1 **The convergent evolution of caste in ants and honey bees is based on a shared**
2 **core of ancient reproductive genes and many plastic genes**
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Abstract

Eusociality, characterized by caste-based division of labor, has convergently evolved multiple

times. However, the genomic basis of caste and degree to which independent origins of

eusociality have utilized common genes is largely unknown. To elucidate these issues, we

characterized caste-specific transcriptomic profiles across development and adult body segments

from honey bees (*Apis mellifera*) and pharaoh ants (*Monomorium pharaonis*), representing two

independent origins of eusociality. We identified a shared core of genes upregulated in the

abdomens of queen honey bees and ants that is also upregulated in female flies. Outside of this

shared core, few genes are differentially expressed in common. Instead, the majority of genes

underlying the caste system show plastic expression, are rapidly evolving, and are relatively

evolutionary young. Altogether our results show that the convergent evolution of eusociality

involves the recruitment of a core reproductive groundplan along with many plastically-

expressed and rapidly evolving genes.

Introduction

Elucidating the genetic basis and evolution of phenotypic novelty is a major goal of

evolutionary biology (Wray et al. 2003; Muller & Wagner 1991; Beldade & Brakefield 2002;

Carroll 2008; Hoekstra & Coyne 2007). The field of evolutionary developmental biology ("evo-

devo") has demonstrated that cis-regulatory mutations in a small set of highly conserved genes --

often described as a "genetic toolkit" -- play a major role in generating morphological novelty

and diversity by altering body plan formation early in development (Carroll 2008; Hoekstra &

Coyne 2007; Wray 2007; Prud'homme et al. 2006; Wittkopp & Kalay 2011; Davidson 2010).

The importance of such a genetic toolkit is seen clearly in examples of convergent phenotypic

evolution. For example, eye development in both vertebrates and arthropods is governed by the

transcription factor *Pax6* despite the fact that these lineages evolved eyes independently (Halder

et al. 1995), and likewise vertebrate and arthropod appendage evolution has repeatedly utilized

copies of the gene *Distal-less* to produce morphological novelty (Nielsen & Martinez 2003;

Shubin et al. 2009). Furthermore, this process often involves the co-option of general pathways

not directly related to the novel trait, as is the case in the utilization of the conserved sex-

determination gene *doublesex* in novel polyphenisms in insects (Kunte et al. 2014; Kijimoto et

al. 2012).

At the same time, an unexpected result of comparative genomics research has been the

widespread occurrence of genes that are unique to a species or lineage (Wilson et al. 2005; Tautz

& Domazet-Lošo 2011; Wilson et al. 2007), and these taxonomically-restricted genes also appear

to play important roles in the evolution of phenotypic novelty (Khalturin et al. 2009; Jasper et al.

2015; Chen et al. 2013; Wilson et al. 2005). For example, taxonomically-restricted genes have

been associated with the evolution of novel cell types and organs, such as cnidarian nematocysts

(Khalturin et al. 2008; Babonis et al. 2016; Milde et al. 2009; Hwang et al. 2007), water strider

propeller fans (Santos et al. 2017), and the molluscan radula (Hilgers et al. 2018).

As a result of these different findings, some researchers stress the importance of highly

conserved genes (Carroll 2008; Müller 2007; Wagner 2014), while others stress the importance

of taxonomically-restricted genes for the evolution of phenotypic novelty (Khalturin et al. 2009;

Jasper et al. 2015; Chen et al. 2013; Wilson et al. 2005). However, the relative importance of

each type of gene to the full genetic architecture underlying phenotypic novelty is unresolved

(Johnson 2018). Furthermore, it remains unclear whether all types of novel traits (e.g.,

morphological, physiological, behavioral) have similar types of genetic and evolutionary features

(Mikheyev & Linksvayer 2015; Jasper et al. 2015).

Some of the most striking phenotypic innovations involve the evolution of novel social

behavior and social complexity. This is exemplified by the caste-based division of labor that has

convergently evolved in several eusocial insect lineages (e.g., ants, honey bees, vespid wasps,

termites) (Johnson & Linksvayer 2010; Hölldobler & Wilson 2009). So far, sociogenomic

research has proceeded along generally similar lines to research on the genetic basis and

evolution of morphological novelty, with researchers alternately emphasizing conserved versus

taxonomically-restricted genes. Following findings from evo-devo and the study of

morphological innovation, researchers proposed that the evolution of novel social behavior is

similarly driven by changing the regulation of a core set of genes, which were hypothesized to

comprise a "genetic toolkit" for the evolution of social behavior (Toth & Robinson 2007; Toth et

al. 2010; Rittschof & Robinson 2016; O'Connell & Hofmann 2012; Saul et al. 2018). This was

largely motivated by the observation that highly conserved genes and gene pathways including

insulin signaling, vitellogenin, and juvenile hormone regulate many aspects of complex societies,

most prominently reproductive caste development (Wheeler 1986; Trible & Kronauer 2017;

Libbrecht et al. 2013; Wheeler et al. 2006; Okada et al. 2017) and worker division of labor

(Smith et al. 2008; Robinson 1987; Sullivan et al. 2000; Amdam et al. 2004; Page & Amdam

2007). Alternatively, many other recent studies have emphasized the role of taxonomically-

restricted genes in the evolution of social complexity, in particular associated with the worker

caste (Feldmeyer et al. 2014; Warner et al. 2017; Ferreira et al. 2013; Jasper et al. 2015; Johnson

& Tsutsui 2011; Harpur et al. 2014; Mikheyev & Linksvayer 2015; Patalano et al. 2015) and

tissues associated with social communication (Jasper et al. 2015). Altogether, the genomic basis

of caste-based division of labor remains largely unclear, as does the degree to which independent

origins of eusociality have utilized common genes.

Here, we present to date the most comprehensive developmental transcriptomic dataset

investigating gene expression associated with reproductive dimorphism between queens and

workers and age-based division of labor between worker nurses and foragers in the honey bee

(*Apis mellifera*) and the pharaoh ant (*Monomorium pharaonis*), species which represent two

independent origins and elaborations of eusociality (Branstetter et al. 2017). We performed all

sampling, sequencing, and analysis for the two species in parallel to maximize compatibility

between the data sets. We leverage the separate origins of eusociality to assess in an unbiased

manner the relative importance of shared versus lineage-specific genetic mechanisms to the

convergent evolution of reproductive caste and worker division of labor as well as the relative

importance of ancient versus taxonomically-restricted genes at each life stage and tissue to the

expression of these traits. We identify a core set of reproduction-related genes upregulated in

honey bee and ant queen abdomens, which is derived from a set of ancient sex-biased genes.

However, this core set comprises only one third of abdominal differential expression, and outside

the abdomen, lineage-specific changes predominate, where young, loosely connected, and

plastically expressed genes tend to underlie division of labor.

Results

We constructed two large, parallel transcriptomic datasets in honey bees and pharaoh ants

spanning caste development as well as adult tissues separated by behavior, reproductive caste,

and sex. In total sequenced 177 total RNA sequencing libraries across 28 distinct sample types

(Table S1).

Differential expression between queens and workers

To identify genes associated with caste development and caste dimorphism, we performed

differential expression analysis between queens and workers at each stage and adult body

segment, separately for each species. The number of differentially expressed genes (DEGs)

between queens and workers at a given developmental stage or tissue varied between 245 in

honey bee pupae and 5352 in honey bee abdomens (Table S2) and generally increased

throughout development. The largest transcriptomic signature of caste occured in the adult

abdomen (Figure 1A). In all tissues and stages, the majority of DEGs between queens and

workers in one species were not differentially expressed in the other species (Figure 1A).

Similarly, the magnitude of gene-wise caste bias (as measured by $\log_2$ fold-change between

queen and worker samples) was positively correlated between ant and honey bee orthologs in all

three adult tissues, with the strongest correlation in the abdomen, but uncorrelated or negatively

correlated in all larval and pupal stages (Figure S1; $r_{head} = 0.089$; $r_{thorax} = 0.161$; $r_{abdomen} = 0.275$;

N = 7640 one-to-one orthologs; N = 7460 one-to-one orthologs; $P < 0.001$ in all cases). The top

enriched Gene Ontology (GO) terms for DEGs between queens and workers were dominated by

metabolism, signaling and developmental processes (Table S3,S4).

Differential expression between nurses and foragers

To identify genes associated with age-based worker division of labor, we performed differential

expression analysis between nurses and foragers in adult body segment, separately for each

species. The number of DEGs between nurses and foragers at a given tissue varied from 405 in

ant heads to 2519 in honey bee thoraces (Table S5). There were more DEGs between nurses and

foragers in honey bees than in ants for all three adult tissues. In general there were very few

DEGs in common in the two species between nurses and foragers (Figure 1B). Gene-wise $\log_2$

fold-change between nurses and foragers was significantly but weakly correlated across ant and

honey bee orthologs (Figure S2; $r_{head} = 0.070$, $P_{head} < 0.001$; $r_{thorax} = 0.031$, $P_{thorax} = 0.008$; $r_{abdomen}$

$= 0.051$, $P_{abdomen} < 0.001$; N = 7460 one-to-one orthologs). The top enriched GO terms based for

DEGs between nurses and foragers were dominated by metabolism and developmental processes

(Table S6,S7).

Conserved abdominal caste-bias in ancient genes

For the most part our results indicate distinct genes are associated with caste and worker division

of labor in honey bees and ants. However, a third of DEGs between queen and worker

abdomens were common to both species (Figure 1A; 1545 shared DEGs in abdomen, comprising

35% [1545/4395] of ant abdominal DEGs, and 29% [1545/5352] of honey bee abdominal

DEGs). Most shared abdominal differential expression was the result of shared queen-bias: 56%

(858/1545 genes) of commonly caste-biased genes were upregulated in queen abdomens in both

species, compared to 22% (338/1545) that were worker-upregulated and 23% (349/1545) that

reversed direction (i.e. were queen-biased in one species and worker-biased in the other). Genes

with conserved abdominal queen-bias tended to be evolutionarily older than genes with

conserved worker bias or non-conserved bias (Figure 1C), though the estimated evolutionary age

of genes was not consistently associated with queen or worker bias across all tissues and stages

(Figure S3).

To identify core genes associated with queen abdominal expression, we performed gene

coexpression analysis, separately for each species. We focused on identifying a group of genes

(i.e. module) which exhibited correlated expression patterns specifically across queen abdominal

samples (see Methods). We identified a queen abdominal module of 1006 genes in ants and a

module of 1174 genes in honey bees. We calculated the connectivity of each gene within these

identified abdominal modules (i.e. intra-modular connectivity), where genes with higher

connectivity values are central to the module, i.e. they exhibit highly correlated expression

patterns with many other genes in the module. There was a positive correlation between intra-

modular connectivity and $\log_2$ fold-change between queen and worker abdomens (Figure 2A,B;

ants: rho = 0.536, P < 0.001, N = 1006; honey bees: rho = 0.617, P < 0.001, N = 1174), as well a

positive correlation between intra-modular connectivity and the significance ($-\log_{10}$ of P-value)

of queen/worker abdominal differential expression (Spearman correlation; ants: rho = 0.485, P <

0.001, N = 1006; honey bees: rho = 0.555, P < 0.001, N = 1174). We identified 183 genes which

were present in the queen abdominal module of both species, and these genes were

overwhelmingly queen-biased (78.7% [144/183] upregulated in queens of both species), and had

higher intra-module connectivity than genes found in only one species-specific module (Figure

2C,D).

A major strength of gene coexpression analysis is its power to identify hub genes for

traits, i.e. genes which are centrally connected and strongly associated with a trait (Zhang &

Horvath 2005). We identified hub genes in both species (see Methods), many of which are

clearly associated with reproduction and maternal effects (Table S8,S9; Figure 2A,B). Included

in this list are genes with previous known roles in caste and reproduction such as vitellogenin

(*Vg receptor* was identified in each species) (Barchuk et al. 2002; Libbrecht et al. 2013) and *vasa*

(Khila & Abouheif 2010), while others are important maternal proteins such as *Smaug* (Benoit et

al. 2009) and *ovo* (Mével-Ninio et al. 1995).

Caste bias is in part derived from ancestral sex bias

Given that our coexpression analysis indicated that many of the most important queen-associated

genes are clearly associated with female reproduction, we reasoned that caste-biased expression

may be derived from sex-biased expression. Indeed, there was a positive correlation between

gene-wise $\log_2$ fold change between queen and worker abdomens and gene-wise $\log_2$ fold-

change between queen and male abdomens in both honey bees and pharaoh ants (Figure 3A,B).

Additionally, sex bias itself was correlated between species (Figure 3C). The correlation of

caste- and sex-bias was not restricted to the abdomen, as there was similar highly significant

effect when comparing heads and thoraces, albeit with weaker effect sizes (Figure S4).

Given the link between conserved caste bias and sex bias within ants and honey bees, we

hypothesized that caste bias is derived from ancient pathways underlying sexual dimorphism. To

test this hypothesis, we estimated the whole-body sex-bias of orthologs in the fruitfly *Drosophila*

melanogaster using available data (Gerstein et al. 2014). Genes with consistent queen-bias in our

ant and honey bee abdomen samples tended to be upregulated in females in *D. melanogaster*

(Figure 3D; one-sided Binomial Test for likelihood of queen conserved having $\log_2$ fold-change

> 0; $P < 0.001$; $N = 566$ conserved queen genes), while genes with consistent worker-bias tended

to be upregulated in males ($P < 0.001$; $N = 160$ conserved worker genes).

Expression plasticity across development, caste, and tissue is correlated between species

While we have emphasized the conservation of abdominal differential expression between

queens and workers in pharaoh ants and honey bees, roughly two-thirds of abdominal caste-

biased genes were not shared between species, and differential expression based on reproductive

caste or worker division of labor was largely not shared (Figure 1A,B). Furthermore, genes were

often differentially expressed across many stages and tissues and sometimes in opposite

directions (e.g., upregulated in queen heads but downregulated in queen abdomens), while other

genes showed little to no expression differences (Figure S5). To quantify the degree to which

genes exhibited biased expression according to reproductive caste across all developmental

stages and tissues we calculated the Euclidean distance of $\log_2$ fold-change across all

queen/worker comparisons separately for each species, and we labeled this quantity "overall

caste bias" (this approach is analogous to previous work on expression plasticity in ants across

alternative morphs, see (Schrader et al. 2017)). Similarly, we defined "overall behavior bias" as

the Euclidean distance of $\log_2$ fold-change across all nurse/forager comparisons, separately for

each species.

Interestingly, both overall caste and overall behavior bias were correlated among

orthologs between species (Figure S6; i.e. caste bias measured in ants was correlated with caste

bias measured in honey bees across 1-1 orthologs). Within species, caste and behavior bias were

correlated to each other (Figure S7). This indicates that plasticity in gene expression is correlated

across contexts (caste versus behavior) and species. GO terms associated with high caste bias

were largely linked to metabolism, while those associated with high behavior bias were largely

linked to developmental processes (Table S10).

Characteristics of genes associated with caste and behavior

We compared overall caste bias and overall behavior bias to gene age, evolutionary rate, network

connectivity, and tissue-specificity to understand the general features of genes commonly

associated with caste (queen versus worker) or behavior (nursing versus foraging). Genes with

younger estimated evolutionary ages tended to exhibit higher overall caste bias (Figure 4A,B)

and behavior bias (Figure S8A,B) compared in particular to ancient genes (Gamma GLM; ant

caste bias: $\chi^2 = 900.19$, honey bee caste bias: $\chi^2 = 1412.80$, ant behavior bias: $\chi^2 = 316.36$, honey

bee behavior bias: $\chi^2 = 877.43$; $P < 0.001$ for all cases; N = 10520 in ant, N = 10011 in honey

bees). Genes that were loosely connected in coexpression networks constructed across all

samples tended to exhibit more caste and behavior bias in comparison to highly connected genes

(Figure 4C,D, Figure S8C,D). Genes with low connectivity are peripheral network elements,

while genes with high connectivity are central to regular networks and often highly pleiotropic

(Zhang & Horvath 2005). Similarly, genes with high tissue-specificity across 12 honey bee

tissues tended to exhibit higher values caste and behavior bias in comparison to more pleiotropic,

ubiquitously expressed genes (Figure S9), where tissue specificity was calculated using available

data (Jasper et al. 2015). Finally, genes that were rapidly evolving (i.e. with high values of

dN/dS) tended to exhibit higher levels of caste and behavior bias, (Figure 4E,F; Figure S8E,F),

with dN/dS estimated between each focal species (*A. mellifera* and *M. pharaonis*) and a

congeneric outgroup (*A. cerana* and *M. chinense*, respectively).

We also detected strong negative correlations between gene-wise expression and overall

caste or behavior bias, (correlation of expression and ant caste bias: rho = -0.640; expression and

honey bee caste bias: rho = -0.676; expression and ant behavior bias: rho = -0.504; expression

and honey bee behavior bias: rho = -0.569; $P < 0.001$ for all; N = 10520 in ants , N = 10011 in

honey bees), where we expression was averaged across the relevant comparisons, analogous to

our calculation of overall caste or behavior bias. However, our results are not solely driven by

expression levels. We performed partial correlation analysis accounting for expression to test for

the conditional effect of evolutionary age, connectivity, tissue specificity, and evolutionary rate

on caste or behavior bias. The relationship between caste/behavior bias and evolutionary age,

evolutionary rate, connectivity, and tissue-specificity generally all remained significant and in

the same direction when expression was accounted for (Table S11). The two exceptions were the

relationship between ant behavior bias and evolutionary age and honey bee connectivity and

caste bias (Table S11). However, when we removed the abdominal contribution to caste bias and

expression, the relationship between honey bee connectivity and caste bias remained significant

and negative (Table S11), revealing that the relationship between connectivity and caste bias was

universal except in the case of highly connected abdominally caste-biased genes, as were present

in our gene coexpression analysis (Figure 2B). Together, these results indicate that each gene's

likelihood of recruitment to regulatory networks underlying caste or worker division of labor is

positively influenced by expression plasticity and position in overall regulatory networks as well

as the evolutionary rate of coding sequences and how recently such genes have arisen across

evolution.

Discussion

In this study we present the most comprehensive transcriptomic dataset to date of caste-

based division of labor for species representing two independent origins of eusociality. We find

generally low overlap between honey bees and ants in the thousands of genes that are

differentially expressed between queen and worker castes (Figure 1A), and between nurses and

foragers within the worker caste (Figure 1B), indicating that the independent evolution of these

plastic phenotypes in honey bees and ants have largely involved different genes. The one notable

exception is in the abdomen, where we find that about a third (~1500/4500) of genes

differentially expressed between queens and workers are shared between honey bees and ants.

We find that genes with conserved queen bias in ants and honey bees also tend to be female-

biased in *D. melanogaster*, indicating that these conserved caste-biased genes are derived from

ancient plastically expressed genes underlying sexual dimorphism (Figure 3). Outside of this

conserved core set of ancient genes associated with female reproduction, the majority of genes

associated with caste and worker division of labor showed plastic expression in multiple contexts

(e.g., between developmental stages, tissues, and castes) and were relatively young, rapidly

evolving, and loosely connected in regulatory networks.

In the long-extinct solitary ancestors of social insects, female behaviors such as egg-

laying and brood care are thought to have been mechanistically linked within an ovarian cycle

such that brood care followed egg-laying (West-Eberhard 1987; Amdam et al. 2006). In extant

eusocial societies, these traits are hypothesized to have been de-coupled such that distinct

individuals (queens and workers, respectively) independently express pathways associated with

egg-laying and brood care (West-Eberhard 1987; Amdam et al. 2006). Crucially, this implies that

these pathways existed in solitary ancestors prior to the evolution of eusociality, and

reproductive division of labor is derived from these pathways. Consistent with this hypothesis,

we found that shared queen-biased abdominal expression in the pharaoh ant and the honey bee is

associated with female-biased expression in fruit flies (Figure 3D). Furthermore, we identified a

module of co-expressed genes specifically associated with queen abdominal expression in

pharaoh ants and honey bees, which were characterized by a core of genes with shared queen-

upregulation and known reproductive or maternal function, including *vitellogenin* and its

receptor as well as *vasa* and *smaug* (Figure 2A,B; Tables S8,S9). While this use of an ancient set

of genes underlying sexual dimorphism for social insect caste dimorphism is striking, it is not

surprising, nor is it surprising that the dominant signature of these reproductive-associated genes

occurs in abdominal tissues: the fundamental difference between the queen and worker caste is

reproduction, and reproductive organs are found in the abdomen (note that pharaoh ant workers

completely lack reproductive organs and are obligately sterile, while honey bee workers are

facultatively sterile and have greatly reduced ovaries relative to queens).

While our results point to a general genetic link between caste dimorphism and sexual

dimorphism, a similar link may exist between caste determination and sex determination.

Mechanisms of sex determination acting early in development are hypothesized to have been co-

opted for the regulation of caste (Klein et al. 2016) and division of labor (Johnson & Cameron

Jasper 2016) by evolving sensitivity to stimuli such as nutrition. Because both queens and

workers are female in eusocial Hymenoptera (Wilson 1971), caste is a sex-limited polyphenism.

Other novel sex-limited polyphenisms such as horns in beetles (Kijimoto et al. 2012) and wing

patterning in butterflies (Kunte et al. 2014) as well as facultative reproduction by honey bee

workers (Velasque et al. 2018) are regulated by the sex determination gene *doublesex*. In this

way, the ancient developmental switch controlling sex may have been co-opted to determine

alternate developmental trajectories of queens and workers, and subsequent cascades of genes

involved in reproductive physiology of females versus males may have been used to drive the

differentiation of females into highly reproductive queens versus sterile workers.

The tasks performed by workers (specifically, nursing versus foraging) represent a plastic

phenotype that changes over the course of the worker's adult lifetime (Mikheyev & Linksvayer

2015). This behavioral change is known to be accompanied by a wide range of physiological

changes and is regulated at least in part by conserved physiological pathways, for example, those

involving insulin signaling, juvenile hormone, and vitellogenin (Gospocic et al. 2017; Smith et

al. 2008; Robinson 1987). However, we identified few genes that were commonly differentially

expressed between nurses and foragers in honey bees and pharaoh ants (Figure 1B), and the

proportion of shared genes was much lower in comparison to genes underlying abdominal

differences between queens and workers. Nonetheless, we identified a number of GO terms

associated with metabolism as well as development in each species (Tables S6,S7), which is

consistent with the notion that the transition from nurse to forager is essentially a developmental

process, and that common molecular pathways may provide the raw genetic material for social

evolution (Berens et al. 2015; Kapheim et al. 2015).

While conserved factors or pathways appear to play important roles in aspects of caste

development and function as well as the transition from nursing to foraging, our results and other

studies indicate that the majority of the full transcriptomic architecture associated with caste and

age polyethism is not shared between species (Mikheyev & Linksvayer 2015; Ferreira et al.

2013; Berens et al. 2015; Morandin et al. 2016). Part of this lineage-specific architecture is

derived from expression differences in conserved genes, as about half the differentially

expressed genes we identified had an ortholog in both species but did not exhibit shared

expression bias (Figure 1A,B), and the degree of caste-biased expression in particular tissues or

stages was generally only weakly correlated among orthologs of honey bees and ants (Figure

S1). However, for about 40% of differentially expressed genes, one-to-one orthology could not

be determined due to apparent duplication or the complete lack of an ortholog, reflecting the

importance of taxonomically-restricted genes for the evolution of eusociality (Sumner 2014;

Simola et al. 2013; Jasper et al. 2015; Johnson & Tsutsui 2011; Patalano et al. 2015).

Additionally, we found that orthologs with shared abdominal worker bias between honey bees

and pharaoh ants were on average evolutionarily younger (i.e. more taxonomically-restricted)

than those with shared queen bias (Figure 1C), in line with previous studies (Warner et al. 2017;

Feldmeyer et al. 2014; Harpur et al. 2014; Ferreira et al. 2013). Based on our research and

others', it is likely that layered on top of a minority of shared ancient genes associated with

sexual dimorphism, the bulk of the genetic architecture underlying caste-based division labor is

made up of plastically expressed genes with non-conserved sequence or expression (Ferreira et

al. 2013; Berens et al. 2015; Kapheim et al. 2015).

Our results indicate that expression plasticity, both in ancient and taxonomically-

restricted genes, is a key feature of the genetic architecture underlying caste and worker division

of labor. Overall caste bias across 1-1 orthologs was correlated between *A. mellifera* and *M.*

pharaonis, where overall caste bias represents the likelihood of a gene to exhibit expression bias

in any comparison between queens and workers (Figure S6A). This indicates that genes that

showed high plasticity for caste-biased expression in one species also showed high plasticity for

caste-biased expression in the other species. Similarly, overall behavior bias (overall bias

between nurses and foragers) was correlated between species (Figure S6B), and caste and

behavior bias were themselves correlated (Figure S7). These results indicate that genes with

plastic expression in multiple contexts (across tissues, development, behavior, and caste) are

consistently recruited for caste and behavior in both honey bees and ants, consistent with the

notion that pre-existing plasticity may be utilized for novel polyphenisms (Moczek et al. 2011;

Hunt et al. 2011; Leichty et al. 2012).

Consistent with theoretical predictions and empirical results from other studies, we also

found that genes with high overall caste and/or behavior bias tended to be loosely connected,

plastically expressed, evolutionarily young, and rapidly evolving (Figure 4, Figure S8). Genes

underlying conditionally (i.e. plastically) expressed traits are expected to experience relaxed

selection and evolve rapidly at the sequence level (Van Dyken & Wade 2010; Snell-Rood et al.

2010; Kawecki et al. 1997), a prediction that has been empirically supported in a number of

organisms (Demuth & Wade 2007; Cruickshank & Wade 2008; Schrader et al. 2017; Purandare

et al. 2014; Snell-Rood et al. 2011; Pespeni et al. 2017; Hunt et al. 2011; Leichty et al. 2012).

Similarly, tissue specificity and connectivity affect evolutionary rate because highly pleiotropic

(highly connected, not tissue-specific) genes experience enhanced selective constraint (Liao et al.

2006; Mank & Ellegren 2009) (Hahn & Kern 2005; Fraser et al. 2002). Based on these

relationships, it is likely that expression plasticity associated with plastic traits (e.g., caste and

worker age polyethism) may initially arise largely neutrally as a result of relaxed selective

constraint (Morandin et al. 2017; Schrader et al. 2017).

The characteristics we have associated with caste or behavior bias (expression plasticity,

evolutionary rate, evolutionary age) form a suite of characteristics which may not be possible to

tease apart. For example, across organisms genes identified as taxonomically-restricted tend to

evolve more rapidly than older genes (Albà & Castresana 2005; Cai & Petrov 2010; Wolf et al.

2009; Cai et al. 2006), but rapidly evolving genes can mistakenly be taken for taxonomically-

restricted genes by BLASTP due to the rapid divergence of their amino acid sequence (Moyers

& Zhang 2016; Moyers & Zhang 2015; Moyers & Zhang 2018). However, there doesn't appear

to be a readily available method to distinguish between weak conservation of coding sequence

(rapid evolution) and a lack of conservation of the entire sequence itself (taxonomically-

restricted genes) (Moyers & Zhang 2018). Similarly, as discussed above, plasticity in expression

profile is also clearly linked to evolutionary rate. As such, it may be most useful to think of these

characteristics as components of a broad class of gene. Evolutionary developmental biology

emphasizes the action of a certain type of gene for the evolution of morphological novelty: core

to networks, highly pleiotropic, and slowly evolving. However, the emerging picture is that the

evolution of other traits such as social innovation may largely utilize genes on the opposite end

of the spectrum: genes that are peripheral elements to networks and exhibit high levels of

divergence in expression and sequence between species (Mikheyev & Linksvayer 2015; Jasper et

al. 2015).

Sociogenomic studies often seek to find common molecular mechanisms underlying

social evolution in diverse lineages (Robinson et al. 2005; Toth & Robinson 2007). Indeed, we

found approximately 1,500 genes associated with abdominal caste differences in both honey bees

and pharaoh ants, and these genes largely appear to be associated with queen reproduction.

However, it is important to note that other than the striking phenomenon of strong queen-worker

dimorphism that characterizes the reproductive caste system in both honey bees and ants, the

details of social living are remarkably different between honey bees and ants. For example,

honey bee workers fly to forage while ant workers forage on foot (Wilson 1971). This is

reflected in the large number of genes differentially expressed in the thorax between honey bee

foragers and largely flightless nurses compared to few differences between ant nurses and

foragers (Figure 1B), both of which lack wings. Brood care behavior is also quite different:

honey bees rear brood in cells in which they deposit food, while ants pile brood together and feed

larvae via mouth-to-mouth liquid exchange (trophallaxis) or by manually inserting solid food

into larval mouths (Wilson 1971). In light of these and other phenotypic differences, it probably

shouldn't be surprising that we largely see distinct sets of genes associated with division of labor

in honey bees and ants, consistent with previous research considering the genetic basis of social

behavior across different social insect lineages (Berens et al. 2015; Kapheim et al. 2015; Ferreira

et al. 2013; Woodard et al. 2011; Woodard et al. 2014).

Conclusions

Our study suggests that the bulk of the genetic architecture underlying social insect caste-

based division of labor varies between lineages. While some sets of conserved pathways such as

the insulin/TOR pathways are certainly important across all social insect lineages, it also seems

clear that a large suite of additional genes must be necessary for the full articulation of dramatic

polyphenisms associated with complex societies (Trible & Kronauer 2017). It is likely that a

relatively small number of core conserved genes exist as upstream hubs in regulatory networks,

and layered on top of this core are a myriad of taxonomically-restricted genes as well as

conserved genes with lineage-specific expression patterns (Mikheyev & Linksvayer 2015;

Johnson 2018; Jasper et al. 2015). This is consistent with models for the evolution of hierarchical

developmental gene regulatory networks, whereby a small number of genes that act upstream to

initiate gene cascades (e.g., to set up body-patterning) are very highly conserved, while batteries

of later-acting genes that are relatively downstream in regulatory networks, are much more

evolutionarily labile, and are largely responsible for lineage-specific features (Erwin & Davidson

2009; Davidson & Peter 2015). Recent studies have made progress elucidating the function of

several core candidate genes and gene pathways that regulate caste and the division of labor by

manipulating individual genes (Chandra et al. 2018; Simola et al. 2016; Gospocic et al. 2017;

Mutti et al. 2011). While individual core genes are no doubt important, association and linkage

mapping studies have shown that most phenotypes (e.g., disease traits) are very highly

polygenic, such that even though only a small number of genes can be identified with large effect

sizes and relatively straightforward causative molecular paths, many more genes act peripherally,

with smaller effects and through more circuitous routes to profoundly influence trait expression

(Boyle et al. 2017). Therefore, a complementary goal of candidate gene-based research is to use

unbiased approaches to identify the full suite of genes underlying phenotypic innovations of

interest in multiple independent lineages and subsequently to ask what proportion of genes show

conserved function across lineages. Large-scale transcriptomic studies such as ours are an

invaluable starting point to achieve this goal. However, transcriptomic studies can only hint at

the relative functional importance of genes, and future studies will have to assess the functional

importance of various components of the transcriptomic architecture, including the relative

importance of of conserved versus lineage-specific genetic mechanisms for social innovation,

and phenotypic innovation more broadly.

Methods

Study Design

We collected parallel time series RNA-seq data of caste development in the pharaoh ant

Monomorium pharaonis and the honey bee *Apis mellifera,* including seven developmental stages

(egg, five larval stages, one pupal stage) plus each of three adult body segments in each species

(see Table S1 for list of all samples). We separated adults into the three main body segments

(head, mesosoma, and metosoma) upon sample collection and sequenced pools of each part

separately. For convenience, we refer to these segments as "head", "thorax", and "abdominal"

tissues throughout. We sequenced whole embryos and whole bodies of larvae and pupae. Each

sample represents a pool of ten individuals taken from the same colony, and replicate samples of

the same type represent pools of individuals taken from different colonies.

RNA extraction, sequencing, aligning to genomes

We isolated RNA using Trizol reagents. We performed cDNA synthesis and library preparation

were performed using the protocol described by Aird et al. (Aird et al. 2017), except that the

input RNA was 50ng and the cycle number of cDNA amplification increased to sixteen. To

compare sample quality across the experiment and test our ability to detect lowly-expressed

genes,, we added ERCC92 (Thermo Fisher Scientific Inc.) spike-in mixes to total RNA prior to

amplification. We pooled libraries with an equal amount of cDNA and sequenced single-end for

50 cycles in Illumina Hiseq 2500. We aligned reads to reference genomes using Bowtie2

(Langmead & Salzberg 2012). *A. mellifera* reads were aligned to NCBI gene models, genome

version 4.5, and *M. pharaonis* reads were aligned to NCBI gene models, version 2.0. We

estimated read count and transcripts per million (TPM) using RSEM (Li & Dewey 2011).

Identification of orthologs

To identify orthologs between *A. mellifera* and *M. pharaonis*, we started with a curated

orthology map of *Aculeata* species from OrthoDB9 (Zdobnov et al 2016). We downloaded

amino acid sequences for each species from RefSeq (O'Leary et al. 2016). We associated

transcripts with OrthoDB9 protein names using BLASTp (E-value 10^{-10}) and identified the

Aculeata ortholog group matched by each gene based on the identified BLASTp hits. In this

way, we identified one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many orthologous groups between *A.*

mellifera and *M. pharaonis*. For direct comparison of the species, we restricted our analysis to

one-to-one orthologs (i.e. genes for which only one gene from each species matches the given

OrthoDB9 ortholog group). We identified three-way 1-1-1 orthologs between *A. mellifera*, *M.*

pharaonis, and *Drosophila melanogaster* using a similar procedure based on *Endopterygota*

orthology groups from OrthoDB9.

Differential Expression Analysis

To identify genes associated with caste development, we performed differential expression

analysis between queens and workers at each developmental stage and tissue, separately for each

species. We constructed GLM-like models including replicate and caste and identified genes

associated with caste (FDR < 0.1) at each stage using EdgeR (Robinson et al. 2010). To identify

caste-associated genes in adults, we treated each stage separately and compared mated queens

with nurses and foragers. Similarly, we identified sex-associated genes by comparing males and

mated queens.

Gene coexpression analysis

In contrast to many network methods which assess gene-gene relationships across all samples,

biclustering seeks to identify a group of genes which are coexpressed (i.e. exhibit concerted

expression changes) across a subset of sample types (Tanay et al. 2002). Given that our data

contained a large number of sample types, we reasoned that we could employ biclustering to

identify groups of genes particularly associated with a given sample type. We performed plaid

clustering, one of the top performing biclustering algorithms in a recent survey (Oghabian et al.

2014). We used the R package biclust to implement clustering (Kaiser & Leisch 2008). Plaid

clustering models expression level for each gene as a function of bicluster weights, where only

biclusters containing the gene contribute to predicted expression level (Turner et al. 2005;

Lazzeroni & Owen 2002). The algorithm iteratively constructs layers containing samples and

genes and retains layers that improve the model fit, where layers represent biclusters.

Plaid clustering is non-deterministic and individual biclusters are not found in every

iteration of clustering. To define a reasonable ensemble of biclusters, we performed clustering

1000 times separately for each species, using inverse hyperbolic sine transformed tpm

(transcripts per million) (Brawand et al. 2011). While a large number of interesting bicluster

definitions are possible, we decided to identify biclusters that consistently contained all queen

abdomen samples to focus our investigation on the tissue that exhibited the strongest signature of

caste bias. Specifically, we extracted biclusters containing all three mature queen abdomen

samples and no more than three other samples total (note that honey bee queen abdomen samples

clustered with egg samples, while pharaoh ant queen samples did not cluster with egg samples).

Because the same genes were not always present in such a bicluster, we tabulated the

number of queen abdomen biclusters each gene was found in and retained genes present in a

higher proportion of biclusters than a given cut-off, determined by inspection of frequency

distributions of bicluster presence. In pharaoh ants, we found a large set of genes present in

greater than 90% of queen abdomen biclusters, and we retained these genes for further analysis

(N = 1039 genes; Figure S10A, i.e. the same set of genes was repeatedly found). In contrast,

honey bee queen abdomen biclusters tended to contain one of two groups of genes, as the

frequency of presence in the bicluster peaks at 60% and 30% (Figure S10B). Out of 1245 genes

present in greater than 60% of the identified biclusters, 877 were differentially expressed and

upregulated in queen abdomens relative to worker (also note that this set of genes exhibited

much higher expression in eggs than the latter set). In contrast, out of 1057 genes present in 25-

35% of biclusters, 611 out of were differentially expressed and upregulated in worker abdomens,

compared to 47 upregulated in queen abdomens. Therefore, it is clear that the more common

bicluster represents genes associated with queen abdomens, so we retained this set of genes for

further analysis (N = 1245 genes).

We proceeded with our analysis using these identified sets of genes, which we term

modules associated with queen abdominal expression. We calculated connectivity in the module

(i.e. intra-module connectivity) as the sum of pairwise Pearson correlations, where correlation

values are raised to the sixth power, the standard value for unsigned weighted gene coexpression

networks (Langfelder & Horvath 2008). A major goal of gene coexpression analysis is the

identification of hub genes, genes central to networks that are strongly associated to relevant

traits (Zhang & Horvath 2005). To this end, we conservatively identified hub genes associated

with queen abdominal expression as genes with intra-module connectivity in at least the 90th

percentile and abdominal $\log_2$ fold-change values greater than 2 (representing a 4-fold increase

in expression in queen relative to worker abdomens).

Phylostratigraphy

We estimated the evolutionary age of each gene using phylostratigraphy. Phylostratigraphy

groups genes into hierarchical age categories based on identifiable orthology (using BLASTp)

(Domazet-Lošo & Tautz 2010; Domazet-Lošo et al. 2007). For example, genes found in ants and

honey bees but not in non-aculeate hymenopterans would be labeled "Aculeata" genes, while

genes shared between vertebrates and insects would be labeled "Bilateria". For our purposes, we

decided to focus on the difference between "ancient" genes, which we defined as displaying

orthology with non-insect animals, and a number of hierarchical younger categories: "insect",

"Hymenoptera", "Aculeata", "ant", "bee", and "novel" (where "ant" refers to genes found in *M.*

pharaonis and other ants but not in any other species, "bee" refers to genes found in *A. mellifera*

and other bees but not in other species, and "novel" refers to a gene found only in *A. mellifera* or

M. pharaonis).

A key component of phylostratigraphy is the creation of a BLAST database in which to

identify orthologs (Domazet-Lošo & Tautz 2010; Domazet-Lošo et al. 2007). Because we largely

planned to focus on younger age categories, we constructed a protein database containing all

annotated hymenopteran genomes (48 total). We added to this group ten non-hymenopteran

insect genomes and ten non-arthropod genomes (see Table S12 for a full list of included

genomes). Therefore, a gene labeled as "ancient" displayed a significant BLASTp hit to one of

the ten non-arthropod genomes. While phylostratigraphy typically employs an extremely large

database containing all available representative taxa, we reasoned that for our study resolution

between categories such as "Bilateria" and "Eukaryota" was unnecessary. Furthermore, adding

extraneous genomes effectively dilutes the database, such that more similarity is needed to pass

an E-value threshold. Because we included only a sample of non-hymenopteran genomes, we

were therefore able to stringently identify orthologs (E-value 10^{-10} in comparison to a typical

value of 10^{-5} (Drost et al. 2015)) and accurately place them along the hymenoptera phylogeny.

Comparison to Drosophila melanogaster

We reasoned that conserved patterns of sex-bias we witnessed between ants and honey bees were

likely highly conserved throughout deep evolutionary time. To address this hypothesis, we used

available MODENCODE RNA-seq data on male and female whole bodies of *D. melanogaster*

(Gerstein et al. 2014). Male and female samples came from 5- and 30-day old flies (one replicate

for each sex). While much recent work has detailed tissue-specific (and even cell-specific)

expression in *D. melanogaster*, we reasoned that whole bodies (lacking the same body parts as

we used in this study) would give us reasonable overall levels of sex bias to compare our data to.

We aligned reads to the current release of the *D. melanogaster* genome available on NCBI

(*assembly release 6 plus ISO*) using the same pipeline as described for *A. mellifera* and *M.*

pharaonis, and we performed differential expression analysis between males and females as

described above.

Calculation of overall bias

Previous work estimated the overall degree to which genes exhibited morph bias in RNA-seq

data among four morphs by calculating the Euclidean distance of $\log_2$ fold-change between each

comparison (Schrader et al. 2017). Following this reasoning, we calculated overall caste bias as

the Euclidean distance of $\log_2$ fold-change between queens and workers at each larval

developmental stage (L2-L5), pupae, and each adult tissue. Similarly, we calculated overall

behavior bias as the Euclidean distance of $\log_2$ fold-change between nurses and foragers in each

tissue. To perform partial correlations controlling for magnitude of gene expression with overall

bias as the dependent variable, we calculated expression analogously, as the Euclidean distance

of $\log_{10}$ counts-per-million at each stage/tissue tested.

Estimation of tissue specificity

While comparing expression between castes across the entirety of development in many tissues

was unfeasible for this study, a previous study performed RNA-sequencing on twelve tissues in

A. mellifera in worker nurses and foragers (Jasper et al. 2015). We downloaded the available data

and aligned reads to the current version of the *A. mellifera* genome, using the pipeline described

above. To classify genes by their tissue specificity, we calculated τ, a commonly used metric of

expression specificity (Yanai et al. 2005). τ ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 indicates genes are

ubiquitously expressed and 1 indicates genes are exclusively expressed in one tissue.

Estimation of dN/dS

We estimated evolutionary rate using dN/dS, the ratio of non-synonymous to synonymous

nucleotide changes. We estimated pairwise dN/dS between each focal species and a second

closely related species. For *A. mellifera*, we compared protein-coding sequences to *A. cerana*,

and for *M. pharaonis*, we compared protein-coding sequences to *Solenopsis invicta*. We

identified 1-1 orthologs using OrthoDB9, as described above. For each 1-1 ortholog pair, we

selected the longest transcript associated with the gene for each pair of species. We aligned

orthologous protein sequences using ClustalW (Larkin et al. 2007), derived nucleotide

alignments from protein alignments using pal2nal (Suyama et al. 2006), and estimated pairwise

dN/dS of nucleotide alignments using PAML, package codeml (Yang 2007).

Gene Ontology Analysis

We performed Gene Set Enrichment Analysis (GSEA) using the R package topGO (Alexa &

Rahnenfuhrer 2010). Rather than relying on automatically annotated Gene Ontology (GO) terms,

we utilized the well-curated *D. melanogaster* gene ontology database, downloaded from FlyBase

(Gramates et al. 2016). We performed GSEA analysis on genes with 1-1 orthologs identified

previously, associating the *D. melanogaster* GO terms to *A. mellifera* and *M. pharaonis*

orthologs. We identified GO terms associated caste-biased or behavior-biased genes using the P-

value of differential expression between queens and workers or nurses and foragers. We

identified GO terms associated with overall caste or behavior bias using the value of overall

caste bias or behavior bias as input. We identified enriched terms with P-value < 0.05.

General statistical analyses

We performed all statistical analyses and constructed plots in R, version 3.4.0 (R Core Team

2017), aided by the packages "plyr" (Wickham & Others 2011), "ggplot2" (Wickham 2016),

"gridExtra", version 2.3 (Auguie 2012) and "cowplot", version 0.9.3 (Wilke 2016). To test for

the effect of phylostrata on caste or behavior bias, we constructed a generalized linear model

using the Gamma distribution and treating phylostrata as an ordinal variable. To test for the

effects of connectivity and evolutionary rate (dN/dS) on caste or behavior bias while controlling

for expression, we employed partial correlation analysis using the package "ppcor" (Kim 2015).

Data availability

All data and scripts required to generate figures, tables, and perform statistical analyses are

available on Github: https://github.com/oist/devnetwork. Raw reads are deposited at DNA Data

Bank of Japan.

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Figure 1. Number of differentially expressed genes (FDR < 0.1) between A) queens and workers and B) nurses and foragers at each developmental stage or tissue in *M. pharaonis* (left) and *A. mellifera* (right). "Head", "thorax", and "abdomen" refer to body segments of adults, while pupa and larva refers to whole bodies. Genes are divided by color into categories based on gene-gene orthology between the two species. Insets show the proportion of each category of gene out of all differentially expressed genes at that stage. C) Genes with conserved queen bias (upregulated in queen abdomens of both species) are comprised of proportionally ancient genes than those with conserved worker bias or genes with non-conserved bias *: the category "larva" represents differential expression across larvae of all stages for which caste can be identified (second to fifth larval stage).

Figure 2. Abdominal caste bias ($\log_2$ fold change queen versus worker) is correlated with connectivity within the queen-abdomen specific bicluster (i.e. module) in A) ants (rho = 0.536, P < 0.001) and B) honey bees (rho = 0.617, P < 0.001), indicating that centrally located genes in the bicluster are highly caste-biased. Genes upregulated in queens are in red, while genes upregulated in workers are in blue. Connectivity is proportional to the most highly connected gene in the module. Furthermore, connectivity within the queen abdominal module is higher in genes found in the module for both species (shared) versus genes found in the module for only one species (not shared) in C) ants and D) honey bees. ***P < 0.001 (Wilcoxon test)

Figure 3. Caste bias is derived from sex bias. Abdominal caste bias (queen vs worker log$_2$ fold-change) is correlated to abdominal sex bias (queen vs male log$_2$ fold-change) in A) *M. pharaonis* (rho = 0.715, P < 0.001) and B) *A. mellifera* (rho = 0.774, P < 0.001) and abdominal sex bias is correlated between the two species (rho = 0.280, P < 0.001) (C). Genes are colored by conservation of differential expression in abdomens, with red indicating genes upregulated in queens in both species, blue indicating genes upregulated in workers of both species, and grey indicating genes that exhibited non-conserved expression patterns. Finally, genes with conserved queen bias tend to be female-biased in *D. melanogaster* based on whole-body adult samples while genes with conserved worker bias tend to be male-biased in *D. melanogaster* (likely reflecting down-regulation in females)

Figure 4. Genes that exhibit more caste bias across body segments and developmental stages have younger estimated evolutionary ages (A,B) and tend to be loosely connected (C,D; ant: rho = -0.159, P < 0.001; honey bee: rho = -0.090, P < 0.001) and rapidly evolving (E,F; ant: rho = 0.157, P < 0.001; honey bee: rho = 0.240, P < 0.001). "Overall caste bias" combines queen/worker log$_2$ fold-change values across all development stages and adult body segments. Connectivity is calculated using all samples and genes and scaled proportionally to the highest value.

Figure S1. Pearson correlation of log-fold change between queens and workers as measured at each stage or tissue in *M. pharaonis* and *A. mellifera* for each 1-1 ortholog (N = 7640). Error bars indicate pearson correlation 95% confidence intervals. In (A), the category "larva*" represents differential expression across larval stages, while in (B) each larval stage (L2-L5) is plotted individually.

Figure S2. Pearson correlation of log-fold change between nurses and foragers as measured in each tissue in *M. pharaonis* and *A. mellifera* for each 1-1 ortholog (N = 7640). Error bars indicate pearson correlation 95% confidence intervals.

Figure S3. Log$_2$ fold-change at each stage/tissue in each phylostrata category. Positive values indicating higher expression in queens compared to workers. Log$_2$ fold-change has been adjusted relative to the median value at that stage/tissue, in order to compare across tests. "Ancient" genes indicate any genes shared beyond insects (i.e. with vertebrates).

Figure S4. Pearson correlation of caste (queen/worker) and sex (queen/male) expression bias in ants and honey bees. Error bars represent pearson correlation 95% confidence intervals. Correlations are significant in all cases (P < 0.001), but abdominal correlations are strongest.

Figure S5. Number of times each gene is upregulated in queen and workers across all comparisons (larva, pupa, and adult head, thorax, and abdomen). Color brightness is logarithmically proportional to the number of genes in each cell. N = 10804 genes (*M. pharaonis*); 11775 genes (*A. mellifera*).

Figure S6. Overall caste bias (A) and overall behavior bias (B) is correlated between ants and honey bees. "Overall" bias refers to the euclidean distance of all log$_2$ fold-change values (queens/worker for caste, nurses/foragers for behavior). Red line is trendline of linear model; Spearman correlation P < 0.001 in all cases.

Figure S7. Overall caste bias and overall behavior bias were correlated within A) ants and B) honey bees. "Overall" bias refers to the euclidean distance of all $\log_2$ fold-change values (queens/worker for caste, nurses/foragers for behavior). Red line is trendline of linear model; Spearman correlation $P < 0.001$ in all cases.

Figure S8. Genes that exhibit more behavior bias across body segments have younger estimated evolutionary ages (A,B) and tend to be loosely connected (C,D; ant: rho = -0.099, P < 0.001; honey bee: rho = -0.157, P < 0.001) and rapidly evolving (E,F; ant: rho = 0.079, P < 0.001; honey bee: rho = 0.226, P < 0.001). "Overall behavior bias" combines nurse forager log$_2$ fold-change values across all adult body segments. Connectivity is calculated using all samples and genes and scaled proportionally to the highest value.

Figure S9. Genes exhibiting more behavior bias tend to be tissue-specific. There was a positive correlation (Spearman correlation, P < 0.001 in each case) between caste/behavior bias and tissue specificity, where tissue specificity (τ) is estimated using data from 12 honey bee tissues. $\tau = 1$ indicates a genes is expressed in only one tissue, while lower values indicate genes are more ubiquitously (i.e. evenly) expressed across tissues.

Figure S10. Histogram of the frequency with which genes were placed in the queen abdomen bicluster (out of 1000 runs). Plaid biclustering is a non-deterministic process, so different sets of genes can be present in each run. In ants (A), 1039 genes were present in >90% of queen abdomen biclusters and retained for further analysis. There are two peaks in the frequency distribution for honey bees (B). The lower frequency peak is made up of worker-associated genes (downregulated in queen abdomens) while the higher frequency peak (~60%) is made up of queen-associated genes. We retained genes with >60% frequency for further analysis.

Species	Stage	Tissue	Caste	Type	Replicates
ant	egg	whole body	N/A	N/A	6
ant	L1	whole body	N/A	N/A	6
ant	L2	whole body	queen	N/A	3
ant	L2	whole body	worker	N/A	3
ant	L3	whole body	queen	N/A	3
ant	L3	whole body	worker	N/A	3
ant	L4	whole body	queen	N/A	3
ant	L4	whole body	worker	N/A	3
ant	L5	whole body	queen	N/A	3
ant	L5	whole body	worker	N/A	3
ant	pupa	whole body	queen	N/A	3
ant	pupa	whole body	worker	N/A	3
ant	pupa	whole body	male	N/A	3
ant	adult	head	queen	virgin queen	3
ant	adult	thorax	queen	virgin queen	3
ant	adult	abdomen	queen	virgin queen	3
ant	adult	head	queen	mated queen	3
ant	adult	thorax	queen	mated queen	3
ant	adult	abdomen	queen	mated queen	3
ant	adult	head	worker	nurse	3
ant	adult	thorax	worker	nurse	3
ant	adult	abdomen	worker	nurse	3
ant	adult	head	worker	forager	3
ant	adult	thorax	worker	forager	3
ant	adult	abdomen	worker	forager	3
ant	adult	head	male	N/A	3
ant	adult	thorax	male	N/A	3
ant	adult	abdomen	male	N/A	3
honey bee	egg	whole body	N/A	N/A	3
honey bee	L1	whole body	N/A	N/A	3
honey bee	L2	whole body	queen	N/A	3
honey bee	L2	whole body	worker	N/A	3
honey bee	L3	whole body	queen	N/A	3
honey bee	L3	whole body	worker	N/A	3
honey bee	L4	whole body	queen	N/A	3
honey bee	L4	whole body	worker	N/A	3
honey bee	L5	whole body	queen	N/A	3
honey bee	L5	whole body	worker	N/A	4
honey bee	pupa	whole body	queen	N/A	5
honey bee	pupa	whole body	worker	N/A	3
honey bee	pupa	whole body	male	N/A	3
honey bee	adult	head	queen	virgin queen	3
honey bee	adult	thorax	queen	virgin queen	3
honey bee	adult	abdomen	queen	virgin queen	3
honey bee	adult	head	queen	mated queen	3
honey bee	adult	thorax	queen	mated queen	3
honey bee	adult	abdomen	queen	mated queen	3
honey bee	adult	head	worker	nurse	3
honey bee	adult	thorax	worker	nurse	3
honey bee	adult	abdomen	worker	nurse	3
honey bee	adult	head	worker	forager	3
honey bee	adult	thorax	worker	forager	3
honey bee	adult	abdomen	worker	forager	3
honey bee	adult	head	male	N/A	3
honey bee	adult	thorax	male	N/A	3
honey bee	adult	abdomen	male	N/A	3

Table S1. Full listing of sample types and number of each sample collected. "L1" and "L2" refers to larvae of the first and second stage, etc. We began caste-specific sampling at stage two because caste is determined and regulated in *M. pharaonis* by the end of the first larval instar (Warner et al. 2016). After the first larval instar in *M. pharaonis*, worker-destined larvae can be distinguished from reproductive-destined larvae, which include male-destined and queen-destined larvae (Peacock & Baxter 1950). As such, our "queen-destined" ant larvae samples likely contain some male-destined larvae, but the proportion is expected to be low, as the sex ratio is known to be heavily queen-biased (Schmidt et al. 2011). Sex and caste are both known in *A. mellifera* larvae, as individuals are reared in separate cells (Wilson 1971).

stage/tissue	species	total DEGs	queen associated	worker associated
L2	ant	119	31	88
L3	ant	818	490	328
L4	ant	81	65	16
L5	ant	757	437	320
pupa	ant	290	88	202
head	ant	741	420	321
thorax	ant	1327	695	632
abdomen	ant	4395	2711	1684
larva_overall	ant	361	241	120
L2	honey bee	136	60	76
L3	honey bee	117	28	89
L4	honey bee	724	224	500
L5	honey bee	1009	540	469
pupa	honey bee	245	163	82
head	honey bee	1144	717	427
thorax	honey bee	1369	721	648
abdomen	honey bee	5352	2769	2583
larva_overall	honey bee	473	176	297

Table S2. Number of differentially expressed genes (DEGs) between queens and workers for each comparison (FDR < 0.1). "L2", "L3", etc refer to the 2nd and 3rd larval stage, respectively, while "larva_overall" is the result of differential expression with caste as main effect across all larval samples. Differentially expressed genes are divided into "queen associated", which exhibited higher expression in queens, and "worker associated", which exhibited higher expression in workers. Differential expression analysis performed with N = 10804 (ant) and 11775 (honey bee) genes.

GO.ID	Term	P	stage/tissue
GO:0007265	Ras protein signal transduction	0.00026	larva
GO:0046578	regulation of Ras protein signal transduction	0.00029	larva
GO:0051056	regulation of small GTPase mediated signal transduction	0.00048	larva
GO:0007264	small GTPase mediated signal transduction	0.00071	larva
GO:0060628	regulation of ER to Golgi vesicle-mediated transport	0.00071	larva
GO:0006970	response to osmotic stress	0.00089	pupa
GO:0009651	response to salt stress	0.00287	pupa
GO:0019432	triglyceride biosynthetic process	0.00297	pupa
GO:0046460	neutral lipid biosynthetic process	0.00297	pupa
GO:0046463	acylglycerol biosynthetic process	0.00297	pupa
GO:0072525	pyridine-containing compound biosynthetic process	0.0018	head
GO:0001704	formation of primary germ layer	0.0042	head
GO:0002098	tRNA wobble uridine modification	0.0050	head
GO:0043086	negative regulation of catalytic activity	0.0071	head
GO:0010508	positive regulation of autophagy	0.0078	head
GO:0019362	pyridine nucleotide metabolic process	0.00021	thorax
GO:0046496	nicotinamide nucleotide metabolic process	0.00021	thorax
GO:0006733	oxidoreduction coenzyme metabolic process	0.00043	thorax
GO:0072524	pyridine-containing compound metabolic process	0.00054	thorax
GO:0006739	NADP metabolic process	0.00088	thorax
GO:0042445	hormone metabolic process	7.5e-05	abdomen
GO:0010817	regulation of hormone levels	0.00041	abdomen
GO:0042181	ketone biosynthetic process	0.00089	abdomen
GO:0042180	cellular ketone metabolic process	0.00094	abdomen
GO:0034754	cellular hormone metabolic process	0.00108	abdomen

Table S3. Enriched gene ontology terms based on Gene Set Enrichment Analysis (GSEA) of differential expression between queens and workers in ants. P-value derived from Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests.

GO.ID	Term	P	stage/tissue
GO:0019722	calcium-mediated signaling	0.0010	larva
GO:0046113	nucleobase catabolic process	0.0021	larva
GO:0007411	axon guidance	0.0024	larva
GO:0061564	axon development	0.0027	larva
GO:0035039	male pronucleus assembly	0.0032	larva
GO:0008544	epidermis development	0.00053	pupa
GO:0008286	insulin receptor signaling pathway	0.00065	pupa
GO:0034599	cellular response to oxidative stress	0.00097	pupa
GO:0032869	cellular response to insulin stimulus	0.00106	pupa
GO:0071375	cellular response to peptide hormone stimulus	0.00106	pupa
GO:0008610	lipid biosynthetic process	0.00011	head
GO:0016070	RNA metabolic process	0.00018	head
GO:0030534	adult behavior	0.00028	head
GO:0008344	adult locomotory behavior	0.00031	head
GO:0007478	leg disc morphogenesis	0.00041	head
GO:0048747	muscle fiber development	0.0011	thorax
GO:0090254	cell elongation involved in imaginal disc-derived wing morphogenesis	0.0027	thorax
GO:0006457	protein folding	0.0045	thorax
GO:0071897	DNA biosynthetic process	0.0055	thorax
GO:0034063	stress granule assembly	0.0071	thorax
GO:0045887	positive regulation of synaptic growth at neuromuscular junction	0.00037	abdomen
GO:1904398	positive regulation of neuromuscular junction development	0.00037	abdomen
GO:0051965	positive regulation of synapse assembly	0.00116	abdomen
GO:0030490	maturation of SSU-rRNA	0.00126	abdomen
GO:0007436	larval salivary gland morphogenesis	0.00205	abdomen

Table S4. Enriched gene ontology terms based on Gene Set Enrichment Analysis (GSEA) of differential expression between queens and workers in honey bees. P-value derived from Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests.

stage/tissue	species	total DEGs	nurse associated	forager associated
head	ant	405	314	91
thorax	ant	490	305	185
abdomen	ant	544	341	203
head	honey bee	927	404	523
thorax	honey bee	2519	1243	1276
abdomen	honey bee	2017	1007	1010

Table S5. Number of differentially expressed genes (DEGs) between nurses and foragers for each comparison (FDR < 0.1). Differentially expressed genes are divided into "nurse associated", which exhibited higher expression in nurses, and "forager associated", which exhibited higher expression in foragers. Differential expression analysis performed with N = 10804 (ant) and 11775 (honey bee) genes.

GO.ID	Term	P	tissue
GO:0048284	organelle fusion	0.00021	head
GO:0006629	lipid metabolic process	0.00138	head
GO:0048580	regulation of post-embryonic development	0.00186	head
GO:0044255	cellular lipid metabolic process	0.00217	head
GO:0044801	single-organism membrane fusion	0.00226	head
GO:0032502	developmental process	0.00019	thorax
GO:0007525	somatic muscle development	0.00035	thorax
GO:0044767	single-organism developmental process	0.00041	thorax
GO:0007275	multicellular organism development	0.00041	thorax
GO:0090175	regulation of establishment of planar polarity	0.00043	thorax
GO:0000289	nuclear-transcribed mRNA poly(A) tail shortening	0.0017	abdomen
GO:0007006	mitochondrial membrane organization	0.0054	abdomen
GO:0042441	eye pigment metabolic process	0.0056	abdomen
GO:0043324	pigment metabolic process involved in developmental pigmentation	0.0056	abdomen
GO:0043474	pigment metabolic process involved in pigmentation	0.0056	abdomen

Table S6. Enriched gene ontology terms based on Gene Set Enrichment Analysis (GSEA) of differential expression between nurses and foragers in ants. P-value derived from Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests.

GO.ID	Term	P	stage/tissue
GO:0019722	calcium-mediated signaling	0.0010	larva
GO:0046113	nucleobase catabolic process	0.0021	larva
GO:0007411	axon guidance	0.0024	larva
GO:0061564	axon development	0.0027	larva
GO:0035039	male pronucleus assembly	0.0032	larva
GO:0008544	epidermis development	0.00053	pupa
GO:0008286	insulin receptor signaling pathway	0.00065	pupa
GO:0034599	cellular response to oxidative stress	0.00097	pupa
GO:0032869	cellular response to insulin stimulus	0.00106	pupa
GO:0071375	cellular response to peptide hormone stimulus	0.00106	pupa
GO:0008610	lipid biosynthetic process	0.00011	head
GO:0016070	RNA metabolic process	0.00018	head
GO:0030534	adult behavior	0.00028	head
GO:0008344	adult locomotory behavior	0.00031	head
GO:0007478	leg disc morphogenesis	0.00041	head
GO:0048747	muscle fiber development	0.0011	thorax
GO:0090254	cell elongation involved in imaginal disc-derived wing morphogenesis	0.0027	thorax
GO:0006457	protein folding	0.0045	thorax
GO:0071897	DNA biosynthetic process	0.0055	thorax
GO:0034063	stress granule assembly	0.0071	thorax
GO:0045887	positive regulation of synaptic growth at neuromuscular junction	0.00037	abdomen
GO:1904398	positive regulation of neuromuscular junction development	0.00037	abdomen
GO:0051965	positive regulation of synapse assembly	0.00116	abdomen
GO:0030490	maturation of SSU-rRNA	0.00126	abdomen
GO:0007436	larval salivary gland morphogenesis	0.00205	abdomen

Table S7. Enriched gene ontology terms based on Gene Set Enrichment Analysis (GSEA) of differential expression between nurses and foragers in honey bees. P-value derived from Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests.

Gene	logFC queen/worker	connectivity	SwissProt
LOC105837185	9.333	0.793	Leukocyte elastase inhibitor A
LOC105838268	8.610	0.790	Gephyrin
LOC105836111	8.147	0.784	RCC1 and BTB domain-containing protein 1
LOC105836023	7.962	0.772	Histone H2B
LOC105834654	7.258	0.797	Vitellogenin receptor
LOC105837528	6.871	0.848	Ankyrin-2
LOC105838623	6.713	0.855	Transcription factor SOX-14
LOC105829700	6.447	0.839	Maternal embryonic leucine zipper kinase
LOC105834441	6.307	0.864	Nuclear RNA export factor 1
LOC105830728	6.115	0.911	S-phase kinase-associated protein 2
LOC105837219	5.825	0.926	Rac GTPase-activating protein 1
LOC105840891	5.777	0.973	Acidic repeat-containing protein
LOC105838786	5.389	0.824	Spondin-1
LOC105837988	5.364	0.819	Multiple PDZ domain protein
LOC105830806	5.311	0.833	Insulin-degrading enzyme
LOC105836312	5.144	0.797	Serine protease nudel
LOC105836129	5.108	0.915	Rho GTPase-activating protein 19
LOC105834586	5.078	0.906	Putative bifunctional UDP-N-acetylglucosamine transferase and deubiquitinase ALG13
LOC105832223	5.058	0.874	E3 ubiquitin-protein ligase SIAH1
LOC105840292	4.974	0.785	Pre-mRNA-splicing factor RBM22
LOC105840093	4.833	0.897	ATP-dependent RNA helicase vasa isoform A
LOC105833898	4.812	0.925	Piwi-like protein 1
LOC105839662	4.676	0.966	G2/mitotic-specific cyclin-B3
LOC105828383	4.542	0.949	Histone RNA hairpin-binding protein
LOC105831777	4.326	0.815	Protein dispatched
LOC105835848	4.292	0.807	Glyoxylate reductase
LOC105838831	4.242	0.890	Broad-complex core protein isoform 6
LOC105832464	4.188	0.774	Zinc finger protein 800
LOC105837226	4.096	0.883	DNA repair and recombination protein RAD54-like (Fragment)
LOC105834656	4.077	0.805	Putative ATP-dependent RNA helicase me31b

Table S8. Hub genes of the queen abdominal module in ants. Hub genes were defined as genes with intra-modular connectivity in at least the 90th percentile, and $\log_2$ fold-change (queen/worker) greater than 2.

Gene	logFC queen/worker	connectivity	SwissProt
LOC724752	11.662	0.746	E3 ubiquitin-protein ligase TRIM71
LOC410888	9.000	0.829	lachesin-like
LOC410684	7.405	0.754	homeobox protein OTX1 A
LOC100576333	6.493	0.738	nucleoredoxin-like
LOC725841	6.339	0.897	hyaluronan mediated motility receptor
LOC100577382	6.272	0.896	targeting protein for Xklp2 homolog
LOC551099	6.172	0.760	coiled-coil domain-containing protein 43
LOC724193	5.957	0.859	kinesin-like protein KIF18A
LOC726506	5.927	0.828	protein claret segregational
LOC725920	5.829	0.875	vitellogenin receptor
LOC100576828	5.826	0.843	protein maelstrom 2
LOC412031	5.811	0.930	S-phase kinase-associated protein 2
LOC102656846	5.705	0.942	cyclin-A2
LOC411529	5.531	0.861	maternal embryonic leucine zipper kinase-like
LOC410502	5.456	0.910	transformation/transcription domain-associated protein
LOC410015	5.270	0.778	protein LSM14 homolog A
LOC100578691	5.186	0.909	rhoGEF domain-containing protein gxcJ-like
LOC100578255	5.073	0.734	ras GTPase-activating-like protein IQGAP1
LOC552100	4.953	0.809	protein ovo
LOC100576908	4.883	0.917	polycomb protein Asx
LOC551871	4.808	0.912	P protein-like
LOC411970	4.546	0.767	G kinase-anchoring protein 1-like
LOC725606	4.498	0.758	serine protease gd
LOC409092	4.486	0.850	enhancer of mRNA-decapping protein 3
LOC409681	4.483	0.807	RWD domain-containing protein 1
LOC411809	4.460	0.780	enolase-phosphatase E1
LOC551773	4.320	0.876	serine/threonine-protein kinase VRK1-like
LOC413667	4.212	0.914	G2/mitotic-specific cyclin-B3
LOC409472	3.995	0.975	protein Smaug homolog 1
LOC552725	3.868	0.848	N-acetylglucosamine-1-phosphotransferase subunits alpha/beta

Table S9. Hub genes of the queen abdominal module in ants. Hub genes were defined as genes with intra-modular connectivity in at least the 90th percentile, and $\log_2$ fold-change (queen/worker) greater than 2.

GO.ID	Term	P	test
GO:0010977	negative regulation of neuron projection development	0.00032	ant caste
GO:0014017	neuroblast fate commitment	0.00038	ant caste
GO:0045165	cell fate commitment	0.00041	ant caste
GO:0007400	neuroblast fate determination	0.00085	ant caste
GO:0010771	negative regulation of cell morphogenesis involved in differentiation	0.00122	ant caste
GO:0060322	head development	2.3e-07	ant behavior
GO:0007420	brain development	3.6e-07	ant behavior
GO:0016319	mushroom body development	1.6e-05	ant behavior
GO:0045165	cell fate commitment	2.1e-05	ant behavior
GO:0007417	central nervous system development	4.2e-05	ant behavior
GO:0006650	glycerophospholipid metabolic process	0.00046	bee caste
GO:0051231	spindle elongation	0.00098	bee caste
GO:0046488	phosphatidylinositol metabolic process	0.00134	bee caste
GO:0035050	embryonic heart tube development	0.00194	bee caste
GO:0000022	mitotic spindle elongation	0.00222	bee caste
GO:0035295	tube development	0.00020	bee behavior
GO:0002009	morphogenesis of an epithelium	0.00029	bee behavior
GO:0035239	tube morphogenesis	0.00032	bee behavior
GO:0048729	tissue morphogenesis	0.00061	bee behavior
GO:0060562	epithelial tube morphogenesis	0.00123	bee behavior

Table S10. Enriched gene ontology terms based on overall caste or behavior bias in ants and honey bees. GO terms are derived from *D. melanogaster* orthologs. P-value is from gene set enrichment analysis (Kolmogorov–Smirnov test)

species	comparison	abdomen included?	variable tested	Spearman rho	P-value
ant	caste	yes	connectivity	-0.162	3.92e-33
ant	caste	no	connectivity	-0.282	1.38e-99
ant	caste	yes	dN/dS	0.151	6.07e-29
ant	caste	no	dN/dS	0.130	8.51e-22
ant	caste	yes	evolutionary age	0.159	5.19e-32
ant	caste	no	evolutionary age	0.161	5.96e-33
honey bee	caste	yes	connectivity	0.003	8.13e-01
honey bee	caste	no	connectivity	-0.132	4.61e-20
honey bee	caste	yes	dN/dS	0.155	3.15e-27
honey bee	caste	no	dN/dS	0.169	4.27e-32
honey bee	caste	yes	evolutionary age	0.166	3.72e-31
honey bee	caste	no	evolutionary age	0.154	7.95e-27
honey bee	caste	yes	tau	0.409	1.33e-193
honey bee	caste	no	tau	0.397	1.14e-180
ant	behavior	yes	connectivity	-0.157	4.29e-31
ant	behavior	no	connectivity	-0.119	1.24e-18
ant	behavior	yes	dN/dS	0.043	1.75e-03
ant	behavior	no	dN/dS	0.020	1.38e-01
ant	behavior	yes	evolutionary age	0.021	1.25e-01
ant	behavior	no	evolutionary age	0.014	3.02e-01
honey bee	behavior	yes	connectivity	-0.162	9.22e-30
honey bee	behavior	no	connectivity	-0.137	1.49e-21
honey bee	behavior	yes	dN/dS	0.174	7.02e-34
honey bee	behavior	no	dN/dS	0.150	1.83e-25
honey bee	behavior	yes	evolutionary age	0.161	3.49e-29
honey bee	behavior	no	evolutionary age	0.126	1.95e-18
honey bee	behavior	yes	tau	0.328	9.55e-121
honey bee	behavior	no	tau	0.281	5.79e-88

Table S11. Partial correlation between connectivity, evolutionary rate (dN/dS), evolutionary age (phylostrata), and tissue-specificity (tau) and caste or behavior bias while accounting for expression. Analysis was performed separately for each species and comparison (i.e. separately for caste bias and behavior bias), as well as while including or excluding abdomen in calculations of caste bias and expression. Connectivity is total connectivity measured across all samples and genes. Phylostrata is a measure of estimated evolutionary age, with higher values indicating younger genes. Tau is the degree to which genes exhibit tissue-specific expression across 12 honey bee tissues (results presented only for honey bees). N = 10520 genes (ants), 10011 genes (honey bees).

Species	NCBI Taxonomy ID
Acromyrmex echinatior	103372
Atta cephalotes	12957
Atta colombica	520822
Camponotus floridanus	104421
Cardiocondyla obscurior	286306
Monomorium pharaonis	307658
Linepithema humile	83485
Lasius niger	67767
Harpegnathos saltator	610380
Dinoponera quadriceps	609295
Cyphomyrmex costatus	456900
Ooceraea biroi	2015173
Pogonomyrmex barbatus	144034
Pseudomyrmex gracilis	219809
Solenopsis invicta	13686
Trachymyrmex septentrionalis	34720
Trachymyrmex cornetzi	471704
Trachymyrmex zeteki	64791
Vollenhovia emeryi	411798
Wasmannia auropunctata	64793
Temnothorax curvispinosus	300111
Apis cerana	7461
Apis dorsata	7462
Apis florea	7463
Apis mellifera	7460
Bombus impatiens	132113
Bombus terrestris	30195
Melipona quadrifasciata	166423
Eufriesea mexicana	516756
Ceratina calcarata	156304
Megachile rotundata	143995
Habropoda laboriosa	597456
Dufourea novaeangliae	178035
Polistes canadensis	91411
Polistes dominula	743375
Ceratosolen solmsi	142686
Ceratosolen solmsi marchali	326594
Copidosoma floridanum	29053
Fopius arisanus	64838
Microplitis demolitor	69319
Nasonia vitripennis	7425
Trichogramma pretiosum	7493
Trichomalopsis sarcophagae	543379
Diachasma alloeum	454923
Orussus abietinus	222816
Athalia rosae	37344
Cephus cinctus	211228
Neodiprion lecontei	441921
Pediculus humanus	121225
Drosophila melanogaster	7227
Aedes aegypti	7159
Bombyx mori	7091
Papilio machaon	76193
Anopheles gambiae	7165
Onthophagus taurus	166361
Tribolium castaneum	7070
Acyrthosiphon pisum	7029
Zootermopsis nevadensis	136037
Caenorhabditis elegans	6239
Hydra vulgaris	6087
Strongylocentrotus purpuratus	7668
Lottia gigantea	225164
Helobdella robusta	6412
Mus musculus	10090
Homo sapiens	9606
Xenopus tropicalis	8364
Latimeria chalumnae	7897
Danio rerio	7955

Table S12. List of species used for phylostratigraphy analysis, with the NCBI Taxonomy ID.