Circadian regulation of the transcriptome in a complex polyploid crop

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<u>Abstract</u>

The circadian clock is a finely balanced time-keeping mechanism that coordinates

programmes of gene expression. It is currently unknown how the clock regulates expression

of homoeologous genes in polyploids. Here, we generate a high-resolution time-course

dataset to investigate the circadian balance between sets of three homoeologous genes (triads)

from hexaploid bread wheat. We find a large proportion of circadian triads exhibit

imbalanced rhythmic expression patterns, with no specific sub-genome favoured. In wheat,

period lengths of rhythmic transcripts are found to be longer and have a higher level of

variance than in other plant species. Expression of transcripts associated with circadian

controlled biological processes are largely conserved between wheat and *Arabidopsis*,

however striking differences are seen in agriculturally critical processes such as starch

metabolism. Together, this work highlights the ongoing selection for balance versus

diversification in circadian homoeologs, and identifies clock-controlled pathways that might

provide important targets for future wheat breeding.

<u>Introduction</u>

Circadian clock homologs have been both inadvertently selected during crop domestication

and identified as crop improvement targets[1–4]. Understanding circadian regulation of the

transcriptome in crops such as bread wheat (*Triticum aestivum*) may provide useful insights

for future crop improvement. Wheat also provides an excellent model system to explore how

the circadian clock and its outputs are co-ordinated in a recently formed, complex

allopolyploid. In *Arabidopsis*, circadian transcription factors act in a dose-dependent manner,

with both knock-out and over-expression mutants resulting in altered function of the

circadian oscillator[5–8]. It is not yet understood how rhythmic gene expression is balanced in

species with multiple copies of the same gene. *T. aestivum* is a hexaploid (AABBDD) formed

through interspecific hybridisation of three diploid ancestors around 10,000 years ago[9,10].

51.7% of high-confidence wheat genes still exist in triads; sets of three homoeologous genes

present on each of the A, B and D genomes[11]. As these homoeologs evolved independently

for several million years prior to hybridization, it is plausible that these independent species

might have been subject to different selective pressures on their clocks (Fig. 1a).

The circadian network in *Arabidopsis* comprises a series of interlocking negative

transcriptional feedback loops connected by key activators[12]. Although monocots such as

wheat diverged from their dicot relatives over 140 million years ago[13], many circadian

oscillator components seem to have been conserved, particularly those forming the core loop

network. Orthologs of *TIMING OF CAB EXPRESSION 1 (TOC1)* and other *PSEUDO-*

RESPONSE REGULATOR (PRR) genes have been identified in wheat, rice and barley, and

several loci within these genes have been associated with altered flowering times, most

notably *(ppd-1)* within *TaPRR3/7*[14–16]. Likewise, mutants of orthologs of *LATE*

ELONGATED HYPOCOTYL (LHY), *GIGANTEA* (*GI*), *EARLY FLOWERING 3 (ELF3),* and

LUX ARRYTHMO (LUX) have been identified that alter heading dates, pathogen

susceptibility, plant height or lower grain yields[17–21].

Circadian control of carbon fixation and starch metabolism are thought to form part of the

selective advantage conferred by the clock[22,23]. This is apparent in the *lhy⁻/cca1⁻* short period

double mutant, where night-time starch levels reach exhaustion earlier compared to wild-

type, triggering early onset starvation responses that reduce plant productivity[23]. Similarly,

genes encoding photosynthesis-related proteins are well-established targets of the circadian

clock and include the *LIGHT HARVESTING CHLOROPHYLL A/B BINDING PROTEIN*

genes (*LHCB* also known as *CAB* genes) and photosystem I and II reaction centre genes[24,25].

Here, we investigate circadian balance within wheat triads to understand how circadian

control is co-ordinated in a polyploid crop with three subgenomes. Second, we examine

similarities and differences between the circadian transcriptome in wheat and its distant dicot

relative *Arabidopsis,* at a global level and at the level of genes encoding key pathways such

as primary metabolism and photosynthesis.

Results

Global analysis of the circadian transcriptome in wheat

We generated a circadian RNA-seq time-course and compared it with a recently published dataset from *Arabidopsis*[26] over 24h - 68h following transfer to constant light. Rhythmicity was assessed using Metacycle Benjamini-Hochberg (BH) *q*-values. Of the 86,567 genes expressed in wheat, 33.0% were rhythmically expressed with a BH *q* < 0.05 and 21.5% with a BH *q* < 0.01 (Supplementary Note 1, Supplementary Table 1). This was significantly lower than the proportions of rhythmically expressed genes in the *Arabidopsis* dataset (50.7% BH *q* < 0.05, 39.1% BH *q* < 0.01) using the same criteria (X^2 (1) = 2727.1, $p < 0.001$, one-tailed, two-proportions z-test). Circadian waveform characteristics of the rhythmically expressed genes (BH *q* < 0.01) in the wheat and *Arabidopsis* datasets were quantified using algorithms in Metacycle (JTK, ARSER, LS and meta2d) and Biodare2 (FFT-NLLS and MESA). Period, phase, and amplitude estimates from FFT-NLLS and meta2d were well-correlated for individual genes (Supplementary Fig. 1). All models reported that mean period length in wheat was approximately 3h longer than in *Arabidopsis* (wheat = 25.9 - 27.5h, *Arabidopsis* = 22.6 - 24.4h; t(36067) = 101.58, $p<0.001$, Welch's two sample t-test; Supplementary Fig. 2). There was no significant difference between mean periods across the three wheat sub-genomes (Fig. 1c, F(2, 28,276) = 0.179, $p=0.836$, One-way ANOVA).

We used meta2d to compare period means and distributions from four previously published circadian datasets, and found that period lengths in wheat were longer and had higher standard deviation than period distributions from *Arabidopsis*, *Brassica rapa*, *Brachypodium distachyon* and *Glycine max* (Fig 1b; Supplementary Table 2).

We investigated how wheat periods changed over the course of the three-day experiment and found that periods were longer immediately after transfer to constant light (28.61h, SD=3.421h), and progressively shortened over the following days (Supplementary Note 2). One explanation for this initial lengthening of period is that the dusk zeitgeber is an important signaling cue for wheat circadian expression. It is possible that the mean period of expressed transcripts initially lengthens trying to follow this missing dark signal before the free-running endogenous period asserts itself.

For both *Arabidopsis* and wheat, we recalculated phases of rhythmic transcripts relative to endogenous period (circadian time; CT). Across all algorithms, most transcripts in *Arabidopsis* peaked during the subjective night (around CT12-24; Supplementary Fig. 3). In

wheat, the greatest numbers of rhythmic genes peaked during the subjective day (around

CT6-8) with a second, smaller group being expressed in the night (~CT20). When we

grouped transcripts into 2h period bins, we found that transcripts with short periods contained

proportionally more dawn-peaking transcripts, whereas those with longer periods contained

proportionally more dusk-peaking transcripts (Supplementary Note 3, Supplementary Fig. 4).

Balance of circadian regulation within triads

Although previous studies have examined the relationships between circadian regulated

orthologs in different plant species[26–28] and within paralogs in *Brassica rapa*[29], hexaploid

wheat provides an opportunity to study the relationships between recently formed circadian

regulated homoeologs acting within the same organism. In wheat, over 72% of syntenic triads

are estimated to have "balanced" expression, with similar relative abundance of transcripts

from each of the three homoeologs[30]. Due to the importance of the clock in coordinating

dosage of gene expression, our hypothesis was that many circadian triads would also have

balanced circadian regulation. We defined imbalanced circadian regulation as triads

harbouring differences in rhythmicity (i.e., BH q-values), period lengths, phases, and relative

amplitudes.

Of the 16,359 expressed triads in our dataset, 9901 (60.52%) had at least one rhythmic

homoeolog, and 3448 (21.08%) had three rhythmically expressed genes (BH $q < 0.05$), with

the latter hereafter termed "rhythmic triads" (purple segment, Fig. 1d). 6453 triads lacked

rhythmicity in either one or two expressed homoeolog(s) (green and blue segments, Fig. 1d).

In both cases, there was no bias for absence of rhythmicity in the A, B or D copy ($\chi^2(2)=$

6.8415, $p = 0.40$ where one gene is arrhythmic, $\chi^2(2)= 6.8415$, $p = 0.03$ where two genes are

arrhythmic). We found cases where high-confidence rhythmic homoeologs (BH $q < 0.01$)

occurred alongside arrhythmic homoeologs (BH $q > 0.05$) represented by light-shaded outer-

ring segments in Fig. 1d. In total there were 3450 of these imbalanced-rhythmicity triads

(Fig. 1h,i). To explore other forms of circadian imbalance, we assessed whether phase, period

and relative amplitude were conserved between homoeologs within the rhythmic triad set

(purple segment, Fig. 1d). Differences in phases were quantified by a cross-correlation

analysis to assess whether the correlation between homoeologs was improved with a time lag

of 4, 8 or 12 hours. We identified 464 triads with imbalanced phases with an optimum lag of

>0h between homoeologs (Fig. 1e,j). 1,139 triads had imbalanced periods with more than 2h

difference in period between homoeologs (Fig. 1f,k). 701 triads had imbalanced relative

amplitudes with more than two-fold difference in relative amplitude (Fig. 1g,l). Within this

last group, the homoeolog with the lowest amplitude was still rhythmic, as observed when

data are mean-normalized (Fig. 1l,m). In summary, the largest cause of imbalanced circadian

expression within triads was absence of rhythmicity (67.89%) with differences in period

(22.41%), relative amplitude (13.79%) and phase (9.13%) occurring more infrequently and

with some overlap between categories.

Out of all expressed triads in our dataset, around 11.1% had balanced circadian expression,

31.1% had imbalanced circadian expression, 39.5% were arrhythmic and 18.4% were

borderline triads which did not fit into the categories imposed by our cut-offs. There is

therefore a ratio of approximately 3:1 imbalanced to balanced circadian triads in wheat. This

finding was initially surprising given that Ramírez-González et al. reported 72.5% of wheat

triads showed balanced expression. We found that 64.15% of the triads classified as circadian

imbalanced in our data would be classified as balanced in the Ramírez-González study

(Supplementary Fig. 5). However, if we consider that triads with highly imbalanced circadian

regulation can be classified as balanced in their expression at a single timepoint (as

demonstrated in Supplementary Fig. 6), and that there are multiple ways in which homeologs

can become circadian imbalanced (phase, period, rhythmicity etc.), then it is quite reasonable

that only a small proportion of triads are classified as having balanced circadian regulation in

this study. This insight highlights the importance of considering temporal dynamics when

studying gene expression.

One explanation for imbalanced rhythmicity is that arrhythmic homoeologs are silenced. In

support of this, we found that the rhythmic homoeologs in imbalanced triads were expressed

at a significantly higher baseline level than their arrhythmic homoeologs (Fig. 1n; $F(16,$

$35,148) = 6.94$, $p<0.001$, Two-level, nested ANOVA on Log10 transformed data). We also

found that triads with balanced rhythmicity were expressed at a uniformly higher level than

the most highly expressed homoeolog(s) in the imbalanced triads (Fig. 1n; $F(7, 35,148) =$

570.909, $p<0.001$). Therefore, in imbalanced rhythmicity triads, the rhythmic homoeolog

does not appear to compensate for reduced expression of the other homoeolog(s), so the

overall expression across the triad is reduced. This is supported by data from diploid *Brassica*

rapa, where circadian regulated paralogs are expressed at a higher level than single copy

genes[29].

To investigate whether certain biological processes were associated with circadian balance,

we compared GO-slim terms enriched in the 1816 circadian balanced triads, the 5082

differently circadian regulated triads and the 6458 arrhythmic triads, identifying significant

terms unique to each group (Table 2). Some terms were enriched only in circadian balanced

triads (*p*-value <0.0001, Fisher's exact test e.g., "photosynthesis", "generation of precursor

metabolites and energy", "gene-expression" and "translation"). In contrast, GO-slim terms:

"developmental process involved in reproduction", "and "system development" were

enriched significantly in triads with differently regulated homoeologs (*p*-value <0.0001) but

not in triads with circadian balanced homoeologs (*p*-value >0.5). A possible explanation for

this enrichment could be that imbalanced circadian triads are more likely to be dynamically

expressed over developmental stages or show local dominance of a sub-genome in a

particular tissue type. Transcription factor (TF) triads were as likely to be circadian

balanced/imbalanced as non-transcription factors (χ^2 (2, N = 13,356) = 3.03, *p* = 0.08, chi-

square test). Previously validated wheat TFs with imbalanced circadian expression included

WCBF2 (aka *TaCBF1*) and *TaPCF5*, both of which regulate abiotic stress responses[31,32]

(Supplementary Note 4, Supplementary Fig. 7).

When we compared GO-slim terms associated with paralogs in *Brassica rapa*[29], we found

that *Brassica* paralogs with similar circadian expression patterns (as characterized in

Greenham et al, (2020) using DiPALM[29]) were also associated with "photosynthesis" and

"generation of precursor metabolites and energy" (*p*-value <0.001, Fisher's exact test). These

terms were not enriched in circadian paralogs with differential expression patterns (*p*-value

>0.5; Supplementary Table 3). Examples of genes having similar (balanced) circadian

expression within *Brassica rapa* paralogs and in all three homoeologs in wheat triads

included orthologs of the PSI light harvesting complex genes *LHCA1*, *LHCA2* and *LHCA3*,

and the RNA polymerase sigma factor *SIG5*. It is possible that conservation of circadian

expression of these duplicate genes poses an evolutionary benefit, as similar regulation has

been retained for both duplicate copies in ancient paralogs of *Brassica rapa* and within more

recently formed wheat homoeologs arising through polyploidization.

<u>Patterns of triad circadian balance across the genome</u>

Next, we wanted to determine whether there are genomic regions that incorporate a clustering

of circadian balance in rhythmicity. We hypothesized that if we found sequential "runs" of

triads with arrhythmic expression on a particular chromosome, this might indicate an

overlying region of differential chromatin accessibility or transcriptional suppression. To

investigate this, we looked for regions on each set of chromosomes where there were

sequential triads having the same number of rhythmic homeologs (i.e. runs of three, two or

one rhythmic genes). We also looked for runs of sequential rhythmic triads specific to a

particular chromosome (e.g. runs of two rhythmic genes on chromosomes A and B). In both

cases, we found no evidence that triads with specific categories of rhythmic homoeologs

were grouped together more often than would be expected by chance (Supplementary Note 5,

Supplementary Table 4). This suggests that distributions of rhythmic balance appear to be

randomly distributed across the genome (Supplementary Fig. 8).

<u>Clustering of gene expression and GO-term enrichment</u>

To establish whether similar phased transcripts in wheat and *Arabidopsis* had similar

biological roles, we clustered rhythmic transcripts (BH $q < 0.01$) into 9 expression modules

for each species and identified GO-slim terms enriched in each module ($p < 0.01$). Circadian

characteristics of module eigengenes are shown in Supplementary Table 6. We compared the

correlation and cross-correlation of pairwise modules in the two species to find modules that

correlated with a peak lag of 0 (synchronous phase) or with a peak lag of 4, 8, or 12h

(asynchronous phase). Overall, modules with synchronous phases in wheat and *Arabidopsis*

shared more GO-slim terms than modules with asynchronous phases (F(3,77) = 4.79, p

<0.01, One-Way ANOVA), indicating that these modules in wheat and *Arabidopsis* contain

genes with similar functions (Supplementary Fig. 9). We focused on four of these

synchronous module pairs, broadly peaking at dawn, midday, dusk, and night for further

analysis (Fig. 2). Eigengenes for dawn peaking modules A9 and W9 were highly correlated

(r>0.9) and shared 14 overlapping enriched GO-slim terms ($p < 0.01$; Fig. 2a,b,f). These

included terms for translation and gene expression as well as terms related to protein, amide,

nitrogen and organonitrogen biosynthetic and metabolic processes (full lists in

Supplementary Table 7). Co-expressed genes in the dawn-expressed modules included

several orthologs involved in light, heat, and biological defence, as well as 45 ribosomal

protein orthologs (Supplementary Note 6). Transcripts for ribosomal proteins in mouse liver

and *Neurospora crassa* have also been reported to oscillate, suggesting a conserved role for

the circadian clock in co-ordinating ribosome biogenesis[33,34].

In addition to enriched GO-slim terms, we investigated enrichment for transcription factor

(TF) superfamilies and transcription factor binding sites in each wheat module of clock-

regulated genes. In late-night/dawn modules W8 and W9, transcripts encoding MYB

transcription factors were significantly enriched and included putative TFs involved in leaf

morphogenesis, plant growth, regulation of flavonoid biosynthesis, and developmental

transition to flowering (Supplementary Note 6, Supplementary Fig. 10).

Eigengenes for wheat and *Arabidopsis* modules peaking in the day (W3 and A2) had a

relatively low correlation (r=0.491), but peaked with similar CT values (CT 6.34h and

6.19h) given the longer circadian period in wheat. 5 out of 15 of the GO-slim terms enriched

in the W3 module were also found in the A2 module ($p < 0.01$; yellow triangles in Fig.

2a,c,f). These included terms relating to "photosynthesis", "response to radiation" and

"generation of precursor metabolites and energy". Co-expressed genes peaking in day-time

modules included light-harvesting and light signaling genes as well as *CYP709B3,* which

protects the plant from transpiration-triggered salinity stress during the day[35,36].

In dusk-peaking modules A5 and W4, 8 significantly enriched GO-slim terms were shared

between *Arabidopsis* and wheat ($p < 0.01$, green triangles in Fig. 2a,d,f). Several genes co-

expressed in these dusk modules were involved in auxin transport and signalling including

the endosomal sorting complex protein *CHMP1A* which ensures proper sorting of auxin

carriers (Supplementary Note 6)[37]. There was also a significant enrichment for expression of

transcripts encoding AP2-EREBP (ethylene responsive) and ARF (auxin responsive)

transcription factor superfamilies within the W4 module (Supplementary Fig. 10).

Interestingly, this was followed two hours later by the expression of genes with AP2-EREBP

transcription factor binding sites in their promoter region (W5, Supplementary Fig 11).

Finally, two evening-phased modules W5 and A6 (r=0.80) were enriched for GO-slim terms

concerning several metabolic processes (blue triangles in Fig. 2f). Co-expressed orthologs in

these two modules included *SEVEN IN ABSENTIA2* that regulates ABA-mediated stomatal

closure and drought tolerance in *Arabidopsis*[38], and *HYDROPEROXIDE LYASE1* that

contributes to responses to insect attack and mechanical wounding[39].

Components of the core circadian clock in *Arabidopsis* and wheat

We next compared the dynamics of circadian oscillator components in wheat and

Arabidopsis. Clock gene orthologs belonging to large gene families were detected by

phylogenetic analysis (Supplementary Fig. 12–16; Supplementary Table 8). Overall, wheat

circadian clock genes were expressed rhythmically and with a similar phase to their

Arabidopsis counterparts (Fig. 3). However, the free-running rhythms of clock transcripts in

wheat had a mean circadian period that was approximately 3.49h longer than in *Arabidopsis*

(27.23h and 23.74h, respectively).

TaLHY and *TaTOC1* peaked sharply at dawn and dusk, respectively, during the first cycle in

constant light, and maintained an >8h difference in phase throughout the experiment (Fig.

3a,b). This is consistent with their phasing in *Arabidopsis. All three homoeologs for *TaGI*

were robustly rhythmic (BH $q < 0.01$) and peaked at CT7 (Fig. 3c). *TaPRR73* transcripts

peaked approximately 5h before *TaPRR37* transcripts, consistent with the phase divergence

of *Arabidopsis PRR7* and *PRR3* (Fig. 3d,e). However, wheat homoeologs *TaPRR59* and

TaPRR95 had similar expression profiles ($R^2=0.68$) peaking marginally apart at CT8 and

CT10, in between the peak phases of *Arabidopsis PRR9* (CT5) and *PRR5* (CT11) (Fig. 3f,g).

Therefore, the *PRR* gene family in wheat peaks in the order of; *TaPRR73*, [*TaPRR37*,

TaPRR95, *TaPRR59]* in quick succession, and finally *TaTOC1*. This sequential pattern

matches the expression of PRR homologs in rice[40].

Transcripts encoding evening complex components, *LUX, ELF3* and *ELF4,* are circadian

regulated in *Arabidopsis* and peak simultaneously at dusk. Three wheat triads for LUX-like

genes were identified; one with higher identity to *LUX/BOA* and two similar to other *LUX-*

like *Arabidopsis* genes (Supplementary Fig. 15). Transcripts from all three of these triads

accumulated rhythmically and peaked from midday to dusk, *TaLUX-Lb* at CT7, *TaLUX/BOA*

at CT10 and *TaLUX-La* at CT12 (Fig. 3h,i; Supplementary Fig. 17). Five wheat transcripts

with homology to *Arabidopsis ELF4* and *ELF4-L1-4* accumulated with a mean circadian

phase of 12.6h; similar to *ELF4,* but with lower relative amplitudes (Fig. 3j,k; Supplementary

Fig. 17). *TaELF3* transcripts were all arrhythmic (BH $q > 0.36$), and the *TaELF3-1D*

homoeolog was expressed with a particularly low baseline level of 0.73 TPM in comparison

to the other two homoeologs (8.7-9.7 TPM) (Fig. 3l). This is consistent with previous

findings linking a deletion in *TaELF3* to the *eps* QTL on chromosome 1D in Cadenza[18].

We next assessed the balance of circadian expression between triad homoeologs in the core

clock network. *TaLHY, TaGI*, and *TaPRR59* had notably similar expression patterns in terms

of phase, period, relative amplitudes, and baseline expression over all timepoints (Fig.

3a,c,f,g), suggesting that unbalance in these triads is strongly selected against. Homoeologs

of *TaTOC1*, *TaPRR73* and *TaPRR37(Ppd)* had similar phases, but all had reduced expression

in the A-genome homoeolog (Fig. 3b,d,e). *TaLUX/BOA-3A, TaLUX-La-3B* and *TaLUX-Lb-*

1D had marginally shorter periods (>2h) and delayed phases (>2h) compared to their

respective homoeologs (Supplementary Table 9).

The REVEILLE family are CCA1/LHY-like MYB-domain transcription factors that are

predominantly activators of evening expressed genes[41,42]. The wheat *RVE* genes could be

split into a *LHY* clade (containing the *TaLHY* triad described above), a *RVE6/8*-like clade

containing three wheat triads and a *RVE1/2/7*-like clade also containing three triads

(Supplementary Fig. 12). All *TaRVE6/8* transcripts peaked at CT0-4 concurrently with

TaLHY (Supplementary Fig. 17). The *TaRVE2/7* transcripts peaked with distinct phases;

TaRVE27b in phase with *TaLHY*, *TaRVE27c* 4h before *TaLHY* and *TaRVE27a*

approximately 12h before *TaLHY* (Supplementary Fig. 17). Based on their phylogenetic

relationships, it is probable that several *RVE2/7* clade paralogs in wheat and *Arabidopsis*

arose independently after their evolutionary divergence, and it is therefore interesting that

they both show distinct phases of expression, suggesting homoplastic circadian functions.

Expression of orthologs for additional transcripts involved in circadian regulation (*FKF1*,

ZTL, *LKP2*, *LNK1/2*, *CHE* and *LWD*) are reviewed in Supplementary Note 7 and

Supplementary Fig. 17.

<u>Circadian control of photosystem and light signalling gene expression is largely conserved</u>

<u>between *Arabidopsis* and wheat</u>

A further GO-slim analysis across all rhythmically-expressed genes in *Arabidopsis* and wheat

identified enrichment of similar GO-slim processes including "photosynthesis" (p<1x10-14),

"rhythmic process" (p<1x10-6), "response to abiotic stimulus" (p<1x10-13) and "cellular

macromolecule biosynthetic process" (p<1x10-5, Fisher's exact test, Supplementary Table

10). We used genes associated with some of these GO-slim terms as case-studies to highlight

similarities and differences in circadian control between the two species. Expression data and

Metacycle statistics for all transcripts in this analysis are in Supplementary Table 11.

In considering photosynthesis, we examined specifically nuclear genome-encoded

photosystem (PS) proteins. Transcripts encoding the PSI components *LHCA1-6,* the PSI

reaction centre subunits *PSAD* and *PSAE* and the *PSII* subunits *LHCB1-7* were rhythmically

expressed in both species and had conserved phases (Supplementary Fig. 18). *LHCA1-4*

peaked towards the end of the subjective day and *LHCA5* and *6* peaked during the subjective

night. *PSAD* and *PSAE* peaked concurrently with *LHCA1-4*. In both species, *LHCB7*

transcripts had lower relative amplitudes compared to other LHCB transcripts. PSB27 is a

protein associated transiently with the PSII complex involved in adaption to fluctuating light

intensities[43]. Transcripts for this protein peaked during the subjective day in *Arabidopsis* and

during the subjective night in wheat.

In considering the GO-slim term "response to abiotic stimulus", we next investigated

expression of transcripts for photoreceptors and light signalling proteins due to their

pervasive influence upon development, metabolism, and circadian timing. Although

transcripts for the UV-B photoreceptor *UVR8* accumulated with a circadian rhythm in both

species, only one PHYTOCHROME ortholog (*PHYA*) and three *CRYPTOCHROME*

orthologs *(CRY1)* were rhythmic in wheat out of 18 orthologs identified (Supplementary Fig.

18). This contrasts with *Arabidopsis*, where *PHYA-C, CRY1* and *CRY2* accumulated with a

circadian rhythm.

Downstream light signalling proteins COP1 and SPA form complexes that degrade positive

regulators of photomorphogenesis (e.g. *HFR1* and *HY5*) under dark conditions[44]. Transcripts

for *COP1*, *SPA4*, *HFR1* and *HY5* accumulated rhythmically and with conserved phases in

both species (Supplementary Fig. 19). *COP1/SPA4* peaked synchronously around the end of

the subjective night. Surprisingly, given the similar role HFR1 and HY5 proteins have in

preventing hypocotyl elongation in low light, *HFR1* and *HY5* transcripts were expressed anti-

phase to each other. HY5 and HFR1 act synergistically to coordinate the photomorphogenesis

response, although it has been suggested that their activation is regulated through

independent pathways[45].

Wheat triads with identity to *Arabidopsis PIN1*, *PIN4, PIN5,* and *PIF4/5* were rhythmically

expressed, alongside two triads with high similarity to rice *OsPIL11* and *OsPIL13* ([46];

Supplementary Fig. 19). Overall, we observe that the arrhythmic accumulation of most of the

wheat PHY and CRY transcripts is not reflected in the rhythmic expression of several

downstream light signalling transcripts. This supports the notion that regulatory signals from

photoreceptors might occur at the level of protein stability and localisation rather than at the

level of transcript accumulation, as occurs for *ZTL* or *HY5* in *Arabidopsis*.

A set of proteins that link light signalling, circadian regulation and chloroplasts are the sigma

factors[47]. These light-responsive nuclear-encoded regulators of chloroplast transcription

guide promoter recognition and transcription initiation by plastid encoded RNA-polymerase

(PEP) on the chloroplast genome[48–51]. In *Arabidopsis*, *SIG1, 3, 4, 5* and *6* were rhythmically

transcribed (Supplementary Fig. 19). In wheat, all homoeologs in triads orthologous to *SIG1*,

SIG3 and *SIG5* were also rhythmic (BH $q < 0.01$). Whilst the dawn phase of *TaSIG5*

transcripts were similar to *AtSIG5*, *TaSIG1* transcripts were expressed over 10h earlier than

AtSIG1 (Supplementary Fig. 19). Previous research has shown that activity of *AtSIG1* can be

regulated through redox-dependent phosphorylation[52], and activity of all sigma factors are

likely to be subject to multiple layers of regulation in addition to circadian control of

transcript expression.

 <u>Similarities and differences in circadian control of primary metabolism genes in *Arabidopsis*</u>

<u>and wheat</u>

Expression profiles of genes with key roles in primary metabolism were compared in

Arabidopsis and wheat with a focus on enzymes that regulate trehalose 6 phosphate (Tre6P)

and starch metabolism (Fig. 4). Tre6P synthase (TPS) and Tre6P phosphatase (TPP)

participate in the synthesis and dephosphorylation of Tre6P, respectively. Tre6P is an

important signalling metabolite associated with both sucrose regulation and circadian

regulation in *Arabidopsis*[53–55]. Tre6P also affects grain yield and drought resilience in wheat,

maize, and rice[56]. Transcripts for *TPS1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 10* and *11* and *TPPA, E, F, G* and *H* were

expressed rhythmically in *Arabidopsis* (Supplementary Fig. 20). Wheat transcripts for *TPS1*

(the most well-characterised of the T6P synthases) were arrhythmic, however rhythmic

transcripts were found in triads more closely related to TPS11, 6 and 7 (Supplementary Fig.

20). We identified three rhythmic TPP triads in wheat, two of which were orthologous to

Arabidopsis TPPA, F and *G.* The third TPP triad was part of a monocot-specific clade

identified by Paul et al. (2018), which also included *Zm00001d032298,* a crop improvement

target in maize[56].

Ribulose bisphosphate carboxylase (Rubisco) comprises eight small (RbcS) and 8 large

(RbcL) subunits, which are encoded by the nuclear and chloroplast genomes, respectively[57].

Rubisco requires activation by Rubisco activase (RCA) to release its activity from inhibitory

substrates[58]. In our wheat expression data, 22 putative wheat orthologs for the small subunit

of Rubisco were rhythmic, peaking during the subjective night, as *RBCS1A, RBCS1B,*

RBCS2B and *RBCS3B* do in *Arabidopsis* (Supplementary Fig. 20). Two triads with identity to

Rubisco activase were identified, one of which accumulated rhythmically (peaking at CT0, as

with *Arabidopsis RCA*).

Circadian regulation has a pervasive influence on starch metabolism in *Arabidopsis*,

particularly the nocturnal rate of transitory starch degradation[23,59]. Chloroplast phospho-

glucose isomerase 1 (*PGI1*) and chloroplast phosphoglucose mutase (*PGM1*) are essential

enzymes that link the Calvin-Benson cycle with starch biosynthetic pathway[60–62]. In

Arabidopsis, these transcripts accumulated with a circadian rhythm (BH $q < 1\times10^{-4}$); *PGM1*

peaked just after dusk (CT14), and *PGI1* slightly later at CT20. In contrast, only one wheat

TaPGI1 homoeolog was rhythmic (BH $q < 0.01$), which had a low relative amplitude (0.16)

and a peak phase of CT8. No homoeologs for *TaPGM1* were rhythmically expressed (BH q >

0.01, Supplementary Fig. 20).

ADP-glucose pyrophosphorylase (AGPase) mediates the first irreversible and rate-limiting step in starch biosynthesis through the formation of ADP-Glc. In *Arabidopsis,* transcripts encoding the small and large subunits of AGPase (*APL1*, *APL2*, *APL3*, *APS1*) were rhythmic, peaking at night around CT20. In comparison, in wheat only two of the eleven transcripts with homology to *APL1*, *APL2* and *APS1* were rhythmic (BH *q* < 0.01), with the remaining transcripts lacking a discernible rhythm (BH *q* > 0.05) (Supplementary Fig. 20). Starch synthases (SS) represent another group of metabolically important enzymes that use the glucose from ADP-Glc to elongate glucan chains. In *Arabidopsis*, there are five types: SSI, SSII, SSIII, SSIV and granule bound GBSSI. SSI-IV are responsible for synthesis of amylopectin, with SSIII and IV determining starch granule number and morphology[63]. *GBSSI* is a known dawn-expressed gene, regulated directly by CCA1/LHY, specialised for amylose synthesis[64]. In wheat, *GBSSI* orthologs are called *TaWaxy* and cultivars with three null alleles produce amylose-free starch in their grain[65]. Comparison of starch synthase expression in *Arabidopsis* and wheat revealed several differences between the phases and relative amplitudes of these transcripts (Supplementary Fig. 20). In *Arabidopsis, GBSSI* transcripts had by far the greatest relative amplitude (1.26) with peak expression at dawn. The next greatest amplitudes were of *SSIV* transcripts, which peaked at CT17. *SSII* and *SSIII* peaked together at CT21 and *SSI* peaked at CT8 with a much smaller amplitude (0.12). In contrast, in wheat, an *SSIII* triad (*TaSSIIIb*) had the largest relative amplitude rhythms of the wheat starch synthases identified (0.64 - 0.73). Wheat transcripts for *SSI* and *SSIV* also peaked in the morning, whereas wheat *SSII* peaked instead in the subjective night (~CT15). In our data, TaWaxy (GBSSI) transcripts were present at a very low baseline level (<0.01 TPM) and without any circadian oscillation. However, another wheat triad, *TaGBSSII,* shared >62% identity with *Arabidopsis GBSSI,* and the B and D homoeologs had rhythmic expression which peaked at dawn. TaWaxy and *TaGBSSII* are specific to endosperm and leaf tissues, respectively[66], which might explain the distribution of transcript accumulation seen here. We can conclude that the circadian clock regulates the expression of SS transcripts in both *Arabidopsis* and wheat, although there might be an emphasis on different types of SS in each species.

The *Arabidopsis* circadian clock regulates the rate of starch degradation so that starch reserves are depleted precisely at subjective dawn[23]. Many transcripts encoding starch-degrading enzymes in *Arabidopsis* had synchronized dusk peaks: Isoamylase-type starch debranching enzyme *ISA3*; alpha-amylase *AMY3*; plastidial phosphorylase *PHS1-2*; disproportionating enzymes *DPE1-2*; glucan, water dikinases *GWD1* and *PWD* and glucan

phosphatase *SEX4*. *Arabidopsis* transcripts for *BAM3*, *BAM5* and *PU1* also oscillated with a

circadian rhythm, peaking later in the subjective night. Strikingly, wheat orthologs for several

of these genes were not rhythmic, including *AMY3*, *DPE1*, *PWD*, *PHS1, PU1* and *BAM1*.

Wheat orthologs for *ISA3* and *DPE2* were expressed rhythmically, but peaked approximately

8-12 h ahead of their *Arabidopsis* counterparts. Some starch degradation enzymes had

conserved circadian expression patterns in the two species, such as *SEX4, GWD1, BAM3* and

BAM5 transcripts. GWD catalyses glucan phosphorylation and *SEX4* encodes a

phosphoglucan phosphatase, both of which facilitate hydrolytic attack by β-amylases (BAM)

in the early steps of starch degradation[59,67].

<u>Discussion</u>

<u>Conservation of circadian regulation between homoeologous genes</u>

We identified a large proportion of imbalanced circadian triads in our dataset. It was our

initial expectation that there would be strict balance between the majority of circadian

regulated homoeologs due to the critical and finely balanced role the clock has in regulating

the transcriptome, and due to the reported high levels of balance reported from single-

timepoint transcriptomic analysis in wheat[30]. Instead, we find three times as many triads with

imbalanced circadian rhythms as triads with balanced circadian rhythms. This is likely to be

partly due to our multiple classification of circadian imbalance as any triad with different

rhythmicity, period, phase or relative amplitudes between homeologs. Another factor which

distinguishes ratios of transcriptional balance (as defined by Ramírez-González et al. (2018))

and circadian balance is that transcriptional balance within circadian triads is often dynamic

across a time-course, shifting between balanced, dominant and supressed relationships over

time (Supplementary Fig 6).

Most of these imbalanced circadian triads were imbalanced due to arrhythmicity in one or

two homoeologs expressed at a lower mean level than the rhythmic homeologs. The

reduction of expression could be due to constitutive epigenetic silencing or changes to

promoter regions, allowing differential binding of transcription factors[68–70]. These are likely

to be triads where one or two homeologs take responsibility for performing the biological

function of the triad, and the other homoeolog has reduced functionality. We found additional

circadian unbalance in the form of altered phase, period, and relative amplitudes. It is

possible that some of these differences are due to retention of circadian regulation from the

ancestral genome of each homeolog (Fig. 1a), although it is likely that other differences

reflect more recent diversification in expression as a step towards neo-functionalisation. It

has been previously suggested that functional divergence is a likely fate for duplicated genes

in a sufficiently large population[71]. In *B. rapa,* 42% of circadian controlled paralogs had

differential expression patterns[29], however these paralogs arose through whole genome

duplication events around 13-43 million years ago, so have been exposed to longer periods of

time during which selection could act upon these duplicate genes[72]. In comparison,

specialisation of circadian homeologs in wheat could be comparatively lower due to the

relative infancy of its polyploidisation around 10,000 years ago.

Differences between periods of rhythmic transcripts in *Arabidopsis* and wheat

The mean period of circadian regulated genes in wheat was over three hours longer than in

Arabidopsis. Period length is affected by a range of exogenous conditions (e.g. light and

temperature), and varies between tissues and plant age[73]. There is also evidence that longer

periods have been selected for during cultivation of crops at higher latitudes[1,2,74], potentially

due to enhanced seasonal tracking capability enabling precision timing of growth and

flowering[75]. Compared to other plant circadian transcriptome data sets, rhythmic wheat

transcripts also had higher period variance (Fig 1b). The broad period distribution in wheat

might be due to inclusion of all aerial material in our sampling strategy. Variation in free-

running periods could occur at the organ-, tissue- or cellular-level, and transcripts which are

highly expressed in those regions may reflect those period differences[76,77]. An alternative

possibility is that period variation is due to uncoupling of multiple circadian oscillators within

the same cell which control expression of subsets of transcripts[78–80]. Future research could

examine the relationship between period distributions of circadian transcriptomes and the

effects of domestication, latitudinal adaption, monocot-dicot divergence, or polyploidy.

Similarities and differences in circadian regulation between wheat and *Arabidopsis*

Our analysis revealed extensive conservation of time-of-day specific GO-slim processes and

co-expressed genes between *Arabidopsis* and wheat. These included genes involved in

photosynthesis (e.g., photosystem proteins), light signalling (e.g., *HFR1, HY5, PINs* etc*),*

translation (e.g., ribosome proteins) and auxin and ethylene responsive transcription factors.

The striking conservation of photosynthesis related genes was also reflected by the

enrichment of these genes in both balanced wheat triads and similarly expressed circadian

paralogs in *Brassica napus*. Photosynthetic outputs have also been reported to be governed

by the circadian clock in the liverwort species *Marchantia polymorpha*, in diazotrophic

cyanobacterium *Cyanothece* sp. and in alga *Aegagropila linnaei*, perhaps suggesting a

widespread control mechanism with an ancient evolutionary origin[81–83].

We also identified several interesting differences between *Arabidopsis* and wheat, including

absence of rhythmicity in wheat *PHY* and *CRY* transcripts and antiphase expression of the

wheat sigma factor *SIG1*. Furthermore, we found differences in rhythmic expression of many

transcripts involved in regulating Tre6P and starch metabolism.

In our data, putative wheat homeologs of *TPS1* were arrhythmic. Instead, rhythmic *TPS*

transcripts in wheat had similarity to *Arabidopsis TPS11, 6* and *7* (Supplementary Fig. 20). In

Arabidopsis, TPS1 is the most catalytically active and best characterised TPS, and feeds back

into the entrainment of the circadian clock[54,84]. If the lack of rhythmicity in wheat *TPS1*

transcripts is reflected at the level of protein activity, it may indicate that Tre6P synthesis is

not regulated as tightly by the circadian clock in wheat as in *Arabidopsis*. On the other hand,

circadian control of other TPS triads may have implications for biotic or abiotic defence in

wheat. TPS5-11 have been previously implicated in control of stomatal aperture[85],

thermotolerance[86], and defence against fungal, bacterial and aphid attack[87,88]. In rice, *OsTPS8*

influences drought resistance through suberin deposition[89], and wheat *TaTPS11* participates

in a cold stress response[90].

In wheat, transcripts for starch degradation enzymes (*PHS1, DPE1, BAM1, PU1, AMY3,*

PWD) and starch biosynthesis enzymes (*PGI1*, *PGM1*, *ISA1* and *ATPase*) had either

arrhythmic expression or low relative amplitudes compared with the robust rhythms of many

of these transcripts in *Arabidopsis*. Additionally, *ISA2*, *ISA3* and the starch synthases (*SSI-IV*)

had differing circadian phases between the two species. While it is possible that rhythmic

expression of a reduced number of genes (e.g.: *SEX4*, *GWD1*, *BAM3* and *BAM5)* is sufficient

to mediate circadian control of starch degradation in wheat, these data suggest that the

circadian clock has a less pervasive influence upon transcriptional control of starch

metabolism in wheat compared to *Arabidopsis* (Supplementary Note 8).

<u>Conclusions</u>

Our data reveal the influence of circadian regulation on the wheat transcriptome and highlight

several intriguing differences between rhythmically expressed transcripts in *Arabidopsis* and

wheat. It explores the added complexity of co-ordinating circadian expression across multiple

sub-genomes in a hexaploid species. Given the circadian clock has been under selection

during domestication and presents multiple targets for crop improvement, it is likely that this

new insight into the clock in wheat will be important in the development of new sustainable

and resilient cultivars. It is our hope that these data provide a resource for identifying target

genes regulated by the circadian clock, allowing the relationships between chronotype, yield

and resilience to be explored in future studies.

Methods

Plant materials and growth conditions

Wheat: Wheat seeds of the spring wheat cv. Cadenza were imbibed for three days on damp

filter paper on a Petri dish at 4°C. Plates were moved at dawn (06.00 = ZT0), to a growth

cabinet set to 22°C under 12:12 light: dark cycles (approximately 200 μmol m−2 s−1). After

two days, only seedlings with fully emerged radicles were sown, 3 cm deep in Petersfield

cereal mix in 9cm pots. Plants were not vernalized. Seedlings were grown under

12hlight:12hdark conditions for 14 days. After 14 days, at dawn (ZT0) seedlings were

transferred to constant light conditions, tissue was sampled every 4h for 3 days (18 samples

in total). At each timepoint, we sampled the entire aerial tissue from 3 replicate plants, which

was frozen immediately in liquid nitrogen before storage at -80°C. Total RNA was extracted

using Qiagen RNeasy plant mini kits (cat. no. 74904) with on-column DNAse treatment

(RNAse-Free DNase Set (cat. no. 79254). RNA concentration and integrity were quantified

using a Nanodrop Spectrophotometer and Perkin Elmer LabChip GX Nucleic acid analyser

before sequencing.

Details of growth conditions for Arabidopsis[26], Brassica rapa[29], Brachypodium distachyon[27]

and Glycine max[28] datasets can be viewed in their source manuscripts. Briefly, all circadian

data were measured under constant light and temperature following 12h:12h light:dark

entrainment other than Glycine max[28] which was entrained under 16h:8h light:dark cycles.

Wheat mRNA sequencing, read alignment and quantification

Library preparation was carried out following the Illumina TruSeq protocol and reads were

sequenced on a NovaSeq S2 flow cell at the Earlham Institute. 150bp paired-end reads were

generated from each library to an average depth of 84M reads per replicate. Reads were

filtered for quality and any remaining adaptor sequence was trimmed with Trimmomatic[91].

Surviving reads were aligned to the Chinese Spring RefSeq v1.1 wheat genome[11] using

HISAT2[92] with default parameters. Uniquely mapping reads were then quantified using

StringTie[93] and TPM values were extracted for each gene per sample.

<u>Processing and quantification of previously published datasets</u>

Raw reads from previously published circadian datasets were downloaded for *Arabidopsis*[26],

Brassica rapa[29], and *Brachypodium distachyon*[27]. These reads were filtered for quality, and

any remaining adaptor sequence trimmed with Trimmomatic[91]. Surviving reads were aligned

using HISAT2[92] to *A. thaliana* genome (TAIR 10), *B. rapa* genome (v1.0) and the *B.*

distachyon genome (v3.0) respectively. For the *Arabidopsis* alignment, maximum intron

length was set to 5000nt consistent with pre-processing in[26,94]. StringTie[93] was used to

quantify uniquely mapping reads before TPM value extraction at gene level. For *Glycine*

max[28], FPKM normalised reads were downloaded from the *Glycine max* RNA-seq Database[95]

(accession GSE94228) and were converted from FPKM to TPM prior to analysis.

<u>Homolog identification of circadian clock and circadian controlled genes</u>

Wheat homologs of *Arabidopsis* core circadian clock genes were identified in the wheat

genome by detecting similarity to the following conserved protein family domains that are

present in the proteins encoded by these genes: MYB1R, a subtype of MYB domain that

contains a distinctive SHAQKY sequence motif (present in the CCA1, LHY and RVE[1-8])

or a distinctive SHLQKY sequence motif (present in LUX), PAS (present in ZTL), PRR

(present in TOC1 and PRR[3579]) and ELF4 (present in ELF4). A hidden Markov model

(HMM) for each domain was used in HMMER 3.2.1 HMMSEARCH[96] to search for

members of the domain family in the following proteome datasets: Araport11 (*Arabidopsis*

thaliana), RGAP7 (*Oryza sativa*), JGI Phytozome version 12 (*Brachypodium distachyon*),

IBSC (*Hordeum vulgare*), SpudDB PGSC v4.03 (*Solanum tuberosum*) and IWGSC Refseq

v1.1 (*Triticum aestivum*). The HMMs provided by Pfam (https://pfam.xfam.org/) were used

for the PAS domain (PAS_9, PF13426), the PRR domain (Response_reg, PF00072) and the

ELF4 domain (PF07011). For the MYB domain, an HMM was built for the MYB1R

subfamily using HMMER3 HMMBUILD[96] with an alignment of protein sequences from

Arabidopsis and rice, previously established as being members of this subfamily. The

sequences found from these genomes were re-aligned to the original alignment using

HMMER 3.2.1 HMMALIGN[96]. Amino acids with non-match states in the HMM were

removed from the alignment and alignment columns with <70% occupancy were also

removed. The longest splice variant of each protein was selected to estimate a phylogenetic

tree with bootstrap support using RAxML 8.2.12[97] with the following method parameters set:

-f a, -x 12345, -p 12345, -# 100, -m PROTCATJTT. The trees were mid-point rooted and

images created using the Interactive Tree of Life (iToL) tool[98]. For the larger MYB and PRR

families, proteins from the tree clades containing known clock gene(s) were re-aligned across

their full-length and a "nested" phylogenetic tree was re-estimated with RAxML as described

above. The tree was visualised in the Interactive Tree Of Life (iTOL) website alongside the

corresponding alignment. This view provided increased detail about the relationships within

the clade and enabled orthologous sequences to be inferred. Wheat homologues for *ELF3*,

GI, LWD1/2, CHE, and *LNK1/2* were identified by BLASTP searches using previously

identified wheat and *Brachypodium* predicted proteins confirmed by reciprocal BLAST

searches against *Arabidopsis*. IDs and source references can be viewed in Supplementary

Table 8.

Putative wheat orthologs for *Arabidopsis* circadian controlled pathway genes involved in

photosynthesis, light-signalling and primary metabolism were first extracted using Biomart

v0.7[99] available from Ensembl Plants and taken forward if they had >40% identity in the

DNA sequence. Orthologs were then verified using BLASTP using *Arabidopsis* protein

sequences as a query against the wheat protein database to confirm the wheat gene IDs.

Complete lists of wheat gene IDs used in the pathway analysis can be viewed in

Supplementary Table 11.

<u>Circadian quantification using Metacycle and Biodare2</u>

To estimate proportions of rhythmic genes expressed in *Arabidopsis* and wheat, we removed

only genes with 0 TPM at all timepoints. This approach has been used in several previous

studies[26,100,101] and allows detection of low-expression rhythmic transcripts. An analysis of

how filtering for low-expression genes affects the estimates of proportions of rhythmically

expressed genes is discussed in Supplementary Note 1 and Supplementary Table 1.

The R package MetaCycle[102] was used to identify rhythmically expressed transcripts

(Benjamini-Hochberg *q*-values) and to quantify period lengths (hours), absolute phase

(hours), baseline expression (TPM), amplitudes (TPM) and relative amplitudes of circadian

waveforms. Relative amplitude is the ratio between amplitude and baseline TPM if the

baseline is greater than 1. Metacycle integrates results from three independent algorithms

(ARSER, JTK_CYCLE and Lomb-Scargle) to produce summary "meta2d" statistics that

combine the outcome from these algorithms. Metacycle was run using the following

parameters; minper = 12, maxper = 35, adjustPhase = "predictedPer". Transcripts were

defined as rhythmic if they had q-values < 0.05 and high confidence rhythmic transcripts if

they have q-values < 0.01. To calculate circadian phase (CT; relative to period length=24),

meta2d phase estimates were multiplied by 24 and then divided by the period estimates for

each transcript. Circular phase means were calculated using the package 'circular'

implemented in R[103].

There are many different algorithms available for quantification of rhythmicity within time-

series data, some of which perform better on datasets with higher levels of noise, non-24h

periods or various sampling frequencies. To validate the meta2d results we also used the

FFT-NLLS and MESA algorithms implemented in Biodare2 to verify our observations about

period, phase and rhythmicity[104]. FFT-NLLS also provides relative amplitude error (RAE)

statistics which represent a useful metric for assessing rhythmic robustness. FFT-NLLS and

MESA were run using the BH q < 0.01 filtered transcripts categorized in Metacycle, and with

the following parameters: no dtr, min-max, p(12.0-35.0).

To enable as close a comparison with the *Arabidopsis* dataset as possible, the wheat time-

course was cropped to a data window of 24-68h for approximation of period, phase and

relative amplitude unless specified otherwise. This data-window also ensures that

measurements are being made under circadian conditions following transfer to constant light.

For the triad analysis, meta2d estimates were measured over the full time-course (0-68h) as

differentiation of homeolog behaviour was the main interest, including the response to

transfer to L:L.

<u>Clustering of rhythmic genes into expression modules</u>

Gene co-expression analysis was carried out using the R package WGCNA (Langfelder and

Horvath, 2008; R version 3.6.0.).

Arabidopsis: The 10,317 genes identified by MetaCycle as significantly rhythmic (q-value <

0.01) were filtered and genes with greater than 0.5 TPM average expression at more than

three timepoints were retained for further analysis. The average expression at each timepoint

for the remaining 10,129 genes was used to construct signed hybrid networks on a replicate

basis using the blockwiseModules() function. The soft power threshold was calculated as 18,

and the following parameters were used; minModuleSize = 30, corType = bicor,

maxPOutliers = 0.05, mergeCutHeight = 0.15. Highly connected hub genes were identified

for each of the 9 co-expression modules using the function chooseTopHubInEachModule()

and eigengenes were identified for each module using the moduleEigengenes() function.

Wheat: The 18,633 genes identified by MetaCycle as significantly rhythmic across 12

timepoints ZT24 - ZT68 (q-value < 0.01) were filtered and genes with greater than 0.5 TPM

average expression at more than three timepoints were retained for further analysis. The

average expression at each timepoint for the remaining 16,327 genes was used to construct

signed hybrid networks using the blockwiseModules() function. A soft power threshold of 18

was used, together with the following parameters; minModuleSize = 30, corType = bicor,

maxPOutliers = 0.05, mergeCutHeight = 0.15. Eigengenes were identified for each module

using the moduleEigengenes() function. Modules with closely correlated eigengenes were

merged using the mergeCloseModules() function, with the parameters; cutHeight = 0.25,

iterate = F) and new module eigengenes were calculated for the resulting 9 modules.

<u>Cross-correlation analysis</u>

A cross-correlation analysis was used to find the shift in time (lag) which produced the

highest (peak) correlation between two rhythms. This approach was used to identify modules

which peaked synchronously (had a peak lag of 0h) or asynchronously (had a peak lag of 4, 8

or 12h) by correlating eigengenes for each module (Supplementary Fig. 9). We also used

cross-correlation to identify imbalanced phases within rhythmic triads (Fig. 1E). Before

calculating the cross-correlation between two expression rhythms, we first scaled both

expression patterns using their means and standard deviations, so the output reflects a time-

dependent Pearson correlation coefficient ranging between -1 and 1:

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$$Z_A = \frac{X_A - \bar{X}_A}{S_A}, Z_B = \frac{X_B - \bar{X}_B}{S_R}$$

Where Z_i, X_i, $\bar{X}_i$ and S_i represent the standardised expression level, tpm expression level,

mean expression level, and standard deviation of gene A and B respectively. Once both

expression patterns have been scaled, the discrete cross-correlation between the two

expression patterns is calculated using the np.correlate function and is divided by the number

of time points in the expression signal returning the Pearson correlation coefficient at

different lags. The index of the array with the largest Pearson correlation coefficient score

corresponds to the lag that maximises the phase similarity between the two temporal

expression patterns.

<u>Mean-normalised data for oscillation plots</u>

Oscillation plots in Supplementary Fig. 18-20 were mean normalised to aid visualisation of

period and phase differences between transcripts. Data was adjusted by dividing the TPM

values at each timepoint by the mean across all timepoints for each gene so that the baseline

expression was equal to 1.

<u>Gene ontology term enrichment</u>

Functional enrichment of differentially expressed genes for biological processes within each

module was performed using the gene ontology enrichment analysis package, topGO[105] in R

(version 3.6.0, with the following parameters: nodeSize = 10, algorithm = "parentchild",

classicFisher test $p < 0.05$). Enrichment of terms in all rhythmic genes in *Arabidopsis* and

wheat was compared against a background 'gene universe' of all expressed genes in each

dataset (26,392 genes for *Arabidopsis* and 86,567 for wheat). This gene universe was also

used in the GO-slim analysis for enrichment in circadian balanced versus imbalanced triads.

Enrichment of terms in expression modules was compared against a background of all

rhythmically expressed genes (BH $q < 0.01$) which clustered into modules in each dataset

(10,129 genes for *Arabidopsis* and 16,327 for wheat). GO-slim terms refer to ontology terms

for biological processes unless otherwise specified and were obtained from Ensembl Plants

51[11], using the BioMart tool. The bubble plot was plotted using ggplot in R adapting code

from De Vega et al., 2021[106].

Enrichment of GO-slim terms in *B. rapa* circadian paralogs with similar and differential

expression patterns was conducted using previously published DiPALM results for pattern

change in a LDHC circadian time course (Supplementary File 4, Greenham et al. 2020 [29]).

Paralog pairs with a pattern change *p*-value of <0.001 were termed differential patterns and

pairs with a pattern change *p*-value of >0.1 were considered to be similar patterns. In this

analysis we ignored differences in expression change for consistency with our wheat triads.

Data was first filtered for rhythmicity using Metacycle q-values <0.01. Only paralog pairs

with two significantly rhythmic paralogs were retained for the GO-slim analysis. Enrichment

of terms in similarly expressed circadian paralogs (1562 genes) or differentially expressed

paralogs (1438 genes) in B. napus was compared against a background of 4646 genes

expressed in the Greenham dataset in paralogs and which had GO-slim annotation available.

<u>Enrichment analysis of transcription factor superfamilies in wheat co-expression modules</u>

Genes annotated as members of transcription factor superfamilies[30] were identified in each

co-expression module and the frequency of each TF superfamily compared to the frequency

observed in the 16,327 genes submitted to WGCNA. TF families were classed as either

significantly under or overrepresented in each module using Fisher's exact test (p <= 0.05).

<u>Enrichment analysis of transcription factor binding sites in wheat co-expression modules</u>

1.5 kb of sequence upstream of the transcription start site (TSS) was extracted for each of the

16,327 genes submitted to WGCNA. FIMO, from the MEME tool suite (v 4.11.1) was used

to predict TFBS in these regions based on similarity with previously DAP-seq validated

TFBS identified in *Arabidopsis*[107]. FIMO was run as reported in Ramírez-González et al.,

2018 (p-value threshold of <1e-04 (default), --motifpseudo set to 1e-08 as recommended for

use with PWMs and a --max-stored-scores of 1,000,000). The background model was

generated from the 16,327 promoter sequences using MEME fasta-get-markov. As the

significance of multiple matches of a single TFBS family in the putative promoter region for

each gene is unknown, we derived a non-redundant (nr) list of matched TFBS motifs for each

gene within each of the nine modules and for the complete set of 16,327 genes, where

multiple occurrences of a TFBS superfamily in a single promoter sequence were only

counted once. The frequency of these nrTFBS motifs for each co-expression module was

compared to the frequency of nrTFBS seen across all 16,327 genes and families significantly

under or overrepresented in each module were identified using Fisher's exact test ($p <= 0.05$).

<u>Loom plots</u>

Genome position data for the plots are based on annotations from Chinese spring

(Triticum_aestivum.IWGSC.52.gtf) downloaded from Ensembl Plants. Code for creating

Loom plots (Supplementary Fig 8) is implemented in R and a code package with

accompanying R markdown notebooks is available from our groups GitHub repository

(https://github.com/AHallLab/triad.expression).

Statistical analysis

Statistical tests including Welch's two sample t-test, Two-proportions z-test, One-way ANOVA, Two-level, nested ANOVA and Chi-square tests of independence were all conducted in the R 'stats' package (version 4.0.0) with default parameters.

Data availability

Fastq data from the RNA-seq circadian time course are available to view from the Grassroots Data Repository: https://opendata.earlham.ac.uk/opendata/data/wheat_circadian_Rees_2021. *[Data will be uploaded to the European Nucleotide Archive (ENA) during the review process]* A summary csv table with expression of wheat genes (TPM), Metacycle estimates, gene annotations and triad balance classification can be viewed in Supplementary Table 12 also available here:

https://opendata.earlham.ac.uk/opendata/data/wheat_circadian_Rees_2021.

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Author contributions
H.R. and A.H. were involved with project concept and designed experiments. H.R. performed
time-course experiments. R.R.P. processed data, quantified read counts and conducted
clustering of rhythmic transcripts. P.B. conducted the phylogenetic analysis of core circadian
protein families. J.C. conducted the cross-correlation analysis. C.R. processed previously
published circadian datasets. S.J.W produced loom plots for circadian triad balance. H.R.,
L.L.B.D., C.A.G., B.W., R.R.P. A.H., and A.N.D. analysed and interpreted the RNA-seq
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1035　　Main Figures and Tables

1036　　*[Figures are provided as separate files]*

Fig. 1. Circadian regulation of homoeolog expression of wheat triads.

a, Schematic of the origins of hexaploid wheat, showing circadian clocks evolving independently in the ancestors of the A, B and D subgenomes following divergence from a common ancestor approximately 6.5 million years ago**.** Colours of clock icons represent theoretical differences in clock regulation integrated in the tetraploid and hexaploid hybrids either through circadian balance or through dominance of a particular homoeolog copy. Speciation and hybridisation event dates are based on estimates from[108]. **b,** Density plot showing the distribution of period lengths across rhythmic transcripts (BH q < 0.01) in *Arabidopsis*, *Brassica rapa*, *Brachypodium distachyon*, *Glycine max* (Soybean) and wheat based on meta2d estimates on 24-68h data following transfer to constant light. **c,** Histogram showing distribution of period lengths in wheat split between the A, B and D subgenomes. Dotted line indicates the mean period for the A, B and D subgenomes. **d,** Proportions of triads with either zero (red segment), one (green segment), two (blue segment) or three (purple segment) rhythmic gene(s) out of the 16,359 expressed triads in this dataset. Lighter shading in the outer segments represents cases where one/two homeolog(s) have high confidence rhythmicity (BH q < 0.01) alongside an arrhythmic homeolog (BH q >0.05). We term these genes "imbalanced rhythmicity" triads. Of the 3448 triads with three rhythmic genes (represented by the purple segment in d), we also looked for triads with circadian imbalance in: phase (**e**), period (**f**) or relative amplitude (**g**). 464 triads had homoeologs which peaked with an optimum lag of 4, 8 or 12h following cross-correlation analysis. 1,139 triads had homoeologs with period differences of more than 2h. 701 triads had homoeologs with a more than two-fold difference in relative amplitude. **h,i,** Example triads for imbalanced rhythmicity, where either one or two homoeologs are rhythmic respectively. **j,** Example triad where the D genome homoeolog lags by 8h. **k,** Example of a triad where the A genome homoeolog has a period estimate 4h longer than the D genome homoeolog. **l,** Example triad where the relative amplitude of the D-genome homoeolog is more than four times that of the A-genome homoeolog. **m,** The rhythmicity of all three homoeologs in **l,** is evident when the expression is mean normalized. **n,** Mean expression of transcripts across all timepoints in the A, B and D subgenomes within imbalanced rhythmicity triads compared with circadian balanced and arrhythmic triads. Error bars represent standard error.

Circadian statistics are meta2d estimates from data 0-68h after transfer to L:L. Data represent the mean of three biological replicates with transcript expression collapsed to gene level. Genes in example triads are: [Triad 1664: TraesCS3A02G177600, TraesCS3B02G207400, TraesCS3D02G183200], [Triad 408: TraesCS3A02G533700, TraesCS3B02G610500, TraesCS3D02G539000], [Triad 13405: TraesCS6A02G269100, TraesCS6B02G296400, TraesCS6D02G245800], [Triad 10854: TraesCS6A02G166500, TraesCS6B02G194000, TraesCS6D02G155100] and [Triad 2454: TraesCS2A02G333000, TraesCS2B02G348800, TraesCS2D02G329900].

  Fig. 2. Overlapping GO-slim terms shared between *Arabidopsis* and wheat modules

  expressed at similar times in the day

  a, Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between eigengenes for wheat and *Arabidopsis* expression
  modules ordered by circadian phase. Coloured triangles and axes labels correspond to module
  expression profiles and columns in bubble-plot. **b-e,** Expression profiles of *Arabidopsis* and
  wheat modules compared in the main text normalised to their mean. Solid and dashed black
  lines represent the module eigengene for wheat and *Arabidopsis* modules respectively. **f,** GO-
  slim terms associated with *Arabidopsis* and Wheat modules. Modules are ordered by predicted
  CT phase for each species. Only terms with -Log10p >3 are shown. Wheat W6 and *Arabidopsis*
  A4 contained no terms above the significance cut-off and so are not shown. Bubble color
  indicates the -Log10p-value significance from Fisher's exact test and size indicates the
  frequency of the GO-slim term in the underlying EBI Gene Ontology Annotation database
  (larger bubbles indicate more general terms).

Fig. 3. Free-running expression of core circadian clock genes in wheat and their homologs in *Arabidopsis*. a-l, Wheat circadian clock genes were identified through alignment of phylogenetic protein family trees or BLASTP to known clock gene homologs. Gene IDs for each gene set are in Supplementary Table 8. Wheat homoeologs are coloured according to their identity to either the A genome (orange), B genome (yellow) or D genome (blue) and grey and white blocks indicate subjective dark and light time periods under constant conditions. Data represent the mean of three biological replicates and transcript expression is collapsed to gene level. Expression profiles for additional core circadian clock genes are in Supplementary Fig. 17. **m,** phases of core clock genes in *Arabidopsis* and wheat (meta2d estimates from data 24-68h after transfer to L:L). Genes were not plotted if B.H q-values were > 0.01. Wheat values represent circular mean circadian phases (CT) across homoeologs calculated in Supplementary Table 9.

Fig. 4. Similarities and differences in circadian control of transcript accumulation in key
genes involved in primary metabolism and signalling. Circles represent metabolites
involved in the breakdown and biosynthesis of starch. Starch synthesis occurs during the day
and breakdown occurs at night as indicated by the yellow to grey shading gradient. The dotted
line encloses processes which take place in the chloroplast. Abbreviations: HP: Hexose-
phosphate, T6P: Trehalose-6-phosphate, TP: Triose phosphate, 3-PGA: Glycerate 3-
phosphate, Fru6P: Fructose-6-phosphate, Glc6P: Glucose-6-phosphate, Glc1P: Glucose-1-
phosphate, ATP: Adensoine tri phosphate, ADP-Glc: ADP-glucose, TPS: Trehalose phosphate
synthase, TPP: Trehalose phosphate phosphatase, PGK1: Phosphoglycerate kinase 1, PGI1:
Glucose-6-phosphate isomerase, PGM1: Phosphoglucomutase-1, PHS1 and 2: ALPHA-
GLUCAN PHOSPHORYLASE 1 and 2, AGPase: ADP-Glc pyrophosphorylase, BAM1,3,5:
β-amylase 1,3,5, ISA1,2,3: Isoamylase 1,2,3, DPE1,2: Disproportionating enzyme1 and 2,
SBEI,II: Starch branching enzyme I, II, PU1: Pullulanase 1, PWD: Phosphoglucan, water
dikinase, GWD: α-glucan, water dikinase, SEX4: starch excess 4, AMY3: α-amylase, GBSS:
Granule bound Starch synthase, SSI-IV: Starch synthase I-IV. Pathway references:[109–111].
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Table 1: Numbers of rhythmic genes at (BH *q* < 0.05 or BH *q* < 0.01) in *Arabidopsis* and
wheat identified using Metacycle Benjamini Hochberg *q*-values. Periods, relative
amplitudes, and *q*-values are estimates from meta2d. Data windows reflect hours relative to
transfer to constant light from entrained 12:12h light conditions. A repeat of this table with
pre-filtering to remove low-expression genes is provided in Supplementary Figure 1, and the
effects on proportions of rhythmic genes are discussed in Supplementary Note 1.

	Wheat data from this study		*Arabidopsis* data from Romanowski et al.
	24-68 data window	0-68 data window	24-68 data window
Total number of expressed genes	86,567	86,567	26,392
Total rhythmic genes (BH *q* < 0.05)	28,594	28,530	13,392
Total rhythmic genes (BH *q* < 0.01)	18,633	21,059	10,317
Mean Period (h) (BH *q* < 0.05)	26.60h (SD 3.62)	26.75h (SD 2.82)	23.50 (SD 2.52)
Mean Period (h) (BH *q* < 0.01)	26.82h (SD 3.21)	26.83h (SD 2.42)	23.62 (SD 2.04)
Mean relative Amplitude (BH *q* < 0.05)	0.24 (SD 0.19)	0.26 (SD 0.20)	0.28 (SD 0.20)
Mean relative Amplitude (BH *q* < 0.01)	0.27 (SD 0.19)	0.29 (SD 0.21)	0.30 (SD 0.20)

1129 **Table 2: GO-slim terms for biological processes associated with circadian balanced,**
1130 **circadian imbalanced, and arrhythmic wheat triads.** Only enriched terms which were
1131 highly enriched (Fisher's exact test $p<0.01$) in one category and non-significantly expressed
1132 ($p>0.05$) in other categories is displayed.

	GO ID	Terms	*p*-value in circadian balanced triads	*p*-value in circadian imbalanced triads	*p*-value in non-rhythmic triads
CIRCADIAN BALANCED	GO:0009628	response to abiotic stimulus	0.00	0.22	0.58
	GO:0015979	photosynthesis	0.00	1.00	1.00
	GO:0006091	generation of precursor metabolites and energy	0.00	1.00	1.00
	GO:0006518	peptide metabolic process	0.00	1.00	0.92
	GO:1901566	organonitrogen compound biosynthetic process	0.00	1.00	0.92
	GO:0009059	macromolecule biosynthetic process	0.00	1.00	0.99
	GO:0006412	translation	0.00	1.00	0.98
	GO:0034645	cellular macromolecule biosynthetic process	0.00	1.00	1.00
	GO:0010467	gene expression	0.00	1.00	0.90
	GO:0019725	cellular homeostasis	0.00	0.54	0.96
	GO:0065008	regulation of biological quality	0.00	0.71	1.00
CIRCADIAN IMBALANCED	GO:0003006	developmental process involved in reproduction	0.85	0.00	0.87
	GO:0090567	reproductive shoot system development	0.92	0.01	1.00
	GO:0009719	response to endogenous stimulus	0.97	0.01	0.10
	GO:0048731	system development	0.98	0.00	0.97
	GO:0048608	reproductive structure development	0.98	0.00	0.97
	GO:0043412	macromolecule modification	1.00	0.00	0.28
	GO:0022414	reproductive process	1.00	0.00	0.47
NON-RHYTHMIC	GO:0044237	cellular metabolic process	0.08	1.00	0.00
	GO:0009605	response to external stimulus	0.41	0.39	0.00
	GO:0009607	response to biotic stimulus	0.58	0.60	0.01
	GO:0060255	regulation of macromolecule metabolic process	0.60	0.76	0.00
	GO:0009056	catabolic process	0.65	0.93	0.00

	GO:0048869	cellular developmental process	0.71	0.19	0.00
	GO:0019222	regulation of metabolic process	0.78	0.85	0.00
	GO:0044238	primary metabolic process	0.81	0.24	0.00
	GO:0071704	organic substance metabolic process	0.81	0.26	0.00
	GO:0008219	cell death	0.82	0.94	0.00
	GO:0010468	regulation of gene expression	0.88	0.15	0.00
	GO:0009790	embryo development	0.95	0.98	0.00
	GO:0007049	cell cycle	0.97	1.00	0.00
	GO:0065009	regulation of molecular function	1.00	1.00	0.00
	GO:0006807	nitrogen compound metabolic process	1.00	1.00	0.00

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