**Natural selection drives population divergence for local adaptation in a wheat pathogen**

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**Abstract**

Evolution favors the emergence of locally-adapted optimum phenotypes that are

likely to differ across a wide array of environmental conditions. The emergence of favorable

adaptive characteristics is accelerated in agricultural pathogens due to the unique

properties of agro-ecosystems. We performed a $Q_{ST}$ - $F_{ST}$ comparison using 164 strains of

*Parastagonospora nodorum* sampled from eight global field populations to disentangle the

predominant evolutionary forces driving population divergence in a wheat pathogen. We

used digital image analysis to obtain quantitative measurements of growth rate and

melanization at different temperatures and under different fungicide concentrations in a

common garden experiment. $F_{ST}$ measures were based on complete genome sequences

obtained for all 164 isolates. Our analyses indicated that all measured traits were under

selection. Growth rates at 18°C and 24°C were under stabilizing selection ($Q_{ST} < F_{ST}$), while

diversifying selection ($Q_{ST} > F_{ST}$) was the predominant evolutionary force affecting growth

under fungicide and high temperature stress. Stabilizing selection ($Q_{ST} < F_{ST}$) was the

predominant force affecting melanization across the different environments. Melanin

production increased at 30°C but was negatively correlated with higher growth rates,

consistent with a trade-off under heat stress. Our results demonstrate that global

populations of *P. nodorum* possess significant evolutionary potential to adapt to changing

local conditions, including warmer temperatures and applications of fungicides.

***Keywords:*** population genetics, pathogen evolution, thermal adaptation, fungicide

resistance, diversifying selection, *Parastagonospora nodorum*

**INTRODUCTION**

Evolution by means of natural selection operates on individual phenotypes and is

enabled by the diversity found in genes encoding quantitative traits within populations.

Across a wide array of environmental conditions, evolution towards a local optimum

phenotype results from the interplay among evolutionary forces such as natural selection

and gene flow and stochastic events like founder events and population extinctions (Merilä

& Crnokrak, 2001; Leinonen, O'Hara, Cano, & Merilä, 2008). Evolutionary processes

affecting local adaptation of pathogen populations may act differently in agro-ecosystems

compared to natural environments. For example, the high planting densities found in

agricultural fields allow more efficient pathogen transmission and the genetic uniformity

of agricultural hosts enable the development of large pathogen populations while imposing

strong directional selection that accelerates the emergence of host specialization

(Stukenbrock & McDonald, 2008; McDonald & Stukenbrock, 2016; Corredor-Moreno &

Saunders, 2019). While particular agro-ecosystems (e.g. the one used for wheat

production) tend to be highly similar on a global spatial scale, local pathogen populations

can encounter significant differences in the deployment of resistant genes, pesticide

exposure and annual fluctuations in temperature over a growing season (Laine, 2008;

Stukenbrock & McDonald, 2008; Elderd & Reilly, 2014). Hence, we expect that even globally

distributed pathogens can evolve different traits in different local populations according to

the predominating local evolutionary forces.

A better understanding of which evolutionary forces are driving local adaptation for

a particular trait can be achieved using $Q_{ST}$ - $F_{ST}$ comparisons (Zhan et al., 2005; Leinonen

et al., 2008; Leinonen, McCairns, O'Hara, & Merilä, 2013; Stefansson, Willi, Croll, &

McDonald, 2014; Yang et al., 2016). $Q_{ST}$ is an index of population differentiation based on

the distribution of variation for a quantitative trait (Spitze, 1993). $F_{ST}$ measures the degree

of population divergence based on neutral genetic markers. Natural selection is inferred

when population differentiation for quantitative traits is significantly different from that

for neutral markers ($Q_{ST} \neq F_{ST}$). Specifically, directional selection is inferred when the $Q_{ST}$ is

higher than the $F_{ST}$, and stabilizing selection is inferred when $Q_{ST}$ is lower than the $F_{ST}$

(Leinonen et al., 2013). When no differences are found between the two indexes, the

inference is that the trait is neutral or that it is not possible to distinguish between the

effects of genetic drift and natural selection in the populations being examined. Previous

$Q_{ST}$ - $F_{ST}$ comparisons for plant pathogenic fungi were conducted using global field

populations of the wheat pathogen *Zymoseptoria tritici* and the barley pathogen

*Rhynchosporium commune*. In both cases, natural selection was inferred to be the main

driver of local adaptation (Zhan et al., 2005; Stefansson et al., 2014), but directional

selection predominated in *Z. tritici*, while stabilizing selection was more important in *R.*

*commune*. These differences highlight the necessity to consider the adaptive dynamics of

each trait in a species-specific manner.

The fungal pathogen *Parastagonospora nodorum* causes stagonospora nodorum

blotch (SNB), a major wheat disease found around the world (Quaedvlieg et al., 2013;

Savary et al., 2019). Field populations of *P. nodorum* are reported to have low genetic

differentiation among continents, elevated population size, high genetic diversity and

exhibit frequent sexual recombination (Stukenbrock, Banke, & McDonald, 2006;  Oliver,

Friesen, Faris & Solomon, 2012). SNB control measures include fungicide applications and

the deployment of wheat varieties that lack toxin sensitivity genes (Oliver et al., 2012;

Ficke, Cowger, Bergstrom, & Brodal, 2017). Fungicides belonging to the sterol

demethylation inhibitors group (DMIs) are commonly used in both agriculture and human

medicine (Price, Parker, Warrilow, Kelly, & Kelly, 2015). DMI-resistant strains of *P. nodorum*

harboring point mutations in the gene encoding the targeted protein (CYP51) have been

reported in China, Denmark, Sweden and Switzerland (Pereira, McDonald, & Brunner,

2017). While the severity of SNB is influenced by environmental factors (e.g. SNB is most

damaging in warm and moist conditions (Shaw, Bearchell, Fitt, & Fraaije, 2008; Zearfoss,

Cowger, & Ojiambo, 2011), the costs of managing SNB were estimated to be \$108 m per

year in Australia alone (Murray & Brennan, 2009). A better understanding of the

evolutionary processes affecting local adaptation may provide insights into how to improve

management strategies and potentially predict future evolutionary changes in *P. nodorum*

populations.

Our aims in this study were to investigate the effects of natural selection and

genetic drift on quantitative traits using eight populations of *P. nodorum* sampled from

naturally infected farmer's fields around the world. First, we estimated the additive genetic

variation for colony growth and melanization phenotypes following exposure to a range of

92 different temperatures (providing a measure of thermal sensitivity) and fungicide

93 concentrations (providing a measure of fungicide sensitivity). We accomplished this by

94 measuring colony growth rates and melanization for 164 strains of *P. nodorum* using

95 automated image analysis (Lendenmann, Croll, Stewart, & McDonald, 2014; Lendenmann,

96 Croll, & McDonald, 2015). Next, we determined the degree of population genetic structure

97 among the eight populations using nearly 50,000 neutral SNPs extracted from whole-

98 genome sequences for all 164 strains. Finally, we estimated $Q_{ST}$ values for each trait and

99 compared these values to the $F_{ST}$ index calculated across the 8 populations. The $Q_{ST}$ - $F_{ST}$

100 comparisons allowed us to infer the predominant evolutionary forces driving quantitative

101 trait divergence among these populations and allowed us to detect local adaptation in

102 response to high temperatures and fungicide exposure.

104 **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

105 *Fungal populations and preparation of inoculum used for phenotyping*

106  *P. nodorum* strains were sampled between 1991 and 2005 from eight wheat fields

107 growing in eight different locations, including Australia, China, Iran, New York (USA),

108 Oregon (USA), South Africa, Switzerland and Texas (USA). Details regarding sampling sites

109 and population genetic structure based on SSR markers were described previously

110 (McDonald, Razavi, Friesen, Brunner, & McDonald, 2012; Stukenbrock et al., 2006). A total

111 of 164 genetically distinct isolates were analyzed with an average of ~21 isolates per

112 geographical field population (Table 1).

113  Based on preliminary experiments, we used 5 mm diameter plugs of mycelium as

114 initial inoculum for all experiments. All isolates were retrieved from -80°C long-term

storage on silica gel and transferred to Petri dishes containing Potato Dextrose Agar (PDA,

4 g $L^{-1}$ potato starch, 20 g $L^{-1}$ dextrose, 15 g $L^{-1}$ agar and 50 mg $L^{-1}$ kanamycin). The PDA

plates were grown for three days in the dark at a constant temperature of 24°C. 5 mm

diameter plugs of mycelium were cut from the edge of the growing colonies using a

sterilized cork borer and placed onto the center of fresh PDA Petri dishes. These plates

were grown in the dark at 24°C for seven days and then used as the inoculum source for all

experiments.

*Strain phenotyping*

All 164 isolates were exposed to the same seven environments, including low,

optimum and high growth temperatures and four different concentrations of an azole

fungicide. The experiments were conducted in square Petri dishes (120 x 120 x 17 mm,

Huberlab) containing PDA. Four 5 mm mycelium plugs of each strain were placed into the

corners of a square plate with equidistant separation. Each treatment was replicated twice,

generating eight colonies in total for each strain.

For the thermal response experiment, all isolates were grown in the dark on PDA at

18°C, 24°C and 30°C. Based on the outcomes of preliminary experiments using a subset of

16 of the strains (two from each field population), 18°C and 30°C were chosen to represent

stressful temperatures while 24°C was chosen as an optimum temperature for growth. For

the fungicide stress experiment, all isolates were grown at 24°C on PDA amended with

propiconazole (Syngenta, Basel, Switzerland) at either 0, 0.1, 0.5 or 1 ppm. All inoculation

procedures were performed on the same day for each of three separate batches of

approximately 54 isolates. No significant differences could be attributed to batch effects.

Digital images for each environment were taken at 2, 4, 6 and 8 days after

inoculation (DAI), a total of four time points. All camera settings and configurations, plate

orientations, and lighting conditions were standardized as described previously

(Lendenmann et al., 2014). After acquiring images, the plates were returned to their

growth chambers and their positions in the growth chamber were re-randomized. The

images were automatically analyzed using a modified version of a batch macro developed

for ImageJ (Lendenmann et al., 2014). For the new macro, the conversion from pixels to

square millimeters was performed using a calibration image taken from 50 cm above the

Petri dish. Colony detection was performed using the color threshold option, with the hue

sliding scales varying between 22 and 255 (macro lines 70 and 71) (Supplementary 1).

Quantitative measurements were acquired from image analyses for each colony.

Total colony area ($mm^2$) and mean grey value per colony (GV, a proxy for total melanization

on the 0-255 grey scale, where 0 is completely black and 255 is completely white) were

measured from digital images taken through the Petri dish top for colony size measures

and the Petri dish bottom for GV measures. We obtained a total of 8 raw data points per

isolate at each time point in each environment. The raw measures of total colony area and

GV were used to determine the following traits: (i) Radial growth rate was obtained by

fitting the mean colony radii ($\sqrt{total\ colony\ area/\pi}$) over the four time points using a

general linear model, resulting in average $r^2 > 0.9$ (Trinci 1971; Lendenmann et al. 2015).

Relative growth rates reflecting (ii) fungicide resistance and (iii) temperature sensitivity (TS)

were determined for each isolate as the ratio between growth rates under different

fungicide concentrations compared to the absence of fungicide, and growth rates at 18°C

or 30°C compared to 24°C. (iv) Melanization rate (MRate) was obtained by fitting the

distribution of GVs over the four time points using a general linear model. A positive value

for MRate indicates a decrease in melanization and a negative value for MRate indicates

an increase in colony melanization over time. The (v) melanization response (MResp) trait

was determined as the ratio between GV under a given fungicide dose and in the absence

of fungicide; and as the ratio between GV at 18°C or 30°C against 24°C. When MResp > 1 it

represents a decrease in melanization and MResp < 1 represents an increase in

melanization after stress exposure relative to optimum conditions. Variation among

isolates for GV reached its maximum at 8 DAI, so MResp was calculated based on this time

point.

*Strain genotyping*

Entire genome sequences were generated for all 164 strains. Strains were grown in

Potato Dextrose Broth (PDB) and total DNA was extracted from lyophilized mycelium using

DNeasy Plant Mini Kits (Qiagen) according to the manufacturer's instructions. Whole-

genome sequencing was performed on an Illumina HiSeq 2500 platform, with paired-end

reads of 150 bp. All the Illumina sequence data are available in the NCBI Short Read Archive

(accession xxx).

The generated raw reads were trimmed for remaining Illumina adapters and read

quality with Trimmomatic v0.36 (Bolger, Lohse, & Usadel, 2014), using the following

settings: illuminaclip = TruSeq3-PE.fa:2:30:10, leading = 10, trailing = 10, slidingwindow =

5:10, minlen = 50. Trimmed reads were aligned with the reference isolate SN2000

(Richards, Wyatt, Liu, Faris, & Friesen, 2017), which is assembled into chromosomes. The

alignment was performed with the short-read aligner Bowtie 2 version 2.3.3 (Langmead &

Salzberg, 2012), using the --very-sensitive-local option. Duplicated PCR reads were marked

as duplicate using Picard tools version 2.17.2 (http://broadinstitute.github.io/picard).

Single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) calling and variant filtration were performed

using the Genome Analysis Toolkit (GATK) version 3.8-0 (McKenna et al., 2010). First, we

used HaplotypeCaller in each isolate file individually, with the -emitRefConfidence GVCF

and -ploidy 1 options. Then, joint variant calls were performed using GenotypeGVCFs with

the flag -maxAltAlleles 2. Finally, SelectVariants and VariantFiltration was used for hard

filtering SNPs with the following cut-offs: QUAL < 200; QD < 10.0; MQ < 20.0; −2 >

BaseQRankSum > 2; − 2 > MQRankSum > 2; −2 > ReadPosRankSum > 2; FS > 0.1.

We retained only bi-allelic sites and excluded sites with missing data using vcftools

0.1.15 (Danecek et al., 2011). Using the function --indep-pairwise in plink v1.9 we pruned

SNPs above a linkage disequilibrium threshold of 0.2 using a sliding window of 15 kb (Chang

et al., 2015). From this unlinked SNP dataset, we selected only SNPs causing synonymous

substitutions (on four-fold degenerated sites) to identify neutral SNP markers, using the

software VCF2MK (https://github.com/russcd/vcf2MK). The final data set consisted of

49374 neutral and un-linked SNPs.

*Data Analyses*

We applied a general linear model to determine whether there were significant

effects for populations and isolates nested within populations on the trait values (package

"lm" and function anova in R) (R Core Team, 2019). Among population comparisons of

mean growth rate and mean melanization in the different environments were based on

Tukey's honest significance difference test using R.

Within-population components of variance for each trait were determined using

genetic variance and heritability (Willi et al., 2011; Stefansson et al., 2014; Pereira et al.,

2016). The variance components were determined using a statistical procedure

implemented in R software using the lme4 package (Bates, Mächler, Bolker, & Walker,

2015). The variance derived from the isolates within each population was interpreted as

genetic variance ($V_G$), while variance among replicates of the same clone was interpreted

as environmental variance because replicates had the same genotype. Narrow-sense

heritability ($h^2$) was calculated as the ratio between $V_G$ and total phenotypic variation

within a population (Falconer & Mackay, 1996). Confidence intervals were estimated by

applying a bootstrap with 999 re-samples.

Estimates of population divergence ($F_{ST}$) were calculated using the 49374 retained

SNPs with the R package hierfstat (Goudet, 2005). Overall and among population values of

$F_{ST}$ as well as their confidence intervals were determined by bootstrapping with 999

resamplings using hierfstat (Goudet, 2005). Nei's diversity was calculated using the

popgenome R package (Pfeifer, Wittelsbürger, Ramos-Onsins, & Lercher, 2014).

*P. nodorum* is a haploid organism, so dominance effects among alleles within loci

can be ignored. If we assume a small or negligible epistatic effect within populations,

genetic variance is equivalent to additive genetic variance for the determination of

population divergence in quantitative traits ($Q_{ST}$) (Whitlock, 2008). Under this scenario, the

following formula can be used to calculate $Q_{ST}$ as described by (Zhan et al., 2005):

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$$Q_{ST} = \frac{\delta^2{}_{AP}}{\delta^2{}_{AP} + \delta^2{}_{WP}}$$

Where $\delta^2{}_{AP}$ is the additive genetic variance attributed to among-population variation and

$\delta^2{}_{WP}$ is the additive genetic variance attributed to within-population variation.

Correlation analyses among the 12 traits used in the $Q_{ST}/F_{ST}$ analysis, between

overall heritability and Nei's diversity, between MRate and fungicide resistance/growth

rate and between MResp and growth rate and MRate were performed using a general

linear model based on Pearson's coefficient in the R package RcmdrMisc (Fox, 2005), and

visually represented using the R package ggplot2 (Wickham, 2009).

The thermal reaction norm of *P. nodorum* was modelled based on a second-order

polynomial equation using individual measures of average growth rate for every isolate

across the three tested temperatures. Another measure, the composite reaction norm, was

calculated based on the slope of the reaction norm between 24°C and 18°C and between

24°C and 30°C. An average value was calculated from the two slopes and populations were

compared based on these isolate mean values.

**RESULTS**

*Colony growth rate and melanization show quantitative distributions and high heritabilities*

Phenotypic variation for traits related to growth and melanization in *P. nodorum*

was assessed after exposure to different temperatures and different concentrations of an

azole fungicide for eight geographical field populations (Figure 1). As expected, the

environment of 24°C without fungicide, hereafter referred to as the control environment,

provided the fastest growth rate for most isolates. We found near-normal distributions for

growth rate and melanization in the control environment and at 18°C and 30°C, consistent

with quantitative inheritance of these traits (Figure 1). Growth rates at 0.1, 0.5 and 1 ppm

fungicide showed bimodal distributions (Figure 1). In general, all environments significantly

affected the average trait values across all populations and across all isolates within

populations ($P \leq 0.0001$, Table 2).

We observed high heritability ($h^2$) values for growth rate and melanization in the

different environments (Table 3). $h^2$ ranged from a low of 0.58 for melanization in 0.5 ppm

propiconazole to a high of 0.95 for growth rate in the control environment and at 18°C and

30°C. Other traits with $h^2$ higher than 0.9 were growth rates in 0.1 ppm, 0.5 ppm, and 1

ppm propiconazole and melanization in the control environment, 18°C, 30°C and in 0.1 ppm

propiconazole.

*Extreme temperatures and fungicide exposure reduced growth rates*

In the optimal control environment, the Australian population had a significantly

lower growth rate (4.37 mm/day) than all other populations except South Africa ($P \leq 0.05$,

Table 4). Average growth rates slowed as propiconazole concentrations increased ($P \leq$

0.001). At 0.1 ppm, the Chinese and Swiss populations had the fastest growth rates (4.6

and 4.3 mm/day, respectively; $P \leq 0.05$; Table 4), while the populations from Australia,

Oregon and South Africa had the slowest growth rates (2.6, 2.4 and 2.5 mm/day,

respectively; $P \leq 0.05$; Table 4). At the highest propiconazole concentrations (0.5 and 1

ppm), the Chinese population grew the fastest (3.3 and 2.4 mm/day, respectively; $P \leq 0.05$;

Table 4), followed by Switzerland (2.7 and 1.9 mm/day, respectively; $P \leq 0.05$; Table 4), with

both populations showing significantly lower fungicide sensitivity than the other

populations. No differences were detected among the other populations at these two

concentrations.

Temperatures of 18°C and 30°C significantly reduced the average growth rates

compared to the control temperature ($P \leq 0.001$). At 18°C, the fastest growth rate was in

the New York population, and the slowest was in Australia (4.4 and 3.6 mm/day,

respectively, $P \leq 0.05$, Table 4). At 30°C, there were no significant differences among

populations except for South Africa, which had the slowest growth rate (1.9 mm/day, $P \leq$

0.05, Table 4). Based on the TS calculations, the populations were overall more sensitive to

higher temperatures then to lower temperatures (Supplementary 2). For TS at the higher

temperature, the populations from Australia and Texas were the least sensitive (TS values

were closest to 1), whereas the population from South Africa was the most sensitive. For

TS at the lower temperature, the populations from New York and Australia were the least

affected. Altogether, 15 isolates had TS > 1 at the lower temperature and no isolate had TS

> 1 at the higher temperature.

The thermal reaction norm of *P. nodorum*, which reflects the patterns of growth

rate across the tested temperatures, showed a good fit to a second-order polynomial

model (Supplementary 3). On average, this model accounted for 66% of the total variation

for growth rates in *P. nodorum* (*P ≤ 0.001*). We did not find significant differences among

populations using this composite reaction norm.

*Melanization varied according to environmental conditions*

In the control environment, the strains in the population from Oregon showed

significantly lower melanization (i.e. higher GVs) than the populations from Australia,

China, Switzerland and Texas ($P \leq 0.05$; Table 4). On average, more stressful temperatures

and fungicide stress significantly affected melanization ($P \leq 0.001$).

Melanization was significantly higher at 0.5 ppm then at 0 and 0.1 ppm of

propiconazole across all populations ($P \leq 0.001$), with mean GVs of 66, 82 and 77

respectively (Table 4). Average melanization across populations at 1 ppm (GV = 68) was not

significantly different from melanization at 0.5 ppm (Table 4). Texas was the most

melanized population at 0.1 ppm, while Australia was the most melanized population at

0.5 and 1 ppm propiconazole ($P \leq 0.05$, Table 4).

Across all populations we observed higher melanization at 30°C and lower

melanization at 18°C (mean GVs of 61 and 90 respectively, $P \leq 0.001$, Table 4). At the

highest temperature, Texas was the most melanized population and at the lowest

temperature Australia showed the highest amount of melanization (mean GVs of 47 and

81 respectively).

*Low population structure based on neutral genome-wide SNPs*

We calculated the genome-wide $F_{ST}$ using 49374 unlinked SNPs (Supplementary 4).

The overall $F_{ST}$ across populations was 0.12 ($P \leq 0.0001$). The pairwise $F_{ST}$ ranged from 0.24

between Australia and Iran to no differentiation between China and Switzerland (Table 5).

Iran was the population with the highest overall Nei's diversity (Table 4, $P \leq 0.05$, 0.13),

consistent with previous studies placing the *P. nodorum* center of origin in the fertile

crescent (McDonald et al., 2012).

*Natural selection was the predominant evolutionary force acting on P. nodorum*

*populations*

To disentangle the effects of natural selection and genetic drift on quantitative

traits in populations of *P. nodorum*, we compared the $Q_{ST}$ index for each trait to the $F_{ST}$

index (Figure 2). The $Q_{ST}$ values for melanization were consistently lower than $F_{ST}$ across all

environments (Figure 2, $P \leq 0.0001$), suggesting that melanization is under stabilizing

selection. Growth rates in all environments, except for the control environment and 18°C,

had significantly higher $Q_{ST}$ then $F_{ST}$ (Figure 2, $P \leq 0.0001$), suggesting that selection

operates to favor local adaptation for these traits.

*Trait correlations*

The correlation analysis revealed significant positive correlations among growth

rates and among GVs (Figure 3, $P \leq 0.0001$), but no significant correlations were found

between growth rates and GVs for any treatment. Overall growth rates amongst the three

concentrations of fungicide were all significantly correlated, indicating that less sensitive

isolates maintained higher growth rates across all concentrations of propiconazole. Growth

rate in the control environment was correlated with growth rate at 18°C but not with

growth rate at 30°C. For melanization, we found positive correlations for GV at 0.1 ppm,

0.5 ppm, 1 ppm, 30°C, 18°C and the control environment. For instance, GV at 30°C was

moderately correlated with GVs at 0.1 and 0.5 ppm propiconazole ($R = 0.40$ and 0.35

respectively, $P \leq 0.0001$) suggesting that melanin accumulates similarly under these

conditions.

Fungicide resistance and growth rates at different temperatures were significantly

correlated with melanization rates (Figure 4). We found significant correlations between

fungicide resistance and MRate at 0.5 and 1 ppm ($p \leq 0.001$, Figure 4A). At the higher

concentrations, isolates with more negative MRate displayed an overall increase in levels

of fungicide resistance. At 30°C, growth rate and MRate were significantly correlated

(Figure 4B), suggesting that isolates with higher MRate were growing faster. Analogous

patterns were observed for fungicide resistance and MResp (Supplementary 5A).

No significant correlations were found between TS and mean annual temperature

or annual temperature variation (Supplementary 2).

**DISCUSSION**

We combined a digital image phenotyping method with whole-genome sequencing

of 164 isolates from eight global field populations of the wheat pathogen *P. nodorum* to

infer the patterns of selection operating on different quantitative traits. When exposed to

a variety of temperatures and fungicide concentrations, we found differences in the

average growth rates, the degree of melanization, and trait heritability among populations.

We then differentiated among the evolutionary forces acting on traits related to thermal

and fungicide sensitivity.

Growth rates varied significantly among populations, with the highest overall

growth rates at 24°C followed by 18°C. The least favorable temperature was 30°C. The field

populations from Australia and South Africa had the slowest growth rates at all

temperatures, while the populations from Australia and Texas were the least affected by

30°C according to the measures of TS. Temperature has an especially large impact on the

physiology of ectothermic organisms like fungi because their internal temperature directly

reflects the external thermal environment (Angilletta, Oufiero, & Leaché, 2006; Knies &

Kingsolver, 2010). In general, phenotypic plasticity and genetic differentiation are

considered the main mechanisms underlying the evolution of thermal adaptation (Chevin,

Lande, & Mace, 2010; Cooper, Tharp, Jernberg, & Angilletta, 2012; Tonsor, Elnaccash, &

Scheiner, 2013; Yampolsky, Schaer, & Ebert, 2013). On average, we found that plasticity

made only a small contribution (<5%) to overall phenotype variation. The field populations

from Australia and South Africa had both the slowest overall growth rates and the lowest

levels of genetic diversity.  We hypothesize that the slow growth rates in these populations

reflects a lower evolutionary potential due to a founder effect (Carson 1961; Templeton et

al. 2001), as also seen for Australian populations of *Z. tritici* and *R. commune* (Zhan &

McDonald, 2011; Stefansson et al., 2014). The Australian and South African populations of

*P. nodorum* likely originated on infected seeds when Europeans introduced wheat into

these regions during the last 500 years, providing a restricted gene pool (Stukenbrock et

al., 2006). Subsequent gene flow that could increase local genetic diversity during the

modern era may have been prevented by global trading patterns (Australia is a major

wheat exporter and South Africa imports relatively little wheat) coupled with effective

quarantine measures that limited the introduction of additional infected wheat seeds or

grains (Oliver et al., 2012).

The $Q_{ST}$ - $F_{ST}$ analyses indicated that growth at 18°C and 24°C were under stabilizing

selection ($Q_{ST} < F_{ST}$), while diversifying selection ($Q_{ST} > F_{ST}$) was the predominant

evolutionary force affecting growth at 30°C. We chose these three temperatures to

represent the range of temperatures that are likely to be encountered by many *P. nodorum*

populations during the wheat cropping season. It was postulated that field environments

experiencing a wide fluctuation in temperatures would favor isolates that can grow more

quickly and consequently colonize the host faster when conditions become conducive for

disease development (Stefansson, McDonald, & Willi, 2013; Yang et al., 2016). However,

because the pathogen depends on the host for reproduction, the pathogen's overall fitness

may be negatively affected if the host life span is reduced due to excessive host damage

caused by pathogen growth that is too rapid (Boots, Hudson, & Sasaki, 2004). This trade-

off between pathogen virulence and pathogen reproduction may stabilize rates of host

colonization in environments where optimum temperatures for infection and colonization

are more constant and frequent, offsetting the selective pressure that favors faster

growers (Alizon, Hurford, Mideo, & Baalen, 2009). The temperatures of 18°C and 24°C used

in our experiment appear closest to the optimum temperatures for *P. nodorum* growth and

development, consistent with the finding of stabilizing selection, which favors isolates with

growth rates closer to the population mean. The significantly higher population

differentiation at 30°C is consistent with a process of diversifying selection for local

adaptation. Over time, this selective process would be expected to evolve *P. nodorum*

populations that are locally adapted to higher temperatures (Hayden, Bratulic, Koenig,

Ferrada, & Wagner, 2014; Yang et al., 2016). Given current patterns of global trade, strains

of *P. nodorum* that are adapted to higher temperatures in wheat exporting countries like

Australia could be unintentionally introduced into regions such as China where local

populations are maladapted to high temperatures. The long distance movement of new

strains of the wheat yellow rust fungus showing novel temperature adaptations caused

extensive damage (Hovmoller, Yahyaoui, Milus, & Justesen, 2008). Thus *P. nodorum* joins

the ranks of plant pathogens that are likely to pose an increasing risk to global food security

in a warming world (Hovmoller et al., 2008; Milus, Kristensen, & Hovmøller, 2009; Fisher et

al., 2012; Stefansson et al., 2013).

Directional selection ($Q_{ST} > F_{ST}$) was associated with growth rates at all tested

fungicide concentrations, indicating that natural selection is the main contributor to

population differentiation for fungicide sensitivity. We extracted and analyzed the *CYP51*

gene from the genome sequences of all 164 isolates used in this $Q_{ST}$ - $F_{ST}$ analysis, and

confirmed the occurrence of previously reported *CYP51* mutations in isolates exhibiting the

highest fungicide resistance (Pereira et al., 2017). The observed mutations, found only in

the populations from China and Switzerland, are likely responsible for most of the

differences in growth rate at different fungicide concentrations among populations.

Evidence that directional selection shapes local adaptation for fungicide resistance

was also found in the wheat pathogen *Zymoseptoria tritici* (Zhan et al., 2005), while in

*Rhynchosporium commune* and *Phytophthora infestans* it was found to be under stabilizing

selection (Stefansson et al., 2014; Qin et al., 2016). In *Z. tritici* the emergence of *CYP51*

mutations in the pathogen populations was proposed to occur locally and then spread via

gene flow across Europe or, as shown more recently, across Tasmania (Brunner, Stefanato,

& McDonald, 2008; McDonald et al., 2018). *P. nodorum* and *Z. tritici* frequently coinfect

wheat plants in the field (Gilbert & Woods, 2001; Blixt, Olson, Lindahl, Djurle, & Yuen, 2010;

Oliver et al., 2012). Though the majority of fungicides applied to wheat in Europe target *Z.*

*tritici* (Fones & Gurr, 2015), we hypothesize that these treatments indirectly selected for

fungicide resistance in populations of *P. nodorum* (Knorr, Jørgensen, & Nicolaisen, 2019).

The findings of CYP51 mutations associated with azole resistance, high heritability, and

evidence for diversifying selection favoring local adaptation suggest a significant risk for

emergence and spread of azole resistance over larger geographical scales for *P. nodorum*.

Melanin is a secondary metabolite found broadly across eukaryotes that often

displays complex phenotypic variation across an organism's life cycle (Butler & Day, 1998;

Chumley & Valent, 1990; Dadachova & Casadevall, 2008; Singaravelan et al., 2008; Sturm

& Duffy, 2012). The ecological roles associated with fungal melanin vary widely among

species (Butler & Day, 1998), but it is most often reported to be related to virulence,

competition with other microbes, protection against UV-light and toxic compounds, and

tolerance of extreme temperatures (Nosanchuk & Casadevall, 2003; Dadachova et al.,

2007; Hagiwara et al., 2017). Although melanin is thought to provide protection against

cold and heat stress (Rehnstrom & Free, 1996; Paolo et al., 2006), there are exceptions

(Wheeler & Bell, 1988), and information regarding its impact on fungal thermal tolerance

remains scarce (Cordero & Casadevall, 2017). Melanin production is energetically costly

(Calvo, Wilson, Bok, & Keller, 2002), and may impose a fitness penalty if it reduces growth

(Choi & Goodwin, 2011; Krishnan et al., 2018).

Quantitative measures of melanization in fungal colonies were previously used to

infer possible contributions of melanin to variation in temperature and fungicide sensitivity

in the fungi *Z. tritici* and *R. commune* (Lendenmann et al., 2014; T. Stefansson et al., 2014;

Lendenmann et al., 2015; Zhu, Zhan, & McDonald, 2018). In *P. nodorum* we found that

stabilizing selection was the predominant evolutionary force shaping differences in

melanization across all tested conditions. The low differentiation among populations for

melanization suggests that selection operates against extreme phenotypes in *P. nodorum*

(Sanjak, Sidorenko, Robinson, Thornton, & Visscher, 2018). For the barley scald pathogen

*R. commune*, melanization was also found to be under stabilizing selection (Stefansson et

al., 2014). In *R. commune*, higher melanization was positively correlated with higher growth

rates at 18°C and 22°C, as well as increased fungicide resistance (Zhu et al., 2018).

Melanization was also correlated with faster growth rates at 15°C and reduced fungicide

sensitivity in *Z. tritici* (Lendenmann et al., 2014, 2015).

In *P. nodorum* the GV for most isolates was lowest at 30°C, suggesting that melanin

production increases under heat stress. We observed a negative correlation between

MRate and growth rate at 30°C ($P$ = 0.02), with faster growing colonies accumulating

melanin at a slower rate, but there was no correlation between growth rate and MRate at

18 or 24°C. Altogether, these findings suggest a possible trade-off between melanization

and growth rate under heat stress.  The calculated values for both MRate and MResp

suggest that the strains that were slowest to melanize had the greatest resistance to

propiconazole, indicating that melanin production did not reduce azole sensitivity. In a

knockout study in *Z. tritici*, albino mutants lacking the melanin-related transcription factor

*Zmr1* were exposed to two different fungicides, and had their growth compared to the wild

type strain producing melanin (Krishnan et al., 2018). The fungicide bixafen (a succinate

dehydrogenase inhibitor, SDHI) significantly reduced the growth of the albino mutants

compared to the isogenic wild type strain, but there was no difference in the growth of the

strains exposed to propiconazole (Krishnan et al., 2018). The protective effect of melanin

against fungicides is attributed to its binding capacity which reduces the fungicide

availability (Bridelli, Ciati, & Crippa, 2006; Paolo et al., 2006; Eisenman & Casadevall, 2012).

Since melanin has a low binding affinity with azoles, the inefficient binding process may

limit its overall contribution to azole resistance (Nosanchuk & Casadevall, 2006), consistent

with our findings in *P. nodorum*.

Our findings illustrate how local environmental conditions can couple with

different agricultural practices to shape the evolutionary trajectories of geographically

distinct populations of a plant pathogen. The high heritability for traits related to fungicide

and thermal sensitivity indicate the importance of genetic diversity in affecting the

adaptative potential of *P. nodorum*. We found that directional selection favors genotypes

with faster growth rates under fungicide and high temperature stress. This suggests a

significant risk for *P. nodorum* to develop fungicide resistance. Moreover, under the

expected scenario of global warming, it is likely that SNB will easily adapt to susceptible

wheat crops growing in warmer areas.

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Genomics Center in Zurich provided sequencing facilities.

FIGURE 1 The distribution of growth rate (A) and grey value (B) for 164 isolates of *Parastagonospora nodorum* growing under different temperatures and fungicide concentrations. Each plot within a panel represents a different temperature or fungicide treatment as indicated in the aligned text.

FIGURE 2 Comparisons of $Q_{ST}$ - $F_{ST}$ across 12 quantitative traits of *Parastagonospora nodorum*. Boxplots display the confidence intervals determined by bootstrapping with 999 resamplings of $Q_{ST}$ values. The red dashed lines show the overall $F_{ST}$ distribution. Traits with a $Q_{ST}$ distribution below that range are interpreted as being under stabilizing selection, while traits with $Q_{ST}$ distribution above that range are interpreted as being under diversifying selection.

FIGURE 3 Pairwise correlations among 12 quantitative traits of *Parastagonospora nodorum*. To make data comparable across populations, trait values of each trait-population combination were standardized to a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1, and then correlation analyses were performed based on isolate means. Significance levels were determined after Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons. * Significant at $p < 0.0001$).

FIGURE 4 Correlation analysis between melanization rate (calculated from the slope of a line fitted to GV over time) and (A) fungicide resistance (= growth rate in presence of fungicide / growth rate in absence of fungicide) and (B) growth rate of isolates under different temperatures. The dots represent individual isolates and colors the corresponding population of origin.

TABLE 1 Origin, location, year of collection and sample size ($N$) of *Parastagonospora nodorum* populations included in the $Q_{ST}$-$F_{ST}$ analysis.

| Origin | Location | Year | $N$ | Collector(s) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Oceania* | | | | |
| Australia | Narrogin | 2001 | 22 | B.A. McDonald & R. Loughman |
| *Africa* | | | | |
| South Africa | Southwestern Cape | 1995 | 22 | P. Crous |
| *Europe* | | | | |
| Switzerland | Winterthur | 1999 | 22 | B.A. McDonald & V. Michel |
| *Asia* | | | | |
| China | Fujian Province | 2001 | 22 | R. Wu |
| Iran | Golestan Province | 2005/2010 | 16 | R. Sommerhalder & M. Razavi |
| *North America* | | | | |
| New York | Ithaca | 1991 | 21 | G. Bergstrom |
| Oregon | Hyslop | 1993 | 17 | M. Schmidt |
| Texas | Overton | 1992 | 22 | B.A. McDonald & L. Nelson |
| Totals | | 1992-2010 | 164 | |

TABLE 2 General linear model analyses testing the effect of population and isolate (nested within population) on quantitative traits of *Parastagonospora nodorum*.

| Trait | Source | df | MS | F | *P* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Growth Rate 24°C (control) | Population | 7 | 4.22 | 77.08 | <0.0001 |
| | Isolates within population | 156 | 1.45 | 26.52 | <0.0001 |
| | Error | 164 | 0.05 | NA | NA |
| Growth Rate 18°C | Population | 7 | 2.41 | 54.10 | <0.0001 |
| | Isolates within population | 156 | 1.17 | 26.27 | <0.0001 |
| | Error | 164 | 0.04 | NA | NA |
| Growth Rate 30°C | Population | 7 | 2.40 | 76.40 | <0.0001 |
| | Isolates within population | 156 | 0.70 | 22.32 | <0.0001 |
| | Error | 164 | 0.03 | NA | NA |
| Growth Rate 0.1 ppm | Population | 7 | 31.16 | 620.08 | <0.0001 |
| | Isolates within population | 156 | 0.71 | 14.04 | <0.0001 |
| | Error | 164 | 0.05 | NA | NA |
| Growth Rate 0.5 ppm | Population | 7 | 40.11 | 640.44 | <0.0001 |
| | Isolates within population | 156 | 0.82 | 13.03 | <0.0001 |
| | Error | 164 | 0.06 | NA | NA |
| Growth Rate 1 ppm | Population | 7 | 23.66 | 579.90 | <0.0001 |
| | Isolates within population | 156 | 0.53 | 12.88 | <0.0001 |
| | Error | 164 | 0.04 | NA | NA |
| Grey Value 24°C (control) | Population | 7 | 6712.08 | 52.06 | <0.0001 |
| | Isolates within population | 156 | 1553.06 | 12.05 | <0.0001 |
| | Error | 164 | 128.92 | NA | NA |
| Grey Value 18°C | Population | 7 | 3048.37 | 39.32 | <0.0001 |
| | Isolates within population | 156 | 1068.70 | 13.78 | <0.0001 |
| | Error | 164 | 77.53 | NA | NA |
| Grey Value 30°C | Population | 7 | 5365.80 | 345.83 | <0.0001 |
| | Isolates within population | 156 | 1465.98 | 94.48 | <0.0001 |
| | Error | 164 | 15.52 | NA | NA |
| Grey Value 0.1 ppm | Population | 7 | 5190.23 | 84.33 | <0.0001 |
| | Isolates within population | 156 | 1693.65 | 27.52 | <0.0001 |
| | Error | 164 | 61.55 | NA | NA |
| Grey Value 0.5 ppm | Population | 7 | 4181.42 | 9.85 | <0.0001 |
| | Isolates within population | 156 | 1710.79 | 4.03 | <0.0001 |
| | Error | 164 | 424.37 | NA | NA |
| Grey Value 1 ppm | Population | 7 | 4008.38 | 10.36 | <0.0001 |
| | Isolates within population | 156 | 1402.31 | 3.62 | <0.0001 |
| | Error | 164 | 386.93 | NA | NA |

TABLE 3 Heritability measures, standard deviations (SD) and coefficient of variation (CV) for 12 quantitative traits of *Parastagonospora nodorum*.

| Population | Growth Rate 24°C (control) | Growth Rate 18°C | Growth Rate 30°C | Growth Rate 0.1 ppm | Growth Rate 0.5 ppm | Growth Rate 1 ppm | Grey Value 24°C (control) | Grey Value 18°C | Grey Value 30°C | Grey Value 0.1 ppm | Grey Value 0.5 ppm | Grey Value 1 ppm |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Australia** | 0.96 | 0.92 | 0.99 | 0.98 | 0.82 | 0.79 | 0.96 | 0.97 | 0.98 | 0.97 | 0.39 | 0.49 |
| | 0.02 | 0.05 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.09 | 0.11 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.32 | 0.45 |
| **South Africa** | 0.99 | 0.91 | 0.96 | 0.63 | 0.89 | 0.92 | 0.98 | 0.51 | 0.59 | 0.60 | 0.44 | 0.97 |
| | 0.01 | 0.08 | 0.03 | 0.31 | 0.07 | 0.04 | 0.01 | 0.49 | 0.39 | 0.37 | 0.34 | 0.02 |
| **Switzerland** | 0.93 | 0.98 | 0.79 | 0.97 | 0.98 | 0.97 | 0.98 | 0.98 | 0.98 | 0.99 | 0.92 | 0.69 |
| | 0.03 | 0.01 | 0.21 | 0.02 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.07 | 0.31 |
| **China** | 0.97 | 0.95 | 0.99 | 0.94 | 0.98 | 0.96 | 0.99 | 0.99 | 0.98 | 0.96 | 0.98 | 0.99 |
| | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.00 | 0.03 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.01 | 0.01 |
| **Iran** | 0.99 | 0.92 | 0.99 | 0.95 | 0.93 | 0.92 | 0.98 | 0.99 | 0.97 | 0.98 | 0.50 | 0.48 |
| | 0.00 | 0.06 | 0.00 | 0.02 | 0.05 | 0.04 | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.33 | 0.39 |
| **New York** | 0.98 | 0.98 | 0.96 | 0.99 | 0.77 | 0.86 | 0.66 | 0.99 | 0.98 | 0.97 | 0.52 | 0.66 |
| | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.04 | 0.00 | 0.19 | 0.08 | 0.35 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.44 | 0.32 |
| **Oregon** | 0.77 | 0.93 | 0.98 | 0.92 | 0.98 | 0.94 | 0.98 | 0.99 | 0.98 | 0.98 | 0.47 | 0.34 |
| | 0.18 | 0.06 | 0.01 | 0.06 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.39 | 0.34 |
| **Texas** | 0.98 | 0.98 | 0.97 | 0.97 | 0.93 | 0.96 | 0.99 | 0.99 | 0.97 | 0.89 | 0.45 | 0.45 |
| | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.03 | 0.02 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.06 | 0.47 | 0.47 |
| **Overall Mean** | 0.95 | 0.95 | 0.95 | 0.92 | 0.91 | 0.91 | 0.94 | 0.93 | 0.93 | 0.92 | 0.58 | 0.63 |
| **SD** | 0.07 | 0.03 | 0.07 | 0.12 | 0.08 | 0.06 | 0.11 | 0.17 | 0.14 | 0.13 | 0.23 | 0.24 |
| **CV** | 0.08 | 0.03 | 0.07 | 0.13 | 0.09 | 0.07 | 0.12 | 0.18 | 0.15 | 0.14 | 0.40 | 0.38 |

TABLE 4 Nei's diversity and mean values for 12 quantitative traits of *Parastagonospora nodorum*.

| Population | Nei's Diversity | Growth Rate 24°C (control) | Growth Rate 18°C | Growth Rate 30°C | Growth Rate 0.1 ppm | Growth Rate 0.5 ppm | Growth Rate 1 ppm | Grey Value 24°C (control) | Grey Value 18°C | Grey Value 30°C | Grey Value 0.1 ppm | Grey Value 0.5 ppm | Grey Value 1 ppm |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Australia | 0.091E* | 4.37B | 3.63B | 2.48A | 2.57CDE | 0.96C | 0.59C | 70.40C | 81.73B | 51.40C | 66.01BC | 50.88C | 56.79B |
| South Africa | 0.095DE | 4.86AB | 3.94AB | 1.93B | 2.52DE | 1.01C | 0.58C | 80.64ABC | 89.87AB | 59.43ABC | 82.19AB | 71.85ABC | 85.30A |
| Switzerland | 0.120B | 5.26A | 4.26A | 2.52A | 4.33A | 2.66B | 1.88B | 79.74BC | 89.40AB | 57.98BC | 85.01AB | 72.11AB | 67.78AB |
| China | 0.121B | 5.11A | 4.20A | 2.56A | 4.66A | 3.27A | 2.38A | 71.81C | 82.28B | 50.57C | 73.35ABC | 64.19ABC | 59.88B |
| Iran | 0.131A | 5.37A | 4.28A | 2.62A | 2.97BC | 1.09C | 0.65C | 94.56AB | 100.05A | 77.31A | 75.29ABC | 69.38ABC | 64.42AB |
| New York | 0.100CD | 5.25A | 4.37A | 2.49A | 2.83BCD | 0.86C | 0.51C | 93.37AB | 103.55A | 72.63AB | 84.46AB | 73.26AB | 74.82AB |
| Oregon | 0.105C | 5.11A | 4.19A | 2.57A | 2.38E | 0.65C | 0.48C | 97.43A | 97.86AB | 74.11AB | 90.80A | 77.70A | 75.04AB |
| Texas | 0.102C | 5.17A | 4.20A | 2.70A | 3.12B | 0.97C | 0.53C | 69.79C | 82.21B | 47.24C | 56.96C | 51.95BC | 60.61B |
| Overall Mean | 0.11 | 5.06 | 4.13 | 2.48 | 3.17 | 1.44 | 0.95 | 82.22 | 90.87 | 61.33 | 76.76 | 66.42 | 68.08 |
| SD | 0.01 | 0.32 | 0.24 | 0.24 | 0.86 | 0.97 | 0.74 | 11.46 | 8.70 | 11.80 | 11.18 | 10.00 | 9.67 |

*Values followed by different letters in the same column are significantly different at $P \leq 0.05$.

TABLE 5 Estimated pairwise $F_{ST}$ according to Nei (1987) based on 49429 neutral SNPs from 164 isolates of *Parastagonospora nodorum*.

| | Australia | South Africa | Switzerland | China | Iran | New York | Oregon | Texas |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Australia | | 0.16 | 0.13 | 0.12 | 0.24 | 0.17 | 0.15 | 0.18 |
| South Africa | | | 0.15 | 0.15 | 0.22 | 0.20 | 0.19 | 0.20 |
| Switzerland | | | | 0.00 | 0.15 | 0.08 | 0.06 | 0.08 |
| China | | | | | 0.15 | 0.08 | 0.06 | 0.08 |
| Iran | | | | | | 0.20 | 0.20 | 0.20 |
| New York | | | | | | | 0.08 | 0.04 |
| Oregon | | | | | | | | 0.08 |
| Texas | | | | | | | | |

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