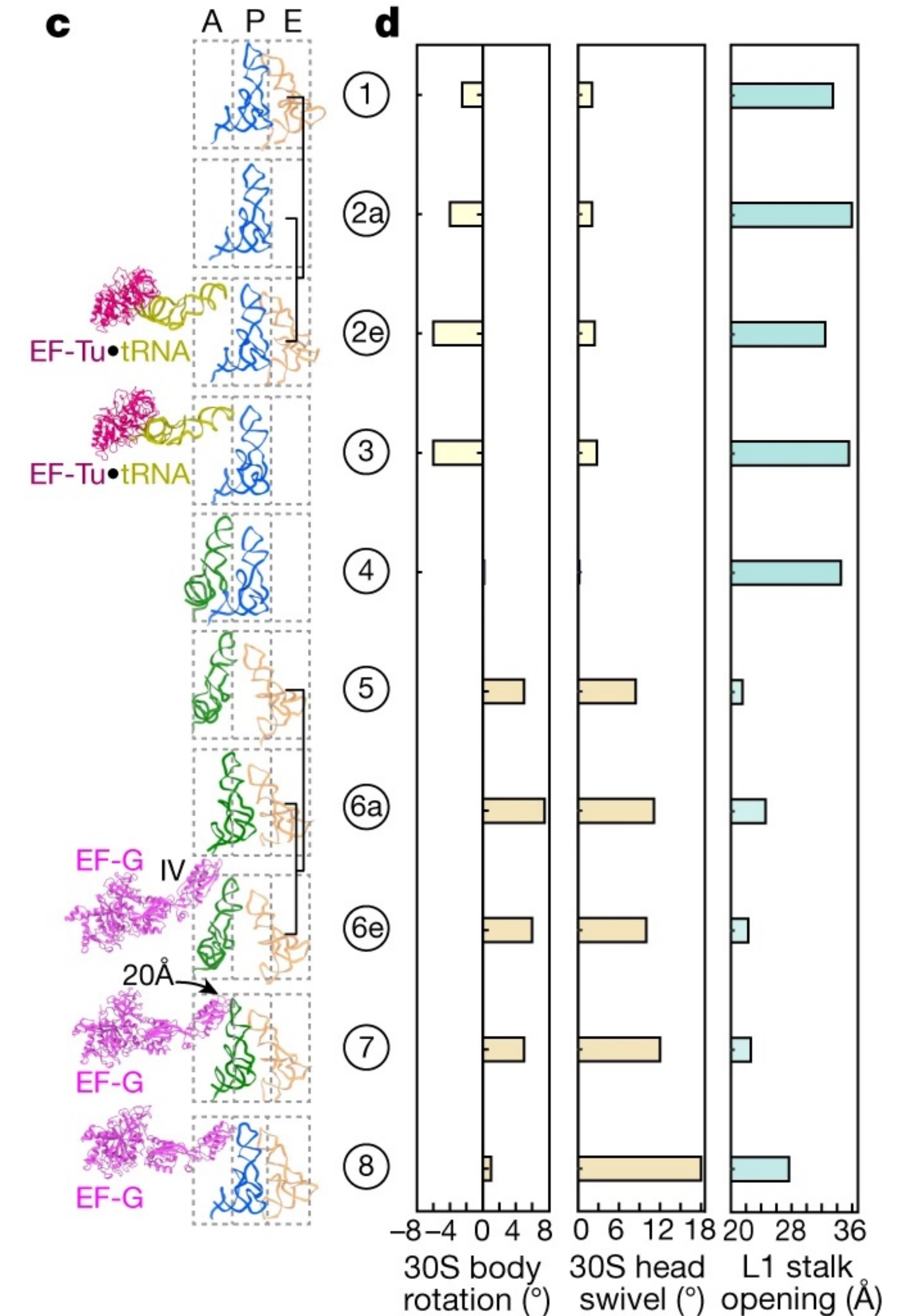
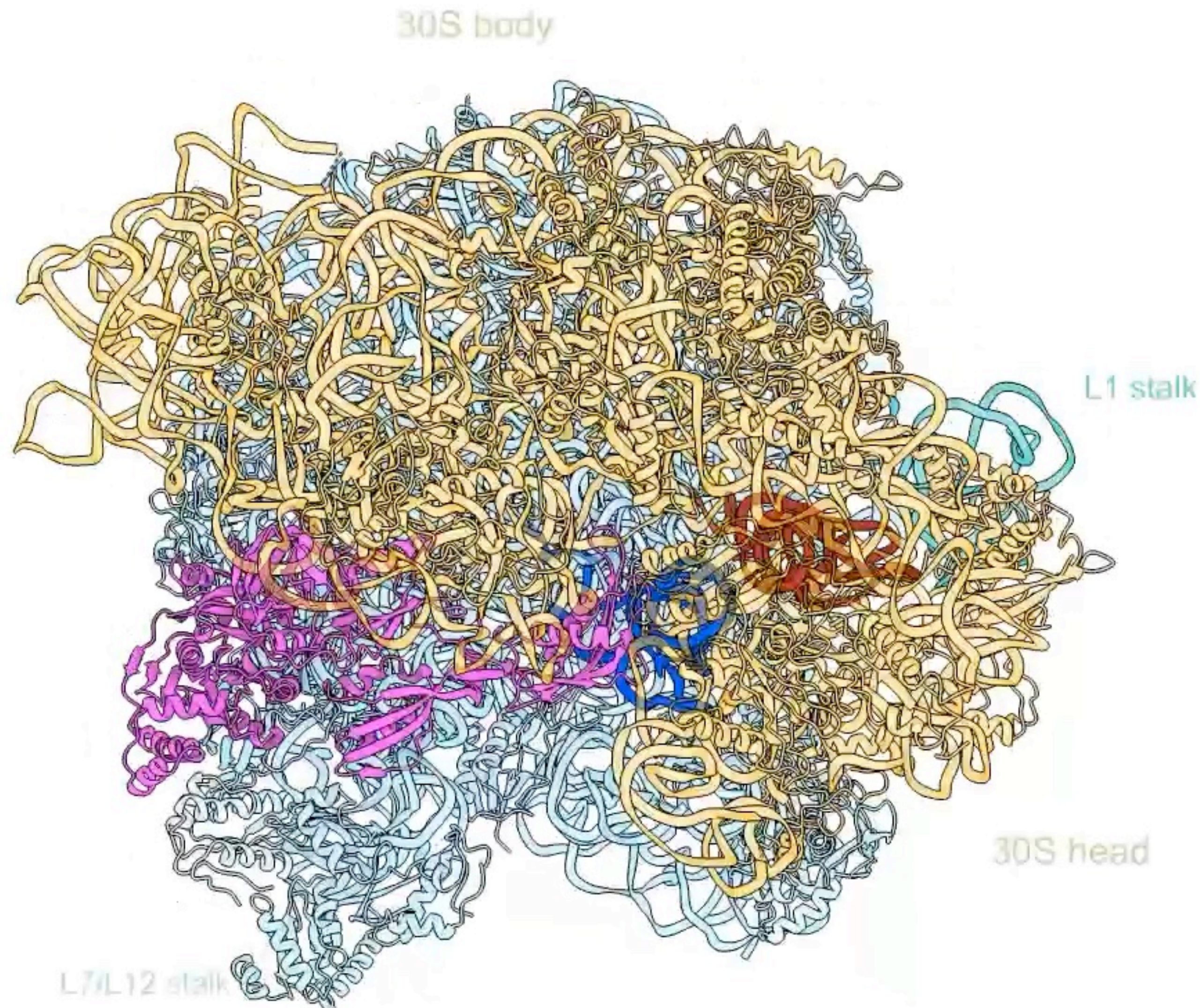
2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

2.6 Inter-subunit rotation



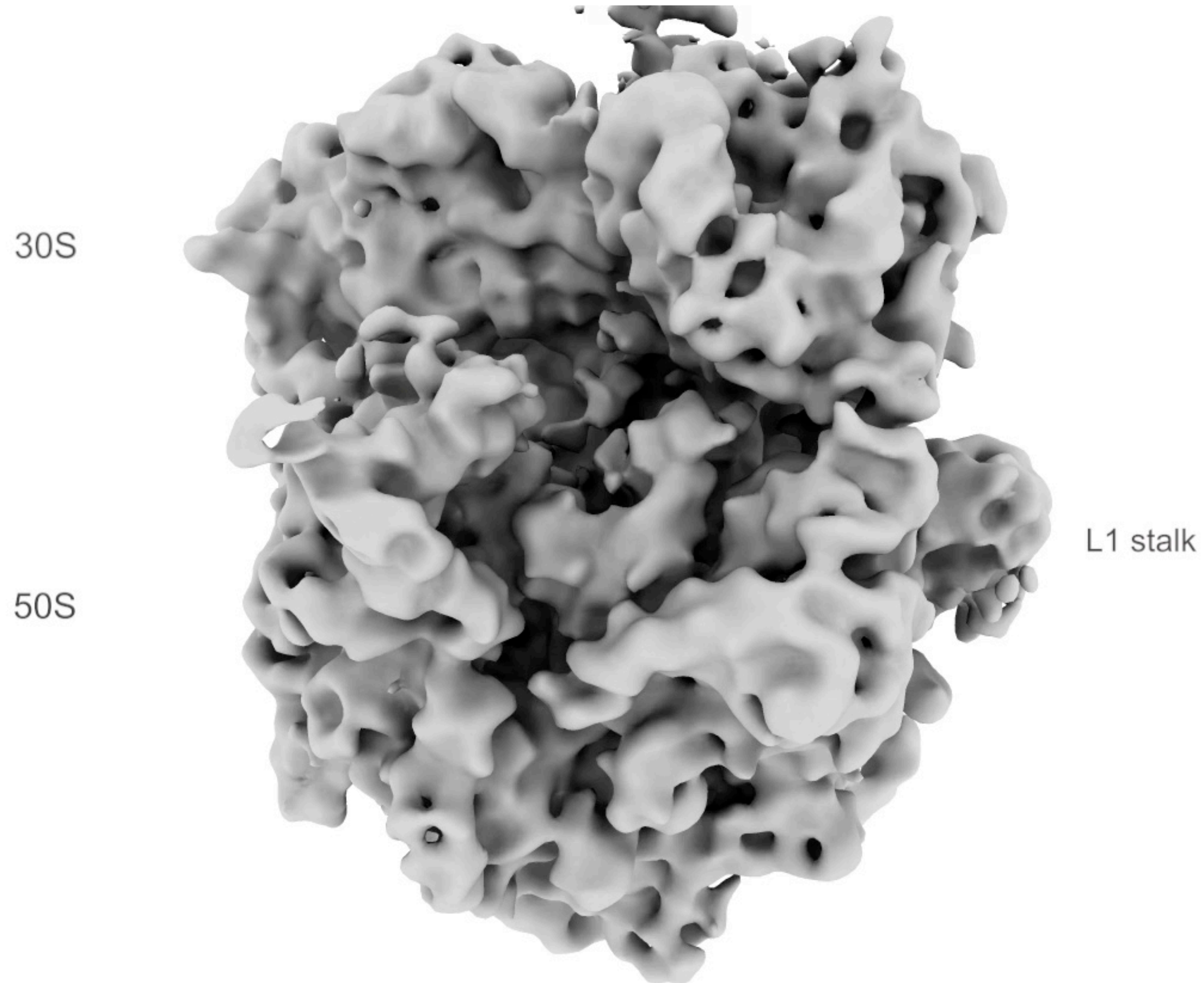
2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

2.6 Inter-subunit rotation



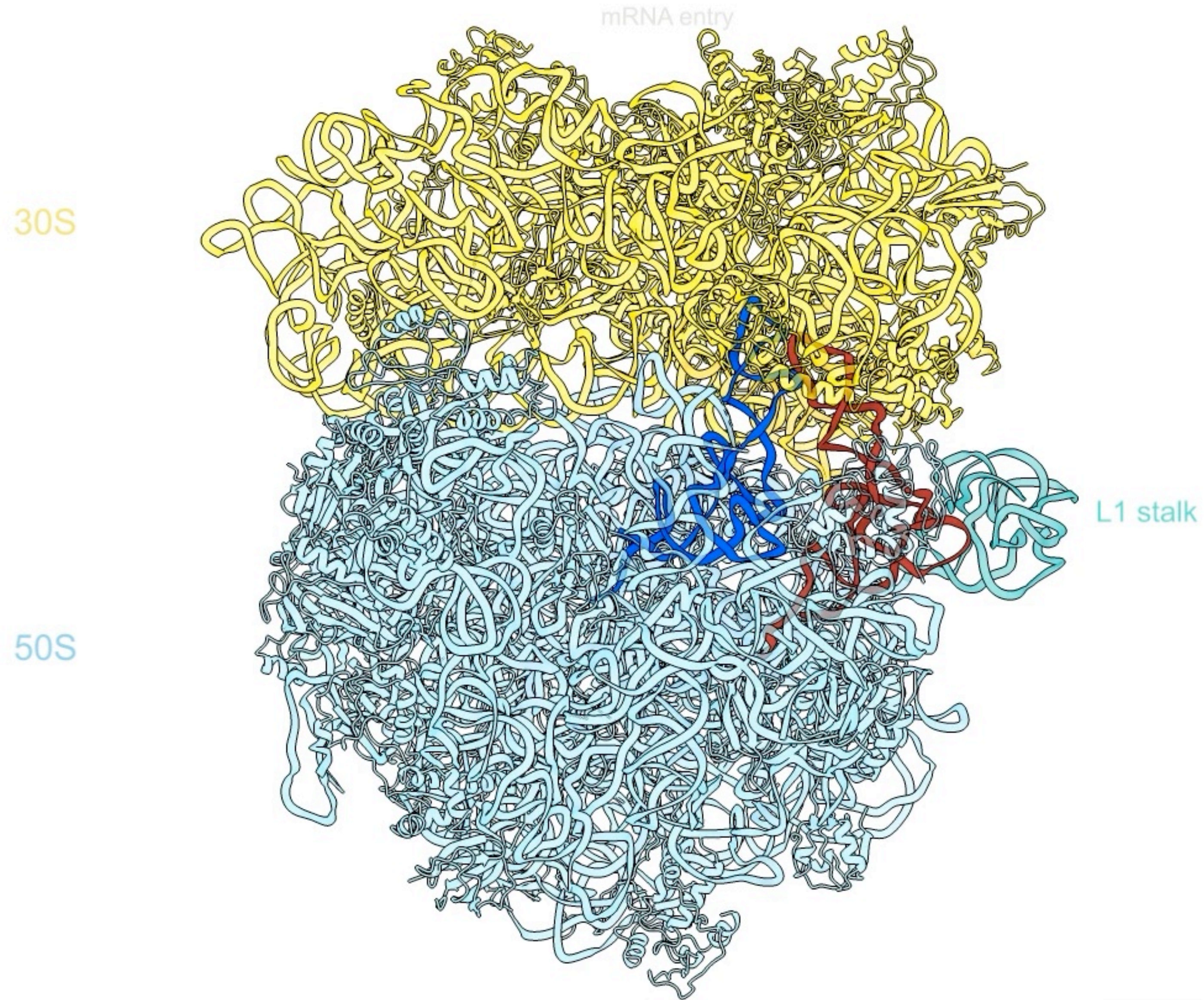
2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

2.7 Translation elongation cycle



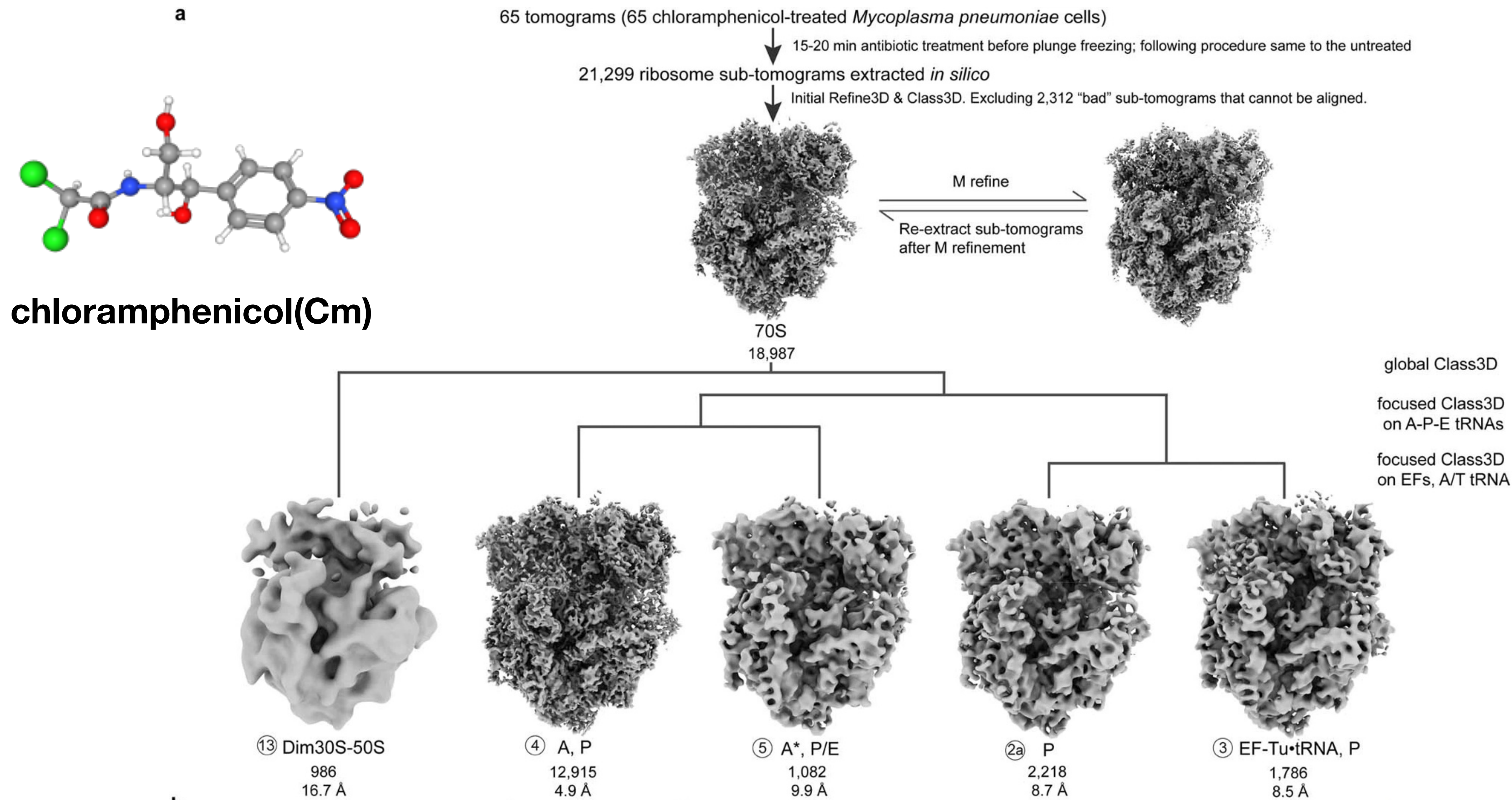
2 Structure dynamics of translation in cells

2.7 Translation elongation cycle



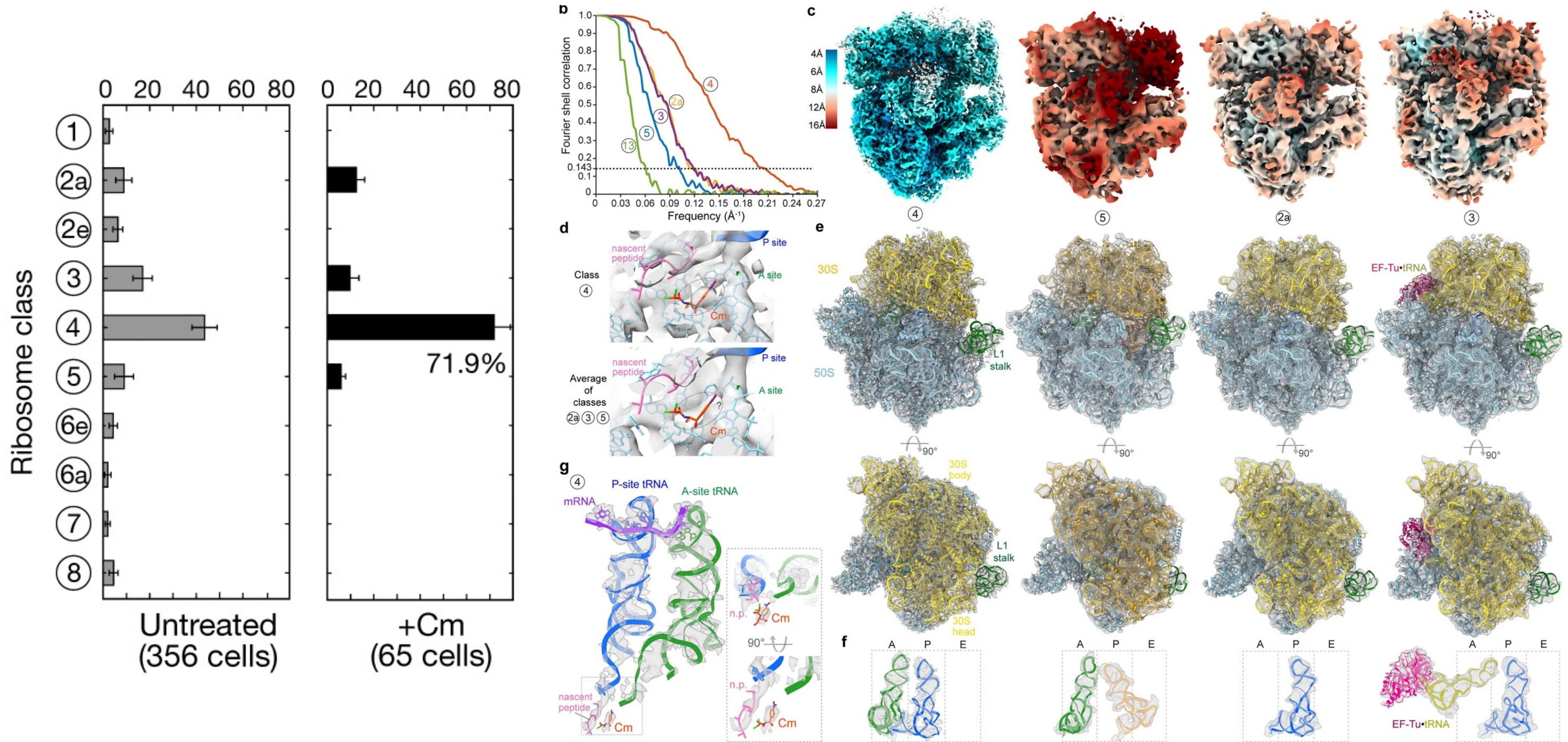
3 Antibiotics alter translation landscapes

3.1 In chloramphenicol(Cm)-treated cells



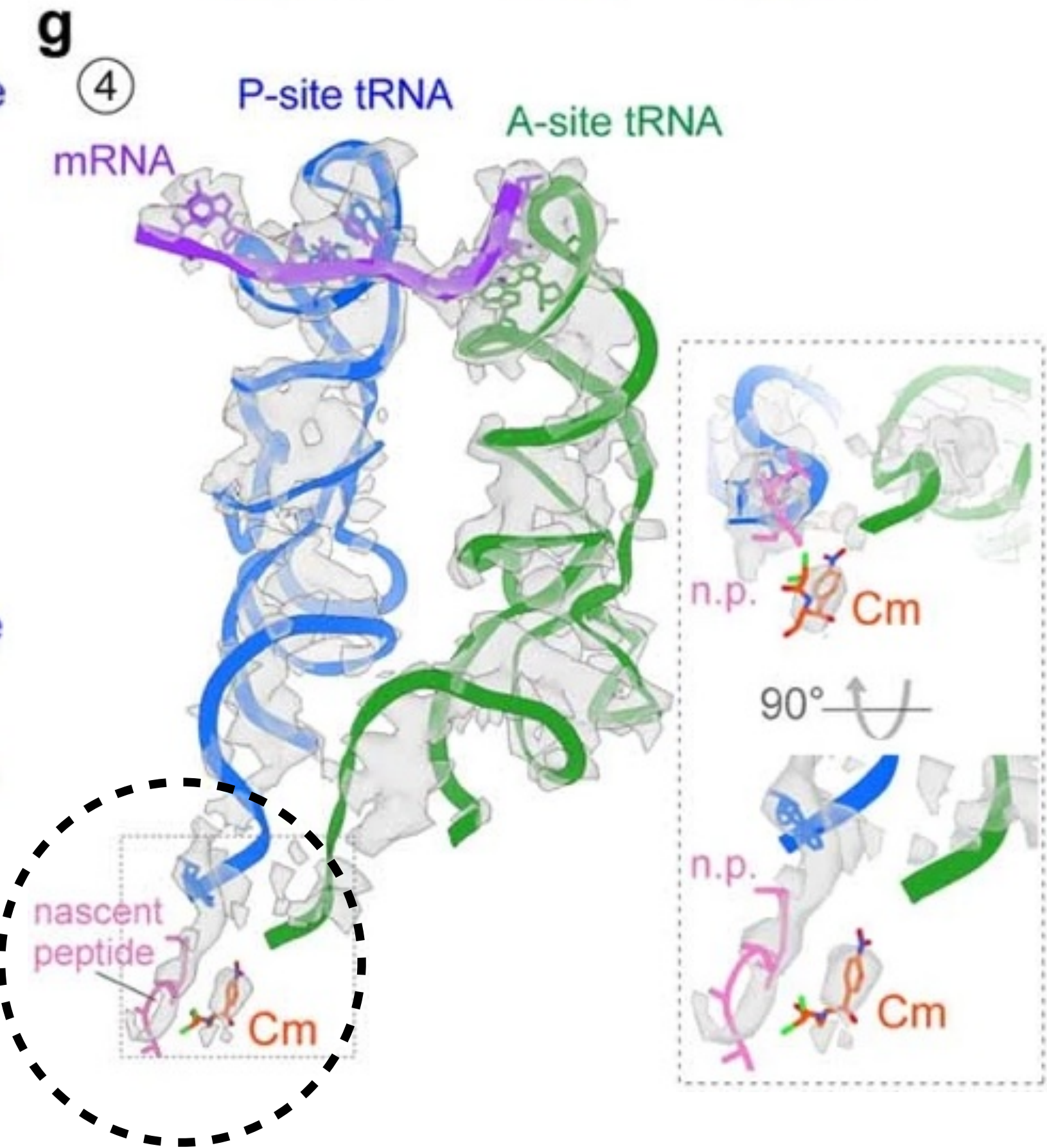
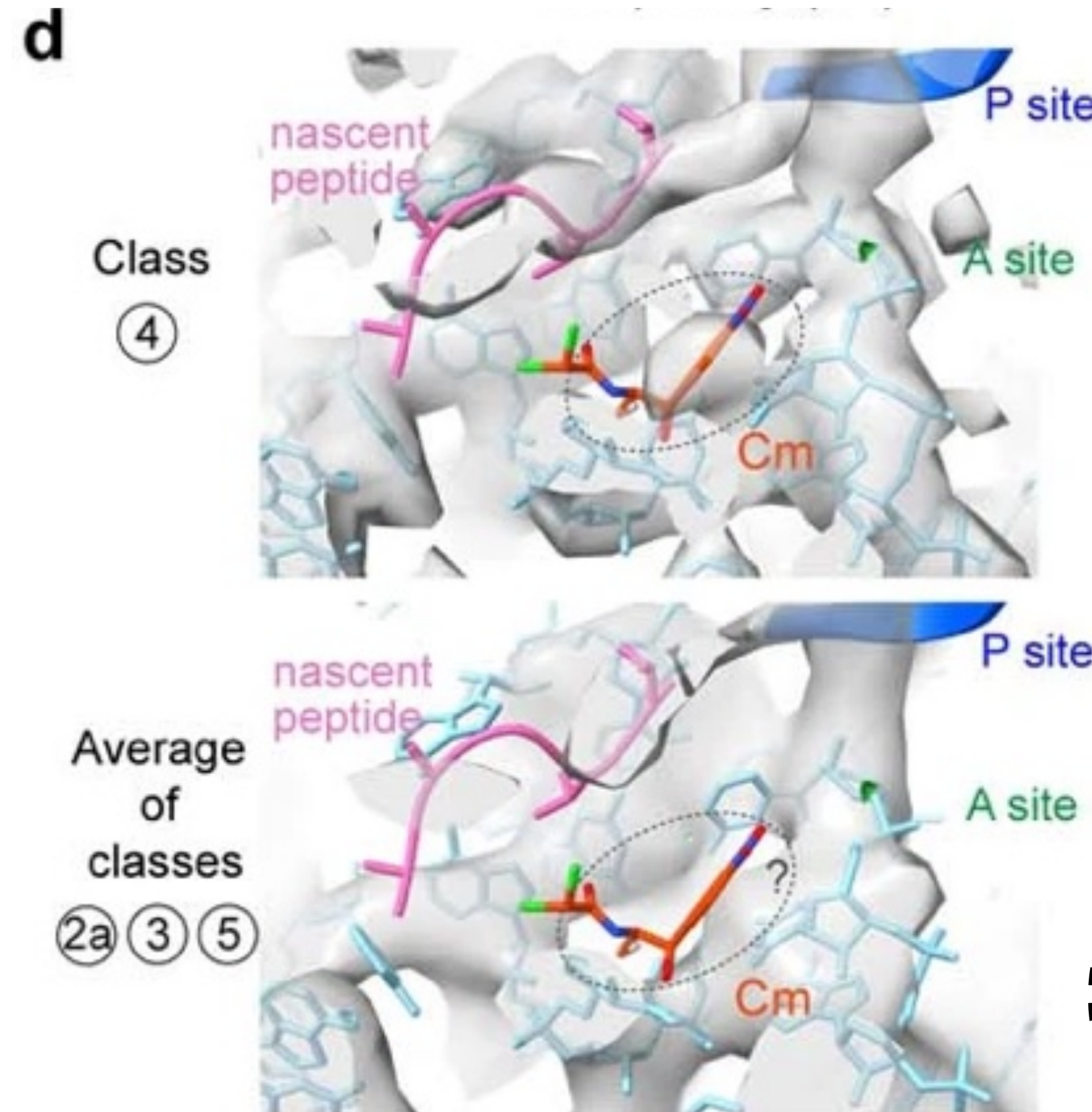
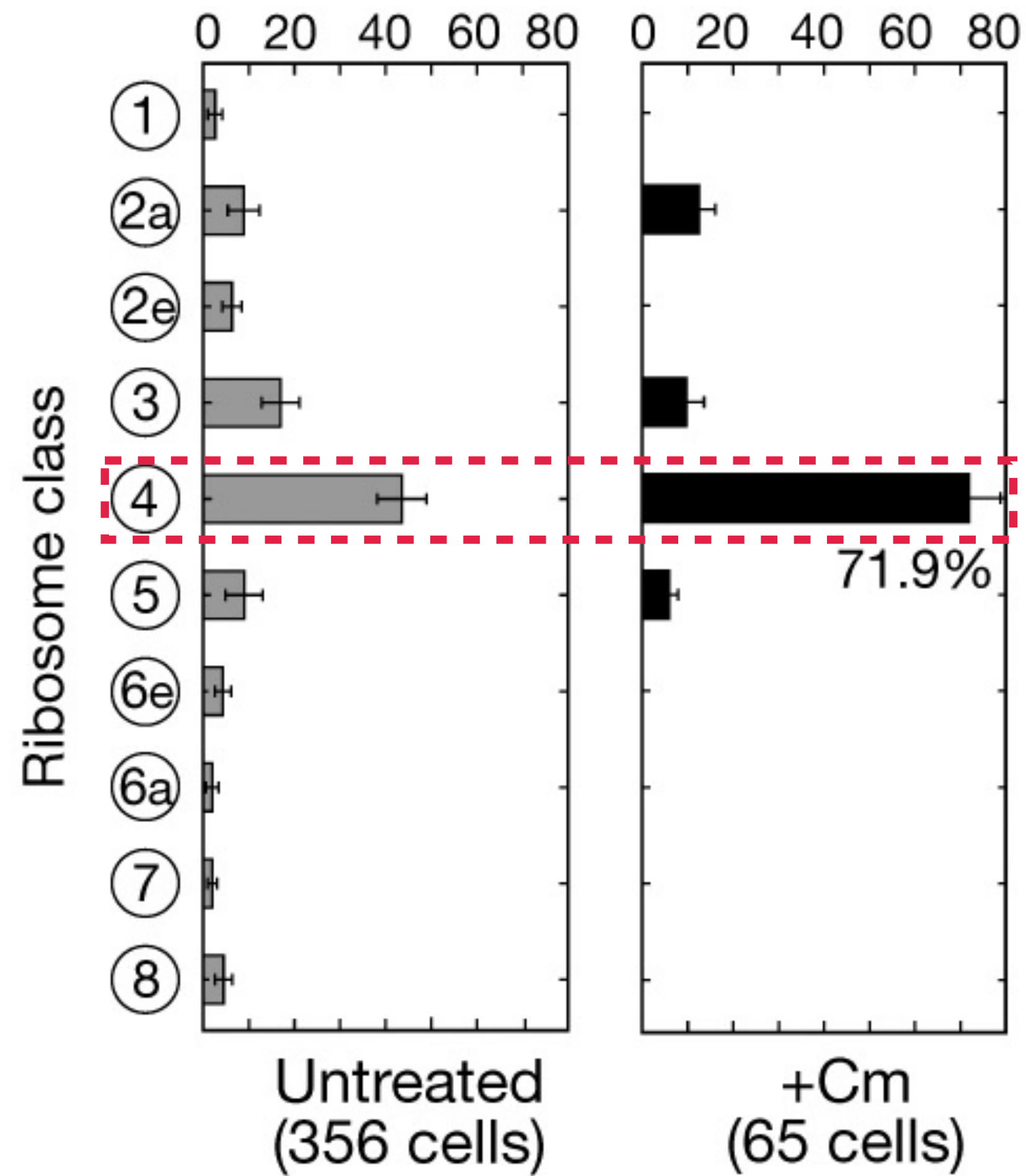
3 Antibiotics alter translation landscapes

3.1 In chloramphenicol(Cm)-treated cells



3 Antibiotics alter translation landscapes

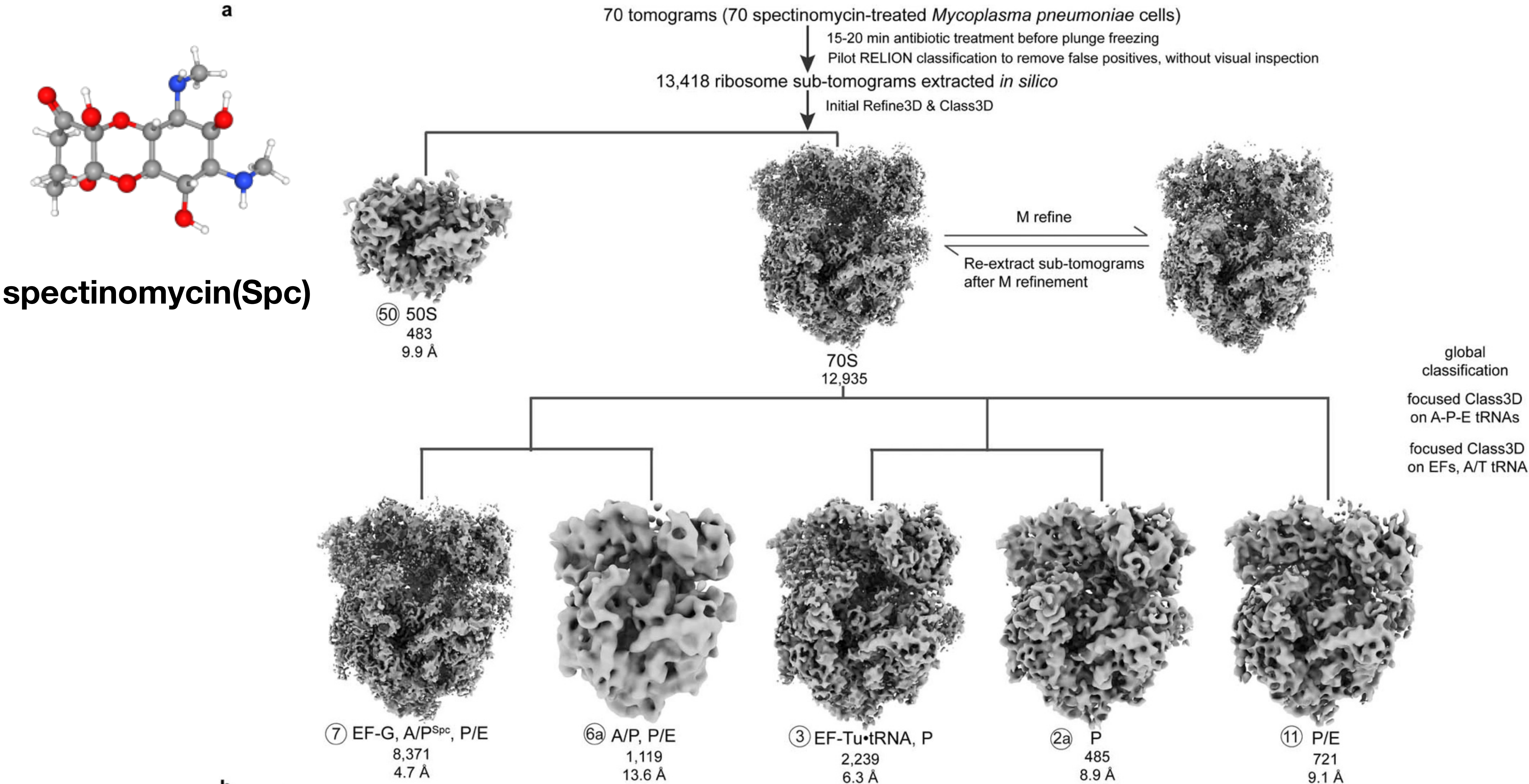
3.1 In chloramphenicol(Cm)-treated cells



Cm inhibits peptide bond formation

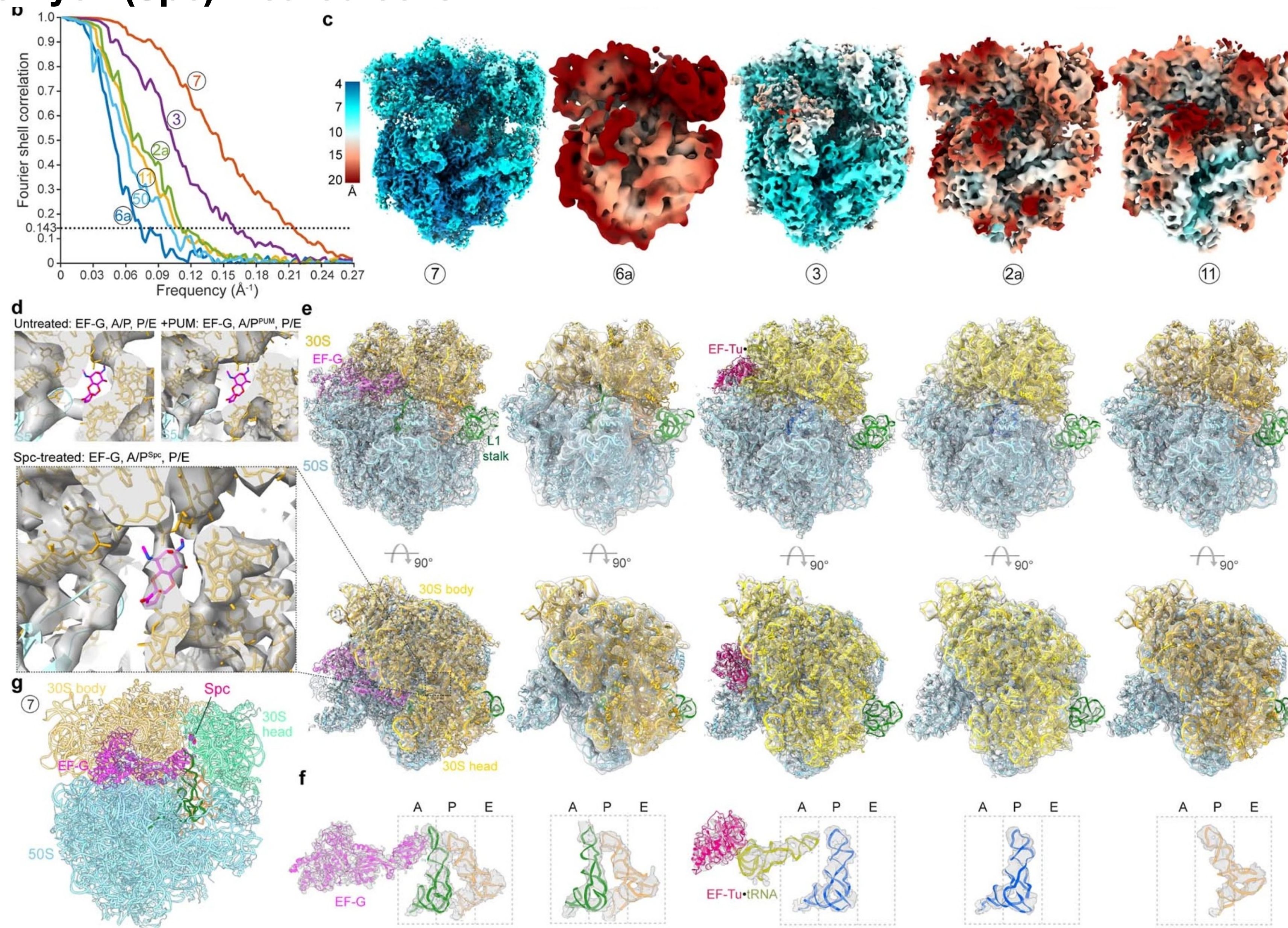
3 Antibiotics alter translation landscapes

3.2 In spectinomycin(Spc)-treated cells



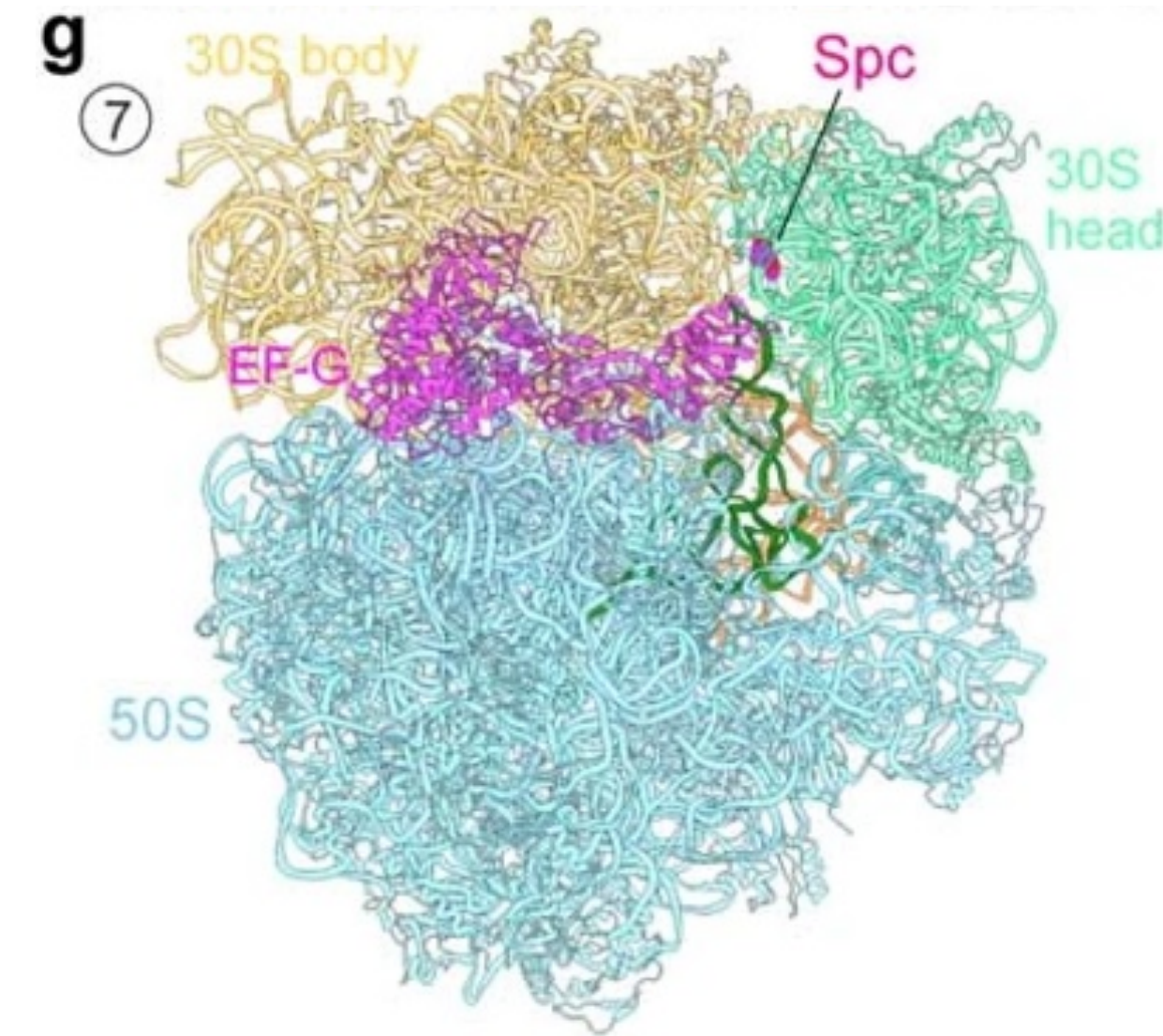
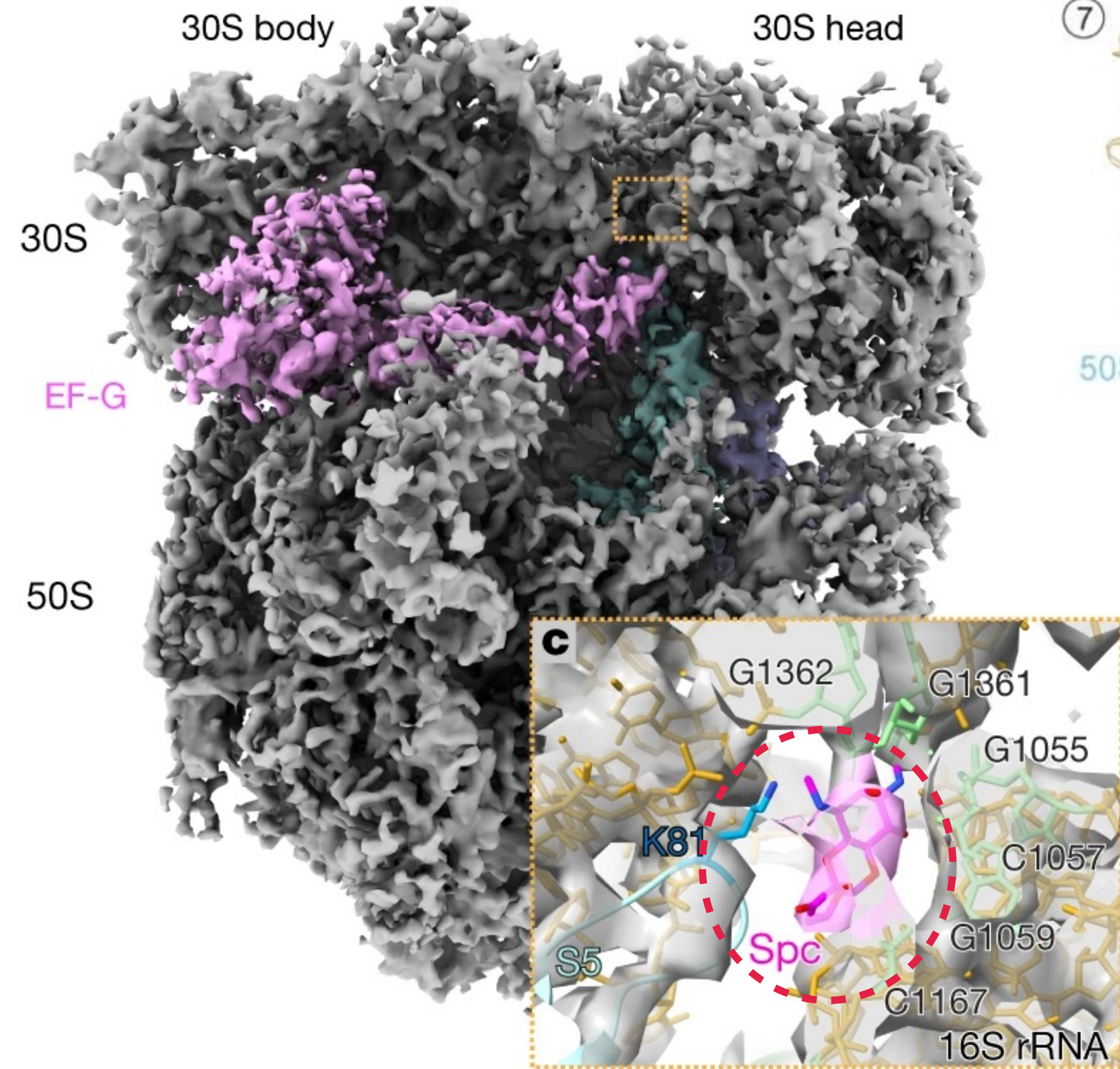
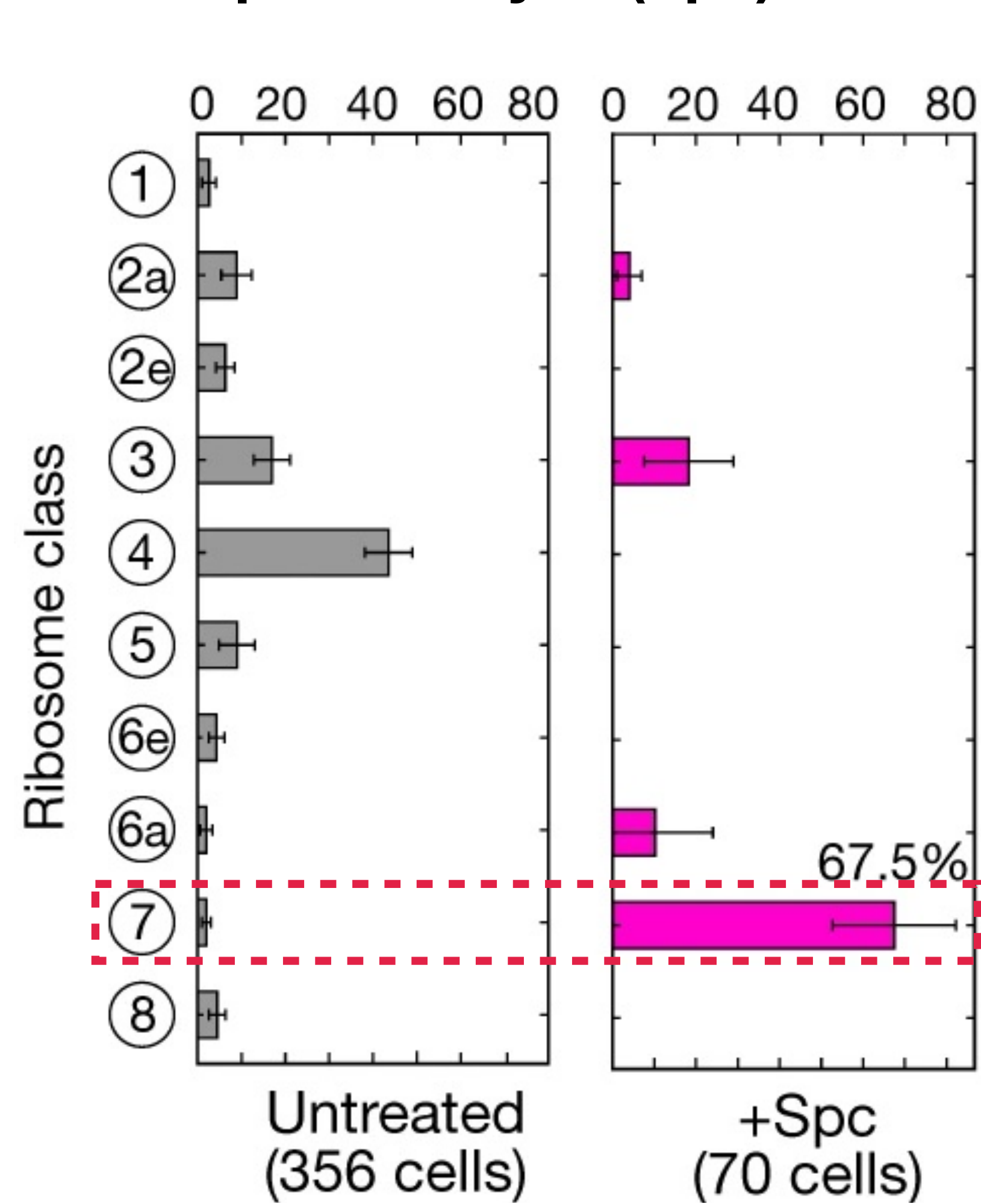
3 Antibiotics alter translation landscapes

3.2 In spectinomycin(Spc)-treated cells



3 Antibiotics alter translation landscapes

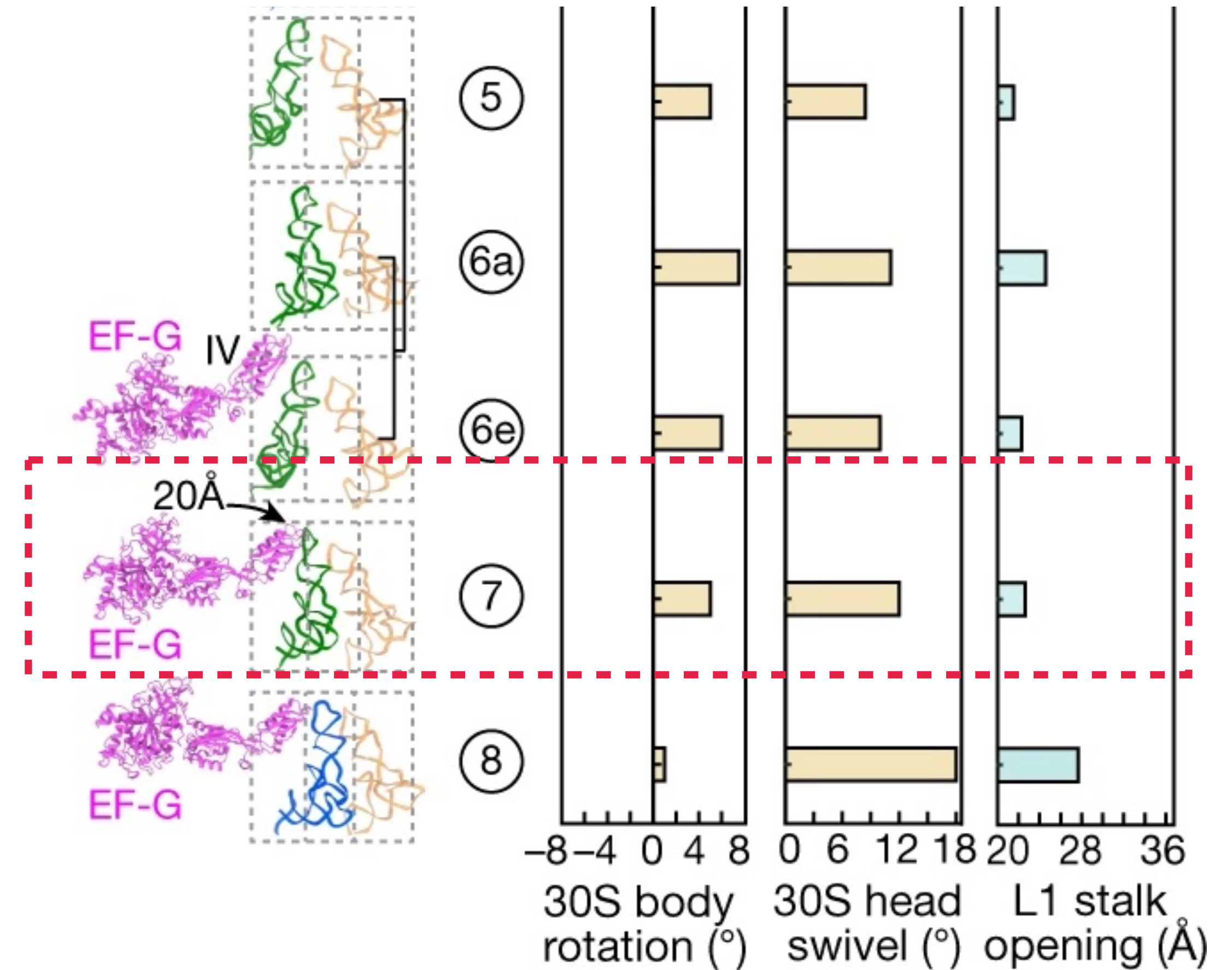
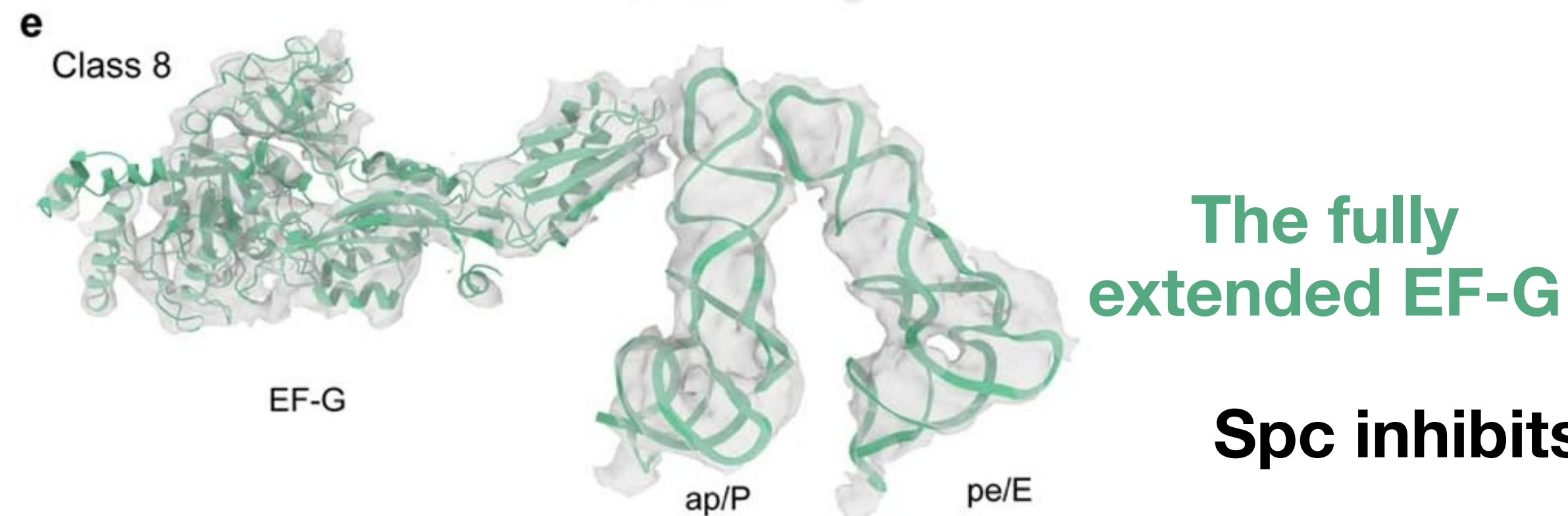
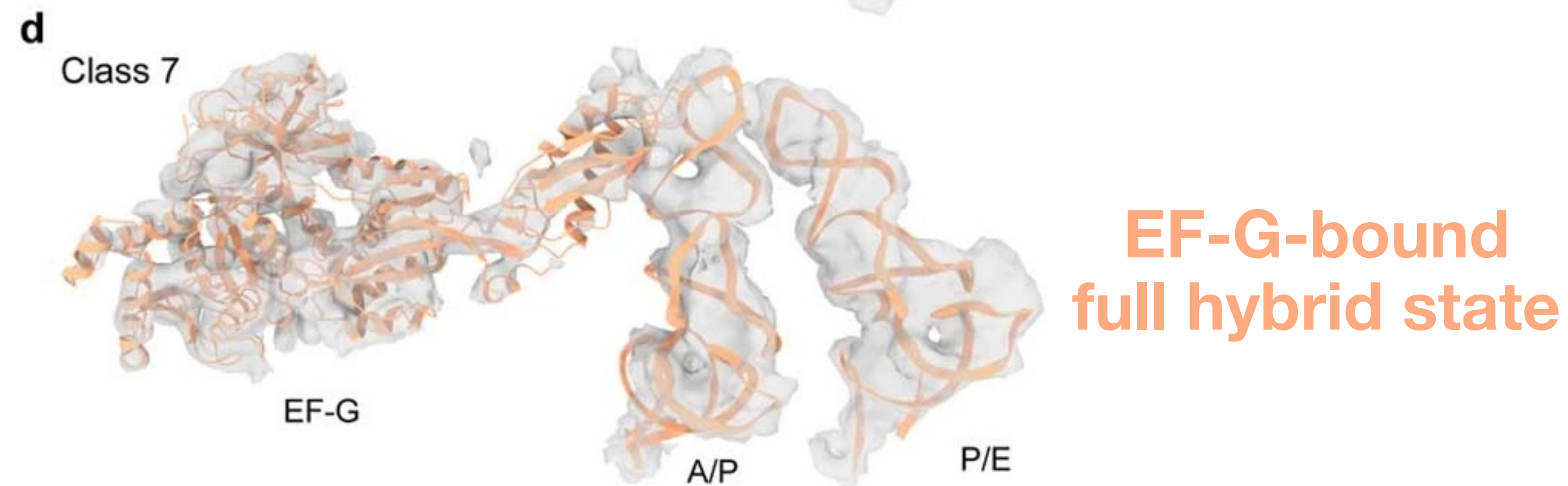
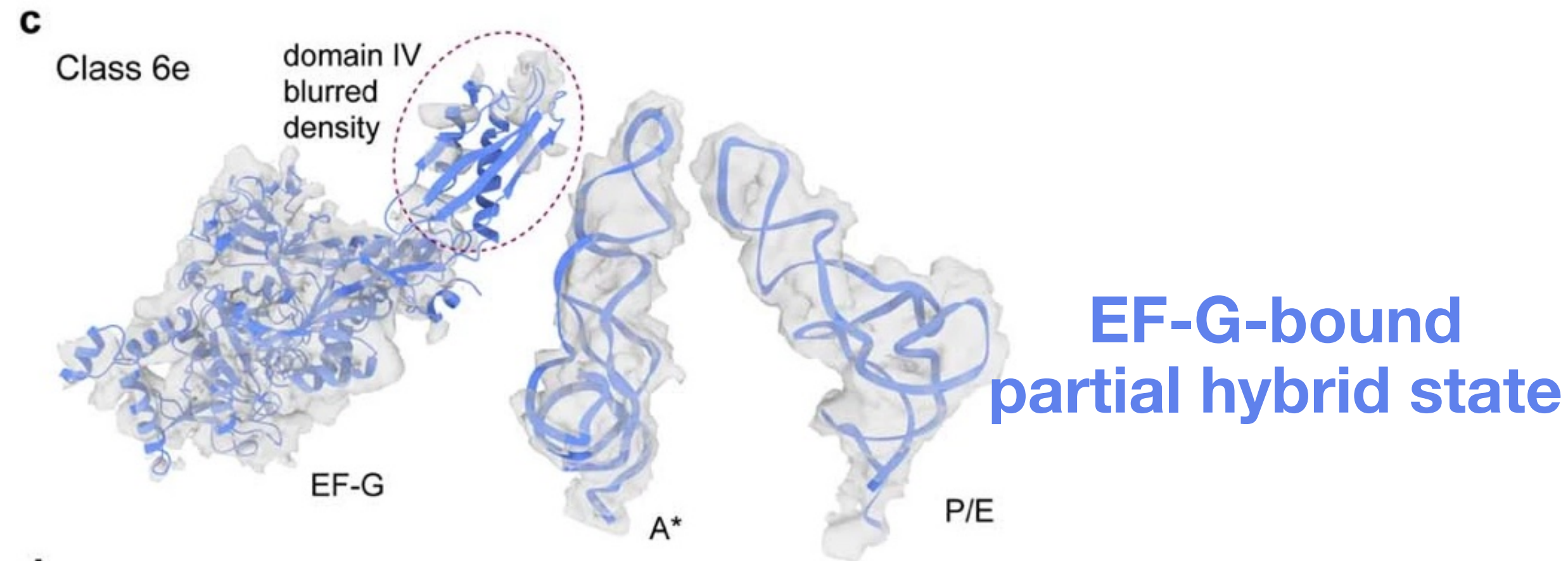
3.2 In spectinomycin(Spc)-treated cells



Spc inhibits translocation by blocking head swivel of the 30S

3 Antibiotics alter translation landscapes

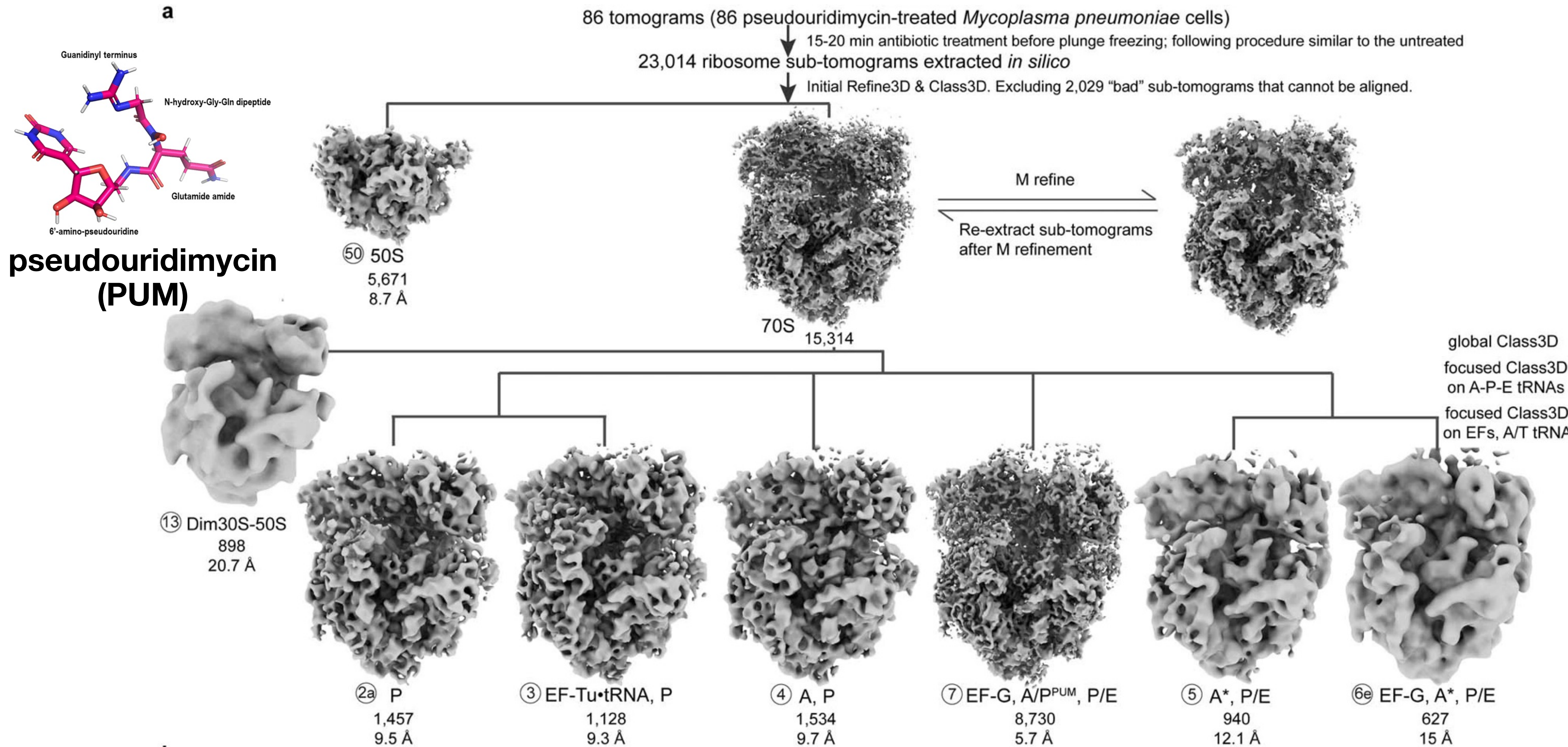
3.2 In spectinomycin(Spc)-treated cells



Spc inhibits translocation by blocking head swivel of the 30S

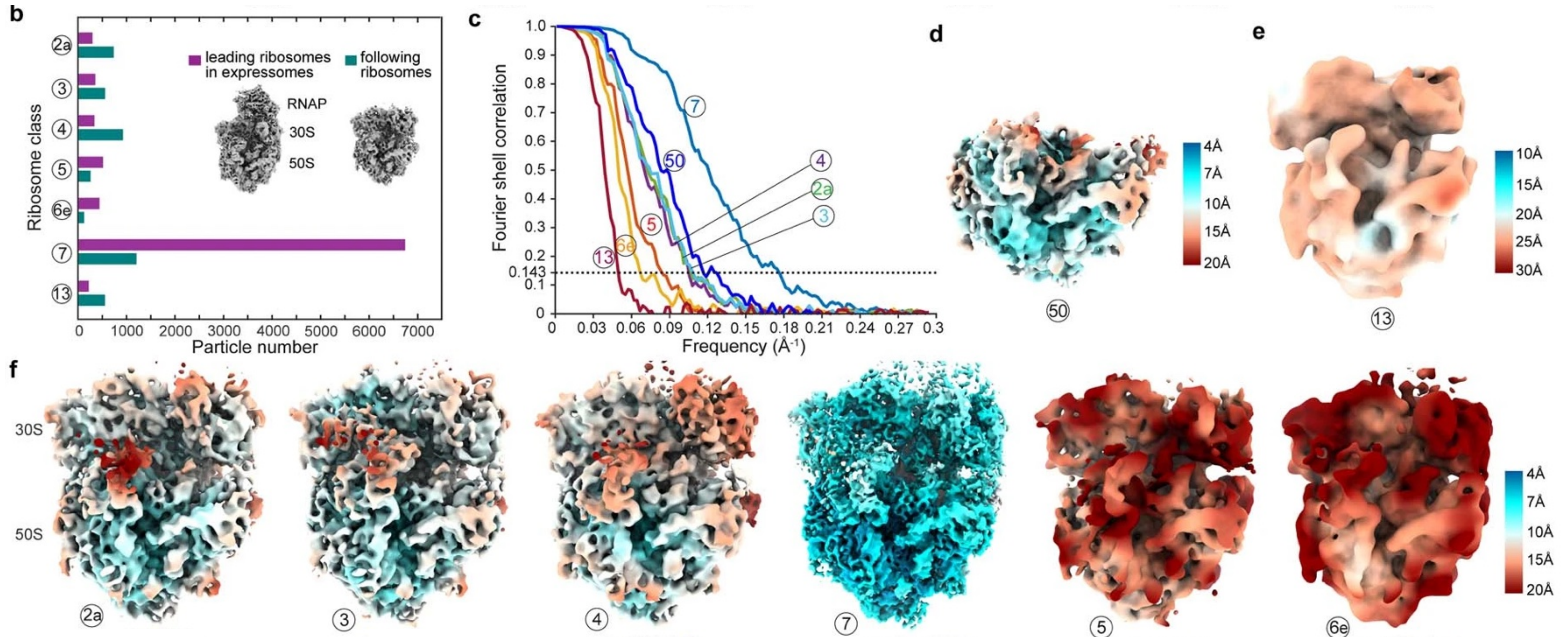
3 Antibiotics alter translation landscapes

3.3 In pseudouridimycin(PUM)-treated cells



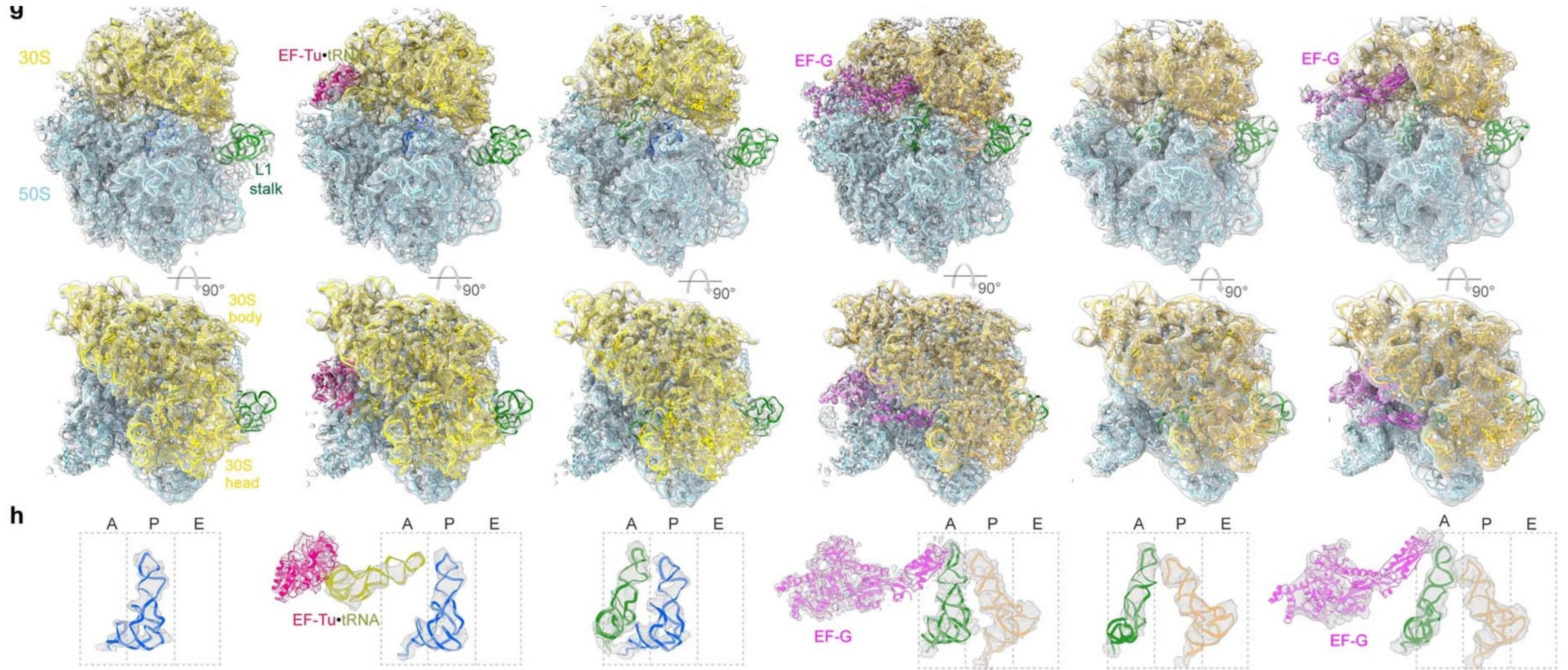
3 Antibiotics alter translation landscapes

3.3 In pseudouridimycin(PUM)-treated cells



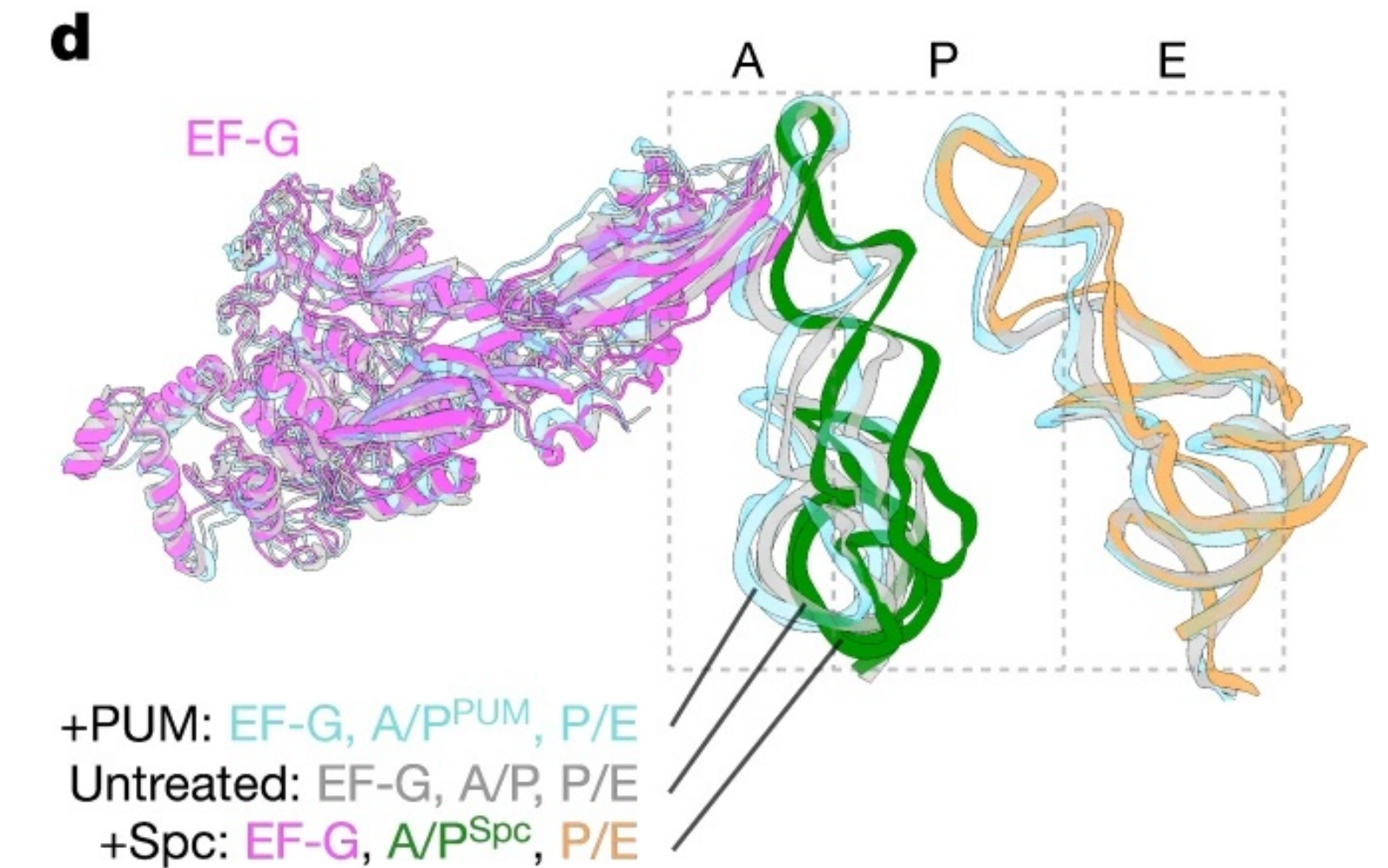
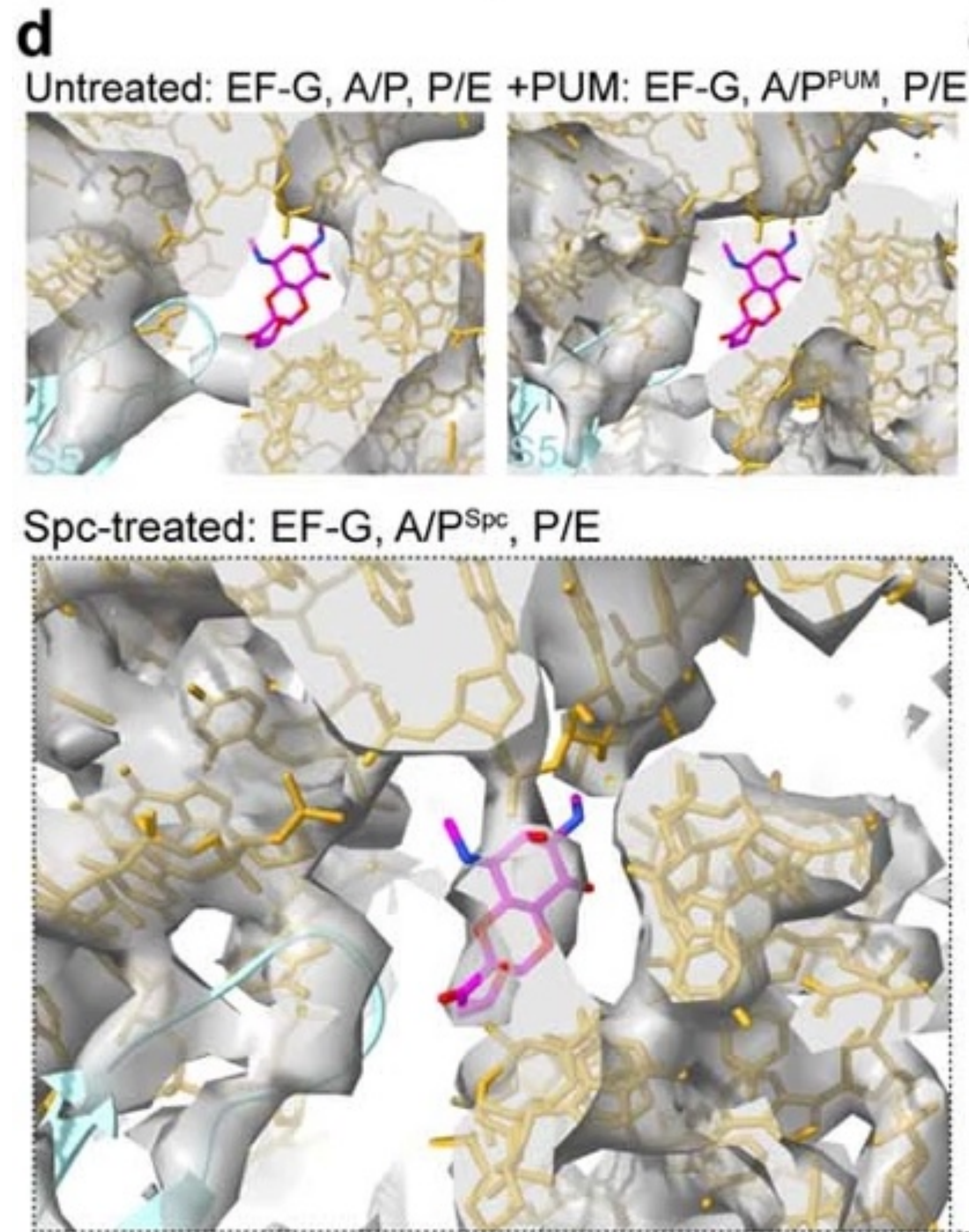
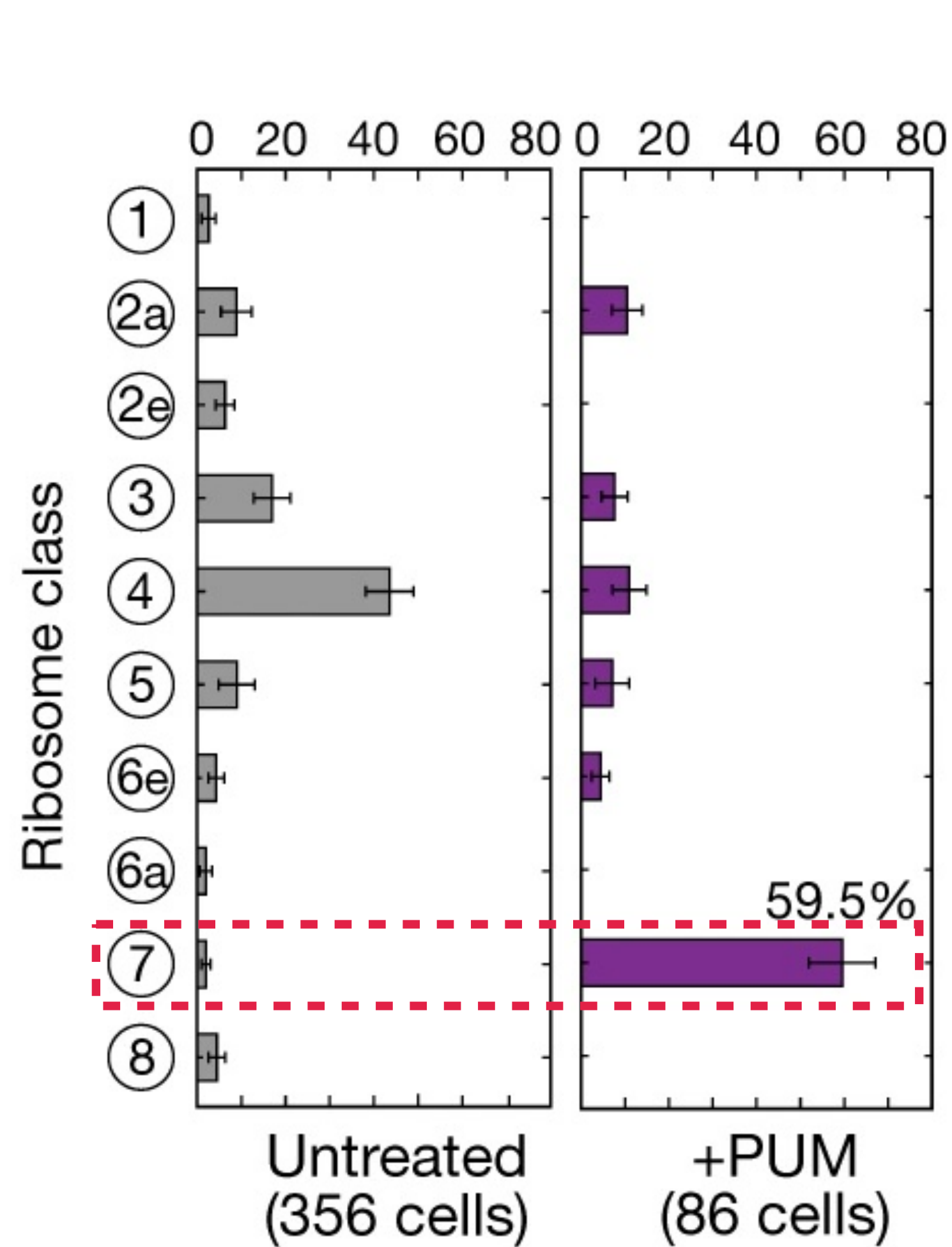
3 Antibiotics alter translation landscapes

3.3 In pseudouridimycin(PUM)-treated cells



3 Antibiotics alter translation landscapes

3.3 In pseudouridimycin(PUM)-treated cells

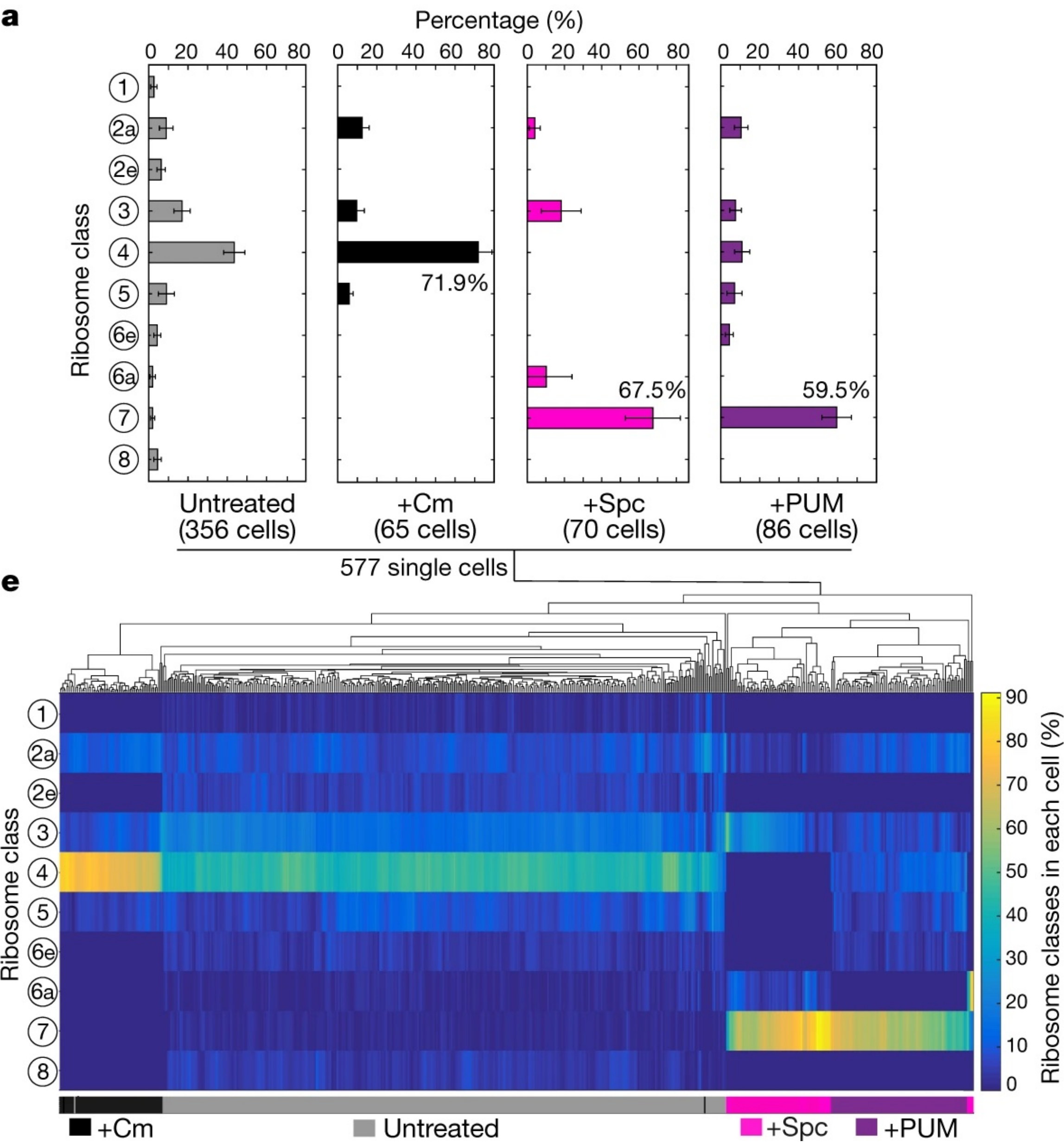


PUM blocks mRNA translocation

mRNA translocation and 30S rotations are directly coupled

3 Antibiotics alter translation landscapes

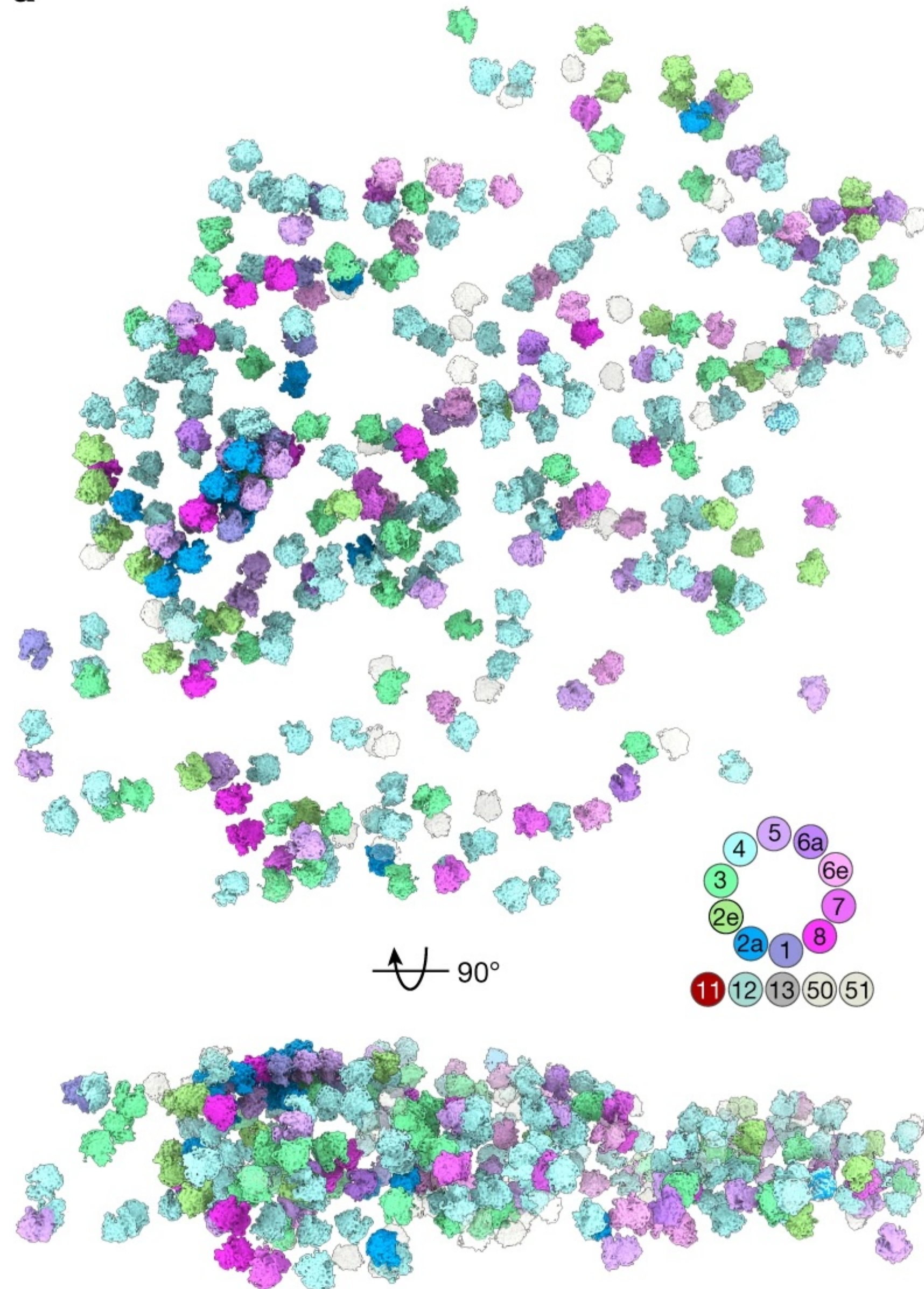
3.4 Translation landscapes are markedly reshaped by different antibiotics



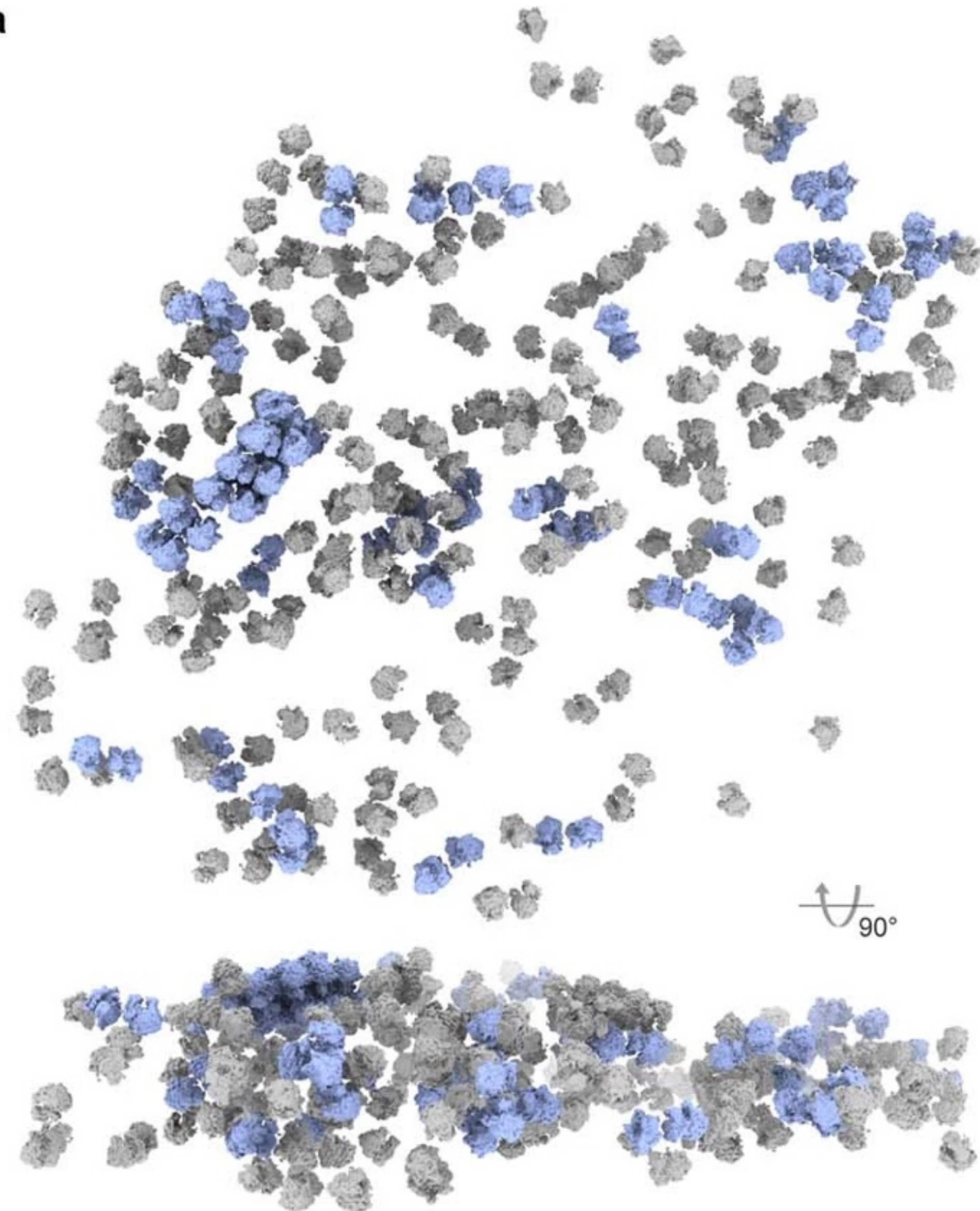
4 Spatial and functional organization of translation

4.1 Spatial analysis of ribosomes and polysomes in native untreated cells

a

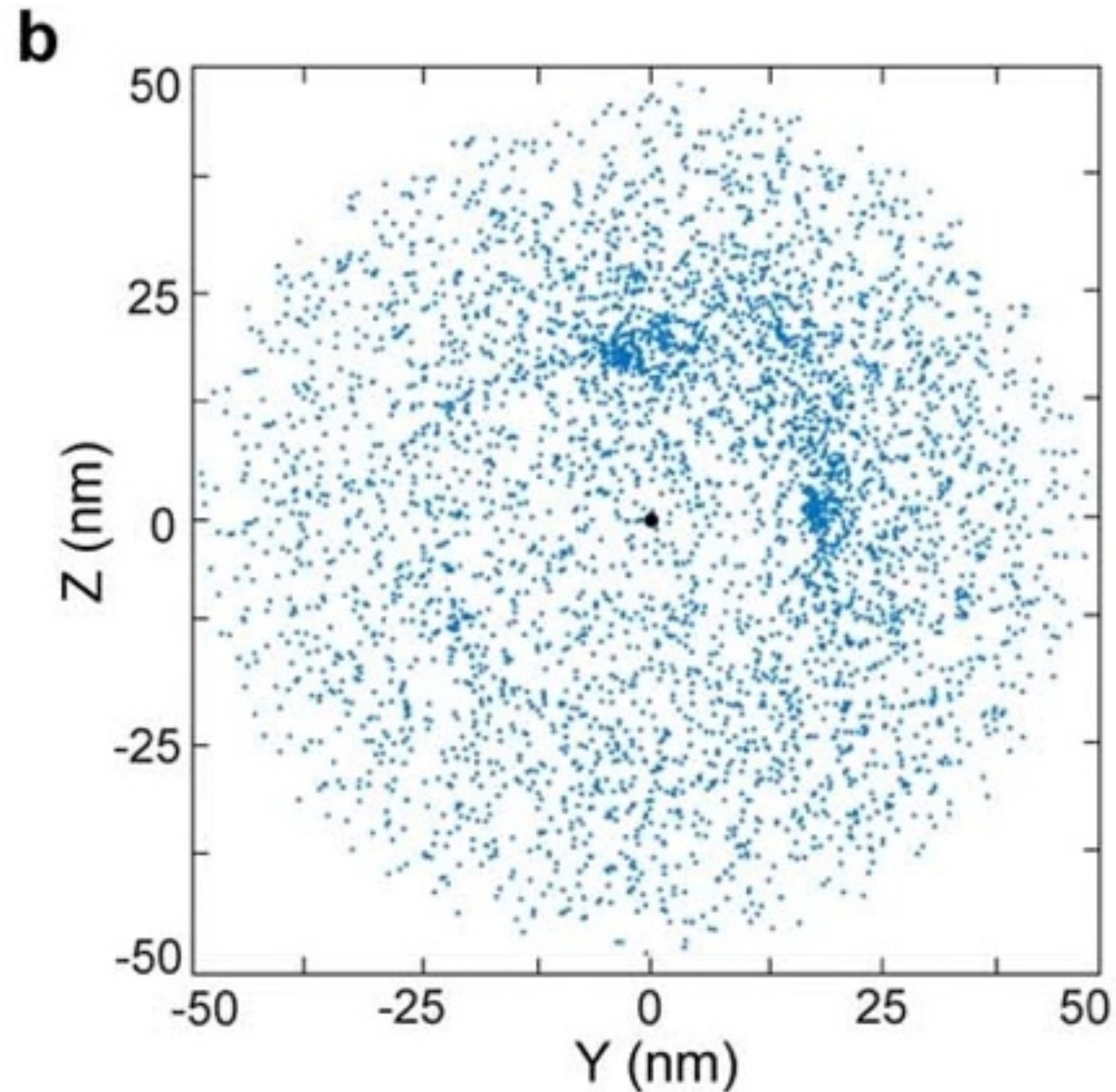


a



4 Spatial and functional organization of translation

4.1 Spatial analysis of ribosomes and polysomes in native untreated cells

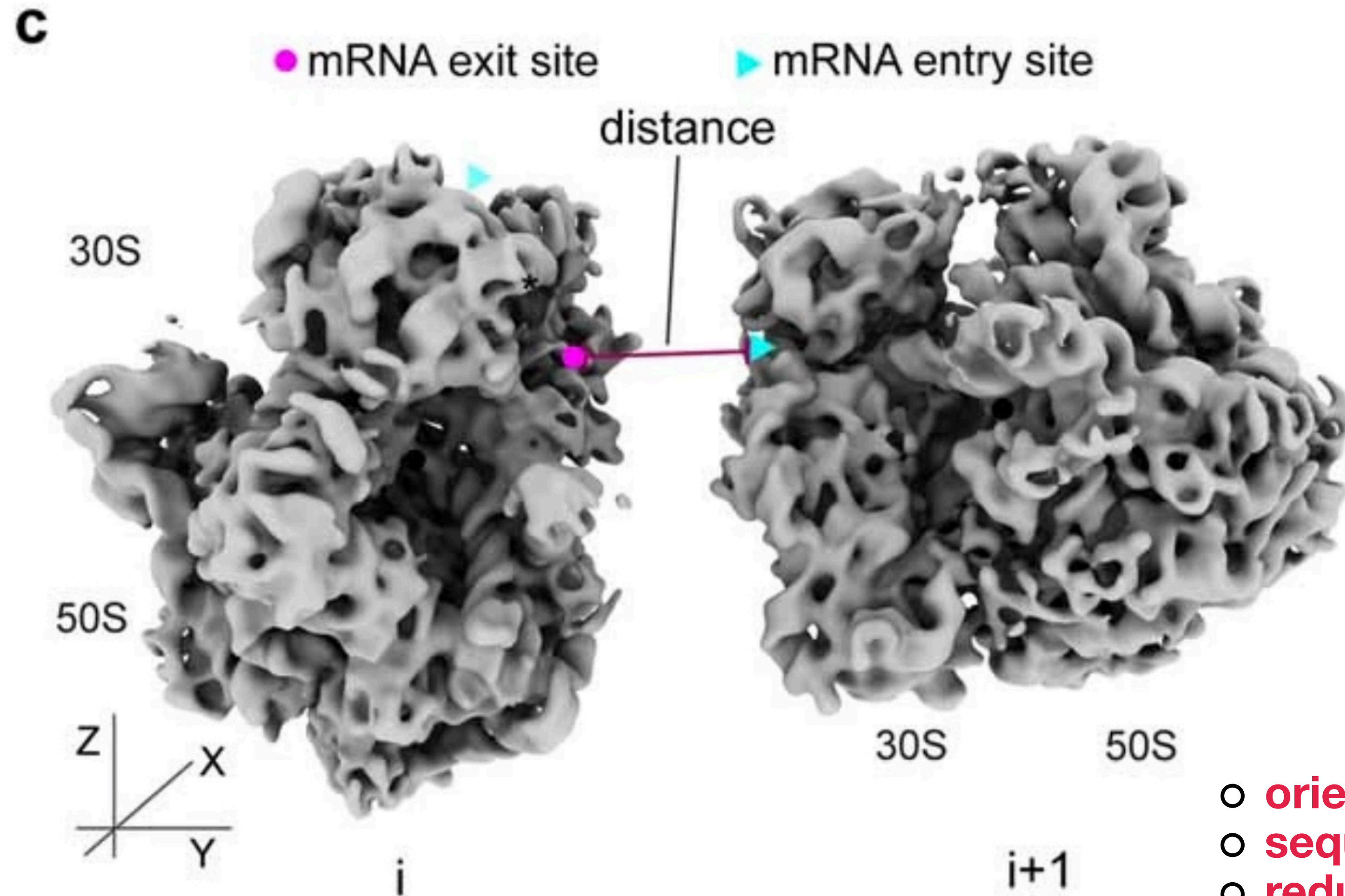


based on center-to-center distance

impossible to obtain the order of ribosomes within the polysome

4 Spatial and functional organization of translation

4.1 Spatial analysis of ribosomes and polysomes in native untreated cells



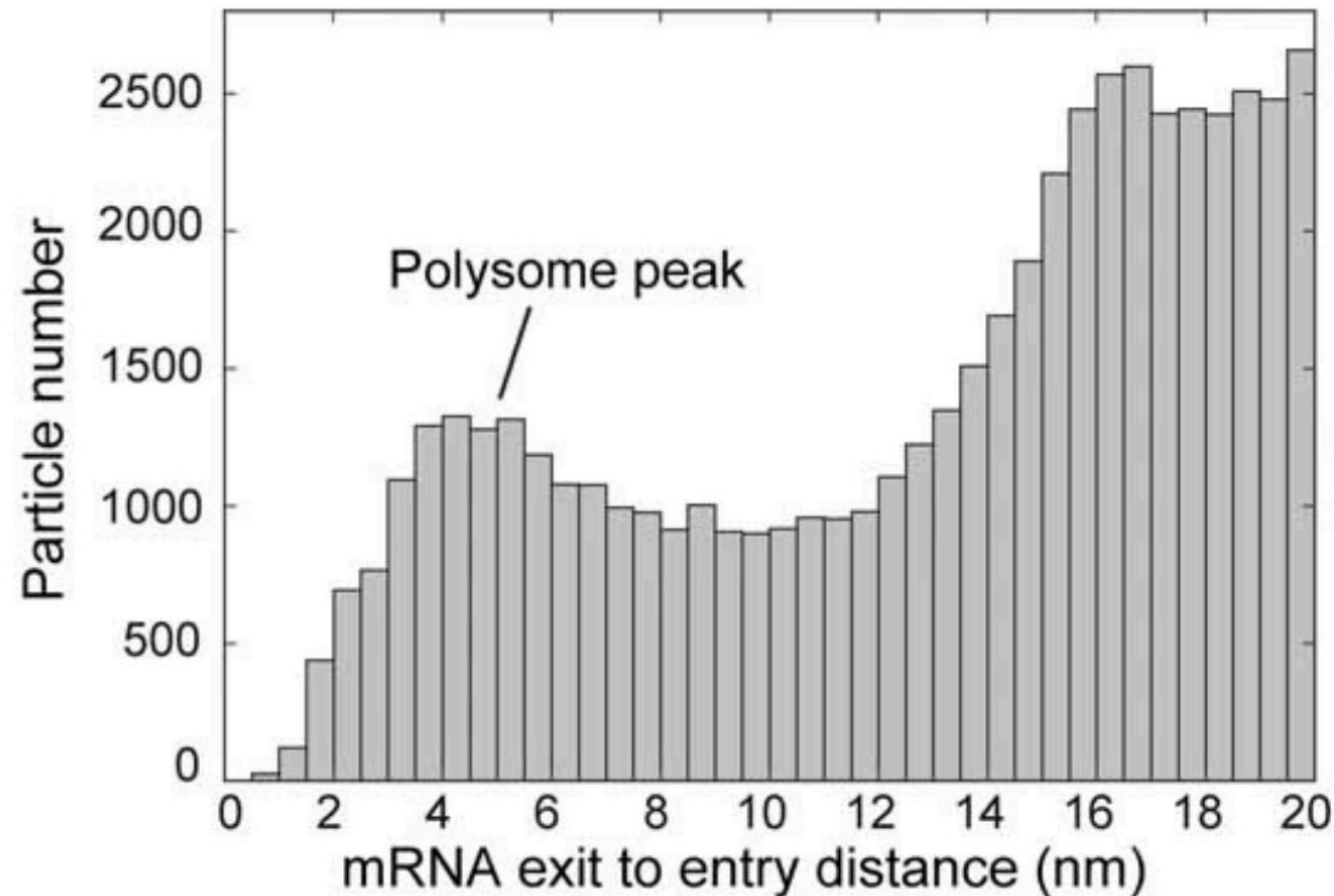
- orientations
- sequential information
- reduce false annotation

based on the distance from mRNA exit of one ribosome
to the mRNA entry of following ribosomes

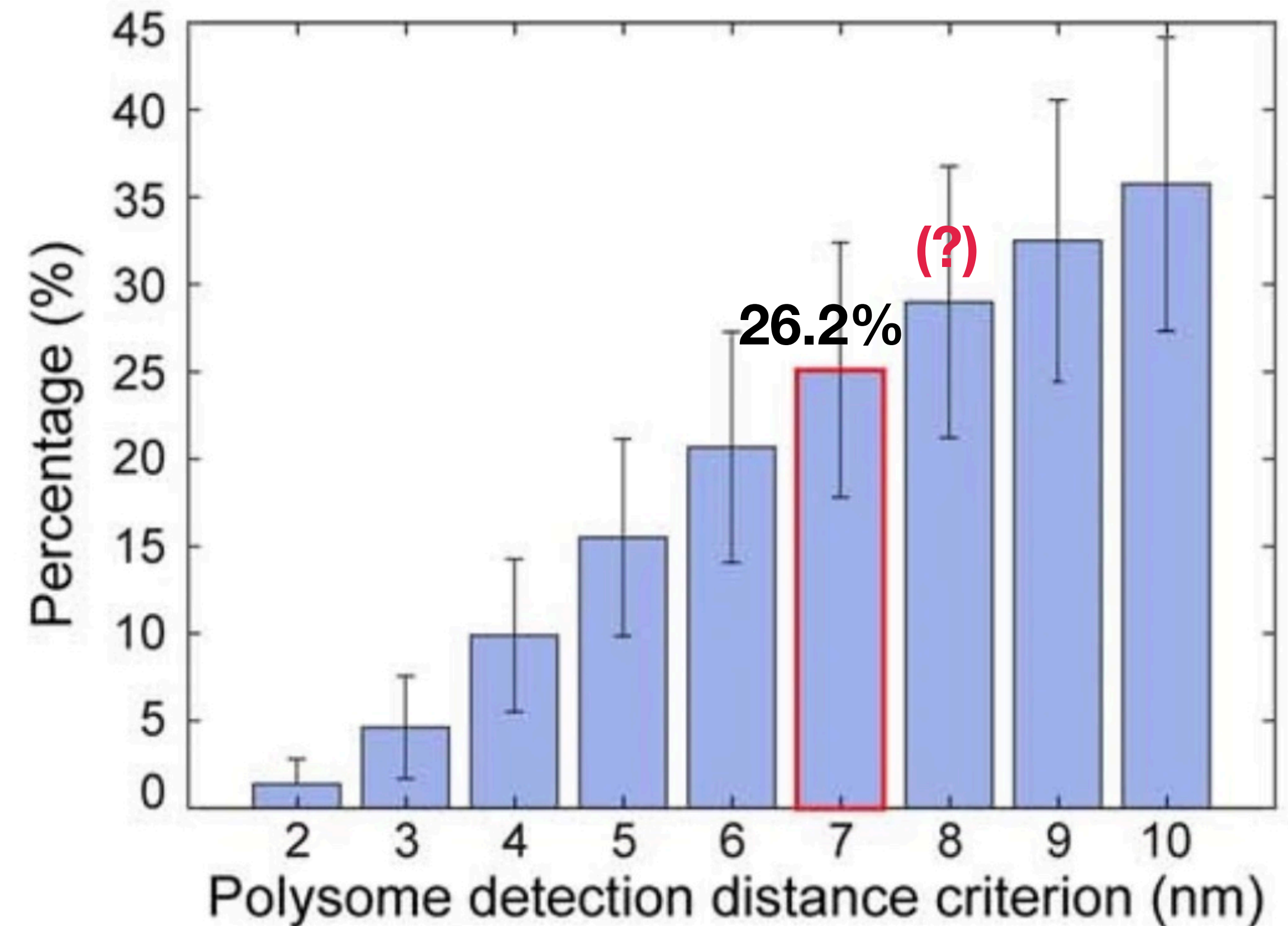
4 Spatial and functional organization of translation

4.1 Spatial analysis of ribosomes and polysomes in native untreated cells

d



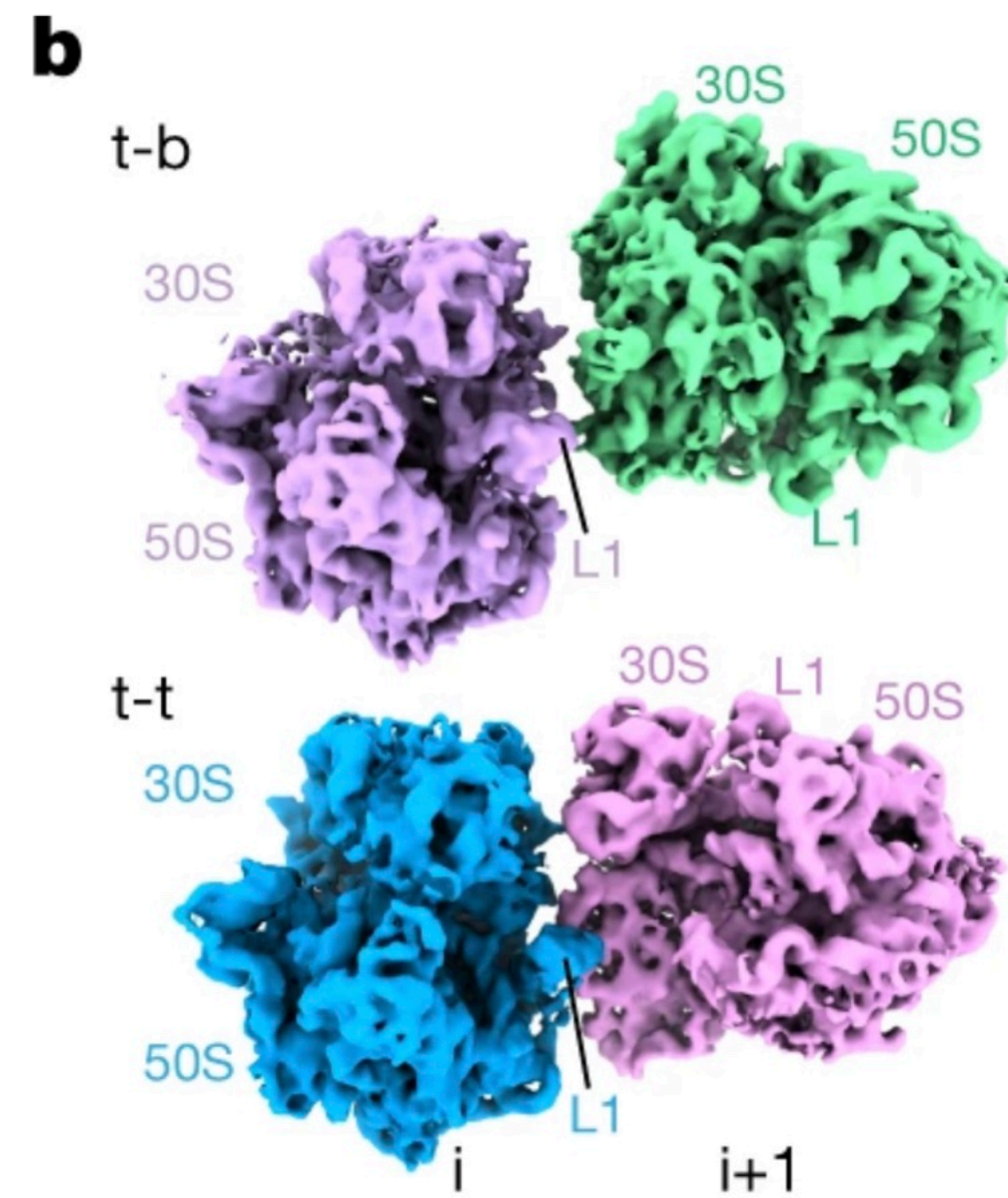
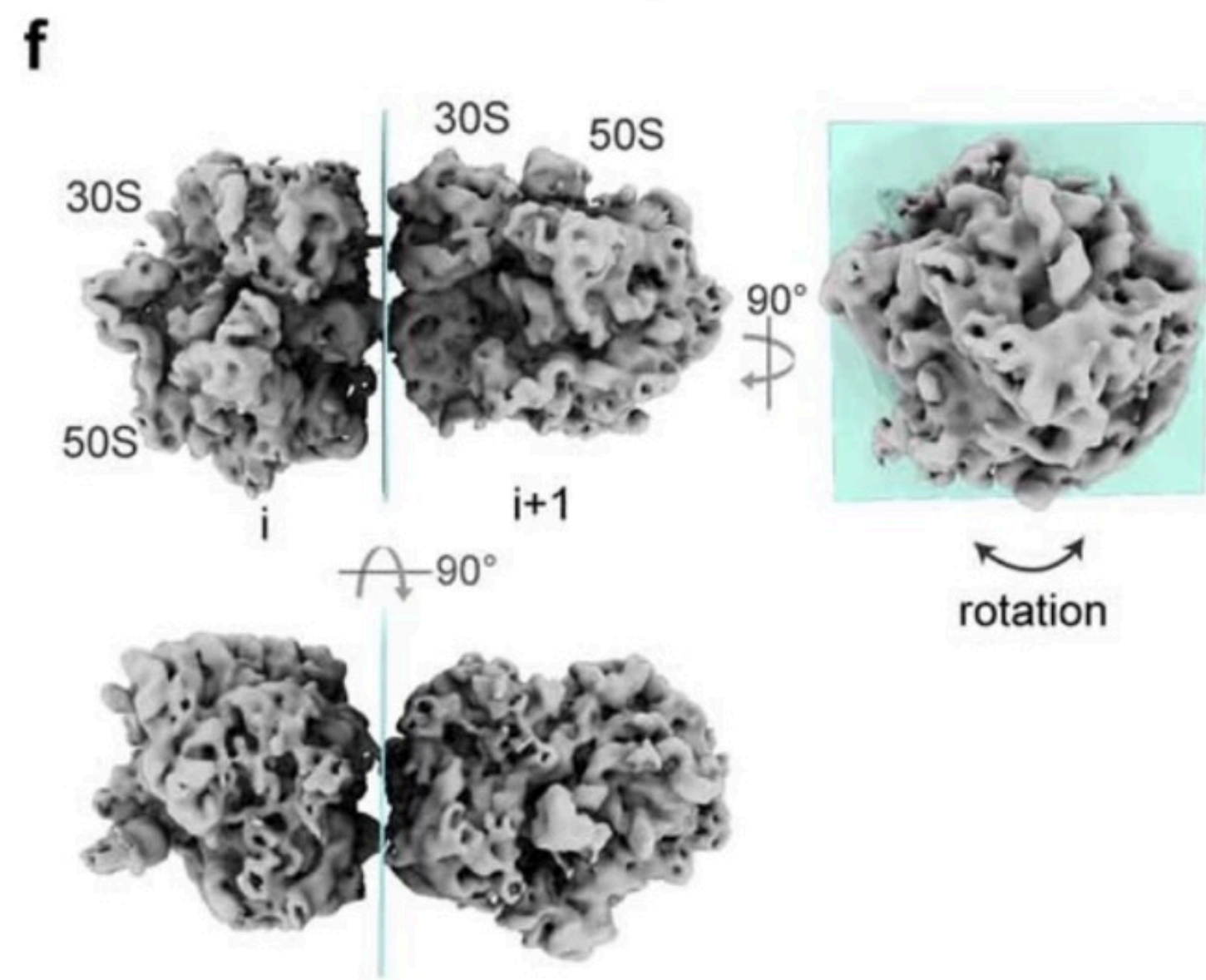
e



- **7 nm** provided the best recovery rate and detection accuracy based on visual inspection
- **26.2%** is consistent with literature reporting that polysomes are often found at relatively low abundance (~30%) in bacteria

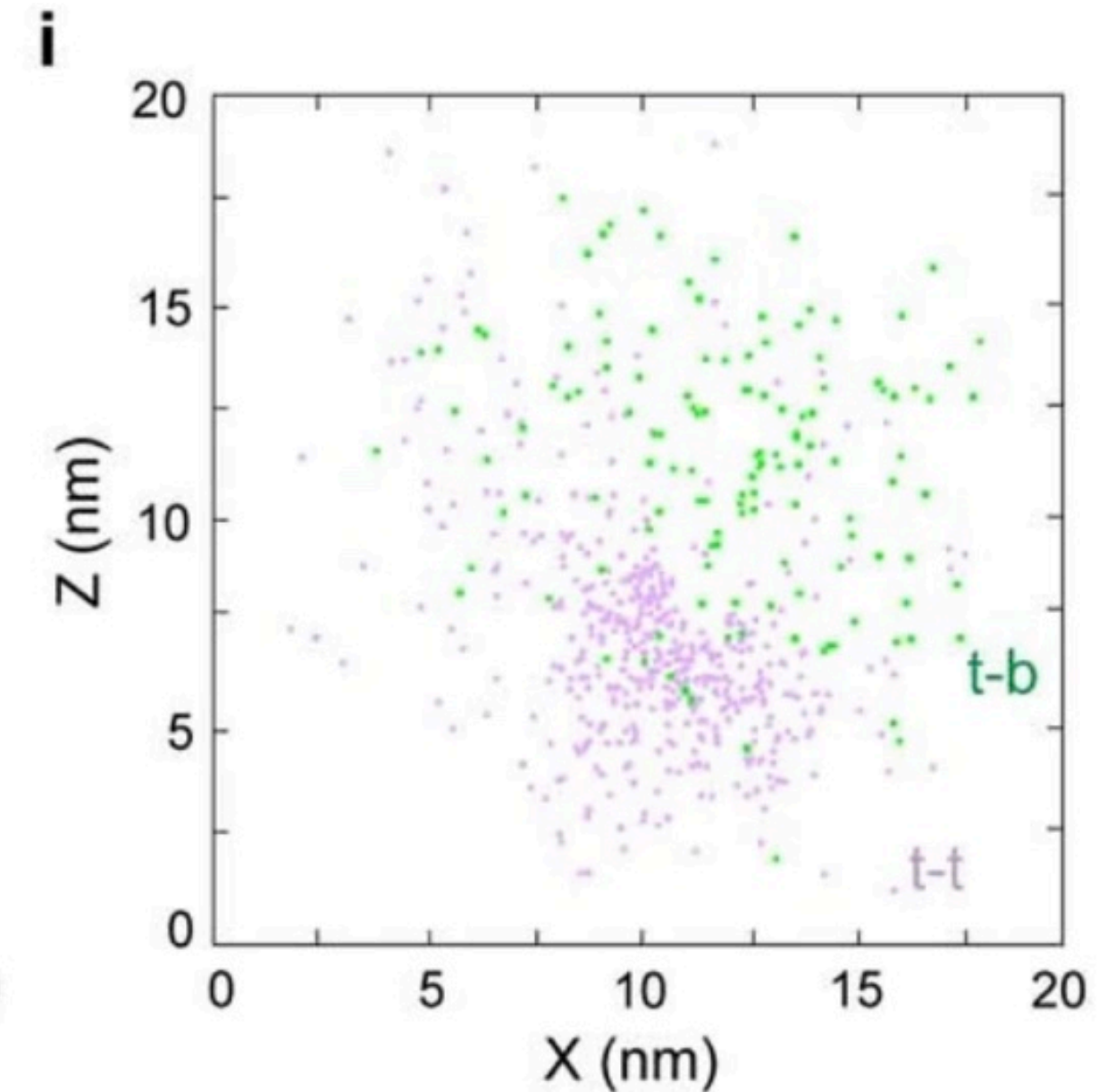
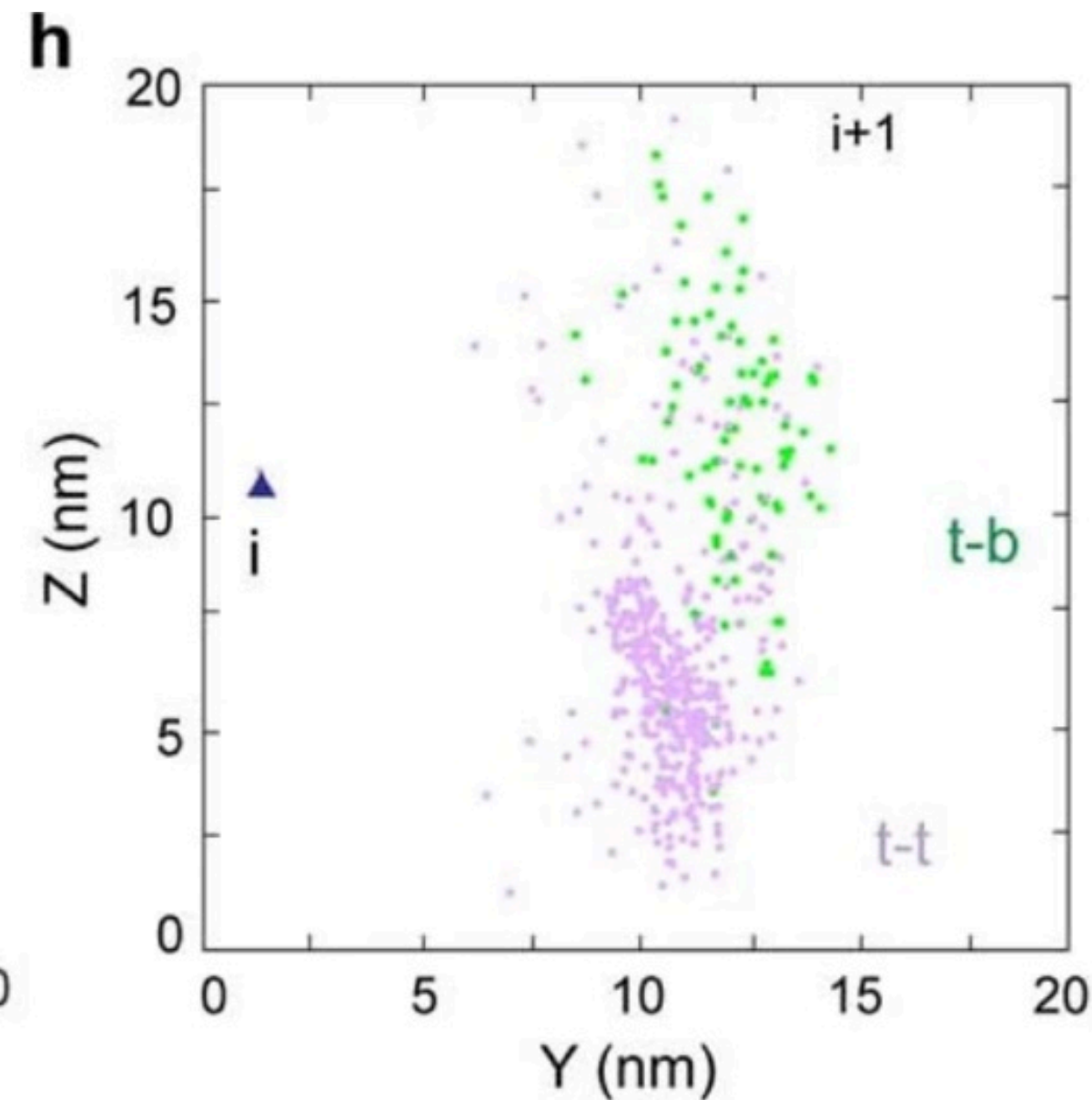
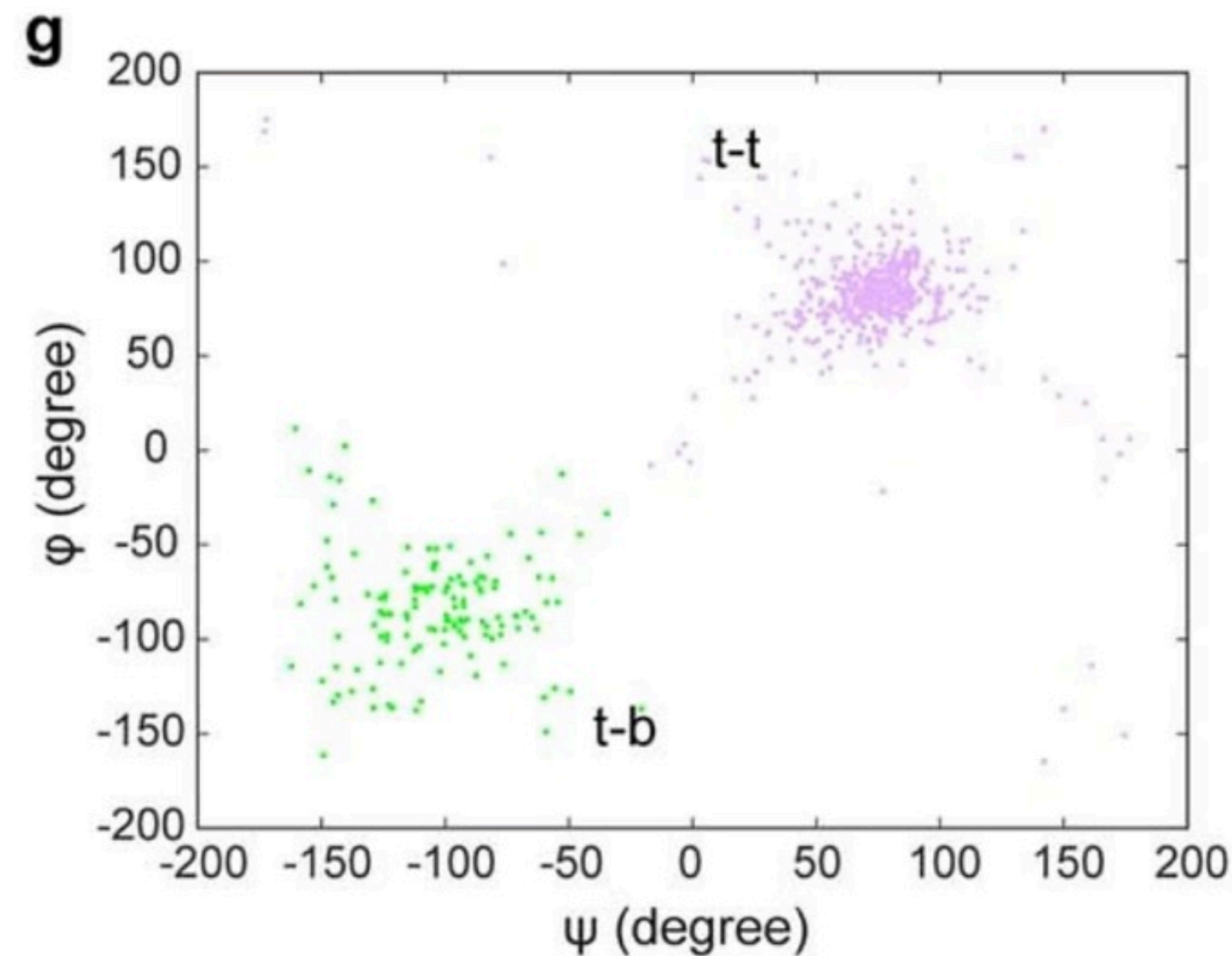
4 Spatial and functional organization of translation

4.1 Spatial analysis of ribosomes and polysomes in native untreated cells



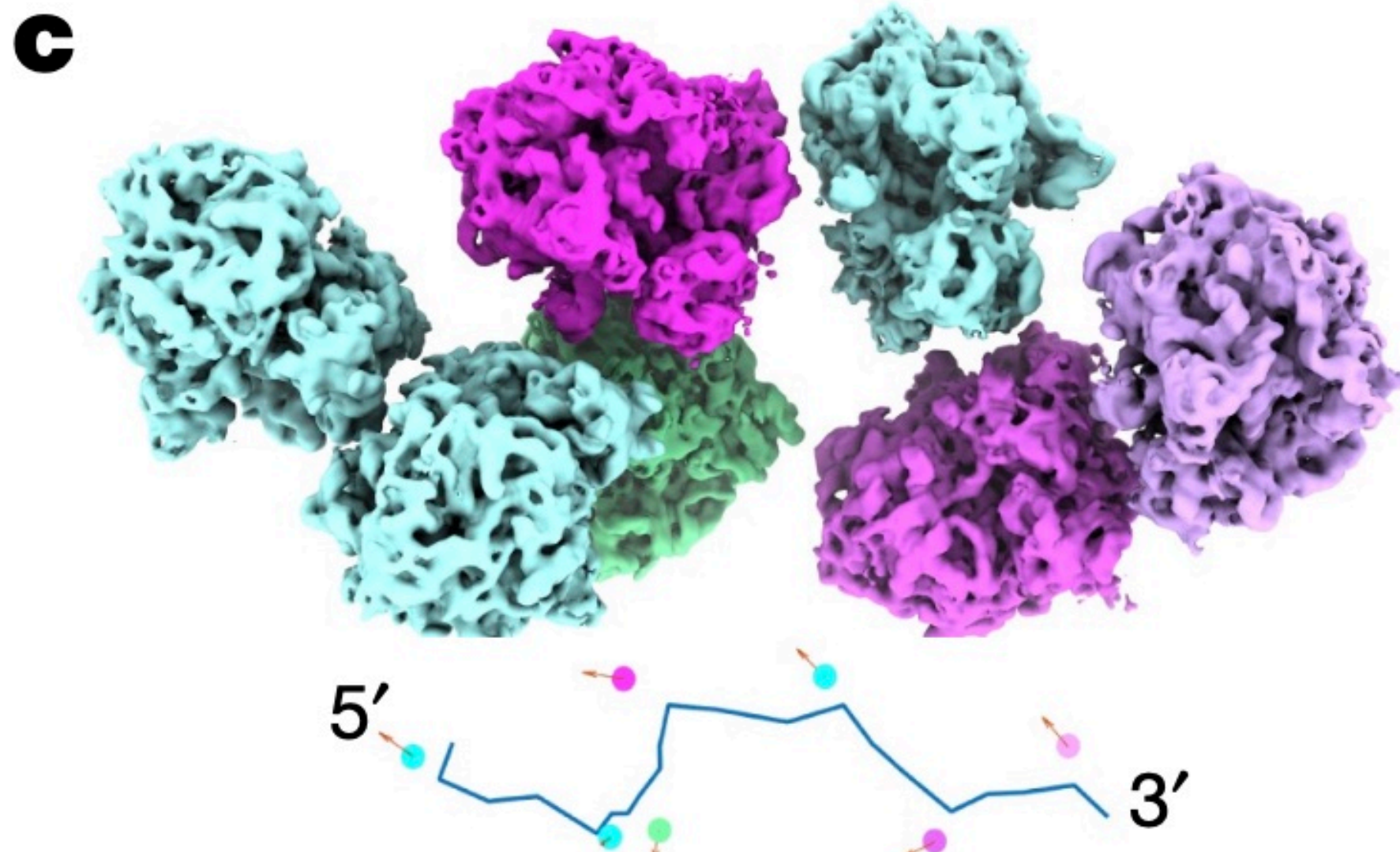
‘Top-top’ 78.5%
mRNA exit-to-entry distance $4.2 \pm 1.4 \text{ nm}$

‘Top-back’ 21.5%
mRNA exit-to-entry distance $5.4 \pm 1.5 \text{ nm}$

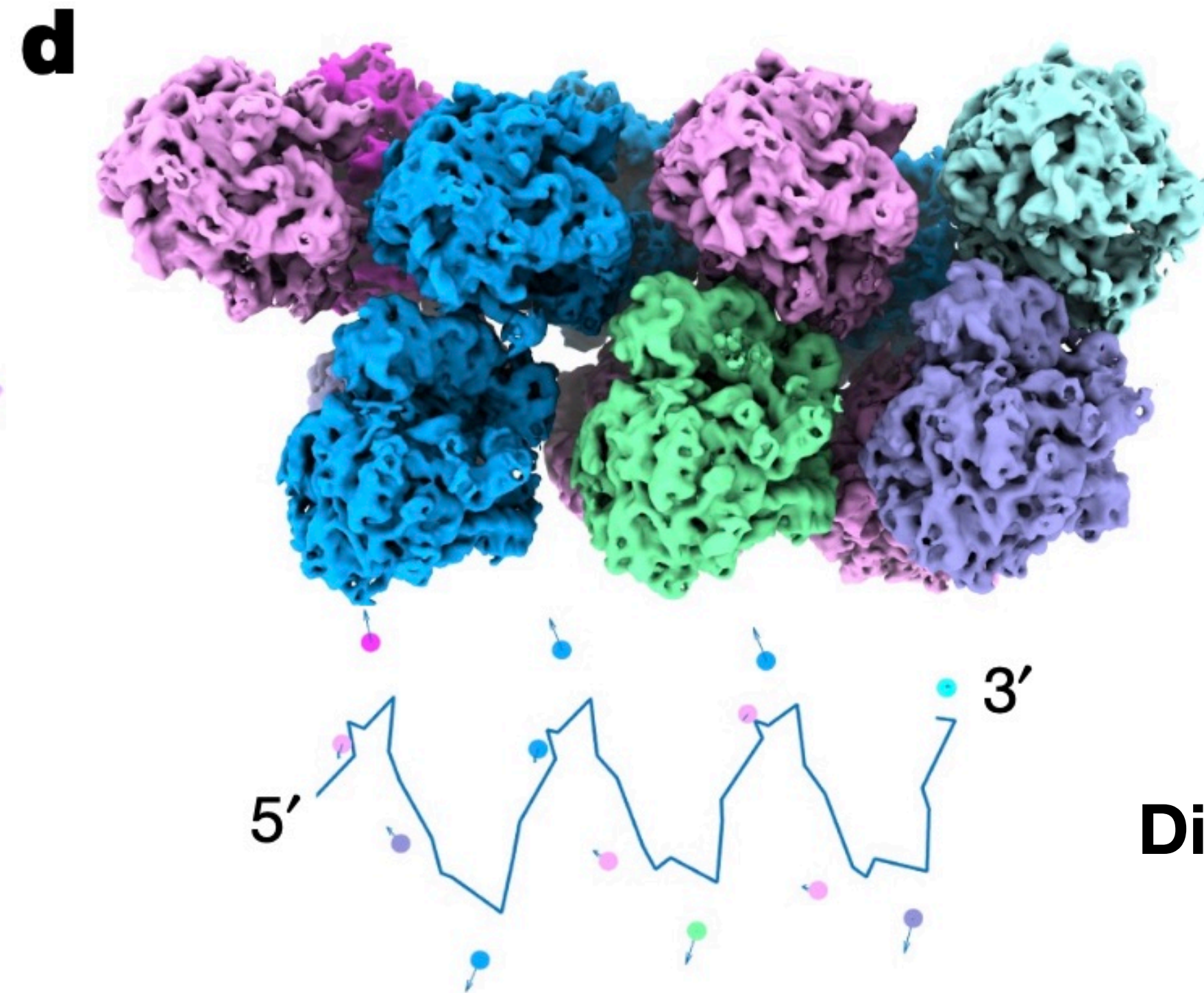


4 Spatial and functional organization of translation

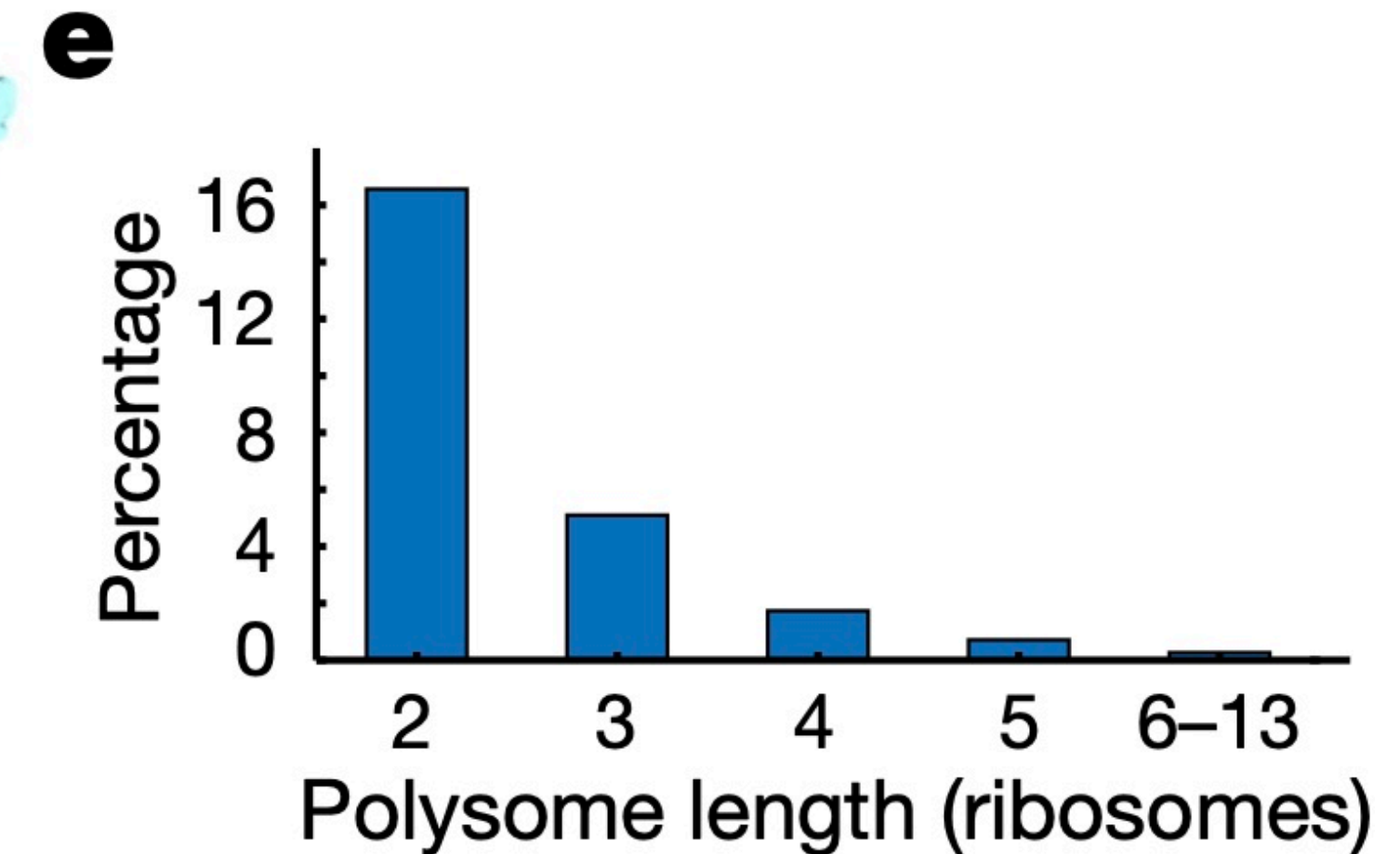
4.1 Spatial analysis of ribosomes and polysomes in native untreated cells



loose assembly



tight packing with helix-like configurations

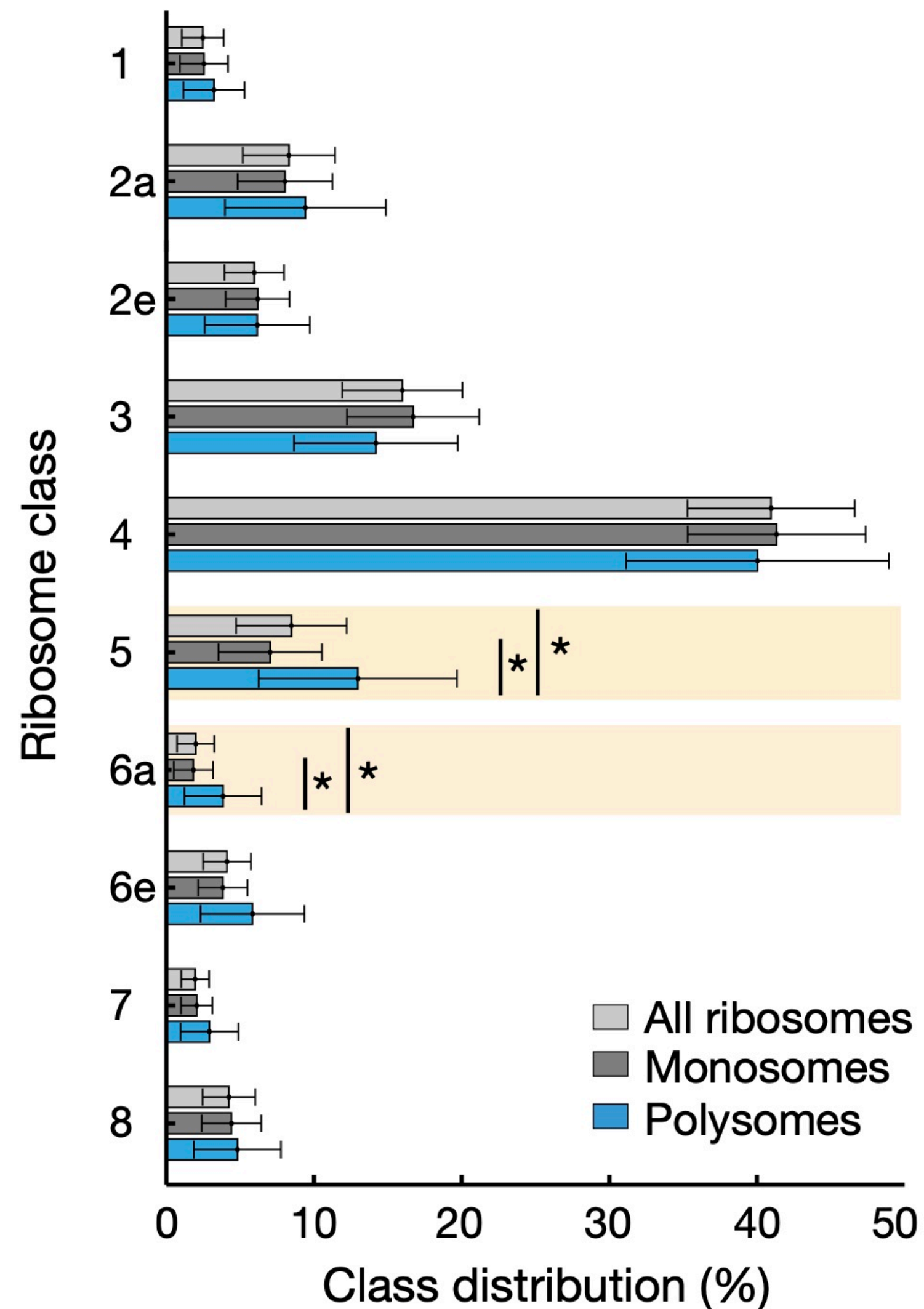


Distribution of polysome lengths

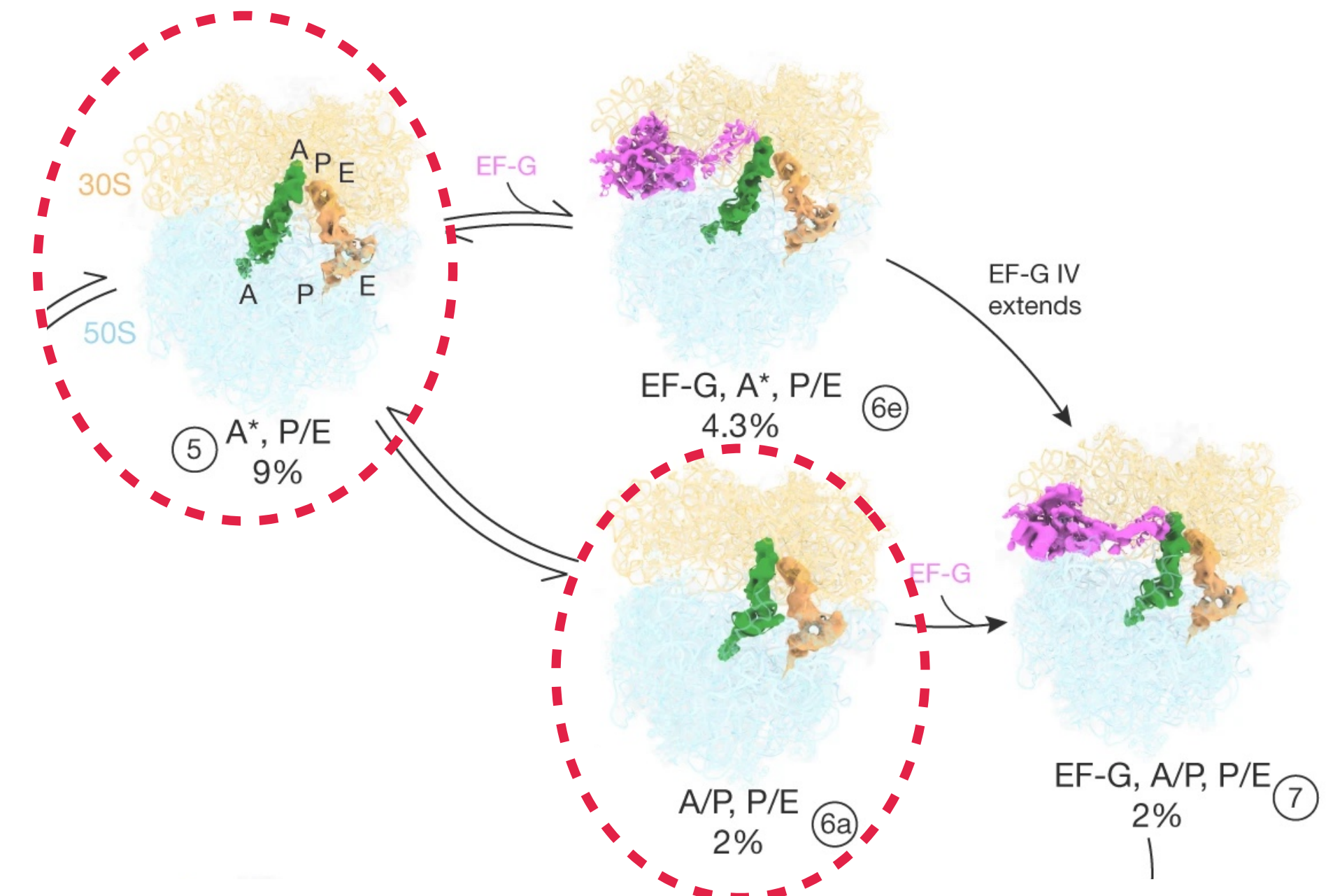
4 Spatial and functional organization of translation

4.2 Local coordination of translation elongation within the polysome

f

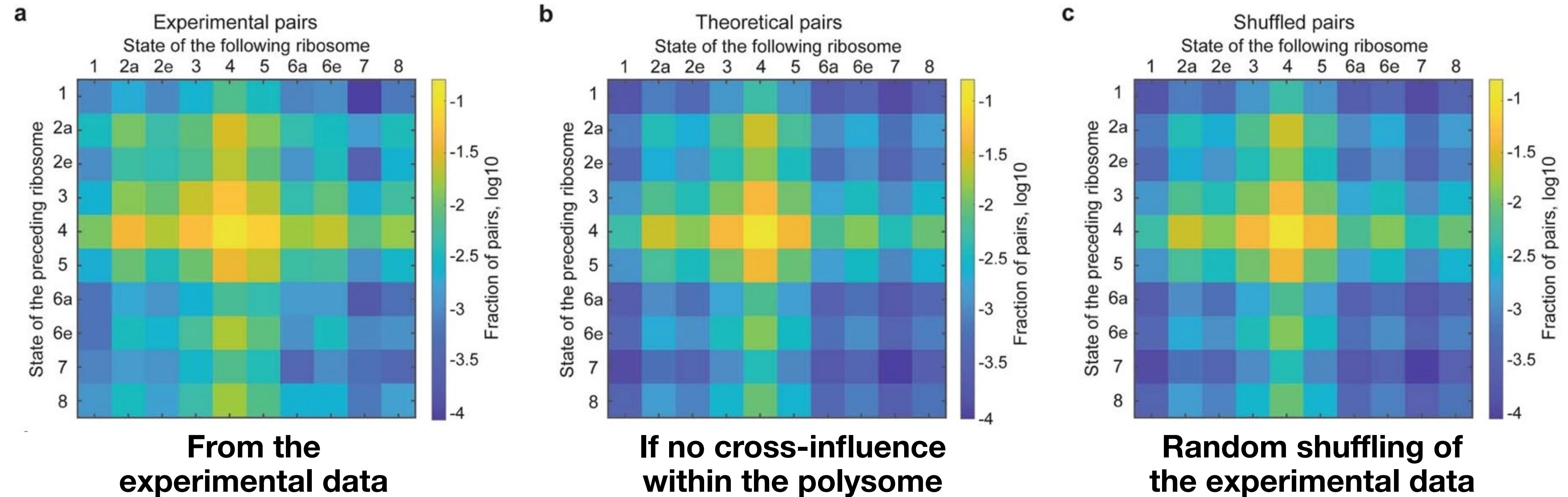


- Most states occurred equally frequently in both populations
- The fractions of two states before EF-G binding (class 5 and class 6a) are more frequent in polysomes

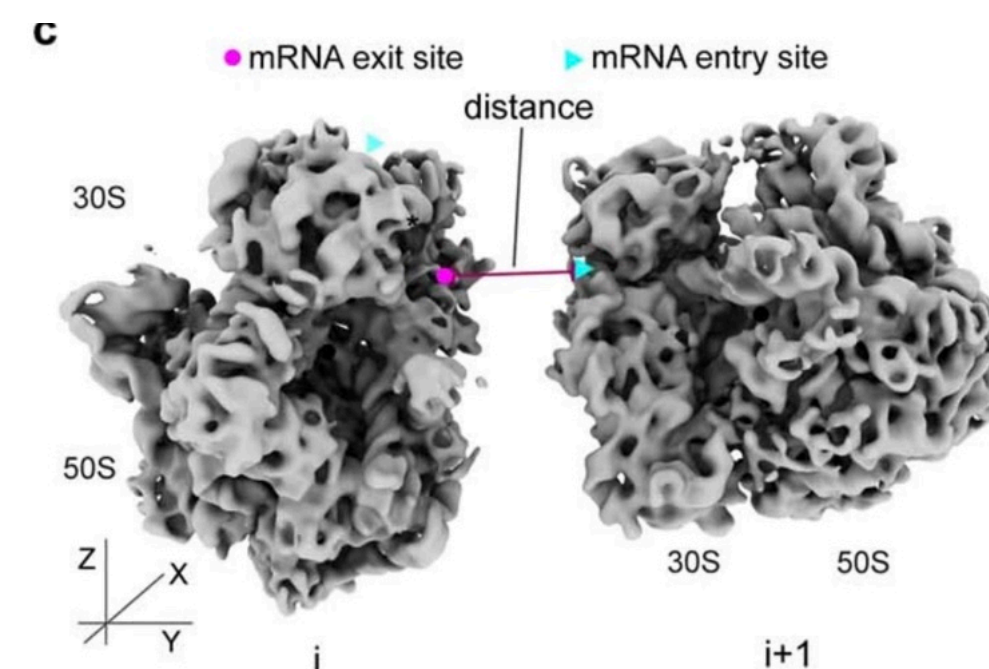


4 Spatial and functional organization of translation

4.2 Local coordination of translation elongation within the polysome



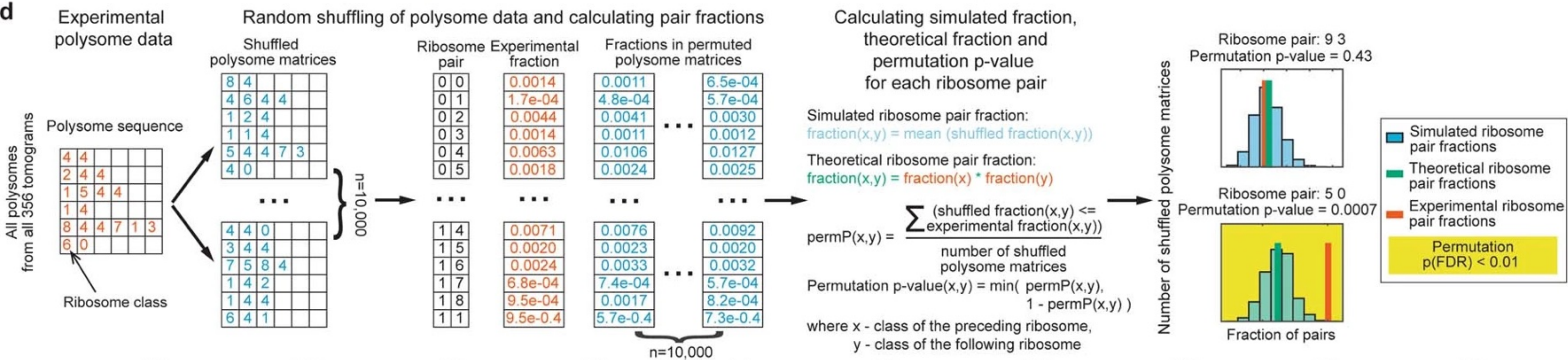
preceding ribosome i



following ribosome $i+1$

4 Spatial and functional organization of translation

4.2 Local coordination of translation elongation within the polysome



Polysome shuffling analysis using Permutation Test

4 Spatial and functional organization of translation

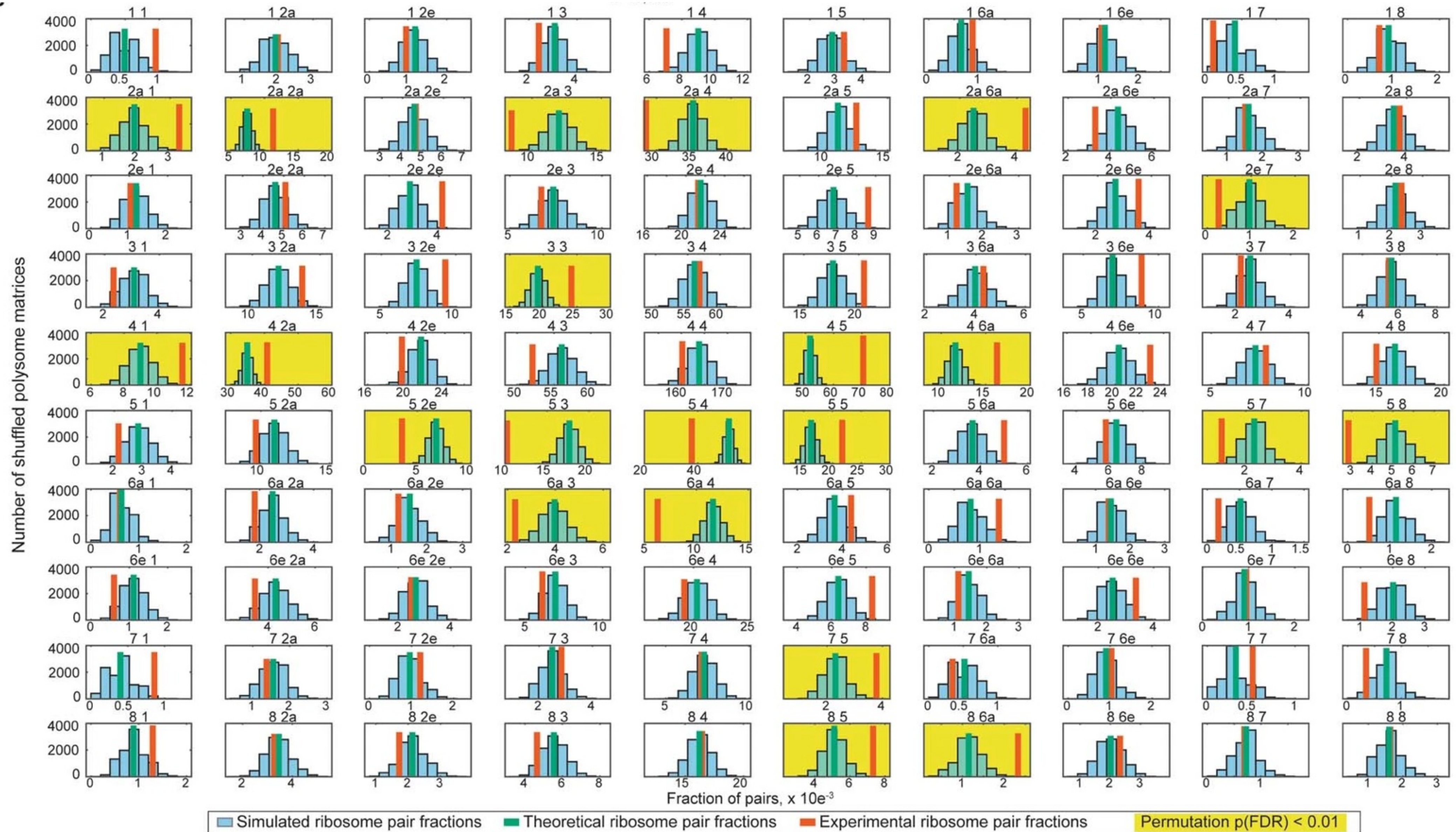
4.2 Local coordination of translation elongation within the polysome

Class pairs	1	2a	2e	3	4	5	6a	6e	7	8
1	0.0567	0.4355	0.2888	0.1418	0.0140	0.2472	0.2532	0.4355	0.1020	0.3040
2a	0.0022	0.0007	0.4576	0.0007	0.0007	0.1078	0.0007	0.0829	0.4277	0.3709
2e	0.3709	0.2780	0.0104	0.2780	0.4355	0.0175	0.2472	0.0787	0.0091	0.3709
3	0.1111	0.0787	0.0158	0.0007	0.3929	0.0230	0.3491	0.0163	0.2888	0.4481
4	0.0018	0.0007	0.0993	0.0359	0.1371	0.0007	0.0007	0.0244	0.2812	0.1371
5	0.1300	0.1252	0.0007	0.0007	0.0007	0.0007	0.0207	0.2547	0.0048	0.0007
6a	0.4759	0.1278	0.2532	0.0032	0.0007	0.1527	0.0635	0.4355	0.1055	0.0374
6e	0.0878	0.1252	0.3946	0.1995	0.2472	0.0133	0.2472	0.0747	0.4500	0.0244
7	0.0330	0.3491	0.2871	0.2888	0.4355	0.0035	0.3091	0.3819	0.1798	0.1177
8	0.1527	0.4355	0.2547	0.1371	0.4355	0.0018	0.0018	0.2888	0.4701	0.4384

p-values corrected with Benjamini-Hochberg method. FDR, false discovery rate.

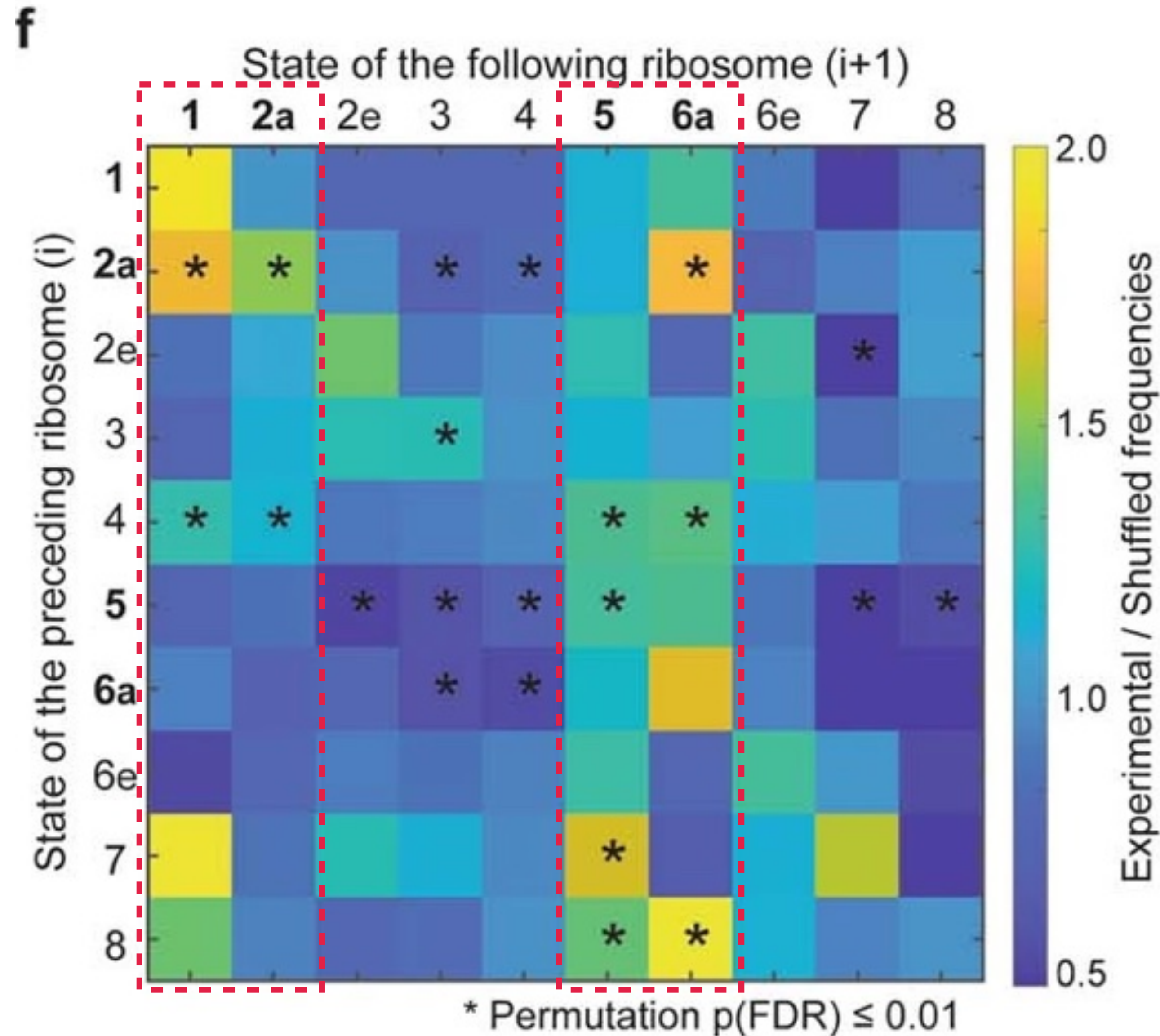
4 Spatial and functional organization of translation

4.2 Local coordination of translation elongation within the polysome



4 Spatial and functional organization of translation

4.2 Local coordination of translation elongation within the polysome

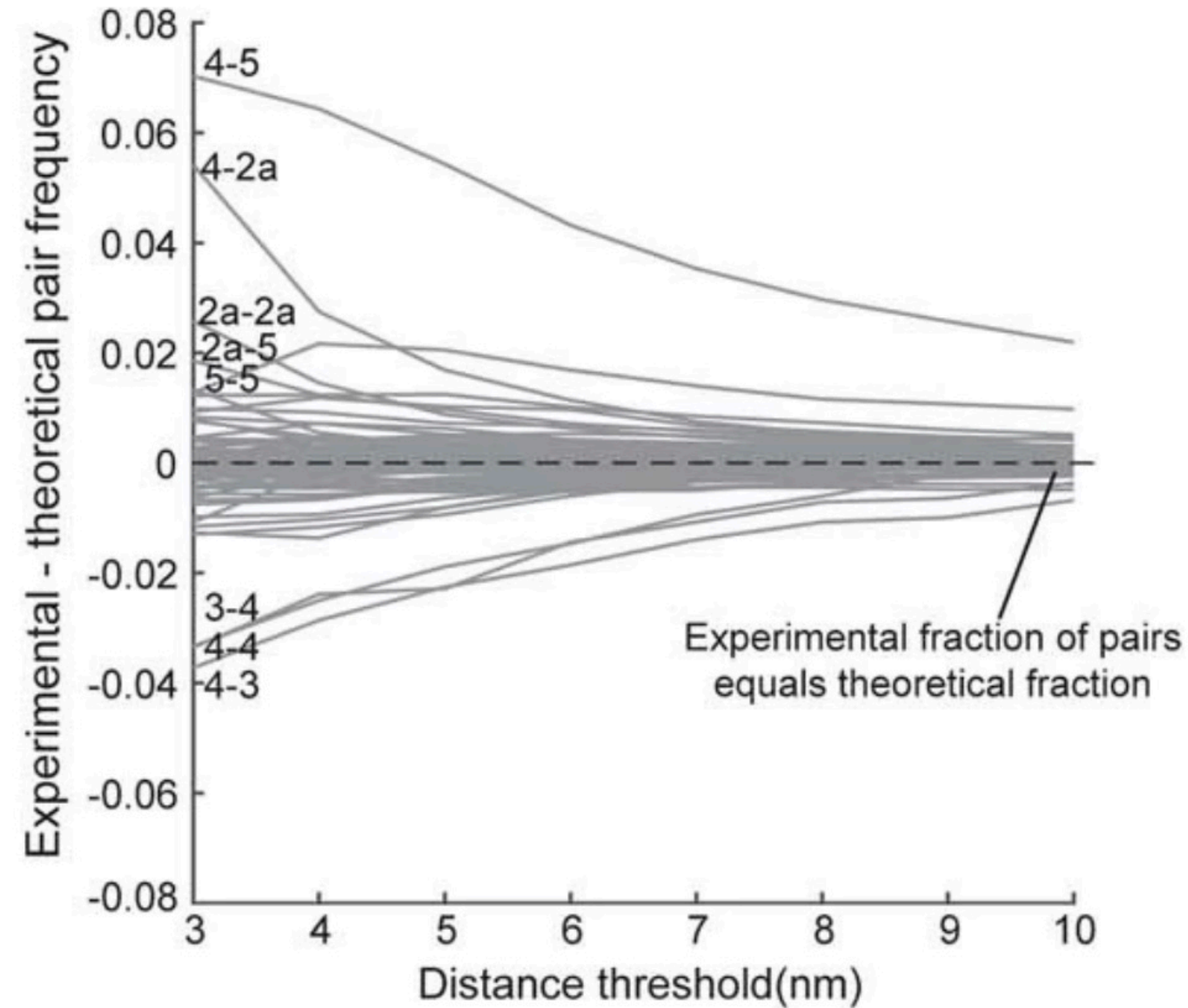


Ribosomes of states that need elongation factor binding to proceed are more frequently engaged as the following ribosomes.

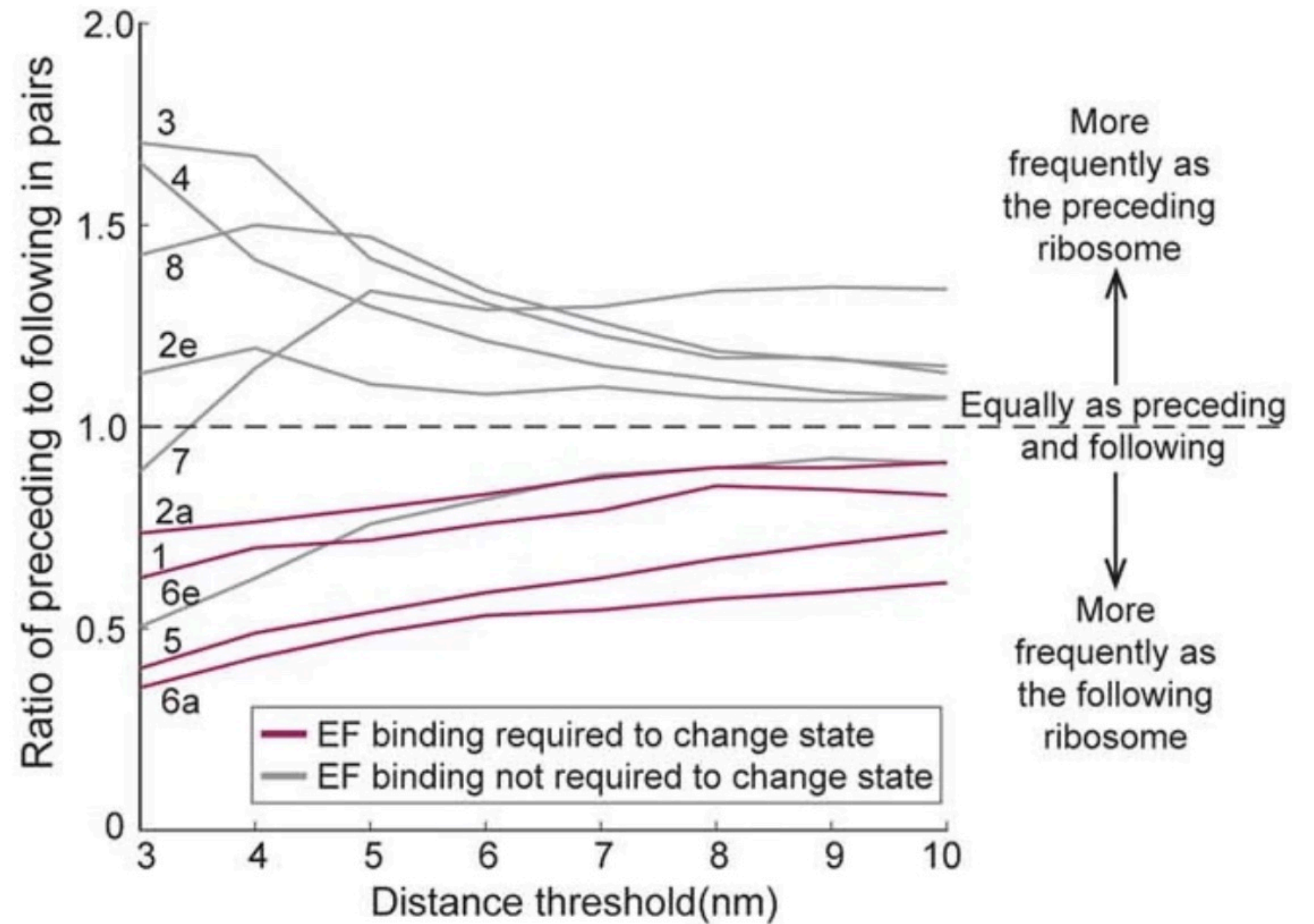
4 Spatial and functional organization of translation

4.2 Local coordination of translation elongation within the polysome

g



h

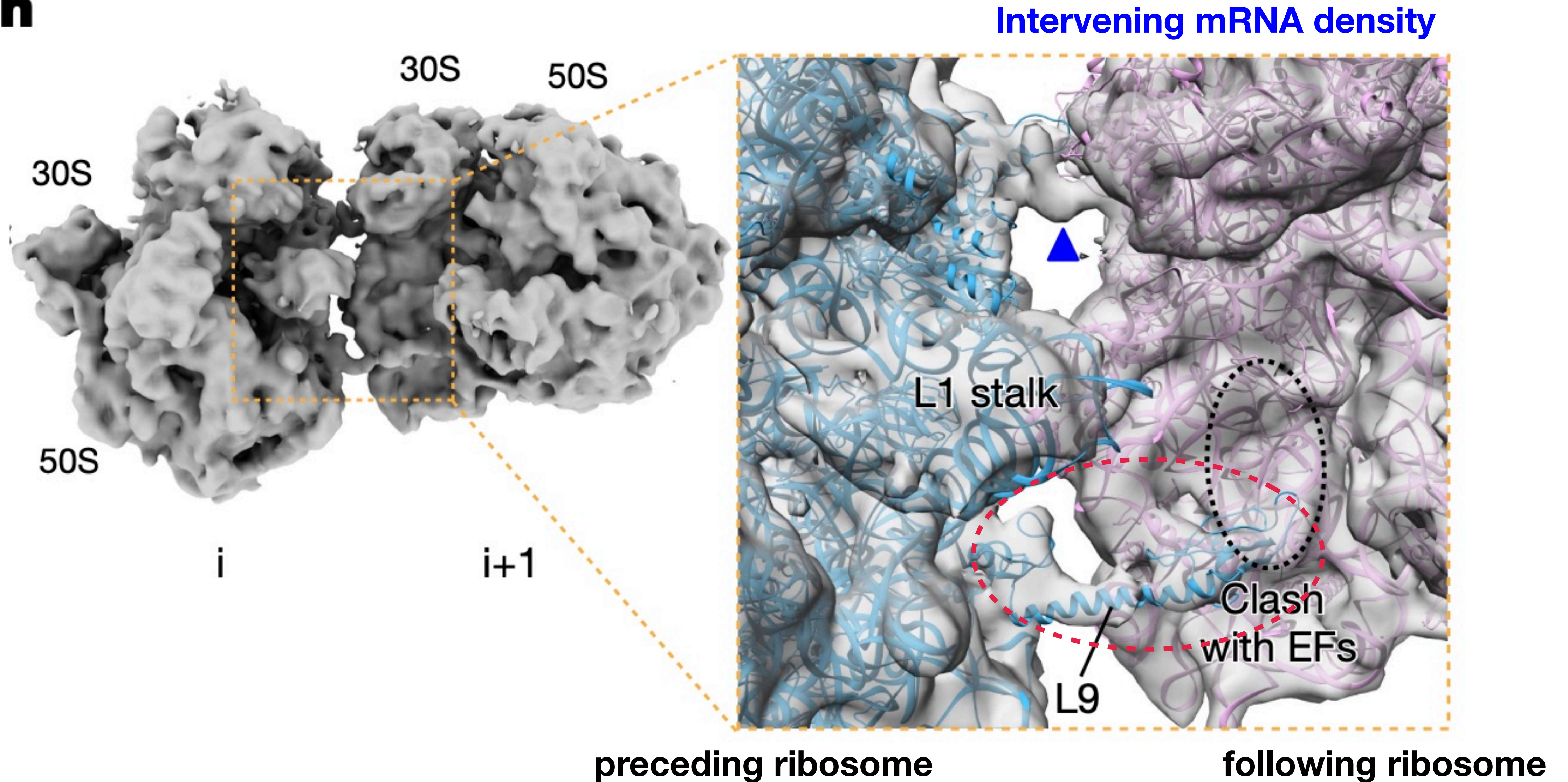


Asymmetry increases as the threshold decreases

4 Spatial and functional organization of translation

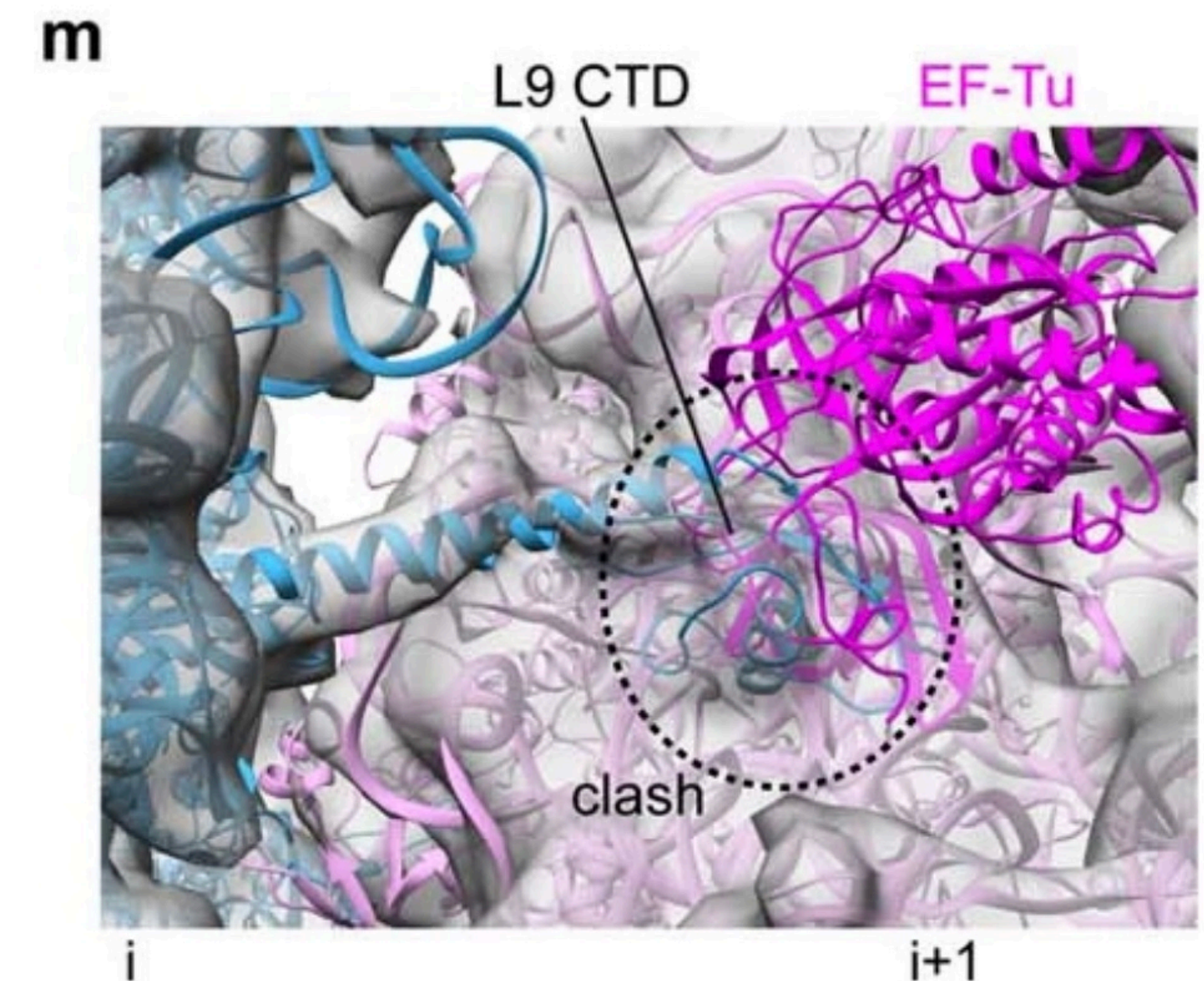
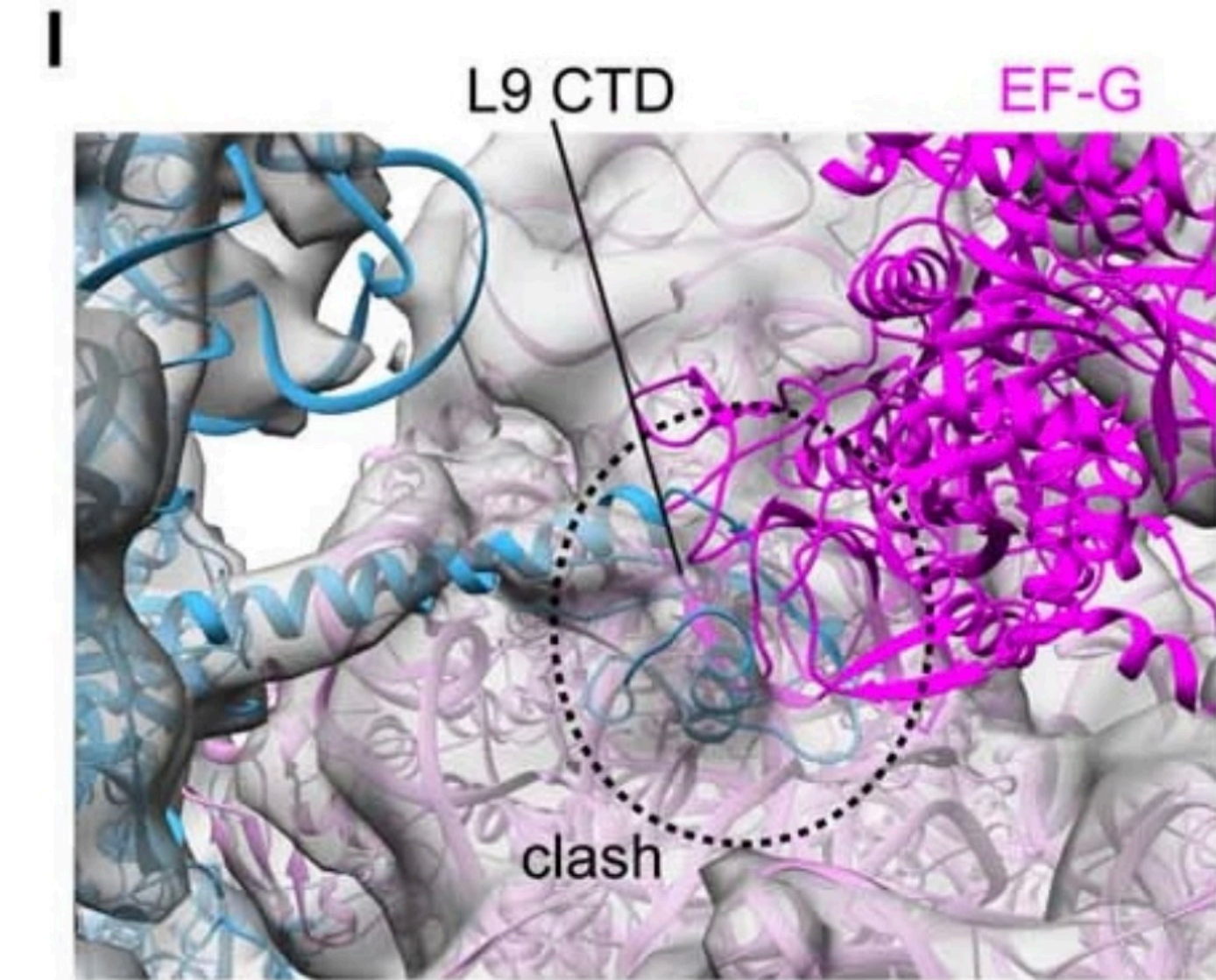
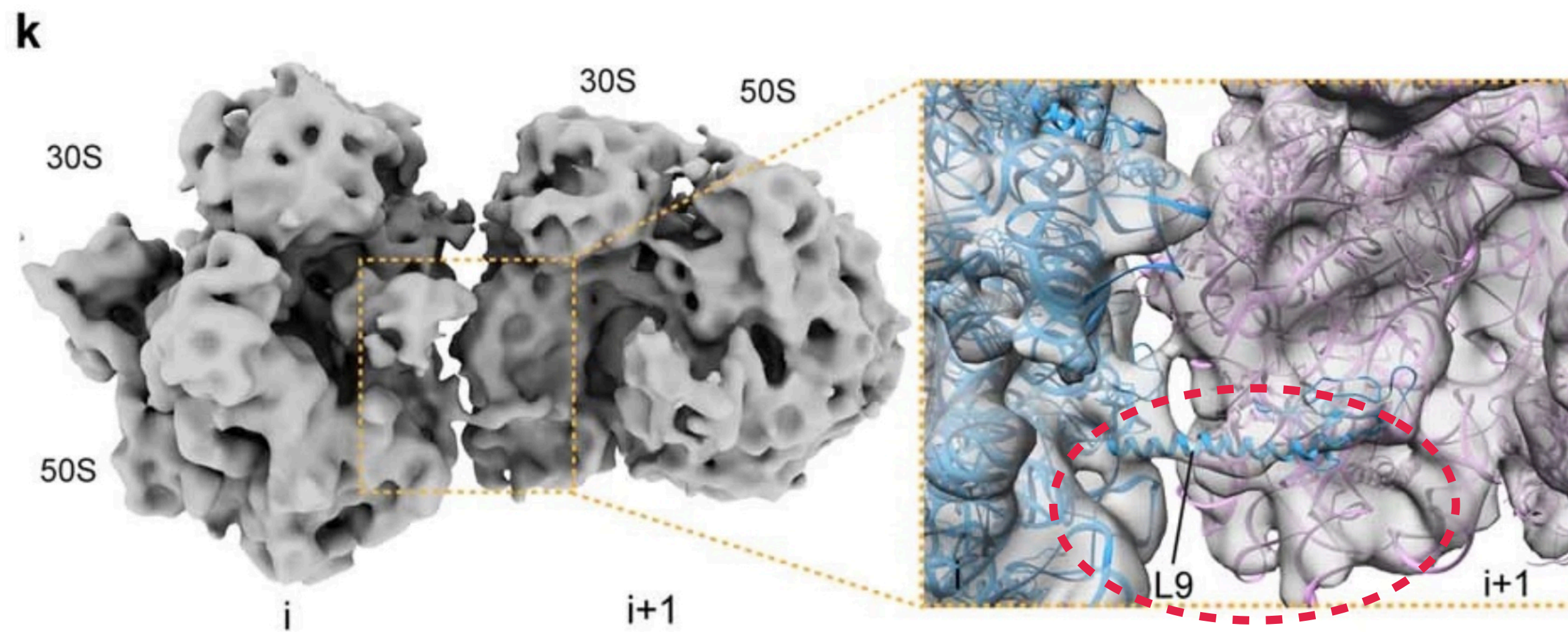
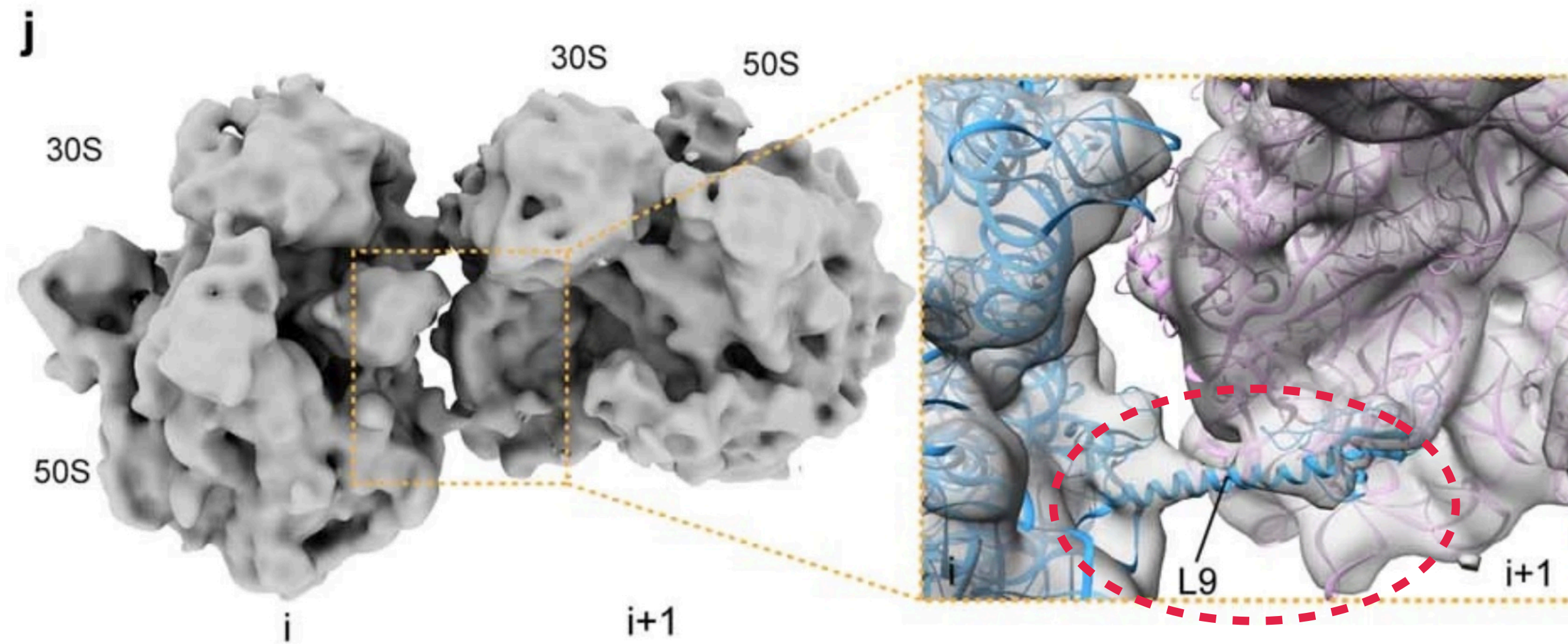
4.3 An extended conformation of L9 sterically interferes with EF

h



4 Spatial and functional organization of translation

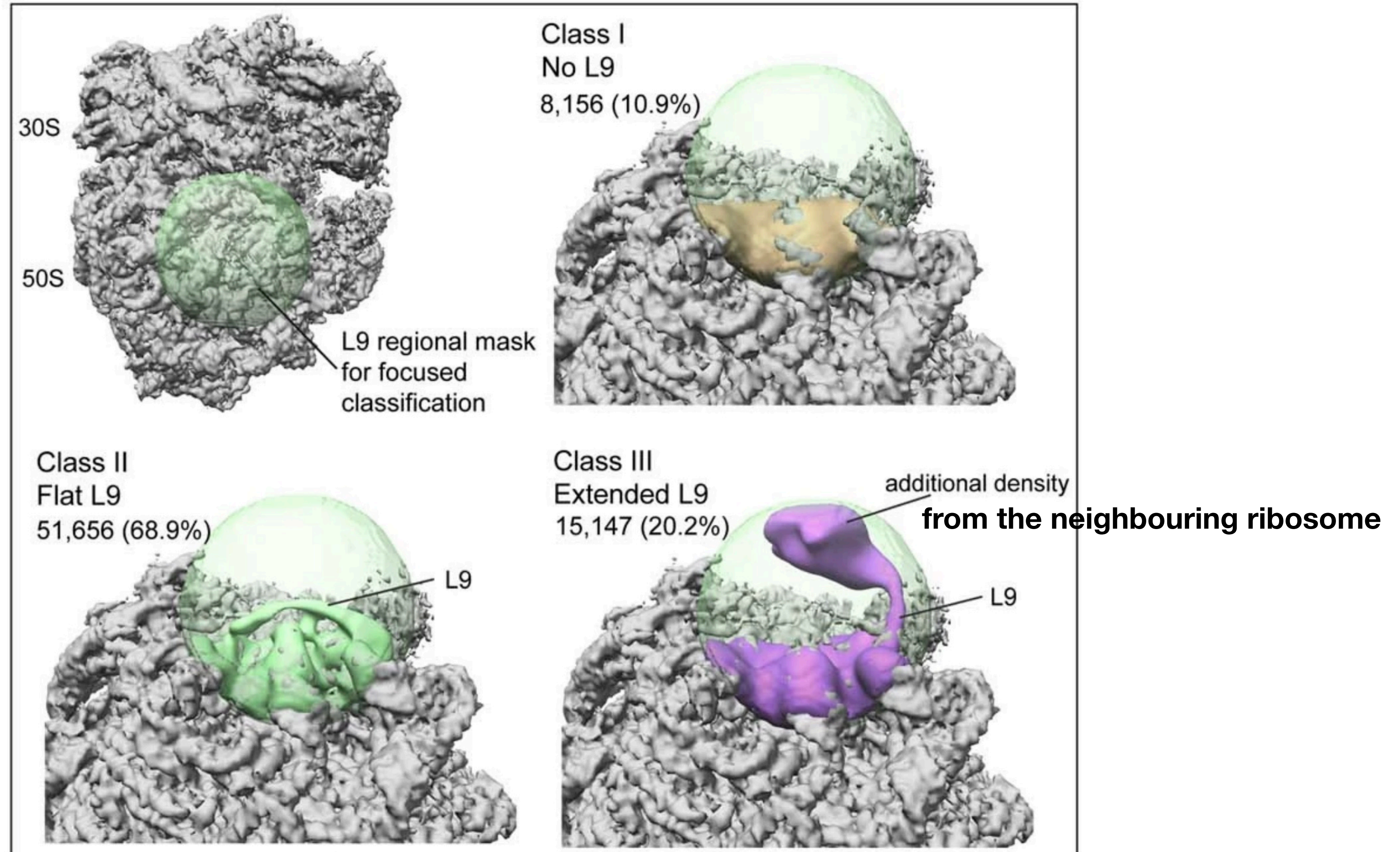
4.3 An extended conformation of L9 sterically interferes with EF



4 Spatial and functional organization of translation

4.3 An extended conformation of L9 sterically interferes with EF

n

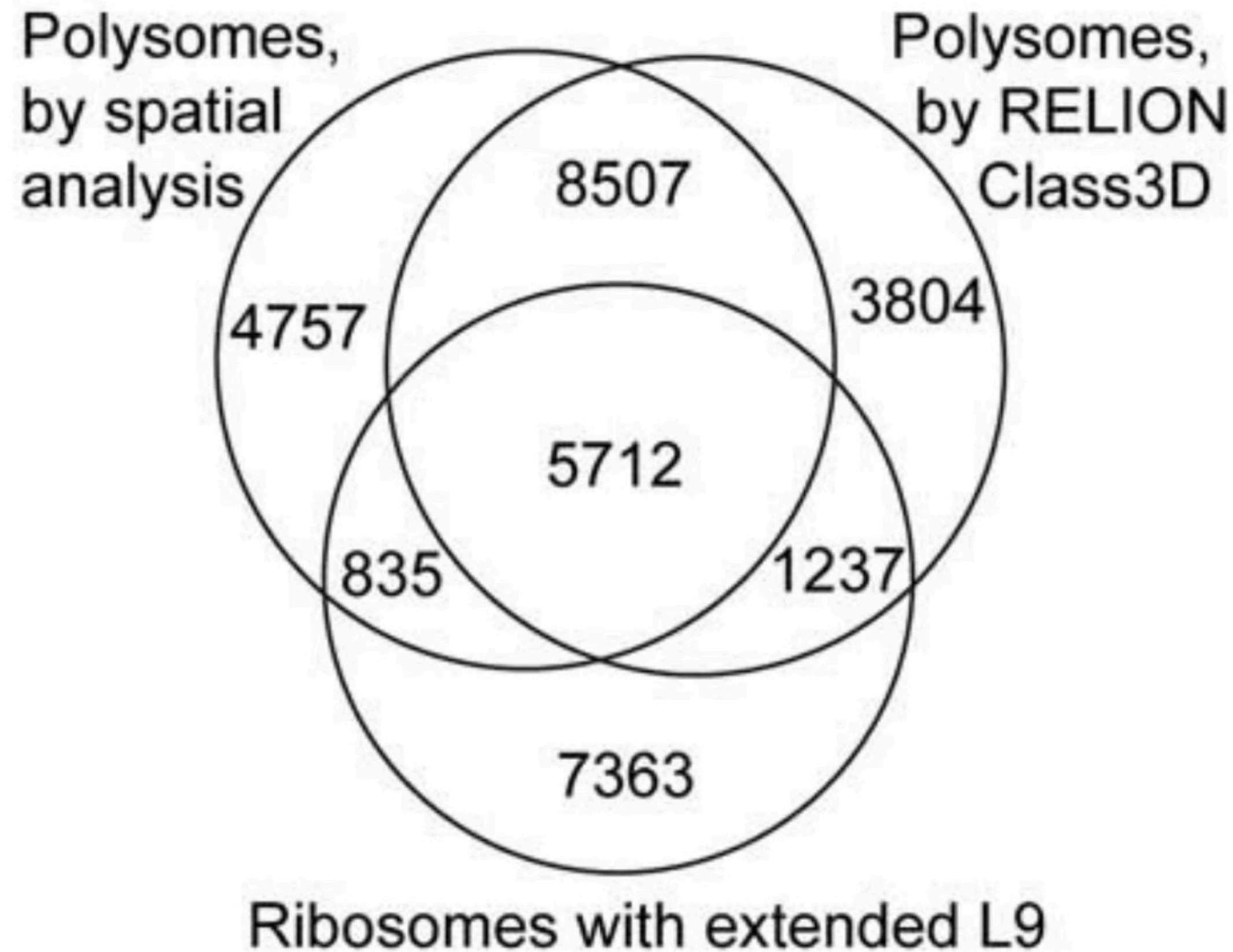


De novo focused classification on the L9 region

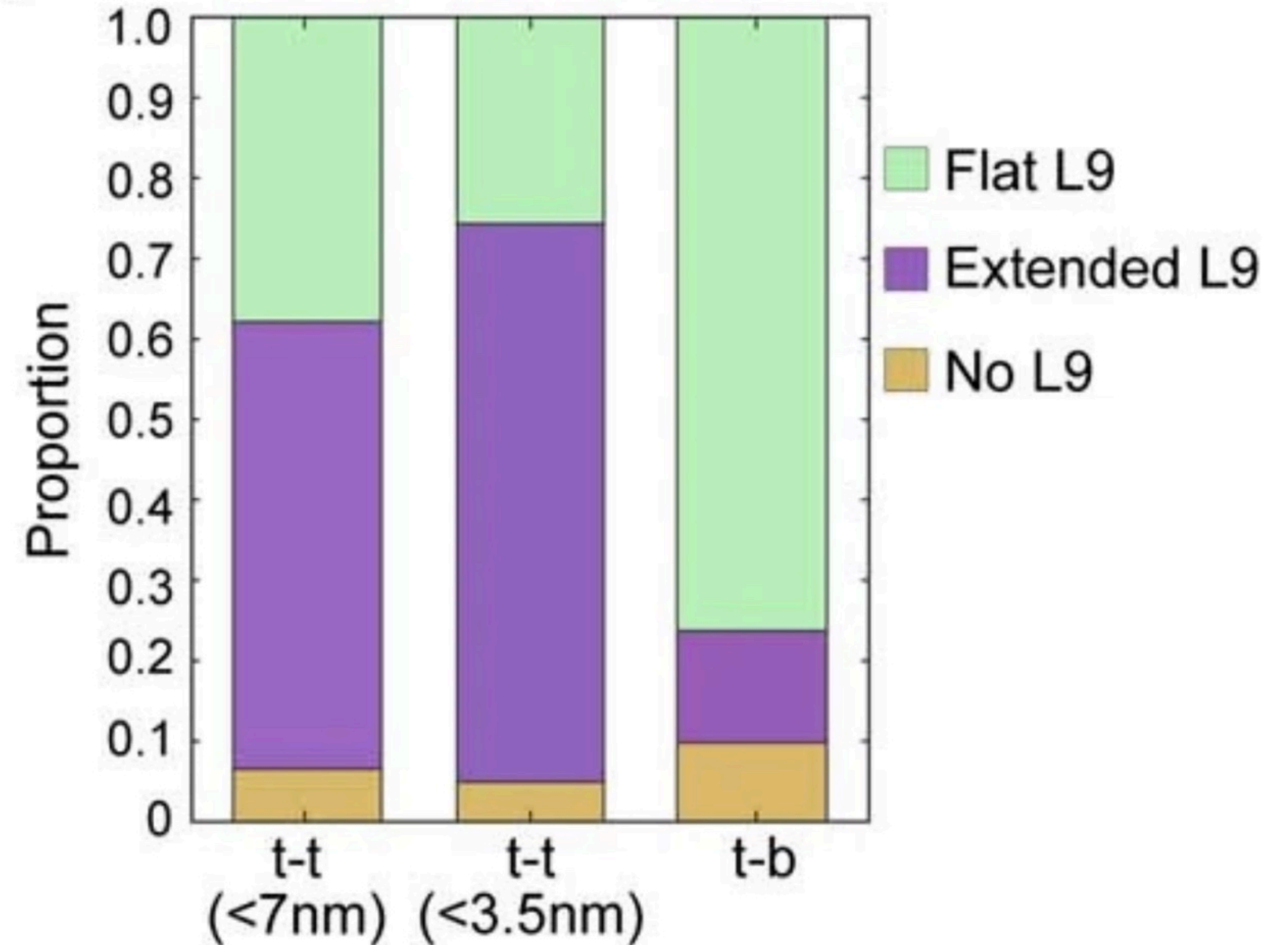
4 Spatial and functional organization of translation

4.3 An extended conformation of L9 sterically interferes with EF

o



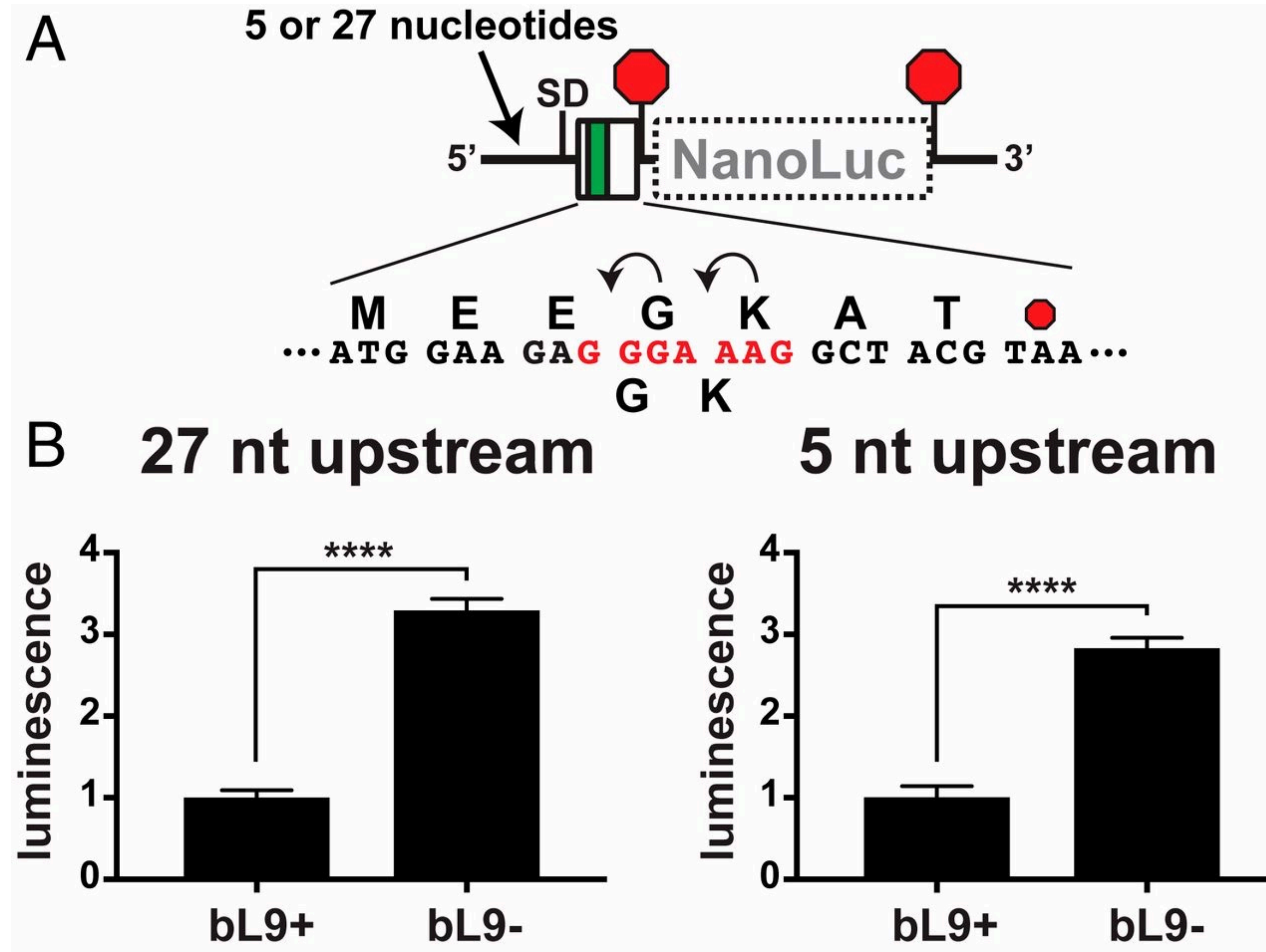
p



- o L9 tends to have a flat conformation in single ribosomes
- o L9 tends to adopt the extended conformation within tightly assembled polysomes

4 Spatial and functional organization of translation

4.3 An extended conformation of L9 sterically interferes with EF



L9's mutations cause increased frame shifting and ribosome compaction

(Smith et al., 2019)

Discussion

Summary

**Visualize structure dynamics of translation inside *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*
at atomic detail using cryo-ET and STA**

Obtain a hi-res in-cell average map of all translating ribosomes



Build an atomic model and reveal distinct extensions



Classification resolves 13 major states and intermediates during translation



Animate translation elongation inside native cells



Show how antibiotics reshape the cellular translation landscapes



Map the organization of translating ribosomes and their association into polysomes



Extended ribosomal protein L9 facilitate translation fidelity