Recombinant inbred line panels inform the genetic architecture and interactions of adaptive

traits in *Drosophila melanogaster*

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Abstract

The distribution of allelic effects on traits, along with their gene-by-gene and gene-

by-environment interactions, contributes to the phenotypes available for selection and the

trajectories of adaptive variants. Nonetheless, uncertainty persists regarding the effect

sizes underlying adaptations and the importance of genetic interactions. Herein, we aimed

to investigate the genetic architecture and the epistatic and environmental interactions

involving loci that contribute to multiple adaptive traits using two new panels of

Drosophila melanogaster recombinant inbred lines (RILs). To better fit our data, we re-

implemented functions from R/qtl (Broman *et al.* 2003) using additive genetic models. We

found 14 quantitative trait loci (QTL) underlying melanism, wing size, song pattern, and

ethanol resistance. By combining our mapping results with population genetic statistics,

we identified potential new genes related to these traits. None of the detected QTLs

showed clear evidence of epistasis, and our power analysis indicated that we should have

seen at least one significant interaction if sign epistasis or strong positive epistasis played a

pervasive role in trait evolution. In contrast, we did find roles for gene-by-environment

interactions involving pigmentation traits. Overall, our data suggest that the genetic

architecture of adaptive traits often involves alleles of detectable effect, that strong

epistasis does not always play a role in adaptation, and that environmental interactions can

modulate the effect size of adaptive alleles.

Introduction

Adaptive evolution is the result of natural selection, which acts by increasing the frequency of beneficial traits in a population. A number of important uncertainties persist regarding the genetic architectures of adaptive trait changes in nature, including the number and effect sizes of contributing variants, and their frequencies before and after the action of positive selection (Pritchard *et al.* 2010, Savoleinen *et al.* 2013, Barghi *et al.* 2020). Furthermore, research on the genetic basis of adaptation has largely been centered on the individual additive effects of each gene underlying the adaptive trait, whereas the role of gene-by-gene and gene-by-environment interactions in adaptation has remained more elusive (Whitlock *et al.* 1995, Malmberg & Mauricio 2005, Martin & Lenormand 2006, Bank 2022).

Theoretical and empirical studies have yielded varied findings concerning the number and strength of loci contributing to adaptive trait change. Fisher (1930) argued that traits were governed by numerous genetic variants of very small magnitude, and that natural selection proceeded via minute incremental changes in allele frequency at these loci. Extending Fisher's geometric model, Orr (1998) found that in a sequential model of genetic adaptation, a few larger effect sizes should tend to be followed by many smaller ones, yielding an exponential distribution of effects. However, adaptation in natural populations may sometimes depart from the assumptions of such models in multiple respects. First, the role of standing variation (as opposed to new mutations) in the adaptive process continues to be investigated (Fuhrmann *et al.* 2023, Schlötterer 2023), and these two sources of genetic variation may differ in their effect sizes, dominance, and other properties (e.g. Orr & Betancourt 2001). Second, the genetic architecture of local

adaptation, in which populations in a heterogeneous landscape adapt to local conditions in

the presence of migration, has a stronger bias towards alleles of large effect sizes (Griswold

2006, Yeaman & Whitlock 2011, Yeaman & Otto 2011). Third, interactions among genes

impacting phenotypes (*i.e.* epistasis) may alter the dynamics of adaptive variants, as

further discussed below.

In regards to the role of epistasis in adaptation, a discussion has existed since the

onset of the Modern Synthesis, with some arguing that it is largely irrelevant to the

trajectory of Darwinian selection (Fisher 1930, Cohan *et al.* 1989, Hill *et al.* 2008, Crow

2010) and others proposing that it plays an important role (Fenster *et al.* 1997, Hansen

2013, Wright 1931). The above literature suggests that on the one hand, epistasis might

not be expected to strongly affect adaptation because alleles at unlinked loci can segregate

independently and selection would act on the combined effect of each allele against

different genetic backgrounds; and yet, epistasis has the potential to alter the rate at which

adaptive trait changes can occur by producing larger or smaller effects in some of these

backgrounds, and in certain contexts, it may wield a stronger influence on the course of

adaptation.

Epistasis has been shown to play a role in many evolutionary processes, including

the evolution of sex and recombination, speciation, canalization, maintenance of genetic

variation, and the evolution of co-adapted gene complexes (Hansen 2013). How epistatic

interactions alter the response to directional selection is determined by the nature of the

epistatic interaction (Hansen 2013). Some kinds of epistasis affect the magnitude of the

phenotypic effects, such as positive and negative epistasis, and another kind, called sign

epistasis, changes the direction of the effect. Multiple theoretical and simulation studies

have investigated how each of these epistatic scenarios might influence the adaptive

process (Carter *et al.* 2005; Hansen *et al.* 2006; Yukilevich *et al.* 2008; Barton 2017). For

positive (synergistic) epistasis, in which the combined effect of both alleles is greater than

the sum of the individual effects, additive genetic variance would increase, and the mean

fitness in an adapting population is expected to change faster and reach a higher plateau

than without epistasis. For negative epistasis, in which the combined effect is lower than

the sum of the individual effects but still qualitatively consistent with the additive effects,

additive genetic variance decreases and the mean fitness during adaptation changes more

slowly and reaches a lower plateau than without epistasis. Particularly in the context of

adaptation, negative epistasis is also referred to as diminishing returns epistasis. For sign

epistasis, whether the allele will contribute to a larger or smaller phenotype will depend on

the allele at another locus. In this case, the evolutionary dynamics can be more complex,

and the fate of one allele is attached to the other, but while both variants persist, their

interaction may impede adaptation. Furthermore, to the extent that epistasis masks the

phenotypic influence of some variants, it may facilitate the accumulation of cryptic genetic

variation for a given trait, which may subsequently be exposed to selection when elements

of the genetic background (or the environment) change (Gibson & Dworkin 2004, Steiner

et al. 2007).

Despite the pervasiveness of epistasis at the genome-wide scale (Huang *et al.* 2012),

as well as between adaptive variants within proteins (Lunzer *et al.* 2010, Gong & Bloom

2014, Starr & Thorthon 2016), the prevalence of epistatic interactions among adaptive

variants that contribute to the evolution of more complex adaptive traits remains

incompletely understood. Studies of crop domestication have reported examples of

epistasis among artificially selected alleles, including grapevine varieties (Duchêne *et al.*

2012) and many examples in maize domestication (Stitzer & Ross-Ibarra 2018). Still,

compared to wild alleles, domesticated alleles were usually less sensitive to the genetic

background (reviewed in Doust *et al.* 2014). Epistasis was also found among adaptive

quantitative trait loci (QTLs) underlying flowering time in *Arabidopsis thaliana* (Juenger *et*

al. 2002). In a recent genome-wide screen in yeast, using genes known to be involved in a

high number of interactions, 24% of the adaptive variants were strain-specific and

indicative of epistasis (Ang *et al.* 2023). Positive epistasis has been shown to underlie the

evolution of bacteria with multiple antibiotic resistance alleles (Trindade *et al.* 2009).

Examples in animals involve epistasis between alleles underlying adaptive coloration in

butterflies (Papa *et al.* 2013), negative epistasis for traits underlying fitness in populations

of *Drosophila melanogaster* experimentally selected on a chronic larval malnutrition

regimen (Vijendravarma & Kawecki 2013), and epistasis between genes underlying coat

color in oldfield mice, in which the effect of one allele is only expressed in the presence of

another allele (Steiner *et al.* 2007).

The genetic architecture of adaptive traits can also be affected by gene-by-

environment interactions because the effect of a given allele can change depending on its

environment (Zeng *et al.* 1999, Mackay 2001). Examples of interactions between the

environment and adaptive alleles include *D. melanogaster* reproductive performance at

different temperatures (Fry *et al.* 1998), drought stress adaptation in wheat (Mathews *et al.*

2008), and local adaptation reflected in biomass for switchgrass (Lowry *et al.* 2019).

Similarly to epistatic interaction, gene-by-environment interaction can also uncover cryptic

genetic variation (Gibson & Dworkin 2004). The chaperone protein Hsp90 offers an

example of how genetic and environmental interactions can uncover cryptic variation

underlying discrete and continuous traits (Rutherford & Lindquist 1998, McGuigan & Sgro

2009, Flynn *et al.* 2020).

Here, we contribute to the understanding of the genetic architecture of adaptive

traits and the emerging knowledge about genetic and environmental interactions by

identifying adaptive quantitative trait loci (QTLs) underlying recent local adaptation in

natural populations of *D. melanogaster* and asking whether there is evidence of epistasis

among them and, for a subset, whether they interact with the environment. Using two

newly-described panels of recombinant inbred lines (RILs), we investigate several traits

that appear to have evolved directly or indirectly under adaptive differentiation between

an ancestral range population (Zambia) and a population from either France or highland

Ethiopia, regions colonized by *D. melanogaster* approximately 2 kya (Sprengelmeyer *et al.*

2020).

The traits examined here (cold tolerance, ethanol resistance, pigmentation, song

pattern, and wing length) show evidence of being either direct targets of local adaptation

or else pleiotropic readouts of local adaptation targeting correlated traits. The

pigmentation traits show strong correlations with environmental variables, especially

ultraviolet radiation (Bastide *et al.* 2014), which reaches particularly high levels in the

Ethiopian highlands. Larger wings may help Ethiopian flies navigate in cooler, thinner air,

and wing size was found to show unusually strong quantitative trait differentiation ($Q_{ST} =$

0.985; Lande 1992; Spitze 1993) between the Ethiopia and Zambia populations, compared

to genome-wide genetic differentiation (Lack *et al.* 2016), indicating a role for selection in

this trait's differentiation. France and Zambia have markedly different ethanol resistance,

also exceeding patterns of genome-wide genetic differentiation (Sprengelmeyer *et al.*

2021). Cold developmental survival shows a similarly consistent differentiation between

France and Zambia in particular (Huang *et al.* 2021), with clear presumptive adaptive value

in light of climate differences between these regions. A male song trait – the proportion of

pulses classified as slow (Clemens *et al.* 2018) – was included based on strong population

differentiation, with a Q_{st} of 0.797 exceeding the F_{ST} of >96% of non-singleton SNPs (Lollar

et al. 2024). Although directional selection has not been previously reported to have acted

directly on song traits within *D. melanogaster*, it is also possible that this trait difference

reflects selection on a pleiotropically connected trait, such as synaptic function in a novel

thermal environment (Pool *et al.* 2017).

We also note that for the pigmentation, size, and ethanol resistance traits examined

here, bulk mapping studies found that all of these population trait changes had very

different genetic architectures from one mapping cross to the next (Bastide *et al.* 2016;

Sprengelmeyer *et al.* 2021; Sprengelmeyer *et al.* 2022). These results imply considerable

segregating variation in genetic basis of each trait difference within one or both of the

populations studied. However, it is possible (though as yet untested) that epistasis may

also play a role in yielding distinct QTLs in different mapping crosses for these traits.

For each of the above traits, we first identify QTLs and candidate genes that may

underlie each of these traits. Then, we quantify the strength of evidence for epistasis

impacting each detected QTL, and then assess the overall signal of epistasis across traits.

Lastly, we investigate the reaction norm of the QTLs underlying a subset of the traits,

related to pigmentation, that were studied in two different temperature treatments. These

investigations provide new insights into both the genetic basis of adaptive trait changes

and the dependence of adaptive alleles on genetic interactions.

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Methods

Mapping cross design

We report two new Recombinant Inbred Line (RIL) mapping panels of *Drosophila*

melanogaster. Each RIL set was derived from a cross between two inbred lines from

distinct geographic populations, in each case pairing a strain from the southern-central

African ancestral range of the species (Sprengelmeyer *et al*. 2020) with a strain from a

cooler derived environment. One cross was between a Zambian inbred line (ZI215N,

BioProject PRJNA861300) and a highland Ethiopian inbred line (EF43N, sequenced in Lack

et al. 2016); the other was between a different Zambian inbred line (ZI418N, sequenced in

Sprengelmeyer & Pool 2021) and a French inbred line (FR320N, sequenced in Lack *et al*.

2016). Each cross was allowed to interbreed in an intercross design for 13 and 12 non-

overlapping generations, in the Ethiopian and French cross, respectively. Then, the

offspring of individual females were inbred for 5 generations to create each RIL. We

obtained 293 and 328 RILs for the Ethiopian and French panels, respectively (BioProject

PRJNA861300). The Zambian lines were collected in Siavonga, the Ethiopian line was

collected in Fiche, and the French line was collected in Lyon (Lack *et al*. 2015).

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Phenotypes

Ethiopian flies have increased wing area, even after correcting size relative to their

larger body mass (Lack *et al*. 2016). We measured the wing length of female flies that were

at least 3-days old. 10 female flies per RIL were photographed using an Amscope SM-4TZZ-

144A dissection microscope under CO_2 anesthesia. The pictures were scored with ImageJ

(Abramoff *et al.* 2004). Wing length was measured as the distance from the intersection of

the L4 longitudinal vein and the anterior cross vein to the L3 longitudinal vein intersection

with the wing margin.

Ethiopian flies are darker than Zambian flies (Bastide *et al.* 2014). We

photographed and measured two to five females per RIL using a dissection scope.

Resolution (3584 x 2748 pixels), gain (3.0), exposure time (99.84 ms), magnification (20x),

and illumination level were kept constant using an Amscope adaptor for LED lamp at

maximum lighting. White balance was set at the same resolution using ColorChecker white

balance. We measured three common traits for pigmentation: the pigmentation of the

mesopleuron in greyscale proportion ranging from 0 for white to 1 for black (herein,

mesopleuron, a thorax trait), the pigmentation of the background of the fourth abdominal

segment in the same greyscale proportion (herein, A4 Background), and the proportion of

the fourth abdominal segment that was covered by the black stripe (herein, stripe ratio).

Relatively low correlations among these three traits were observed among independent

isofemale strains within the Ethiopia and Zambia populations ($r < 0.35$), except for a

higher correlation between mesopleural and A4 Background for Ethiopia specifically ($r =$

0.646; Bastide *et al.* 2014).

Pigmentation is also plastically influenced by temperature, and the Ethiopian

population is located in a colder region, on a high plateau 3 km above sea level. Therefore,

we measured the three pigmentation traits in flies raised at two temperatures (25 °C and

15 °C), to uncover potential cryptic variation that could be present in the warmer Zambian

(midpoint temperature: 25 °C) but is only expressed in the colder Ethiopian (midpoint

temperature: 11 °C) population. We also report plasticity for these three pigmentation

traits, as the difference in the trait measured at 25 °C and 15 °C.

French flies have higher resistance to ethanol (Cohan & Graf 1985, Sprengelmeyer &

Pool 2021) and cold (Pool *et al.* 2017, Huang *et al.* 2021) than Zambian flies. Ethanol

resistance was measured as the average time 300 female flies, 3- to 5-day old, from each

RIL needed to become immobile when exposed to 18% ethanol. The flies were placed in 50

ml falcon tubes with ethanol-saturated tissue placed on the bottom, and the number of

mobile flies was scored every 15 minutes for six hours. Cold tolerance was measured as

egg to adult survival when raised at 15 °C (Huang *et al.* 2021).

The song pattern trait was the ratio of slow pulses over all pulses (slow and fast) in

the song made by males during courtship. Although not expected to be under local

environmental selection *a priori*, male courtship is often under strong sexual selection. In

addition, a large number of nervous system genes appear to have evolved between warm-

and cold-adapted *D. melanogaster* populations (Pool *et al.* 2017), representing one

potential source of pleiotropic effects on song traits. We found that Zambian male flies

display a greater fraction of slow to fast pulses than French flies, a novel pulse mode

classification recently discovered within the *D. melanogaster* species complex (Clemens *et*

al. 2018). The song data was recorded in the Stern Lab at Janelia Farms Research Campus,

using materials and methods described by Arthur and colleagues (Arthur *et al.* 2013). Song

was annotated without human intervention with SongExplorer (Arthur *et al.* 2021).

Annotations were classified with locally modified versions of BatchSongAnalysis

(https://github.com/dstern/BatchSongAnalysis), using previously trained *D. melanogaster*

models provided by Ben Arthur (Lollar *et al.* 2024).

We expected that there might be some level of correlation among the traits of any

given cross purely due to either linkage among causative variants or else pleiotropy. We

calculated the pairwise correlation between all the traits measured for each cross to

investigate the degree to which they are correlated.

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DNA Extraction and Sequencing

For each RIL, we extracted DNA from five to ten female flies from each line. The flies

were crushed and homogenized using pipette tips in strip tubes, in a solution of 100 µl of

lysis buffer (50 mM Tris-HCl with pH = 8, 100 mM EDTA, 100 mM NaCl, and 0.5% SDS)

and 2 µl of proteinase K (IBI Scientific). The samples were incubated to inactivate the

proteinase K (55 °C for 5 minutes, 95 °C for 10 minutes, and 25 °C hold). The supernatant

of the fly lysate was transferred to new tubes, and we added SPRI beads (Sera-mag

SpeedBeads SPRI beads, [GE Healthcare 24152105050250]) in a 1.8 to 1 proportion of

beads to lysate. The beads were used in a solution of PEG 8000 (9 g), Tween 20 (27.5 µl),

5M NaCl, and 3 mL TE Buffer (composed of 100 µl of 1 mM EDTA, 500 µL of 10 mM Tris

HCl). 1 mL of the beads were added to the buffer mix and filled with water until the final

volume was mL. The tubes were incubated for at least three minutes at room temperature

for DNA to bind to the beads and then placed on a magnetic plate for five minutes to

remove the beads from the solution. The supernatant was discarded, and the beads were

washed with two rounds of 80% ethanol (90 µL per well). DNA was eluted beads with 30

µL of H$_2$O and then used the magnetic plate to transfer only the resuspended DNA to new

tubes.

Genomic libraries were prepared following Adams *et al.* (2020), with size selection,

cutoff at 300 bp, and cleanup performed using the Zymo Select-a-Size DNA clean &

Concentrator [catalog No. D4080]. Libraries were sequenced at the UW-Madison

Biotechnology Center on the Illumina NovaSeq 6000 platform, with 150bp pair-ended

reads.

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DNA Alignment and Ancestry Calling

The reads were mapped to the *D. melanogaster* (v5.57) reference genome using

BWA-MEM, version 0.7.17 (Li 2013). We used Ancestry HMM (Corbett-Detig & Nielsen

2017) to estimate ancestry along the genome of each RIL, allowing for diploid ancestry

calls (*i.e.* homozygous for either parent, or heterozygous). Ancestries were summarized in

windows defined to contain 1,000 SNPs in the Zambian population (~19kb average size),

using the majority ancestry call in the case of an ancestry breakpoint within the window.

We used a recombination map based on Comeron *et al.* (2012) but modeled only one

generation of recombination when using Ancestry HMM, in order to focus on

conservatively-defined ancestry switches (pipeline available on

https://github.com/ribeirots/RILepi).

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QTL Mapping

To test whether adaptive loci showed evidence of epistatic interactions we first used

QTL mapping to identify the adaptive loci and then performed epistasis tests between the

focal loci and all other loci in the genome. Each locus is a genomic window of ~19kb,

defined and genotyped as described above.

To identify loci underlying trait changes, we reimplemented the R/qtl (Broman *et al.*

2003) *scanone()* function in an additive framework using Python3 (Van Rossum & Drake

2009), modifying the genotypes to be coded as numeric variables instead of categorical

(https://github.com/ribeirots/RILepi). This modification was preferred in light of the

small counts of specific genotypes due to low heterozygosity and genomic ancestry skew

present in our RIL panels.

The initial QTL mapping is based on the comparison of a model with a single QTL

versus a model without any QTL, performed repeatedly one locus at a time. For each locus,

we obtained a logarithm of the odds (LOD) score as the ratio between the log-likelihoods of

the model with one QTL over the model without a QTL. Because both RIL sets had average

ancestral frequencies skewed against the Zambian ancestry (68% Ethiopia ancestry and

75% France ancestry), we excluded the windows with an ancestry bias of 90% or greater

for either ancestry to avoid the effects of extremely uneven sample sizes on the model. The

genome-wide significance of a QTL was tested using 10,000 permutations, in which trait

values were randomly shuffled. From each permutation, we saved the highest LOD score

obtained for any window (excluding windows with ancestry skew of 90% or greater) and

empirical LOD scores from each window were compared to the null, permutation LOD

score distribution. We considered the windows whose LOD score's p-value was lower than

0.10 as putative QTLs (*i.e.* a less than 10% chance of having a QTL signal of that strength

anywhere in the genome). A p-value threshold of 0.10 was chosen aiming to include a

sufficient number of QTLs to be tested for epistasis. Each putative QTL surrounded by

windows with a lower LOD score was considered a putative QTL peak. If two putative QTL

peaks were not separated by a window with a LOD score lower than the minor peak's LOD

score minus 1.5, the minor peak was removed. Finally, the remaining putative QTL peaks

were filtered to remove any peak within 10 cM of a QTL peak with a higher LOD score, in

order to increase the independence of QTLs used in epistasis testing. The confidence

interval for these QTLs was defined as all contiguous windows with a LOD higher than the

QTL's peak LOD score minus 1.5.

Candidate Genes and Population Genetics

To identify genes potentially underlying the adaptive traits, we scanned our QTL

regions for signatures of local adaptation based on populations genetics. We used

sequenced genomes from inbred lines from each of the studied populations to calculate a

haplotype-based statistics: χ_{MD} (Lange & Pool 2016) and two F_{ST} statistics (using Reynolds *et*

al. 1983), $F_{ST\_FullWin}$ (window-wide F_{ST} calculated using all the SNPs in the window) and F_{ST_MaxSNP}

(the highest F_{ST} value from a single SNP within the window), that have power to distinct

power to detect distinct kinds of selective events (da Silva Ribeiro *et al*. 2022). We defined

as outlier windows those that fell within the top 1% of windows on the same chromosome

arm for any of the above three statistics. We focused on regions with recombination rates

generally above 0.5 cM/Mb (Comeron *et al*. 2012) due to more localized signatures of

selection: 2.3–21.4 Mb of the chromosome X, 0.5–17.5 Mb of arm 2L, 5.2–20.8 Mb of arm

2R, 0.6–17.7 Mb of arm 3L, and 6.9–26.6 Mb of arm 3R. We selected as candidates all genes

that overlapped with the outlier windows as well as the first gene up- and down-stream of

the outlier window, to account for instances in which the target of selection is in a

regulatory region outside the gene region. We also identified other genes within these

QTLs with a known or potential association with the phenotype.

Epistasis Testing

Epistasis tests were performed between each focal QTL and all of the remaining

genomic windows outside its confidence interval. The epistasis test for each window pair

consisted of an interaction LOD score obtained as the ratio between the log-likelihoods of

the model with two QTLs and their interaction (y ~ Q1 + Q2 + Q1:Q2) *versus* a model

including both QTLs but no interaction (y ~ Q1 + Q2). The interaction LOD score for each

pair was compared against permutations. Permutations were specific for each QTL

analyzed. We shuffled the phenotype, fixed the focal QTL (Q1), and calculated the

interaction LOD score of Q1 against all other windows in the genome. The highest

genomewide interaction LOD score from each permutation was kept and the empirical

interaction LOD scores were compared against this null, permuted interaction LOD

distribution.

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Epistasis Meta-analysis

We combined the results from all the epistasis tests across mapping crosses and

phenotypes to test the hypothesis of whether adaptive QTLs have epistatic interactions.

We collected the set of epistasis p-values from each QTL and its most likely interactor,

which quantify the probability of obtaining any interaction term between that QTL and any

partner locus in the genome with an interaction LOD score as high as the one observed. We

used Fisher's combined probability test to ask if the p-values from each QTL and their most

likely interacting locus reject the null hypothesis that there is no epistasis. The p-values

should follow a uniform distribution if the null hypothesis is true. Therefore, we performed

an additional step to investigate how many of the lowest p-values would need to be

removed from the data set to obtain a median value near 0.50, in order to ask whether our

cumulative data set showed any hints of epistasis across all analyzed QTLs.

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Epistasis Power Analysis

We calculated the power of our approach and our data sets to detect an interaction

by simulating phenotypes with different interaction strengths. We chose one empirical

QTL with intermediate sample size and estimated the additive QTL effect among the

detected QTL to serve as the basis for the simulations. The QTL chosen was detected for

the abdominal background pigmentation at 25 °C, it had an estimated effect size equal to

0.035, mean trait value equal to 0.3485, and a standard deviation equal to 0.0697. The

observed genotype distribution of the QTL peak window was used for the simulations. Our

null simulations generated phenotypes based on a normal distribution with the observed

trait mean and standard deviation, and the simulated values were modified based on the

trait effect and individual genotypes (1x effect for heterozygous and 2x effect for non-

Zambian homozygous). We then calculated the interaction LOD score of the focal peak

window against all other genome windows outside the original QTL's confidence interval

and kept the highest genomewide interaction LOD score obtained. We repeated this

process 10,000 times to obtain a null (no interaction) distribution of interaction LOD

scores.

To simulate epistasis, we used the genotype distribution of the window most likely

to be interacting with our focal QTL: the window with the highest empirical interaction

LOD score. We modified the effect of the focal QTL on the simulated phenotype based on

the genotype of the interacting window. If the genotype of the interacting window was

Zambia homozygous, the original effect was not modified, if it was non-Zambian

homozygous, the original effect was multiplied by the interacting factor I, and if the

genotype of the interacting window was heterozygous, the original effect was intermediate,

(i.e. multiplied by $(1+I)/2$). We simulated positive epistasis effects (original effect

increased by the presence of the epistatic allele) ranging from 1.125 to 4. For diminishing

returns negative epistasis, we simulated negative epistasis effects (original effect

decreased by the presence of the epistatic allele) from 0.889 (1/1.125) to 0.5. For sign

epistasis (the original effect changes in sign, e.g. instead of producing larger trait it

produces smaller traits), we examined effects from -0.5 to -2. We also simulated masking

epistasis (the original effect is nullified in the presence of the epistatic allele) with effect I

$= 0$.

Each interaction simulation was compared against the null distribution and a p-

value was calculated as the proportion of null simulations with an interaction LOD score

higher than the simulated interacting LOD score. Power was calculated for each interaction

effect I as the proportion of simulations that had p-value lower than 0.05.

We also calculated the power of our meta analysis based on 13 QTLs' interaction p-

values. For each interaction effect, we sampled 13 interaction LOD score p-values and

calculated (1) how often the fisher combined p-value was as extreme or greater than the

one we observed and (2) how often at least one p-value was lower than the lowest p-value

we obtained for our empirical data.

Reaction Norms

To investigate genotype-by-environment interactions for pigmentation traits, we

combined phenotypic data from RILs raised at the two temperature treatments (15 °C and

25 °C) with the genotype of each non-overlapping QTL. To test whether the genotype-by-

environment interaction was significant, we used a linear model with the phenotype as the

response variable and the genotype, environment, and genotype-by-environment

interaction as the explanatory variables.

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423   **Results**

424   *Genotype and phenotype data*

425   Whole genome sequences for the RILs had mean depth of coverage of 3.3X (S.D.

1.96, Table S1) and 7.58X (S.D. 9.09, Table S2) per site for EF and FR RILs, respectively,

which should be more than sufficient to call population ancestry in large chromosomal

blocks. Ancestries for both RIL sets were skewed toward lower Zambian ancestry, with

averages of 67.84% Ethiopian ancestry and 77.88% French ancestry. After five generations

of inbreeding, a low level of parental strain heterozygosity was present in the final panel:

8.71% and 5.3% on the Ethiopian and French panels, respectively (at the level of genomic

windows). The sample size varied for each trait based on the number of RILs successfully

phenotyped (Table 1, S1, S2).

Table 1. Summary of mapped traits. Listing the mapping cross used for each trait (EF =

Ethiopia, FR = France), the number of phenotyped lines for each trait, the number of QTLs,

and the number of QTLs with epistatic interaction for each phenotypic trait.

RIL panel	Trait	Sample size	# QTLs
EF	A4 Background 25 °C	278	1
EF	Stripe Ratio 25 °C	278	1
EF	Mesopleuron 25 °C	278	1
EF	A4 Background 15 °C	190	0
EF	Stripe Ratio 15 °C	190	1

EF	Mesopleuron 15 °C	190	1
EF	A4 Background (Plast.)	178	0
EF	Stripe Ratio (Plast.)	178	0
EF	Mesopleuron (Plast.)	178	0
EF	Wing Length	268	5
FR	Cold Tolerance	304	0
FR	Ethanol Resistance	277	3
FR	Song Pattern	294	1

Correlations among the analyzed traits were examined for each RIL panel, which

may indicate pleiotropy or else linkage of causative alleles. Among pigmentation traits, the

thoracic mesopleuron trait was strongly correlated with abdominal background (Table

S3). Stripe width showed moderate, significant correlations with both of those traits at 25

°C but weaker correlations at 15 °C. Abdominal background showed a non-significant

correlation between the two temperatures, while the other two traits showed moderate,

significant correlations between temperatures. In light of the correlations observed among

many pigmentation traits, overlapping QTLs for pigmentation traits were not treated as

independent QTLs, and only the QTL with the highest LOD score was used in downstream

analyses. No pigmentation trait was significantly correlated with wing length (Table S3),

the only other trait scored among the Ethiopian RIL panel. Among traits scored from the

French RIL panel, the song pattern was weakly correlated with ethanol resistance, $r_2 = 0.13$

(Table S4).

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Single locus QTL mapping

We identified potential QTLs for eight out of the thirteen investigated traits (Figure

1; Table 1). The traits with no detected QTLs were A4 Background at 25C, all the three

pigmentation plasticity traits, and cold tolerance. The number of QTLs per trait ranged up

to five, for wing length, with other traits yielding one or three QTLs (Figure 1, Table 1).

Twelve of the fourteen QTLs were significant at $p < 0.05$, while two marginally significant

QTLs - one for A4 Background at 25 °C ($p = 0.0591$) and one QTL for ethanol resistance (p

$= 0.0693$) – were also considered in downstream analyses (Table 2).

Figure 1. The number of QTLs for each trait ranged from 0 to 5. In this figure, only the traits

with at least one identified QTL are shown; the traits without QTLs (Table 1) can be seen in

Figure S1. Each panel shows the -log of the p-value for the LOD score of the genomic

windows. A4 Background (Figure 1E) is shown here with no QTL above the threshold, but

one marginally significant QTL (p-value = 0.053, Table 2). Windows filtered out for

ancestry skew are given a value of -0.25. The red dashed line represents the 0.05 p-value

cutoff based on 10,000 permutations. The color of the dots represents the chromosome

arm of each genomic window. Note that for wing length, a single QTL spans a broad low

recombination centromeric region between 2L and 2R.

Table 2. Characteristics of detected QTLs for all analyzed phenotypes. The single QTL

coefficient shows the magnitude of phenotypic change by substituting one allele of the

derived population ancestry at that locus, which is shown on the scale of the measured

phenotype. The correlation coefficient r^2 shows how well QTL genotype predicts

phenotypic variation (how well the data fits the model). QTL p-value and epistasis p-value

were obtained based on 10,000 permutations. * an estimated p-value of zero means the

empirical value was more extreme than any permutation. A LOD score and CI in italics

indicate a QTL that was excluded from subsequent meta-analysis due to a stronger

overlapping QTL for a correlated trait. Further details of each QTL are given in Table S5.

RIL panel	Trait	LOD score	Trait Coeff.	r^2	QTL p-value	QTL Confidence Interval	Epist. p-value
EF	A4Back 25C	3.274	0.012	0.053	0.0591	Chr3R:21,614,478..22,512,754	0.736
EF	Mesopl 15C	5.819	0.012	0.132	0.0006	Chr3R:16,750,589..16,945,416	0.699
EF	Mesopl	5.890	0.014	0.093	0.0003	Chr3R:17,549,430..17,666,763	0.714

	25C						
EF	Stripe 25C	*6.335*	0.035	0.100	0.0002	*ChrX:0..2,141,596*	0.643
EF	Stripe 15C	9.924	0.071	0.214	0*	ChrX:1,057,169.. 2,420,139	0.244
EF	Wing	9.581	0.026	0.153	0*	Chr2L:12,902,781..13,046,286	0.322
EF	Wing	8.628	0.024	0.139	0*	Chr2L:22,740,849..23,011,543	0.672
EF	Wing	3.867	0.022	0.065	0.0183	Chr3L:10,353,468..11,407,946	0.444
EF	Wing	3.526	0.019	0.059	0.0369	Chr3R:18,722,896..19,232,530	0.941
EF	Wing	4.286	0.016	0.072	0.0073	ChrX:20,419,847.. 20,893,609	0.183
FR	EtOH	3.565	22.516	0.059	0.0368	Chr3L:10,829,907..11,166,414	0.208
FR	EtOH	3.253	27.506	0.054	0.0693	Chr3R:3,268,049..3,791,969	0.853
FR	EtOH	3.740	19.166	0.061	0.0246	Chr3R:23,770,233..24,580,087	0.476
FR	Song	9.111	0.019	0.133	0*	Chr3R:21,997,113..22,171,358	0.273

Of the five pigmentation QTLs, the two identified for stripe ratio (one at 25 °C and one at 15 °C) overlapped, and only the one with the highest LOD score (15 °C) was retained for meta-analysis (Table S5). Confidence intervals for the two QTLs detected for mesopleuron (one at 25 °C and one at 15 °C) were separated by just over 600 kb, so they were kept as two independent QTLs for the meta-analysis (Table 2).

The effect of all QTLs (Table 2) was in the expected direction: substituting alleles of the derived population resulted in phenotypic changes in the direction of the derived populations. This pattern is congruent with a scenario where these QTLs are contributing to locally adaptive trait changes (involving either the measured traits or else pleiotropically correlated traits under selection), given that if the phenotypic difference were neutral, we would expect some QTLs to show an effect in the opposite direction (Orr 1998).

Outlier and Candidate Genes within QTLs

To generate hypotheses for possible causative genes underlying trait changes, we

used population genetic summary statistics to identify genes within our QTLs that are

potentially under local adaptation. Specifically, we flagged genes associated with windows

that fell within the chromosome arm's top 1% of windows for window F_{ST}, maximum SNP

F_{ST}, or the haplotype statistic χ_{MD} (Table 3). These local adaptation scans were not

conducted in low recombination QTL regions due to the expected lack of gene-scale

resolution of selection signals in such genomic intervals. Since a striking signal of local

adaptation is not guaranteed at loci underlying these strong population trait differences,

we also noted the presence of other functionally relevant candidate genes within each QTL.

Table 3. QTL traits, confidence interval, and candidate genes detected by a priori functional

knowledge or as population genetics outliers (n/a indicates that QTL was in a region of low

recombination and was not analyzed for signatures of selection).

Trait	QTL Confidence Interval	Candidate Genes	Genes with Signatures of Selection
A4Back 25C	Chr3R:21,614,478.. 225,12,754		*TwdlQ, beat-vii, scrib*
Meso 15C	Chr3R:16,750,589.. 16,945,416		
Meso 25C	Chr3R:17,549,430.. 17,666,763	*burs*	
Strp 25C	ChrX:0..2,141,596	*Hr4, y*	n/a
Strp 15C	ChrX:1,057,169.. 2,420,139	*Hr4*	n/a
Wing	Chr2L:12,902,781.. 13,046,286		*A16, Vha68-2, ACXE, CG16800, Tor, Ube4B*
Wing	Chr2L:22,740,849..	*Slmap*	n/a

	23,011,543		
Wing	Chr3L:10,353,468.. 11,407,946	*Cpr67Fa2, FoxK, Rbfox1, scyl, wls*	*Fad2, CG32079, klu*
Wing	Chr3R:18,722,896.. 19,232,530	*Cow, Gbp3, hh, lrk1, p53, pnt, Rassf*	*Pnt*
Wing	ChrX:20,419,847.. 20,893,609		*CG15450, Cyp6v1, hydra, shakB, CG1835, CG11227*
EtOH	Chr3L:10,829,907.. 11,166,414	*Aps*	*CG42831, tna*
EtOH	Chr3R:3,268,049.. 3,791,969		n/a
EtOH	Chr3R:23,770,233..24,580,087	*fkh*	*trv, htt, CG34354, CG43125, snu*
Song	Chr3R:21,997,113.. 22,171,358		

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The mesopleuron pigmentation QTL detected at 25 °C included the gene *burs*

(Dewey *et al.* 2004), implicated in cuticle tanning and hardening. The two stripe ratio QTLs,

at the beginning of chromosome X, both included the candidate gene *Hr4*, a gene that when

suppressed results in reduced pigmentation (Rogers *et al.* 2014). One also included the

gene *yellow*, canonically implied in pigmentation variation and evolution (e.g. Massey &

Wittkopp 2015). This pair of QTLs overlapped others previously detected for the same

trait in distinct Ethiopia-Zambia crosses (Bastide *et al.* 2016). The gene *ebony*, at which a

soft sweep signal associated with a pigmentation QTL was previously characterized for

Ethiopian *D. melanogaster* (Bastide *et al.* 2016), fell just between the closely-located

Meso15C and Meso25C peaks.

At least one gene related to wing development was found within each of the five

wing length QTL regions. Within the distal 2L QTL, our population genetic outliers

included the *Drosophila* target of rapamycin gene (*Tor*), which plays a key role in insulin

signaling and growth regulation, and has been tied to wing size and development

specifically (Parker & Struhl 2015). Outliers inside this QTL also included the potential

wing regulators *Vha68-2* and *Ube4B* (Krupp *et al.* 2005, Blanco *et al.* 2010, Okada *et al.*

2016, López-Varea *et al.* 2021). Within the low recombination distal 2L wing QTL, among

the few genes present was *Slmap*, a hippo signaling gene shown to alter wing size (Zheng *et*

al. 2017). Within the 3L wing QTL, population genetic outliers included *klu*, which

regulates cell size and proliferation, and is associated with wing size defects (Schertel *et al.*

2015). Within the 3R QTL, outliers included *pnt*, related to wing morphogenesis (Dworkin

& Gibson, 2006, Bejarano *et al.* 2008, Paul *et al.* 2013). The X-linked wing QTL on

chromosome X included an outlier gene possibly involved in wing development, *shakB*

(Krishnan *et al.* 1993). Three of those QTLs (X, 2L proximal, and 3L) overlap with

previously detected wing length QTLs, each from a different Ethiopia-Zambia cross out of

four previously analyzed mapping crosses (Sprengelmeyer *et al.* 2020).

For the ethanol resistance QTLs, we identified two population genetic outlier genes

(*htt* and *trv*) previously implicated in response to ethanol within the distal QTL on

chromosome 3R (Fochler *et al.* 2017). Outlier genes detected within the other two QTLs

had no annotated connection to ethanol. These QTLs did not overlap with those previously

detected for the same trait from distinct France-Zambia crosses (Sprengelmeyer *et al.*

2021), in line with the genetically variable basis of this trait identified by that study.

Overall, we identified both novel genes underlying the studied traits and genes that

had already been implicated with their respective trait. The identification of genes already

known to underlie these traits (although in many cases not their evolution) provides

support for the approach we used here.

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Epistasis

To investigate whether there is evidence of epistasis among adaptive loci, we

performed an epistasis scan for each single QTL and a meta-analysis combining the results

across non-correlated traits. We did not identify any individually significant epistatic QTL

pairs. The lowest genome-wide interaction LOD score p-value we obtained was 0.183, for a

wing length QTL (Table 2).

Our meta-analysis of the combined non-overlapping single QTLs also supports the

hypothesis that there is no strong epistasis involving adaptive loci. By combining the

interaction p-values for all non-overlapping QTLs (where each p-value denotes the

probability of that QTL having any interaction LOD effect that strong in the genome, based

on 10,000 permutations), we obtained a p-value of 0.763 using Fisher's combined

probability test. This result indicated that the observed p-values do not deviate from the

null expectation of uniformly distributed p-values expected without epistasis involving

adaptive loci.

Because our sample sizes of RILs may not be suitable for detecting all magnitudes of

epistasis, we conducted a simulation-driven analysis to indicate the strength of our

negative results, and to indicate if there was a parameter space of epistasis that we could

confidently rule out based on these results. Based on this analysis, our method had a high

power (over 80%) to detect an epistatic QTL pair in scenarios of sign epistasis, in which the

interaction effect changed the direction of the main effect, as well as high power to detect

strong positive epistasis in which the interaction effected increased the main effect at least

2.5-fold (Figure 2, Table S6). We also tested the power of our meta-analysis by re-sampling

13 p-values from simulated data sets of different interaction effects (Figure 2). This

analysis indicated that we should have had power to detect similar scenarios of strong

epistasis as indicated for the lowest p-value analysis above (*i.e.* sign epistasis and positive

epistasis at least doubling the main effect, and that we would likely have detected masking

epistasis as well, in which the main effect was erased by the modifier). Therefore, the lack

of detected epistatic interactions from our empirical data supports the hypothesis that such

strong forms of epistasis did not play an important role in these instances of evolution.

Figure 2. Simulation analysis indicating that strong positive epistasis or sign epistasis

should have been detectable for the empirical data. Simulations based on randomly

permuted individual genotypes and simulated epistatic effects (see Materials and Methods)

were conducted to assess our ability to detect varying models of epistasis based on either

the lowest empirical epistasis p-value (red series) or the Fisher-combined epistasis p-value

across 13 analyzed QTLs (blue series). Here, the epistasis factor (x-axis) represents the

multiplier that a modifier locus exerts on the primary QTL's effect. Thus, negative values

represent sign epistasis, zero represents masking epistasis, values less than 1 indicate

negative epistasis, and values above 1 indicate positive epistasis. The y-axis shows the

proportion of occurrences out of the 1,000 resampled instances in which a given model of

epistasis yielded a lowest p-value lower than the observed 0.183 (red), or else how often

the combined Fisher p-value was lower than the observed 0.763 (blue).

Figure 3. The reaction norms of the four non-overlapping pigmentation QTL show darker

phenotypes for flies raised at 15 °C than at 25 °C and for flies with Ethiopia ancestry alleles,

corroborating expectations. (A) Mesopleuron at 25 °C, QTL on chromosome 3 with peak

position from 17,566,218 to 17,600,070. (B) Mesopleuron at 15 °C, QTL on chromosome

3R with peak position from 16,773,298 to 16,788,420. (C) A4 Background at 25C, QTL on

chromosome 3R with peak from 21,614,478 to 21,628,049. (D) Stripe ratio at 15 °C, QTL

on chromosome X with peak from 1,246,761 to 1,303,582. The y-axis shows the mean

phenotype for each genotype and temperature treatment; a higher number is a darker

phenotype. ZZ = Zambia homozygous, EZ = heterozygous, EE = Ethiopia homozygous.

Phenotype plasticity for pigmentation QTLs

Fly pigmentation is known for its temperature-based plasticity; flies reared at lower

temperatures develop darker phenotypes than those raised at warm temperatures (David

et al. 1990). Our results recapitulated this behavior, in that average pigmentation traits

were higher (*i.e.* darker) at 15 °C (Figure 3). We identified one overlapping QTL for stripe

ratio at both temperatures (Table 2). Based on the trait correlation and the shared QTL, at

least part of the genetic architecture underlying adaptive melanism appears to be shared

between temperatures.

The reaction norm of four pigmentation QTLs also showed that flies raised at 15 °C

showed darker phenotypes for all traits and even darker phenotypes for the Ethiopia

homozygotes, as expected (Figure 3). We also found significant genotype-by-environment

interactions for two of these QTLs – A4 Background and stripe ratio (Figure 3C-D). The

change in stripe ratio (Figure 3D) was greater for flies with the homozygous Ethiopia

genotype. Here, the more derived-like environment appears to enhance the phenotypic

consequences of the Ethiopian pigmentation variants. In contrast, for the A4 Background

QTL, the phenotype means at 15 °C only show a small difference between homozygous

genotypes, compared to the much larger difference at 25 °C, which is congruent with this

QTL being found only at 25 °C (whereas differences in the heterozygote means may reflect

small sample size effects).

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Discussion

We report the creation of two new *Drosophila melanogaster* RIL panels established

from crosses between single inbred lines from Ethiopia and Zambia, and from France and

Zambia. We used these new data sets, together with an updated QTL mapping approach

focusing on additive effects, to investigate the genetic architectures of multiple traits that

have evolved become differentiated between *D. melanogaster* populations. We did not find

evidence for strong epistasis underlying their evolution, but genotype-by-environment

interactions were supported for two of the three traits investigated.

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Genetic architectures underlying trait evolution

Our QTL mapping results indicate genetic architectures for most traits involving

detectable loci with non-trivial effect sizes (5.3% to 21.4%; Table 2), consistent with past

bulk mapping studies for some of these traits (Bastide *et al.* 2016, Sprengelmeyer *et al.*

2020, Sprengelmeyer *et al.* 2021). In combination with those studies, our results reinforce

previous findings that evolved populations maintain persistent variability in the genetic

basis of pigmentation traits, wing length, and ethanol resistance. We did not find

significant QTLs for cold tolerance or thermal plasticity of pigmentation, which could

reflect either a more complex genetic basis of those traits or else greater non-genetic

variance in those assays.

We have also identified genes within the detected QTLs that might be underlying the

relevant traits, including genes previously known to be related to the phenotype and, with

the use of population genetic signatures of selection, novel candidate genes (Table 3). The

identified genes represent viable hypotheses for contributors to the genetic architecture of

traits that appear to have evolved due to local adaptation targeting either these or

pleiotropically correlated traits. Additional studies using functional approaches such as

genome editing will be needed to confirm the roles of these genes in the evolution of the

respective traits.

Lack of evidence for epistasis

Despite the pervasiveness of epistasis underlying the genetic basis of complex traits

(Huang *et al*. 2012, Mackay 2014), we did not find evidence of epistasis involving any of the

detected adaptive loci (Table 2). In light of our power analysis (Figure 2), our empirical

results primarily argue against the presence of modifier variants within our RIL panels that

trigger sign epistasis, complete masking epistasis, or strong positive epistasis with regard

to the main effect loci. In contrast, our study does not speak to the presence of

quantitatively negative epistasis (*e.g.* diminishing returns epistasis) or more moderate

positive synergistic epistasis.

Previous studies have also found mixed results when investigating epistatic

interaction among adaptive loci (Malmberg & Mauricio 2005). In some cases, the varied

outcome for adaptive traits might reflect the transient nature of epistatic interactions in a

population, given that the epistatic effects of two loci on a trait depend on the allele

frequency of the interacting alleles. Interestingly, studies mapping QTLs for fitness-related

traits (more directly related to reproduction and survival) have a more consistent result,

often showing more epistatic QTLs than additive QTLs (Malmberg & Mauricio 2005).

One of the difficulties in extrapolating the results of experimental crosses to natural

populations is that experimental crosses start with a limited amount of genetic variation

(Mackay 2014). In our case, the crosses were made between one inbred line from each

parental population, which will exclude some variants present in the source populations

while elevating some naturally rare variants to moderate frequency. However, our crosses

have the advantage of focusing on a simplified genetic architecture, which may improve

power to detect interactions among the variants present, in addition to clear inference of

the parental origin of alleles genomewide.

We highlight that our study likely underestimates the epistatic interactions affecting

D. melanogaster adaptive traits, since we only had power to detect relative strong

interactions (Figure 2, Table S6). Based on the limited numbers of RILs available, we could

only detect strong additive QTLs, and we needed to focus our epistasis scan on interactions

with those few strong QTLs. Future research with a larger sample size (e.g. Torgeman &

Zamir 2023) would be helpful to achieve more extensive insights into the scope of epistatic

interactions affecting traits such as these.

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Genetic Architectures at Two Temperatures

Although the three body pigmentation traits we studied were somewhat correlated

(Table S3), no shared QTL was noted between them (Table 2). Instead, we found two

instances of overlapping or neighboring QTLs for the same trait measured at different

temperatures, with 25 °C and 15 °C being more similar to the mean temperatures in the

Zambian and Ethiopian populations, respectively. These results are compatible with the

same or nearby genes being responsible for pigmentation differences at both

temperatures.

Drosophila pigmentation is known to show thermal plasticity, and Ethiopian flies

would have been expected to become somewhat darken on this basis alone, and yet they

have also adapted genetically to become darker (Bastide *et al.* 2014). It is unclear whether

this pigmentation plasticity is adaptive, which in itself can facilitate adaptive evolution

(Ghalambor *et al.* 2007). Unlike larger ectotherms, it has been estimated that the solar gain

in temperature from having dark pigmentation is at most a fraction of a degree for an

organism with the small size and high surface to volume ratio of *Drosophila* (Willmer &

Unwin 1981, Hirai & Kimura 1997). Across African populations of *D. melanogaster*, levels

of ultraviolet radiation have been found to be stronger predictors of pigmentation than

temperature (Bastide *et al.* 2014).

Gene-by-environment loci have recently been shown to be enriched for signatures

of positive selection (Lea *et al.* 2022), supporting the hypothesis that environment-specific

loci play an important role in local adaptation. Here, we did find that two QTLs underlying

pigmentation evolution showed significant genotype-by-environment interactions (Figure

3), suggesting that the rate of their response to selective events might have changed upon

colonization of colder environments. However, we did not find consistent patterns of

either gene-by-gene or gene-by-environment interactions that met the predictions of

cryptic variation. For example, the absence of epistatic interactions means that the

Ethiopian alleles did not have their effect completely masked or reversed by another gene

on the ancestral background. And in the case of gene-environment interactions, there was

an enhanced QTL effect in the derived Ethiopia-like cool environment in just one of two

significant cases (*i.e.* the stripe QTL). While cryptic variation may have played a role in the

evolution of some or all of these traits, our results suggest that it may not have been

pervasive with respect to the strongest effect changes.

Conclusion

While the genetic architecture underlying adaptive evolution may vary somewhat

depending upon the trait, there remains a key interest in assessing potentially general

patterns. In combination with past studies, our results suggest that most adaptive trait

changes involve variants of non-trivial effect size, and that these variants often do not

initially reach fixation. Epistasis is an important component underlying complex traits,

including in flies (Huang *et al.* 2012), but we did not find evidence that strong epistasis was

relevant for the adaptive evolution of the studied loci. In light of the existence of other

examples in which epistasis among adaptive loci have been shown (Malmberg & Mauricio

2005), our study highlights that the answer to the classic debate on whether epistasis is

important to natural selection might vary case by case. Lastly, we found evidence of gene-

by-environment interactions underlying pigmentation, stressing that the variability of

genetic architectures can also be environment-dependent, which is particularly relevant in

light of rapidly changing global environments.

Data availability: Source code used in the analyses is available on GitHub

(https://github.com/ribeirots/RILepi). Raw sequence read data for the Recombinant

Inbred Lines are available on the Sequence Read Archive (BioProject: PRJNA861300).

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