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Title: Comparative Analysis of Syntenic Genes in Grass Genomes Reveals Accelerated Rates of Gene Structure and Coding Sequence Evolution in Polyploid Wheat Author(s): Akhunov, ED (Akhunov, Eduard D.); Sehgal, S (Sehgal, Sunish); Liang, HQ (Liang, Hanquan); Wang, SC (Wang, Shichen); Akhunova, AR (Akhunova, Alina R.); Kaur, G (Kaur, Gaganpreet); Li, WL (Li, Wanlong); Forrest, KL (Forrest, Kerrie L.); See, D (See, Deven); Simkova, H (Simkova, Hana); Ma, YQ (Ma, Yaqin); Hayden, MJ (Hayden, Matthew J.); Luo, MC (Luo, Mingcheng); Faris, JD (Faris, Justin D.); Dolezel, J (Dolezel, Jaroslav); Gill, BS (Gill, Bikram S.) Source: PLANT PHYSIOLOGY Volume: 161 Issue: 1 Pages: 252-265 DOI: 10.1104/pp.112.205161 Published: JAN 2013 **Times Cited in Web of Science Core Collection:** 49 **Total Times Cited: 49** Usage Count (Last 180 days): 2 Usage Count (Since 2013): 80 **Cited Reference Count: 91** Abstract: Cycles of whole-genome duplication (WGD) and diploidization are hallmarks of eukaryotic genome evolution and speciation. Polyploid wheat (Triticum aestivum) has had a massive increase in genome size largely due to recent WGDs. How these processes may impact the dynamics of gene evolution was studied by comparing the patterns of gene structure changes, alternative splicing (AS), and codon substitution rates among wheat and model grass genomes. In orthologous gene sets, significantly more acquired and lost exonic sequences were detected in wheat than in model grasses. In wheat, 35% of these gene structure rearrangements resulted in frameshift mutations and premature termination codons. An increased codon mutation rate in the wheat lineage compared with Brachypodium distachyon was found for 17% of orthologs. The discovery of premature termination codons in 38% of expressed genes was consistent with ongoing pseudogenization of the wheat genome. The rates of AS within the individual wheat subgenomes (21%-25%) were similar to diploid plants. However, we uncovered a high level of AS pattern divergence between the duplicated homeologous copies of genes. Our results are consistent with the accelerated accumulation of AS isoforms, nonsynonymous mutations, and gene structure rearrangements in the wheat lineage, likely due to genetic redundancy created by WGDs. Whereas these processes mostly contribute to the degeneration of a duplicated genome and its diploidization, they have the potential to facilitate the origin of new functional variations, which, upon selection in the evolutionary lineage, may play an important role in the origin of novel traits.

Accession Number: WOS:000312964000021

PubMed ID: 23124323

Language: English

Document Type: Article

KeyWords Plus: MESSENGER-RNA DECAY; HEXAPLOID WHEAT; NUCLEOTIDE SUBSTITUTION; BRACHYPODIUM-DISTACHYON; PHYLOGENETIC ANALYSIS; DUPLICATE GENES; PLANT GENOMES; ORYZA-SATIVA; BREAD WHEAT; EXPRESSION

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Publisher: AMER SOC PLANT BIOLOGISTS

Publisher Address: 15501 MONONA DRIVE, ROCKVILLE, MD 20855 USA

Web of Science Categories: Plant Sciences

Research Areas: Plant Sciences

IDS Number: 062ZP

ISSN: 0032-0889

29-char Source Abbrev.: PLANT PHYSIOL ISO Source Abbrev.: Plant Physiol.

Source Item Page Count: 14

Funding:

English . .

Funding Agency	Grant Number
U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture	2006-35604- 17248 2008-35300- 04588 CRIS0219050
Kansas Wheat Commission	
Grains Research and Development Corporation of Australia	
Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports of the Czech Republic and the European Regional Development Fund (Operational Programme Research and Development for Innovations grant)	
Kansas Agricultural Experiment Station	
Integrated Genomics Facility	

This work was supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture (grant nos. 2006-35604-17248 to B.S.G., 2008-35300-04588 to B.S.G., and CRIS0219050 to E.D.A.), by the Kansas Wheat Commission (to E.D.A.), by the Grains Research and Development Corporation of Australia (to M.J.H.), by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports of the Czech Republic and the European Regional Development Fund (Operational Programme Research and Development for Innovations grant no. ED0007/01/01 to H.S. and J.D.), and by Kansas Agricultural Experiment Station grants to the Wheat Genetics Resources Center (to B.S.G.) and the Integrated Genomics Facility (to A.R.A.). **Open Access:** No

Output Date: 2017-07-25

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