**Gene Regulatory Divergence Between Locally Adapted Ecotypes in Their Native Habitats**

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**ABSTRACT**

Local adaptation is a key driver of ecological specialization and the formation of new species. Despite its importance, the evolution of gene regulatory divergence among locally-adapted populations is poorly understood, especially how that divergence manifests in nature. Here, we evaluate gene expression divergence and allele-specific gene expression responses for locally-adapted coastal perennial and inland annual accessions of the yellow monkeyflower, *Mimulus guttatus*, in a field reciprocal transplant experiment. Overall, 6765 (73%) of surveyed genes were differentially expressed between coastal and inland habitats, while 7213 (77%) were differentially expressed between the coastal perennial and inland annual accessions. Further, 18% of transcripts had significant genotype x site (GxE) effects. Habitat-specific differential expression was found for 62% of the GxE transcripts (differential expression in one habitat, but not the other), while only 94 (~5%) GxE transcripts had crossing reaction norms. *Cis*-regulatory variation was pervasive, affecting 79% (5532) of differentially expressed genes. We detected *trans* effects for 52% (3611) of differentially expressed genes. Consistent with the supergene hypothesis of chromosome inversion evolution, a locally adaptive inversion was enriched for *cis*-regulatory divergence. Above and below mid-parent heterosis for gene expression was prevalent across habitats and heterotic genes were enriched for growth and development gene ontologies. These results provide multiple new insights into the evolution of transcriptome-wide gene regulatory divergence and plasticity among locally adapted populations.

## INTRODUCTION

One of the most important forces driving the evolution of ecological specialization and the origin of biodiversity is local adaptation (Clausen 1951; Colosimo et al. 2005; Sobel et al. 2010). Local adaptation is characterized by reciprocal home-site advantage, whereby populations perform best in their home habitat while performing poorly in foreign habitats (Kawecki & Ebert 2004; Hoekstra et al. 2006; Hereford 2009; Wadgymar et al. 2017). Case-studies, such as the evolution of beak size in Darwin's Finches (Abzhanov et al. 2004) and coat color of Beach Mice (Hoekstra et al. 2006), suggest that local adaptation should involve fitness trade-offs at the level of individual genes. However, studies that have combined reciprocal transplant field experiments with quantitative trait locus (QTL) mapping have observed that the majority of loci which confer substantial fitness benefits in one habitat result in little or no cost in alternative habitats (Verhoeven et al. 2008; Gardner & Latta 2006; Lowry et al. 2009; Lowry & Willis 2010; Anderson et al. 2011, 2013; Leinonen et al. 2013; Agren et al. 2013; Wadgymar et al. 2017). While multiple studies have now evaluated the effects of individual loci on fitness across habitats, the patterns gene regulatory divergence that might explain habitat-dependent fitness effects in those systems have not been evaluated under natural field conditions.

One very promising route for understanding how gene expression regulation evolves between locally adaptive populations is to conduct allele specific expression (ASE) analyses in nature (Tung et al. 2009; Lovell et al. 2016; Wang et al. 2017; Lohman et al. 2017). In contrast to coarse QTL mapping, conducting ASE analyses in the field allows for the evaluation of the patterns of gene expression responses to habitat context at the individual allele level. ASE analysis is often conducted in F1 hybrids, where parental alleles are evaluated for significant

differences in expression (de Meaux et al. 2005; Guo et al. 2008; Zhang & Borevitz 2009;

Cubillos et al. 2014; Coolon et al. 2014; Steige et al. 2015, 2017; Lovell et al. 2016; Aguilar-

Rangel et al. 2017). ASE relies on there being nucleotide polymorphisms between parental

alleles, so that those alleles can be individually counted in the F1 transcript pool. *Cis*-regulatory

allelic expression differences are expected to persist regardless of whether alleles are expressed

separately in parental genotypes or together in an F1 hybrid. In this way, ASE allows for the

identification of *cis* expression Quantitative Trait Loci (eQTL), which can be evaluated for their

responses to different habitats. Further, *trans* effects on gene expression are indicated by a

change in allelic effects between the parental generation and the F1 hybrids (Cowles et al. 2002;

Wittkopp et al. 2004). Despite its great potential, we are unaware of any field reciprocal

transplant experiment that has measured ASE to evaluate how gene expression divergence

manifests across the habitats known to be responsible for local adaptation.

In this study, we evaluated gene regulatory divergence in nature between locally adapted coastal

and inland population accessions of the yellow monkeyflower, *Mimulus guttatus* (*syn.*

*Erythranthe guttata* (Fisch. ex DC.) G.L. Nesom). *M. guttatus* is a major study system for

understanding the genetic underpinnings of fundamental patterns in evolutionary ecology

(reviewed in Wu et al. 2008; Twyford et al. 2015). Inland populations of *M. guttatus* have

evolved an early-flowering annual life-history to escape from the seasonal summer drought that

occurs in the Mediterranean climate of the California Coastal Mountain Range. In contrast,

coastal populations of *M. guttatus* are sheltered from the summer drought by pervasive oceanic

fog, which supplies soil moisture and reduces transpiration rates (Corbin et al. 2005). As a result,

these populations have evolved a late-flowering perennial life-history (Hall & Willis 2006;

Lowry et al. 2008). While coastal habitats are benign in terms of soil water availability, these

populations must contend with toxic oceanic salt spray, in response to which they have evolved

high salt tolerance (Lowry et al. 2008, 2009; Selby et al. 2014). Across previous reciprocal

transplant field experiments, inland plants have survived to flower at 23.9 times the rate of

coastal plants in inland habitat, while coastal plants have survived at 2.5 times the rate of inland

plants in coastal habitat (Hall & Willis 2006; Lowry et al. 2008, 2009; Hall et al. 2010).

Population structure analysis has repeatedly demonstrated that coastal populations collectively

constitute a single ecotype, which is distinct genetically from inland annual populations (Lowry

et al. 2008; Twyford & Friedman 2015). The individual genes responsible for the divergence of

coastal and inland ecotypes are unknown, but it is clear that a large paracentric chromosomal

inversion on chromosome 8 is responsible for much of the divergence in traits and fitness

between coastal and inland ecotypes (Lowry & Willis 2010; Friedman 2014; Oneal et al. 2014;

Gould et al. 2017). Smaller effect loci across the genome also account for divergence between

the coastal and inland ecotypes (Hall et al. 2006, 2010; Lowry et al. 2009; Friedman et al. 2015).

In addition, significant heterosis occurs for multiple traits (fitness, flowering time, internode

length) in F1 hybrids between coastal and inland accessions (Lowry et al. 2008; Lowry & Willis

2010). The extent to which gene expression also shows patterns of heterosis in this system is

unknown.

The primary goal of our study was to characterize gene regulatory divergence between coastal

perennial and inland annual *M. guttatus* in the natural habitats that drove the evolution of these

distinct coastal and inland ecotypes. In particular, our study aimed to 1) determine the prevalence

of genotype x environment (GxE) interactions affecting the expression of native and non-native

alleles across the divergent habitats, 2) characterize the relative contributions of *cis* and/or *trans*

regulatory variation in expression divergence, 3) establish the role of genome structure (e.g.

inversions) in the evolution of potentially locally adaptive regulatory variation, 4) quantify gene

expression heterosis across habitats, and 5) identify candidate genes underlying local adaptation

in this system. The results of our study provide new insights into the gene regulatory evolution

and suggest that coupling allele-specific expression with reciprocal transplant experiments is a

promising approach for modern local adaptation research.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

*Germplasm*

Original field collections of the seeds used in this experiment were made in the Spring of 2005

from the SWB (N39.0359', W123.6904') and LMC (N38.8640', W123.0839') populations

located in Mendocino County, California. The SWB and LMC populations have been the subject

of extensive recent research (Lowry et al. 2008; Lowry & Willis 2010; Wu et al. 2010; Friedman

& Willis 2013; Friedman 2014; Gould et al. 2017). Seeds from these populations were inbred for

multiple generations in the Duke University Greenhouses. The plants used for the field

experiment included the following: 1) An inbred (7 generations self-fertilized) inland line, LMC-

L1-2, henceforth referred to as LL; 2) An inbred (13 generation self-fertilized) coastal line,

SWB-S1-2, henceforth referred to as SS; and 3) An F1 hybrid between the two inbred lines,

henceforth referred to as F1 or SL. The F1s used in this experiment were made in the Michigan

State University (MSU) Growth Chamber Facilities through a cross between the two parental

inbred lines.

*Field Reciprocal Transplant Experiment*

We conducted a field reciprocal transplant experiment in tandem with allele-specific expression

analysis to understand the causes (*cis*, *trans*) of gene expression divergence between locally

adapted coastal and inland populations of *M. guttatus* (Fig. 1). The reciprocal transplant

experiment was conducted in 2016 using one coastal (Bodega Marine Reserve; N38.3157',

W123.0687') and one inland (Pepperwood Preserve; N38.5755', W122.7008') field site located

in Sonoma County, CA. SS, LL, and F1 seeds were originally sown in Sun Gro Metromix 838

soil on February 3. The seeds were then stratified in the dark at 4°C until February 9, when they

were removed from the cold and germinated in the UC Berkeley Oxford Track Greenhouses.

Seedlings were moved to the Bodega Marine Reserve Greenhouses on February 21 for

acclimation. On February 22, the seedlings were transferred to native soil collected from the field

sites. Seedlings were planted in the field at Bodega on March 7 and at Pepperwood on March 8.

~90 plants per type (SS, LL, F1) were planted at each field site. Plants were evenly distributed

among three blocks per each field site and randomized within block. Tissue for RNA

sequencings was collected from Bodega on April 23 and Pepperwood on April 24. To avoid

effects of circadian rhythm on gene expression, all tissue was collected between 12:00pm and

1:00pm. Both collection days had mostly clear skies, with mean local temperatures during

collection periods of 14° C at Bodega and 17° C at Pepperwood. Plants had progressed to

different developmental stages at time of collection, with some plants approaching flowering and

others not. To best standardize tissue collection across genotypes, only the two youngest pairs of

fully expanded leaves were collected from each plant. Tissue was immediately flash frozen on

liquid nitrogen in the field. Samples were then shipped on dry ice to Michigan State University

for RNA extractions.

*RNA-sequencing*

Total RNA was extracted from 80 leaf tissue samples with the Spectrum Plant Total RNA Kit

(Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, MO, USA). RNA was extracted from 12 replicates of both SS and LL

parental lines from the coastal field site and 13 replicates of both parental lines from the inland

field site. RNA from 15 F1 hybrids from each site was also extracted. Total RNA was submitted

for library preparation and sequencing at the MSU Genome Core

(https://rtsf.natsci.msu.edu/genomics/). RNA-Seq libraries were prepared using the Illumina

TruSeq Stranded mRNA Library Preparation Kit on a Perkin Elmer (Waltham, MA) Sciclone

NGS robot. Completed libraries were quality controlled and quantified using a combination of

Qubit dsDNA HS (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham, MA), Caliper LabChipGX HS DNA

(Perkin Elmer, Waltham, MA), and Kapa Biosystems Illumina Library Quantification qPCR

(Wilmington, MA) assay kits. All libraries were barcoded and library concentrations were

normalized and pooled in equimolar amounts: 8 pools each consisting of 10 randomly chosen

libraries were made. Each of these pools was loaded on one lane of an Illumina HiSeq 2500 High

Output flow cell (v4) and sequenced in the 1x100bp (SE100) format using HiSeq SBS reagents

(also v4). Base calling was done by Illumina Real Time Analysis (RTA) v1.18.64 and output of

RTA was demultiplexed and converted to Fastq format with Illumina Bcl2fastq v1.8.4.

*Reference Transcriptome Assembly*

Alignment of RNA-seq to a single reference genome can lead to major biases in ASE studies

(Stevenson et al. 2013). To overcome reference bias, we assembled reference transcriptomes for

the coastal perennial (SS) and inland annual (LL) parents. We chose this method over

construction of a pseudo-transcriptome reference (Shen et al. 2013) to avoid generating bias

caused by the reference genome and transcriptome for *M. guttatus*, which was generated from an

inland annual line (IM62; Hellsten et al. 2013). Reference bias is of particular concern in *M.*

*guttatus* because pairwise polymorphism is generally high ($\pi_S$ = 0.033-0.065; Brandvain et al.

2014; Gould et al. 2017; Puzey et al. 2017). To generate a reference transcriptome assembly that

contained allele-specific sequences for each parental genotype, we sequenced and conducted *de*

*novo* assembly using RNA-sequencing. Plants of each of the coastal (SS) and inland (LL) lines

were grown in the MSU greenhouses until both genotypes were flowering. Floral bud, leaf, and

root tissue were collected from each of the SS and LL lines, flash frozen with liquid nitrogen,

and stored at -80° C. Total RNA was extracted from each sample using the Spectrum Plant Total

RNA Kit and submitted to the MSU Genome Core for library construction and sequencing.

Strand-specific Tru-Seq Illumina RNA-seq libraries were prepared and sequenced along with

four libraries constructed from field collected leaf tissue from the reciprocal transplant

experiment (one sample per parental line per field site). These libraries were included in the

transcriptome assembly pipeline to capture sequences from genes that may only be expressed

under field conditions. Completed libraries were quality controlled and quantified using a

combination of Qubit dsDNA HS, Caliper LabChipGX HS DNA, and Kapa Biosystems Illumina

Library Quantification qPCR assay kits. A total of 10 libraries were barcoded with dual index

barcodes and pooled together. The entire pool was sequenced using 125 bp paired-end reads on a

single lane of the Illumina GA 2500 platform.

Raw output reads were quality checked using FastQC v.0.11.3 (Andrews 2015). Residual adapter

sequences were removed and reads were quality trimmed using Trimmomatic v.0.33 (Bolger et

al. 2014), discarding sequences less than 50 bp in length. Paired and un-paired reads from each

ecotype were combined and assembled into two separate *de novo* (non-reference guided)

assemblies using Trinity v20140413p1 (Grabherr et al. 2011) with *in silico* read normalization.

To check the quality of our two transcriptomes, we compared our *de novo* assemblies to the set

of primary transcripts from the IM62 reference transcriptome using Trinity utility scripts. We

found that 74.3% of primary transcripts represented at least 50% sequence coverage in the inland

(L) transcriptome and 74.1% in the coastal (S) transcriptome. We also aligned the filtered input

reads back to the finished assemblies using Bowtie2 (Langmead et al. 2012). A total of 98.98%

and 99.26% of input reads aligned back to the inland (L) and coastal (S) assemblies, respectively.

We identified possible non-plant contaminant sequences in each assembly through comparison to

the NCBI nt database using blastn. We eliminated transcriptome sequences with top blast

sequence matches (e-value cutoff of 1e-20) to non-plant organisms ($N = 16,243$ and $N = 1222$

eliminated sequences for the inland and coastal transcriptomes, respectively).

To construct a combined reference transcriptome that contained pairs of allelic sequences from

both lines, we used a reciprocal best blast strategy. Each transcriptome was compared against the

other (blastn) at an e-value cutoff of 1e-5 and reciprocal best hits were returned using a custom

Python (v. 2.7.2) script (https://github.com/lowrylab/Mimulus_Gene_Expression). We tested a

range of e-value cutoffs in this analysis and found that the choice of e-value between 1e-5 and

1e-50 had little effect on the total output number of best blast pairs (see Fig. S1). We considered

two sequences best blast hits if total high-scoring pair (HSP) coverage was 75% or greater

between sequences. We included only aligned sequence regions of the longest HSP in the

combined transcriptome.

To match transcripts in the combined *de novo* reference transcriptome with their corresponding

*Mimulus* genes, we compared *de novo* assembled alleles against the reference (IM62) set of

primary transcripts (blastn) at an e-value cut-off of 1e-5. In rare cases, where two alleles from a

*de novo* assembled transcript matched different *Mimulus* genes, the gene with the lowest e-value

alignment was chosen as a match for the allele pair. Note that with this annotation method, each

*de novo* assembled transcript has only one matching gene and thus, can be unambiguously

assigned a specific location in the genome. However, multiple transcripts can be assigned to the

same genomic location, which is typical of isoforms stemming from the same gene.

***Differential Expression Analyses***

Raw reads from the 80 field RNA-seq libraries were de-multiplexed, quality filtered, and

trimmed using FastQC and Trimmomatic, as described above for the transcriptome assembly.

Filtered reads were aligned to the *de novo* combined reference transcriptome (described above)

using the un-gapped aligner Bowtie v1.0.0 (Langmead et al. 2009). We outputted only unique

alignments with zero mismatches. In this way, we analyzed only read count data for reads that

aligned uniquely and perfectly to only one parental allele in the combined reference

transcriptome. Using these criteria, on average 28.6% of library reads per individual were

aligned (range 23.7 – 30.7%). For confirmation, some alignments were visually checked using

IGV v.2.3.65 (Thorvaldsdóttir et al. 2013).

Read alignments to each transcript were quantified using a custom Python (v.2.7.2) script. Using

the raw count data, we identified allele pairs in the transcriptome with a high degree of residual

heterozygosity in the parental inbred lines. This is potentially indicated where a significant

number of reads from a homozygous parent align to the opposite parental allele in the

transcriptome. We eliminated from further analysis any pair of alleles where the average number

of reads aligning to the correct parental allele was less than 5 times the average number of reads

aligning to the alternate allele ($N = 2255$ eliminated transcripts). We also used the initial count

data to test for mapping bias (Fig. S2). For both field sites, mapping bias was present but well

controlled. There was a small but statistically significant relationship between transcript

nucleotide divergence and differential expression (equivalent to 0.001 increase in the absolute

value of LFC between genotypes, per SNP). Count data was normalized for library size using

Trimmed Mean of M-values (TMM) normalization to counts per million, which reduces biases

generated by the presence of very highly and lowly expressed transcripts (Robinson et al. 2010).

We eliminated any transcript without at least one library containing >= 10 counts per million

reads. The remaining sequences constitute the 'expressed' set of transcripts ($N = 10,122$). The

mean expressed library size for samples from the coast and inland sites was not significantly

different (*t*-tests: all libraries, $P = 0.60$; parental libraries only, $P = 0.22$, Fig. S3A), and is thus,

unlikely to strongly affect statistical comparisons between the two sites. Only 2 transcripts were

expressed at only one site and only 7 transcripts were expressed by only one parental line.

We analyzed the expressed transcript data using the limma (Ritchie et al. 2015) and edgeR

(Robinson et al. 2010) packages in R v.3.2.1 (R. Core Team 2012). Variance stabilizing

normalization of the data was performed using the voom (Law et al. 2014) function in limma,

with a design matrix corresponding to the particular linear model being used for analysis. Model

design matrices were coded using the default treatment-contrast parameterization scheme (see

Smyth et al. (2015), section 9.5.4) and the significance of model effects were calculated using

voom precision weights and the eBayes function. Model effects were judged significant if they

fell below a Benjamini-Hoechberg false-discovery rate corrected $P$-value of 0.05 using the

decideTests function.

We used several different linear models to analyze the count data for expressed transcripts,

modified from the method of Lovell et al. (2016). For this approach, it is important that the size

of the L and S sub-transcriptome in each F1 is approximately equal to produce unbiased results,

which we verified independently (Fig. S4). Each linear model had one or more fixed factors:

allele (L/S), environment (coastal field site vs. inland field site), generation (F0/F1), and

interaction terms. We analyzed the parental plants (F0 generation) separately, the F1 plants

separately, and both generations together in different models. We avoided analyzing models with

more than one categorical factor, except for the purposes of measuring interaction effects

because effect significance testing for crossing categorical factors only captures differences

present in the first level of each factor.

For data from the F0 plants, we ran models examining the allele (homozygous genotype) effect

within each environment separately. We also tested for environmental effects separately within

each parental genotype.  We used a model with both genotype and environment to test the

significance of the genotype x environment interactions. Because the inland site had one extra

plant per genotype compared with the coastal site, we analyzed data from 12 randomly chosen

parental lines of each genotype to equalize the power to detect effects between sites. A *post-hoc*

power analysis was conducted using the R package *RnaSeqSampleSize* (Bi & Liu 2016).

We used data from all plants together (both F0 and F1) to test for *cis* and *trans* regulation. *Cis-*

regulatory allelic expression differences are expected to persist regardless of whether alleles are

expressed separately in parental genotypes or together in an F1 hybrid. However, in the F1

genotype, *trans* acting factors from both parental genotypes will influence the expression of an

allele, so *trans* regulation is indicated if allelic patterns of differential expression are different in

the parents vs. the F1 plants. In our model, a significant effect of allele is indicative of a *cis-*

regulatory difference in expression. If a transcript has a significant allele x generation interaction

effect, this indicates *trans* regulation. Within each environment, we tested a model with the

following factors: allele (genotype), generation (F0/F1), and the interaction term. Any transcript

with any *cis* regulation had a significant allele effect (measured in the F1 generation only). Any

transcript with only *trans* regulation had a significant difference between generations, but a non-

significant allele effect in the F1 generation. Any transcript with both *cis* and *trans* regulation

had a significant generational effect and a significant allele effect in the F1.

To gauge the significance of *cis* x environment interactions, we tested the interaction term of a

model using only F1 data and the factors allele, environment, and interaction. To gauge the

significance of trans x environment interactions we modeled all the data (F0 and F1) and

measured the significance of a three-way interaction term: allele x generation x environment.

***Gene Ontology Enrichment and Expression Networks***

We tested for enrichment of gene-ontology (GO) terms among subsets of genes with particular

expression patterns (significant model effects). To annotate GO terms, all IM62 reference

*Mimulus* proteins were paired with their best *Arabidopsis* protein matches (blastp) at an e-value

cutoff of $10^{-3}$. The set of expressed transcripts in our study was matched to the IM62 reference

genome genes, as described above, and corresponding GO terms were matched to the

*Arabidopsis* BLAST hits. Subsequent GO enrichment tests were done using the R

BIOCONDUCTOR package topGO (Alexa & Rahnenführer 2015). We used the Bioconductor

database 'org.At.tair.db' for annotation and the algorithm 'classic' (statistic = 'fisher') for

statistical tests. Because *P*-value distributions of GO enrichment tests do not typically conform to

a distribution amenable to Benjamini-Hoechberg FDR control, and because such control methods

can be overly conservative causing loss of valuable functional information (Alexa &

Rahnenführer 2015), we report GO terms with uncorrected enrichment *P*-values <= 0.01 (Table

S1). Enrichment tests were conducted at the level of genes rather than transcripts. For each gene

in the IM62 reference transcriptome, we determined the model effects for all matching expressed

transcripts in our data set. A model effect for a gene was considered significant if at least one

matching transcript had a significant effect. GO enrichment was then tested among all expressed

genes ($N = 9326$) with a significant effect vs. all expressed genes without a significant effect.

Enrichments for GxE effects were measured against all genes where either environmental or

allelic DE could be detected. Reaction norm plots were generated using the LSMean expression

level of all transcripts for each gene in each environment.

We conducted clustering analysis of gene expression within each parental genotype using the R

package WGCNA (Langfelder et al. 2008). Gene expression was quantified as the expression

level of the longest matching transcript for each gene. For all analyses, we calculated

dissimilarity of expression using a soft thresholding power of 6 and used the dynamicTreeCut

function to define modules with a minimum number of 30 genes. We calculated the correlation

of each cluster (eigengene) with habitat (Fig. S5). Gene ontology term enrichment was calculated

for all modules with a correlation value of r > 0.75 (Table S2).

***Chromosomal Inversion Analyses***

Two inverted regions of the genome, one on chromosome 5 and one on chromosome 8, have

been linked to adaptive differences between inland and coastal ecotypes in previous studies

(Lowry & Willis 2010; Oneal et al. 2014; Twyford & Friedman 2015; Gould et al. 2017). When

examining genes in putatively inverted regions of the genome, we included reference genome

v1.1 scaffolds that are inferred to be in the inverted regions from a previous linkage mapping

study (Holeski et al. 2014). For the inversion on chromosome 5, we included v1.1 scaffolds 36,

149, 158, 170, 197, 266, 281, 288, 327, and 368. For the inversion on chromosome 8, we

included v1.1 scaffolds 11, 59, 76, 155 233, 604, and 1093. We tested whether genes in these

regions of the genome are enriched for any model effects. Enrichment tests of model effects

among annotated inversion and non-inversion genes were carried out using Fisher's Exact tests.

The magnitude of model effects among genes with significant effects were compared using

Wilcox rank sum tests in R. It should be noted that the presence of alternative orientations of

chromosome 8 inversion in the SS and LL parental lines has been confirmed by previous crosses

(Lowry & Willis 2010) while the chromosome 5 inversion was originally identified in a QTL

cross between different inland and coastal lines (Holeski et al. 2014). High differentiation

between the SS and LL parental lines in both inversion regions has been demonstrated by an

allele frequency outlier analysis (Gould et al. 2017).

***Expression Heterosis***

We analyzed heterosis of gene expression separately for each field site using a model with a

single factor for genotype (SS/LL/SL). Data from the inland site was down-sampled to 12 lines

for each parental genotype to equalize power to detect effects between sites. Specific contrasts of

the F1 genotype (SL) were made to each parental genotype (LL/SS) using makeContrasts in

limma. Contrasts were judged significant if they fell below a Benjamini-Hoechberg false-

discovery rate corrected *P*-value of 0.05. Heterosis of gene expression for each transcript was

classified into 7 categories depending on contrasts between the parental genotype with lower

expression (LP), parental genotype with higher expression (HP), and the F1:

i.    additive expression (no heterosis): LP<F1<HP

ii.   low parent heterosis: F1<LP<HP

iii.  below mid-parent heterosis: F1=LP<HP

iv.   above mid-parent heterosis: LP<HP=F1

v.    high parent heterosis: LP<HP<F1

vi.   ambiguous: LP<HP, but LP=F1=HP

vii.  no differential expression: LP=HP

Transcripts with ambiguous expression patterns were excluded from enrichment tests (Table S1).

*Patterns of Candidate Gene Expression*

In a study of species-wide genomic variation, Gould et al. (2017) identified a set of 667

candidate adaptation genes. These genes had unusually high differentiation in allele frequencies

between a set of 47 coastal and 50 inland *Mimulus* populations. High differentiation was detected

in either the genic or 1 kb upstream promoter regions of the genes, or both. We tested for

enrichment of differential expression patterns and heterosis among the expressed candidate genes

in the current study. Enrichment was tested against all expressed non-candidate genes using

Fisher's Exact tests. The magnitude of model effects among genes with significant effects were

compared using Wilcox rank sum tests in R.

**RESULTS**

*Reference Transcriptome Assembly*

From the tissues of the two *M. guttatus* parental lines we were able to reconstruct both parental

alleles for 25,893 transcripts, of which 708 pairs were removed because they contained no

polymorphism between lines. Eighty-two percent of transcripts could be matched back to

previously annotated *M. guttatus* genes ([www.phytozome.org](http://www.phytozome.org)). Our transcriptome reconstructed

54.0% of *M. guttatus* primary transcripts at 50% coverage or greater. On average, there were 43

polymorphisms (SNPs or indels) between each pair of alleles in the reference (Fig. S3B).

*Differential Expression Analyses*

RNA-sequencing of plants from the field experiments produced approximately 25.9 million raw

reads per library (range 9.2-35.9 million reads). We were able to evaluate gene expression for

10,122 transcripts corresponding to 9,326 genes, after transcriptome reconstruction and filtering.

Significant expression differences (FDR = 0.05) between the inland and coastal field sites were

common (6765 genes; 73% of genes). Expression differences between parental genotypes within

field sites were also common (7213 genes; 77%; Table 1 and 2).  We found 54% more genes

were differentially expressed between parental lines at the inland site than at the coastal site

(Table 2). We can attribute only part of this discrepancy to differences in power at the two sites.

Average power to detect DE genes was only slightly higher at the inland site than the coastal site

(75% vs. 68% for a minimum fold-change of 2X).

Genotype x site (GxE) interactions were relatively common. In total, 1837 transcripts

(corresponding to 19% of expressed genes, Table 1, Table S3) had significant GxE interactions,

where the magnitude of expression differences between parental ecotypes depended on the field

site in which they were grown (Fig. 2A). Only 94 transcripts had crossing reaction norms (green

points, Fig. 2B). More often, expression differences between genotypes were significant at one

site and non-significant at the other (1137 transcripts, 11%, blue and red points, Fig. 2).

Most of the expression differences between the coastal and inland lines could be attributed to *cis*-

regulatory variation: 79% (5532 genes) of differentially expressed genes had *cis* regulatory

differences, while about half (3611 genes) of the differentially expressed genes had detectable

*trans* effects (Fig. 3A-C, Table 1). At both coastal and inland field sites, the magnitudes of *cis*

and *trans* regulatory differences were similar (Table S4). However, we detected far more

significant *trans* effects in the inland field site than the coastal field site (Fig. 3A-C, Table S4).

Overall, there was only moderate overlap between the sets of *cis*-regulated transcripts from the

two environments (Fig. S6). The same was true for the sets of *trans*-regulated transcripts from

the two environments.

***Gene Ontology Enrichment and Expression Networks***

We explored the functional significance of genes with differential expression between

environments and between parental ecotypes. Differentially expressed genes in the coastal (SS)

parent between sites were enriched for glycosinolate/glucosinolate/S-glycoside biosynthesis and

metabolism, response to starvation, and others (Table S1). Differentially expressed genes in the

inland parent (LL) between sites were enriched for GO categories related to cuticle development,

meristem and floral development, and pigment production. Differentially expressed genes

between the parental lines (across sites) were enriched for genes involved with cell wall

formation, meristem initiation, and responses to viral pathogens. Genes with genotype x site

(GxE) interactions had the most significantly enriched GO terms ($N = 69$), including

brassinosteroid biosynthesis/metabolism, cell wall formation, regulation of development, and

pigment accumulation.

We used network clustering analysis to examine correlated expression of gene clusters (modules)

within habitats for the coastal and inland lines (Pearson's correlation, r > 0.75, Fig. S5). The

coastal perennial line (SS) preferentially expressed modules related to root and epidermal

development at its home site, while oxidative stress response, chlorophyll metabolism, and

circadian rhythm modules were highly expressed in inland habitat (Table S2). The inland annual

line preferentially expressed gene clusters related to nucleoside catabolism, sugar and starch

metabolism, pigment accumulation, and photoperiodism at the inland field site, but had no

modules strongly associated with the coastal field site.

***Chromosomal Inversion Analyses***

Chromosomal inversions are thought to act as adaptation supergenes that hold together long

haplotypes containing multiple adaptive polymorphisms through suppressed recombination

(Kirkpatrick 2010; Joron et al. 2011; Thompson & Jiggins 2014). We were thus interested in

evaluating the hypothesis of whether the known inversions in this system hold together

haplotypes of differentially expressed genes. There were significantly more differentially

expressed genes inside the chromosome 5 inversion than expected by chance and there were

significantly more GxE interactions for genes in this inversion (Table 1). The adaptive (Lowry &

Willis 2010) chromosome 8 inversion also had significantly more differentially expressed genes,

but only at the coastal site (Table 2). Interestingly, the chromosome 8 inversion had a significant

enrichment of *cis*-eQTLs (Table 1), suggesting that it may maintain a higher level regulatory

divergence caused by the evolution of *cis*-regulatory elements.

***Expression Heterosis***

Heterosis is commonly found in crosses among locally-adapted populations and can potentially

facilitate gene flow between those populations (Lowry et al. 2008; Charlesworth & Willis 2009;

Baack et al. 2016). Heterosis is typically quantified at the level of an individual trait, including

expression traits by comparing the trait value of hybrids to the trait values of the parents

(Springer & Stupar 2007a,b; Niemi et al. 2015; Lovell et al. 2016). Consistent with previous

studies (Lowry et al. 2008; Lowry & Willis 2010), we have found robust heterosis for multiple

phenotypic traits in F1 hybrids between coastal and inland lines (Fig. 1F). In the current study,

we also found nearly 73% of differentially expressed transcripts had heterotic (non-additive)

expression in the F1 (Fig. 3D, Table S5). The percentage of transcripts with heterotic expression

did not vary strongly by site (Fig 3D), although only 54% of heterotic genes were shared

between sites. Heterotic genes were enriched for functional terms associated with multiple

growth and development terms at both field sites (Table S6).

***Patterns of Candidate Gene Expression***

To identify genes putatively linked to local adaptation, we cross-referenced our results with a

recent genomic outlier analysis, which identified 667 genes with a high level of allelic

differentiation between coastal and inland populations (Lowry et al. 2010). We found that the

magnitude of differential expression between lines and between field sites was significantly

elevated for candidate genes with highly differentiated SNPs (from Gould et al. 2017) in their

promoter regions (Table S7).

We were able to examine gene expression in seven top candidate genes highlighted by the outlier

analysis and/or previous QTL mapping studies (Fig. 3E-G, Fig. S7). The candidate gene *ABA1*

mediates production of abscisic acid, which controls responses to osmotic stress, including

drought (Xiong et al. 2002). An *ABA1* homolog, Migut.H00431, is located within the

chromosome 8 inversion and may contribute to inland ecotype's adaptation to low soil water

availability. *ABA1* was always more highly expressed in the inland line and was upregulated in

both lines at the inland field site (Fig. 3E). Previously, we showed that coastal *M. guttatus*

populations have evolved leaf tissue tolerance to oceanic salt spray (Lowry et al. 2009). Leaf salt

tolerance is generally mediated by a Na$^+$/H$^+$ antiporter (*SOS1*; Qiu et al. 2002), which is

activated by a calcium sensor (*CBL10*; Kim et al. 2007). Both *SOS1* (Migut.E00570) and *CBL10*

(Migut.A00138) were more highly expressed in the coastal line than the inland line across

habitats (Fig. 3G, F), a pattern consistent with elevated salt tolerance of coastal populations.

**DISCUSSION**

Overall, our results identified multiple key patterns regarding the relationship between gene

expression and the evolution of local adaptation. Differential expression is substantial between

locally-adapted accessions in nature. Expression plasticity of alleles across habitats (genotype x

environment interactions) appear to be common and may minimize fitness trade-offs at

individual loci that contribute to the overall pattern of local adaptation. A large portion of that

differential expression is due to *cis*-regulatory divergence. Chromosomal inversions appear to act

as supergenes by holding together haplotypes of differentially expressed genes, but this pattern

depends on habitat context. Heterosis of gene expression is pervasive and heterotic genes are

enriched for growth and developmental functions. We discuss each of these major findings as

well as the limitations and caveats associated with our study in detail below.

***Sources of Variation in Gene Expression***

One of the major outstanding questions in local adaptation research is why the fitness effects of

individual loci on local adaptation are so often asymmetric across habitats. Theoretical models

(Levene 1953; Hedrick 1976, 1986; Dieckmann & Doebeli 1999) and studies in key model

systems (Abzhanov et al. 2004; Hoekstra et al. 2006; Barrett et al. 2009) have suggested trade-

offs at individual loci (e.g. antagonistic pleiotropy) to be common. However, field reciprocal

transplant experiments and experimental evolution studies have often found a pattern of

conditional neutrality, where loci have a strong effect on fitness in one environment, but have an

undetectable effect on fitness in alternative environments (reviewed in Bono et al. 2017;

Wadgymar et al. 2017). While a failure to statistically detect a trade-off across habitats does not

rule out the possibility of a small trade-off for an individual locus, it does suggest that adaptive

loci are often strongly asymmetric in their fitness effects across habitats.

Adaptive phenotypic plasticity mediated through gene regulatory divergence between locally

adapted populations is one possible mechanism by which trade-offs could be minimized across

habitats for individual loci (Rutherford 2003; Ghalambor et al. 2007; Des Marais et al. 2013,

2017; Dayan et al. 2015; Lohman et al. 2017). Adaptations of organisms to maintain homeostasis

when faced by environmental challenges can be caused by genotypic specific changes in gene

expression (Gibson 2008; Des Marais et al. 2017). However, such environmentally dependent

changes in gene expression would not be expected to result in a cost if gene expression did not

differ among genotypes in habitats that lacked particular environmental stresses. In our study, we

identified 1137 transcripts that were differentially expressed between the coastal perennial and

inland annual lines in one habitat (coast or inland), but were not differentially expressed in the

alternative habitat. We cannot definitively determine whether any of these genes are responsible

for asymmetries in fitness effects across habitats. Further, some of the genotype specific changes

in gene expression could potentially be maladaptive (Ghalambor et al. 2007). However, our

results do clearly show that habitat-specific differential gene expression is common for locally

adapted ecotypes. Future studies should focus on making the critical linkages between patterns of

gene expression and fitness in the field to determine whether asymmetries of fitness effects

across habitats are the result of habitat-specific differential gene expression.

Overall, *cis*-regulatory evolution was responsible for at least 79% of the differentially expressed

genes. This is about twice the percentage of *cis*-regulated differentially expressed genes for

crosses both within and between *Drosophilia* species (Coolon et al. 2014). However, the

relatively high proportion of *cis*-regulatory divergence underlying differentially expressed genes

is not too surprising, given the high level of polymorphism among *M. guttatus* accessions

(Brandvain et al. 2014; Gould et al. 2017; Puzey et al. 2017). Indeed, the degree of allele

frequency differentiation in promoter regions between the coastal and inland ecotypes (Gould et

al. 2017) was predictive of differential expression in this study. Further, in terms of the

proportion of *cis* regulated genes out of all genes surveyed (59% for our study), our results are

not very different from other study systems. Mack et al. (2016) found significant *cis* effects for

68% of surveyed genes in crosses between house mice subspecies (*Mus musculus musculus* and

*M. m. domesticus*). Steige et al. (2015) found that 33-39% of genes surveyed had significant

allele-specific expression effects for hybrids between accessions of the plant *Capsella*

*grandiflora*.

***Gene Regulatory Evolution and Chromosomal Inversions***

Chromosomal inversions have been thought to be involved in evolutionary adaptations since

classic studies in *Drosophila* found that inversion polymorphisms are frequently correlated with

environmental conditions over geographic space and through time (Dobzhansky 1951, 1970;

Kirpatrick & Barton 2006; Hoffman & Rieseberg 2008; Cheng et al. 2012; Ayala et al. 2013,

2014; Adrion et al. 2015). Inversions strongly suppress genetic recombination in heterokaryotic

(inversion heterozygotes) individuals because recombinant gametes are unbalanced (Dobzhansky

1970; Rieseberg 2001). Researchers have thus hypothesized that inversions could act as

supergenes by holding together long haplotypes containing multiple adaptive polymorphisms

through suppressed recombination (Dobzhansky 1970; Joron et al. 2011; Thompson & Jiggins

2014; Kirkpatrick & Barton 2006; Kirkpatrick & Barrett 2015).

The supergene hypothesis is a major reason why inversions are thought to frequently contribute

to the evolution of adaptations (Dobzhansky 1970; Kirkpatrick & Barton 2006; Hoffman &

Rieseberg 2008; Faria & Navarro 2009; Thompson & Jiggins 2014). Early researchers,

especially Dobzhansky (1970), argued that inversions could hold together co-adapted epistatic

complexes of genes through suppressed recombination. However, theoreticians have recently

shown that inversions can spread due to purely additive effects, when at least two locally

adaptive loci are captured within the inverted region (Kirkpatrick & Barton 2006; Kirkpatrick &

Barrett 2015). Regardless of the ultimate genetic mechanisms, these models all predict that

suppression of recombination by inversions maintains adaptive divergence at multiple linked

loci.

Global gene expression analyses offer one way to test whether inversions hold together

haplotypes of genetic variation potentially responsible for phenotypic divergence between locally

adapted populations. Research in a few systems has found evidence of increased levels of

expression divergence in inversions (Marquès-Bonet et al. 2004; Cassone et al. 2011; Fuller et al.

2016). For example, Marquès-Bonet et al. (2004) found 8.9% greater divergence (fold change) in

human versus chimp brain gene expression for chromosomal inversions when compared to the

rest of the genome. We did not observe a significant difference in fold change between inverted

and non-inverted regions in our study. However, genes within the region of the chromosome 5

inversion were 12.5% more likely to be differentially expressed. Genes within the adaptive

chromosome 8 inversion were 8.3% more likely to have a *cis*-eQTL.

The enrichment of gene expression differences in our study is consistent with patterns found in

inversions between chimpanzees and humans (Marquès-Bonet et al. 2004) and *Drosophila*

(Fuller et al. 2016), but contrasts with results for the plant *Boechera stricta* (Lee et al. 2017).

While the finding of an enrichment of differential gene expression for inversions in this study

and others is consistent with the supergene hypothesis of inversion evolution, it is by no means

definitive proof. Demonstrating that an inversion has evolved as an adaptation supergene

requires confirmation that multiple genes within the inversion have effects on adaptive

phenotypes (Hoffman & Rieseberg 2008; Kirkpatrick 2010; Kirkpatrick & Kern 2012). There is

currently no study that we are aware of which has experimentally confirmed that two or more

genes within an inversion contribute additively or epistatically to adaptive phenotypic

differences between locally adapted populations, ecotypes, or species (but see Kunte et al. 2014).

***Heterosis of Gene Expression***

We have previously found that heterosis is common in F1 hybrids between coastal perennial and

inland annual accessions (Lowry et al. 2008; Lowry & Willis 2010). In this study, we observed a

high level of above mid-parent heterosis for gene expression. However, only a small percentage

(<1%) of genes had above high-parent or below low-parent heterosis. Heterosis often causes

increased growth and vigor (reviewed in Hochholdinger & Hoecker 2007; Charlesworth & Willis

2009). Consistent with this pattern, heterotic genes were enriched for functional terms associated

with growth and development at both field sites (Table S1). The enrichment of heterotic genes

involved with growth and development likely reflects the downstream responses of the ultimate

genetic causes of heterosis.

Even though heterosis is a well-documented phenomenon occurring in hybrids, the ultimate

causes of heterosis are still not well characterized (Hochholdinger & Hoecker 2007;

Charlesworth & Willis 2009). The dominance hypothesis postulates that heterosis is the result of

masking of deleterious recessive loci through complementation genome-wide in hybrids.

Alternatively, the overdominance hypothesis proposes that heterosis is the result of heterozygote

advantage at multiple loci across the genome. A third major alternative hypothesis is that

heterosis is conferred by epistatic interactions.

Some readers may question our use of the term heterosis to describe the observation of non-

additive gene expression in F1 hybrid individuals. Many in the field have used other terms to

describe non-additive gene expression in allele-specific expression studies, often labeling above

mid-parent heterosis as "overdominance" and below mid-parent heterosis as "underdominance"

(Gibson et al. 2004; Swanson-Wagner et al. 2006; Rockman & Kruglyak 2006; Bell et al. 2013).

However, the use of overdominance in this way conflates the phenomena of heterosis with one of

the hypotheses for its ultimate cause (i.e. heterosis is conflated with the overdomiance

hypothesis; Hochholdinger & Hoecker 2007; Niemi et al. 2015). Further, it is important to

recognize that the quantification of heterosis is not limited to fitness and yield traits. In the plant

biology and crop literature, heterosis is routinely quantified for any trait measured in F1 hybrids,

including leaf shape, root morphology, and flowering time (Blum et al. 1977; Barth et al. 2003).

Gene expression is also a trait. Thus, heterosis can be quantified as transcript levels for

individual genes, as has been done in previous studies (Huang et al. 2006; Stupar & Springer

2006; Ji et al. 2014; Niemi et al. 2015; Lovell et al. 2016).

***Caveats, Limitations, and Future Directions***

There are important caveats and concerns to consider in the interpretation of the results of our

study. One of the foremost caveats of the study is its narrow scope. We only evaluated gene

expression differences between one inbred line per ecotype, at two field sites, and for gene

expression at one time point. Despite these drawbacks, this is the first study that we are aware of

to evaluate allele-specific expression in the field between known locally adapted populations

(Voelckel et al. 2017), which allowed us to detect novel *cis* x habitat and *trans* x habitat

interaction (Fig. 3; Table S8). The major outstanding questions include how variable gene

expression is across populations, field sites, and tissue types? In the future, it will be critical to

evaluate gene expression at different time points and across tissue types to gain a more

comprehensive understanding of how ecotypic differences in gene expression manifest

throughout development under natural field conditions.

Perhaps, the greatest challenge for interpreting gene expression results from reciprocal transplant

experiments is understanding how patterns of expression actually contribute to phenotypes and

fitness across habitats. Fitness trade-offs that are associated with local adaptation could

potentially be caused by any type of gene expression pattern. Constitutive expression differences

between ecotypes could cause stable phenotypic differences that are beneficial in one habitat but

deleterious in another. For example, in our study, expression of *SOS1* does not appear to be

plastic in either ecotype and it may be a major contributor to the fitness trade-offs observed

between habitats (Fig. 3F). Gene expression characterized by genotype x environment

interactions could cause fitness trade-offs, but just as likely could mitigate trade-offs by helping

ecotypes maintain homeostasis across habitats.

Until recently, studies of gene regulation have for the most part been limited to the laboratory

setting. Coupling those studies with reciprocal transplant experiments to better understand local

adaptation is still rare (Kenkel & Matz 2016; Lohman et al. 2017; Voelckel et al. 2017). Allele-

specific expression is clearly an important tool for understanding the evolution of regulatory

differences between locally adapted populations, ecotypes, and species. However, we hope that

future reciprocal transplant experiments will go beyond RNA-sequencing by also examining

genotypic differences in genome-wide patterns of chromatin remodeling and protein translation

across divergent habitats (Rodgers-Melnick et al. 2016; Voelckel et al. 2017).

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1074 **DATA ACCESSIBILITY**

1075 RNA-sequence data are deposited are available through the NCBI Sequence Read Archive under

1076 project identifier XX.

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1078 **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

1079 DBL designed and conducted the field experiment. YC conducted the laboratory work. BAG

1080 analyzed the data. DBL and BAG wrote the manuscript.

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1087 **TABLES**

1088

1089 Table 1: Summary of model effects on expressed genes.

| | Inversion 5 (246) | | Inversion 8 (311) | | Non-Inversion (8805) | | total (9326) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Differential Expression (model 1): | no. | LFC | no. | LFC | no. | LFC | no. |
| Genotypic DE | 201 | 0.893 | 239 | 0.932 | 6773 | 0.86 | 7213 |
| Environmental DE | 185 | 0.667 | 230 | 0.808 | 6350 | 0.729 | 6765 |
| Genotype by Environment | **60*** | 0.19 | 61 | 0.213 | 1659 | 0.196 | 1780 |
| Regulation effects (model 2): | | | | | | | |
| total DE genes | **204*** | | 232 | | 6490 | | 6962 |
| Cis regulation | 158 | 1.023 | **198*** | 1.04 | 5176 | 1.04 | 5532 |
| Trans regulation | 106 | 1.707 | 109 | 1.628 | 3396 | 1.229 | 3611 |

1090 *significantly greater percentage than non-inversion regions at p<0.05, **p<0.01.
1091 LFC: average magnitude (abs) log2 fold-change of genes with significant effects
1092

1093

1094

1095     Table 2: Number and average effect size of differentially expressed genes within each habitat.

|  | Coast | | Inland | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | no. | LFC | no. | LFC |
| Inversion 5 (246) | 119 | 1.136 | 184 | 0.932 |
| Inversion 8 (311) | **161*** | 1.092 | 210 | 0.993 |
| Non-Inversion (8805) | 3997 | 1.084 | 6195 | 0.897 |
| Total (9326) | 4277 | 1.085 | **6589*** | **0.901*** |

1096          *significantly greater than non-inversion regions at p<0.05
1097          *** significantly greater than the coastal field site, p<0.001
1098          LFC: average magnitude (abs) log2 fold-change of genes with significant effects
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**Figure 1.** A) Map of Northern California with the location of two field reciprocal transplant sites. Colors represent mean temperature of the warmest quarter in °C x 10. Inset: left, coastal ecotype; right, inland ecotype. B) The coastal field site. C) The inland field site. D) SS parental gene expression at two field sites. E) LL parental gene expression at two field sites. F) Survival of parental and F1 (SL) plants at the two field sites.

**Figure 2.** A) Average log2 fold-change (LFC) differences between parental genotypes for expressed transcripts at two field sites. B) Expression reaction norms corresponding to colored points in A and B. LFC has been restricted to <3 and <-3 for graphing purposes. Note, 28 transcripts with ambiguous expression patterns are not included.

**Figure 3.** *Cis* and *trans* regulated transcripts detected at the coastal (A) and inland (B) field sites. Average log2-fold change (LFC) ratios are between inland and coastal alleles in the parental (y-axis) and F1 (x-axis) genetic backgrounds. C) The frequency of significant model effects among expressed genes. D) The frequency of expression heterosis in F1 plants at the inland and coastal field sites. LP, low parent; HP, high parent. E-G) Reaction norms of expression at the two field sites for three candidate adaptation genes. Red, inland parent; Blue, coastal parent; Pink, F1 .