Polygenic adaptation and negative selection across traits, years and environments in a

long-lived plant species (*Pinus pinaster* Ait.)

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Abstract

Results from a decade of association studies in different organisms suggest that most complex

traits are polygenic, that is, their genetic architectures are determined by numerous causal loci

distributed across the genome each with small effect-size. Thus, determining the degree of

polygenicity is a central goal to understand the genetic basis of phenotypic variation.

Recently, multi-loci methods able to detect variants associated with a phenotype of interest

despite the subtle allele frequency changes between populations usually observed have been

developed. In this study, we applied two multi-loci methods to estimate the degree of

polygenicity of fitness-related traits in a long-lived plant species (maritime pine) and to

analyze how polygenicity changes across years and environments. For this purpose, we

evaluated five categories of fitness related traits, such as, height, survival, phenology-related,

biotic-stress resistance and functional traits in a clonal common garden network planted in

contrasted environments. Most of the analyzed traits showed evidences of local adaptation.

We observed a remarkably stable degree of polygenicity (average 6%) across traits,

environments and years. Additionally, some of the measured traits showed evidences of

negative selection that could explain the observed degree of polygenicity, as previously

suggested in humans. The observed genetic architecture of fitness-related traits in maritime

pine is in accordance with the polygenic adaptation model. Because polygenic adaptation can

take place rapidly, our results can contribute to improve the predictions about the capacity of

natural populations of forest trees to adapt to new environments, which is of special relevance

in the current context of climate change.

Introduction

Adaptive responses by populations to environmental changes depend on the genetic architecture of traits related to fitness (Hayward and Sella 2019). Thus, the identification of genetic variants affecting fitness-related traits, their allele frequencies, the magnitudes of their effects, and their interactions with one another and the environment has been a major focus of evolutionary studies for humans (reviewed by Visscher *et al.* 2017), other animals (e.g. Sharma *et al.* 2015; Pitchers *et al.* 2019) and plants (González-Martínez *et al.* 2006; Huang and Han 2014; Alonso-Blanco *et al.* 2016). In this regard, the information provided by genome-wide association studies (GWAS) was essential in clarifying the genetic basis of complex traits.

Over the past decade of GWAS for humans, a substantial number of genetic variants associated with phenotypes of interest have been identified (Visscher *et al.* 2017). Surprisingly, however, they accounted for only small fractions of trait heritabilities, as estimated through pedigree analysis, causing the so-called 'missing heritability' paradox (Maher 2008). While the 'missing heritability' paradox continues to be debated for model plant species (Brachi *et al.* 2011; Hamblin *et al.* 2011), it is expected to also apply to forest trees because of their large effective population sizes and outcrossing mating systems, which create genomic patterns of diversity mirroring those of humans (Resende *et al.* 2012; Lind *et al.* 2018). Several explanations of missing heritability have been identified (Manolio *et al.* 2009; Brachi *et al.* 2011; Björkegren *et al.* 2015; Pallares 2019). For instance, rare variants, routinely excluded from GWAS studies because of the associated lack of statistical power, can account for a considerable fraction of heritability (Bloom *et al.* 2019; Fournier *et al.* 2019). Epistasis may also be an important component for understanding the genetic architecture of adaptive phenotypes, but its contribution to non-additive genetic variance seems low and recent work argues that it is not a likely source of 'missing heritability' (Mäki-

Tanila and Hill 2014; Sella and Barton 2019). Epigenetics has also been identified as a

measurable component of 'missing heritability' (Cortijo *et al.* 2014; Koch 2014). Finally,

several sources of evidence point to polygenicity –trait architectures determined by a large

number of variants located in a large number of genes, each with small effect size - as a

potential reason for the low levels of heritability explained by GWAS results. First, estimates

of heritability based on all or at least extremely large sets of the single nucleotide

polymorphisms (SNPs) used in GWAS, regardless of the statistical significance of their

association to the phenotype of interest, are consistent with an explanation that most of the

heritable variance is linked to loci that are difficult to detect with realistic sampling designs

(Yang *et al.* 2010; Shi *et al.* 2016; Boyle *et al.* 2017). In addition, the proportion of the

heritability contained within chromosomes is strongly correlated to their length for many

traits (Shi *et al.* 2016), suggesting that causal variants are abundant and scattered throughout

the genome.

The study of adaptation has traditionally been addressed from contrasting research paradigms

(Höllinger *et al.* 2019). While quantitative genetic approaches viewed adaptation as the result

of changes in allele frequencies at an idealized and infinite number of loci each with

infinitesimal effects on fitness (Fisher 1918), population genetic approaches make more

emphasis in the detection of selective sweeps where new beneficial mutations rapidly became

fixed at a small number of loci (Smith and Haigh 1974). It was Pritchard *et al.* (2010) who

first brought together population and quantitative genetic theory with the conclusions from

GWAS to formulate a new framework for the study of adaptation – the polygenic adaptation

model. The hypothesis articulated under this model states that natural selection (mostly) acts

through subtle allele frequency shifts on standing genetic variation at numerous loci

distributed across the genome. Some genes may harbor new mutations that have been fixed by

natural selection, but the most common pattern would be the genome-wide increase of

favored alleles, without fixation for most of the causative alleles. Thus, the expected genome-

wide footprint resulting from natural selection would not be that of classical hard sweeps, but

would rather involve a large number of causal variants each with subtle allele frequency

changes (Pritchard *et al.* 2010; Pritchard and Rienzo 2010; Hermisson and Pennings 2017b).

This new evolutionary context may explain why GWAS have failed to explain the bulk of

heritable variance using methods designed to identify signatures from hard selective sweeps

that drive new mutations to fixation (Pritchard and Rienzo 2010; Stephan 2016) .

From the formulation of the polygenic adaptation model, a lot of work has been devoted to

assess how much adaptation occurs by any of the different models and mechanisms proposed.

New methods have been developed to detect the genetic signatures of natural selection under

the polygenic adaptation framework (Guan and Stephens 2011; Daub *et al.* 2013; Field *et al.*

2016; Zeng *et al.* 2018; Edge and Coop 2019; Speidel *et al.* 2019). Some of these methods

were based on the identification of coordinated changes in allele frequency at many loci

associated to a trait of interest, as identified by GWAS (Turchin *et al.* 2012; Berg and Coop

2014). Results from these latter methods had to be modulated and contextualized because they

were biased by population stratification (Liu *et al.* 2018; Josephs *et al.* 2019; Rosenberg *et al.*

2019; Berg *et al.* 2019a; Sohail *et al.* 2019). Nonetheless, even considering the inflation of the

polygenic signal due to neutral genetic structure, cumulating evidence in last years, using a

variety of methodologies, supports the polygenic adaptation model, mainly in humans

(Hancock *et al.* 2010a; b; Daub *et al.* 2013; Shi *et al.* 2016; Zeng *et al.* 2018; Gnecchi-

Ruscone *et al.* 2018; Berg *et al.* 2019b), but also in model plants (He *et al.* 2016), crops

(Josephs *et al.* 2019; Wisser *et al.* 2019) and forest trees (Lind *et al.* 2017; De La Torre *et al.*

2019b).

Strikingly, heritability of complex traits is not only widespread across the genome, but also

comprised in genes and pathways that do not show a clear connection with the trait (Boyle *et*

al. 2017). The omnigenic model, formulated by Boyle *et al*. in 2017, provides a plausible hypothesis to explain this observation: the interconnection of gene regulatory networks implies that virtually all the expressed genes in a relevant tissue likely influence the functions of core genes that are directly relate with the phenotype. In this regard, recent work with expression networks revealed that genes with higher connectivity experienced higher intensities of selection and consequently presented higher variation, increasing the probability of being detected by traditional GWAS (Mähler *et al.* 2017; Chateigner *et al.* 2019). In addition, the study of polygenic adaptation at pathway level revealed that gene sets related with resistance to pathogens in humans showed enriched signals of selection (Daub *et al.* 2013), highlighting its importance in shaping human adaptation. Polygenic adaptation at pathway level has been shown as a useful approach to detected evidences of selection that were unnoticed when using traditional single-locus approaches in a non-model tree species (Mayol *et al.* 2020). By this approach, Mayol et al. (2020) found that most selective signatures in *Taxus baccata* were driven by the effect of negative selection.

Unraveling the genetic architecture of adaptive traits allow to draw conclusions on the kind of natural selection acting on them. The studies that addressed this question from a polygenic adaptation perspective concluded that negative selection drove the observed genetic differences between individuals (Zeng *et al.* 2018; O'Connor *et al.* 2019). This conclusion was based on modeling SNP effect size conditional to MAF, which allowed not only to test for evidences of selection but also to infer the type of action accordingly with the sign of the detected correlation (i.e. positive or negative). Accordingly, negative selection has been suggested to favor polygenicity of complex traits by removing large-effect variants, because of their deleterious effect, while small-effects variants would remain unaffected (O'Connor *et al.* 2019). Furthermore, unraveling the genetic basis of adaptive traits in forest trees is not only useful to understand past adaptive processes but also to predict the future of forests under

climate change (Aitken *et al.* 2008). Polygenic adaptation is expected to produce rapid

changes in phenotypic variation because it requires only small changes in allele frequencies at

the numerous loci contributing to genetic variation (Hermisson and Pennings 2017b; Dayan *et*

al. 2019; Wisser *et al.* 2019). Consequently, considering information about the genetic

architecture of fitness-related traits can significantly improve the predictions of species range

shifts under climate change and inform forest management for conservation and reforestation

purposes (Valladares *et al.* 2014; Fady *et al.* 2016). Ultimately, a better understanding of the

genetic architecture of polygenic productive traits could improve the predictive accuracy of

genomic-assisted breeding, allowing to build genomic selection models in accordance with

the underlying genetic architecture of the trait of interest (Grattapaglia *et al.* 2018).

Despite the advances in theory and the development of new methods to study polygenic

adaptation, there still remains multiple open questions regarding the degree of polygenicity

for adaptive traits, the effect size distribution of these loci, and how the genetic architecture

changes under varying selective forces, specially for non-model species (Lind *et al.* 2018). In

this work, we addressed these questions taking advantage of the opportunity that plants offer

to replicate the genotypes through clonal propagation and investigate selective forces under

contrasting environments. We, i) tested the hypothesis that most complex adaptive traits for a

long-lived plant species, maritime pine (*Pinus pinaster* Ait.), are polygenic and 2) that their

genetic architecture is determined by the effect of negative selection, as it has been suggested

in humans (Zeng *et al.* 2018; O'Connor *et al.* 2019). We then, 3) tested how these patterns

change across years and environments in this iconic long-lived forest tree. Maritime pine has

nearly undomesticated random-mating populations with high genetic diversity (González-

Martínez *et al.* 2002; Jaramillo-Correa *et al.* 2015). It expanded from isolated glacial refugia

and now can be found in scattered populations, living under contrasting environments across

the occidental Mediterranean Basin and the European Atlantic front (Bucci *et al.* 2007),

making it an ideal case study to analyze the modes of evolution across traits, years and

environments.

Materials and Methods

CLONAPIN clonal common garden network

The *P. pinaster* clonal common garden network (CLONAPIN) is formed by five common

gardens covering the range of environments where the species is present, from harsh

Mediterranean climates to mild Atlantic ones. Overall, it comprises trees from 36 populations,

sampled across the species natural distribution range and covering the six distinct gene pools

previously identified for this species (Jaramillo-Correa *et al.* 2015; Supplemental Figure S1).

Open-pollinated seeds were collected in natural stands, germinated in a nursery and one

seedling per open-pollinated family was vegetatively propagated by cuttings (following

Majada *et al.* 2011). A total of 535 genotypes (clones) belonging to 35 populations were used

to establish four of the clonal trials (in Asturias, Cáceres, Madrid, and Portugal) with eight

ramets per clone set in a randomized complete block design (N=4,273 trees). These clonal

trials were planted in 2010 and constitute identical copies. In 2011, a fifth trial was

established in Bordeaux, comprising 443 clones from 36 populations (N=3,434 trees). Trials

in Asturias, Portugal and Bordeaux are located in the Atlantic region, with high annual

rainfall and mild temperatures. Trials in Madrid and Cáceres are located in continental areas

under Mediterranean influence, with large seasonal temperature oscillations and a marked

summer drought (Table 1). In addition, clay soils in Cáceres prevented maritime pine survival

and growth in this site.

Phenotypic evaluation

A total of 29 phenotypic trait-environment combinations were evaluated in this study. Phenotypic traits considered can be classified in five groups: survival, height, phenology-related traits, functional traits and biotic-stress response (see Supplemental Table S1 for an exhaustive list of the measured traits). In brief, survival and height were evaluated in the five common garden sites (including different years in Bordeaux, with measurements in 2013, 2015 and 2018). Phenology-related traits were evaluated in the Atlantic sites only (Asturias, Bordeaux and Portugal), including different years of evaluation in Bordeaux (2015 and 2017). In Asturias and Portugal, growth phenology was estimated through the presence of polycyclism and a phenology growth index (1):

$$\text{Phenology Growth Index} = \frac{spring \text{ growth}}{total \text{ growth}} = \frac{(tree \text{ height } may_n - tree \text{ height } dec_{n-1})}{(tree \text{ height } dec_n - tree \text{ height } dec_{n-1})} \qquad (1)$$

where *may* and *dec* correspond to the months May and December of the year n and the year n-1, respectively.

In Bordeaux, phenology of bud burst was estimated through a scale ranging from 0 to 5 (0: bud without elongation during winter, 1: elongation of the bud, 2: emergence of brachyblasts, 3: brachyblast begins to space, 4: elongation of the needles, 5: total elongation of the needles) (see Hurel *et al.* 2020). The Julian day of entry in each stage (S1 to S5) was scored for each tree. Julian days were converted into accumulated degree-days (0°C basis) from the first day of the year, to take into account the between year variability in temperature.

Functional traits, including nitrogen and carbon amount and isotopic composition, as well as Specific Leaf Area (SLA), were evaluated in the common garden trial located in Portugal. SLA, a measure of leaf area per unit dry mass, is an estimation of the compromise between light-capture and CO_2 assimilation and the restrictions imposed by water loss through transpiration. Therefore, it is a key leaf trait conditioning fitness components, such as survival

(Greenwood *et al.* 2017). Since the establishment of the direct positive relationship between

$\delta^{13}C$ and water use efficiency (Farquhar and Richards 1984), $\delta^{13}C$ has been widely used as a

surrogate to study tree adaptation to water limiting environments (e.g. Aranda *et al.* 2010;

Walker *et al.* 2015). Complementary, $\delta^{15}N$ is an indirect indices of different nitrogen cycle

process (Craine *et al.* 2015). In this study, nitrogen and carbon amount did not show genetic

variation (i.e. heritability) and polygenic association methods failed to converge for these

traits. Thus, they were excluded for further analyses.

Biotic-stress response was evaluated based on susceptibility to two major pine pathogens,

Diplodia sapinea and *Armillaria Ostoyae*, based on an inoculation experiment at controlled

conditions and the incidence of a defoliator pest, the pine processionary moth (*Thaumetopoea*

pityocampa) (see Hurel *et al.* 2020 for details on biotic-stress response evaluation). *D.*

sapinea causes several diseases in conifers that may be exacerbated in the context of climate

change compromising the health of maritime pine forests (Desprez-Loustau *et al.* 2006). In

this study, susceptibility to *D. sapinea* was evaluated through two parameters: length of the

lesion around the inoculation (hereafter referred as necrosis) and a scalar notation of needle

discoloration caused by the inoculation (from 0: no discoloration to 3: all needles around the

necrosis showed discoloration). *A. ostoyae* is a root pathogen of conifers that causes growth

cessation and eventually leads to tree mortality (Heinzelmann et al., 2018). In this study, the

susceptibility to *A. ostoyae* was assessed through the length of the lesion in sapwood. Finally,

the pine processionary moth is an insect that rapidly defoliates pines conducing to forest

decay (Jacquet *et al.* 2013). Biotic-stress responses were only evaluated in the Bordeaux

common garden trial.

DNA extraction and SNP genotyping

Needles were collected from one ramet per clone in the Asturias trial (*N*=523). Genomic

DNA was extracted using the Invisorb® DNA Plant HTS 96 Kit/C kit (Invitek GmbH, Berlin,

Germany). A 9K *Illumina Infinium* SNP array developed by by Plomion et al. (2016b) was

used for genotyping. This array comprised SNPs previously identified as well as newly

developed *in silico* SNPs, either randomly screened from EST sequences or specifically

detected in candidate gene involved in adaptation to biotic and abitoc factors (see Plomion et

al. 2016 for further details). Genotyped SNPs covered the 12 chromosomes of *P. pinaster*

genome as revealed by linkage mapping (Plomion *et al.* 2016b). For this study, 6100 SNPs

were finally retained after standard filtering followed by removal of SNPs with uncertain

clustering patterns (visual inspection using *GenomeStudio v. 2.0*). This resulted in 5,167

polymorphic SNPs that were included in the polygenic association study.

Quantitative genetics analysis

Genetic components of the phenotypic variance were estimated using Generalized Linear

Mixed Effects Models (GLMM) fitted in a Bayesian framework using Markov Chain Monte

Carlo (MCMC) methods. Model (2) was implemented for those phenotypic traits evaluated in

multiple sites of the CLONAPIN common garden network. In addition, to estimate the genetic

control of the genotype per environment interaction (G×E term), model (3) was fitted for

those traits measured in all sites of the CLONAPIN common garden network (i.e. height and

survival).

$$y_{ijk} = \mu + S_i + S(B)_{ij} + P_k + P(C)_{kl} + S_i * C_l + \varepsilon_{ijkl} \qquad (2)$$

$$y_{ijk} = \mu + S_i + S(B)_{ij} + P + P(C)_{kl} + S_i * P_l + S_i * C_l + \varepsilon_{ijkl} \qquad (3)$$

where for any trait *y*, μ denotes de overall phenotypic mean, S_i represents the fixed effect of

the CLONAPIN common garden site *i*, *B* represents the random effect of experimental block *j*

nested within site i, P is the random effect of population k, C denotes the random effect of

clone l nested within population k and ε is the residual effect.

Models (4) or (5) were implemented for those phenotypic traits measured in just one site of

the CLONAPIN common garden network.

$$y_{ijk} = \mu + B_i + P_j + P(C)_{jk} + \varepsilon_{ijk} \qquad (4)$$

$$y_{ijk} = \mu + B_i + cov + P_j + P(C)_{jk} + \varepsilon_{ijk} \qquad (5)$$

where for any trait y, μ denotes de overall phenotypic mean, B_i represents the fixed effect of

experimental block i, P_j is the random effect of population j, C denotes the random effect of

clone k nested within population j and ε is the residual effect. In model (5), *cov* represents a

covariate implemented when modeling the presence of pine processionnary moth nets (i.e

height in 2015) and necrosis caused by *A. ostoyae* (i.e. a categorical evaluation of the level of

humidity in the experimental jar).

All models were fitted with the R package *MCMCglmm* (Hadfield 2010). Phenotypic traits

that showed a Gaussian distribution where modeled using the identity link function while

phenotypic traits that followed a binomial distribution (i.e. survival, polycyclism, *D. sapinea*

needle discoloration and pine processionary moth) were modeled either with *logit* or *probit*

link functions (see Supplemental Table S2 for an exhaustive list of model parameter

specifications). Multivariate-normal prior distribution with mean centered around zero and

large variance matrix (10^8) were used for fixed effects. For ordinal traits a Gelman prior for

the variance of fixed effects was set, as suggested by Gelman et al. (2008). Inverse Wishart

non-informative priors were used for the variances and covariances of random effects with a

matrix parameter V set to 1 and a parameter n set to 0.002 (Hadfield 2010). Parameter

expanded priors were used to improve the convergence and mixing properties of the chain as

suggested by Gelman (2006) for models with near-zero variance components. Parameter

estimates were not sensitive to change in the priors. The models were run for at least 550,000

iterations, including a burn-in of 50,000 iterations and a thinning interval of 100 iterations.

Four chains per model were run to test for parameter estimate convergence. Gelman-Rubin

criterion Potential Scale Reduction Factor (psrf) was consistently below 1.02 (Gelman and

Rubin 1992).

Variance components were then used to compute broad-sense heritability (H^2) as (6):

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$$H^2 = \frac{\sigma^2_{clone}}{(\sigma^2_{clone}+\sigma^2_e)} \qquad (6)$$

where σ^2_{clone} is the variance among clones within populations and σ^2_e the residual variance.

For the estimation of broad-sense heritability in traits with binomial distribution (i.e. survival,

polycyclism, *D. sapinea* needle discoloration and pine processionary moth), we included an

extra term in the denominator ($+\pi^2/3$) to account for implicit *logit* link function variance and

+1 for probit link function (Nakagawa and Schielzeth 2010).

The GLMM described above were used to estimate the genetic value by means of Best Linear

Unbiased Predictors (BLUPs) (Henderson 1973; Robinson 1991) The genetic value of each

clone was defined as the population BLUP plus the clone BLUP. BLUPs of the G×E

component, obtained from model (3), were calculated as the difference between the mean

population BLUPs for Atlantic sites minus the mean population BLUPs for Mediterranean

sites, plus the difference between the mean clone BLUPs for Atlantic sites minus the mean

clone BLUPs for Mediterranean sites, following equation (7):

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$$G \times E \; BLUP = \left(\frac{\sum BLUP_{pop\;atl}}{N\;atl} - \frac{\sum BLUP_{pop\;med}}{N\;med}\right) + \left(\frac{\sum BLUP_{clone\;atl}}{N\;atl} - \frac{\sum BLUP_{clone\;med}}{N\;med}\right) \qquad (7)$$

Parameter estimates from quantitative genetics analysis were presented as the mode of the

posterior distribution, and 95% credible intervals were computed as the highest density region

of the posterior parameter distribution.

Q_{st}-F_{st} comparison

Population neutral differentiation (F_{ST}) was estimated according to Weir and Cockerham

(1984) using the diveRsity package in R (Keenan *et al.* 2013) to calculate a global F_{ST} using

the 5,167 SNPs. The 95% confidence intervals of the global F_{ST} were computed by

bootstrapping. Quantitative genetic differentiation among populations was calculated as in

Spitze (1993), using the variance components estimated from the models previously described

(equations 2-5):

$$Q_{ST} = \frac{\sigma^2_{pop}}{\sigma^2_{pop} + 2\sigma^2_{clone}} \qquad (8)$$

where σ^2_{pop} is the variance among populations and σ^2_{clone} is the variance among clones within

populations. If the 95% credible intervals obtained from the posterior distribution of Q_{ST} were

not overlapping with the 95% confidence intervals of F_{ST}, both estimates were considered

significantly different.

Polygenicity across traits, years and environments

Polygenicity was evaluated by estimating the number of SNPs with non-zero effects on

phenotypic traits and using two alternative methods, posterior inference via model averaging

and subset selection (VSR), as implemented in piMASS software (Guan and Stephens 2011),

and a Bayesian Mixed Linear Model (MLM) developed by Zeng et al. (2018) and

implemented in CGTB software. This latter model simultaneously estimates SNP-based

heritability (H^2_{SNP}, the proportion of trait variance explained by SNPs with non-zero effects),

polygenicity, and the relationship between SNP effect size and minor allele frequency (S), a

common indicator of negative selection. When negative selection is operating, S is expected

to be negative, as most new mutations are deleterious and thus SNPs with high-effect on

phenotypes are kept at low frequencies. Previous to analyses, neutral population genetic

structure was removed by running a simple linear model of the trait genetic values (i.e. with

site and block effects removed) on the Q factors obtained in a STRUCTURE run for K=6

based on neutral markers (see Jaramillo-Correa *et al.* 2015 for further details), and using the

normalized residuals, as recommended in piMASS manual.

Analyses were done separately for different traits, years and environments (see Supplemental

Table S1). VSR models were run for 2,000,000 iterations with a burn-in of 100,000 iterations

and a thinning interval of 100. After several preliminary runs, the maximum number of SNPs

included in VSR models was fixed to 2,000 (i.e. maximum polygenicity of ~40%). MLM

models were run for 500,100 iterations, including a burn-in of 100 iterations and a thinning

interval of 10 iterations. Parameter estimates from both VSRs and MLMs were presented as

the median of the posterior distribution, instead of the mode in order to better handle bimodal

distributions (Supplemental Figure S2). The 95% credible intervals were computed as the

highest density region of the posterior parameter distribution, as above.

Results

Genetic differentiation among populations and broad-sense heritability

Global F_{ST} was 0.112 [0.090, 0.141] (estimate and 95% confidence intervals). All five groups

of phenotypes evaluated in this study showed at least one trait with Q_{ST} higher than F_{ST}, except

for survival (Supplemental Table S1). The highest Q_{ST} was obtained for susceptibility to *D.*

sapinea infection measured as necrosis length in excised branches, followed by $\delta^{13}C$ and

height, which also showed very stable estimates of Q_{ST} measured in different environments or

at different tree ages (Figure 1).

All traits had moderate to low broad-sense heritability (Supplemental Table S1). The highest

H^2 was observed for phenology-related traits and height. Heritability estimated from the

polygenic models (H^2_{SNP}) was consistent between the two methods, although VSR method

tended to render higher heritability values (Supplemental Table S3). On average H^2_{SNP} was

0.38 across traits, with a minimum of 0.018 for survival in the French Atlantic environment in

2018 and a maximum of 0.99 for *D. sapinea* necrosis.

Genetic architecture (polygenicity)

Polygenicity estimates, i.e. the number of SNPs with non-zero effects on phenotypes, were

consistent between VSR and MLM methods (Supplemental Table S3). Both methods showed

substantial polygenic control for most of the study traits with an average of 6% and up to 27%

for the upper boundary of $\delta^{15}N$ credible interval (Figure 2). Polygenicity for height was stable

across environments and years, when measured multiple times in the same environment (i.e.

French Atlantic common garden) (Figure 3). In the same line, polygenicity for phenology-

related traits and survival also remained stable across environments, although 95% credible

intervals overlapped zero for some of them. The low values of polygenicity observed for

survival in the French Atlantic common garden are probably a consequence of the low levels

of genetic variability in this site (almost no mortality, with 97.12% of trees remaining alive,

Supplemental Table S1). Polygenicity estimated for biotic-stress response and functional traits

varied depending on the studied trait (Figure 2). *D. sapinea* susceptibility presented higher

levels of polygenicity than *A. ostoyae* susceptibility and pine processionary moth presence.

For functional traits, SLA and $\delta^{15}N$ showed the highest levels of polygenicity while $\delta^{13}C$

showed a considerably lower number of SNPs with non-zero effects.

Polygenicity and H^2_{SNP} were positively and consistently correlated for both VSR and MLM

models (Figure 4; R^2=0.59 for VSR and R^2=0.62 for MLM, p<0.001). A positive correlation

between polygenicity and H^2_{SNP} suggests that heritability is mainly determined by small effect

genetic variants in a high number of genes, according to the polygenic genetic architecture of

the analysed phenotypes. H^2_{SNP} estimated by the VSR method on the G×E component of

height (considering Atlantic versus Mediterranean environments) was low but significant

(median = 0.238, 95% credible interval = 0.043-0.409), indicating some heritable component

of plasticity. However, this result could not be confirmed by the MLM method. Moreover,

H^2_{SNP} was not significant for the G×E component of survival using any of the models.

Evidence of negative selection

The kind of natural selection acting on the studied traits was evaluated through the correlation

between SNP effect size and minor allele frequency (MAF). Out of the 29 analyzed traits, we

were able to estimate S through the MLM method for 19 of them. The estimates of S over

traits ranged from -1.68 (bud burst in 2017) to 0.55 (survival in French Atlantic environment).

Seven traits involving four out of the five trait groups (i.e. height, survival, phenology-related

and functional traits) had significant S estimates (Figure 5). No significant effect of selection

was observed for any trait belonging to the biotic stress category. Remarkably, all the

significant estimates of S were negative indicating negative selection.

Estimates of S for height were consistent across years and environments. However, the impact

of negative selection on survival could only be observed in the Iberian Atlantic environment

and for phenology-related traits, only in bud burst measured in 2017 (Figure 5). These results

contrast with the remarkably stable degree of polygenicity for all these traits across years and

environments. Interestingly, our results suggest a stable polygenic architecture but an

environment and year-dependent impact of negative selection for some traits.

Discussion

Unraveling the genetic architecture of complex polygenic traits has been a challenge for association studies because of the difficulty to detect variants of low effect. Here, we addressed this question for an extensive number of traits belonging two five different categories related with fitness and adaptation to abiotic and biotic stresses (i.e. height, survival, phenology-related, biotic-stress response and functional traits). These traits were measured in 36 range-wide populations of maritime pine clonally replicated (i.e. in total more than 12,500 trees were evaluated) which allowed precise phenotypic estimations. In addition, traits were evaluated in three different environments (i.e. French Atlantic, Iberian Atlantic and Mediterranean), representative of different environmental conditions of the distribution range of maritime pine, and for consecutive years for some of them (Supplemental Figure S1). First, we assessed the effect of natural selection on the measured traits and we identified local adaptation for most of them. Then, we estimated the degree of polygenicity that resulted remarkably stable across traits, years and environments. Finally, we assessed the effect of natural selection in the variants associated with these traits. This test revealed the impact of negative selection in the analyzed traits.

Evidence of local adaptation in maritime pine

Understanding the causes and consequences of population differentiation is of broad interest in evolutionary biology, ecology and genetics and provide essential knowledge to inform conservation biology, breeding programs and medical applications (Leinonen *et al.* 2013). Q_{ST}-F_{ST} comparison has been a useful approach to discern if population differentiation is caused by selective versus neutral processes (Savolainen *et al.* 2007; Leinonen *et al.* 2008; Whitlock 2008). Through this approach the amount of genetic differentiation among populations relative to the total genetic variance at neutral marker loci (F_{ST}) is compared with

the analogous parameter Q_{ST} that estimates the amount of genetic variance between

populations for quantitative traits. Therefore, if $Q_{ST} \approx F_{ST}$ trait divergence among populations

could have been achieved by genetic drift alone, if $Q_{ST} > F_{ST}$ divergent selection would be

driving local adaptation and the action of uniform selection is suggested from $Q_{ST} < F_{ST}$

(Whitlock 1999; Whitlock and Guillaume 2009). Our results show evidences of adaptive

differentiation ($Q_{ST} > F_{ST}$) for most of the traits analysed in this study, involving four out of

the five trait categories (except survival). These results are in accordance with the pervasive

observation of locally adapted traits in forest trees (Savolainen *et al.* 2007, 2013; Alberto *et*

al. 2013; Lind *et al.* 2018). It was remarkable the high amount of adaptive genetic

differentiation found for $\delta^{13}C$ and *D. sapinea* necrosis (Figure 1). These traits deserve special

relevance because of the implication of water use efficiency in drought resistance (reviewed

by Plomion *et al.* 2016a) and the concern of disorders caused by *D. sapinea* as important

emerging diseases for maritime pine (Fabre *et al.* 2011; Brodde *et al.* 2019). Lamy et al.

(2011) did not find adaptive genetic differentiation between populations of maritime pine for

$\delta^{13}C$ and similar results have been reported in broad-leaved trees (Torres-Ruiz *et al.* 2019).

Although, this disagreement may be influenced by the higher number of populations analyzed

in this study compared to Lamy et al. (2011), we cannot discard the overestimation of genetic

differences because of the fact that we estimated total genetic variance instead of additive

genetic variance (analyzed trees from each population were clonal replicates). The study of

adaptive genetic differentiation in biotic-stress response traits has not been fully addressed in

trees yet (but see Ahrens *et al.* 2019). Anyway, the high adaptive genetic differentiation for

$\delta^{13}C$ and *D. sapinea* susceptibility suggest that maritime populations will likely require to

match their new environments in the context of climate change.

Survival is a trait directly related with a component of fitness (i.e. viability) and contrarily to

our results previous evidence of local adaptation for this trait in maritime has been obtained

(e.g. González-Martínez *et al.* 2002). Local adaptation for fitness has been also observed in

model plant species (e.g. Fournier-Level *et al.* 2011). The low levels of phenotypic variability

observed for survival in this study may explain these contrasting results. In the most favorable

environment, that is the French Atlantic common garden (Bordeaux, France), almost all trees

remained alive. In the most unfavorable Mediterranean environments, a high percentage of

trees were dead after the first year of plantation. The strong selective pressure in the

Mediterranean region exacerbated the genetic differences among clones and consequently a

higher heritability was estimated but quantitative genetic differentiation between populations

was not adaptive. Another plausible explanation is that, in this work, survival was measured

as a binary trait. Future studies should focus on quantitative evaluations of survival in order to

better gather the complexity of this trait and be able to discern genetic differences between

populations.

Height also showed high levels of adaptive genetic differentiation that were stable across

different environments and years (Figure 1). So, for this trait we did not find evidences of

increased population differentiation under more stressful environments. Although adaptive

genetic differentiation for height has been broadly described in maritime pine and other tree

species (e.g. Yang *et al.* 1996; González-Martínez *et al.* 2002; Lamy *et al.* 2011; Rodríguez-

Quilón *et al.* 2016; Bogdan *et al.* 2017; Ahrens *et al.* 2019), the question of the environment

and temporal variability of this parameter has not been addressed in depth (but see Rodríguez-

Quilón *et al.* 2016). Nevertheless, phenology-related traits showed contrasting estimates of

Q_{ST} depending on the environment and year of measurement. Phenology-related traits in trees

usually display local adaptation (Vitasse *et al.* 2009; Csilléry *et al.* 2014; Firmat *et al.* 2017;

Torres-Ruiz *et al.* 2019) prompting its susceptibility to climate change. However, high

phenotypic plasticity has been also detected for phenology, highlighting its potential for short-

term survival under climate change (Firmat *et al.* 2017). Our results highlight that the

evolutionary forces driving population genetic differences in phenology-related traits are

environmentally and temporally-dependent which can slow-down the achievement of new

phenotypic optima under rapidly changing environmental conditions. Our experimental

design, with multiple clonal replicates and contrasting trial environments should have help to

overcome some of the drawbacks assigned to Q_{ST}-F_{ST} comparisons (Whitlock 2008) .

Insights on forest tree missing heritability

SNP-based heritability is usually defined as the proportion of phenotypic variance attributable

to the additive effects of a given set of SNPs and it is becoming a fundamental parameter in

quantitative genetics (Hou *et al.* 2019). We were able to estimate H^2_{SNP} though independent

methodologies (VSR and MLM, see below). Despite some slight differences, notably for

biotic-stress response traits that were limited by low sample size, both methods presented

robust and consistent estimations. In this study, SNP-based heritability was calculated for the

genetic component of the expressed phenotype (i.e. the clonal BLUPs extracted from the

quantitative genetic models). Thus, H^2_{SNP}, as estimated here, should be interpreted as the

proportion of genetic variance explained by the additive effects of the SNPs with non-zero

effects. The high proportions of the genetic variance explained in this way, usually higher

than 50%, suggest that by adopting a polygenic analytical framework we were able to account

for a big part of the missing heritability commonly observed in GWAS in forest trees

(reviewed by Lind *et al.* 2018).

However, these results should be interpreted with caution as *P. pinaster* is a species with a

huge genome size of 28 Gbp (Grotkopp *et al.* 2004; Zonneveld 2012) and a rapid decay in

linkage disequilibrium (Neale and Savolainen 2004), which would need a large number of

genotyped SNPs to obtain a good coverage of its genome. Even though further investigations

are needed to draw definitive conclusions, robust and consistent estimates of polygenicity

across methods (see Discussion below), and with previous estimates in humans (Zeng *et al.* 2018), may have been fostered by precise phenotypic evaluation using a clonal common-garden network covering the species environmental range. Denser genome-wide genotyping in conifers, that have extremely large genomes, should be feasible rapidly as new technologies such as genotyping-by-sequencing, sequence capture and direct sequencing are currently being developed for these species (Neves *et al.* 2013; Pan *et al.* 2015; Vidalis *et al.* 2018). The availability of new genomic resources for conifers will allow advancing our understanding of polygenicity.

Genetic architecture of adaptive traits

To increase our knowledge on the genetic basis of phenotypic variation is crucial for the understanding of species adaptive evolution. Disentangling the genetic architecture of fitness-related traits allows to make inferences on the action of natural selection on traits that drive evolutionary change (Fisher 1930). The development of GWAS in the last decade has provided a powerful tool to unravel the genetic architecture of complex traits in humans (Visscher 2008; Shi *et al.* 2016; Visscher *et al.* 2017), plants (Brachi *et al.* 2011; Li *et al.* 2016; De La Torre *et al.* 2019a) and animals (Karlsson *et al.* 2007; Charlier *et al.* 2008; Yang *et al.* 2016), but it is not yet widespread in long-lived forest trees (but see, for example, De La Torre *et al.* 2019a). The conclusions inferred from these studies motivated the development of a new evolutionary framework conceptualized in the polygenic adaptation model (Pritchard *et al.* 2010; Pritchard and Rienzo 2010). This model states that adaptation to new environments results from simultaneous selection at many loci and standing genetic variation. Although the expected signatures of polygenic adaptation are well-known, still little is known about how genetic architecture varies across age (i.e. ontogenetic effects) and environments (see below).

In our study, we have used two complementary Bayesian methods that allowed us to evaluate

the robustness of our estimates. The VSR method (Guan and Stephens 2011) is a multi-SNP

analysis whose potential lies in the estimation of the overall percentage of explained

phenotypic variance (PEV) that might be accounted for by relevant SNPs, even when

confidently identifying this relevant SNPs is not possible. The MLM method (Zeng *et al.*

2018) estimates a SNP-based heritability as an analogous parameter of the overall PEV

estimated through VSR. Both methods showed a considerable degree of polygenicity for most

traits, 4-15% for those traits with polygenicity estimates no overlapping zero, in the same

order of magnitude as for humans when using the same methods (MLM, Zeng *et al.* 2018),

although we obtained higher credible intervals because of lower sample size. Considering that

P. pinaster genome size is more than seven times higher than that of the human genome (De

La Torre *et al.* 2014), our results suggest that genome size is not conditioning the genomic

architecture that underlie fitness-related traits. This observation contrast with the hypothesis

proposed by Mei *et al.* (2018), that predicts different genetic architectures as a function of

genome size.

Recent studies have suggested that polygenicity estimates for human height in Europe, one of

the clearest example for polygenic adaptation, are affected by subtle biases in GWAS caused

by population stratification (Berg *et al.* 2019a; Sohail *et al.* 2019). In our study, we devoted

special care to correct for the effect of neutral population genetic structure on phenotypic

variation. In addition, the clonal common garden network allowed us to thoroughly identify

the traits that have diverged due to adaptation and to separate the genetic and the

environmental effect on phenotypes. Upcoming polygenic association methods that consider

corrections for population stratification (e.g. Josephs *et al.* 2019) should be implemented in

different plant species with varied life-history traits in order to elucidate the mechanisms that

allow the maintenance of variation in adaptive traits for species with complex demographic

history. In this sense, our work highlights the potential of combining precise estimation of the

genetic effect on phenotypes with multi-locus genotype-phenotype association models.

The implementation of polygenic adaptation studies outside humans is gently coming out in

the last years (Csilléry *et al.* 2014; He *et al.* 2016; Lind *et al.* 2017; Barghi *et al.* 2019; Wisser

et al. 2019), providing increased evidence that polygenic adaptation through complex traits

may be pervasive and a key mode of adaptation (Sella and Barton 2019). As a result, new

evolutionary questions relevant for different organisms arise. In forest trees, for which local

adaptation is frequently observed (Savolainen *et al.* 2007, 2013; Alberto *et al.* 2013; this

study), how alleles of small effect and selection coefficients (and therefore more prompted to

be swamped by gene flow) can contribute to shape local adaptation is a question that remains

to be solved (Yeaman 2015). A fundamental question that arise from the application of

polyenic adaptation studies to conifers is the role of genetic redundancy in shaping this mode

of adaptation. It has been suggested that genetic redundancy favor polygenic adaptation in

model species (Höllinger *et al.* 2019; Barghi *et al.* 2019) and to unravel this relationship in

conifers, whose genomes are characterized by a high number of paralogs (Diaz-Sala *et al.*

2013), may shed-new light in this fundamental question.

Stability of polygenicity across environments and years

The temporal and spatial heterogeneity of selection can impact the evolution of genetic

architectures underlying adaptation (Sella and Barton 2019). Using a range wide maritime

pine collection replicated clonally in multiple common gardens, we were able to test whether

polygenicity varies across environments (Mediterranean vs. Atlantic) for traits related to

growth, survival and phenology. In this sense, our study is not only a validation of the

polygenic adaptation framework in a new organism but it also contributes to improve our

understanding of this kind of adaptation. Surprisingly, the estimated degree of polygenicity

remained stable across different environments for all trait categories analyzed, especially for

height (Figure 3). The genetic architecture of height, phenology and survival was also highly

stable across years. Patterns of genetic architecture across years are an important issue in

long-lived forest trees that may experience changing selection pressure along their lifetime. In

conifers, previous genotype-phenotype association analyses (using single-locus models) have

revealed different genes underlying the expression of phenology-related traits across years

(Pelgas *et al.* 2011; Hurel *et al.* 2020). Our study suggests that even if the causal variants

underlying adaptive traits may vary across years, the estimated degree of polygenicity remains

stable. In the context of climate change, the stability of polygenicity is an important

consideration because species experience rapid and abrupt deterioration of environmental

conditions (Seidl *et al.* 2017) and polygenic adaptation is expected to produce rapid changes

in phenotypic variation (Hermisson and Pennings 2017a; Jain and Stephan 2017; Dayan *et al.*

2019; Wisser *et al.* 2019).

Strikingly, the impact of selection did not mimicked the trend observed for polygenicity. That

is, the impact of negative selection remained stable for height but changed across

environments and years for survival and phenology-related traits. Our results highlight that

even when the impact of natural selection on SNPs was not stable, the degree of polygenicity

remained unchanged. This pattern has to be validated with more genotyped SNPs, specially

rare SNPs that can considerably affect the estimates of S (Zeng *et al.* 2018). Moreover, some

traits presenting evidences of negative selection did not show adaptive genetic differentiation

between populations (inferred from Q_{ST} - F_{ST} comparisons; for example: survival in Iberian

Atlantic environment, bud burst in 2017 and SLA) and viceversa (for example duration of bud

burst in 2017, growth phenology index and *D. sapinea* necrosis). Thus, our results suggest an

uncoupling of the impact of natural selection on some phenotypes and on the identified causal

variants, a question that deserve further investigation. It has been already suggested that

polygenic adaptation can accelerate differentiation between populations but generally does

not produce predictable directional changes in allele frequencies and the genetic response can

be highly stochastic (Zhang *et al.* 2013).

The role of negative selection

All the significant correlations between SNP effect size and frequency were negative (for

height, bud burst and SLA). These results are in accordance with a genetic architecture

designed by the action of negative selection: SNPs with large effects are rare because they

mostly have deleterious effects and thus are selected against (O'Connor *et al.* 2019). The

MLM method does not allow to elucidate whether the negative estimates of S are the

consequence of an enrichment of trait-increasing or -decreasing alleles (Zeng *et al.* 2018) but

it certainly suggests that these traits (height, bud burst and SLA) have been under negative

selection. The effect of purifying selection is widespread in model plant genomes (Wright and

Andolfatto 2008) and it has been also largely evidenced in trees (Krutovsky and Neale 2005;

Palmé *et al.* 2009; Eckert *et al.* 2013; De La Torre *et al.* 2017). Indeed, negative selection has

been pointed out as the main cause for the maintenance of polygenicity (Zeng *et al.* 2018;

O'Connor *et al.* 2019).

Negative selection can explain the degree of polygenicity observed in maritime pine adaptive

traits, as well as the absence of large-effect SNPs in previous GWAS for the species . In

addition, the omnigenic model (Boyle *et al.* 2017) provides a complementary reasoning to

explain highly polygenic architectures in maritime pine. A large number of causal SNPs in

this species could be explained by the very high biological complexity and interconnectivity

of gene expression networks, resulting in the association of virtually all expressed genes in

relevant tissues with the observed phenotypes (Wray *et al.* 2018).

Conclusions

The study of genetic adaptation is currently facing new challenges. The advancement of GWAS relies on the development of methods able to detect causal variants of small effect size or at low allele frequency. In our study, adopting a polygenic adaptation framework on well-characterized clones planted in contrasted environments, contributed to a better understanding of the heritability of complex adaptive traits and its underlying genetic architecture. Moreover, we addressed the question of how genetic architecture varies over spatial and temporal heterogeneity. Our results showed that most complex adaptive traits in a long-lived plant species, such as maritime pine, are polygenic, with several of them showing also signatures of negative selection. The degree of polygenicity was similar for traits spanning different functional categories, and this genetic architecture was considerably stable over time and environments. Current models to predict population trajectories of forest trees under climate change are based on identification of SNP outliers with relatively large effects on phenotypes and/or strong correlation with climate variables (e.g. Jaramillo-Correa *et al.* 2015; Rellstab *et al.* 2016). Because polygenic adaptation can take place rapidly (see, for example, Jain and Stephan 2017), current prediction models are probably underestimating the capacity of natural populations of forest trees to adapt to new environments. Thus, adopting a polygenic adaptation perspective could significantly improve the accuracy of species range-shift predictions under climate change and provide new scenarios to inform forest conservation and reforestation programs.

Supplemental material

Table S1. Data summary on measured phenotypes. Vg stands for genetic variance (posterior mean of the variance explained by clone effect), H2 stands for broad-sense heritability and Qst for genetic differentiation among populations (posterior mode and 95% credible interval are presented).

Table S2 . MCMCglmm Bayesian model parametrization. Psrf stands for Gelman-Rubin criterion Potential Scale Reduction Factor, a mesure of model convergence. Good convergence of models is expected for psrf <1.02.

Table S3. Parameter results from two multi-locus association studies: Bayesian variable selection regression (implemented in piMASS software) and Bayesian linear mixed model (implemented in GCTB software). The parameters are presented as the posterior median and 95% credible interval for SNP-based heritability (H2SNP), number of non-zero effect SNPs (polygenicity) and coefficient of correlation between SNP effect size and minor allele frequency (*S*). Non-overlapping zero estimates are marked in bold. NA values for MLM models correspond to models that did not converge.

Figure S1. Sampled *Pinus pinaster* populations (circles) and common garden trial sites (other symbols). Neutral gene pools (identified in Jaramillo-Correa *et al.* 2015) outline the species natural distribution range in different colors.

Figure S2. Posterior distributions of the number of non-zero SNPs for 26 traits belonging to five categories: height, survival, phenology-related traits, biotic-stress response and functional traits. The number of non-zero SNPs was estimated through two Bayesian methods: posterior inference via model averaging and subset selection (VSR) implemented in the software piMASS (Guan and Stephens 2011) and Mixed Linear Model (MLM) implemented in the software CGTB (Zeng *et al.* 2018). The posterior median is indicated with a dashed line.

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1087

1088

Trial	Plantation year	N trees	N clones	Annual precipitation (mm)	Precipitation of the warmest quarter Jun+Jul+Aug (mm)	Annual mean temperature	Annual temperature range
Asturias	2010	4,272	535	890	126	12.9	24.0
Portugal	2010	4,272	535	1122	58	14.0	26.9
Bordeaux	2011	3,434	443	933	199	13.8	26.7
Madrid	2010	4,272	535	378	35	14.8	32.8
Cáceres	2010	4,272	535	374	21	16.7	32.6

Table 1. Description of the five sites of CLONAPIN common garden network. Climatic data correspond to the mean of each parameter for the period 2005-2014 obtained from the EuMedClim database (Fréjaville and Benito Garzón 2018).

A

B

Figure 1. Q_{ST} and F_{ST} estimates. A) Q_{ST} for different traits belonging to five categories: survival, height, phenology-related traits, functional traits and biotic-stress response. B) Q_{ST} for height estimated in three different environments: Mediterranean, Iberian Atlantic, and French Atlantic, and a global Q_{ST} for the three environments together. In the French Atlantic common garden, height was measured in three different years: 2013, 2015 and 2018.

Figure 2. Polygenicity estimated from Bayesian mixed linear models (MLMs) for different traits. Polygenicity was estimated as the proportion of non-zero effect SNPs. Posterior median and 95% credible intervals are presented.

Figure 3. Polygenicity estimated from Bayesian mixed linear models (MLMs) across years and environments. A) Variation of polygenicity across environments. B) Temporal variation of polygenicity. Polygenicity was estimated as the proportion of non-zero effect SNPs. Posterior median and 95% credible intervals are presented.

Figure 4. Correlation between polygenicity and H^2_{SNP} **(SNP-based heritability).** A) MLM method implemented in CGTB software. B) VSR method implemented in PiMASS software. Polygenicity was estimated as the proportion of non-zero effect SNPs. H^2_{SNP} is the proportion of the genetic variance explained by all the SNPs with non-zero effects. Each point represents the posterior median.

Figure 5. Correlation between SNP effect size and MAF. The coefficient of correlation between SNP effect size and MAF (*S*) was estimated through the MLM method. The posterior distribution of *S* (median and 95% credible intervals) are presented.