Haplotype-resolved genome assembly enables gene discovery in the red palm weevil *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*

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ABSTRACT

The red palm weevil *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus* (Coleoptera: Curculionidae) is an economically-important invasive species that attacks many species of palm trees around the world. A better understanding of gene content and function in *R. ferrugineus* has the potential to inform pest control strategies and thereby mitigate economic and biodiversity losses caused by this species. Using 10x Genomics linked-read sequencing, we produced a haplotype-resolved diploid genome assembly for *R. ferrugineus* from a single heterozygous individual with modest sequencing coverage (∼62x). Benchmarking against conserved single-copy Arthropod orthologs suggests both pseudo-haplotypes in our *R. ferrugineus* genome assembly are highly complete with respect to gene content, and do not suffer from haplotype-induced duplication artifacts present in a recently published hybrid assembly for this species. Annotation of the larger pseudo-haplotype in our assembly provides evidence for 23,413 protein-coding loci in *R. ferrugineus*, including over 13,000 predicted proteins annotated with Gene Ontology terms and over 6,000 loci independently supported by high-quality Iso-Seq transcriptomic data. Our assembly also includes >96% of *R. ferrugineus* chemosensory- and neuropeptide-related transcripts identified previously in short-read transcriptome assemblies, and provides a platform for the molecular analysis of these and other functionally-relevant genes that can help guide management of this widespread insect pest.

Introduction

The insect order Coleoptera (beetles) is one of the most diverse groups of organisms on earth, with over 350,000 species currently described and an estimated 1.5 million species in total[1]. Despite this unrivaled organismal diversity, there has not yet been an inordinate fondness for studying beetle genomes[2], with only 37 species having genome assemblies in NCBI as of August 2020. The family Curculionidae ("true" weevils) is one of the largest beetle groups, containing over 80,000 described species including many important agricultural pests. Among these, the red palm weevil (RPW) *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus* is a widespread invasive species that attacks a variety of palm tree species. The RPW is of particular interest since it is the major arthropod pest of the date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*), resulting in economic losses in the order of tens of millions of dollars annually[3].

RPW adult females bore into palm trees to deposit their eggs, wherein larvae hatch and consume the surrounding trunk tissue causing extensive damage as they develop. This trait of being a "concealed tissue borer" makes infestation hard to detect in its early stages and often results in the death of infected plants. Concealed boring also protects developing larvae from abiotic stressors, and facilitates weevil dispersion across large distances during commercialization of palm offshoots for farming and ornamental purposes[4]. These factors, together with polyphagy and strong flight ability[5], contribute to the invasive potential and economic impact of the RPW.

To reduce the economic and biodiversity losses caused by the RPW, there has been growing interest to identify RPW genes that can be used to guide strategies for pest management in this species. Previous gene discovery efforts for the RPW have mainly relied on RNA sequencing (RNA-seq). These transcriptomic studies used different sequencing platforms, as well as a range of tissues, developmental stages, and strains, and typically have focused on identifying chemosensory genes to aid chemical ecology mitigation efforts[6–11]. Transcriptomics is a cost-effective strategy of gene discovery compared to whole-genome sequencing since only a fraction of the genome is represented in mature transcripts. However, the time- and tissue-specificity of gene expression makes it hard to capture all protein-coding genes in an organism using a limited number of RNA-seq samples. In addition, aspects of transcript structure and gene organization cannot be inferred from transcriptome

assemblies alone.

Like many agriculturally important non-model species, efforts to generate a genome assembly for the RPW to aid gene discovery have been hampered by the heterozygosity inherent in diploid organisms. However, advances in genomics now allow resolution of both haplotypes in *de novo* assemblies of diploid organisms, typically using either linked (e.g. 10x Genomics) or long (e.g. PacBio or Oxford Nanopore) reads[12]. Recently, a hybrid assembly using a combination of Illumina, 10x Genomics and Oxford Nanopore sequencing was reported for the RPW that was used for gene discovery and analysis of gene family evolution[13]. This hybrid assembly reported an unusually high rate of gene family expansion in the RPW genome relative to other beetle species, and also reported a very high number of duplicated genes in the BUSCO gene set, which are expected to be present in a single copy in most organisms[14]. To overcome limitations of previous transcriptome-based gene discovery efforts in the RPW[6–11] and to evaluate the correctness of the previously-reported RPW genome assembly[13], here we report a haplotype-resolved ("phased") diploid genome assembly from an independent RPW sample generated using 10x Genomics linked-read sequencing. We provide evidence that the previously-reported RPW genome hybrid assembly contains a large proportion of artifactually duplicated sequences that have arisen from multiple haplotypes being scaffolded into a single haploid representation of the genome[15]. We demonstrate that our haplotype-resolved diploid assembly does not suffer from such artifacts and therefore provides a more accurate resource for understanding the genome and gene content of this important agricultural pest.

Materials and Methods

Sample, library preparation and sequencing

A single three-week-old RPW larvae was selected randomly for sequencing from a colony of RPW reared on date palms of the 'Khalas' cultivar in the shade house at the Date Palm Research Center of Excellence at King Faisal University. This colony was established from multiple individuals sampled in February 2017 using insecticide-free pheromone traps in the Al-Ahsa oasis in Saudi Arabia.

The individual larvae selected for sequencing was sectioned into 4-8 mg pieces, one of which was used for DNA extraction following the 10x Genomics recommended protocol for single insect DNA purification (https://support.10xgenomics.com/permalink/7HBJeZucc80CwkMAmA4oQ2). This protocol uses a salting out method adapted from Miller *et al.*[16]. We chose larval tissue for sequencing since the recommended 10x Genomics DNA extraction protocol for insects yielded longer molecules for larval relative to adult tissues. As a consequence, the sex of the individual sequenced here is unknown.

Purified genomic DNA was size selected to remove fragments shorter than 20 kb using the BluePippin instrument (Sage Science). After size selection, 0.6 ng of DNA was loaded onto the 10x Genomics Chromium Genome Chip for gel bead-in-emulsion generation, barcoding, and library construction using the 10x Genomics Chromium Genome Reagent Kit Protocol v2 (RevB). DNA sequencing was carried out on a Illumina NextSeq 500 mid-output flow cell with 150 bp paired-end (PE) read layout.

Genome assembly

Raw sequencing reads were assembled using the Supernova assembler v2.1.1 with default parameters and exported to fasta format using the 'pseudohap2' style[17]. This output mode generates two pseudo-haplotype assemblies that differ in genomic regions where maternal and paternal haplotypes can be phased ("phase blocks") but are identical in homozygous and unphased blocks of the genome (Supplementary Figure 1). Pseudo-haplotype1 was selected as the main assembly for analysis and annotation since it is slightly longer than pseudo-haplotype2. Both pseudo-haplotypes were deposited in GenBank (see Data availability section for accession numbers). To better understand differences between our pseudo-haplotype assemblies and the hybrid assemblies of Hazzouri *et al.*[13], we also exported our RPW Supernova assembly in 'megabubbles' style[17] which includes maternal and paternal phase blocks together with unphased blocks in a single file (Supplementary Figure 1).

Contigs in 11 scaffolds from both pseudo-haplotypes were trimmed to remove small (<50 bp) internal adapter sequences that flanked assembly gaps following NCBI's contamination screen report. Redundancy in the assembly was eliminated using the 'sequniq' command from GenomeTools v1.5.9[18]. These filtering steps resulted in the removal of two contaminated and 3,694 redundant scaffolds spanning 10,665,716 bp, or 1.78% of the original assembly size.

Genome annotation

Prior to genome annotation, a custom repeat library was generated from pseudo-haplotype1 using RepeatModeler v1.0.11 (-engine ncbi) and used to soft mask the pseudo-haplotype1 assembly with RepeatMasker v4.0.9 (-gff -u -a -s -no_is -xsmall -e ncbi) (http://www.repeatmasker.org/). Protein-coding gene annotation of pseudo-haplotype1 was performed with BRAKER v2.1.5[19,20], an automated gene annotation pipeline that uses extrinsic evidence in the form of spliced alignments from RNA-seq data and protein sequences to train and predict gene structures with AUGUSTUS[21–23].

Short-read RNA-seq data from *R. ferrugineus* for training BRAKER was obtained from the NCBI SRA database. Three different datasets were used consisting of Illumina short-read sequencing of: (i) polyA+ RNA from pooled male and female adults (PRJDB3020)[7], (ii) total RNA from pooled male and female antennae (PRJNA275430)[9], and (iii) total RNA from RPW larvae, pupae and adults of both sexes (PRJNA598560)[10]. Raw RNA-seq reads were quality filtered with fastp v0.20.0[24] using default parameters, and aligned to pseudo-haplotype1 using HiSat2 v2.1.0 (--dta)[25]. Resulting alignments were position sorted and converted to BAM format using SAMtools v1.9[26]. Spliced alignments of predicted protein sequences from 15 Coleopteran species plus *Drosophila melanogaster* to the RPW pseudo-haplotype1 assembly were obtained with ProtHint v2.4.0 pipeline[27], and were also used to train BRAKER. Species names and NCBI accession numbers of genomes used as sources of predicted protein sequences for BRAKER training are listed in Supplementary Table 1. Genome-wide protein coding gene annotation was performed using BRAKER v2.1.5 (--prg=ph --etpmode --softmasking)[19,20] and the final BRAKER annotation was based on AUGUSTUS predictions only. Genes with internal stop codons (n=5) were removed from the final annotation.

Protein-coding gene models from BRAKER output were functionally annotated through protein signature scanning and sequence similarity searches against multiple databases. InterProScan v5.32-71.0[28] was used to search the InterPro v71.0 member databases, and Diamond v0.9.32[29] was used to search the non-redundant (*nr*) protein database from NCBI (from June 2020). The resulting similarity hits from InterPro and *nr* were imported to Blast2GO v5.2.5[30] for final annotation with Gene Ontology (GO) terms[31]. Blast2GO was used to: (i) retrieve GO terms associated with *nr* protein similarity hits (mapping pipeline), (ii) annotate sequences with the most specific and reliable GO terms available from the mapping step, (iii) merge InterProScan associated GO IDs to the annotation, and (iv) augment the final annotation with the newly incorporated InterProScan GO IDs. All Blast2GO pipelines were run with default settings.

Evaluation of assembly quality

General metrics for unmasked versions of both pseudo-haplotypes of our phased genome assembly, the megabubbles version of our phased genome assembly, assemblies from Hazzouri *et al.*[13] (David Nelson, personal communication; GCA_012979105.1) and the *Tribolium castaneum* reference genome (GCF_000002335.3)[32] were collected with the 'stats.sh' utility script from BBMap v38.76[33]. Completeness of unmasked genome assemblies was assessed with BUSCO v4.0.6 (-m genome -l arthropoda_odb10 --augustus_species tribolium2012)[14] using the Arthropoda gene set from OrthoDB v10[34]. Nucleotide differences between pseudo-haplotypes in our RPW assembly were computed by aligning orthologous scaffolds with minimap2 v2.17 (-cx asm20 --cs --secondary=no)[35] and extracting variants with paftools.js call across alignments at different minimal length cutoffs (-L) of 1 kb, 10 kb, and 50 kb. Estimates of total genome size from unassembled Illumina reads were generated using findGSE v1.94[36] and GenomeScope v1.0.0[37]. Frequency histograms for 21-mers were obtained with Jellyfish v2.3.0 with a max k-mer coverage of 1,000,000[38].

We used a mapped read depth approach to test whether unassembled Illumina DNA-seq datasets provided evidence for the high proportion of BUSCO genes that are classified as duplicated in the final Hazzouri *et al.*[13] hybrid assembly (M_pseudochr; GCA_012979105.1). First, arthropod BUSCO genes were classified as being single-copy or duplicated in the M_pseudochr assembly using BUSCO v4.0.6 (-m genome -l arthropoda_odb10 --augustus_species tribolium2012)[14]. Next, unassembled DNA-seq reads generated in this study (SRX7520800) and in Hazzouri *et al.*[13] (SRX5416727, SRX5416728, SRX5416729) were aligned to our unmasked pseudo-haplotype1 assembly using BWA-MEM v0.7.17-r1188 with default parameters[39]. The resulting alignments were position sorted and low quality mappings (MAPQ = 0) were removed using SAMtools v1.9[26]. Mean depth of all mapped reads or only high-quality mapped reads were then calculated using BEDtools v2.29.0 (bedtools coverage -mean)[40] across the complete genomic range of each BUSCO gene in our pseudo-haplotype1 assembly. Finally, histograms of mean read depth for BUSCO genes in our pseudo-haplotype1 assembly (partitioned as being single-copy or duplicated based on classification in the M_pseudochr assembly were plotted for each DNA-seq dataset using R and ggplot2[41,42]. The cumulative distribution functions for mean mapped read depth were compared between single-copy and duplicated gene sets for each DNA-seq dataset using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test in R with the alternative hypothesis that the mean mapped read depth of duplicated BUSCO genes is greater than the mean mapped read depth of single-copy BUSCO genes ($\alpha = 0.05$).

Evaluation of annotation quality

Support for exon-intron junctions in gene models from our BRAKER annotation was evaluated against the spliced RNA-seq alignments using paftools.js from minimap2 v2.17[35]. Completeness of the following RPW and *T. castaneum* gene sets was evaluated using BUSCO v4.0.6 (-m transcriptome -l arthropoda_odb10 --augustus_species tribolium2012)[14]: BRAKER annotation of our pseudo-haplotype1 assembly, a re-processed version of the long read transcriptome dataset from Yang *et al.*[10] (see below), the Funannotate annotation of the ABySS+10x hybrid genome (M_v.1) from Hazzouri *et al.*[13] (Khaled Hazzouri, personal communication), BRAKER re-annotation of their final hybrid genome (M_pseudochr) using the same procedure used for the pseudo-haplotype1 (see above), and the *T. castaneum* v5.2 reference genome annotation. Two BUSCO analyses were performed for each gene set, one using all transcripts and one using a single randomly chosen isoform per locus after clustering BRAKER transcripts into distinct loci using GffRead 0.11.7 (--cluster-only)[43]. Clustering transcripts with GffRead

takes into account strand orientation and exon-intron structure, and although this process might group transcripts that only partially overlap it its more specific that a simple interval overlap. The "all transcripts" BUSCO analysis provides an upper bound estimate of BUSCO recovery in a gene set, since one isoform of a locus might fit a BUSCO gene profile better than another isoform, but can falsely classify BUSCO genes as being duplicated due to the identification of multiple isoforms of the same locus. The "one isoform per locus" BUSCO analysis provides a conservative estimate of BUSCO gene recovery which more accurately represents the true degree of duplication in the gene set that is not biased by alternative isoform usage.

Our BRAKER genome annotation was also evaluated against two external curated datasets of RPW genes. First, we used a dataset of full-length cDNA transcripts reported in Yang *et al.*[10] generated using PacBio long-read isoform sequencing (Iso-Seq) from mixed tissues (larvae, pupae, and adults of both sexes). We observed anti-sense artifacts in the processed Iso-Seq transcriptomes reported by Yang *et al.*[10] (High quality: SRX7519788; Low quality: SRX8694670) (Supplementary Figure 2). Thus we re-processed the original circular consensus sequences (CCS) from Yang *et al.*[10] (SRX7495110) using default parameters of the isoseq3 pipeline in SMRT Link v8.0.0.79519. Unpolished isoform consensus sequences output from isoseq3 cluster were polished with Illumina RNA-seq reads from Yang *et al.*[10] using Lordec v0.9[44] based on best performing parameters from Hu *et al.*[45] (-k 21 -t 15 -b 1000 -e 0.45 -s 5). Polished isoform consensus sequences were then aligned to our pseudo-haplotype1 assembly using minimap2 v2.17 (-ax splice --cs --secondary=no)[35]. Supplementary alignments were then removed using SAMtools v1.9 to retain only primary and representative alignments. The resulting spliced alignments were position sorted and converted to GTF2 format using SAMtools v1.9, BEDtools v2.29.0, and UCSC tools v377[26,40,46]. Finally, we clustered re-processed Iso-Seq transcripts into distinct loci using GffRead v0.11.7 (--cluster-only), then compared Iso-Seq loci with BRAKER loci using GffCompare v0.11.2[43]. GffCompare identifies multiple types of overlaps between a reference set of transcripts and a query. These include overlaps representing the perfect concordance of the exon-intron structure, but also partial intronic and exonic overlaps as well as the containment of query transcripts by reference transcripts and vice-versa. Exonic overlaps between reference and query transcripts in opposite strands are flagged but do not contribute to the final statistics of overlapped loci[43].

Second, we compared our BRAKER genome annotation against curated sets of RPW genes that are potentially relevant for pest mitigation strategies[9,11]. Transcript identifiers for chemosensory genes were obtained from Antony *et al.*[9] and parsed from their transcriptome assembly (GDKA01000000). Transcripts for neuropeptides and their G-protein coupled receptors (GPCRs) were obtained from Zhang *et al.*[11] (MK751489–MK751534, MK751535–MK751576). Transcripts from both datasets were aligned to our pseudo-haplotype1 assembly, converted to GTF2, and clustered into distinct loci as for the Iso-Seq transcripts above. Transcripts for curated genes that could not be mapped to the RPW pseudo-haplotype1 assembly were further analyzed by directly querying DNA-seq data generated in this study (SRX7520800) and in Hazzouri *et al.*[13] (SRX5416727, SRX5416728, SRX5416729). DNA-seq reads were mapped directly to the transcript contigs using minimap2 v2.17 (-ax sr)[35], sorted and converted to BAM format using SAMtools v1.9[26]. Mean mapped read depth over each entire transcript was then calculated using BEDtools v2.29.0 (coverage -mean)[40]. To correct strand orientation errors observed in the mapped RPW curated gene sets from Antony *et al.*[9] (Supplementary Figure 2), we used the combined RNA-seq dataset (used above as input to BRAKER) to assemble a reference-guided transcriptome using StringTie v2.0[47]. We removed mostly single-exon genes for which no strand could be computed by StringTie, then overlapped the location of mapped transcripts from Antony *et al.*[9] and Zhang *et al.*[11] with our StringTie transcripts using GffCompare v0.11.2 to obtain the corresponding StringTie transcript for each curated gene in order to evaluate their consistency with BRAKER gene models. Finally, we compared StringTie transcripts for curated genes with BRAKER loci using GffCompare v0.11.2[43]. We note that while both StringTie transcripts and BRAKER annotations use the same underlying mapped RNA-seq data as input, StringTie transcripts were not used as evidence in BRAKER training nor were BRAKER gene models used in StringTie assembly, and thus BRAKER and StringTie annotations represent independent predictions of transcript structure.

Results and Discussion

Haplotype-resolved diploid assembly using 10x Genomics linked reads provides an accurate representation of RPW genome content

We prepared a 10x Genomics linked-read sequencing library from a single RPW individual originating from Al-Ahsa, Saudi Arabia and used this library to generate over 145 million 150-bp PE Illumina reads, totaling ∼40.4 Gb after adapter trimming. Using this data, we assembled a draft phased diploid genome assembly for *R. ferrugineus* using Supernova[17]. We exported our diploid assembly in 'pseudohap2' format (Supplementary Figure 1), which produces two output files each having a phased 'pseudo-haplotype' assembly. In regions where haplotype phasing can be achieved, maternal and paternal phase blocks are randomly assigned to one of the two pseudo-haplotype assemblies. In regions where phasing cannot be achieved, either because low heterozygosity or insufficient linked-read data, the two pseudo-haplotypes are identical.

Assembly statistics and BUSCO scores for both pseudo-haplotypes in our assembly are presented in Table 1. The total length of each pseudo-haplotype is approximately 590 Mb, with contig N50's of nearly 38 kb, and scaffold N50's of over 470 kb.

Over 140 Mb (∼24%) of each pseudo-haplotype is phased. Approximately 98% of Arthropod BUSCOs are found completely represented in both pseudo-haplotypes, ∼96% of which are single copy and only ∼2% are duplicated. The completeness of our RPW pseudo-haplotype assemblies is comparable to the current reference genome of the best studied beetle species *T. castaneum*[32], which has 99.1% complete BUSCOs with 98.6% being single-copy. The two pseudo-haplotypes in our assembly differ by <0.4% at aligned orthologous sites, with the majority of differences being single nucleotide polymorphisms and short indels (Supplementary Table 2). We note that differences between pseudo-haplotypes in our assembly underestimate the true heterozygosity of the two haplotypes in the individual sequenced, because insufficient linked-read data in some regions may lead to incomplete phasing. Nevertheless, because the two pseudo-haplotypes produced in our assembly are very similar, we chose pseudo-haplotype1 – the longer of the two assemblies – as our main focus for further analysis.

Recently, a hybrid assembly constructed using a combination of Illumina, 10x Genomics and Oxford nanopore sequencing has been published by Hazzouri *et al.*[13]. This hybrid assembly was produced by initially scaffolding an ABySS assembly of male Illumina 150 bp PE reads using SSPACE-LongRead[48] with scaffolds from a Supernova assembly based on a mixed-sex 10x Genomics library (comprised of three males and three females; Khaled Hazzouri, personal communication) exported in 'megabubbles' format to create the "M_v.1" hybrid assembly. The resulting M_v.1 hybrid assembly was further merged with two assemblies based on Oxford nanopore data and then scaffolded into pseudochromosomes using synteny with the *T. castaneum* genome to create the "M_pseudochr" assembly available in NCBI (GCA_012979105.1). By using long-read sequences and assuming chromosome-wide synteny and collinearity with *T. castaneum* for scaffolding, the M_pseudochr has a much higher scaffold N50 and also has nearly 200 Mb of additional DNA relative to either of our pseudo-haplotype assemblies (Table 1). However, the contig N50s of both our pseudo-haplotypes are higher than the M_pseudochr assembly. Both pseudo-haplotypes in our assembly also have a higher proportion of complete BUSCOs and a much lower proportion of duplicated BUSCOs than the M_pseudochr assembly (Table 1).

The observation of very high proportion of duplicated genes in the BUSCO gene set for the M_pseudochr assembly is unusual since by definition BUSCO genes are expected to be present in a single copy in most organisms[14]. We hypothesized that the high proportion of duplicated BUSCOs in the M_pseudochr assembly is an artifact of scaffolding the initial male ABySS assembly using a Supernova assembly exported in megabubbles format, which includes multiple haplotypes in a single output file (Supplementary Figure 1). Scaffolding with a megabubbles formatted Supernova assembly could introduce multiple haplotypes of the same locus into a single haploid representation of the genome, thereby creating regions which falsely appear to be duplicated in the M_pseudochr assembly when in fact they are haplotype-induced duplication artifacts[15]. Inclusion of multiple haplotypes in a single haploid assembly could also explain the substantially larger total genome size in the M_pseudochr assembly relative to either of our pseudo-haplotype assemblies (Table 1). Additionally, since the 10x Genomics library used by Hazzouri *et al.*[13] for Supernova assembly was made from six diploid individuals, heterozygosity will be increased across the genome in this library relative to a single diploid individual and it is also possible that more than two haplotypes per locus could have been exported in their megabubbles assembly.

To provide initial support for the hypothesis that high proportion of duplicated BUSCO genes in the M_pseudochr assembly results from scaffolding with multiple haplotypes from their Supernova megabubbles assembly, we exported our diploid 10x Genomics assembly in megabubbles format and ran BUSCO on the resulting assembly. As predicted, exporting our diploid assembly in megabubbles format led to a much larger total genome size and higher proportion of duplicated BUSCOs (Table 1). We also obtained and analyzed the male ABySS assembly and mixed-sex Supernova megabubbles assemblies used as input to the ABySS+10x (M_v.1) and final hybrid assemblies (M_pseudochr) from Hazzouri *et al.*[13] (David Nelson, personal communication). As shown in Table 1, their male ABySS assembly has a low proportion of duplicated BUSCO genes, similar to our pseudo-haplotype assemblies. In contrast, their multiple individual mixed-sex Supernova megabubbles assembly has an extremely high proportion of duplicated BUSCO genes, higher even than our diploid Supernova assembly exported in megabubbles format. Their male ABySS assembly has an apparently higher total assembly size than our pseudo-haplotype assemblies, but has a much lower total assembly size (597 Mb) when only scaffolds ≥250 bp are considered (Table 1), suggesting many small scaffolds inflate the total size of their initial male ABySS assembly. Their mixed-sex Supernova megabubbles assembly also has very large total genome size (968 Mb), which is not caused by inclusion of small scaffolds ≤250 bp. A high proportion of duplicated BUSCOs and a large total assembly size are also observed in the M_v.1 hybrid assembly prior to assembling into the final pseudochromosomes (M_pseudochr). Together, these results support the hypothesis that the mixed-sex Supernova megabubbles assembly used for scaffolding by Hazzouri *et al.*[13] contributed an excess of artifactually-duplicated sequences to their intermediate M_v.1 and final M_pseudochr hybrid assemblies.

Next, we tested which reconstruction of the RPW genome – our pseudo-haplotype1 assembly versus the M_psuedochr hybrid assembly – has better support in the unassembled DNA-seq data from both projects. To do this, we first classified BUSCO genes as being single copy or duplicated in the M_pseudochr assembly. We then mapped unassembled DNA-seq reads from four datasets (our 10x Genomics library, their 10x Genomics library, their male and female Illumina PE libraries) to our pseudo-haplotype1 assembly. If BUSCO genes classified as duplicated in the M_pseudochr assembly are truly duplicated in the

RPW genome but are erroneously collapsed in our pseudo-haplotype1 assembly, we expect these genes to have higher mapped read depth relative to BUSCO genes classified as single-copy. Alternatively, if BUSCO genes classified as duplicated in the M_pseudochr assembly are haplotype-induced duplication artifacts and our pseudo-haplotype assemblies represent the true structure of the RPW genome, we expect no difference in mapped read depth for BUSCO genes classified either as duplicated or single copy in the M_pseudochr assembly. Expectations of the latter hypothesis hold even for the 10x Genomics library from Hazzouri *et al.*[13] that was generated from multiple individuals if gene copy number is consistent among all individuals in the pooled sample. As shown in Figure 1, despite differences in overall coverage across datasets, we observe no difference in relative mapped read depth for BUSCO genes classified as duplicated versus single copy in the M_pseudochr assembly when DNA-seq reads are mapped to our pseudo-haplotype1 assembly (Kolmogorov-Smirnov Tests; all $P > 0.05$). No difference in read depth for these two categories of BUSCO genes is robustly observed across four different DNA-seq datasets sampled from two geographic locations generated using two different library types, and is not influenced by low quality read mappings (Figure 1). These results indicate that the unassembled DNA-seq data from both projects better support BUSCO gene copy number in our pseudo-haplotype1 reconstruction of the RPW genome.

Finally, we estimated total genome size for the RPW using assembly-free k-mer based methods[36,37] based on raw DNA-seq reads from our 10x Genomics library and genomic libraries from Hazzouri *et al.*[13] (Supplementary Table 3; Supplementary Figure 3). DNA-seq datasets from our study (10x Genomics) and from their male and female Illumina PE libraries all predict a total genome size for the RPW of <600 Mb (Supplementary Table 3), similar to our pseudo-haplotype1 genome assembly. Their mixed-sex 10x Genomics library predicts a much higher genome size than other DNA-seq datasets, however estimates of genome size based on this library are likely biased since it was generated from multiple diploid individuals and thus does not fit the assumptions of genome size estimation methods that assume diploidy (Supplementary Figure 3). We note that Hazzouri *et al.*[13] also reported genome size estimates based on flow cytometry analysis of 726 and 696 Mb for the female and male RPW genome, respectively, which are >100 Mb larger than either of our pseudo-haplotypes assembly sizes (Table 1). This discrepancy could be due to the presence of highly repetitive sequences such as centromeric satellite DNAs and other repeats in the RPW genome that cannot be recovered during genome assembly[49]. Indeed, such differences between physical estimates of genome size and assembly length have been observed in other insects[50] and often correlate with the abundance of heterochromatic repeats. Integrating all lines of evidence, we conclude that our phased diploid assembly does not include haplotype-induced duplication artifacts and excess sequence present in the M_v.1 and M_pseudochr hybrid assemblies, and thus provides a more accurate platform for gene discovery in the RPW genome.

Gene prediction using a haplotype-resolved diploid assembly provides a high-quality RPW gene set

We next performed *ab initio* gene prediction on a repeat-masked version of our pseudo-haplotype1 assembly using BRAKER[19] trained with protein evidence from multiple insect species and RPW short-read RNA-seq data from three previous studies[9,10,51]. Over 45% of pseudo-haplotype1 was identified by RepeatMasker as interspersed repeats using a *de novo* repeat library generated using RepeatModeler and masked prior to annotation. BRAKER annotation of our masked pseudo-haplotype1 assembly predicted 25,382 protein-coding transcripts that clustered into 23,413 loci (Table 2). Over 88% of exon-intron junctions in our BRAKER annotation can be validated by RNA-seq spliced alignments, suggesting that the exon-intron structures for the genes included in our genome annotation have high accuracy. Functional annotation of our BRAKER annotation revealed that ∼70% of RPW predicted proteins share similarity to sequences in the NCBI *nr* protein database, and that ∼84% had hits to one of InterPro's member databases. The combined evidence of *nr* and InterPro resulted in over 13,000 (∼54%) RPW predicted proteins being annotated with Gene Ontology (GO) terms (Table 3, Supplementary File 1).

BUSCO analysis on the full set of transcripts predicted by BRAKER revealed the presence of 91.8% of Arthropod genes in our annotation, which is close to the upper bound of the total number of Arthropod BUSCOs expected in a well-annotated Coleopteran genome like *T. castaneum* (95.6%) (Table 2). However, our BRAKER annotation has lower BUSCO completeness relative to the RPW pseudo-haplotype1 sequence itself (98%) (Table 1), which implies that a small proportion of genes present in the assembly are missing from our BRAKER annotation. The total number of genes in our BRAKER annotation (23,413 loci) is also substantially higher than the 14,244 loci currently annotated in *T. castaneum*, which may indicate false positive gene models in our BRAKER annotation or real loci in our RPW pseudo-haplotype1 assembly that are split into multiple BRAKER gene models. The total number of loci in our BRAKER annotation is on the same order of the number of RPW loci identified by Hazzouri *et al.*[13] (25,394), who annotated their intermediate M_v.1 hybrid assembly using Funannotate (`https://github.com/nextgenusfs/funannotate`). However, when the BRAKER pipeline used to annotate our pseudo-haplotype1 assembly is applied to their final M_pseudochr hybrid assembly, we identifiy a much larger number of loci (33,422) (Table 2).

Both the Funannotate (68.9%) annotation of the M_v.1 assembly performed by Hazzouri *et al.*[13] and our BRAKER (88.8%) annotation of their M_pseudochr assembly had lower BUSCO completeness than our BRAKER annotation of pseudo-haplotype1 (Table 2). In addition to lower overall BUSCO completeness, both the M_v.1 Funannotate and M_-

pseudochr BRAKER annotations have much higher BUSCO duplication than gene sets based on BRAKER annotation of pseudo-haplotype1 or the re-processed Iso-Seq transcriptome (Table 2: "all isoforms"). However, it is important to highlight that the BUSCO method can falsely classify single copy genes as being duplicated when applied to gene sets that include multiple transcript isoforms at the same locus, thereby obscuring the true degree of duplication in a gene set. Therefore, we also performed BUSCO analysis on RPW and *T. castaneum* gene sets using a single isoform selected randomly from each locus (Table 2: "one isoform per locus"). After controlling for the effects of alternative isoforms, 91.2% of Arthropod BUSCOs were captured completely in our BRAKER annotation of pseudo-haplotype1, 89.2% of which were identified as single-copy and only 2% as duplicated. Similarly low rates of duplicated BUSCOs are observed in the RPW Iso-Seq and *T. castaneum*gene sets when the effects of multiple isoforms are eliminated (Table 2). In contrast, even after controlling for the effect of multiple isoforms on estimates of BUSCO gene duplication, we observe very high rates of duplicated BUSCO genes in the M_v.1 Funannotate annotation and the M_pseudochr BRAKER annotation (Table 2). These results indicate that the haplotype-induced duplication artifacts detected in the hybrid genome assemblies from Hazzouri *et al.*[13] also impact protein-coding gene sets predicted in these genome sequences.

We further evaluated the quality of our BRAKER annotation by comparison to two external datasets of RPW genes. The first dataset is based on a recently-published RPW transcriptome obtained using Iso-Seq[10]. Preliminary analysis of the processed Iso-Seq dataset reported by Yang *et al.*[10] mapped to our pseudo-haplotype1 assembly revealed many transcript isoforms on the forward and reverse strands of the same locus (Supplementary Figure 2), presumably due to the inclusion of non-full length cDNA subreads that were sequenced on the anti-sense strand. Therefore, we re-processed CCS reads from Yang *et al.*[10] using the isoseq3 pipeline and obtained a dataset of 24,136 high-quality transcripts, nearly all of which could be mapped to our pseudo-haplotype1 assembly (24,009, 99.5%). After clustering mapped Iso-Seq transcripts at the genomic level, we identified 6,222 loci supported by this high-quality re-processed Iso-Seq dataset. Overlapping BRAKER annotations with this high-quality Iso-Seq dataset revealed that the vast majority of loci identified using Iso-Seq evidence were also present in our BRAKER annotation (5,875/6,222; 94.4%). This analysis also revealed 6,436 RPW loci in the BRAKER annotation that are independently supported by the Iso-Seq data, with the discrepancy in numbers of overlapping loci explained by one-to-many relationships.

The second external dataset used to evaluate our BRAKER annotation is derived from genes involved in behavior and physiology that may be relevant for RPW pest management[9,11]. Antony *et al.*[9] identified 157 transcripts belonging to six gene families associated with chemosensation, including: odorant receptors (ORs), odorant binding proteins (OBPs), gustatory receptors (GRs), chemosensory proteins (CSPs), ionotropic receptors (IRs), and sensory neuron membrane proteins (SNMPs). Likewise, Zhang *et al.*[11] identified 88 transcripts encoding neuropeptide precursors and their G-protein coupled receptors (GPCRs)[11]. Our pseudo-haplotype1 assembly contains the vast majority of these functionally-relevant RPW genes (236/245, 96%) (Table 4). Only nine previously reported chemosensory genes (3 OBPs, 6 CSPs) could not be found in our pseudo-haplotype1 assembly. Analysis of unassembled DNA-seq reads revealed that the sequences for these nine genes are in fact not present in the raw sequencing data produced here or in Hazzouri *et al.*[13], and thus represent either strain-specific gene variants or assembly/contamination artifacts in the *de novo* transcriptome from Antony *et al.*[9]. The 236 transcripts that map to our RPW assembly can be clustered into 232 distinct loci (Table 4), indicating that some previously identified transcripts are either isoforms of the same gene, allelic pairs, or sequencing/assembly errors.

We initially sought to evaluate the consistency of genomic mappings of transcript models for curated genes against our BRAKER annotation, but preliminary analysis revealed that many transcripts in the assembly reported by Antony *et al.*[9] map to the opposite strand of genes predicted by both BRAKER and our re-processed Iso-Seq transcriptome (Supplementary Figure 2). Opposite strand mappings relative to BRAKER annotations were not observed in the Zhang *et al.*[11] transcripts. We interpret the opposite strand mapping of many transcripts in the Antony *et al.*[9] assembly as arising from contigs being assembled in the anti-sense orientation. To correct these strand orientation artifacts in the Antony *et al.*[9] assembly, we generated a reference-guided StringTie assembly of short-read Illumina data and overlapped transcripts from Antony *et al.*[9] with StringTie transcripts. The majority of curated gene loci overlap StringTie transcripts (216/232; 93%) (Table 4). Using the StringTie transcript models as more accurate representation of curated gene structures, we find that the majority of curated genes are consistent with our BRAKER annotations (212/216; 98%) (Table 4).

Conclusion

Here we report a draft diploid assembly and genome-wide gene annotation constructed with the aim of supporting efforts to mitigate the impact of agricultural damage caused by the Red Palm Weevil, *R. ferrugineus*. We demonstrate that phased diploid assembly using 10x Genomics linked reads is a successful strategy for generating scaffolds that are suitable for protein-coding gene prediction in this species. We argue that our haplotype-resolved genome assembly provides a more accurate representation of the *R. ferrugineus* genome that does not include haplotype-induced duplication artifacts present in the genome assembly and annotation reported in a recent study[13]. If our interpretation of the differences between our assembly of the RPW genome and

that of Hazzouri *et al.*[13] is correct, then the claims for high rates of gene family expansion in the RPW lineage reported by Hazzouri *et al.*[13] could be an artifact of their assembly and should be re-evaluated. Additionally, we show that our annotation of the RPW genome cross-validates the majority of chemosensory and neuropeptide genes previously identified as candidates for guiding management of this pest using molecular genetics[9,11], but that a limited number of previously-identified chemosensory genes may be transcriptomic artifacts or strain-specific gene variants. The availability of an RPW genome assembly also allows the identification of strand orientation artifacts in previously-reported transcriptomic datasets for this species[9,10]. Finally, by integrating our genomic data with rigorously-processed Iso-Seq data[10], we identify >6,000 RPW genes independently supported by both genome annotation and long-read transcriptomics that represent a high-quality core gene set for future genetic analysis in this economically-important insect pest.

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Author contributions statement

M.M.M., M.B.A-F and C.M.B conceived the experiments, M.A.A., H.A.F.E-S, and F.M.A. conducted the experiments, G.D., C.M.B, and M.M.M. performed the bioinformatic analyses and analyzed the results, G.D., C.M.B, and M.M.M. drafted the manuscript. All authors reviewed the manuscript.

Additional information

Data availability: The raw reads used for genome assembly are available under SRA accession SRX7520800. Pseudo-haplotype1 (primary) and pseudo-haplotype2 (alternate) assemblies are available at GenBank under accession numbers JAACXV000000000 and JAACXW000000000, respectively.

Table 1. **General assembly statistics and BUSCO scores for RPW genome assemblies.**

	Assemblies from this study			Assemblies from Hazzouri *et al.*[13]			
	10x pseudo-haplotype1	10x pseudo-haplotype2	10x diploid megabubbles	Male diploid ABySS	10x mixed-sex megabubbles	ABySS+10x (M_v.1)	hybrid (M_pseudochr)
Assembly size (bp)	589,402,552	588,821,663	730,004,643	749,083,425	967,735,890	780,518,639	782,098,041
Assembly size for scaffolds ≥250 bp (bp)	589,402,552	588,821,663	730,004,643	596,550,086	967,735,890	780,518,639	782,098,041
Contig count (#)	42,051	41,976	47,835	1,832,276	125,191	48,516	48,516
Contig N50 (bp)	37,927	37,977	38,908	2,000	18,553	23,825	23,825
Scaffold count (#)	24,005	24,005	25,245	1,810,484	78,408	12,400	4,807
Scaffold N50 (bp)	471,583	471,583	288,817	2,289	76,013	127,745	64,117,472
GC content (%)	32.21	32.21	32.15	32.4	32.27	32.19	32.19
BUSCO (%)							
Complete	98.1	97.5	97.3	94.9	95.3	92.8	93.2
Single-copy	96.2	95.5	71.7	93.6	13.4	16.0	54.2
Duplicated	1.9	2.0	25.6	1.3	81.9	76.8	39.0
Fragmented	1.1	1.1	1.1	2.9	1.6	1.4	1.3
Missing	0.8	1.4	1.6	2.2	3.1	5.8	5.5

Table 2. **Statistics and BUSCO scores for RPW and *Tribolium* annotation gene sets.**

	RPW pseudo-haplotype1 BRAKER	RPW isoseq3	RPW M_v.1 Funannotate	RPW M_pseudochr BRAKER	Tribolium v5.2
Transcript (#)	25,382	24,009	25,394	36,491	25,229
Loci (#)	23,413	6,222	25,394	33,422	14,244
BUSCO (%) – all isoforms					
Complete	91.8	62.5	68.9	88.8	95.6
Single-copy	82.0	29.8	21.1	9.6	76.2
Duplicated	9.8	32.7	47.8	79.2	19.4
Fragmented	2.2	1.6	10.5	2.2	0.3
Missing	6.0	35.9	20.6	9.0	4.1
BUSCO (%) – one isoform per locus					
Complete	91.2	60.1	68.9	88.3	91.6
Single-copy	89.2	59.7	21.1	10.9	91.1
Duplicated	2.0	0.4	47.8	77.4	0.5
Fragmented	2.2	2.6	10.5	2.2	0.5
Missing	6.6	37.3	20.6	9.5	7.9

Table 3. **Functional annotation of 25,382 predicted proteins in the RPW pseudo-haplotype1 annotation.**

Database	Sequences annotated	% of total
nr	17,893	70.5
InterPro	21,210	83.6
nr or InterPro	22,001	86.7
Gene Ontology	13,779	54.3

Table 4. Presence of functionally-relevant gene sets in the RPW pseudo-haplotype1 assembly and annotation.

Gene family	Transcripts	Transcripts mapped to assembly	Mapped loci	Mapped loci with StringTie models	StringTie models consistent with BRAKER annotation
OR†	76	76	74	68	68
OBP†	38	35	35	34	34
GR†	15	15	15	15	13
CSP†	12	6	6	6	6
IR†	10	10	10	8	8
SNMP†	6	6	6	5	4
Neuropeptide‡	42	42	40	37	36
GPCR‡	46	46	46	43	43
Total	245	236	232	216	212

†Curated gene set from Antony *et al.*[9]. ‡Curated gene set from Zhang *et al.*[11]. Numbers of transcripts, numbers of transcripts mapped to the pseudo-haplotype1 assembly, and numbers of loci in the pseudo-haplotype1 assembly are based on the original transcripts reported in Antony *et al.*[9] and Zhang *et al.*[11]. Numbers of loci that are consistent with the BRAKER annotation of pseudo-haplotype1 are based on the corresponding StringTie transcript model overlapping transcripts from Antony *et al.*[9] and Zhang *et al.*[11] to correct for orientation strand orientation artifacts in the Antony *et al.*[9] transcriptome.

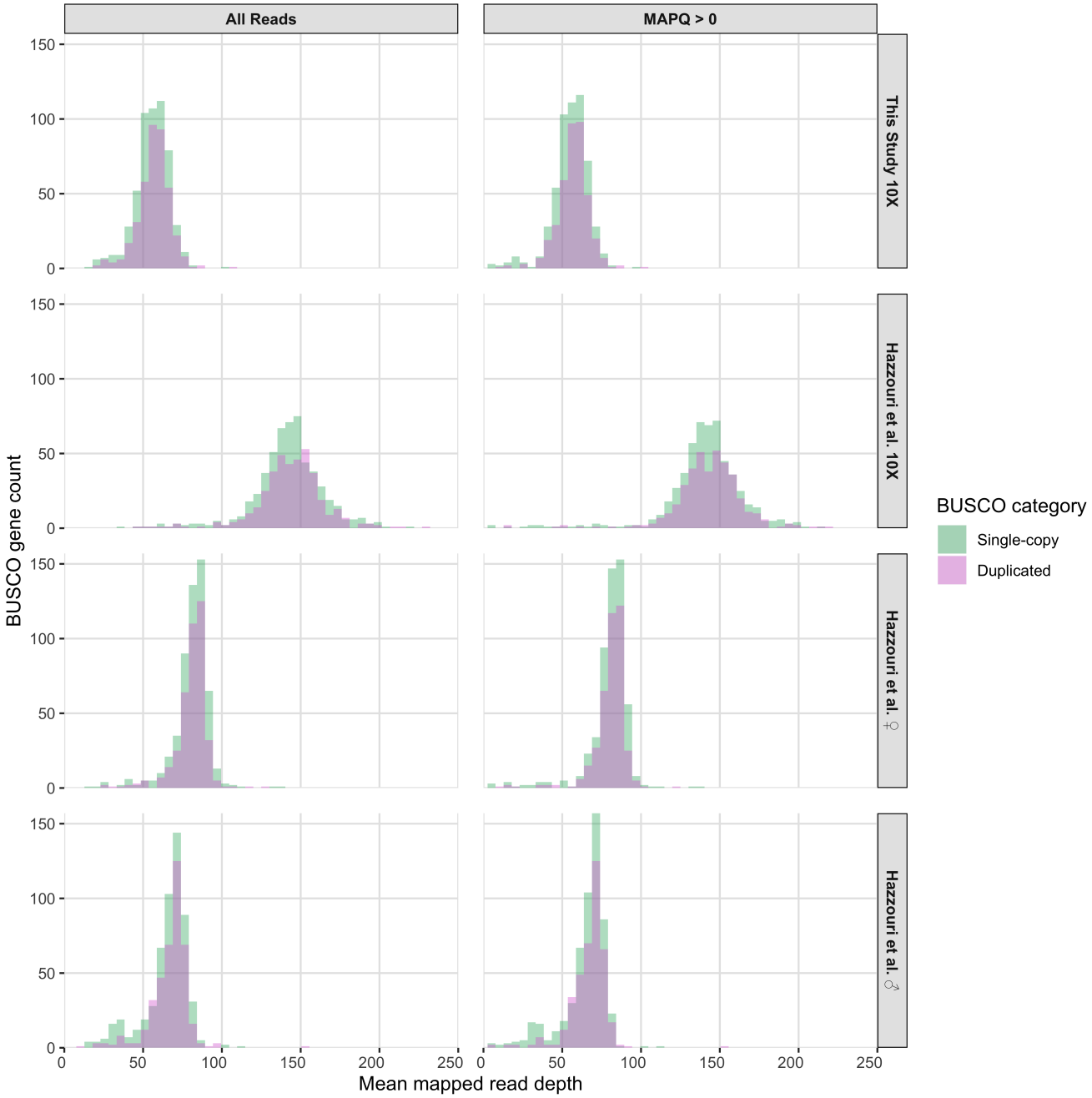

Figure 1. Mapped read depth of BUSCO genes in the RPW pseudo-haplotype1 assembly. BUSCO genes were categorized as single-copy or duplicated based on their status in the M_pseudochr assembly. The four DNA-seq datasets analyzed are (from top to bottom): 10x Genomics library from this study (SRX7520800), 10x Genomics library from Hazzouri *et al.*[13] (SRX5416727), female RPW Illumina PE library from Hazzouri *et al.*[13] (SRX5416728), and male RPW Illumina PE library from Hazzouri *et al.*[13] (SRX5416729). Depth estimates based on all mapped read and high quality mapped reads (MAPQ > 0) are shown in the left and right columns, respectively.