Title: Artisanal and farmers bread making practices differently shape fungal species diversity in French

sourdoughs

Running title: Bread making practices as a driver of yeast species diversity

Authors

Elisa Michel[†,°], Estelle Masson[‡], Sandrine Bubbendorf[‡], Léocadie Lapicque[‡], Thibault Nidelet[†], Diego

Segond[†], Stéphane Guézenec[†], Thérèse Marlin[†], Hugo deVillers[†], Olivier Rué[⁋], Bernard Onno[°], Judith

Legrand[§*], Delphine Sicard[†] *and the participating bakers[#]

Authors affiliation

[†] SPO, Univ Montpellier, INRAE, Institut Agro, Montpellier, France

[°] Oniris, Laboratoire MicrobioTech, UMR GEPEA 6144, Rue de la Géraudière CS 82225, 44322 Nantes

Cedex 3, France

[‡]Laboratoire de Psychologie : Cognition, Comportement, Communication – EA 1285, Université de

Bretagne Occidentale, 20 rue Duquesne, CS 93837, F-29238 Brest 03, France

[§]Génétique   Quantitative   et   Evolution-Le   Moulon,   Université   Paris-Sud,   INRAE,   CNRS,

AgroParisTech, Université Paris-Saclay, 91190 Gif-sur-Yvette, France

[⁋]MaIAGE, INRA, Université Paris-Saclay, Jouy-en-Josas, France

*Judith Legrand and Delphine Sicard should be considered both last authors.

Corresponding author

Delphine Sicard, SPO, Univ Montpellier, INRAE, Institut Agro, Montpellier, France +33 624720501

delphine.sicard@inrae.fr

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Abstract

Preserving microbial diversity in food systems is one of the many challenges to be met to

achieve food security and quality. Although industrialization led to the selection and spread of specific

fermenting microbial strains, there are still ongoing artisanal processes that may allow the conservation

of a wider diversity of microbial species. We examined whether the diversity of artisanal practices could

lead to an increased level in fungal species diversity for bread making. We used an interdisciplinary

participatory research approach including bakers, psycho-sociologists and microbiologists to analyse

French bread making practices and describe fungal communities in naturally fermented sourdough of

27 bakers and 12 farmer bakers. Their bread making practices were classified in two groups: the farmer-

like practices group and the artisanal-like practices group. Surprisingly, the well-known bakery yeast,

Saccharomyces cerevisiae, was dominant (i.e. with a relative abundance over 50%) in only 24% of

sourdoughs while other yeast species of the closely related *Kazachstania* genus were dominant in 54%

of sourdoughs. Bread making practices were found to drive the distribution of yeast species. The most

remarkable difference was the occurrence of *Kazachstania humilis* in sourdoughs made with artisanal-

like practices and the occurrence of *Kazachstania bulderi* in sourdoughs made with farmer-like

practices. Phenotyping of these two species in laboratory sourdough mimicking media revealed

signatures of domestication for *K. humilis* but not for *K. bulderi*. Overall, our results showed that

preserving bread making practices diversity allows the preservation of a higher taxonomic and

phenotypic diversity in microbial communities.

Introduction

Humans started to ferment food before the emergence of the Neolithic using naturally fermenting microbial communities. In the 19th century, the industrialization and the increase of knowledge in microbiology resulted in changes in fermented food practices with the use of targeted species and selected strains. This selection led to a reduction in species and genetic diversity for fermented food processing and limited *in situ* conservation of microbial communities in industrialized systems [1–3]. Domestication of the yeast *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* for the production of beer, wine, cheese, leavened bread, that of the fungi *Penicillium roquefortii* or *Penicillium camemberti* for cheese production or that of the fungus *Aspergillus oryzae* for rice or soybean fermented products are well studied cases [1–10]. The recent renewed interest in artisanal practices that make use of naturally fermenting microbial communities could promote again the conservation of microbial diversity. However, the effect of artisanal practices on the distribution of microbial species diversity remains poorly documented.

Among fermented foods, bread is still a symbol deeply engrained in the history, religious rites and medicine of several cultures. The origin of bread likely originated 14 000 years ago, suggesting bread was made long before plant domestication [11]. Since the Neolithic, bread history is intimately combined with the evolution of cereals, bread making associated tools and the advent of Mediterranean civilizations [12]. Leavened bread was traditionally made with flour, water and a fermenting agent, which was either a fermenting beverage or a fermenting dough, called sourdough. This sourdough was generally initiated from a mixture of flour and water, naturally colonized by lactic acid bacteria (LAB) and yeasts. Sourdough was then either maintained from one bread making process to the other or initiated again and again, depending on the craftsman [13, 14] . In the 19th century, the use of yeast starters made of *S. cerevisiae,* often called « baker's yeast », spread as an alternative to sourdough. Nowadays, *S. cerevisiae* industrial starters are more frequently used than sourdoughs, although the latter are gaining interest. A recent study showed that industrial populations of *S. cerevisiae* have followed a different evolutionary path than sourdough populations of *S. cerevisiae* [10]. Both have been

domesticated by humans and have improved their fermentation performance in a sourdough-mimicking medium. However, industrial and sourdough strains of *S. cerevisiae* differ genetically and phenotypically, indicating that sourdough bread making contributes to the conservation of *S. cerevisiae* diversity [10].

Beyond *S. cerevisiae*, sourdough can also host other yeast species. To date, more than 40 yeast species have been detected in sourdough [1, 15, 16]. The most frequently encountered species are *Wickerhamomyces anomalus* and *Kazachstania humilis*. Several other species in the genus Kazachstania (*Kazachstania barnettii*, *Kazachatania exigua*, *Kazachstania bulderi*, *Kazachstania unispora*) as well as several species in the polyphyletic genus Pichia have also been recurrently detected. The factors that may determine the distribution of these species are still unknown. A recent large-scale study of 500 sourdoughs from four continents found no effect of geography or factors related to bread-making practices such as age of sourdough, storage location, feeding frequency, grain intake, house characteristics [17]. However, most of the sourdoughs in this study were made by private citizens who probably did not maintain the sourdough microbial community in the same way as a professional baker. To our knowledge, no studies have been conducted to date to investigate the effect of bakers' bread-making practices on sourdough yeast diversity.

In France, sourdough breads are made both by bakers and farmer-bakers who also grow and mill their own wheat. The number of farmers-bakers has increased in the 2000s with two motives: to grow wheat varieties meeting their needs and to assert their independence from industry [18]. Although farmer-bakers are less numerous than bakers, they participate in the renewed interest in local wheat varieties and artisanal know-how, which may contribute to the conservation of both socio-cultural diversity and microbial diversity.

Here, we used a participatory research approach involving psycho-sociologists, biologists, bio-statisticians, bakers and farmers-bakers to study whether and how bakers and farmers-bakers contribute to the preservation of socio-cultural and fungal species diversity in sourdough microbial community.

Materials and methods

A total of 27 bakers and 12 farmer-bakers participated to the study. They were all making bread with organic flour except five. All of them sent sourdough to the lab for microbiological and metabolic analysis. Among them, 36 described their bread making practices as well.

A questionnaire survey, face-to-face interviews and focus-groups to collect bread making practices

Data on bread-making practices were collected through a questionnaire survey, interviews and focus groups. The collected variables were related to *i)* the ingredients origin : wheat varieties types (ancient populations also called landraces / modern varieties), whether they produced flour from their own wheat, whether they had their own mill or use an external mill, water origin, *ii)* the sourdough recipe: its age, its hydration state, the origin of the chief sourdough (sample of dough or sourdough), the number of back-sloppings before bread making and per week, the temperature of water used for back-sloppings, *iii)* their bread making practices: the number of bread makings per week, the percentage of sourdough, flour and salt in bread dough, the kneading methods, the total duration of fermentation and the addition of baker's yeast in dough.

Sourdoughs samples, enumeration and strain isolation

Sourdoughs were collected before kneading and referred to as final sourdoughs (Table S1). On the day of collection, they were sent to the lab where yeast and bacteria were enumerated and isolated as in [19, 20], and sourdoughs stored at -20°C in sterile vials for non- culture based analysis. Ethics and rights associated with sourdough collection and strains isolation have been respected.

Sourdough acidity and metabolic analyses

For each sourdough, three independent 1-g replicates were analysed. pH and Total Titrable Acidity were measured as described in [20]. Organic acids, alcohol and sugars concentrations (expressed as g/kg of sourdough) were analysed by liquid chromatography using an HPLC HP 1100 LC system (Agilent

129 technologies, Santa clara, CA, USA) equipped with a refractive index detector (RID Agilent G1382A)

130 and a UV detector (Agilent G1314A). Two different columns were used, a Rezex ROA-organic acids

131 column and a Rezex RPM-monosaccharide column (SDVB – Pb+2 8%, 300x7.8mm, Phenomenex,

132 Torrance, CA, USA). The details of the experiments are described in supplementary information

133 (Method S1).

Yeast species identification

The Internal transcribed spacer 1 (ITS1) ribosomal DNA of each 1216 yeast isolates was amplified by

PCR from chromosomal DNA, either by using primers ITS1F and ITS2 [21, 22], or primers NSA3 and

58A2R [19, 22]. For isolates unidentified with the ITS1 region alone, DNA was extracted according to

MasterPure Yeast DNA purification kit (Epicentre, Epibio). PCR reactions targeting partial genes, the

D1D2 region of the large subunit of rRNA (LSU), a part of the RNA polymerase II large subunit

encoding gene (*RPB1)*, a part of the RNA polymerase II encoding gene (*RPB2)*, a part of the actin

encoding gene *Act1* and Transcriptional Elongation Factor TEF were performed. To discriminate three

specific isolates, PCR on genes *GHD1*, *FSY1*, *URA3*, *DRC1*, *MET2* were performed [23–26] (Table S2).

All PCR products were sent to be sequenced with Sanger sequencing (Eurofins, Germany). Species were

identified using NCBI [27], YeastIP [28] and a personal database, which was constructed after *ITS1*,

RPB2, LSU sequencing of all 33-yeast species reportedly found in sourdoughs in the literature [19].

Sourdough DNA extraction, MiSeq sequencing, bioinformatics

The ITS1 region was targeted with the PCR primers ITS1-F (5′- CTTGGTCATTTAGAGGAAGTAA -

3′) and ITS2 (5'-GCTGCGTTCTTCATCGATGC-3').

The sequencing run was performed with MiSeq Reagent Kit v3. 2015 [20]. Sequences were analysed

through FROGS "Find Rapidly OTU with Galaxy Solution" [29] and home-made pipelines. Overlapped

reads were merged with Flash [30] with a minimum overlap of 10 nucleotides, a maximum overlap of

300 nucleotides and a maximum mismatch density of 0.1. Adapters were removed with Cutadapt [31]

and data were cleaned with Sickle [32]. Reads were clustered with Swarm [33] and chimeras deleted

with VSEARCH [34]. Sequences were then filtered on minimum abundance of 0.05% of all sequences.

From the OTU's abundance table and for each OTU, the taxonomic affiliation using UNITE Version

7.1, Release 2016-11-20 [35], YeastIP [28] and our own databases [19] was obtained by blasting OTUs

representative sequences against each database.

Phenotypic analysis of yeast strains

Fermentations performance of the two most frequently encountered Kazachstania species were assessed

as described in [10] for *S. cerevisiae*. 15 sourdough strains of *K. bulderi* and 16 sourdough strains of *K.*

humilis were included in the analysis. *K. bulderi* strains were coming from sourdoughs B4, B12, B15,

B17 B20, B21, while *K. humilis* strains were coming from sourdoughs B2, B5, B6, B7, B10, B17. From

one to three strains per sourdough were analysed in the experiment. In addition, four strains of *K. bulderi*

(strain MUCL 38021 isolated from ensilage in Namur, Belgium, strain MUCL 54694 isolated from

ensilage in Erezée, Belgium, strain NRRL Y-27205 isolated from three month old maize silage in the

Netherland, and strain CLIB 604 coming from Agro food industry) and three strains of *K. humilis* (strain

CBS 7754 isolated from food dressing, strain CBS1323 isolated from bantu beer, and strain CBS 2664

isolated from alpechin) which were coming from non-sourdough habitats, were added as control to test

the effect of habitat of origin. Each strain was phenotyped at least in triplicate leading to a total of 145

fermentations distributed over two blocks. Briefly, fermentations were carried out at 24 °C with constant

magnetic stirring (300 rpm) during 24 h. CO_2 release was measured by weight loss every 40 min using

an automated robotic system [36]. At the end of fermentation, population size and cell viability were

determined by flow cytometer (C6 cytometer, Accuri, BD Biosciences) as described in [37].

Data analyses

To analyse bread making practices, a multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) and hierarchical

clustering (complete linkage clustering method) on principal components based on the first two axes of

the MCA were performed using the FactoMineR R package [38].

To analyse fungal community, weighted Unifrac distances between sourdough communities were

computed from a rooted phylogenetic tree based on the OTUs sequences using the R-packages Phyloseq

and GUniFrac [39, 40]. Phylogenetic sequences were aligned with Clustalo and phylogenetic tree were

built with the parsimony algorithm, with 100 replicates bootstraps, pairwise ktuple-distances with

Seaview [41]. Different roots were tested (*Sporidiobolales sp.*, *Bullera globospora*, *Trichosporon*

asahii, *Udeniomyces pyricola*). Tree architecture did not change with the root. It did not fit the expected

phylogeny and, notably, some *Ascomycota* were misclassified among the *Basidiomycota*. However, the

dominant sourdough species belonging to the *Saccharomycetaceae* family were clustered according to

expected clades or subclades, except that *Kazachstania servazzi* and *Kazachstania unispora* were

grouped in a clade closer to *Saccharomyces* species than to other *Kazachstania* species. Using the

Unifrac distances matrix, we performed a Principal Coordinate Analysis (PCoA) and clustered

sourdough communities using the first two axes of the PCoA, and the complete linkage clustering

method (hclust R function). To check the sensitivity of our analysis to this misclassification, we

performed the same analyses without the sourdoughs that had one misclassified species representing

more than 10% of their reads, *i.e.* sourdoughs B20, B41, B42, and B44 and found the same clustering

[40].

For each sourdough, the species richness, Chao1, Shannon and Simpson indexes were computed, and

the Shannon and Simpson indices values were converted to the effective number of species per

sourdough. This number was estimated from the Shannon diversity index as $exp^{Shannon\ index}$ and from

the Simpson diversity index as $\frac{1}{1-Simpson\ index}$ [42, 43]. For probability estimates, the exact 95%

confidence intervals were computed using a binomial distribution.

To study the link between microbial diversity and bakery practices, a univariate Permutational

Multivariate Analysis (PERMANOVA) on the Unifrac distance matrix was performed for each bakery

practice variable. We performed univariate analysis on the 30 bakers who had less than 8 missing values

among the 29 bread making practices variables and adjusted the p-value using FDR correction to account

for multiple testing. In addition, independence exact Fisher tests between the variable providing fungal

community PCoA groups and each of the bread making practices variables were performed. Multiple testing was accounted for using the False Discovery Rate method [44].

The link between the baker practices group, the fungal community group or the yeast dominant species and the variation of each quantitative variable (microbial density, pH, TTA, metabolite concentration) was tested with the following mixed effect model: $Y_{ijk} = \mu + \alpha_i + B_j + \varepsilon_{ijk}$ with $\varepsilon_{ijk} \sim N(0,\sigma^2)$, where α_i is the effect of the fungal community group i modelled as a fixed effect and B_j is the effect of sourdough j modelled as a random effect and k represents the measurement replicates. For sourdough hydration rate, the variable was arcsin transformed but sourdough effect was not included in the model because no repetition was obtained from any sourdough. The model parameters were estimated using the lmertest R package [45]. To test the fixed effects, we used likelihood ratio tests. Multiple comparisons of means were performed using Tukey tests with the multcomp package. p-values were all adjusted for multiple testing with the FDR method. The geographical structuration was tested with a Mantel test on the Unifrac distances matrix and the geographical distances matrix computed with the package geosphere [46] and ade4 [47].

Finally, the phenotypic diversity of *K. bulderi* and *K. humilis* strains coming from sourdough and non-sourdough habitat were analyzed. Population size and mortality rate after 27h of fermentation measured by flow cytometer were used as proxy for absolute fitness. The cumulative CO_2 production curve was calculated and the kinetics of CO_2 production rate over time was estimated by successive linear smoothing over 5 points. Four fermentation parameters were then estimated: the maximum CO_2 release (CO_2max, in gr/L) was estimated by the maximum of the cumulative CO_2 production curve, the fermentation latency-phase time (t1g, in h) was estimated by the time between inoculation and the beginning of the fermentation calculated as 1g/L of CO_2 release, the maximum CO_2 production rate (Vmax in g/L/h) was estimated by the maximum of the CO_2 production rate kinetic and the time of the Vmax (tVmax in h) as the time between inoculation and the Vmax. Hence, the phenotype of each strain was characterized by six quantitative variables called "phenotype variables" below: its population size, its mortality rate and the four fermentation parameters. To determine whether the origin of the strain

(sourdough or non-sourdough) had an impact on strain phenotype, each log-transformed quantitative

variable was analyzed separately using a mixed linear model as described below. The experimental

design was unbalanced between the two blocks with very few non-sourdough strains in one of the two

blocks. Therefore, for each phenotype variable, we first estimated the block effect with a subset of 8

strains cultivated in both blocks using a linear model with two fixed effects : the strain and the block.

Additive models were used as the interactions terms were not significantly different from zero after

adjusting p-values with the Benjamini-Hochberg method. Second, each phenotype variable was

corrected for the block effect and analyzed with the mixed effect model: $Y_{ijkl} = \mu + \alpha_i + \beta_j + \gamma_{ij} +$

$Z_k + \epsilon_{ijkl}$ where Y_{ijkl} represents the log-transformed phenotype variable corrected for the block effect

for the strain *k*, from species *i (i=1,2)*, sampled in environment *j (j=1,2)*, observed for replicate *l*. μ

represents the mean of the phenotype variable, α_i the additive effect of species *i*, β_j the additive effect

of environment *j*, and γ_{ij} their interaction. Z_k represents the gaussian random effect of strain *k* with $Z_k \sim$

$N(0, \sigma_s^2)$ and ϵ_{ijkl} the gaussian residuals with $\epsilon_{ijkl} \sim N(0, \sigma^2)$. For each species *i*, the impact of the

environment was quantified using the contrast $\Delta_i = \beta_S + \gamma_{i,S} - \beta_{NS} - \gamma_{i,NS}$ with NS standing for

"non-sourdough" and "S" for '"sourdough" and tests $(H_0 = \Delta_i = 0, H_1 : \Delta_i \neq 0)$ were performed and

p-values were adjusted using the Benjamini-Hochberg method. As log-transformed data were analyzed,

the exponential of this contrast can be interpreted as the ratio between the sourdough mean and the non-

sourdough mean. Confidence intervals and tests were performed using the doBy R-package.

All statistics and plots (ggplot2 [48], leaflet package [49], with minor esthetical adjustment with

Inkscape)   have   been   done   with   R.   Data   and   scripts   are   shared   on   Zenodo.

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Results and discussion

Bread making processes and the diversity of bread making practices

A total of 39 French bakers producing natural sourdough bread and distributed all over France participated to the study (Table S1). The bread making practices of 35 of them were collected through one or several methods: personal interviews (with 12 bakers), focus groups (3 groups), observation during break-making workshops (2 workshops), and an online/phone survey (36 bakers). The general process of sourdough bread making is presented in Figure 1. We analysed 28 variables around this general bread making process, describing variations of the practices at all steps of the bread making process, from wheat grains to baked bread (Figure S1). Four bakers (B6, B10, B19, B20) who did not provide enough information about their practices were excluded from the multivariate analysis. According to a hierarchical clustering on principal components (HCPC), the 32 other bakers clustered into two groups corresponding to two main types of bread making practices (Figure 2). The first group, hereafter termed "farmer-like" practices group, includes 6 bakers and 11 farmers-bakers using the following practices: low bread production (<500 kg per week, 81% of the bakers of the "farmer-like" group), use of ancient wheat populations (56%), manual kneading (63%), working at ambient temperature (88%), long fermentation periods (more than 4 hours for 88%), and no use of commercial baker's yeast (88%). In addition, they tend to make their chief sourdough from dough after kneading (75%). The second group, hereafter called "artisanal-like" practices group consists of 12 bakers and 4 farmer-bakers having more intensive practices, characterized by a large bread production (>500 kg per week, 81%), mechanical kneading (100%), use of modern wheat varieties (63%), working at ambient temperature (56%), using commercial yeast starters in addition to sourdough for bread making or using commercial yeast starters for pastries and buns making (81%). In this second group, bakers tend to make their chief sourdough from a final sourdough.

Fungal community composition

Sourdough is a mix of flour and water naturally fermented by bacteria and yeasts. Sourdough yeast density ranged from $8.1 \ 10^4$ to $5.8 \ 10^8$ CFU per gram of sourdough, with a mean value of $2.9 \ 10^7$ CFU per gram, as commonly found in sourdoughs from all over the world [1, 16, 50, 51]. We isolated 20 to 40 yeast strains from each sourdough and identified species using ITS sequence as well as other barcodes when needed (see M&M section). Among the 39 collected sourdoughs, one (sourdough B14) did not give any colony in the laboratory, suggesting that his sourdough microbiota was no longer alive. A total of 1216 strains were characterized from the other 38 sourdoughs. In addition, we developed an ITS1 meta-barcoding MiSeq sequencing method on sourdough (see sup M&M). After filtering 5,360,620 raw ITS1 sequences for quality, abundance (0.005%) and chimera, 3,542,801 sequences were further analyzed. Overall, the sequences clustered in 113 OTUs. The number of reads per sourdough ranged from 8421 to 194 557. Therefore, we carried out our analysis on the rarefied matrix. Among all OTUs, 64 were identified as non-yeast, including 10 assigned to the order *Triticodae* (especially to the species *T. aestivum*), 50 assigned to plant pathogen fungi, such as *Alternaria*, *Aspergillus* or *Fusarium*, *Gibberella*, while 4 OTUs remained unidentified. Among the 40 yeast or yeast-like OTUs, 96% of total reads were assigned to the phylum *Ascomycota*, 87.5% to the order *Saccharomycetales* and 85.7% to the family *Saccharomycetaceae*. Only 4% of the total reads were assigned to the phylum *Basidiomycota*. Overall, three OTUs assigned to the species *Kazachstania humilis*, *Kazachstania bulderi* and *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* represented 20.3%, 15.5% and 24.1% respectively of the total number of reads and 28.1%, 23.7% and 18.2% respectively of the number of reads identified as yeast species (Figure 3).

Both non-culture-based and culture-based methods allowed the identification of the same dominant species (defined as a species with an over 50% frequency) for all sourdoughs but five (B09, B20, B22, B25, B41) (Figure 3). In two cases, the discrepancy was explained by the detection of *Cladosporium* sp. at high frequency with metabarcoding while this species could not be isolated in the laboratory (Figure 3). In two other cases, it was explained by a high number of *S. cerevisiae* isolated in the laboratory

compared to what was observed using metabarcoding sequencing. Finally, in the last case, the

identification of *Pichia kudriavzevii* required additional sequencing as it shares an identical ITS with

Candida xylopsoci. Because metabarcoding allows a deeper characterization of the fungal species

diversity with few discrepancy cases, the distribution of fungal species diversity will be further described

using metabarcoding data only. Previous analysis of the same sourdoughs revealed that *F.*

sanfranciscensis was the dominant bacterial species in all analysed sourdoughs but two, where the

dominant species was either *L. curvatus* or *L. heilongjiangensis* [20, 52, 53]. Therefore, we decided to

study the distribution pattern of microbial species in the fungal community only.

Distribution of fungal species diversity over sourdoughs

All sourdoughs but two had a dominant yeast species with a relative abundance over 50% and

many species with a lower relative abundance (Figure 3). Within sourdoughs, fungal species richness

ranged from 10 to 33, with a 23.5 median (Table S3). The effective number of species per sourdough

calculated from the Shannon diversity index ranged from 1 to 6.8 (Table S3), with 70% of sourdoughs

having an index below 2 (Table S3). Between-sourdoughs species diversity was analysed using weighted

Unifrac distances, computed from a phylogenetic tree built from the distances between OTUs using

Sporidiobolales species as root (Figure S2). Unifrac distances computed with four differently rooted

trees were highly positively correlated (Figure S3). Unifrac distances between sourdoughs ranged from

0.0005 and 0.71, with a median of 0.49 and a mean of 0.52. There was no significant correlation between

the Unifrac distances and geographical distances between sourdoughs (Mantel test, P=0.35).

We then analysed specifically the distribution of yeast species diversity as yeast species,

together with lactic acid bacteria, are the main functional player in a sourdough ecosystem and for bread

quality. Over the 40 yeast species detected in the 38 sourdoughs, 12 had a relative abundance over 50%

in at least one sourdough, four had a relative abundance between 20% and 50% and 24 had a relative

abundance below 10%. All dominant species (relative abundance over 50%) were fermentative yeast

species, except in one sourdough that had a *Cladosporium* species. We found all the sourdough yeast

genera (*Saccharomyces*, *Kazachstania*, *Pichia*, *Torulaspora* and *Hyphopichia)* commonly reported in

the literature except the *Wickerhamomyces* genus that we did not detect in our samples [1, 15, 16].

The baker's yeast species, *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* is not the most widespread yeast species in French organic sourdoughs

S. cerevisiae was found in 53% of all sourdoughs (95% confidence intervals=36% - 69%) but was

dominant (relative abundance over 50%) in only 24% (95% confidence intervals=11% - 40%) (Figure

3). In two cases, *S. cerevisiae* co-occurred with another yeast species at similar relative abundance. In

the first case, *S. cerevisiae* was present at a relative abundance of 40% with *Candida sake* at a 41%

relative abundance. In the second case, it was found at a relative abundance of 47% with *Pichia*

kudriavzevii at a relative abundance of 52%. In all the other cases, *S. cerevisiae* had a relative abundance

below 21% and was found with other dominant yeast species, such as *Kazachstania australis*,

Kazachstania humilis, *Saccharomyces uvarum* or *Torulaspora delbrueckii*. This suggests that *S.*

cerevisiae did not displace other species and can indeed be out-competed by other species in sourdoughs.

Therefore, despite the recurrent use of *S. cerevisiae* as starter species, its massive use in some bakeries

and homes, and its occurrence in a wide range of habitats such as soil, trees, and humans [9, 54] , this

species does not appear to have overwhelmingly colonized French traditional sourdoughs (Figure 3,

Figure 4). This result confirmed a recent analysis which revealed that *S. cerevisiae* sourdough strains

have a different evolutionary history than industrial strains [10].

The *Kazachstania* genus is highly represented in sourdoughs

Kazachstania was the most represented yeast genus over all sourdoughs, when considering both the

number of reads over all sourdoughs and the number of detected species. Indeed, this genus represented

57% of the total number of reads while *Saccharomyces* represented 26% of the total number of reads.

In addition, eight species of the *Kazachstania* genus were found in sourdough, a much higher figure

than for the *Saccharomyces* genus, represented by only two species (*S. uvarum* and *S. cerevisiae*) (Figure

3). *Kazachstania* species dominated in 54% (95% confidence intervals=36%-69%) of sourdoughs while

Saccharomyces species dominated in 27% only (95% confidence intervals=13%-43%). *K. humilis*,

followed by *K. bulderi* were the most commonly dominant *Kazachstania* species, and found in

respectively 21% (95% confidence intervals=10%-37%) and 15% of sourdoughs (95% confidence

intervals=6%-31%) (Figure 3). *K. humilis* is common in sourdoughs and has been found in many

countries, viz. Austria, Canada, China, Denmark, Ethiopia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Morocco,

the Netherland, Spain, UK, USA, and France [1, 15–17, 19, 53, 55–60]. *K. bulderi* has been reported

for the first time in anaerobic maize silage in the Netherlands and in fermented liquid feed for piglets

[61, 62] and more recently in French, Belgium and Spain sourdoughs [19, 53, 57, 63]. A recently

described *Kazachstania* species, *Kazachstania bozae*, was also identified in five sourdoughs (4.5%-

29%) and found dominant in three (1.7%-22%) [64]. Strains of this species were closely related to a

strain previously isolated from boza, a Bulgarian fermented drink, as estimated with ITS and LSU

(D1D2) barcodes (Source: NCBI, GenBank: KC118125.1 and KX369579.1). In addition, *Kazachstania*

saulgeensis, a recently described species [65, 66], was dominant in one sourdough (0.07%-14%).

Kazachstania unispora and *Kazachstania servazzi* which had previously been detected in sourdough

were also found [17, 17, 53, 57, 58, 63, 67–71]. Finally, some *Kazachstania* species were detected for

the first time as dominant in sourdoughs, whereas they had been previously found in other environments,

like soil (*K. australis*), sauerkraut (*K. barnettii*) [72–74]. None of the previous studies on sourdough

have evidenced as many *Kazachstania* species in sourdough.

The diversity of sourdough fungal communities was associated with differences in bread making

practices

We tested whether sourdough fungal community composition could be explained by bread making

practices. To do so, we performed univariate PERMANOVA analysis on the 30 bakers with less than 8

missing values for the 29 bread making practices variables (Table S4). The univariate analysis revealed

that the weighted Unifrac distance is structured according to the use of commercial yeast in bakery

($P<0.05$). It also varied significantly with sourdough age, chief sourdough origin (dough, sourdough or

both), the quantity of bread produced per week, the milling method (cylinder, millstone, Astrie, Tyrol),

the type of wheat variety (ancient, modern or a mix thereof) and the fermentation duration. However,

after FDR correction for taking into account multiple testing, none of these variables significantly

explained Unifrac distances.

In order to understand further the relationship between sourdough fungal community composition

and bread making practices, we clustered sourdoughs according to their fungal community composition,

on the basis of the PCoA of their weighted Unifrac distances. Then, we tested the link between the

fungal community group and the bread making practice group (farmers/artisanal practices group) as well

as the link between the fungal community group and each of the different bread making practices (Figure

5). Sourdoughs were clustered into three fungal community groups. Group 1 clustered all sourdoughs

(but two) having *Kazachstania* species as dominant species (K. *humilis K. barnettii, K. bulderi, K.*

saulgeensis, K. bozae). Group 2 contained sourdoughs with *Saccharomyces sp.*, *K. servazzi* or *K.*

unispora as dominant species. Group 3 sourdoughs harbored *S. cerevisiae* together with other species

such as *Pichia kudriavzevii*, *Candida sake*, or a Dipodascaceae sp. Group 1 sourdoughs were mostly

made by bakers having farmer's bread making practices while group 2 and 3 sourdoughs were mostly

made by bakers using artisanal practices (exact Fisher test, P=0.035). The fungal community groups

were significantly related to two specific bread making practice variables: the quantity (in kg) of bread

made per week (Exact Fisher test, P=0.001) and the use of commercial yeast (Exact Fisher test, P=0.05).

All sourdoughs in group 2 but one were found in bakeries making between 500 kg and 1000 kg of bread

per week, while groups 1 and 3 sourdoughs originated from bakeries producing very different amounts

of bread (ranging from amounts below 250 kg to over 1000 kg). In addition, group 1 sourdoughs were

more frequently found in bakeries that do not use commercial yeast while group 2 and 3 were more

frequently found in bakeries using the commercial yeast *S. cerevisiae* (Exact Fisher test, P=0.01).

Interestingly, group 1 sourdoughs harbored *S. cerevisiae* either at a relative abundancy below 1% or not

at all, while all groups 2 and 3 sourdoughs had *S. cerevisiae* at a relative abundancy over 20%, except

in three cases where it was either absent or at a relative abundancy below 6%.

To test more specifically the link between bread making practices and the distribution of

Kazachstania species, we analyzed more in depth group 1 sourdoughs. Within this group, 8 sourdoughs

had *K. humilis* as dominant species, 6 had *K. bulderi*, 3 had *K. bozae* and the remainder had still other

Kazachstania species. All sourdoughs made with artisanal practices carried *K. humilis* as dominant species or, in one case, the *K. bozae*. By contrast, sourdoughs made with farmers' practices had as dominant species *Kazachstania bulderi*, *K. australis*, *K. barnettii*, *K. saulgeensis* or *K. bozae* (exact Fisher test, P=0.004).

Other bread making practices than the ones studied here could also explain the distribution of yeast species diversity. Interviews with the bakers working with sourdough hosting *K. bulderi* and *K. bozae* suggested the role of dispersion of these species in French sourdoughs. Indeed, these bakers have been connected over the years either through seed exchanges, sourdoughs mixing or gifts, bread making training in common or working in one another's bakery. Some yeast species have been found in the bakery house environment and baker's hands and may thus be dispersed through baker's tools or baker's travels [58, 67, 75, 76]. However, it is still unclear whether wheat seeds and flour are a source of sourdough yeasts.

Fungal community composition was partly related to sourdough acidity, maltose concentration and hydration

The composition of fungal community may affect sourdough metabolic content (sugars, acids, alcohols) via fungal strains metabolite consumption and production. Inversely, the presence and concentration of different compounds (sugars, acids, alcohols) may affect differently the fitness depending on the strains and consequently be one of the drivers of fungal community composition. For example, lactic acid bacteria (LAB) are the main producers of acidity in sourdough, but yeasts also produce acetic acid and also indirectly affect acidity through positive or negative interaction with bacteria.

To investigate the relation between sourdough fungal communities and metabolic compounds, we quantified sourdough hydration, yeast density, bacteria density, sourdough pH, Total Titrable Acidity (TTA), sourdough concentration in seven sugars (maltose, glucose, fructose, raffinose, arabinose, mannose, xylose), four alcohols (glycerol, ethanol, mannitol, meso-erythtritol), six acids (lactate,

acetate, glutarate, pyruvate, malate, succinate) and calculated the fermentative quotient (lactate over

acetate ratio). For each variable, there was a wide range of variation (Table S5). The principal component

analysis based on all variables showed no evidence of sourdoughs grouping (Figure S4). As expected

in fermentation, yeast density was positively correlated to ethanol (r=0.74, P<0.001), glycerol (r=0.67,

P<0.001), and acetate (r=0.6, P<0.001) concentration. However, it was not significantly correlated to

sugar concentrations. This might be explained by the co-occurrence of bacteria which have their own

metabolism and interact by competition and/or cross feeding with sourdough yeasts.

We then tested whether the variation of each quantitative variable was associated with the bread

making practices groups (farmer-like practices and artisanal practices). There was no significant effect

of the bread making practice group except for sourdough hydration that was significantly higher in

sourdoughs made using farmer-like practices ($F_{1,94}$=11,69, P<0.001). On average, sourdoughs made with

farmers-liker practices had 55% water while sourdoughs made with artisanal-like practices had in

average 49% of water.

In addition, we tested whether variations in quantitative variables were associated with the fungal

community groups (Table S5). Group 3 microbial community sourdoughs (defined by PCoA clustering

on Unifrac distance, see below), which contains *S. cerevisiae* in co-dominance with a second yeast

species (*Candida sake*, *Pichia kudriavzevii* or a *Dipodascus* species), had a significantly higher mean

pH (mean pH_{group3}=4.2 against pH_{group1}=3.8, Tukey Contrasts, P<0.001), lower TTA (mean TTA_{group3}=7.7

against TTA_{group1}=17.1, Tukey Contrasts, P=0.002), and a higher maltose concentration (mean Maltose

$_{group3}$=52.8 mg/gr of sourdough against Maltose $_{group1}$=24.1 mg/gr of sourdough, Tukey Contrasts

P=0.002) than group1, having a *Kazachstania* dominant species. Compared to group 2 having in most

cases *S. cerevisiae* as dominant species, it also had higher pH (pH_{group2}=3.9, Tukey Contrasts, P=0.003),

and higher maltose concentration (Maltose $_{group2}$=23.7, Tukey contrast, P=0.003). These data may reflect

a lower fermentative activity for group 3 fungal community having two co-dominant species, and/or a

negative interaction effect of group3 fungal community on the activity of lactic acid bacteria (LAB),

which are the main producers of sourdough acids. Previous studies on the bacteria content of the same

sourdoughs showed that *L. sanfranciscensis* was most generally the dominant species, although *L. heilongjiangensis*, *L. curvatus* or *L. brevis* were also found as dominant species [20, 52, 53]. We found no significant correlation between LAB and yeast densities (r= -0.15, p= 0.45, Figure S4) but the link between fungal and bacteria community might be species and strains dependent. Additional studies on the interactions between fungal and bacterial communities need to be performed to better understand how they may drive sourdough acidity and sugar content.

Finally, we analysed whether the variations of each quantitative variable was associated with the dominant yeast species. We only considered the 26 sourdoughs having either *S. cerevisiae* (9 sourdoughs), *K. humilis* (8 sourdoughs), *K. bulderi* (6 sourdoughs) or *K. bozae* (3 sourdoughs) as dominant species, since the other yeast species were found dominant only once. The differences in dominant species was not significantly associated to variation in sourdough sugar, acids or alcohol concentration. However, on average, sourdoughs dominated by *K. bulderi* were more hydrated (63% water content in average) than sourdoughs dominated by *K. humilis*, *K. bozae*, and *S. cerevisiae*, having respectively 49%, 47%, 53 % water content in average (P<0.001 for the 3 Tukey Contrasts). *K. bulderi* was found to be dominant only in sourdoughs made using farmers' practices, a bread making practice group that was also found to be associated with more hydrated sourdoughs. Additional experiments should be carried out to test whether this species has indeed a better fitness in more hydrated sourdoughs or whether its presence in more hydrated sourdoughs is related to covariation with other farmer practices.

Phenotypic signatures of domestication

A previous analysis on *S. cerevisiae* revealed that sourdough strains had higher average fitness and fermentation performance than strains from other environments in a sourdough-mimicking medium (Bigey et al. 2021). Here, we investigated whether signatures of domestication could also be found in *K. humilis* and *K. bulderi*, the two Kazachstania species most commonly found in French sourdoughs. We tested whether fitness (log of population size and mortality at the end of fermentation) and fermentation performance (CO2max, Vmax, t1g, tVmax) differed between sourdough strains and strains from elsewhere.

A principal component analysis of 38 strains of *K. bulderi* and *K. humilis*, based on quantitative variation

in the six phenotypic variables described below was carried out. The first two axis explained 80.5% of

the variation and clearly separated strains by species (Figure 6). The *K. bulderi* strains were located at

the right of the PCA and were characterized by high population size and low mortality at the end of

fermentation, while the *K. humilis* strains were located at the left and were characterized by a rapid onset

of fermentation (t1g), high maximum fermentation rate (Vmax), and a short time to reach Vmax

(tVmax). Non-sourdough strains of *K. humilis* were located outside the cloud of sourdough strains while

non-sourdough strains of *K. bulderi* were distributed within and outside the cloud of sourdough strains.

Statistical comparison of sourdough and non-sourdough strains of *K. bulderi* and *K. humilis* for each

phenotypic variable revealed signatures of domestication for *K. humilis* but not for *K. bulderi*. While

the *K. bulderi* sourdough strains did not ferment significantly faster than the non-sourdough strains, the

K. humilis sourdough strains showed significantly higher Vmax, lower t1g, and lower tVmax than the

non-sourdough *K. humilis* strains (Figure 7, Table S6). On average, they started fermentation two hours

before the others and reached Vmax three hours before the others. In addition, their Vmax were on

average 34% higher than the others. *K. humilis* was found in French bakeries practicing artisanal bread

making. It is also the most frequently encountered Kazachstania species in sourdoughs around the world.

This species is therefore frequently found in bakeries, where short fermentations are often favoured.

This may explain why sourdough strains of *K. humilis* seem to have been selected for increased

fermentation speed. In contrast, sourdough-derived strains of *K. bulderi* did not appear to have a faster

fermentation rate than strains from other environments. *K. bulderi* was found in bakeries with farmer-

like practices. These bakeries often bake bread once or twice a week and store their sourdough for

several days. They also often use long fermentation and thus may not have selected an increased

fermentation rate. Other than fermentation phenotypes, there was no evidence of fitness differences

between sourdough and non-sourdough strains of *K. humilis* and *K. bulderi* in sourdough mimicking

media. Additional experiments in real dough should be performed to further test the effect of natural

selection in this environment.

Therefore, our results suggest that populations of *K. humilis* have been selected by humans and can

therefore be considered domesticated. Selection by artisanal practices would have led to an increase in

fermentation rate, which is a desired trait by humans to accelerate the bread-making process. In contrast,

we did not find a domestication signature for *K. bulderi* found in sourdoughs made by farmer-bakers.

Farmer-bakers typically store their sourdough for several days during the week and therefore make a

lower number of backslopping during the week. In addition, they make bread with longer fermentation

times than artisanal bakers. It is therefore possible that they did not select to accelerate the speed of

fermentation and instead let natural selection in the sourdough environment act alone.

Conclusion and perspectives

In conclusion, a great diversity of bread making practices and fungal community composition

was found in our sample of French sourdoughs. Surprisingly, the well-known baker's yeast

Saccharomyces cerevisiae was found dominant only in one fourth of the sampled sourdoughs. By

contrast, several species of the neighbouring genus *Kazachstania* were detected at high frequency,

revealing a major role for this mostly unknown genus in the study of fungal domestication and in bread

making. The fungal community diversity was partly explained by the diversity in bread making

practices. Bread-making practices divergence also led to different phenotypic signatures. Strains of the

K. humilis species, which was typical of sourdough made by artisanal-like practices, had increased

fermentation rate while strains of *K. bulderi* which was typical of sourdough made by farmer-like bread-

making practices had not. To our knowledge, this is the first evidence of the influence of artisanal

practices on taxonomic and phenotypic diversity in microbial communities. Therefore, our results

highlight the necessity of maintaining socio-cultural diversity to maintain microbial diversity in food

systems. These findings could not have been evidenced without the collaboration of bakers and

scientists, showing the importance of participatory research projects to gain new insight into biodiversity

preservation.

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Figure 1. The sourdough bread making process. Sourdough is a mix of flour and water naturally

fermented by bacteria and yeasts. It is initiated by mixing flour, water and occasionally other ingredients.

It is then "fed" by regularly adding flour and water, a process termed back-slopping. Once considered

mature by bakers based on their acidity, flavour and bubbling activity, the sourdough is called "chief",

or "mother" sourdough, and can then be used for bread making. The bread making process starts from

this "chief sourdough", or from a piece of dough or sourdough sampled from the preceding bread making

process, or initiated from a mix of flour and water naturally colonized by yeasts and LAB following

several back-sloppings. Once or several times, the chief sourdough is refreshed by adding flour and

water to constitute the final sourdough, which is used for bread making. This final sourdough is mixed

with flour, water, and other ingredients (salt, seeds, yeasts starters, etc.) during kneading to constitute

the dough. After kneading, primary fermentation occurs during the first rising. The dough is then divided

and shaped. The pieces of dough are then left to rise during a second fermentation and finally oven-

baked.

Figure 2. Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) based on 28 categorical variables describing

bread making practices.

A) Representation of bakers. Each point represents a bakery. The left area brings together baker with

"artisanal" practices and the right area bakers with "farmer" practices. Centroid of each group is

designed by a triangle. The dot's colors indicate the PCoA cluster of the sourdough fungal community

(see Figure 5). Black dots for group 1, white for group 2, grey for group 3. The fungal community of

the sourdough of baker 14 (in red) was not studied. B) Representation of the 20 first categories that

contributed the most to the MCA axes. The category is written next to the triangle. C) Distribution of

each variable for each bread making practices group. Only variables that mostly explained differences

between bread making practice groups are shown: use of commercial yeast, kneading method, chief

origin, kg of bread production per week, number of bread making per week, percent of water in dough,

number of back-sloppings before making bread, water origin, sourdough age and flour percentage in

dough.

Figure 3. Yeast species diversity was analyzed for 38 out of the 39 sourdoughs with both cultural and

metabarcoding methods.

Left: species were identified by traditional microbial isolation and identification using ITS sequencing.

Right: species were identified using ITS1 metabarcoding. The three most frequently-encountered

species are shown in contrasting colors (blue: *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*, red: *Kazachstania bulderi*,

yellow: *Kazachstania humilis*).

Figure 4. Distribution of yeast species diversity across French sourdoughs. Each bar represents the yeast

species diversity of one sourdough and is placed on the map where the baker is located.

Figure 5. Representation of sourdough depending on the weighted Unifrac distances between

microbial communities. The first line shows the clustering of sourdough according to their Unifrac

distance on a tree (left) or on a PCoA (right). Sourdough fungal community can be clustered in three

groups according to their weighted Unifrac distances. The lines below show the distribution of bread

making practices or the distribution of the dominant or most frequent species among fungal

community. Each line corresponds to a variable. On the left: a tree constructed from the Unifrac

distance matrix colored by groups of sourdoughs defined by the clustering analysis. In the center:

sourdoughs represented on the first 2 axes of the PCoA colored according to the group of sourdoughs.

On the right: the distribution of modalities of the variable for each group of sourdoughs (number of

each group on the x-axis).

Figure 6. Principal component analysis of 37 *K. humilis* and *K. bulderi* strains based on the

quantitative variation of maximum CO_2 production (CO2max), fermentation latency phase (t1g),

maximum CO_2 production rate (Vmax), time to reach the maximum production rate (tVmax), log of

population size and mortality at the end of the fermentation. The correlations between variables are

presented on the left while the figure on the right shows the projection of strains on the first two axes

representing 70.64% of the variation. The strains are colored according to their habitat of origin

(sourdough/non-sourdough). Their species is indicated by symbol.

Figure 7. Ratio between the sourdough strains mean and the non-sourdough strains mean values of

each quantitative variable measuring fermentation performance (t1g, tVmax, Vmax, CO2max) and

absolute fitness (Cellt27, Mortality). Confidence intervals are indicated by bars.

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Type de pratiques:
☐ Paysannes
☐ Artisanales

Species
■ Saccharomyces cerevisiae
■ Kazachstania humilis
■ Kazachstania bulderi
■ Kazachstania bozae
■ Cladosporium sp
■ Kazachstania unispora
■ Kazachstania saulgeensis
■ Kazachstania barnettii
■ Kazachstania servazzii
■ Kazachstania australis
■ Torulaspora delbrueckii
■ Saccharomyces uvarum
■ Pichia kudriavzevii
■ Cryptococcus victoriae
■ Candida sake

Figure 5

Figure 6

Figure 7