Title: The genome sequence of the Violet Carpenter Bee, *Xylocopa violacea* (Linnaeus, 1785): a hymenopteran species undergoing range expansion.

Working title: Xylocopa reference genome

Authors: Will J Nash[1*], Angela Man[1], Seanna McTaggart[1], Kendall Baker[1], Tom Barker[1], Leah Catchpole[1], Alex Durrant[1], Karim Gharbi[1], Naomi Irish[1], Gemy Kaithakottil[1], Debby Ku[1], Aaliyah Providence[1], Felix Shaw[1], David Swarbreck[1], Chris Watkins[1], Ann M. McCartney[2], Giulio Formenti[3,4], Alice Mouton[4,5,6], Noel Vella[7], Björn M von Reumont[8,9], Adriana Vella[7*], Wilfried Haerty[1,10*]

* Joint Corresponding Authors, these authors contributed equally to this work

Author Affiliations
1.   The Earlham Institute, Norwich Research Park, Colney Lane, Norwich, NR4 7UZ, UK
2.   Genomics Institute, University of California, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, USA
3.   The Vertebrate Genome Laboratory, The Rockefeller University, 1240 York Ave, 10065 New York, USA
4.   Department of Biology, University of Florence, Sesto Fiorentino, Italy
5.   InBios - Conservation Genetics Laboratory, University of Liege, Chemin de la Vallee 4, 4000 Liege, Belgium
6.   SEED - Departement des sciences et gestion de l'environnement, University of Liege, Chemin de la Vallee 4, 4000 Liege, Belgium
7.   Conservation Biology Research Group, Biology Department, University of Malta, Msida, MSD 2080, Malta
8.   LOEWE Center for Translational Biodiversity Genomics (LOEWE-TBG), Senckenberganlage 25, 60325 Frankfurt, Germany
9.   Applied Bioinformatics Group, Faculty of Biological Sciences, Goethe University Frankfurt, Max-von-Laue-Str. 13, 60438 Frankfurt, Germany
10.   School of Biological Sciences, The University of East Anglia, Norwich, NR4 7TJ, UK

Authors for Correspondence:
1.   Will Nash, The Earlham Institute, Norwich Research Park, Colney Lane, Norwich, NR4 7UZ, +44 (0) 1603 450 974, will.nash@earlham.ac.uk
2.   Wilfried Hearty, The Earlham Institute, Norwich Research Park, Colney Lane, Norwich, NR4 7UZ, +44 (0) 1603 450 974, wilfried.haerty@earlham.ac.uk
3.   Adriana Vella, Conservation Biology Research Group, Biology Department, University of Malta, Msida, MSD 2080, Malta, +356 2340 2790, adriana.vella@um.edu.mt

Key Words:

Hymenoptera, Genome, Long-read, Assembly, Hi-C, Repetitive DNA

Data Availability Statement:

The data underlying this article are available in the European Nucleotide

Archive and can be accessed with the BioProject identifier PRJEB72102.

The assembly is available through GenBank under the accession

GCA_963969225.1.

Abstract

We present a reference genome assembly from an individual male Violet Carpenter Bee (*Xylocopa violacea,* Linnaeus, 1758). The assembly is 1.02 gigabases in span. 48% of the assembly is scaffolded into 17 pseudo-chromosomal units. The mitochondrial genome has also been assembled and is 21.8 kilobases in length. The genome is highly repetitive, likely representing a highly heterochromatic architecture expected of bees from the genus *Xylocopa*. We also use an evidence-based methodology to annotate 10,152 high confidence coding genes. This genome was sequenced as part of the pilot project of the European Reference Genome Atlas (ERGA) and represents an important addition to the genomic resources available for Hymenoptera.

Introduction

We live in a time of unprecedented biodiversity loss (Ceballos and Ehrlich, 2023) exemplified by the global decline of insect fauna undeniably associated with anthropogenic stressors (Outhwaite *et al.*, 2022). Insect biodiversity loss puts key ecosystem services, such as pollination (Ollerton, 2021) and decomposition (Yang and Gratton, 2014), at risk. Although there is strong evidence of insect declines in the recent history (Hallmann *et al.*, 2017; Powney *et al.*, 2019), changes in global climate have also seen patterns of range shift in many taxa (e.g. Kerr *et al.*, 2015; Lehmann *et al.*,

2020; Rollin *et al.*, 2020; Halsch *et al.*, 2021; Skendžić *et al.*, 2021). The

European Reference Genome Atlas (ERGA, Mc Cartney *et al.*, 2023) aims

to empower research communities to expand the taxonomic coverage of

genomic resources, enabling cross taxa analyses to address continent-

scale questions, such as those surrounding range shifts, at the genomic

level.

There are currently no annotated, reference quality, genomic resources for

the Carpenter bees (Hymenoptera: Apidae). They are classified as a single

genus, *Xylocopa* (Latreille, 1802), which contains around 400 species

(Gerling *et al.*, 1989; Leys *et al.*, 2000, 2002; Michener, 2007), and are

considered as essential pollinators (e.g. Vargas *et al.*, 2017; Malabusini *et*

al., 2019). In Europe, the most widespread *Xylocopa* species is the Violet

Carpenter Bee, *Xylocopa violacea* (Linnaeus, 1758) (Vicidomini, 1996).

This species has a pan-European distribution (Figure 1,

https://www.gbif.org/species/1342108) that also extends to Algeria and

Turkey (Gerling *et al.*, 1989; Aouar-Sadli *et al.*, 2008; Tezcan and Skyrpan,

2022), Iraq and India (Dar *et al.*, 2016; Bamarni and Elsaiegh, 2022).

In recent years, *Xylocopa violacea* has exhibited a marked range

expansion, with records in Germany (Praz *et al.*, 2022), Czech Republic

(Kleprlíková and Vrabec, 2020), Poland (Banaszak *et al.*, 2019), and as far

north as Sweden (Cederberg and Others, 2018) (Figure 1). The northward

expansion of the Violet Carpenter Bee's range may be attributed to various

factors, including climatic changes in Europe (Banaszak *et al.*, 2019).

Xylocopa violacea is a solitary bee (Vicidomini, 1996), although within the

genus there is evidence for several independent transitions to sociality

(Gerling *et al.*, 1989; Sless and Rehan, 2023). *X. violacea* also exhibits a

lineage specific microbiome (Alberoni *et al.*, 2019; Holley *et al.*, 2022;

Handy *et al.*, 2023) and a distinctive venom profile with novel melittin

variants that show potential for anticancer applications (von Reumont *et al.*,

2022; Erkoc *et al.*, 2022). There is only a contig-level assembly of the *X.*

violacea genome currently available (Koludarov *et al.*, 2023).

Here, we present a pseudo-chromosomal assembly of the genome of

Xylocopa violacea. The genome was sequenced as part of the pilot project

of the ERGA (Mc Cartney *et al.*, 2023). The ERGA consortium is pioneering a

democratised approach to biodiversity sequencing, and paired a sample

ambassador from Malta, where *X. violacea* is an important and understudied

species, with a sequencing centre in the UK order to generate the assembly

presented here. The *X. violacea* genome assembly is characterised by its

highly heterochromatic karyotype, a trait also shared by other *Xylocopa*

species (Hoshiba and Imai, 1993). This genomic resource fills an important

gap in the taxonomy of the Apidae, and also releases the potential to study

the expanding population of this important pollinating species at the

genomic level (e.g. Formenti *et al.*, 2022; Webster *et al.*, 2022).

Materials and Methods

Sample Acquisition

A male (iyXylViol4, ERS10526494) and female (iyXylViol2, ERS10526492) *Xylocopa violacea* individual were collected at Chadwick Lakes, Rabat, Malta (Latitude: 35.894639, Longitude: 14.392165). Samples were chilled to 4°C, preserved in dry ice, and maintained at -80°C until shipment to the Earlham Institute, Norwich, UK following Nagoya Protocol, permit ABSCH-IRCC-MT-255778-1. Sample metadata conformed to ERGA sample manifest standards (Böhne *et al.*, 2024) and were submitted to ENA using COPO (Shaw *et al.*, 2020).

DNA Library Preparation and Sequencing

High molecular weight (HMW) DNA was extracted from thorax tissue of an individual male bee (iyXylViol4) using the Qiagen MagAttract HMW DNA Kit, with modifications as described in Mullin *et al.* (2022). HiFi library preparation and Pacific Biosciences (PacBio) sequencing were carried out following the low-input protocol described in Mullin *et al.* (2022), (Supplementary Methods) and sequenced on four Sequel II SMRT® Cell 8M (diffusion loading, 30-hour movie, 2-hour immobilisation time, 2-hour pre-extension time, 60-77 pM on plate loading concentration).

RNA Extraction, RNA-seq Library Preparation and Sequencing

RNA extractions were conducted on flash frozen head, thorax, abdomen, and leg tissues from an individual female bee (iyXylViol2) using the Omega EZNA Total RNA Kit I (R6834-01). RNA-seq libraries were then constructed

using the NEBNext Ultra II RNA Library prep for Illumina kit (NEB#E7760L)

NEBNext Poly(A) mRNA Magnetic Isolation Module (NEB#7490) and

NEBNext Multiplex Oligos for Illumina® (96 Unique Dual Index Primer Pairs)

(E6440S) at a concentration of 10uM. Libraries were sequenced on an SP

flow cell on a NovaSeq 6000 instrument set up to sequence 150bp paired

end reads.

Iso-Seq Library Preparation and Sequencing

PacBio Iso-Seq libraries were constructed starting from 234-300 ng of total

RNA from the 4 tissue specific extractions described above. Reverse

transcription cDNA synthesis was performed using NEBNext® Single

Cell/Low Input cDNA Synthesis & Amplification Module (NEB, E6421).

Samples were barcoded and the library pool was prepared according to the

guidelines laid out in the Iso-Seq protocol version 02 (PacBio, 101-763-

800), using SMRTbell express template prep kit 2.0 (PacBio, 102-088-900).

The Iso-Seq pool was sequenced on the PacBio Sequel II instrument with

one Sequel II SMRT® Cell 8M.

Hi-C Library Preparation and Sequencing

High-throughput/resolution chromosome conformation capture-based (Hi-

C) sequencing data was generated from head tissue of male individual

iyXylViol4 using the Arima Genome Wide Hi-C kit, the NEBNext Ultra II

DNA Library preparation kit, and Kappa HiFi HotStart ReadyMix. The

resulting libraries were sequenced on an SP flow cell, on the Novaseq 6000

instrument, sequencing 150bp paired end reads.

Contig level genome assembly

HiFi reads were extracted from the raw Pacific Biosciences output by the

Earlham Institute core bioinformatics group using the Pacific Biosciences

SMRTlink pipeline (v10.1.0.119588). Prior to assembly, HiFi reads were

trimmed for adapter sequences with Cutadapt (v3.2, Martin, 2011). The

genome was assembled with hifiasm (v0.18.5, Cheng *et al.*, 2021).

Mitochondrial contigs were identified with MitoHifi (v3.0.0, Uliano-Silva *et*

al., 2023), using the *Apis mellifera* mitochondrial genome (OK075087.1) as

a closely related guide. All putative mitochondrial contigs were removed

prior to scaffolding, and the MitoHifi best fit mitochondrial sequence was

added back into the assembly following scaffolding. Contaminant contigs

were identified and removed as the intersect of the outputs of Kraken2

(v2.0.7, Wood *et al.*, 2019), BlobTools (v1.1.1, Laetsch and Blaxter, 2017),

barnapp (v0.9, Table S1), CAT (v5.2.3,von Meijenfeldt *et al.*, 2019), and

FCS-GX (v0.3.0, Astashyn *et al.*, 2023). Assembly completeness was

assessed with BUSCO (v5.0.0, Manni *et al.*, 2021) using

hymenoptera_odb10. Assembly quality and kmer completeness were

assessed with Merqury (v1.3, Rhie *et al.*, 2020). Genome size of the final

assembly was estimated using FastK (Table S1) and GeneScopeFK (Table

S1).

Hi-C Read QC & Scaffolding

Raw Hi-C reads were trimmed for adapters using trimmomatic (v0.39,

Bolger *et al.*, 2014) with the adapters.fa file from bbmap (v35.85, Bushnell,

2014) as input (see Supp. Methods). Hi-C reads were mapped to the draft

assembly with Juicer (v1.6, Durand *et al.*, 2016). Following the removal of

contigs assigned as contaminant or mitochondrial, Hi-C reads were

mapped to the resulting assembly using the Arima Mapping Pipeline (Table

S1). The resulting mappings were used to scaffold the decontaminated

assembly using YaHS (v1.2a.2, Zhou *et al.*, 2023).

Manual Curation of Scaffolded Assembly

Following scaffolding, trimmed, unfiltered Hi-C reads were mapped to the

scaffolded assembly using Juicer (v1.6, Durand *et al.*, 2016). Using these

mappings, the scaffolded assembly was manually curated to pseudo-

chromosomal level using Pretext-Map (v0.1.9, Table S1) contact maps

visualised in PretextView (v0.2.5, Table S1). Inputs for PrextextView

(Coverage track, Gap track, Telomere track) were created using the eihic

pipeline (Table S1) in curation mode (`-c`). Following curation, the Rapid

Curation Pipeline (Table S1), developed by the GRiT team at the Wellcome

Sanger Institute, was used to extract the manually curated assembly in

fasta format.

Annotation

Annotation of repetitive DNA content was performed using the EI-Repeat

pipeline (v1.3.4, Table S1) which uses third party tools for repeat calling.

The repeat content of the iyXylViol4 assembly was further classified using

srf (Zhang *et al.*, 2023) and TRASH (Wlodzimierz *et al.*, 2023), and

visualised using StainedGlass (Vollger *et al.*, 2022). The telomeric repeat

landscape was explored using the explore and search functions of tidk

(Table S1). Gene models were generated from the iyXylViol4 assembly

using REAT - Robust and Extendable eukaryotic Annotation Toolkit (Table

S1) and Minos (Table S1) which mayke use of Mikado (Table S1),

Portcullis (Table S1) and many third-party tools (listed in the above

repositories).

Results & Discussion

DNA sequencing

HMW DNA extractions from two 30 mg sections of thorax tissue from a

single male *Xylocopa violacea* individual (iyXylViol4) yielded 829 ng of

HMW DNA, with 74-84% of fragments over 40 kb fragment size (Figure

S1). Following library preparation, 2,520,442 PacBio HiFi Reads were

obtained (21.8x coverage of the final assembly). The whole head tissue

from this individual (98mg) was used to generate 535,271,589 Illumina

short reads following proximity ligation and Arima High Coverage Hi-C

library preparation (see Supp. Results). Sequencing of this library produced

509,760,108 read pairs.

Transcriptome sequencing

Total RNA was extracted from four tissues segments (Head, Thorax, Abdomen, Legs) from a second individual (female, iyXylViol2). These tissues produced 4.3 µg, 3.6 µg, 18.2 µg, 2.6 µg of total RNA respectively. We generated 149,032,417, 107,159,638, 116,609,061, and 148,189,077 Illumina RNA-seq short reads respectively for the head, thorax, abdomen, and legs. Additional RNA-seq reads, from *X. violacea* venom gland, were downloaded from SRA (SRR14690757, Koludarov *et al.*, 2023). The same extractions were also used to generate 790,150; 717,956; 977,170, and 999,264 PacBio Iso-Seq long reads for the head, thorax, abdomen, and legs respectively. Cumulatively, this represented an average of 81.76x long-read coverage of the transcriptome.

Genome Assembly

The initial contig assembly had 1224 contigs and spanned 1.08 Gb with an N50 of 5.91 Mb (Table 1). Prior to scaffolding, 161 contigs (59.8 Mb) were classified as contaminant content and removed from the assembly. A contig was only classified as contaminant and removed if it was identified in the output of 2 of the following tools: Contigs identified as not within the Instecta by Kraken2 (316), contigs classified as ''no-hit' by blobtools (389), contigs identified as bacterial or archaeal 16s by barnapp (384), contigs classified as bacterial or viral by CAT (4), or contigs identified as contaminants by FCS-GX (1). For further details see Table S6. 79

mitochondrial candidates (1.7 Mb), identified by MitoHifi, were also

removed. With this content removed, the assembly had 984 contigs

spanning 1.02 Gb, with an N50 of 5.96 Mb (Table 1).

Scaffolding generated an assembly with 1343 scaffolds spanning 1.02 Gb

with an N50 of 6.65 Mb (Table 1). The scaffolded assembly was manually

curated to give the final pseudo-chromosomal iyXylViol4 assembly

(GCA_963969225.1), containing 1300 scaffolds over 1.02 Gb, and an N50

of 11.42 Mb (Figure 2, Table 1). The consensus mitogenome (21.8 Kb) was

added to the assembly following manual curation and annotation. The

iyXylViol4 assembly contains 17 pseudo-chromosomal units. One of these

units has Hi-C telomeric signal at both ends, and the remaining 16 of which

have Hi-C telomeric signal at one end. *Xylocopa violacea* has been

suggested to have a karyotype of 16 (Granata, 1909), similar to a related

species, *X. fenestra*, (Kumbkarni, 1965; Kerr and da Silveira, 1972), thus it

is possible that two of the remaining super scaffolds in the iyXylViol4

assembly correspond to chromosomal arms with insufficient Hi-C signal to

be joined. Alternatively, *X. appendiculata* has a karyotype of 17

chromosomes including a majority of pseudo-acrocentric chromosomal

morphologies (Hoshiba and Imai, 1993).

Following Wallberg *et al.* (2019), we identified the centromeric signature of

low GC% in 6 super scaffolds (Supplementary Methods, Figure S5). We

identified one such region at the centre of the only firmly identified

metacentric chromosome (iyXylViol4_SUPER_4). The other 5 candidates

all separate putative euchromatic regions bearing many coding

annotations, from regions of high repeat content. This pattern of repeat

expansion around centromeric sequences has been observed in other

bees, such as *Austroplebeia australis* (Travenzoli *et al.*, 2022), and may

help to explain the high levels of interaction between unplaced scaffolds

and the pseudo-chromosomal units in the iyXylViol4 assembly.

Highly acrocentric karyotypes are well represented within the Xylocopinae,

the genus *Ceratina* exhibits species with karyotypes representing 14-17

chromosomes, with ratios of acrocentric to metacentric chromosomes

varying between 16:1, 15:2, and 12:5 (Hoshiba and Imai, 1993; Cunha *et*

al., 2021). Such patterns are also common in other, more evolutionarily

distant bees: *Austroplebeia australis* has been shown to have 14 largely

heterochromatic chromosome pairs and four that are fully euchromatic

(Travenzoli *et al.*, 2022).

Without further investigation, potentially employing ultra-long read

technologies, it is not possible to differentiate between N=16 or N=17 from

the iyXylViol4 assembly.

Assembly QC

BUSCO analysis of the iyXylViol4 assembly showed that it contains 96.5%

of the 5991 hymenoptra_odb10 set as complete genes, with only 0.4%

complete and duplicated, 0.6% fragmented, and 2.5% missing (Figure 2,

Table S2). The genic content was not impacted by the scaffolding process

as the same metrics are recovered in the contig, scaffolded, and manually

curated assemblies. The iyXylViol4 assembly is QV 63.3 and has a kmer

completeness of 98.8% (Table S3).

The iyXylViol4 assembly is 1.02Gb in length. Although this is not outside of

the upper limits for known genome sizes from the Apidae (e.g. *Melipona*

capixaba 1.38Gb, (Tavares *et al.*, 2010; Cunha *et al.*, 2021), k-mer based

estimation of genome size from iyXylViol4 suggests the genome size to be

672 Mb (Table S4, Figure S4). This estimation is in line with the only

prediction from the genus *Xylocopa* comes from Ardila-Garcia *et al.* (2010),

who report an estimated genome size of 0.69pg (~675 Mb) for *Xylocopa*

virginica krombein. This species is a member of the North American

subgenus *Xylocopoides*, thought to have diverged from the genus *Xylocopa*

s.*l.* some 34 mya (Leys *et al.*, 2002), and so using this estimate as a cross

validation for the iyXylViol4 assembly may not be relevant. The 17 pseudo-

chromosomal iyXylViol4 super scaffolds (including unloc) are 481.4 Mb in

length, representing a large majority of the predicted genome size. As

complete reconstruction of the iyXylViol4 chromosomes was not feasible in

this study, we have included all unplaced scaffolds in the final assembly, as

these likely encompass the remaining genomic content.

Repeat Content

The majority of the iyXylViol4 assembly was masked as repetitive

sequence (821.28 Mb, 80.47%) (Table S5). The predominant category was

unclassified repeats, with 755.96 Mb (74.08%). This pattern is consistent

with pseudo-acrocentric chromosomes with extremely elongated
heterochromatic arms which are frequently observed in bees and wasps
(Hoshiba and Imai, 1993). These have been suggested to be induced by
saltatory growth of constitutive heterochromatin after centric fission
(Hoshiba and Imai, 1993). Bees from the Apinae genus *Melipona* have
recently been shown to exhibit up to 73% heterochromatin content (Pereira
et al., 2021). As is seen in iyXylViol4, bees from the genus *Melipona* also
have terminal euchromatic regions (Piccoli *et al.*, 2018) which is consistent
with the pseudo-acrocentric chromosomal topology derived from *X.*
appendiculata (Hoshiba and Imai, 1993), with many chromosomes
representing large expansions of heterochromatin repeats around the
centromere.

Classification of the repeats within the iyXylViol4 assembly showed the ten
most abundant satellite repeat units identified by srf (Zhang *et al.*, 2023) to
occupy 105.6Mb of the assembly (Table S6). Further decomposition of the
satellite repeats present in the iyXylViol4 assembly, using TRASH
(Wlodzimierz *et al.*, 2023), revealed the predominant monomeric repeat unit
to be a 109mer (Figure S7, Figure S8, Table S7). This 109mer or a 217mer
(approximately double its length) were highly abundant throughout the
putative acrocentric chromosomes (Figure S8) and was repeated with high
identity (Figure S7).

We also observe that the putative centromeric sequences are flanked by a

distinct repeat signature. In the metacentric iyXylVio4_SUPER_4, the

putative centromere has expansions of a 95mer on either side of it.

Regions abundant in this 95mer are also seen in 13 of the 16 putative

acrocentric pseudo-chromosomal molecules (Figure S8), and these often

occur in proximity to the location of the regions of low GC% which are

putatively centromeric.

Recent studies have shown telomeric repeat motifs in Hymenoptera to be

diverse, including complex telomeric layering resulting from numerous site

specific retrotransposon insertions (Lukhtanov, 2022; Zhou *et al.*, 2022).

The iyXylViol4 assembly shows that *X. violacea* has telomeres enriched for

the canonical 5bp ancestral arthropod repeat motif (TTAGG) (Figure S5).

The iyXylViol4 assembly also shows that *X. violacea* has varying sub-

telomeric repeat sequences, consistent with 'Type 2' telomeres suggested

by (Lukhtanov and Pazhenkova, 2023) (Figure S6).

Annotation

The iyXylViol4_EIv1.0 annotation of the iyXylViol4 assembly contains

10,152 high confidence, protein-coding gene models, coding for 26,577

transcripts (Table S8). This number of annotations is well within the range

of those generated for contemporary genome assemblies (Table S9). Using

the hymenoptera_odb10 database, this annotation represents 99.75%

BUSCO completeness at the protein level, with only 34 BUSCO genes

duplicated, 3 fragmented and 12 missing (Table S3). The annotation

contains an average of 2.49 transcripts per gene, with a mean transcript

cDNA size of 3,238.2bp (Table S10). The distribution of coding genes is

skewed to the distal end of the 16 pseudo-chromosomal super-scaffolds

with putative pseudo-acrocentric structure (Figure S5), supporting the

previously suggested topology of highly repetitive pseudo-acrocentric

chromosomes expected in *Xylocopa* species (Hoshiba and Imai, 1993;

Gokhman, 2023).

Conclusion

Here, we present a pseudo-chromosomal genome assembly of the Violet

Carpenter bee, *Xylocopa violacea*. At 1.02 Gb, the assembly is larger than

the predicted genome size (672 Mb), but also represents large regions of

highly repetitive, putatively heterochromatic, sequence. Such chromosomal

architecture is in line with the small amount of karyotypic resources from

the genus and is also supported by the iyXylViol4_EIv1 annotation. The

repetitive regions we describe are predominantly made up of 109 and

217mers. The annotated assembly we present fills an important taxonomic

gap in the genomic resource set representing Hymenoptera and will also

provide a genomic basis for future interpretation of the expanding range of

this charismatic and economically important species.

Acknowledgments

The authors acknowledge Fiona Fraser (Earlham Institute, Norwich) and

Michael Quail (Wellcome Sanger Institute, Hinxton) for valuable

conversations and advice in developing Hi-C library preparation. The

authors would also like to acknowledge the GRiT (Wellcome Sanger

Institute, Hinxton), particularly Jo Wood, Tom Mathers, Dominic Absolon,

Camilla Santos, Michael Paulini for invaluable mentorship in Hi-C

scaffolding and curation. The authors also acknowledge Kamil Hepak

(Norwich Bioscience Institutes, Scientific Computing) for significant HPC

support.

Author Contributions

Language used to describe roles below uses the CRediT Taxonomy

(**credit.niso.org**).

AV acted as ERGA sample ambassador, and with NV and BvRM, initiated

the **Conceptualisation** of this study; WJN, SMcT, KG, and WH designed

the sequencing strategy, assembly of the genome, and all analyses. WJN

conducted **Data Curation** throughout the project; GK and DS curated data

during genome annotation; DK, AP, and FS curated data for ENA upload

through COPO. WJN conducted all **Formal Analysis** outside of genome

annotation, which was conducted by GK and DS. **Funding acquisition**

was conducted by AV, SMcT, and WH. Primary **Investigation** was

conducted by WJN; NI Prepared IsoSeq libraries and Illumina RNA-Seq

libraries**;** TB Sequenced Illumina RNA-seq libraries, PacBio IsoSeq

libraries, and PacBio low-input HiFi libraries; AMa prepared Hi-C libraries.

AD Developed and improved the Omega EZNA Total RNA extraction

protocol **Methodology**; NI Developed and improved the low-input HiFi

library preparation protocol methodology; WJN and AMa developed and

tested the Hi-C library preparation methodology. WJN and SMcT conducted

overall **Project administration**; CW and KB Coordinated the project from

sample submission to data delivery; AMcC, GF, and AMo Conceptualised

and administrated the ERGA Pilot Project. AV and NV delivered

Resources by collecting the individuals sequenced. KG led the

development of resource data production capability for reference-grade

assembly and annotation. WJN wrote code to deploy **Software** as part of

the genome assembly project; DS and GK developed and deployed the

software used for genome annotation FS, DK, and AP developed and

maintain the COPO data brokering software. WH contributed **Supervision**

to the whole project, KG provided leadership responsibility for nucleic acid

extraction, short-read sequencing, and long-read sequencing; CW Provided

supervision and oversight of all project management activities; LC Provided

supervision and oversight for Illumina RNA-seq library preparation. WJN

conducted **Validation** on all assemblies generated, and generated the

Visualisations used in the publication. WJN led the **Writing – Original**

Draft with contributions from AV, NV, SMcT and WH. All authors

contributed to **Writing – review & editing** of the final manuscript.

Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests.

Funding

The authors acknowledge support from the Biotechnology and Biological

Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), part of UK Research and Innovation,

Core Capability Grant BB/CCG2220/1 at the Earlham Institute and its

constituent work packages (BBS/E/T/000PR9818 and

BBS/E/T/000PR9819), and the Core Capability Grant BB/CCG1720/1 and

the National Capability at the Earlham Institute BBS/E/T/000PR9816 (NC1 -

Supporting EI's ISPs and the UK Community with Genomics and Single

Cell Analysis), BBS/E/T/000PR9811 (NC4 - Enabling and Advancing Life

Scientists in data-driven research through Advanced Genomics and

Computational Training), and BBS/E/T/000PR9814 (NC 3 - Development

and deployment of versatile digital platforms for 'omics-based data sharing

and analysis). Authors also acknowledge support from BBSRC Core

Capability Grant BB/CCG1720/1 and the work delivered via the Scientific

Computing group, as well as support for the physical HPC infrastructure

and data centre delivered via the NBI Computing infrastructure for Science

(CiS) group. AV and NV acknowledge funding from the BioCon_Innovate

Research Excellence Grant (I18LU06-01) from the University of Malta.

BMvR acknowledges funding from the DFG (RE3454/6-1).

Figure 1. The Violet Carpenter Bee, *Xylocopa violacea*. A) Records of

X. violacea occurrence in Europe between 1980 and 2023 (GBIF.org, 04

December 2023, https://doi.org/10.15468/dl.3gr8wv). Hexes are coloured

by earliest year of occurrence; lighter colours are more recent. Records

prior to 1980 not plotted. **B)** A female *X. violacea* individual (Bautsch, CC0,

via Wikimedia Commons.) **C)** The male *X. violacea* (iyXylViol4) used for

DNA sequencing in this study.

Figure 2. iyXylViol4 assembly of the *Xylocopa violacea* genome. A) Hi-

C contact map (Supp Methods). Scaffolds are ordered by size with the 17

pseudo-chromosomal super scaffolds appearing in the top left half of the

map, defined by overlayed lines. Visualisation constructed with

multimapping reads (MAPQ=0). **B)** Merqury kmer spectra, k = 19, single

peak representing the haploid male genome of iyXylViol4. **C)**

Completeness of the hymenoptera_odb10 BUSCO set (5991 genes).

Table 1. Contiguity statistics of the iyXylViol4 assembly at four stages of

the assembly pipeline. Statistics generated using abyss-fac (Jackman *et*

al., 2017). Contam = Contigs identified as contaminant, see main text, Mito

= putuatuive mitochondrial contigs, identified using MitoHifi (Uliano-Silva *et*

al., 2023), see main text.

Assembly	Processing	n	n:500	L50	Min Size (Bases)	N75 (Bases)	N50 (Bases)	N25 (Mb)	Max Size (Mb)	Sum Size (Gb)
Contig	None	1224	1224	54	6217	2,713,785	5,907,526	11.39	25.68	1.082
	Contam removed, Mito removed	984	984	50	6530	3,024,594	5,963,704	11.73	25.68	1.02
Scaffold	None	1343	1343	41	1000	2,669,000	6,651,566	15.08	39.23	1.02
	Manual Curation	1300	1300	19	1000	2,735,000	11,420,000	31.82	71.42	1.02

References

Alberoni D, Gaggìa F, Baffoni L, Modesto MM, Biavati B, Di Gioia D (2019). Bifidobacterium xylocopae sp. nov. and Bifidobacterium aemilianum sp. nov., from the carpenter bee (Xylocopa violacea) digestive tract. *Syst Appl Microbiol* **42**: 205–216.

Aouar-Sadli M, Louadi K, Doumandji S-E (2008). Pollination of the broad bean (Vicia faba L. var. major)(Fabaceae) by wild bees and honey bees (Hymenoptera: Apoidea) and its impact on the seed production in the Tizi-Ouzou area (Algeria). *Afr J Agric Res* **3**: 266–272.

Ardila-Garcia AM, Umphrey GJ, Gregory TR (2010). An expansion of the genome size dataset for the insect order Hymenoptera, with a first test of parasitism and eusociality as possible constraints. *Insect Mol Biol* **19**: 337–346.

Astashyn A, Tvedte ES, Sweeney D, Sapojnikov V, Bouk N, Joukov V, *et al.* (2023). Rapid and sensitive detection of genome contamination at scale with FCS-GX. *bioRxiv*: 2023.06.02.543519.

Bamarni RZ, Elsaiegh MA (2022). A survey and phenotypic study of carpenter bee species recorded in Kzo village and its environs/Dohuk Governorate–Iraq. *NTU Journal of Agriculture and*.

Banaszak J, Cibicka WB, Twerd L (2019). Possible expansion of the range of Xylocopa violacea L. (Hymenoptera, Apiformes, Apidae) in Europe. *Turk Zool Derg* **43**: 650–656.

Böhne A, Fernández R, Leonard JA, McCartney AM, McTaggart S, Melo-Ferreira J, *et al.* (2024). Contextualising samples: Supporting reference genomes of European biodiversity through sample and associated metadata collection. *bioRxiv*: 2023.06.28.546652.

Bolger AM, Lohse M, Usadel B (2014). Trimmomatic: a flexible trimmer for Illumina sequence data. *Bioinformatics* **30**: 2114–2120.

Bushnell B (2014). *BBMap: A Fast, Accurate, Splice-Aware Aligner*. Lawrence Berkeley National Lab. (LBNL), Berkeley, CA (United States).

Ceballos G, Ehrlich PR (2023). Mutilation of the tree of life via mass extinction of animal genera. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A* **120**: e2306987120.

Cederberg B, Others (2018). The carpenter bees Xylocopa valga and X.
violacea-climate refuges or labour migrants in Sweden
(Hymenoptera: Apidae). *Entomol Tidskr* **139**: 65–72.

Cheng H, Concepcion GT, Feng X, Zhang H, Li H (2021). Haplotype-
resolved de novo assembly using phased assembly graphs with
hifiasm. *Nat Methods* **18**: 170–175.

Cunha MS, Cardoso DC, Cristiano MP, de Oliveira Campos LA, Lopes DM
(2021). The Bee Chromosome database (Hymenoptera: Apidae).
Apidologie **52**: 493–502.

Dar S, Mir G, Parry M, Sofi MA, Padder SA (2016). Nest distribution and
nesting habits of Xylocopa violacea (Donovan), Fabricius
(Hymenoptera: Apidae) in Kashmir valley. *Journal of Experimental
Zoology, India.*

Durand NC, Shamim MS, Machol I, Rao SSP, Huntley MH, Lander ES, *et
al.* (2016). Juicer Provides a One-Click System for Analyzing Loop-
Resolution Hi-C Experiments. *Cell Syst* **3**: 95–98.

Erkoc P, von Reumont BM, Lüddecke T, Henke M, Ulshöfer T, Vilcinskas
A, *et al.* (2022). The Pharmacological Potential of Novel Melittin
Variants from the Honeybee and Solitary Bees against Inflammation
and Cancer. *Toxins* **14**.

Formenti G, Theissinger K, Fernandes C, Bista I, Bombarely A, Bleidorn C,
et al. (2022). The era of reference genomes in conservation
genomics. *Trends Ecol Evol* **37**: 197–202.

Gerling D, Velthuis HHW, Hefetz A (1989). Bionomics of the Large
Carpenter Bees of the Genus Xylocopa. *Annu Rev Entomol* **34**:
163–190.

Gokhman VE (2023). Chromosome Study of the Hymenoptera: History,
Current State, Perspectives. *Biology Bulletin Reviews* **13**: 247–257.

Granata L (1909). Le *divisioni degli spermatociti di 'Xylocopa violacea'* L.
Biologica Torino **2**: 1–12.

Hallmann CA, Sorg M, Jongejans E, Siepel H, Hofland N, Schwan H, *et al.*
(2017). More than 75 percent decline over 27 years in total flying
insect biomass in protected areas. *PLoS One* **12**: e0185809.

Halsch CA, Shapiro AM, Fordyce JA, Nice CC, Thorne JH, Waetjen DP, *et
al.* (2021). Insects and recent climate change. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U
S A* **118**.

Handy MY, Sbardellati DL, Yu M, Saleh NW, Ostwald MM, Vannette RL
(2023). Incipiently social carpenter bees (Xylocopa) host distinctive
gut bacterial communities and display geographical structure as
revealed by full-length PacBio 16S rRNA sequencing. *Mol Ecol* **32**:
1530–1543.

Holley J-AC, Jackson MN, Pham AT, Hatcher SC, Moran NA (2022).
Carpenter Bees (Xylocopa) Harbor a Distinctive Gut Microbiome
Related to That of Honey Bees and Bumble Bees. *Appl Environ*
Microbiol **88**: e0020322.

Hoshiba H, Imai H (1993). Chromosome evolution of bees and wasps
(Hymenoptera, apocrita) on the basis of C-banding pattern analyses
: *Japanese Journal of Entomology* **61**: 465–492.

Jackman SD, Vandervalk BP, Mohamadi H, Chu J, Yeo S, Hammond SA,
et al. (2017). ABySS 2.0: resource-efficient assembly of large
genomes using a Bloom filter. *Genome Res* **27**: 768–777.

Kerr JT, Pindar A, Galpern P, Packer L, Potts SG, Roberts SM, *et al.*
(2015). Climate change impacts on bumblebees converge across
continents. *Science* **349**: 177–180.

Kerr WE, da Silveira ZV (1972). Karyotypic Evolution of Bees and
Corresponding Taxonomic Implications. *Evolution* **26**: 197–202.

Kleprlíková L, Vrabec V (2020). Bee spread continues-new records of
Xylocopinae (Hymenoptera: Apidae) in the Czech Republic. In:
Conference paper, 11th Workshop on Biodiversity, Jevany,
researchgate.net, p .

Koludarov I, Velasque M, Senoner T, Timm T, Greve C, Hamadou AB, *et*
al. (2023). Prevalent bee venom genes evolved before the aculeate
stinger and eusociality. *BMC Biol* **21**: 229.

Kumbkarni CG (1965). Cytological Studies in Hymenoptera: Part II:
Cytology of parthenogenesis in the carpenter-bee, Xylocopa
fenesterata (Fabre). *Cytologica* **30**: 222–228.

Laetsch DR, Blaxter ML (2017). BlobTools: Interrogation of genome
assemblies. *F1000Res* **6**: 1287.

Lehmann P, Ammunét T, Barton M, Battisti A, Eigenbrode SD, Jepsen JU,
et al. (2020). Complex responses of global insect pests to climate
warming. *Front Ecol Environ* **18**: 141–150.

Leys R, Cooper SJ, Schwarz MP (2000). Molecular phylogeny of the large
carpenter bees, genus Xylocopa (Hymenoptera: apidae), based on
mitochondrial DNA sequences. *Mol Phylogenet Evol* **17**: 407–418.

Leys R, Cooper SJB, Schwarz MP (2002). Molecular phylogeny and
historical biogeography of the large carpenter bees, genus Xylocopa
(Hymenoptera: Apidae). *Biol J Linn Soc Lond* **77**: 249–266.

Lukhtanov VA (2022). Diversity and evolution of telomere and subtelomere
DNA sequences in insects. *bioRxiv*: 2022.04.08.487650.

Lukhtanov VA, Pazhenkova EA (2023). Diversity and evolution of telomeric
motifs and telomere DNA organization in insects. *Biol J Linn Soc*
Lond **140**: 536–555.

Malabusini S, Palamara Mesiano M, Zanovello D, Giuliani C, Fico G,
Giovanetti M, *et al.* (2019). Flower selection of Xylocopa violacea:
aromatic and ornamental plants as resources in a botanic garden.
In: *Landscape management for functional biodiversity*, IOBC-
WPRS, pp 41–45.

Manni M, Berkeley MR, Seppey M, Simão FA, Zdobnov EM (2021).
BUSCO Update: Novel and Streamlined Workflows along with
Broader and Deeper Phylogenetic Coverage for Scoring of
Eukaryotic, Prokaryotic, and Viral Genomes. *Mol Biol Evol* **38**:
4647–4654.

Martin M (2011). Cutadapt removes adapter sequences from high-
throughput sequencing reads. *EMBnet.journal* **17**: 10–12.

Mc Cartney AM, Formenti G, Mouton A, Ciofi C, Waterhouse RM, Mazzoni
CJ, *et al.* (2023). The European Reference Genome Atlas: piloting a
decentralised approach to equitable biodiversity genomics. *bioRxiv*:
2023.09.25.559365.

von Meijenfeldt FAB, Arkhipova K, Cambuy DD, Coutinho FH, Dutilh BE
(2019). Robust taxonomic classification of uncharted microbial
sequences and bins with CAT and BAT. *Genome Biol* **20**: 217.

Michener CD (2007). *The Bees of the World*. Johns Hopkins University
Press.

Mullin VE, Stephen W, Arce AN, Nash W, Raine C, Notton DG, *et al.*
(2022). First large-scale quantification study of DNA preservation in
insects from natural history collections using genome-wide
sequencing. *Methods Ecol Evol*.

Ollerton J (2021). *Pollinators and Pollination: Nature and Society*. Pelagic
Publishing Ltd.

Outhwaite CL, McCann P, Newbold T (2022). Agriculture and climate
change are reshaping insect biodiversity worldwide. *Nature* **605**:
97–102.

Pereira JA, Travenzoli NM, de Oliveira MP, de Azevedo Werneck H,
657   Salomão TMF, Lopes DM (2021). Molecular cytogenetics in the
658   study of repetitive sequences helping to understand the evolution of
659   heterochromatin in Melipona (Hymenoptera, Meliponini). *Genetica*
660   **149**: 55–62.

661   Piccoli MCA, Bardella VB, Cabral-de-Mello DC (2018). Repetitive DNAs in
662   Melipona scutellaris (Hymenoptera: Apidae: Meliponidae):
663   chromosomal distribution and test of multiple heterochromatin
664   amplification in the genus. *Apidologie* **49**: 497–504.

665   Powney GD, Carvell C, Edwards M, Morris RKA, Roy HE, Woodcock BA, *et*
666   *al.* (2019). Widespread losses of pollinating insects in Britain. *Nat*
667   *Commun* **10**: 1018.

668   Praz C, Müller A, Hermann M, Neumeyer-Funk R, Bénon D, Amiet F, *et al.*
669   (2022). Swiss National Apoidea Databank. Version 1.5.

670   von Reumont BM, Dutertre S, Koludarov I (2022). Venom profile of the
671   European carpenter bee Xylocopa violacea: Evolutionary and
672   applied considerations on its toxin components. *Toxicon X* **14**:
673   100117.

674   Rhie A, Walenz BP, Koren S, Phillippy AM (2020). Merqury: reference-free
675   quality, completeness, and phasing assessment for genome
676   assemblies. *Genome Biol* **21**: 245.

677   Rollin O, Vray S, Dendoncker N, Michez D, Dufrêne M, Rasmont P (2020).
678   Drastic shifts in the Belgian bumblebee community over the last
679   century. *Biodivers Conserv* **29**: 2553–2573.

680   Shaw F, Etuk A, Minotto A, Gonzalez-Beltran A, Johnson D, Rocca-Serra
681   P, *et al.* (2020). COPO: a metadata platform for brokering FAIR data
682   in the life sciences. *F1000Res* **9**: 495.

683   Skendžić S, Zovko M, Živković IP, Lešić V, Lemić D (2021). The Impact of
684   Climate Change on Agricultural Insect Pests. *Insects* **12**.

685   Sless T, Rehan S (2023). Phylogeny of the carpenter bees (Apidae:
686   Xylocopinae) highlights repeated evolution of sociality. *Biol Lett* **19**:
687   20230252.

688   Tavares MG, Carvalho CR, Soares FAF (2010). Genome size variation in
689   Melipona species (Hymenoptera: Apidae) and sub-grouping by their
690   DNA content. *Apidologie* **41**: 636–642.

691   Tezcan S, Skyrpan I (2022). New Locality Records For Xylocopa
692   (Hymenoptera: Apidae: Xylocopinae) Fauna of Turkey. *Біологічні*
693   *студії / Studia Biologica* **16**: 3–12.

Travenzoli NM, Cunha MS, Teixeira LV, Brito RM, Oldroyd B, Campos
LAO, *et al.* (2022). Cytogenetic characterization of Austroplebeia
australis: evolutionary hints from a stingless bee outside the
Neotropical region. *Apidologie (Celle)* **53**: 1–8.

Uliano-Silva M, Ferreira JGRN, Krasheninnikova K, Darwin Tree of Life
Consortium, Formenti G, Abueg L, *et al.* (2023). MitoHiFi: a python
pipeline for mitochondrial genome assembly from PacBio high
fidelity reads. *BMC Bioinformatics* **24**: 288.

Vargas P, Liberal I, Ornosa C, Gómez JM (2017). Flower specialisation: the
occluded corolla of snapdragons (Antirrhinum) exhibits two
pollinator niches of large long-tongued bees. *Plant Biol* **19**: 787–
797.

Vicidomini S (1996). Biology of Xylocopa violacea (Hymenoptera): In-nest
ethology. *Ital J Zool* **63**: 237–242.

Vollger MR, Kerpedjiev P, Phillippy AM, Eichler EE (2022). StainedGlass:
interactive visualization of massive tandem repeat structures with
identity heatmaps. *Bioinformatics* **38**: 2049–2051.

Wallberg A, Bunikis I, Pettersson OV, Mosbech M-B, Childers AK, Evans
JD, *et al.* (2019). A hybrid de novo genome assembly of the
honeybee, Apis mellifera, with chromosome-length scaffolds. *BMC*
Genomics **20**: 275.

Webster MT, Beaurepaire A, Neumann P, Stolle E (2022). Population
Genomics for Insect Conservation. *Annu Rev Anim Biosci*.

Wlodzimierz P, Hong M, Henderson IR (2023). TRASH: Tandem Repeat
Annotation and Structural Hierarchy. *Bioinformatics* **39**.

Wood DE, Lu J, Langmead B (2019). Improved metagenomic analysis with
Kraken 2. *Genome Biol* **20**: 257.

Yang LH, Gratton C (2014). Insects as drivers of ecosystem processes.
Curr Opin Insect Sci **2**: 26–32.

Zhang Y, Chu J, Cheng H, Li H (2023). De novo reconstruction of satellite
repeat units from sequence data. *Genome Res* **33**: 1994–2001.

Zhou C, McCarthy SA, Durbin R (2023). YaHS: yet another Hi-C scaffolding
tool. *Bioinformatics* **39**.

Zhou Y, Wang Y, Xiong X, Appel AG, Zhang C, Wang X (2022). Profiles of
telomeric repeats in Insecta reveal diverse forms of telomeric motifs
in Hymenopterans. *Life Sci Alliance* **5**.

A Earliest GBIF record of occurence (1980-2023)

1980 1985 1990 1995 2000 2005 2010 2015 2020

A

B

k-mer

read-only
1
2
3
4
>4

Count

1×10^7

5×10^6

0   20   40   60   80

kmer_multiplicity

C

C:96.9%[S:96.5%,D:0.4%],F:0.6%,M:2.5%,n:5991

Complete   Duplicated   Fragmented   Missing

0   20   40   60   80   100

% BUSCOs