Transferring functional chromosomes between intergeneric yeast generates

monochromosomal hybrids with improved phenotypes and widespread transcriptional

responses

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Abstract

19   Interspecific hybrids can exhibit phenotypes that surpass those of their parents, known

as heterosis, which is often of interest for industrial applications and evolutionary genetics

research. However, constructing hybrids between distantly related species, such as

intergeneric yeasts, presents technical challenges. In this study, we established a method to

transfer individual chromosomes from *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* (Sc) into *Kluyveromyces*

marxianus (Km), an emerging model for bioproduction. The Sc chromosome of interest was

circularized, genetically modified to carry Km centromeres and replication origins, and

transformed into Km via protoplast transformation. With this method, we generated

monochromosomal hybrids with eight Km chromosomes and Sc chromosome I or III. The Sc

chromosomes exhibited normal replication, segregation, and active transcription in the

hybrids. The hybrids displayed heterosis in flocculation and salt tolerance due to the

overexpression of *FLO9* and *SPS22* on transferred Sc chromosome, respectively.

Transcriptomic analysis revealed that both *cis-* and *trans*-regulatory changes contributed to

the divergence of gene expression between the two species, with the *cis* and *trans* effects

often acting in a compensatory manner. Our strategy has potential applications in optimizing

cell factories, constructing synthetic genomes, and advancing evolutionary research.

Teaser

A yeast hybrid containing an alien chromosome transferred from a distantly related species

exhibits improved phenotypes.

MAIN TEXT

Introduction

42   The transfer of genetic materials between species is one of the major driving forces

for speciation and environmental adaptation [1,2]. Chromosomes, which carry packs of genes,

can introduce abundant genetic variation and contribute to evolution of adaptive traits when

transferred between species. For example, horizontal transfer of plastid chromosomes

between tobacco plants (*Nicotiana*) aided chloroplast capture [3]. Horizontal transfer of

chromosomes between *Fusarium* species, a group of filamentous fungi, led to new

pathogenic lineages [4]. Furthermore, hybridization is by nature a process of interspecific

chromosome transfers. With the combined genetic materials, hybrids often exhibit enhanced

phenotypes, known as heterosis or hybrid vigor. For example, hybridization between the top-

fermenting yeast *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* and the cold-tolerant *S. eubayanus* gave rise to

one of the most important lager-brewing species, *S. pastorianus* [5]. Similarly, triticale, a

hybrid of rye (*Secale cereale*) and wheat (*Triticum aestivum L.*), exhibited improved yield in

marginal environments [6]. Therefore, introduction of genetic materials from a distantly related

species may hold great potential for phenotypic improvement in the fields of crop breeding

and industrial applications.

57   Understanding the phenotypic and molecular consequences of interspecific

hybridization may also address many important questions in genome evolution. For example,

what are the molecular bases for heterosis [7]? From the perspective of gene regulation, can

distantly related genomes regulate each other [8]? Is there an upper limit for evolutionary

divergence such that two genomes with a divergence level above this threshold cannot

regulate each other anymore? Is evolution of gene expression predominantly driven by *cis*- or

trans-regulatory changes [9]? Many previous studies have addressed these questions with

natural or synthetic hybrids [10–17], including important conclusions that sequence divergence in

cis-regulatory elements such as promoters and enhancers, as well as compensatory *trans*-

acting changes, became increasingly important for evolution of gene expression as

evolutionary distance increases [16]. However, many of these questions remain open for

distantly related species where natural hybrids are not available.

In this study, we explore the phenotypic and molecular consequences of hybridization

between *Kluyveromyces marxianus* and *S. cerevisiae*, by synthetically constructing

monochromosomal hybrids between the two distantly related species. *K. marxianus* is a yeast

species that belongs to the *Saccharomycetaceae* family but only distantly related to *S.*

cerevisiae (**Fig. 1A**). It has been previously argued that it may serve as an emerging model

for bioproduction, including heterologous proteins, bioethanol and bulk chemicals [18,19]. It has

a number of traits different from *S. cerevisiae*, including a high growth rate, thermotolerance,

and the ability to assimilate a wide variety of sugars [20–22]. On the other hand, *S. cerevisiae* is

more tolerant to ethanol than *K. marxianus* [19]. It is widely used in industrial fermentation and

has arguably the best studied genome among eukaryotes [23]. Mixing the genetic materials

between the two species is expected to provide novel phenotypes for industrial development,

as well as to understand their evolution.

Stable allodiploid hybrids between *K. marxianus* and *S. cerevisiae* haven't been made

available, although partial integration of *S. cerevisiae* genome fragments into *K. marxianus*

has been achieved by protoplast fusion [24,25]. In order to introduce *S. cerevisiae* genetic

materials in a systematic, controllable manner, we developed a genetic-engineering strategy

to artificially transfer chromosomes between the two species. Artificial chromosome transfer

was first established in 1977, when murine chromosomes were transferred into human cells

via microcells [26]. To date, artificial transfer of functional chromosomes has primarily been

achieved between closely related species (dashed lines, **Fig. 1B**), including transfers of

human chromosome 21 into mouse and chicken cells [27–29], and between bacteria species

Mycoplasma mycoides and *M. capricolum* [30]. *S. cerevisiae* (Sc) and *K. marxianus* (Km)

diverged 114 million years ago [31], significantly exceeding the evolutionary distance between

the species that have been shown capable of natural or artificial chromosome transfers (**Fig.**

1B). Previous efforts of protoplast fusion showed that Sc genomes are often unstable after the

fusion with Km [25]. One possible explanation is the incompatibility of replicating elements

such as centromere (*CEN*) and autonomously replicating sequence (*ARS*), as previously

shown in hybrid incompatibility studies [32,33]. In this study, we engineered the Sc chromosome

to resolve potential incompatibilities, including circularization of the chromosome and

insertion of *ARS* and *CEN* from the host species [34]. The engineered Sc chromosome was

transformed into Km, creating a monochromosomal hybrid. Through phenotypic and gene

expression analysis, we showed that functional chromosome transfer between distantly

related species can produce beneficial phenotypes associated with overexpression of genes

from the Sc chromosome. The transferred chromosomes triggered widespread transcriptional

responses in the transferred and host genomes, suggesting cross-species regulation. Finally,

we found that divergence of gene expression of the two species is often contributed by

compensating *cis-* and *trans-*regulatory changes, providing new evidence for regulatory

evolution across a long evolutionary timescale. Our strategy has potential applications in

optimizing microbial cell factories and advancing evolutionary studies.

Results

Compatibility of ARS and CEN between Sc and Km

111   It is critical to ensure proper replication and segregation of the heterologous

chromosome upon chromosome transfer. Therefore, we started by investigating the

compatibility of *ARS* and *CEN* between Sc and Km. We examined transformation success

and stability of plasmids carrying different combinations of *KmARS1*, *KmCEN5*, *ScARSH4*

and *ScCEN6*. We found that *KmARS1* and *KmCEN5* was respectively essential for successful

transformation (**Fig. 1C**, left**)** and plasmid maintenance in Km (**Fig. 1D**, left). Neither could

be replaced by their Sc counterparts, *ScARSH4* and *ScCEN6*, suggesting incompatibility.

Plasmids carrying *KmCEN5+KmARS1* produced transformants in Sc (**Fig. 1C**, right), but

with poor stability (**Fig. 1D**, right), suggesting that *KmARS1* but not *KmCEN5* can function in

Sc. Similar results were obtained using combinations of *KmARS18*, *KmCEN3*, *ScARS1* and

ScCEN4 (**Fig. S1**). The observed incompatibility could explain the rapid loss of Sc

chromosomes in previous protoplast fusion between Km and Sc [25]. Finally, the plasmid

containing both *ARS*s and *CEN*s from Sc and Km, known as double *CEN/ARS* plasmid, could

replicate and segregate stably in both Km and Sc (**Fig. 1C**, left). Therefore, the issue of Sc

chromosomal instability in Km may be resolved by engineering *KmCEN* and *KmARS* into Sc

chromosomes.

127   Using double *CEN/ARS* plasmids carrying different antibiotic markers, we examined

the mating rate between Km and Sc. We transformed haploid Km and Sc cells with plasmids

carrying the kan^R or hyg^R marker, mixed them in different combinations (see **Methods**) and

selected for zygotes on double antibiotic medium (**Fig. 1E**). The results showed that the

mating efficiency between Km *MAT***a** and *MAT*α cells, as well as between Sc *MAT***a** and

*MAT*α cells, was around 16%. However, mixing 1.6×10^7 Km cells with 1.6×10^6 Sc cells,

regardless of their mating types, failed to yield any zygotes, based on both double selection

(**Fig. 1E**) and microscopic observation (**Fig. S2**). These results demonstrated a prezygotic

reproductive barrier between the two species, which urges a synthetic method for generating

Km-Sc hybrids.

Fig. 1. Functionality of ARS and CEN in Sc and Km. (A) Phylogenetic tree of the
Saccharomycetaceae family based on 71 selected species. Blue ellipses show species capable
of interspecific hybridization, while red ellipse marks the event of whole-genome duplication.
Sc and Km are highlighted in orange. The tree was constructed with iqtree2 [35] with
concatenated coding sequences of 2,408 orthologous groups [31]. **(B)** The evolutionary distance
between Km and Sc, compared to species in other taxa that are capable of interspecific
hybridization (solid lines) or tolerant to chromosomal transfer (dashed lines). Data of amino
acid substitutions per site were generated by Orthofinder2 [36]. Sp, *Saccharomyces paradoxus*.
Su, *S. uvarum*. **(C, D)** Transformation efficiency **(C)** and stability **(D)** of plasmids containing
different combinations of *ARS* and *CEN* alleles in the two species (blue for Sc, red for Km).
Stability refers to the percentage of cells containing the plasmid after being grown in non-
selective YPD medium for 24 h. Lines in the boxplots and whiskers show the median,
maximum and minimum values. **(E)** Mating assay between Km and Sc. Haploid Km or Sc
cells containing a *kanR* (red cross) or *hygR* (blue cross) plasmid were mixed and spotted onto
a medium containing hygromycin (Hyg), kanamycin (Kan), or both. Mating efficiency was

 quantified by counting double-resistant colonies (see **Methods**), represented by the mean of
three replicate experiments.

Engineering and transferring Sc chromosomes into Km

We selected the smallest Sc chromosome, chrI (252 kb, 85 genes based W303

annotation), and the third smallest chromosome, chrIII (341 kb, 156 genes), for proof-of-

principle experiments of Sc-Km chromosomal transfer. The experimental pipeline is shown

in **Fig. 2A**. First, we circularized the chromosomes of interest to avoid potential

incompatibility of telomeres. Sc telomeres (TELs) are composed of TG_{1-3} repeat sequences,

while Km TELs consist of a long repeat motif (25 nt) [37]. We removed the TELs from chrI and

chrIII, respectively, and joined the ends with *KmURA3* with CRISPR/Cas9 [38]. To avoid

homologous recombination at the telomeres, the telomere-associated long repetitive sequence

on chr1 was deleted during circularization [38]. Next, to ensure stable maintenance of Sc

chromosomes in Km, we inserted *KmCEN5 /ARS1* adjacent to the native *CEN*s on chrI and

chrIII. Given that chrI and chrIII contain 5 and 12 *ARS*s, respectively [39], we placed another

copy of *KmARS1* close to a native *ScARS*, which was about ~100 kb away from the *KmCEN5*

/ARS1 in the circular chromosomes (see **Methods** for details). The engineered circular chrI

and chrIII were named R1 and R3, respectively. Sc cells with R1 ("Sc-R1") or R3 ("Sc-R3")

showed no fitness defect under normal culture conditions as well as in the presence of

microtubule-depolymerizing and DNA-damaging agents (**Fig. S3**), indicating that the

introduction of *KmARS1* and *KmCEN5* did not affect chromosome replication in Sc. The

circularization was confirmed by pulsed-field gel electrophoresis (PFGE), which showed an

absence of linear chrI or chrIII in the gel (**Fig. 2B**). Following a protocol developed by

Noskov et al. [40], we extracted and column-purified R1 and R3, with the undesired linear

chromosomes removed by exonuclease. Finally, the purified R1 and R3 were separately

transformed into Km using protoplast transformation [41], yielding four R1 transformants

(*Kluyveromyces-Saccharomyces*-R1, "KS-R1" hereafter) and one R3 transformant ("KS-R3").

The low number of transformants indicates a need for further optimization of the

transformation protocol, especially for transferring larger chromosomes.

We next examined the integrity of the transferred chromosomes. All four KS-R1

transformants retained six Sc-specific markers located on R1 (**Fig. 2C**, see **Table S1** for

marker positions), indicating successful transfer of R1. The transfer was further confirmed by

restriction digest (**Fig. 2E**) and whole genome sequencing, which found no mutations in the

transferred R1. In PCR analysis of KS-R3, marker 7 was absent (**Fig. 2D**). PFGE analysis

showed that the size of linearized R3 was smaller than the expected 340 kb (**Fig. 2E**).

Genome sequencing revealed a 29 kb deletion between two direct repeats of putative Ty

elements in R3 (**Figs. 2F & S4**). The deletion was potentially due to homologous

recombination between Ty elements, the rate of which has been shown to significantly

increase in circular plasmids during transformation [42]. The deleted region contained 13 genes

(*MAK32*, *PET18*, *MAK31*, *HTL1*, *HSP30*, *YCR022C*, *YCR023C*, *SLM5*, *YCR024C-B*, *PMP1*,

YCR025C, *NPP1*, *RHB1*). We introduced the deleted region, in six individual segments via

plasmids, into Km cells (**Fig. S4**). None of the segments affected growth (**Fig. S4**), excluding

the possibility that the loss of the 29 kb region was an adaptive response to overcome

incompatibility.

We next evaluated the Km genome integrity after transformation. The PFGE patterns

of Km chromosomes in KS-R1 and KS-R3 were consistent with the Km parent (**Fig. S5**).

Genome sequencing revealed 33 mutations in 11 ORFs, as well as 82 SNPs and indels in

intergenic sequences in Km chromosomes in KS-R1 (**Table S2**). KS- R3 contained 4

mutations in 4 ORFs, and 47 SNPs and indels in intergenic sequences (**Table S2**). These

mutations might have been induced during the protoplast transformation. Overall, the transfer

of R1 or R3 into Km did not result in fusions, translocations, or other large-scale

rearrangements in the Km chromosomes, thus creating a monochromosomal hybrid

containing eight Km chromosomes and one Sc chromosome.

Subsequently, we examined the hybrids for any fitness defects. In rich medium (YPD),

the growth curves of KS-R1 and KS-R3 were indistinguishable from Km-V, the parental Km

strain with a void vector (**Fig. 2G**). Under non-selective conditions, R1 and R3 were highly

stable in the hybrids. The loss rate per generation for R1 and R3 in YPD was 0.11% and

0.84%, respectively (**Fig. 2H**), a level comparable to that of circular YACs in Km [43].

Furthermore, KS-R1 and KS-R3 exhibited robust growth in the presence of the microtubule-

depolymerizing agents benomyl (BML) and thiabendazole (TBZ), DNA replication inhibitor

hydroxyurea (HU), DNA-damaging agents methyl methane sulfonate (MMS) and

camptothecin (CPT) [44], or protein synthesis inhibitor cycloheximide (CHX) (**Fig. 2I**). Taken

together, the introduction of R1 and R3 did not affect growth, chromosome segregation, DNA

replication, or protein synthesis of the hybrids in rich medium. The Km cells were tolerant to

the transplantation of Sc chromosomes, reflecting cellular plasticity.

Fig. 2. Engineering and Transferring Sc Chromosomes into Km. (**A**) Experimental pipeline for transferring Sc chromosomes into Km. (**B**) PFGE of chromosomal extracts from Sc-R1, Sc-R3 and the parental Sc strain. (**C, D**) PCR of markers in the circular chromosomes in KS-R1 (**C,** represented by one transformant) and KS-R3 (**D**). Purple box labels the missing marker, #7, in KS-R3. See **Table S1** for marker positions. (**E**) PFGE of R1 and R3 (arrows) in the hybrids, linearized with NotI and AscI respectively. Ctrl: non-digested KS-R1 chromosomal extracts. λ: Lambda PFG Ladder. (**F**) Illustration of the 29 kb deletion in R3 of KS-R3. Coordinates are based on a manually curated R1 sequence (**Table S1**). (**G**) Growth curves of KS-R1, KS-R3, and Km-V in YPD. The values represent mean ± SD (n=3). (**H**) Stability of circular chromosomes in hybrids. The values represent the mean (n=3). (**I**) Spot assay of KS-R1 and KS-R3 in the presence of benomyl (BML), thiabendazole (TBZ), hydroxyurea (HU), methyl methane sulfonate (MMS), camptothecin (CPT) or cycloheximide (CHX). Unless otherwise indicated, the plates were incubated at 30 degrees for 1 day.

Hybrids exhibit heterosis due to interactions between Km-encoded *trans*-factors and Sc *cis*-regulatory sequences

We next investigated if the transferred chromosomes conferred novel phenotypes. We treated the hybrids and their parents with twenty environmental conditions and semi-quantified their relative growth on solid media, using YPD growth as a reference (**Figs. 3A & S6**). The monochromosomal hybrids KS-R1 and KS-R3 exhibited comparable growth to Km-V under 19 and 15 conditions, respectively (**Fig. 3A**), suggesting that the small number of genes in R1 and R3 did not trigger a widespread metabolic reprogramming in Km. Under a few conditions, R1 and R3 caused growth defects, suggesting potential incompatibility. For instance, KS-R1 exhibited increased sensitivity to 42 ☐ and KS-R3 exhibited increased sensitivity to tunicamycin (TM) (**Fig. 3A-B**). The defective growth phenotypes were not shared by the two hybrids, indicating that the defects were caused by dominant effects of genes on R1 or R3, rather than a general effect caused by chromosomal transfers. Additionally, we ruled out the possibility that the mutations in the Km genome caused the phenotypes, because the strains no longer exhibited the phenotypes after losing the Sc chromosomes in non-selective medium (**Fig. S7**).

Interestingly, the chromosomal transfer resulted in heterosis. KS-R3 exhibited enhanced tolerance to high concentration of sodium chloride (NaCl) compared to its parents (**Fig. 3C**). The high-salt condition is a common stress in industrial processes. Therefore, increased tolerance to NaCl is a beneficial phenotype for industrial production [45]. We next investigated the molecular mechanisms by which R3 increased NaCl tolerance in the hybrid. Among the genes carried by R3, *ScSPS22* is involved in *β*-glucan synthesis and related to cell wall function [46]. In a previously published genome-wide screen, overexpressing *ScSPS22* reduced NaCl tolerance [47]. We thus tested if *ScSPS22* contributed to the enhanced NaCl tolerance of the hybrid. *ScSPS22*, along with its 1000 bp upstream sequence (promoter), was introduced into Km via a centromeric plasmid. We found that, in contrast to its role in Sc, *ScSPS22* increased NaCl tolerance of Km to the same level as KS-R3 (**Fig. 3C**, upper panel). Expressing the Km ortholog of *ScSPS22*, *KmSPS22* (*FIM1_814*), did not have an obvious effect (**Fig. 3C**, upper panel). This result indicates that *ScSPS22* is the causal gene for the increased NaCl tolerance in KS-R3. Additionally, overexpressing *ScSPS22* in Sc with centromeric or 2-micron plasmids reduced NaCl tolerance (**Fig. 3C**, lower panel), consistent with the previous report.

In order to understand the contribution of *cis*-regulatory and coding sequences (CDS) to the phenotypic effect of *ScSPS22*, we constructed a chimeric allele consisting of the promoter of *KmSPS22* and the CDS of *ScSPS22*, namely *Pkm-ScSPS22*. There was no substantial difference between *Pkm-ScSPS22* and *KmSPS22* when expressed with a centromeric plasmid (**Fig. 3C,** upper panel), suggesting a lack of functional divergence in the CDS. On the contrary, *Pkm-ScSPS22* conferred a much lower level of NaCl tolerance than *ScSPS22* driven by its endogenous promoter, indicating that the Sc promoter was causal for the increase in NaCl tolerance.

The different phenotypic effects of Sc and Km promoters suggest potential divergence in gene expression. Therefore, we analyzed the transcription level of *ScSPS22* and *KmSPS22* in the hybrid and parents by qPCR (**Fig. 3D**). The relative mRNA level of *ScSPS22* in KS-R3 was respectively 53 and 80 times higher than those in Sc-R3 with and without NaCl (**Fig. 3D**, right panel), suggesting that (1) a significant difference in *trans*-acting regulators for *ScSPS22* between Sc and KS-R3; and (2) the up-regulation of *ScSPS22* in KS-R3 is constitutive. The relative mRNA level of *KmSPS22* did not significantly differ between KS-R3 and Km-V (**Fig. 3D**, left panel), indicating little difference in the *trans*-acting factors for *KmSPS22* between Km and KS-R3.

When transformed into Km on a centromeric plasmid, the *ScSPS22* allele was expressed at the same level as *ScSPS22* in KS-R3 ($p > 0.05$ for both YPD and NaCl conditions, Student's t-test, **Fig. 3D**), suggesting that the promoter sequence of *ScSPS22* was causal for its up-regulation in KS-R3. The chimeric allele *Pkm-ScSPS22* drove lower expression than *ScSPS22* in Km, consistent with *cis*-regulatory divergence. In Sc-R3 background, expressing *ScSPS22* with centromeric or high-copy 2μ plasmids increased its relative mRNA level, but failed to match the level of *ScSPS22* in KS-R3, suggesting that the upregulation of *ScSPS22* in KS-R3 resulted from induction or derepression by Km-specific *trans*-acting factors, rather than increased gene copy number. Taken together, the phenotypic and expression analysis showed that the heterosis in NaCl resistance was caused by specific interactions between Km-encoded *trans*-acting regulators and the Sc promoter of *SPS22*.

Although KS-R1 did not show any significant heterosis in the twenty conditions shown in **Fig. 3A**, we found that it exhibited a flocculation phenotype surpassing that of the parental Km-V and Sc-R1 (**Fig. 3E&F**). The flocculation phenotype disappeared after the loss of R1, indicating that R1 is responsible for the enhanced flocculation (**Fig. S8**). Flocculation facilitates cell sedimentation, reducing separation costs in high-density fermentation [48]. The *FLO* family genes control flocculation [49], among which *ScFLO9* is

present on R1. Introducing *ScFLO9* with its 1000 bp upstream sequence into Km via a

centromeric plasmid enhanced flocculation to the same level as KS-R1 (**Fig. 3E&F**). This

result suggests that *ScFLO9* is responsible for the increased flocculation phenotype in KS-R1.

Overexpressing *ScFLO9* with a centromeric or 2μ plasmid in Sc slightly enhanced

flocculation (**Fig. 3E&F**), consistent with its known role in Sc but suggesting its effect is

background dependent.

We similarly analyzed the expression level of *FLO9* to understand the molecular

mechanisms of the heterosis phenotype. qPCR showed that the relative mRNA level of

ScFLO9 in KS-R1 was 64.5 times higher than in Sc-R1 (**Fig. 3G**), again suggesting a

significant change in the *trans*-regulatory environment. The high expression in KS-R1 was

recapitulated by *ScFLO9* expression from a centromeric plasmid in Km (light pink bars in

Fig. 3G, $p > 0.05$, Student's t-test). The expression level of *KmFLO5* (*FIM1_6*), the *ScFLO9*

ortholog, was not increased in KS-R1, consistent with a lack of change in *trans* environment

for Km genes (**Fig. 3G**, left panel). Overexpressing *ScFLO9* in Sc-R1 with centromeric and

2μ plasmids led to an increase in the mRNA level of *ScFLO9* expression (purple bars in **Fig.**

3G), with the higher level of *ScFLO9*$_{2\mu}$ correlating with faster flocculation (**Fig. 3F**). Taken

together, the enhanced flocculation of KS-R1 was associated with *ScFLO9* being exposed to

an alien *trans*-regulatory environment encoded by the Km genome. In both cases of *SPS22*

and *FLO9*, the genetic combinations between Km-encoded *trans*-factors and Sc-encoded *cis*-

factors would never be found in nature due to reproductive isolation, demonstrating the

power of cross-species synthetic biology.

Fig. 3. Hybrids exhibit heterosis. (A) Growth phenotypes of hybrids and their parental
strains under various conditions. Relative growth was semi-quantified through greyscale
scanning of images from spot assays and normalized to YPD growth. Original images are
provided in **Fig. S6**. The heatmap shows Z-scores of $\log_2$-transformed data. Grey denotes
conditions where the strain could not grow. Glu, glucose; 1/4 N, one-quarter ammonium
sulfate; 1/2 AA, half amino acids; 1/2 N, half ammonium sulfate; TM, tunicamycin; 5-FU, 5-
fluorouracil. **(B)** Growth defects under tunicamycin or 42°C treatment associated with the
transferred Sc chromosomes. **(C)** Improved NaCl tolerance associated with the promoter
sequence of *ScSPS22*. *ScSPS22*, *KmSPS22* and *PKm-ScSPS22* alleles were expressed with a
centromeric plasmid (indicated by the subscript CEN) or a 2μ plasmid (*ScSPS22*$_{2μ}$) in either
Km (upper panel) or Sc-R3 (lower panel). Serial dilutions were performed at 1:5 for all spot
assays in this study. **(D)** Relative mRNA levels of *ScSPS22* and *KmSPS22* measured by
qPCR. mRNA levels in the hybrid and Km cells were normalized to the average level of three
housekeeping genes, *KmSWC4*, *KmTRK1*, and *KmMPE1*. mRNA levels of *ScSPS22* in Sc
were normalized to the average level of *ScSWC4*, *ScTRK1*, and *ScMPE1*. The values
represent the mean ± SD (n=3). **(E, F)** Enhanced flocculation in KS-R1 associated with
ScFLO9. *ScFLO9* was expressed with either a centromeric plasmid (*ScFLO9* $_{CEN}$) or a 2μ

plasmid ($ScFLO9_{2\mu}$) in Km or Sc-R1. The strains were cultured overnight in SD-Ura or SD-
Leu (see **Methods**) to an OD_{600} of 20. The cultures were vortexed vigorously and left still,
before being imaged **(E)** and examined for the OD_{600} of the supernatant **(F)** at designated
timepoints. The values in **(F)** represent the mean ± SD (n=3). **(G)** Relative expression levels
of *ScFLO9* and *KmFLO5* measured by qPCR and normalized as described above. The values
represent the mean ± SD (n=3). *, p<0.05; ***, p<0.001. NS, not significant. P-values were
based on t-tests.
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Pervasive transcriptional responses triggered by chromosomal transfer

The experiments with *ScSPS22* and *ScFLO9* revealed significant changes in Sc gene

expression after being transferred to Km. To determine if this is a general pattern, we

analyzed transcriptomes of the hybrids (KS) and parental strains in YPD and under two stress

conditions, 1 µg/mL tunicamycin (TM) and 1 M NaCl. The genes on R1 and on R3 were

actively transcribed in the hybrids under the three conditions (read counts >5)

(**Supplementary Data File 2**). However, their expression in hybrids poorly correlated with

that in Sc, with an average correlation coefficient (R^2) of 0.38 for R1 genes and 0.32 for R3

genes (**Fig. 4A**). This correlation was substantially lower than the correlation between the

expression of human genes on Hsa21 transplanted into mouse cells and their counterparts in

human cells (R^2=0.90) [29], which aligns with the remote evolutionary distance between Km

and Sc (**Fig. 1B**). Compared to Sc, on average, 22.7% and 18.3% of the genes in R1 and R3,

respectively, were up-regulated in KS, while 27.3% and 19.3% of the genes in R1 and R3

were down-regulated in KS, respectively (FDR-adjusted p < 0.05 by Wald test and absolute

log2FoldChange >1; **Fig. 4B, Table S3**). The median log2-fold change for up- and down-

regulated genes was 1.81 and -1.57, respectively. Consistent with the case studies of *SPS22*

and *FLO9*, the high proportion and fold change of differentially expressed Sc genes reflect

dramatic differences in the *trans*-regulatory environment between Sc and the hybrids.

The genes showing differential expression between Sc and hybrids were in general

uniformly distributed across the transferred chromosomes (**Fig. S9**), but we found a region

around *HML* that showed derepression across multiple genes in KS-R3, providing an

interesting example for chromatin-level regulatory divergence. The *HML* locus, along with its

flanking genes *GEX1* and *VBA3*, is repressed in Sc by *SIR* complex [50]. Consistent with this

previous knowledge, we found little expression of these genes in Sc (**Fig. 4C**, upper panel).

Interestingly, *GEX1*, *VBA3* and *HML* genes were highly expressed in KS-R3 (**Fig. 4C**, lower

panel), consistent with derepression. qPCR confirmed that the relative mRNA levels of α1

and α2 were upregulated 42-fold and 39-fold, respectively, in KS-R3 compared with Sc-R3

(**Fig. 4D**). The differential expression might be explained by different composition of

silencers between *Kluyveromyces* and *Saccharomyces* [51]. The silencer of *HML* in KS-R3

might not be able to recruit essential proteins such as Rap1 and ORC to the locus [52],

contributing to the derepression of α1 and α2, and the flanking genes *GEX1* and *VBA3*.

While the expression of Sc genes underwent significant changes in the hybrids, R1

and R3 also profoundly affected the expression of Km genes. Out of 4,975 Km genes, 931

and 803 genes in KS-R1 and KS-R3, respectively, exhibited significant expression

differences compared to Km-V in YPD (FDR-adjusted $p < 0.05$ by Wald test and absolute

log2FoldChange >1; **Fig. 4E, Table S3**). R1 encodes a transcription factor, Oaf1, that

regulates at least 97 Sc target genes [53]. Among the 73 Km orthologs of the known Sc target

genes (see **Methods** for ortholog assignment), 27 (37.0%) showed differential expression in

KS-R1. R3 encodes four transcription factors regulating at least 305 Sc target genes [53], with

44/160 (27.2%) of their Km orthologs differentially expressed in KS-R3 (**Table S3**). This

suggests that transcription factors encoded by R1 and R3 might directly alter gene expression

in Km, but a large fraction of the observed transcriptional changes might be explained by

indirect or uncharacterized regulation. Under TM and NaCl stresses, the number of

differentially expressed genes was substantially lower than in YPD (**Fig. 4E**, **Table S3**).

These results indicate that the heterologous chromosomes induced pervasive changes in

expression of the endogenous genome, potentially via novel Sc-Km regulatory interactions.

Interestingly, regulation from the Km genome became dominant under stress conditions,

removing much of the effects associated with foreign chromosomes found in YPD.

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Fig. 4. Transferred Sc chromosomes were actively transcribed in the hybrids. (A)
Correlation of Sc gene expression between hybrids (KS) and Sc strains. The expression level
was represented by log2 (average normalized read counts). Each point represents the average
of three replicates. Adjusted R^2 were derived from linear regression. N = 81 genes for R1,
and 137 genes for R3 (see **Methods** for data filters). DEG, differentially expressed genes. n.s.,
not significant. **(B)** Number of significantly up- and down-regulated R1/R3 genes in hybrids.
(C) Derepression of the *HML* locus in KS-R1, shown by raw read counts (grey bars) covering
the *GEX1-CHA1* region in the W303 genome, visualized by Integrative Genomics Viewer.
Data were from one representative biological replicate in YPD. Grey bars are in log scale. **(D)**
The relative mRNA levels of *HMLα*1 and *HMLα*2 in KS-R3 and Sc-R3 determined by qPCR,
normalized to the average of three housekeeping genes as described in **Fig. 3D**. The values
represent the mean ± SD (n=3). **(E)** Number of DEGs between KS strains and Km-V. Y,
YPD; T, TM; N, NaCl. In this figure, all DEGs are defined as an FDR-adjusted p-value <
0.05 by Wald test and abs(log2FoldChange) > 1.
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Contributions of *cis* and *trans* effects to the expression divergence between Km and Sc

The monochromosomal hybrids provide a unique opportunity to examine the

contribution of *cis*- and *trans*-regulatory divergence to the evolution of gene expression in the

two remotely related species. In the hybrid, alleles from the two species are exposed to the

same *trans* environment, so their expression differences stem from differences in *cis*-acting

regulatory elements, such as promoters, that are physically located on the same DNA strand

of the regulated genes. Allelic expression is also regulated by *trans*-acting factors, i.e.
diffusible products, such as transcription factors, that are not linked with the affected genes.
The expression differences between the parental species are the sum of *cis*-and *trans*-acting
effects. Therefore, subtracting the allelic differences in hybrids from parental differences
yields an estimation of *trans* effects (**Fig. 5A**) [9]. In order to characterize the effects of *cis* and
trans regulatory divergence, we identified Km orthologs for 62/85 genes on R1 and 100/156
genes on R3, with an average amino-acid sequence similarity of 48.0% (BLOSUM62-based
similarity, see **Methods** and **Table S4**). Using models in DESeq2, we identified genes with
significant differential expression driven by *cis*-only (parental differences completely
explained by allelic differences in hybrids, upper right panel in **Fig. 5B**), *trans*-only (no
allelic differences in hybrids but significant parental differences, lower left panel in **Fig. 5B**)
or *cis*-and-*trans* effects (upper left panel in **Fig. 5B**, see **Methods** and **Table S5** for details;
significance was based on an adjusted p-value < 0.05). Genes that showed no allelic
differences in neither parents nor hybrids were classified as conserved (lower right panel, **Fig.
5B**). The genes were most commonly under both *cis* and *trans* effects (57-63%, **Fig. 5B & C**),
which deviates from the previous notion that *cis* effects become increasingly dominant as
species diverge [16]. However, we note that the pronounced *trans* effect could be associated
with the fact that only one chromosome was transferred into the hybrids. Interestingly, when
both significant, the *cis* and *trans* effects often act in the opposite direction, i.e. their effects
compensate each other (blue points/bars, **Fig. 5B&C**). Only a marginal proportion of genes
showed reinforcing effects, where *cis* and *trans* effects act in the same direction (magenta
points/bars, **Fig. 5B&C**). The prevalence of compensatory effects was also supported by
negative correlations between *cis* and *trans* effects across treatments (**Fig. 5D**). The data
together suggest that stabilizing selection on gene expression might operate on a much longer
evolutionary distance than previously appreciated.

What factors could potentially drive divergence in *cis*- and *trans*-regulation of
different genes? We considered (1) essentiality of genes [54] and (2) gene duplication [55]. After
separating from Km, Sc underwent whole-genome duplication (WGD), leading to paralogs in

Across environmental conditions, the correlations within *cis* effects (average of 0.85)
and *trans* effects (average of 0.79) were high, indicating that the mechanisms causing
expression divergence under different conditions were similar (**Fig. 5D**). The lower
correlation among *trans* effects suggests that *trans* effects were more likely to be
environmental-dependent than *cis* effects, aligning with previous results from intragenus
hybrids [11].

Sc genome (**Fig. 1A**). We reasoned that essential genes might be less likely to evolve

regulatory changes due to functional constraint. On the other hand, genes with paralogs might

be more likely to exhibit regulatory divergence due to redundancy. We found that the average

magnitude of *cis* effects, but not *trans* effects, was significantly lower in essential genes than

dispensable genes (p = 0.036, Wilcoxon test, **Fig. 5E**). This suggests that *cis* effects might

play a greater role than *trans* effects in driving divergence among non-essential genes [56]. We

did not find any significant correlations that distinguish genes with and without paralogs.

Finally, we note that the monochromosomal hybrids' *trans* environment

predominantly resembled Km (**Fig. S10**), given that the transferred R1 and R3 chromosomes

contained only a small number of genes. As shown above, the pervasive expression changes

in Sc genes upon chromosomal transfer reflected the divergence in *trans*-acting factors

between Km and Sc. We expect that the change in *trans* environment would cause a more

dramatic effect on Sc-specific genes that evolved after the split of the Sc and Km lineages.

There were 56 Sc-specific genes in R1 and R3 that did not have any identifiable orthologs in

Km (**Table S6**). Indeed, the magnitude of expression differences between hybrids and Sc was

significantly greater for Sc-specific genes than genes with orthologs (p = 0.01, Wilcoxon test;

Fig. 5F). This potentially suggests that regulation of Sc-specific genes required co-evolution

of *trans*-acting factors in a lineage-specific manner.

Fig. 5. Contributions of *cis* and *trans* effects to the expression divergence between Km and Sc. (A) Schematic representation of *cis* and *trans* effects in expression divergence between Km and Sc. **(B)** Log2 fold changes between alleles in hybrids (H) vs. parental differences (P), adjusted with the ashr method. Error bars represent 95% confidence interval. Numbers in the parentheses indicate the number of genes. Data are from the YPD treatment. **(C)** Proportion of genes showing *cis* only, *trans* only, *cis* & *trans*, compensatory, and reinforcing effects in three conditions. **(D)** Pearson correlation coefficient (Corr.) between *cis* and *trans* effects across conditions. Data are average correlations of three replicates, using a cross-replicate design. YPD (Y), TM (T), NaCl (N). **(E)** The magnitude of *cis* effects on essential genes and dispensable genes, averaged across three treatments. **(F)** The magnitude of log2 (KS/Sc) expression differences in Sc-specific genes and orthologous genes, averaged across three conditions. Log2 fold changes were adjusted with the ashr method. Midlines in the violin plots in **(E)** and **(F)** represent median.

Discussion

Interspecific hybridization often leads to novel phenotypes that are of interest for industrial purposes and evolutionary studies. For diverged species that cannot mate naturally, artificial chromosomal transfer provides an opportunity to explore the molecular and

phenotypic consequences of combining genetic materials evolved independently during

millions of years of evolution. In this study, we, for the first time, successfully introduced

chromosomes of *S. cerevisiae* to *K. marxianus*, two species both with great industrial

potential but genetically as diverged as human and lancelet (**Fig. 1B**). We show that the

transferred Sc chromosomes are stably maintained in Km. The monochromosomal hybrids

exhibited heterosis, demonstrating the technology's potential in future phenotypic screens.

The improved salt resistance and flocculation phenotypes were associated with Sc promoters

being activated by Km-encoded *trans*-acting factors in the artificial hybrids, to a greater level

than the native regulation in Km or Sc. Finally, we examined the molecular consequences of

monochromosomal hybridization with transcriptomic analysis, revealing broad transcriptional

responses upon chromosomal transfer, as well as prevalent compensatory evolution of *cis*-

and *trans*-regulatory changes during the divergence of the two species.

One of the technological advances in our study is the method to enable stable

maintenance of Sc chromosomes in Km. There are several technical factors of consideration.

First, we removed Sc TELs and circularized the chromosomes of interest. The circularization

made it possible to easily remove unwanted linear chromosomes by exonuclease treatment [40],

which may increase transformation efficiency. In the case of *CEN* engineering, it was

important to ensure that the heterologous *CEN* was not partially functional, which has been

shown to disrupt chromosome segregation and lead to dicentric breakage, thereby causing

genome rearrangements and instability [57]. We found that Sc and Km *CEN*s were non-

functional in the other species. Therefore, we may use double *CEN*s for maintaining the

heterologous chromosomes. Next, we considered the density of *ARS*s. The requirement of

ARS density for YACs varied in previous reports, from one *ARS* per 30 kb [58], 51 kb [59], to 1

Mb [60]. In our study, *KmARS1* was positioned at a density of one *ARS* per 110 kb in R1 and

150 kb in R3, which proved to be sufficient for replication of Sc chromosomes in the hybrid.

Finally, our strategy allows for possibilities of transferring multiple chromosomes into Km.

This can be done either by marker recycling, i.e., popping out *URA3* in the

monochromosomal hybrid (see the sequences in **Supplementary Data File 1**) and

transforming another chromosome subsequently, or by mating with another

monochromosomal hybrid.

There are a few advantages in constructing functional monochromosomal hybrids for

synthetic biology purposes. First, it partly circumvents the problem of genome

incompatibility, which is a major barrier for hybridization between remotely related species.

We found that, although Km and Sc cannot form hybrids, the monochromosomal hybrids

with R1 or R3 were viable. It suggests that R1 and R3 did not carry incompatibilities that are

detrimental to the hybrids' survival, although they may cause fitness defects under certain

environmental conditions (**Fig. 3A**). These observations imply that R1 and R3 might carry

environment-dependent incompatibility, which should be noted in future studies. Second, the

hybrids exhibited heterosis in a few phenotypes, demonstrating industrial potential. They also

provide ideal materials for directed evolution for desirable traits, as demonstrated by other

synthetic hybrids [61]. Third, the limited number of genes in the transferred chromosomes made

it easier to identify the molecular basis of phenotypes of interest. We found that the

flocculation phenotype in KS-R1 was due to overexpression of *ScFLO9*, consistent with its

known role in Sc [62]. The heterosis in NaCl tolerance stems from overexpression of *ScSPS22*

in KS-R3, which might be caused by loss of repressors [63]. It remains to be understood why

overexpression of *ScSPS22* had an opposite effect in KS than Sc. One explanation lies in the

different composition of glucan in cell wall between Km and Sc [64]. As a gene responsible for

synthesizing *β*-1,3-glucan in the cell wall, *ScSPS22* might affect the two species differently

under osmotic stresses.

The synthetic Km-Sc monochromosomal hybrids showed interesting phenotypic and

molecular characteristics, demonstrating that chromosome transfer is functional, even across

a remote evolutionary distance such as between yeast genera. Previous interspecific

chromosomal transfers in yeast have been successful in using *S. cerevisiae* as a container to

maintain heterologous genetic materials from bacteria [30,60,65,66], but little interaction between

the host and the heterologous chromosomes has been characterized, or desired at all. In our

study, we found that the Sc chromosomes were "alive" in the Km background. Genes on the

transferred R1 and R3 chromosomes were actively transcribed, despite a high level of

sequence divergence. Genes on R1 and R3 showed significant expression differences

between KS and Sc backgrounds, and the same for Km genes between KS and Km

background. The transcriptional responses indicate active interspecific regulation, which can

give rise to heterosis phenotypes, as shown with *SPS22* and *FLO9*. It is of future interest to

investigate what proportion of the regulatory interactions between the two species' genomes

are associated with beneficial phenotypes, or, on the other hand, indicative of molecular

incompatibility.

The monochromosomal hybrids allowed for exploring evolutionary patterns of gene

regulation between distantly related species. We found that the intergeneric expression

differences were primarily driven by a combination of *cis* and *trans* effects (**Fig. 5B, C**),

contrasting with previous findings with intrageneric species where expression divergence was

mainly attributed to changes in *cis* effects [11,16]. However, we note that the monochromosomal

hybrids differ from allodiploid hybrids in that its *trans* environment closely resembles one of

the parental species (Km in this case), but are similar to introgression lines where only parts

of the genomes are hybridized [67,68]. Therefore, the Sc and Km alleles experienced imbalanced

changes in *trans* environment, potentially leading to an overestimation of *trans* effects. With

this deviation in mind, our conclusion is consistent with previous studies showing that *cis-*

trans coevolution is more likely to accumulate over greater evolutionary timespans than *cis*

or *trans* effects alone [69]. Additionally, the prevalence of compensatory effects of *cis* and *trans*

changes (**Fig. 5C**) is consistent with stabilizing selection on gene expression [11,16],

demonstrating that stabilizing selection is able to operate on an evolutionary timescale of

over a hundred million years. Future studies with even more diverged species may help us to

understand what is the upper limit of evolutionary distance for stabilizing selection to act on

and how the relative contribution of *cis* and *trans* effects change across evolutionary

timescales.

In summary, our study established a strategy for engineering the structural elements

and ARS of a functional chromosome before transferring it between intergeneric yeasts. This

strategy might be extended to other microbes as well as to plants. The resultant hybrids,

containing rationally designed synthetic genomes, provide valuable resources for cell

factories, synthetic biology, and evolutionary genomics.

Materials and Methods

Strains and media

Yeast strains used in this study are listed in **Table S7**. Sc strain W303-1A (*MATa*

leu2-3,112 trp1-1 can1-100 ura3-1 ade2-1 his3-11,15) was subjected to chromosome

engineering. The engineered Sc chromosome was transferred into a *ura3Δ* Km strain, FIM-

1ΔU [70]. The following media were used in this study: YPD [71], synthetic medium lacking

uracil or leucine (SD-Ura or SD-Leu) (0.17% yeast nitrogen base without amino acids and

ammonium sulfate, 2% glucose, 1 g/L sodium glutamate, 2 g/L DO Supplement-Ura

(630416, Takara) or DO Supplement-Leu (630414, Takara), 2% agar for plates), SD (same

recipe as SD-Ura, with the addition of 20 mg/L uracil), and ME (2% malt extract, 3% agar).

G418 (A600958, Sangon) and hygromycin (H8080, Solarbio) were added to YPD medium at

final concentrations of 200 mg/L and 300 mg/L, respectively, to prepare YPDG and YPDH

media. Both antibiotics were supplemented into YPD and SD-Ura to prepare YPDGH and

SD-Ura+GH, respectively. Unless otherwise indicated, cells were grown at 30 □.

Plasmids

All plasmids used in this study are listed in **Table S8**. All primers are listed in **Table**

S1. A previously published vector LHZ626 which contains CEN and ARS elements from

both Sc and Km (double CEN/ARS plasmid), as well as *KmURA3*, served as a control for

circular chromosomes [41]. To construct plasmids for diploid selection, a fragment containing

ScARSH4 and *ScCEN6* was amplified from LHZ626 and inserted into the HpaI and SpeI sites

of a Km-centromeric plasmid, LHZ882 [72], yielding LHZ1493. KANMX6 (*kan^R*) was

amplified from pFA6a-KANMX6 and used to replace HPHMX4 (*hyg^R*) in LHZ1493 to

produce LHZ1494. To create plasmids with different combinations of ARS and CEN from

Km and Sc, a BamHI site was introduced between *KmARS1* and *KmCEN5* of LHZ882 to

generate LHZ1495. *ScCEN6* was inserted between the BamHI and SalI sites of LHZ1495 to

generate LHZ1496. *ScARSH4* was inserted between the BamHI and HindIII sites of

LHZ1495 to generate LHZ1497. *ScARSH4* and *ScCEN6* were inserted between the HindIII

and SalI sites of LHZ1495 to obtain LHZ1498. *KmARS18* and *KmCEN3* were inserted

between the HindIII and SalI sites of LHZ1495 to obtain LHZ1783. *ScARS1* and *ScCEN4*

were inserted between the HindIII and SalI sites of LHZ1783 to obtain LHZ1784. *ScARS1*

was inserted between the BamHI and HindIII sites of LHZ1783 to generate LHZ1785.

ScCEN4 was inserted between the BamHI and SalI sites of LHZ1783 to generate LHZ1786.

ScARS1 and *ScCEN4* were inserted into the SalI site of LHZ1783 to obtain LHZ1787.

In order to remove the telomeres and join the chromosomal ends, we first constructed

CRISPR plasmids expressing single guide RNAs (gRNAs) targeting telomeres of each end of

chr1 and chr3. Primers containing a 20 bp gRNA sequence were annealed in pairs and

inserted into the SapI sites of pRS425-Cas9-2xSapI, resulting in plasmids LHZ1499A, B,

LHZ1500A and B. Next, the gRNA cassette from LHZ1499A was inserted into the NotI site

of LHZ1499B to produce LHZ1499. Similarly, the gRNA cassette from LHZ1500A was

inserted into the NotI site of LHZ1500B to produce LHZ1500. The double-gRNA plasmids,

LHZ1499 and LHZ1500, were subsequently transformed into yeast (see below). In order to

insert *KmARS1* and *KmCEN5* into the circularized chromosomes, we cloned gDNAs into the

SapI sites of pRS425-Cas9-2xSapI to construct LHZ1501~1504, following the same cloning

procedure as described above. The homologous repair templates ("donor DNA", see below)

used in CRISPR/Cas9 genome editing was assembled into pMD-18T with In-Fusion Snap

Assembly (Clontech), according to the designs in **Supplementary Data File 1**.

For flocculation analysis, the *ScFLO9* cassette, including 1000 bp upstream, the ORF

of *ScFLO9*, and 200 bp downstream sequence was amplified from the genome of W303-1A.

This cassette was inserted into the NotI site of LHZ626 to produce LHZ1505, and into the

SmaI and SpeI sites of pRS315 and pRS425 to produce LHZ1509 and LHZ1510, respectively.

For NaCl tolerance analysis, the *ScSPS22* cassette, including 1000 bp upstream

sequence, the ORF of *ScSPS22*, and 200 bp downstream sequence was amplified from the

genome of W303-1A. This cassette was inserted into the NotI site of LHZ626 to produce

LHZ1506, and into the SmaI and SpeI sites of pRS315 and pRS425 to produce LHZ1511 and

1512, respectively. The 1000 bp upstream sequence of *ScSPS22* in LHZ1506 was replaced by

the 1000 bp upstream sequence of *KmSPS22* to produce LHZ1507. The *KmSPS22* cassette,

including 1000 bp upstream sequence, the ORF of *KmSPS22*, and 200 bp downstream

sequence was amplified from the genome of FIM-1ΔU and inserted into the NotI site of

LHZ626 to produce LHZ1508. The full sequences of LHZ626, LHZ1495, and pRS425-Cas9-

2xSapI are listed in **Table S8**.

Transformation efficiency and plasmid stability

Fim-1ΔU and W303-1A were grown in YPD liquid medium overnight. Cells from 1

mL-culture were pelleted and transformed with LHZ626, LHZ1495~LHZ1498, respectively,

using the lithium acetate (LiAc) method [73,74]. The cells were diluted and spread onto YPDH

plates. Colony-forming units (CFUs) were counted after 3 days. The transformation

efficiency (CFUs/μg DNA) was calculated taking the dilution factor into account. To measure

the stability of the plasmid, transformants were grown in YPD liquid medium for 24 h. The

cells were then diluted and spread onto YPD and YPDH plates. Stability was determined by

dividing the CFU count on YPDH plates by that on YPD plates. The experiments were

replicated three times.

Mating assay

The quantitative mating assay was performed as previously described [75] with

modifications. Strains transformed with LHZ1493 (hyg^R) were used as experimental cells,

and strains transformed with LHZ1494 (kan^R) served as tester cells. Both experimental and

tester cells were cultured overnight in YPDH and YPDG liquid media, respectively. Cells

were then washed and resuspended in H_2O to an OD_{600} of 1. A total of 100 μL of

experimental cells was mixed with 500 μL of tester cells. The mixture resulted in a 1:5 ratio

of experimental to tester cells when both cell types were Km or Sc. The mixture resulted in a

1:10 ratio of Sc experimental cells to Km tester cells, as CFU per OD_{600} of Km cells was

twice that of Sc cells. The mixed cells were pelleted, resuspended in 20 μL of ddH_2O, and

spotted onto ME plates. After incubation at 30 □ for 24 h, cells were washed off the ME

plates with ddH_2O and then pelleted and resuspended in 1 mL of ddH_2O. To visualize the

mating result, a total of 3 μL cells were spotted on YPDH, YPDG, and YPDGH (Fig.1E).

These plates were incubated at 30 □ for 24 h. To quantify mating efficiency, the cells were

diluted and plated onto YPD and YPDGH plates. The mating efficiency was calculated as the

number of colonies on YPDGH plates divided by one-sixth of the number on YPD plates,

reflecting the 1:5 ratio of experimental to tester cells. The experiments were replicated three

times.

Engineering of Sc chromosome I and III

Each step of engineering Sc chromosome I (chr1) or III (chr3) involved transforming

a CRISPR plasmid (**Table S8**) and a donor, which is a PCR product for homologous

recombination repair. The composition and full sequences of the donors are listed in

Supplementary Data File 1.

Chr1 and chr3 were circularized as previously described [76]. First, LHZ1499 or

LHZ1500 was transformed into W303-1A to induce double strand breaks in both telomeres in

chr1 or chr3. A DNA fragment "chr1-cir" or "chr3-cir" containing *KmURA3* with

homologous arms to the chromosomal ends was simultaneously transformed to connect the

two chromosomal ends with *KmURA3*. The constructs above were designed to remove the

left telomere (0-1111 bp) and the right telomere along with the repetitive sequence (208917-

252221 bp) of chr1, and the left telomere (0-831 bp) and the right telomere (334198-341087

bp) of chr3. Successful circularization was selected by SD-Ura-Leu medium. The

transformants with circularized chromosomes were named Sc-ring1 and Sc-ring3.

In order to insert *KmARS1* and *KmCEN5* into the circularized chromosomes, we

transformed LHZ1501 and a donor "chr1-ARS1" into Sc-ring1 to insert *KmARS1* and *hyg^R* at

66090 bp of chr1, resulting in a strain named Sc-ring1L. LHZ1502 and a donor "chr1-

ARS1/CEN5" were transformed into Sc-ring1L to insert *KmARS1*/*KmCEN5* and *kan^R* at

157346 bp of chr1, resulting in a strain named Sc-R1. Similarly, LHZ1503 and a donor

"chr3-ARS1/CEN5" were transformed into Sc-ring3 to insert *KmARS1*/*KmCEN5* and *hyg^R* at

108718 bp of chr3, resulting in a strain named Sc-ring3L. LHZ1504 and a donor "chr3-ARS1"

were transformed into Sc-ring3L to insert *KmARS1* and *kan^R* at 243183 bp of chr3, resulting

in a strain named Sc-R3. All transformations described above followed the LiAc method [73,74].

Extraction and protoplast transformation of R1 and R3

691 R1 and R3 were extracted from Sc-R1 and Sc-R3 as previously described [40], which

692 was developed for purifying yeast artificial chromosomes up to 600 kb in size. A total of 10

693 μL R1 or R3 was transformed into Km by protoplast transformation [42]. The transformants

694 were selected on SD-Ura+GH plates.

Pulsed-Field Gel Electrophoresis (PFGE)

Plugs containing the genome of Sc, Km, and hybrid cells were prepared by using the CHEF Yeast Genomic DNA Plug Kit (170-3593, Biorad). To separate circular R1 from linear chromosomes in KS-R1, chromosomes were separated on the CHEF MAPPER^{TM} XA System in a 1% pulsed field certified agarose gel (162-0137, Biorad) in 0.5×TBE (diluted from 10×TBE, T1051, Solarbio) at 14 □. The running time was 24 h at 6.0 V cm^{-1}, with a 60~120 sec switch time ramp at an included angle of 120 °. The plug containing the entrapped R1 was cut out and linearized with NotI as described in the protocol of the CHEF Yeast Genomic DNA Plug Kit. Similarly, R3 in KS-R3 was separated from linear chromosomes and then linearized with AscI. Chromosomes of W303-1A, Sc-R1, Sc-R3, linearized R1 and R3 were separated in a 1% pulsed field certified agarose gel in 0.5×TBE at 14 □. The running time was 16 h at 6.7 V cm^{-1}, with a 10~40 sec switch time ramp at an included angle of 120 °. Lambda PFG Ladder (N0341S, NEB) was used as a size marker for PFGE.

Growth curves of KS-R1 and KS-R3 and the stabilities of transferred chromosomes

As a control, Fim-1ΔU was transformed with LHZ626 to produce Km-V. KS-R1, KS-R3, and Km-V were cultured in YPDGH liquid medium overnight. The overnight culture (referred to as day 0 culture) was diluted into YPD liquid medium to an initial OD$_{600}$ of 0.2 and grown at 30 □. To monitor growth curves, the OD$_{600}$ of the culture was recorded every 2 hours for the first 14 hours. To assess the stability of the transferred chromosomes, the culture was diluted into fresh YPD medium to start at an OD$_{600}$ of 0.2 every 24 hours, a period corresponding to approximately 7 generations. Cultures from day 0 and after 5 days of growth were diluted and plated onto YPD and YPDGH plates on the day the cultures were collected. Stability was determined by dividing the CFU count on YPDGH plates by that on YPD plates. The loss rate of transferred chromosomes per generation was calculated as previously described [72]. The experiments were replicated three times.

Genome Sequencing

Km-V, Sc-R1, Sc-R3, KS-R1, and KS-R3 were cultured overnight in SD-Ura+GH liquid medium. The cultures were diluted to an OD$_{600}$ of 0.2 and cultured until the OD$_{600}$ reached 0.6. The cells were collected and washed once with ddH$_2$O. Genomic DNA was extracted using the E.Z.N.A. Fungal DNA Kit (D3390, OMEGA Bio-Tek) and sequenced on the Illumina NovaSeq 6000 platform using the 150-bp pair-end sequencing strategy (BIOZERON, Shanghai, China).

To construct the reference sequences for R1 and R3, sequences of chr1 and chr3 were extracted from the W303-1A genome (GenBank assembly: GCA002163515.1). We then

manually modified the sequences to reflect our genome edits, including the insertions of Km

elements and deletions of telomere sequences, giving rise to reference sequences R1 and R3

(provided in **Table S1**). Annotations for R1 and R3 were transferred from S288c annotations

with SnapGene. The whole-genome sequencing data were processed by BIOZERON

biotechnology. To identify *de novo* variants during circular chromosome transfer, the raw

sequencing data of Sc and KS strains were aligned to reference sequences for R1 or R3 using

BWA [77] with default settings. Picard tools were used to remove PCR duplicates. The average

sequencing depth of KS-R1, Sc-R1, KS-R3, and Sc-R3 was 298, 1,183, 1,241 and 1,134 for

the respective R1 or R3 chromosome. SNPs and indels were called following the best

practices of GATK HaplotypeCaller [78]. Then, all heterozygous variants were removed from

the VCF files of KS-R1 and KS-R3. All variants coexisting in both KS-R1 and Sc-R1 or KS-

R3 and Sc-R3 were filtered out from the KS-R1 and KS-R3 VCF files as well. The remaining

variants were considered to have occurred during the chromosome transfer. In the case of R1,

no *de novo* mutation was found.

To identify variants in the genome of Km, raw sequencing data of KS-R1, KS-R3, and

Km-V were aligned to the reference genome of FIM1 (GenBank assembly:

GCA_001854445.2) [79] combined with either R1 or R3 sequence, using BWA with default

parameters. Picard tools were used to remove PCR duplicates. The average sequencing depth

for KS-R1, KS-R3 and Km-V was 1,036, 1,102 and 615, respectively. GATK

HaplotypeCaller was used to identify the variants in these strains, following its best practices.

VCFtools [80] was used to remove variants shared between Km-V and KS-R1 or KS-R3, as

well as heterozygous calls. The remaining unique, homozygous variants in KS-R1 and KS-R3

were listed in **Table S2**.

RNAseq and qPCR

Three biological replicates of Km-V, Sc-R1, Sc-R3, KS-R1, and KS-R3 were cultured

overnight in SD-Ura+GH liquid medium. The cultures were diluted into YPD to achieve an

OD_{600} of 0.2. Once the OD_{600} of the cultures reached 0.6, cells were collected directly for the

YPD treatment. For stress treatment, the culture was supplemented with tunicamycin (T8480,

Solarbio) at a final concentration of 1 μg/mL, or with NaCl at a final concentration of 1 M,

and cells were collected after 1 hour. Total RNA was extracted using the ZR Fungal/Bacterial

RNA MiniPrep kit (R2014, ZymoResearch). Samples were reversed transcribed using

TruSeqTM RNA sample preparation Kit (Illumina, California, USA) and sequenced by

Illumina HiSeq X Ten (BIOZERON, Shanghai, China). Batch information was provided in

Supplementary Data File 2.

The reads were mapped to corresponding reference genomes with BWA (0.7.17-

r1188) [77] under the default settings. Different reference genomes were used for different

samples: Km-V samples were mapped to the FIM1 genome (GCA_001854445.2), *S.*

cerevisiae samples were mapped to a W303 genome [81] (GCA_002163515.1, ScRAPdb[82] code

W303.asm02.HP0), and KS samples were mapped to a combined genome of FIM1 and chrI

and chrIII of W303. They were then processed with samtools [83] to remove duplicated reads.

Reads with mapping quality lower than or equal to 2 were also removed with samtools, as

well as those with 30 or more soft-clipped bases. The number of reads mapped to each allele

(with a minimal mapping quality of 10) was counted with htseq-count [84], with the setting "-

idattr ID -t CDS". Counts from exons were summed up to generate counts per gene. The gene

models for the RNA-seq analysis were based on the W303.asm02.HP0 annotation

downloaded from ScRAPdb. There are 5,680 annotated genes in this genome, but not all

genes were annotated to a known systematic name as in the S288C genome, due to known

intraspecific variation [81]. We performed an all-vs-all BLAST search between W303 and

S288C genes (R64 assembly) and selected the top S288C hit for each W303 gene, based on

E-value and query coverage. 5,347 out of the 5,680 (94%) W303 annotations matched S288C

genes unambiguously. The rest W303 gene models were kept in the analysis but flagged with

"ambiguous" in the dataset.

Differential expression was analyzed with DEseq2 [85]. To examine changes in

expression levels before and after chromosomal transfers (Sc vs. KS; Km vs KS), the data

were fitted to a model of *count ~ group,* where *group* represented a combination between the

strain factor (Sc/KS/Km) and the treatment factor (YPD/TM/NaCl). In the Sc analysis (**Fig.**

4A to D), R1 and R3 data were treated separately. Data from different treatments were

combined in one data frame and normalized together. In the Km analysis, data from KS-R1,

KS-R3 and Km-V across three treatments were combined and normalized together. Genes

with an average read count lower than 5 of any *group* were removed from the analysis,

leaving 218 out of 241 Sc genes (chrI and chrIII) and 4,975 out of 5,081 Km genes in the

dataset. The median of read counts across groups was 1,413 for Sc genes and 1,267 for Km

genes, prior to normalization. Adjusted p-values for pairwise comparisons between *groups*

(e.g. Sc-YPD vs. KS-YPD) were derived from FDR-corrected Wald significance tests, with

an FDR cutoff of 0.05. Log2 fold changes were shrunken with the ashr method [86].

Differentially expressed genes (DEG) were defined as an adjusted p-value lower than 0.05

and an absolute log2 fold change higher than 1.

For qPCR, RNA samples were reverse-transcribed using a PrimeScript RT Reagent

Kit (RR037A, Takara, China). The qPCR was performed using ChamQ Universal SYBR

qPCR Master Mix (Q711-02, Vazyme). The mRNA level was normalized to the average of

three housekeeping genes, including *MPE1*, *TRK1*, and *SWC4*. Primers used in qPCR are

listed in **Table S1.**

Cis **and** *trans* **effects**

Orthologs were identified with OrthoFinder (3.0.1b1)[36]. Animo acid sequences of six

species were provided to OrthoFinder, including *S. cerevisiae* (W303, GenBank

#GCA_002163515.1), *K. marxianus* (FIM1, GCA_001854445.2), *Candida albicans* (SC5314,

GCF_000182965.3), *Lachancea thermotolerans* (CBS6340, GCF_000142805.1),

Naumovozyma castellii (CBS4309, GCF_000237345.1), and *Torulaspora delbrueckii*

(CBS1146, GCF_000243375.1), along with a species tree according to Shen et al. (2018) [31].

There was a total of 32,488 genes across the six genomes, 93.5% of which were placed into

orthogroups. There was a total of 5,056 orthogroups, of which 3,630 were with all species

present and 2,847 were single-copy orthogroups. When focusing on single-copy orthologues,

the median of amino acid sequence similarity between *S. cerevisiae* and *K. marxianus* genes

was 51.0% (using BLOSUM62 scoring matrix), between that of *S. cerevisiae-T. delbrueckii*

(58.7%) and *S. cerevisiae-C. albicans* (37.0%), consistent with expectation (**Fig. S11A**). The

high level of evolutionary divergence resulted in loss of synteny (**Fig. S11B**), so we did not

further take into account of synteny in the ortholog analysis.

Between *S. cerevisiae* and *K. marxianus*, there were 4,851 orthologs, of which 3,813

were one-to-one orthologs. In the cases where multiple orthologs were identified for one gene

(one-to-many or many-to-one) and many-to-many orthologous relationships, we performed

pair-wise sequence alignments within the orthogroup and selected the reciprocal best match

based on amino-acid sequence similarity, identifying 4,330 orthologous pairs. The median

amino acid sequence similarity was 48.4%. The length of orthologs did not differ by more

than two fold for 4,149/4,330 (95.8%) orthologous pairs, ruling out partial match due to local

similarity. The orthologous genes were listed in **Table S4**.

Cis and *trans* effects were calculated with DESeq2 as previously described [17]. R1 and

R3 data were combined. YPD, TM and NaCl data were analyzed separately. Out of 241 genes

on chrI and chrIII of W303 genome, we identified Km orthologs for 173 genes, 162 of which

had an average read count above 5 across replicates and were retained in the analysis. We

designated Km alleles in Km-V as kmk, Sc alleles in Sc-R1 or Sc-R3 as scs, Km alleles in

hybrids as hyk, and Sc alleles in hybrids as hys. The variables *gb*, *F*, and *allele* were used,

where *gb* represents genetic background (Km for kmk, Sc for scs, hybrid-Km for hyk, hybrid-Sc for hys), *F* represents generation (F0 for kmk and scs, F1 for hyk and hys), and *allele* indicates the allele (km for kmk and hyk, sc for scs and hys). The model "*count ~ gb*" was used for testing the significance of *cis+trans* and *cis* effect, i.e., contrasts between kmk and scs for *cis + trans* effects and between hyk and hys for *cis* effects. P-values were from Wald test followed by an FDR-correction. Log2 fold changes were adjusted with the ashr method. For testing *trans* effects, another model "*count ~ F + allele + F:allele*" was used. Significant *trans* effect was determined by a likelihood ratio test (test = "LRT", reduced = "*F + allele*") for testing the effect of the interaction term "*F:allele*".

Genes with significant *cis* or *trans* effects were defined by an FDR-adjusted p-value less than 0.05. "*Cis* only" genes were defined as significant for *cis* effects but not *trans* effects, and *vice versa*. "*Cis* and *trans*" genes include two categories: (1) genes that were significant for "*cis+trans*" effects as indicated by the *count ~ gb* model above; (2) genes that were significant for both *cis* and *trans* effects (but not necessarily significant for "*cis+trans*" effects, because compensatory evolution might have resulted in conserved expression between parental strains).

In order to properly address the correlation between *cis* and *trans* effects (**Fig. 5D**), we employed a cross-replicate design for deriving the *trans* effect, as previously suggested [87]. In this analysis, *cis*, *trans*, and *cis+trans* effects were independently calculated for each replicate ($i = 1,2,3$): $Cis_{rep_i} = log2(\frac{hyk_{rep_i}}{hys_{rep_i}})$, $Ct_{rep_i} = log2(\frac{kmk_{rep_i}}{scs_{rep_i}})$, and $Trans_{rep_i} = Ct_{rep_i} - Cis_{rep_{i+1}}$, where *Ct* denotes *cis+trans* effect. Then, Pearson correlation between *cis* and *trans* effects for each replicate was calculated. The correlation coefficient was averaged across the three replicates. Results are provided in **Table S5**.

In order to understand the major source of variance among the factors *allele*, *F*, and *treatment*, we performed a PCA analysis (**Fig. S10**) with TM and NaCl data combined and normalized together (YPD was excluded due to batch effect). The normalized data were transformed with the VarianceStabilizingTransformation function in DESeq2 prior to the PCA analysis.

Spot assay and quantification of growth phenotypes under various conditions

Km-V, Sc-R1, Sc-R3, KS-R1, and KS-R3 were cultured overnight in liquid SD-Ura+GH medium. The cultures were diluted to an OD_{600} of 1.0 and subjected to five serial 5-fold dilutions. These dilutions were spotted on plates using a 48-pin replicator. To evaluate the growth in different carbon sources, we used YP in combination with 2% ethanol, 3%

glycerol, or different concentrations of glucose (0.02%, 1%, 3%, and 5%). To evaluate the

growth in various nitrogen sources, we replaced 1 g/L sodium glutamate in the SD medium

with 1 g/L threonine, 1 g/L serine, or 1.25 g of ammonium sulfate (1/4 N). In the condition of

1/2 AA and 1/2 N, the amino acids supplemented in the SD medium were halved, and 2.5 g/L

ammonium sulfate was added. In the plates for chemical treatment, YPD medium was

supplemented with 0.08% H_2O_2, 60 mM acetic acid (AcOH), 0.4 µg/mL TM, 20 mM DTT,

15 µg/mL 5-FU, 1 M NaCl, 1 M sorbitol, 20 µg/mL benomyl (BML), 10 µg/mL

thiabendazole (TBZ), 0.05 M hydroxyurea (HU), 0.01% methyl methane sulfonate (MMS), 5

µg/mL camptothecin (CPT), or 0.05 µg/mL cycloheximide (CHX). The plates were incubated

at 30 □ or at other specified temperatures for 1-3 days before the pictures were taken. To

quantify growth phenotypes, spot quantification was performed using the 'gitter' package [88]

in R, with the dilution factor taken into account. The quantified spot value of a strain under a

specific condition was divided by the value of the same strain grown in YPD, to calculate the

relative growth value under that condition. Each spot value represents the average of three

replicates.

To perform spot assays of cells with plasmids expressing *SPS22*, Sc-R3 was

transformed with LHZ1511 or LHZ1512, and Fim-1ΔU was transformed with LHZ1506,

LHZ1507, or LHZ1508. Transformants were cultured overnight in SD-Leu medium. The

culture was diluted and spotted onto plates with or without 1 M NaCl, as described above.

Flocculation analysis

Km-V, KS-R1, and Sc-R1 were cultured overnight in SD-Ura medium. Sc-R1 was

transformed with LHZ1509 or LHZ1510. Fim-1ΔU was transformed with LHZ1505.

Transformants were cultured overnight in SD-Leu medium. Cells were harvested and washed

with ddH_2O and 250 mM EDTA. After two subsequent washes with ddH_2O to ensure

complete removal of EDTA, cells equivalent to an OD_{600} of 40 were pelleted and

resuspended in 2 mL of ddH_2O in a 15 mL tube. A total of 100 µL of 1 M Tris-HCl (pH 7.5)

was added to the cell suspension, followed by 1 min of agitation. The tube was then left

undisturbed, and pictures were taken every minute for a total of 5 minutes. Supernatant

samples were collected at various time points from the surface for OD_{600} measurement to

quantify the flocculation progress.

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9r4l18u)

Supplementary Materials

Fig. S1. Transformation efficiency and stability of plasmids containing different combinations of *ARS* and *CEN* from Km and Sc.

Fig. S2. Zygotes formed between Km cells and between Sc cells.

Fig. S3. Growth of Sc-R1 and Sc-R3.

Fig. S4. Identification of a 29 kb deletion in R3.

Fig. S5. PFGE of Km chromosomes.

Fig. S6. Growth of hybrids and their parental strains under various conditions.

Fig. S7. Growth of KS-R1 and KS-R3 after loss of Sc chromosomes.

Fig. S8. Flocculation of Km and KS-R1ΔR1.

Fig. S9. Expression differences along R1 and R3 chromosomes under YPD, TM and NaCl conditions.

Fig. S10. PCA of gene expression under NaCl and TM conditions.

Fig. S11. Divergence of orthologous genes.

Supplementary Data File 1. Donors used in the engineering of Sc chr1 and chr3.

Supplementary Data File 2. Raw read counts of RNA-seq data and batch information.

Table S1. Primers used in this study, along with manually curated R1 and R3 sequences.

Table S2. SNPs and INDELs on Km chromosomes of KS-R1 & KS-R3.

Table S3. Differential expression of Sc and Km genes upon chromosomal transfers.

Table S4. Orthologous genes in Km and Sc (W303).

Table S5. *Cis, trans* and *cis+trans* effects based on allele-specific expression.

Table S6. Expression changes in Sc-specific genes vs. orthologous genes.

Table S7. Strains used in this study.

Table S8. Plasmids used in this study, and sequences of LHZ626, LHZ1495 and pRS425-Cas9-2xSapI.

A

S. cerevisiae
(Sc, chr = 16)

linear chr1/chr3

Circularization
- ScTEL
- ScCEN
- *KmCEN5*
- *KmURA3*
- *KmARS1*
- drug resistance

Km*ARS*&*CEN*
insertion

Chromosome
extraction

Protoplast
transformation

K. marxianus
(Km, chr = 8)

KS-R1/KS-R3
(chr = 8 + 1)

B

Sc Sc-R1   Sc Sc-R3

chr

IX
III
VI
I

C

(kb) M 1 2 3 4 5 6

6.0
3.0
1.5
1.0
0.5

R1 in KS-R1

D

(kb) M 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

6.0
3.0
1.5
1.0
0.5

R3 in KS-R3

E

λ   R1   R3
     ctrl NotI   λ AscI
(kb)

339.5
291.0
242.5
194.0
145.5

F

R3 in KS-R3
311,659 bp

Ty element
ORF

1 kb

5'   3'

159,796 bp   188,841 bp

G

OD₆₀₀

- KS-R1
- Km-V
- KS-R3

Time (h)

H

Strain	Circular chromosome	Loss frequency per generation (%)
KS-R1	R1	0.11
KS-R3	R3	0.84

I

	YPD	BML	TBZ	HU (3d)	MMS	CPT	CHX
Km-V							
KS-R1							
KS-R3							