

Targeted Enrichment of Large Gene Families for Phylogenetic Inference: Phylogeny and Molecular Evolution of Photosynthesis Genes in the Portullugo Clade (Caryophyllales)

ABIGAIL J. MOORE^{1,2,*}, JURRIAN M. DE VOS^{1,3,4}, LILLIAN P. HANCOCK¹, ERIC GOOLSBY^{1,5}, AND ERIKA J. EDWARDS^{1,5}

¹Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Brown University, Box G-W, Providence, RI 02912, USA; ²Department of Microbiology and Plant Biology and Oklahoma Biological Survey, University of Oklahoma, 770 Van Vleet Oval, Norman, OK 73019, USA; ³Department of Comparative Plant and Fungal Biology, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AE, UK; ⁴Department of Environmental Sciences—Botany, University of Basel, Totingässlein 3, 4051 Basel, Switzerland; and ⁵Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Yale University, PO Box 208105, New Haven, CT 06520, USA

*Correspondence to be sent to: Department of Microbiology and Plant Biology and Oklahoma Biological Survey, University of Oklahoma, 770 Van Vleet Oval, Norman, OK 73019, USA;
E-mail: abigail.j.moore@ou.edu.

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Abstract.—Hybrid enrichment is an increasingly popular approach for obtaining hundreds of loci for phylogenetic analysis across many taxa quickly and cheaply. The genes targeted for sequencing are typically single-copy loci, which facilitate a more straightforward sequence assembly and homology assignment process. However, this approach limits the inclusion of most genes of functional interest, which often belong to multi-gene families. Here, we demonstrate the feasibility of including large gene families in hybrid enrichment protocols for phylogeny reconstruction and subsequent analyses of molecular evolution, using a new set of bait sequences designed for the “portullugo” (Caryophyllales), a moderately sized lineage of flowering plants (~2200 species) that includes the cacti and harbors many evolutionary transitions to C₄ and CAM photosynthesis. Including multi-gene families allowed us to simultaneously infer a robust phylogeny and construct a dense sampling of sequences for a major enzyme of C₄ and CAM photosynthesis, which revealed the accumulation of adaptive amino acid substitutions associated with C₄ and CAM origins in particular paralogs. Our final set of matrices for phylogenetic analyses included 75–218 loci across 74 taxa, with ~50% matrix completeness across data sets. Phylogenetic resolution was greatly improved across the tree, at both shallow and deep levels. Concatenation and coalescent-based approaches both resolve the sister lineage of the cacti with strong support: Anacampserotaceae + Portulacaceae, two lineages of mostly diminutive succulent herbs of warm, arid regions. In spite of this congruence, BUCKy concordance analyses demonstrated strong and conflicting signals across gene trees. Our results add to the growing number of examples illustrating the complexity of phylogenetic signals in genomic-scale data. [Bait sequencing; Cactaceae; CAM photosynthesis; C₄ photosynthesis; gene duplication; protein sequence evolution.]

Next-generation sequencing has revolutionized the field of phylogenetics, and there are now many approaches available to efficiently collect genome-scale data for a large number of taxa. In one way or another, they all involve downsampling the genome as a means to simultaneously sequence homologous genomic regions across multiple species. Transcriptome analysis was among the first approaches (Dunn et al. 2008; Jiao et al. 2011; Wickett et al. 2014), and this remains an effective method, but typically fresh or flash-frozen tissues must be used for RNA extraction. Many researchers have large and invaluable collections of stored genomic DNA collected over years of fieldwork that must remain relevant. More recently, approaches such as Restriction Associated DNA Sequencing (RAD-seq), genome skimming, and hybrid enrichment have been adopted as effective means of sub-sampling the genome to enable development of very large data sets (1000s of loci) across large numbers of individuals with multiplexed sequencing (McCormack et al. 2013). For deeper phylogenetic problems spanning larger clades, hybrid enrichment is emerging as the method of choice (Faircloth et al. 2012; Lemmon et al. 2012; de Sousa et al. 2014; Mandel et al. 2015; Schmickl et al., 2016).

Hybrid enrichment studies tend to limit their scope to “single-copy loci” (SCL), that is, genes that do not appear to have maintained multiple paralogs within a genome

after a gene duplication. Targeting SCL has obvious appeal, as it facilitates straightforward contig assembly and reduces the risk of constructing erroneous gene trees due to incorrect orthology assignment. However, the number of SCL in a genome is relatively small, and especially in plants, they appear to be somewhat unusual (De Smet et al. 2013). As all extant flowering plants have undergone multiple rounds of whole genome duplication ((WGD; De Bodt et al. 2005; Jiao et al. 2011; Renny-Byfield and Wendel 2014; Soltis et al. 2015), SCL are likely under strong selection to lose additional gene copies after undergoing duplication (Freeling 2009; De Smet et al. 2013). If gene loss happens very quickly post duplication (i.e., prior to subsequent speciation events), these loci would be especially useful for phylogenetics; if, on the other hand, gene loss is more protracted, these loci could instead be especially problematic. Genome-wide estimates suggest that the rate of duplication is quite high (0.01/gene/Ma) and subsequent loss is relatively slow, with the average half-life of a duplicate gene estimated at ~4 Myr (Lynch and Conery 2000). It is at least worth considering that purported SCL may be susceptible to “hidden” paralogy issues, due to differential loss of duplicates over longer periods of time (Martin and Burg 2002; Álvarez and Wendel 2003).

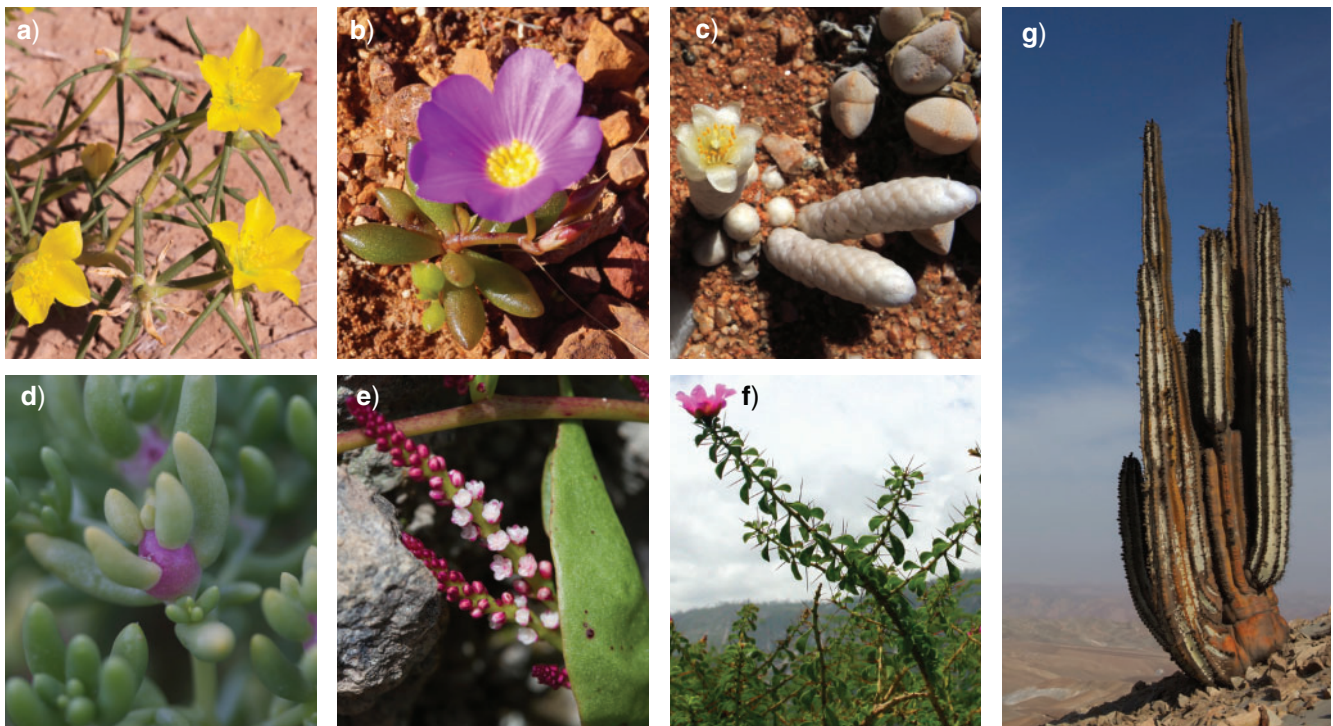


FIGURE 1. Species representatives across Portulacaceae families. a) *Portulaca* aff. *filifolia*, b) *Calandrinia hortiorum*, c) *Anacampteros papyracea*, d) *Halophytum ameghinoi*, e) *Anredera diffusa* f) *Pereskia portulacifolia* and g) *Neoraimondia arequipensis*.

An additional limitation of constraining analyses to SCL is the necessary omission of genes of potential interest for other sorts of evolutionary or functional studies, independent of their utility in phylogenetic inference. Beyond the primary goal of generating data for phylogenetic inference, hybrid enrichment offers an unparalleled potential to affordably and efficiently build large comparative data sets of important functional genes, enabling molecular evolution analyses of a scope not seen before. Because the substrate of hybrid enrichment is whole genomic DNA, rather than transcriptomic data of expressed genes, there is also the potential to isolate additional copies of genes that were not expressed at the time of tissue collection, providing a more complete picture of the evolutionary dynamics of gene duplication and function/loss of function. There are several methodological challenges to unlocking this potential, including: i) designing molecular probes (“baits”) that can target multiple members of large gene families across disparate groups of taxa, ii) accurately joining fragmented contigs that belong to the same paralog within individuals together into a single non-chimeric locus, and iii) confident assignment of loci to their correct orthologs across species. Each of these tasks is difficult but, we demonstrate, not insurmountable.

We present a first attempt to include multi-gene families in a hybrid enrichment study of the “portullugo” (Caryophyllales) (sensu [Edwards and Ogburn 2012](#)), a diverse clade of ~2200 species of flowering plants with a worldwide distribution (Fig. 1). The clade includes nine major lineages, is most

commonly found in warm and arid or semi-arid environments, and includes such charismatic succulents as the cacti of the New World and the Didiereaceae of Madagascar. The portullugo has received a fair amount of phylogenetic attention over the decades (e.g., [Hershkovitz and Zimmer 2000](#); [Applequist and Wallace 2001](#); [Nyffeler and Eggli 2010](#); [Ocampo and Columbus 2010](#); [Ogburn and Edwards 2015](#)), yet relationships among many of its major lineages remain stubbornly unresolved; one particularly recalcitrant problem is the relationship between the cacti, *Portulaca*, and Anacampterotaceae.

Portullugo also harbors multiple origins of two plant metabolic pathways: C_4 and Crassulacean Acid Metabolism (CAM) photosynthesis, both complex syndromes that employ a shared set of enzymes to increase internal plant CO_2 concentrations and improve photosynthetic efficiency ([Edwards and Ogburn 2012](#)). We are especially interested in the molecular evolution of genes coding for the major C_3 , C_4 , and CAM photosynthesis enzymes during evolutionary transitions between these metabolic pathways, and included 19 major photosynthesis gene families in our hybrid enrichment design. Phylogenetic analyses of our data resolve many outstanding issues in portullugo phylogeny, and we also present the utility of our data set for analyzing adaptive protein sequence evolution, with a preliminary analysis of the phosphoenolpyruvate carboxylase (PEPC) gene family. In both C_4 and CAM photosynthesis, PEPC is the enzyme recruited to first fix atmospheric CO_2 in leaves, where it is temporarily

stored as a 4-carbon acid and later decarboxylated in the presence of the Calvin cycle. The enzyme is a critical component of both pathways, and previous work has demonstrated convergent evolution of multiple amino acid residues associated with both C_4 and CAM origins (e.g., Christin et al. 2007, 2014).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Terminology

We use the term paralog to describe gene copies that diverged from one another in a duplication event; hence multiple paralogs can be present in a single individual. In contrast, ortholog is used when referring to a set of homologous genes that originated via speciation events. Depending on the context, a single gene can therefore be included and discussed in the context of a paralog group or an ortholog group. In the context of phylogenetic inference involving all sequenced genes, we refer to all ortholog groups from all of the various gene families as loci.

Data Availability

All scripts are available in a public repository. One folder contains the analysis pipeline (<https://github.com/abigail-Moore/baits-analysis>), and a second folder contains scripts for bait design, gene tree/species tree analysis, and pipeline validation (https://github.com/abigail-Moore/baits-suppl_scripts). Raw reads have been deposited in the NCBI Short Read Archive (accession numbers in [Supplementary Table S2](#) available on Dryad at <http://dx.doi.org/10.5061/dryad.7h3f6>). Tree files, concatenated alignments, and separate alignments for each locus are available from the Dryad Digital Repository: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5061/dryad.7h3f6>.

Bait Design

Baits for targeted enrichment were designed for use across the portullugo based on analyses of eight previously sequenced transcriptomes from the Portulacineae from our previous work (Christin et al. 2014, 2015; Anacampserotaceae: *Anacampseros filamentosa*; Cactaceae: *Echinocereus pectinatus*, *Nopalea cochenillifera*, *Pereskia bleo*, *Pereskia grandifolia*, *Pereskia lychmidiflora*; Portulacaceae: *Portulaca oleracea*; and Talinaceae: *Talinum portulacifolium*) and four from its sister group Molluginaceae from the 1000 Plants transcriptome sequencing project [1KP; Matasci et al. 2014; *Hypertelis cerviana* (called *M. cerviana* in 1KP), *Mollugo verticillata*, *Paramollugo nudicaulis* (called *M. nudicaulis* in 1KP), and *Trigastrotheca pentaphylla* (called *M. pentaphylla* in 1KP)]. MyBaits baits were designed from two sets of genes: 19 gene families that were known to be important in CAM and C_4 photosynthesis, and 52 other nuclear genes ([Supplementary Table S1](#) available on Dryad; MYcroarray, Ann Arbor, MI, USA).

Sequences for photosynthesis-related genes were taken from the alignments from Christin et al. (2014, 2015), which included the transcriptomic data, sequences from GenBank, and individual loci from other members of the portullugo clade. Gene family identities for the remaining genes in the portullugo transcriptomes were assigned by BLASTing (BLASTN 2.2.25, default settings; Altschul et al. 1990) them against sets of orthologous sequences of known identity from six model plants (Ensembl database; Kersey et al. 2016; <http://plants.ensembl.org/>, accessed 4 December 2013). Similarly, we also assigned gene family identities to genes from five additional Caryophyllales transcriptomes, which had previously been sequenced (*Amaranthus hypochondriacus*, *Amaranthaceae*; *Boerhavia coccinea*, *Nyctaginaceae*; *Mesembryanthemum crystallinum*, *Aizoaceae*; *Trianthema portulacastrum*, *Aizoaceae*; Christin et al. 2015; *Beta vulgaris*, *Amaranthaceae*, Dohm et al. 2014) to be able to include them in subsequent analyses. Further details of bait design are provided in the Supplementary Methods available on Dryad.

Taxon Sampling

Sixty portullugo individuals were sequenced ([Supplementary Table S2](#) available on Dryad), including multiple representatives of all major lineages (with the exception of the monotypic Halophytaceae, which was represented by *Halophytum ameghinoi*), and relevant sequences from transcriptomes of two further species were added (*Pereskia bleo*, *Cactaceae*; *Portulaca oleracea*, *Portulacaceae*). Eleven outgroups were added by extracting the relevant sequences from the five non-portullugo, Caryophyllales transcriptomes and the six model plant genomes, for a total of 73 taxa.

Molecular Sequencing

Leaf material was first extracted using the FastDNA Spin Kit (MP Biomedicals, Santa Ana, CA, USA). After DNA extraction, samples were cleaned using a QIAquick PCR Cleanup Kit (Qiagen Inc., Valencia, CA, USA), following the manufacturer's protocol. DNA was fragmented using sonication and libraries were prepared using the NEBNext Ultra or NEBNext Ultra II DNA Library Prep Kits for Illumina (New England Biolabs, Ipswich, MA, USA), including addition of inline barcodes (see [Supplementary Methods](#) available on Dryad for details). For hybridization with MyBaits baits, samples were combined into groups of 8 or 9 with approximately equal amounts of DNA for each sample, resulting in a total of 100–500 ng of DNA in 5.9 μ L of buffer. A low stringency hybridization protocol was followed, because species used for bait design were sometimes distantly related to the species sequenced (Li et al. 2013). The remainder of the hybridization and cleanup protocol followed version 2 of the manufacturer's protocol, except that the

cleanup steps took place at 50°C instead of 65°C. Final quantification, combination, and sequencing of most samples were performed at the Brown University Genomics Core Facility on an Illumina HiSeq 2000 or 2500, to obtain 100-bp, paired end reads. Further details are given in the [Supplementary Methods](#) available on Dryad. Reads for each individual were submitted to the NCBI SRA (BioProject PRJNA387599, accession numbers in [Supplementary Table S2](#) available on Dryad).

Methods Summary for Data Processing and Orthology Assignment

Our pipeline addresses two major challenges of using targeted sequence capture to retrieve data from gene families for phylogenetic analysis. First, the assembly of complete gene sequences for each individual for each paralog is complicated by the fact that baits designed from exon sequences do not allow the contigs to span very long (thousands of base pairs) introns, given the sizes of fragments that are commonly sequenced. Thus, unlike with transcriptome sequencing, the gene sequence will not necessarily be assembled as a single contig, but more likely as multiple non-overlapping contigs that must then be classified according to paralog (Part II of the pipeline). Second, gene family alignments and trees must be separated into sets of homologous loci in which each individual is present only once, in order to be used for phylogenetic analysis (Part III of the pipeline).

We designed a three-part bioinformatics pipeline to reconstruct gene sequences (Fig. 2). Part I aimed to extract all relevant reads for each gene family and then assemble them into contigs. Part II then constructed longer sequences from contigs and assigned them to particular paralogs within a gene family. Part III identified gene duplications within gene families, extracted phylogenetically useful sets of orthologs, and used them for phylogenetic analysis. Each of the three parts of the pipeline was run through one master script, with Parts I and II being fully automated and Part III largely automated, given the default set of loci/individuals and analyses. The major steps in the pipeline are summarized below; details are given in the [Supplementary Methods](#) available on Dryad.

In Part I, paired reads were classified into gene families using BLASTN version 2.2.29 (Altschul et al. 1990) and assembled into contigs. A read pair was assigned a gene family if either read matched (e -value $<10^{-16}$) the sequences used to design the baits. For each gene family, reads were then pooled among the individuals that belonged to each of the nine major lineages, and SPAdes version 3.1.0 (Bankevich et al. 2012) was used to assemble them into nine sets of preliminary contigs. By combining reads from different individuals and different species in the same assembly, we maximized contig number and lengths. These chimeric contigs were not used in the final analysis; they were only used to make a better BLAST database for the second round of BLAST searching, allowing us to pull significantly more reads into the pool

for analysis. In the next step, a new BLAST database was created from both the chimeric contigs and the sequences from which the baits were designed. The reads were then BLASTed to this larger database, again extracting both reads of a pair if either matched. For each individual and gene family, reads were assembled using SPAdes. Finally, the resulting contigs were BLASTed against the bait sequences to identify exons, and only exons were used for all subsequent analyses. We originally attempted to include the introns but, even within a single genus, they were too polymorphic to align well, potentially due to not being sequenced to as great a depth as the coding regions from which the baits were designed.

Part II of the pipeline identified the paralog that each contig from Part I belonged to, in order to combine contigs and maximize the sequence length for each paralog. While it was generally obvious when two overlapping contigs belonged to different paralogs (because of many sequence differences in the regions where they overlap), the function of Part II of the pipeline was to determine which of the non-overlapping contigs belonged to the same paralog, in order to be able to reconstruct the full gene sequence of each paralog. This iterative process of contig classification began with initial backbone alignments and trees for each gene family; these consisted of the sequences used to design the baits as well as the model plant and nonportullugo Caryophyllales sequences. In each iteration, all contigs for a gene family were first added to the backbone alignment using MAFFT version 7.017 (Katoh and Standley 2013) and then placed in the backbone gene family tree using the short-read classification algorithm in RAXML version 8.0.22 (option “-f v”; Berger et al. 2011, Stamatakis 2014). These two steps yielded gene-family trees that contained one or several clusters of contigs. Each cluster was treated as a putative paralog and extracted for further testing. For each cluster and individual, contigs were combined into a consensus sequence (based on their positions in the backbone alignment) if the number of conflicting bases in overlapping contigs (e.g., due to presence of multiple alleles) was acceptably low: less than twice the number of contigs for nonpolyploids and less than five times the number of contigs for plants that were previously known to be polyploid. We used the number of contigs rather than total sequence length, because contigs that are correctly classified according to paralog generally overlap only at their ends. If a consensus sequence was successfully produced from a cluster of contigs, it was added to the backbone tree. If not, those contigs were analyzed again in the next iteration. After six iterations, some contigs could still not be combined into acceptable consensus sequences (e.g. due to recent gene duplications that were absent from the backbone tree). Instead of discarding all contigs that belong to these paralogs, a single contig per individual, per paralog was chosen. When the contigs overlap, it is obvious when they belong to different paralogs; so the longest of these overlapping contigs was chosen for each paralog, and

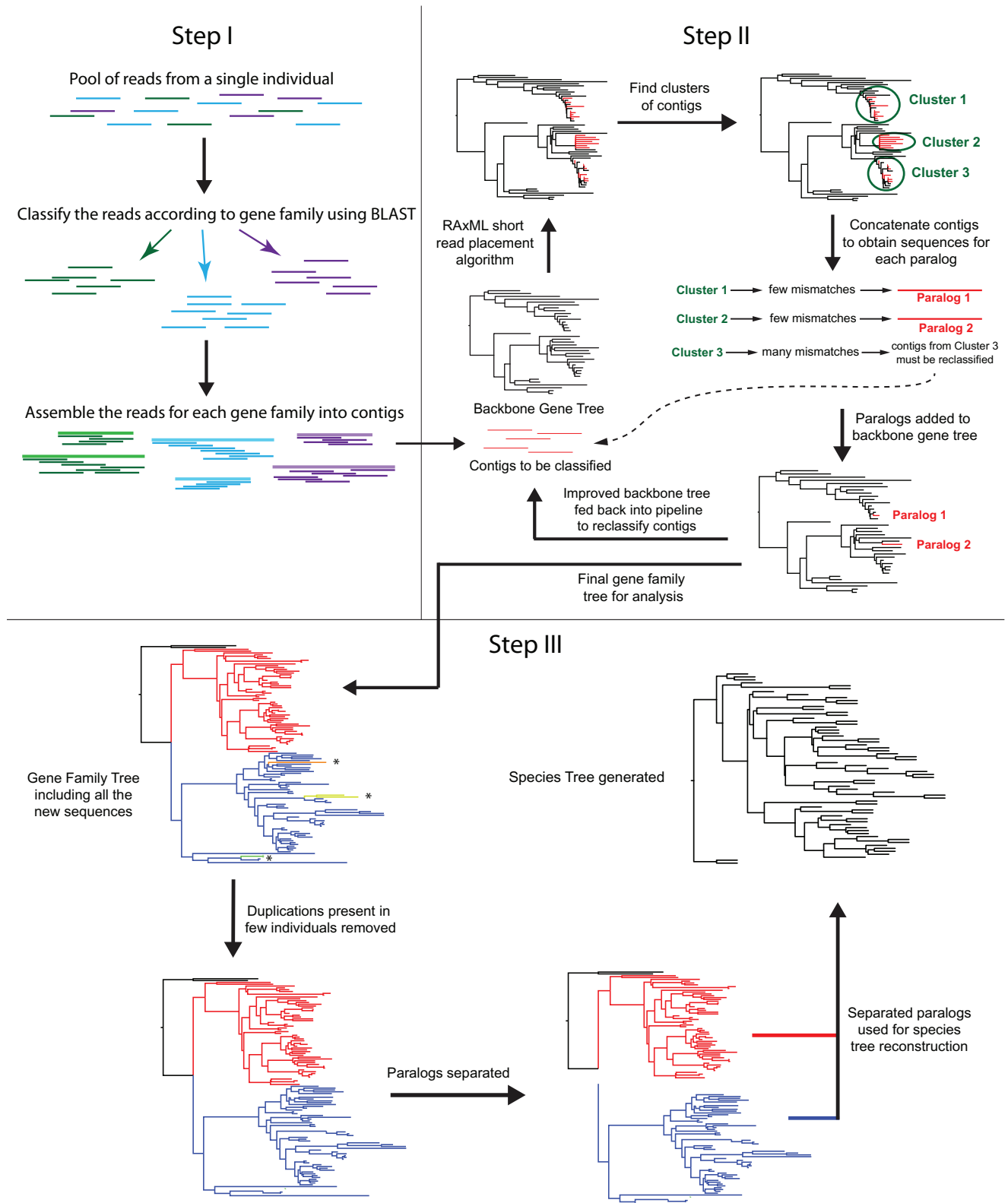


FIGURE 2. Assembly pipeline schematic. Part I extracts all relevant reads for each gene family and then assemble them into contigs. Part II constructs longer sequences from contigs and assigns them to particular paralogs within a gene family. Part III identifies gene duplications within gene families, isolates phylogenetically useful sets of orthologs, and uses them for phylogenetic analysis.

the remaining, shorter contigs were not used for further analysis.

We acknowledge that distinguishing between alleles and very similar gene copies is a difficult problem. Using phylogenetic position to choose which contigs to combine, instead of combining them based on sequence similarity alone, should help solve this problem. If a gene duplication is shared between multiple species, sequences from gene copies resulting from this duplication will be sister to sequences from other species. On the other hand, sequences from alleles would generally be sister to sequences from the same species, or at least in a polytomy with them, so they would be combined (as would sequences from gene duplications that happened within a single species).

Part III of the pipeline extracted paralogs as separate phylogenetic loci from the gene-family trees, by identifying the positions of gene duplications in comparison with a preliminary species tree, and used these loci to reconstruct species trees. Part III was performed twice, first with a preliminary species tree constructed from three chloroplast loci (*matK*, *ndhF*, and *rbcL*) and the nuclear internal transcribed spacer (ITS) region, all recovered as off-target reads, and then with an updated species tree, reconstructed from the loci recovered from the pipeline. For each round of analysis, NOTUNG version 2.8.1.6 (Chen et al. 2000, Stolzer et al. 2012) was used to find gene duplications in the gene family trees, based on the given species tree. While the topology of the species tree was taken as given, poorly supported nodes (<90% bootstrap) on the gene family trees were rearranged to correspond to the species tree, to minimize the impact of lack of support on paralog classification. Besides accounting for poorly supported incongruences between the gene-family tree and species tree, we also employed a conservative strategy involving a variety of criteria to accept duplications. Most importantly, a duplication was accepted if the two sister groups subtended by a putative duplication contained at least one shared individual or two shared taxonomic families represented by different individuals. This strategy prevented us from accepting putative duplications that actually represent incongruence between the topologies of the gene family tree and species tree. After inspection, at each node that subtended an accepted duplication, the smaller sister group was pruned off as a distinct locus, while the larger group was retained on the gene tree. (Note that after pruning, the larger group represents more than a single paralog, as it also contains the unduplicated sequences from the tree partition not affected by the focal duplication.) This strategy maximized the number of loci that contained all or most of the individuals, facilitating phylogenetic inference. We then calculated the number of individuals and number of major lineages present in each locus, and removed all sites with >90% missing data prior to analysis.

Pipeline Validation

In order to validate Parts II and III of the pipeline (assigning contigs to correct paralogs), we used the data from the portullugo transcriptomes analyzed by Yang et al. (2015; data on Dryad: doi:10.5061/dryad.33m48; one Basellaceae, two Cactaceae, four Molluginaceae, and six Portulacaceae). Sequences from a fully sequenced genome would have been preferable over transcriptome data because transcriptome data may include splice variants and lack introns, and because whole genome data would offer a one-to-one correspondence between sequences and paralogs. However, no fully sequenced genomes are present within the portullugo, which is the only clade for which our backbone trees are informative. Therefore, we were constrained to use transcriptome data.

We first selected the relevant transcripts (from our included gene families), by BLASTing the assembled transcriptomes (found in the data/cds_69taxa_Caryophyllales_only/ folder) against the BLAST database of sequences from which we designed the baits. BLAST hits with bit scores over 500 were accepted for sequence classification. Once the sequences for each locus were selected, they were aligned, and the alignments were pruned so that they only included the parts that we recovered with the bait sequencing, as the beginnings and the ends of the transcripts were generally not present in the bait sequences.

The pruned locus alignments were randomly divided into n fragments, with n calculated by dividing the alignment length by 300 and rounding to the nearest integer. We chose 300 as this was the approximate mean length of the contigs from the baits data after the introns had been removed. Fragments were created by randomly choosing n numbers between one and the length of the alignment and dividing the alignment in those places. The alignments were divided into fragments together, instead of dividing the transcripts individually, because the baits also tended to be divided into fragments at the same places, according to the larger introns. Ten sets of these randomly divided sequences were created as our test data sets.

The test data sets were run through parts II and III of the pipeline, using the gene family trees that the pipeline produced in the analyses in this article as the backbone trees in the validation analyses, instead of only using the backbone trees with the fragments used for bait design. We then inspected the success of classifying the transcript fragments. A fragment could be correctly classified, incorrectly classified, or not classifiable. A fragment was considered to be correctly classified if it was put into the same final sequence as the remaining fragments from its transcript. On the other hand, if the fragments of a given transcript were classified into different final sequences, all of the fragments were considered to be incorrectly classified. The number of incorrectly classified fragments is thus an overestimate, because it is likely that one or more of these fragments was correctly classified. Unclassifiable

fragments were those for which the backbone tree was not resolved enough to allow us to separate them from other fragments and put them into reconstructed final sequences.

Fragments of all sizes were run through the pipeline together (just as contigs of all sizes were run through the pipeline together when the sequences from the baits data were being reconstructed), and the results were examined separately for four different size classes of fragments: all fragments over 50, over 100, over 150, and over 200 bases in length. Thus, for the results of the analysis with all fragments over 200 bases in length, fragments were considered to be correctly classified if all fragments over 200 bases long from that transcript belonged to the same final sequence and incorrectly classified if the fragments over 200 bases in length from that transcript belonged to two or more final sequences.

Reconstruction of Species Trees and Estimating Gene Tree Congruence

To evaluate phylogenetic relations and branch support, we used concatenation and coalescent-based approaches on each of five data sets. We selected the following data sets, after dividing species into 11 taxonomic groups (the 9 major clades recognized within the portullugo; Nyffeler and Eggli 2010; Thulin et al. 2016), and 2 additional paraphyletic groups for the outgroups, namely non-portullugo Caryophyllales and non-Caryophyllales; Supplementary Table S3 and Fig. S1 available on Dryad): all loci that were present in two or more groups (g2 matrix, 218 loci, 42.7% missing loci, where “missing loci” are loci that were completely absent for certain individuals), all loci present in at least 5 taxonomic groups (g5 matrix, 163 loci, 27.7% missing loci), all loci present in at least 9 taxonomic groups (g9 matrix, 115 loci, 18.1% missing loci), all loci present in at least 50% of individuals (i36 matrix, 136 loci, 20.6% missing loci), and all loci present in at least 80% of individuals (i57 matrix, 75 loci, 10.1% missing loci). Concatenation analyses were performed in RAXML with 100 bootstrap replicates. Coalescent-based species trees were reconstructed using ASTRAL II version 4.10.2 (Mirarab and Warner 2015, Sayyari and Mirarab 2016) using gene trees from RaxML as input.

In addition, to evaluate genomic support for relations among major clades of portullugo, Bayesian concordance analysis was performed using BUCKy version 1.4.4 (Larget et al. 2010) based on the posterior distribution of gene trees from analyses in MrBayes 3.2 (Ronquist et al. 2012). BUCKy estimates the genomic support as a concordance factor (CF) for each relationship found across analyses of all individual loci (Ané et al. 2006; Baum 2007). This way, groups of genes supporting the same topology are detected, while accounting for uncertainty in gene tree estimates. BUCKy thus alleviates the concern that methods used to reconcile gene trees, such as ASTRAL, may underestimate the uncertainty of the species tree (Leaché and Rannala 2011), by highlighting genomic conflict.

BUCKy requires each individual to be present in trees for all loci. In order to maximize the number of loci that could be simultaneously analyzed, taxa were renamed to their major lineage (detailed above), and all but one random exemplar per major lineage was pruned from each sample of the posterior distribution of MrBayes trees. Although there is strong support for the monophyly of the major portullugo lineages (Nyffeler and Eggli 2010), our renaming and pruning approach does not require them to be monophyletic in each individual gene tree. Rather, the phylogenetic position of a lineage is averaged out over all probable positions, because a large number of renamed, pruned trees from each posterior distribution are input.

We conducted two sets of BUCKy analyses: one focusing on the position of Cactaceae within the ACPT clade (Anacampserotaceae + Cactaceae + Portulacaceae + Talinaceae), and a broader Portulacineae-wide analysis, focusing on the remaining relationships after collapsing the ACPT clade to a single taxon. MrBayes analyses generated a posterior distribution of gene trees for each locus and consisted of two runs of 4,000,000 generations with default Metropolis-coupled Markov chain Monte Carlo (MCMCMC) settings, sampling every 4000 generations, employing a general time reversible (GTR) substitution model with gamma-distributed rate variation across sites. After confirming the adequacy of these settings and excluding 25% of samples as burnin, runs were combined to a full posterior distribution of 1500 samples and subsequently thinned to 200 samples. The full posterior distribution was subjected to the renaming and thinning approach described above. For each locus, posterior probabilities of the monophyly of each lineage and their relationships to one another were scored from the thinned posterior distribution as the fraction of sampled trees that contained the node of interest. Analyses were conducted on all loci in which all focal lineages were present (ACPT: $n=143$; Portulacineae: $n=132$). For all analyses, we ran BUCKy using four runs of 100,000 generations each and computed genome-wide CF (in which loci are interpreted as a random sample from the genome) of all possible relationships, as well as the posterior probability of each locus pair to support the same tree. All processing of MrBayes and BUCKy files was performed using custom R scripts (R Core Team 2016).

Molecular Evolution of PEPC

Phylogenetic trees of the three major lineages of PEPC in eudicots (*ppc-1E1*, *ppc-1E2*, and *ppc2*) were inferred using RAXML. Coding sequences were translated into amino acid sequences and numbered according to *Zea mays* sequence CAA33317 (Hudspeth and Grula 1989). Fourteen amino acid residues (466, 517, 531, 572, 577, 579, 625, 637, 665, 733, 761, 780, 794, and 807) that were previously determined to be under positive selection in C₄ grasses (Christin et al. 2007; Besnard et al. 2009), as well as position 890, which is associated with malate

sensitivity (Paulus et al. 2013), were examined across the three major paralogs separately. Some residues could not be identified due to missing data or ambiguity. For these residues, marginal ancestral state reconstruction was performed using the *rerootingMethod* function in the R package *phytools* (Revell 2012) to determine the amino acid with the highest marginal probability.

Separately, we used a mixed effects model of evolution (MEME, R package HyPhy) to identify additional sites potentially under positive selection in *ppc-1E1* by statistically comparing the ratio of nonsynonymous to synonymous substitutions (ω) to one (Murrell et al. 2012). MEME, which does not require *a priori* branch regime designations, allows ω to vary across sites as a fixed effect and treats branch-to-branch variation in ω at individual sites as a random effect.

RESULTS

Sequence Coverage and Data set Structure

We obtained between 682,702 and 13,008,046 reads per individual (mean 3,385,697 \pm 2,953,383; [Supplementary Table S2](#) available on Dryad). Percent enrichment, expressed as the percentage of read pairs yielding a BLAST hit to the bait design alignments, ranged from 0.26% to 12.32% across individuals, with a mean of 2.66 \pm 1.81% after two rounds of BLASTing (0.17% to 6.20%, with a mean of 1.72 \pm 0.98% after one round of BLASTing; [Supplementary Table S2](#) available on Dryad) and did not differ between species closely related to individuals with transcriptomes (Cactaceae, *Portulaca*, *Mollugo*) and more distantly related species (2.73 \pm 1.01% vs. 2.63 \pm 2.56%, $n = 59$, $P = 0.40$ for 1-tailed *t*-test, samples having unequal variance).

Part I of the analysis pipeline yielded a widely varying number of contigs per individual and gene family [mean of 15.6 \pm 35.5, range of 0 (in numerous cases) to 1816 (*ppc* genes in *Ullucus tuberosus*)]. The total number of contigs per individual ranged from 500 (*Calandrinia lehmannii*) to 2576 (*Ullucus tuberosus*), with a mean of 1123 \pm 451 ([Supplementary Table S2](#) available on Dryad). Part II of the pipeline consolidated these contigs into longer sequences, and the total number of sequences per individual ranged from 62 (*Calandrinia lehmannii*) to 221 (*Alluaudia procera*), with a mean of 149 \pm 28 ([Supplementary Table S2](#) available on Dryad). The number of loci per individual per gene family was also variable [mean of 1.85 \pm 1.61, range of 0 (in numerous cases) to 13 (*nadmdh* in *Alluaudia procera*)].

The pipeline yielded a total of 665 distinct loci, with the number of individuals per locus ranging from 1 to 72 and the number of loci per gene family varying between 1 (i.e., putatively single-copy; 5 loci) and 34 (*nadmdh*). Taxon sampling across these loci was quite variable, with some loci being present in all major lineages, and others only being present in a single group (because they were paralogs due to a gene duplication near the tips). The mean sequence length

per locus varied between 152 and 4075 bp (812 \pm 616 bp). There was considerable variation in the number of loci per gene family, both between gene families and between individuals. Photosynthesis genes generally had many more paralogs than the nonphotosynthesis genes, although there was variation in both groups of gene families ([Supplementary Fig. S2](#) available on Dryad for heatmaps showing the number of recovered per gene family for each individual; [Supplementary Fig. S3](#) available on Dryad for duplication numbers of photosynthesis-related and nonphotosynthesis-related genes across all branches of the species tree).

Pipeline Validation

We used transcriptome data from Yang et al. (2015) to validate Parts II and III of the pipeline, which classifies contigs into paralogs. We started out with 2636 sequences, with a mean length of 1159 \pm 668.5. After removing the parts that extended beyond the alignment of sequences from the baits, the 2548 remaining sequences had an average length of 1079 \pm 615.9 bases, while the pruned alignments themselves had an average length of 1753 \pm 792.5. After dividing the alignments, each transcript was divided into a mean of 3.84 \pm 2.14 fragments. The final fragments had a mean size of 240.5 \pm 209.6 bases.

Fragments were considered to be correctly classified if they were put into the same final sequence as the remaining fragments from their transcripts and incorrectly classified if at least one of the fragments from their transcript was placed into a different final sequence. Fragments could also be unclassifiable, in which case they were not sorted into final sequences, due to lack of resolution of the backbone tree. Across all simulations, the proportion of sequences that could not be classified varied little (11.1 \pm 1.8% for a minimum length of 50 to 11.2 \pm 1.9% for a minimum length of 200), which is to be expected, given that the ability to classify a sequence depends on both paralogs from a given gene duplication being present in the backbone tree and is therefore independent of fragment length. Of the remaining fragments, a high percentage of them were correctly classified, and this increased with increasing fragment length (from 82.8 \pm 1.6% for a minimum length of 50 to 91.4 \pm 0.8% for a minimum length of 200), while the proportion of sequences that were incorrectly classified decreased (from 17.2 \pm 1.6% for a minimum length of 50 to 8.6 \pm 0.8% for a minimum length of 200).

Fragment classification also improved when the results from the end of the second step of the pipeline were compared with those from the end of the third (and last) step of the pipeline. For fragments of a minimum length of 50 bases, classification success was 77.6 \pm 1.6% at the end of the second step (of fragments that were classified), compared to 82.8 \pm 1.6% at the end of the third step, while for fragments of a minimum length of 200 bases, classification success was 87.2 \pm 1.5% at the end of the second step of fragments that were classified) and

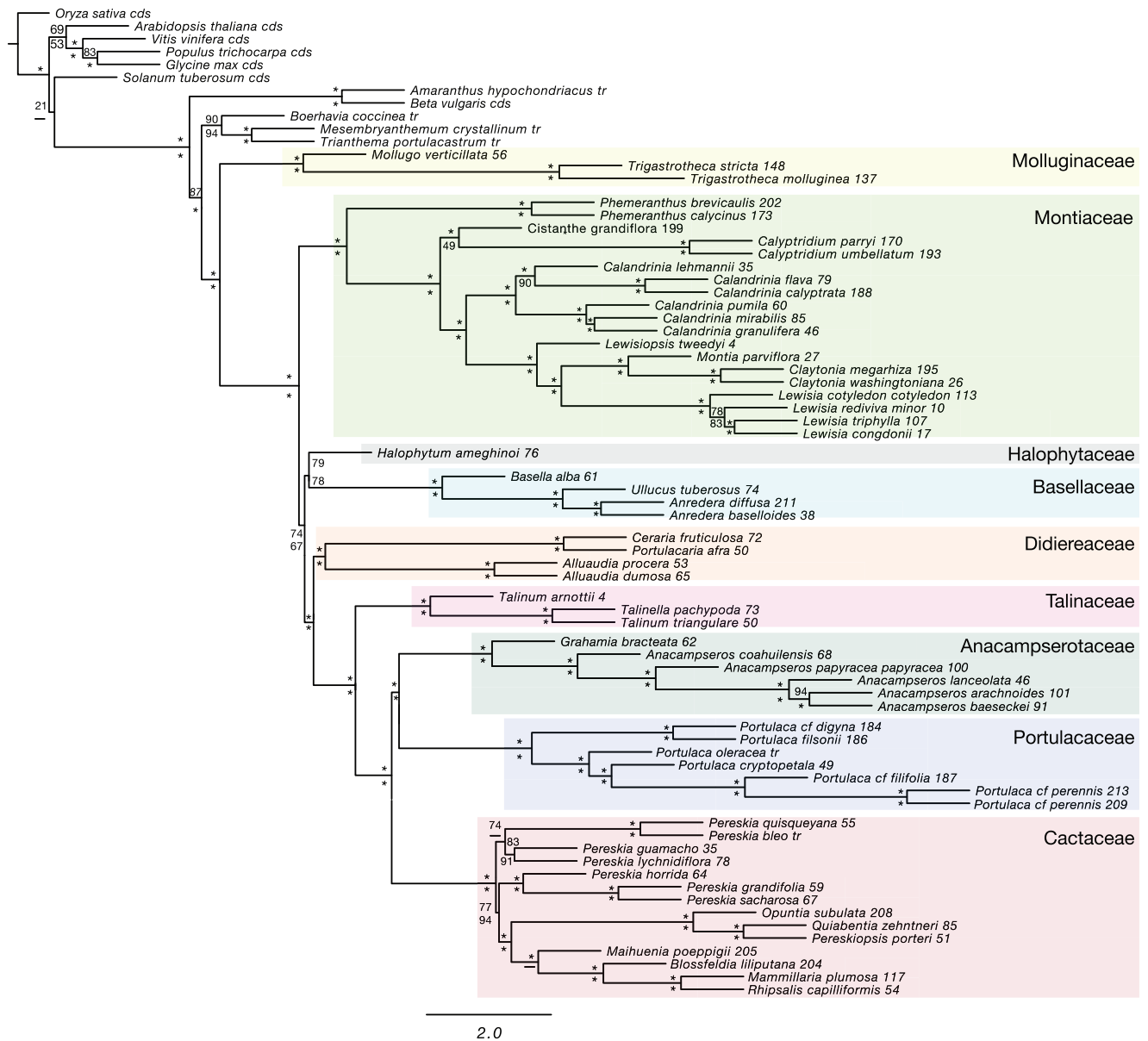


FIGURE 3. Astral topology from the g5 locus sampling (including only the loci that are present in five or more groups). ASTRAL bootstrap values are above the branches, while RAxML bootstrap values are below the branches. Star indicates greater than 95% bootstrap support.

91.4 ± 0.8% at the end of the third step (Supplementary Table S5 and Fig. S4 available on Dryad).

Phylogenetic Analyses

Most nodes were congruent and well supported across all analyses of all matrices (Fig. 3; Supplementary Fig. S5 available on Dryad, all remaining trees). The major differences are summarized in Supplementary Table S6 available on Dryad. Most of the conflict between analyses concerned relationships within the cacti, particularly the various species of *Pereskia*, and some of the relationships among closely related species of the Montiaceae. All nine of the major clades within

the portullugo were well supported (>95% bootstrap) in both coalescent (ASTRAL) and concatenated (RAxML) species trees. The following larger clades were also always well supported: Anacamperotaceae and Portulacaceae as sister lineages; the clade comprised of Anacamperotaceae, Cactaceae, and Portulacaceae (ACP); ACP plus Talinaceae (ACPT); ACPT plus Didiereaceae; and the Portulacineae (portullugo without Molluginaceae). The analyses consistently recovered Montiaceae alone as sister to the seven remaining clades in the Portulacineae, and Basellaceae as sister to Halophytaceae, although with lower support in both cases.

The major conflict between analyses resided within Cactaceae. While all analyses recover the “core cacti”

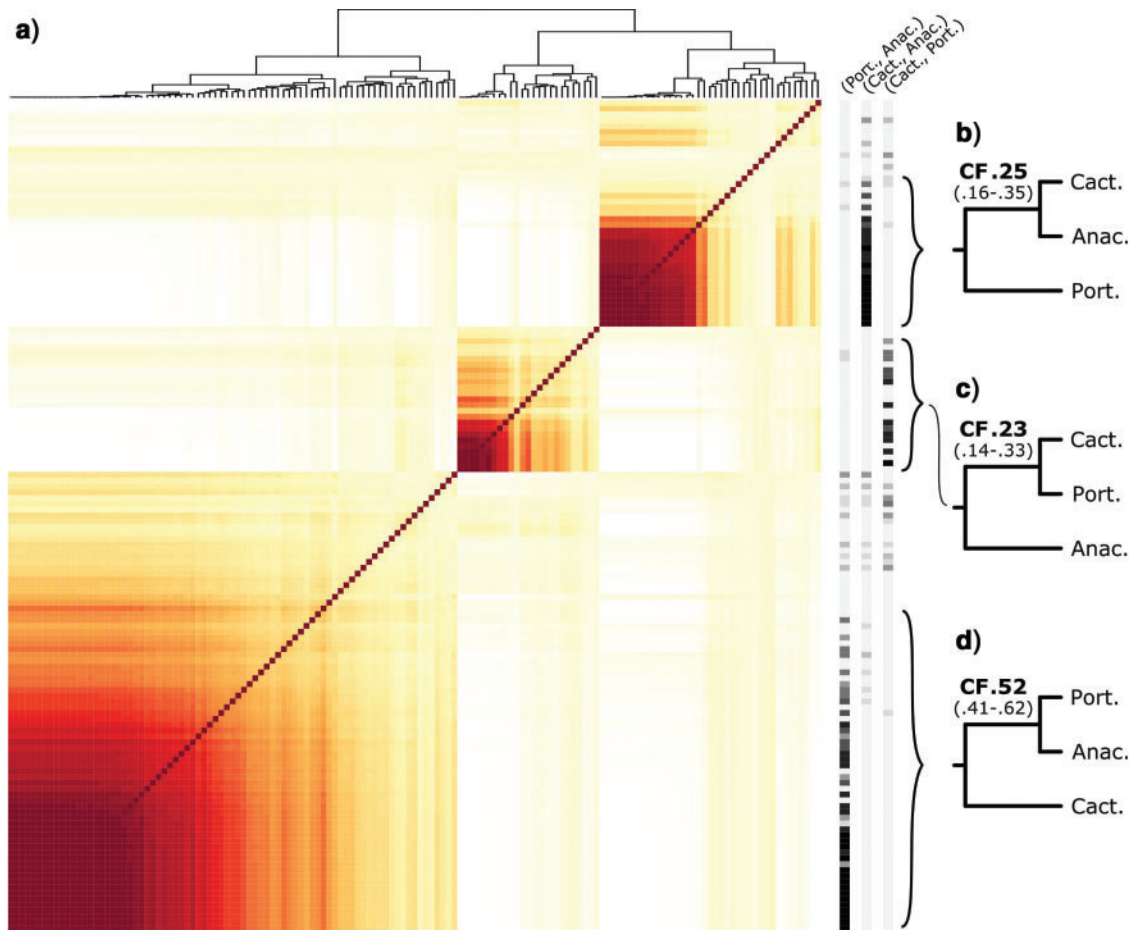


FIGURE 4. Genomic conflict for phylogenetic relationships between Cactaceae and its putative sister groups, Portulacaceae and Anacampeperotaceae. a) Heatmap of the “calculate-pairs” analysis in BUCKy (i.e., based on a posterior distribution of trees randomly pruned to one exemplar for each of Cactaceae, Portulacaceae, Anacampeperotaceae, and Talinaceae), indicating the posterior probability (pp) that a pair of loci support the same topology (red: pp = 1; white: pp = 0). Thus, each row and column represents a locus; posterior probability from the MrBayes analysis of individual loci (i.e., based on unpruned trees) for three alternative sister group relations are given to the right (light grey: pp = 0; black: pp = 1), and a dendrogram based on Euclidean distance between pp values is drawn above. b–d) Topologies for the three putative sister relations, with genome-wide concordance factor (bold) and 95% credibility interval (in brackets) indicated. (Note that strongly supported conflict across genes, rather than lack of information in individual genes, is indicated through presence of multiple major red blocks in panel A and considerable concordance factors for conflicting resolutions in panels b–d.)

(sensu Edwards et al. 2005) as monophyletic, four of the five concatenated analyses show *Maihuenia* to be sister to Opuntioideae + Cactoideae with high support, while all ASTRAL analyses and the i57 concatenated analysis recover Opuntioideae as sister to *Maihuenia* plus Cactoideae. The relationships within *Pereskia* are quite variable and are generally poorly supported. Two analyses recover a monophyletic *Pereskia*, two recover *P. lychnidiflora* alone as sister to the core cacti, and the remaining six recover a clade composed of *P. grandifolia*, *P. sacharosa*, and *P. horrida* as sister to the core cacti, a relationship first proposed by Edwards et al. (2005; the “caulocacti”).

Even though the various species tree analyses demonstrated congruence in the resolution of major relationships, Bayesian Concordance Analysis highlighted significant underlying genome-wide conflict among loci. First, the primary concordance

tree from the portulacaceae-wide analysis revealed similar topologies as the ASTRAL and concatenation analyses, but with low to medium genome-wide CF (from 0.63 for ACP to 0.28 for Portulacaceae except Montiaceae; Supplementary Table S7 available on Dryad), indicating that significant portions of the genome support relationships that deviate from the dominant signal (Fig. 4, Supplementary Fig. S6 available on Dryad). For instance, in the ACPT analysis, the sister group of Cactaceae as Portulacaceae + Anacampeperotaceae was supported by half of our sampled loci (mean CF 0.52), while the other half supported either Anacampeperotaceae (mean CF 0.25) or Portulacaceae (mean CF 0.23) alone as sister to Cactaceae (Fig. 4). In the Portulacaceae-wide analysis, the ASTRAL and concatenation-inferred position of Halophytaceae as sister to Basellaceae received a mean CF of 0.35, somewhat higher than an alternative placement as sister

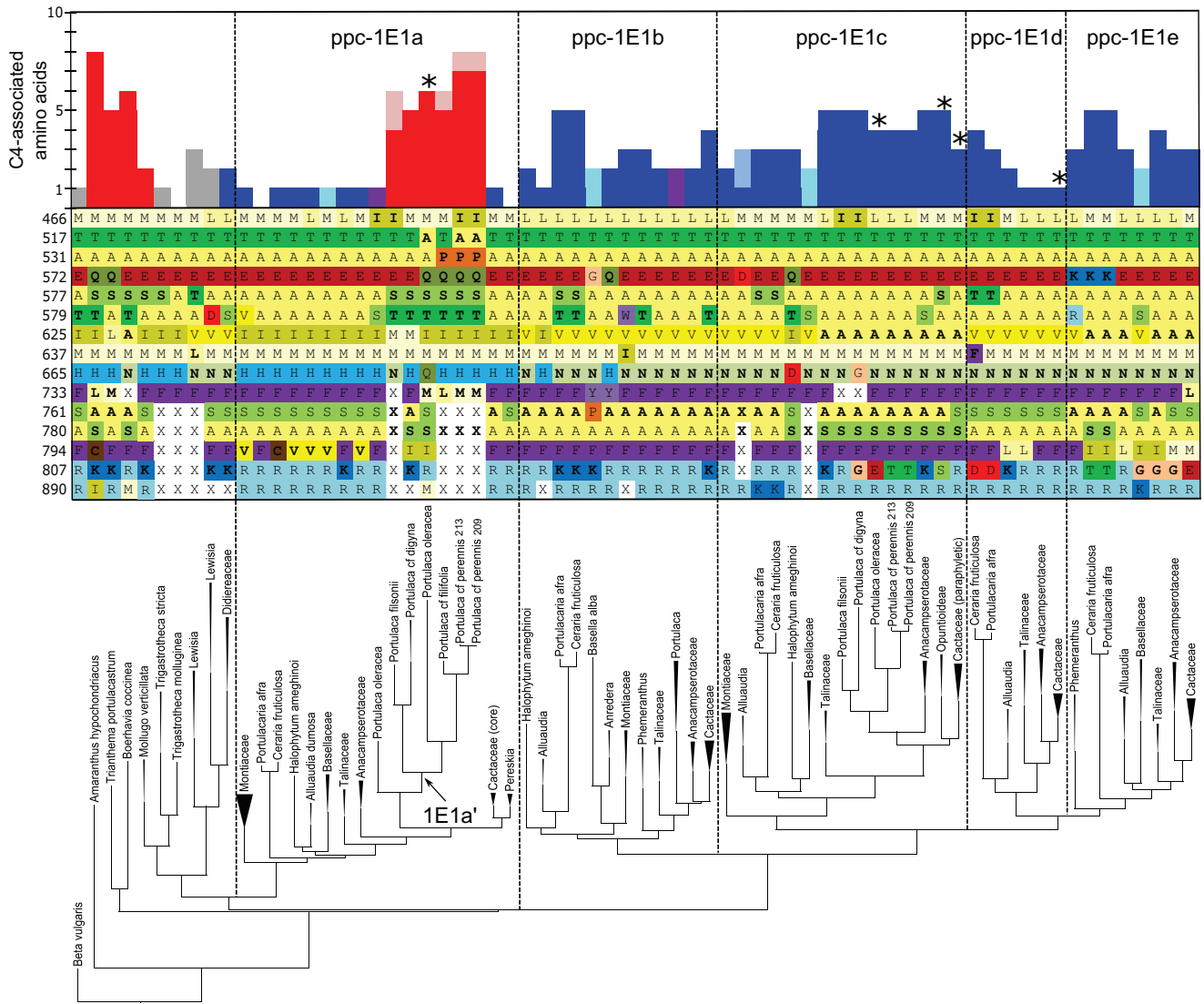


FIGURE 5. Molecular evolution of *ppc-1E1* in portullugo. Phylogenetic tree of *ppc-1E1* obtained via RAXML. Where possible, named lineages are compressed. Amino acids residues for 14 positions shown to be under positive selection in C₄ grasses, as well as position 890, which is associated with malate sensitivity, are shown (numbering corresponds to *Zea mays* CAA33317). For compressed lineages, the most frequent amino acid is shown. Amino acids are color-coded based on chemical properties. For specific residues that could not be identified due to missing data or ambiguity, amino acids with highest marginal probabilities are shown, and corresponding color codes are partially transparent (*rerootingMethod* function in *phytools*, Revell 2012). Amino acids specifically associated with C₄ in grasses are in boldface, and the number of boldface amino acids for a lineage are indicated with red, blue, gray, and purple horizontal bars. Red bars indicate a C₄ lineage, blue bars indicate a lineage with CAM activity, light blue bars indicate suspected CAM activity, purple indicates both C₄ and CAM, and gray indicates a C₃ lineage. For *Portulaca*, a C₄ and CAM lineage, *ppc-1E1a'* bars are coded red because of the known association with C₄ photosynthesis, and *ppc-1E1c* bars are coded blue because of the documented association with CAM activity. Asterisks indicate lineages with drought-induced night time up-regulation of transcript copy number, suggesting relevance to CAM activity.

to Montiaceae (mean CF 0.19; Supplementary Fig. S7 available on Dryad).

Molecular Evolution of PEPC

One of the major *ppc* paralogs, *ppc-1E1*, has undergone multiple rounds of duplication in ancestral Portulacineae, with sequences clustering into five main paralogs, denoted *ppc-1E1a-e* (following Christin et al. 2014; Fig. 5). In addition, *ppc-1E1a* underwent a

further duplication (*ppc-1E1a'*) in ancestral *Portulaca*. Members of Didiereaceae and *Lewisia* appear to possess additional copies of *ppc-1E1* distinct from the *ppc-1E1a-e* duplications, though their placement is poorly supported. Non-Portulacineae Caryophyllales possess a single copy of *ppc-1E1*.

We inferred multiple C₄-associated amino acid substitutions in *ppc-1E1*, both inside and outside of Portulacineae. In particular, *ppc-1E1a'* within the *Portulaca* lineage, which has been previously shown to be associated with C₄ activity (Christin et al. 2014),

contains an elevated number of C₄-associated amino acids relative to *ppc-1E1a* across Portulacineae. We also looked for C₄-specific AA substitutions in CAM species, with the hypothesis that there may be convergence in coding sequences between these two syndromes due to their shared function of PEPC. We discovered a number of C₄-adaptive substitutions in *ppc-1E1b–e* in different CAM lineages, with most lineages showing the greatest accumulation in *ppc-1E1c*. However, some species in particular (*Ceraria* + *Portulacaria*) show a very broad distribution of putative C₄-like substitutions across *ppc-1E1b–e*. The most ubiquitous and consistent C₄-adaptive AA in other plant groups, Ser780, has appeared only in *ppc-1E1c* and *ppc-1E1e* (and the C₄ *ppc-1E1a*). Sequences of *ppc-1E2* and *ppc2* were also examined, and both paralogs exhibit very low rates of evolution in general, and a low number of C₄-associated amino acid substitutions (0.59 and 0.29 C₄-associated substitutions per site per unit branch length, respectively) relative to *ppc-1E1* (1.44, 1.12, 1.47, 2.37, and 2.45, respectively). Selection analysis in MEME on *ppc-1E1* alone identified 42 sites under positive selection (64, 67, 156, 308, 397, 445, 451, 480, 502, 519, 554, 569, 573, 579, 583, 608, 616, 632, 655, 685, 702, 709, 727, 744, 746, 749, 797, 806, 826, 828, 839, 865, 869, 873, 885, 924, 926, 927, 933, 934, 935, 950) using $P \leq 0.05$ as a threshold level of significance (Murrell et al. 2012).

DISCUSSION

Targeted Gene Enrichment with Multi-gene Families

Hybrid bait enrichment is becoming increasingly common in phylogenetics, with researchers developing specialized bait sets designed specifically for unique lineages, much in the way we have done with portullugo (e.g., Lemmon et al. 2012; Nicholls et al. 2015; Heyduk et al. 2016). The critical difference is that most studies focus on capturing “single-copy” genes in plant genomes (De Smet et al. 2013; Chamala et al. 2015), which facilitate contig assembly and homology assignment. Despite the obvious practical advantages of SCI for phylogenetic inference, many questions require sequencing other parts of the genome. By broadening sampling to include large gene families, targeted enrichment provides an effective means to collect data for phylogenetic reconstruction while simultaneously accumulating comparative data sets on particular gene families of interest. In this study, we attempted to target a wide array of genes in our bait design and included gene families of major photosynthesis proteins that are relevant to our broader research program.

While all phylogenomic data sets undoubtedly contain some errors in orthology assignment, overall we feel confident that we are accurately sorting paralogs into their correct ortholog groups, resulting in accurate phylogenetic inference. First, our validation analyses produced low error rates, with over 90% of simulated “broken” contigs accurately reassembled into their original paralogs (Supplementary Table S5 and Fig. S4

available on Dryad). Second, our phylogenetic findings are congruent with those recovered in phylogenetic studies that used non-controversial, Sanger-sequencing-based approach (e.g., the ACPT clade, Portulacineae ex Montiaceae; Nyffeler and Eggli 2010; Arakaki et al. 2011). Third, for classic recalcitrant nodes, our BUCKy analyses reveal significant underlying genomic conflict, despite an emerging phylogenetic resolution (discussed below). Thus, rather than conflicting with previous studies, our results are largely consistent with them, and also provide greater insight into the real genomic conflict underlying historically recalcitrant nodes.

Overall, we have identified two key challenges to working with multi-gene families in hybrid enrichment approaches. First, if baits are designed only from exons (e.g., RNA-seq data, which are the most likely genomic resource for most groups), sequencing across introns is only possible when they are quite small. Thus, long introns in the genomic data prevent the entire gene from assembling into one contig, which increases the chance of assembling chimeric sequences derived from multiple paralogs in later steps. Second, the sampling density of the gene family “backbone tree” used to assign orthology has an enormous effect on the ability to accurately classify contigs, as the only way to separate the sets of contigs that belong to two different paralogs is for both of those paralogs to be present in the backbone tree. Both of these limitations were mostly (though not entirely) overcome by our iteration of the short-read classification step, as confidently placed contigs were maintained in the backbone tree for further rounds of homology assignment. We admit that our approach is largely one of “brute force” at this point, with massive iteration and refinement of key steps. However, as researchers continue to sequence additional taxa with their designed baits, the backbone trees in this step will become more densely sampled, and confidence in contig classification should increase.

Strong Consensus for Major Relationships Within the Portullugo, and the Sister Lineage of the Cacti

The primary goal of our targeted enrichment study was phylogenetic inference, and our analyses provide robust support for most major relationships within the portullugo. In nearly all cases, concatenation and coalescent-based inference methods are congruent and show similar levels of support. Although previous analyses presented conflicting support for the branch uniting Portulacineae with Molluginaceae (Arakaki et al. 2011; Soltis et al. 2011; Yang et al. 2015; Brockington et al. 2015; Thulin et al. 2016), our analyses across all data sets confidently support this node, though our sampling outside of the portullugo is sparse and not designed to directly address this question. Montiaceae consistently appears as sister to the remaining Portulacineae, though with lower support in both ASTRAL and concatenated analyses than we would have predicted. Long recognized clades, like ACPT (Anacampserotaceae, Cactaceae, Talinaceae, Portulacaceae) and ACP (ACPT

without Talinaceae) remain strongly supported. More importantly, relationships among other difficult taxa are beginning to crystallize. Our analyses confirm the monophyly of the Didiereaceae *s.l.* (Bruyns et al. 2014) and its placement as sister to the ACPT clade. In addition, Halophytaceae, a monotypic subshrub endemic to the arid interior of Argentina, is now placed with moderate support as sister to Basellaceae in all of our analyses, which is a new finding.

One of the more frustrating phylogenetic problems in the Portulacineae has been identifying the sister lineage of Cactaceae. The cacti are among the most spectacular desert plant radiations, with ~1500 species of mostly stem succulents that diversified recently, during the late Miocene–Pliocene time period (Arakaki et al. 2011). They are closely related to *Portulaca*, a globally widespread, herbaceous, and succulent C₄ lineage, and the Anacampserotaceae, another unusual succulent lineage with most species endemic to South Africa. The relationship among these three clades has remained uncertain, despite numerous phylogenetic studies aimed at resolving it (Hershkovitz and Zimmer 2000; Applequist and Wallace 2001; Nyffeler and Egli 2010; Ocampo and Columbus 2010; Ogburn and Edwards 2015). We present strong support for *Portulaca* + Anacampserotaceae together as the sister lineage of the cacti, in both concatenation (100% BS) and coalescent (98–100% BS) analyses.

In spite of this congruence, our BUCKY analyses revealed strong and significant discord among loci for these relationships, with roughly half of our sampled genome (mean CF 0.52) supporting ((A,P),C) and roughly 25% supporting either (A(P,C)) or (P(A,C)) (Fig. 4). It is important to note that this discord among individual gene trees is not derived from poorly supported topologies of individual loci; on the contrary, posterior probabilities for the alternative topologies are routinely very high, mostly with 100% support (Supplementary Fig. S6 available on Dryad). Due to the congruence and overall strong support for ((A,P)C) by multiple inference methods and alternative matrices, we tentatively accept this topology and present it as the best working hypothesis for ACP relationships. Nevertheless, we find the amount and strength of conflicting signal throughout the genome quite remarkable. The reconstruction of a single, bifurcating species tree has generally been seen as the ultimate goal of phylogenetics and lack of resolution is typically regarded as a problem that will be solved with the addition of more or better data. However, in a growing number of cases, additional data have only shown the problem to be more complicated, and strong conflict in genome-scale data appears to be the rule, rather than the exception (Scally et al. 2012; Suh et al. 2015; Brown and Thomson 2016; Pease et al. 2016; Shen et al. 2017).

Genomic Conflict in Deep Time Phylogenetics

Commonly proposed reasons for the existence of recalcitrant nodes in phylogeny reconstruction, beyond

lack of phylogenetic information, include homoplasy, incomplete lineage sorting (ILS), incorrect homology assignment due to gene duplication and loss, protracted gene flow, and hybridization. Homoplasy was long the preferred explanation for lack of resolution due to conflict (as exemplified by long-branch attraction and the Felsenstein zone), when it was assumed that, in general, gene trees would be congruent with the species tree. Newer data show that, while some degree of homoplasy would still be expected, ILS appears to be a reasonable explanation for recalcitrant nodes in some instances (Oliver 2013; Hahn and Nakhleh 2015; Suh et al. 2015). Strongly supported incongruence of our various gene trees could be evidence for widespread ILS at several nodes in our phylogeny, including the split between Anacampserotaceae, Cactaceae, and Portulacaceae, and the relationship of the various species of *Pereskia* to the remainder of the Cactaceae.

The adoption of coalescent theory to resolve ancient nodes has been quickly accepted (e.g., Edwards et al. 2007; Mirarab et al. 2014), though not without some skepticism (Gatesy and Springer 2013; Gatesy and Springer 2014; Gatesy and Springer 2014). Clearly, there is obvious value in evaluating gene trees independently of one another, as they may represent distinct evolutionary histories. Concatenation of very large matrices has also been shown to cause inflated support values, masking significant phylogenetic conflict in the underlying data (Salichos and Rokas 2013). Under the coalescent, the expected degree of deviation of gene trees from the species tree depends on effective ancestral population sizes and generation times (Degnan and Rosenberg 2009). In a series of simulations, Oliver (2013) provided some estimate of ancestral population sizes and generation times needed for the signal of ILS to be recovered in practice.

We cannot help but consider the diffuse and significant numbers of inferred gene duplications in our data set (Supplementary Fig. S3 available on Dryad), including many potential losses of paralogs in certain groups. It is true that inference of both paralog presence and absence is compromised in any genome sub-sampling approach (hybrid enrichment, RNA-seq, etc.), because the absence of a particular paralog could simply be because the paralog was not captured in the sub-sampling or, in the case of transcriptomes, expressed in the collected tissue. Nevertheless, the ubiquitous and phylogenetically dispersed pattern of our inferred duplications across the portullugo (Supplementary Fig. S3 available on Dryad) implies that, regardless of where precisely these duplications are located, isolated duplications are common along the vast majority of reconstructed branches, and not confined to occasional WGD events. Considering estimated genome-wide rates of gene duplication and loss in other groups (Lynch and Conery 2000; Liu et al. 2014), we wonder if the ILS signal in some of these deep-time phylogenetic studies may be better considered as the “incomplete sorting” of paralogs due to differential paralog fixation following

gene duplication and subsequent speciation, rather than a persistent signal of incomplete sorting of alleles alone. In data sets like ours, which span deep nodes and typically include no measure of intraspecific sequence variation, we find it difficult to distinguish between these two scenarios when accounting for gene tree-species tree incongruence.

Molecular Evolution of PEPC

A secondary goal of our study was to design a bait enrichment scheme that would allow us to simultaneously build a large database of genes relevant to the evolution of C₄ and CAM photosynthesis. Our previous work on PEPC evolution in this lineage identified five Portulacineae-specific gene duplications within *ppc-1E1*, the major *ppc* paralog that is most often recruited into C₄ function across eudicots (these duplications all appeared to take place after the separation of the Molluginaceae; [Christin et al. 2014, 2015](#)). We also previously identified specific amino acid substitutions in C₄ and CAM *ppc* loci consistent with changes seen in C₄ origins in grasses, suggesting that there may be shared adaptive AA residues associated with both C₄ and CAM function, likely due to the enzyme's similar function in both syndromes ([Christin et al. 2014, 2015](#)). Our small analysis presented here (Fig. 5) is preliminary, and only meant to illustrate the feasibility of performing large-scale comparative molecular evolution studies with bait sequence data by focusing on an already well known gene family as a proof of concept.

Our expanded baits sampling and analysis is consistent with our previous findings. We confirmed the additional duplication of *ppc-1E1a* within the *Portulaca* lineage (*ppc-1E1a'*) that was associated with the evolution of C₄ photosynthesis in this group, and the use of this specific paralog in C₄ function has already been documented ([Christin et al. 2014](#)). Multiple residues of *ppc-1E1a'* overlap with amino acids associated with C₄ photosynthesis in grasses, whereas *ppc-1E1a* possesses 0 to 1 of the C₄-associated AA residues in all taxa examined. Strikingly, *ppc-1E1a'* sequences also exhibit substantial variation within the major clades of *Portulaca*, suggesting that differing C₄ origins in *Portulaca* were associated with the fixation of distinct C₄-adaptive AA residues within *ppc-1E1a'* ([Christin et al. 2014](#)).

Less is known about the relationship between CAM function and the molecular evolution of PEPC-coding genes. We have discovered the Ser780 residue, which is ubiquitous in C₄ PEPC, in multiple CAM species ([Christin et al. 2014](#)); however, in orchids, CAM-expressed PEPC does not seem to require Ser780 ([Silvera et al. 2014](#)). Furthermore, expression studies have found nighttime up-regulation of primarily *ppc-1E1c* (with Ser780; [Christin et al. 2014](#); [Brilhaus et al. 2016](#)) and in one case each *ppc-1E1a* ([Brilhaus et al. 2016](#)), *ppc-1E1d* ([Christin et al. 2014](#)), and *ppc-1E1e* ([Brilhaus et al. 2016](#)),

all without Ser780, in multiple Portulacineae engaged in a CAM cycle. In this first broader look at amino acid substitutions across the entire *ppc* gene family, we can observe a few patterns. First, many CAM species appear to have accumulated multiple AA residues that have been identified as important to C₄ function, suggesting that there may be a shared selection pressure for both syndromes at the protein coding level. Second, only two of the five *ppc-1E1* copies (with the exception of the *Portulaca*-specific *1E1a'*) in Portulacineae have acquired a Ser780: *ppc-1E1c* and *ppc-1E1e*. In general, *ppc-1E1c* and *ppc-1E1e* are the paralogs that have acquired the most C₄-adaptive AA residues. Despite the accumulation of C₄-associated residues, positive selection analysis using MEME detected little overlap with C₄-associated amino acids under positive selection in grasses, with only residue 579 exhibiting evidence for positive selection in both grasses and in the portulugo species included in our study ([Murrell et al. 2012](#)). We find these results a bit surprising but also difficult to interpret, as the selection tests in the two studies were quite distinct. In particular, MEME tests do not incorporate any *a priori* information about phenotype in the analysis; as we have a mix of C₃, C₄, and CAM phenotypes in our sampling, it may be difficult to find a strong signal for any particular metabolism.

Alternatively, PEPC evolution may be genuinely different in this lineage, and perhaps CAM plants more generally. One interesting case is presented by *Ceraria fruticulosa* and *Portulacaria afra* in the Didiereaceae (the sister group to the ACPT clade). These species demonstrate a relatively high number of C₄-associated amino acids in *ppc-1E1b*, *ppc-1E1c*, *ppc-1E1d*, and *ppc-1E1e*; furthermore, the specific residues that overlap with C₄-associated amino acids largely differ across paralogs, and the only copy in these species with a Ser780 is *ppc-1E1e*. Considering that a *ppc* locus with a Ser780 has, to our knowledge, never been found in non-C₄ or non-CAM plants, we predict that *ppc-1E1e* in these taxa is primarily used for CAM function. However, the three additional paralogs that also exhibit putatively adaptive AA residues may also contribute to CAM function. This type of scenario, with multiple paralogs all contributing to PEPC carbon fixation, has never been demonstrated for C₄ photosynthesis, though we have previously documented significant upregulation of both *ppc-1E1c* and *-1E1d* in *Nopalea cochenillifera* (CAM, Cactaceae) at night ([Christin et al. 2015](#)) and [Brilhaus et al. \(2016\)](#) documented significant upregulation of *ppc-1E1c*, *-1E1e*, and likely *-1E1a* (*Talinum triangulare*, facultative CAM, Talinaceae).

In light of the broad distribution of putative adaptive residues across the multiple copies of *ppc-1E1* in the Portulacineae, it seems that this lineage and gene family might be an especially powerful system for examining the dynamics of gene duplication and subsequent sub-functionalization (e.g. [Ohno 1970](#)). Perhaps in some Portulacineae lineages, functional specialization of particular *ppc-1E1* paralogs took a considerable amount of time post-duplication, with

many of them co-contributing to CAM function for millions of years while accumulating adaptive AA changes independently. Transcriptome profiling of a broader array of Portulacineae could provide critical insight here; for instance, all members of the ACPT clade so far investigated show strong upregulation of *ppc-1E1c* during CAM, which could have been selectively favored because of the presence of the Ser780 residue. Perhaps this mutation occurred earlier in the ACPT clade than it did in the *Ceraria/Portulacaria* clade, which facilitated a more rapid functional specialization of *ppc-1E1c* to CAM function in ACPT species. If the Ser780 mutation is of large effect, then the timing of its appearance may have significant consequences for subsequent specialization of duplicated genes.

In conclusion, we show that it is possible to use targeted sequence capture to sequence gene families across a broad taxonomic range of plants. Phylogenetic studies need not be confined to single copy genes that may be of limited interest outside of their phylogenetic utility; rather, sampling can be expanded to include large, multi-gene families. Not only does this allow for the inclusion of a greater proportion of the genome in targeted sequence capture studies, it also enables exhaustive sampling and analysis of any gene with relevance to a very broad range of evolutionary questions. This creates exciting opportunities for phylogenetic biology in general, opening the potential for systematics-centered research to fully grow into integrative and comprehensive analyses of whole-organism evolution.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

Data available from the Dryad Digital Repository: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5061/dryad.7h3f6>.

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