The Fate of Chromosomes and Alleles in an Allohexaploid *Brassica* Population

Annaliese S. Mason,^{*,1} Matthew N. Nelson,^{*,2} Junko Takahira,³ Wallace A. Cowling,⁴
Gustavo Moreira Alves,^{*,5} Arkaprava Chaudhuri,^{*,**} Ning Chen,⁶ Mohana E. Ragu,⁶
Jessica Dalton-Morgan,⁶ Olivier Coriton,^{††} Virginie Huteau,^{††} Frédérique Eber,^{††}
Anne-Marie Chèvre,^{††} and Jacqueline Batley^{*,1}

^{*}School of Agriculture and Food Sciences and Centre for Integrative Legume Research, The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Queensland 4072, Australia, [†]School of Plant Biology and [‡]The UWA Institute of Agriculture, The University of Western Australia, Crawley 6009, Perth, Western Australia, [§]Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, 6627, Pampulha Belo Horizonte-MG, 31270-901, Brazil, ^{**}Department of Biotechnology, National Institute of Technology, Durgapur, West Bengal 713209, India, and ^{††}Unité Mixte de Recherche Institut de Génétique, Environnement et Protection des Plantes, Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique, BP35327, 35653 Le Rheu Cedex, France

ABSTRACT Production of allohexaploid *Brassica* ($2n = AABBC$) is a promising goal for plant breeders due to the potential for hybrid heterosis and useful allelic contributions from all three of the *Brassica* genomes present in the cultivated diploid ($2n = AA$, $2n = BB$, $2n = CC$) and allotetraploid ($2n = AABB$, $2n = AACC$, and $2n = BBCC$) crop species (canola, cabbages, mustards). We used high-throughput SNP molecular marker assays, flow cytometry, and fluorescent *in situ* hybridization (FISH) to characterize a population of putative allohexaploids derived from self-pollination of a hybrid from the novel cross (*B. napus* $\times$ *B. carinata*) $\times$ *B. juncea* to investigate whether fertile, stable allohexaploid *Brassica* can be produced. Allelic segregation in the A and C genomes generally followed Mendelian expectations for an F_2 population, with minimal nonhomologous chromosome pairing. However, we detected no strong selection for complete $2n = AABBC$ chromosome complements, with weak correlations between DNA content and fertility ($r^2 = 0.11$) and no correlation between missing chromosomes or chromosome segments and fertility. Investigation of next-generation progeny resulting from one highly fertile F_2 plant using FISH revealed general maintenance of high chromosome numbers but severe distortions in karyotype, as evidenced by recombinant chromosomes and putative loss/duplication of A- and C-genome chromosome pairs. Our results show promise for the development of meiotically stable allohexaploid lines, but highlight the necessity of selection for $2n = AABBC$ karyotypes.

THE *Brassica* genus contains the largest number of cultivated crop species of any plant genus (Dixon 2007). Six major crop species are *B. rapa* (Chinese cabbage, turnip), *B. oleracea* (cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli), *B. nigra* (black mustard), *B. napus* (canola, rapeseed), *B. juncea* (Indian mustard, leaf mustard), and *B. carinata* (Ethiopian mustard). These six species share a unique genomic relationship: progenitor diploid species *B. rapa* ($2n = AA$), *B. oleracea* ($2n = CC$),

and *B. nigra* ($2n = BB$) gave rise to the allotetraploid species *B. juncea* ($2n = AABB$), *B. napus* ($2n = AACC$), and *B. carinata* ($2n = BBCC$) through pairwise crosses (Morinaga 1934; U 1935). However, despite the fact that each pair of genomes coexists in an allotetraploid species, no naturally occurring allohexaploid species ($2n = AABBC$) exists. In general, interspecific hybridization and polyploidy in plants are potent evolutionary mechanisms, allowing formation of new species with adaptation to a wider range of climatic conditions and greater “hybrid vigor” than their progenitor species (Otto and Whitton 2000; Leitch and Leitch 2008). Hence, production of an artificial allohexaploid in the agriculturally important *Brassica* genus could potentially give rise to new crop types with greater intersubgenomic heterosis (Zou *et al.* 2010) and tolerance of a wider range of environmental conditions than pre-existing *Brassica* crops (Chen *et al.* 2011).

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¹Corresponding authors: John Hines Bldg. 62, Centre for Integrative Legume Research, School of Agriculture and Food Sciences, The University of Queensland, Brisbane 4072, Australia. E-mail: annaliese.mason@uq.edu.au; j.batley@uq.edu.au

Interest in producing an allohexaploid *Brassica* dates back to the 1960s when induction of somatic chromosome doubling of triploid ABC interspecific hybrids to form AABBCC allohexaploids was first carried out (Iwasa 1964). However, mixed results have been reported for success of these synthetic allohexaploid *Brassica*. Howard (1942) reported relatively high fertility over several generations of self-pollination of $2n = \text{AABBCC}$ plants derived from the cross *B. rapa* $\times$ *B. carinata*. However, Iwasa (1964) found poor meiotic stability in the same species cross that failed to improve even up to the F_5 selfing generation, resulting in loss of fertility and hence usefulness of this crop. Allohexaploid *Brassica* has also been created as a bridge to transfer disease resistance between *B. nigra* and *B. napus* (Sjödén and Glimelius 1989; Pradhan *et al.* 2010) to produce yellow-seeded *B. napus* by crosses between *B. rapa* and *B. carinata* (Meng *et al.* 1998; Rahman 2001) to transfer cytoplasmic male sterility from *B. oleracea* to *B. juncea* (Arumugam *et al.* 1996) and to resynthesize *B. napus* from *B. rapa* and *B. carinata* (Li *et al.* 2004). However, although these studies demonstrate the ease of production of allohexaploid *Brassica* from crosses between the diploid and allotetraploid species, meiotic stability and fertility was not assessed in these allohexaploid types. Somewhat increased genomic stability in allohexaploids derived from genotypes of *B. rapa* $\times$ *B. carinata* crosses has recently been demonstrated after several successive generations of selfing and selection for $2n = 54$ chromosome complements (Tian *et al.* 2010).

Mason *et al.* (2012) mimicked a natural evolutionary pathway for polyploid formation in *Brassica* by using unreduced gametes to produce an allohexaploid plant. *B. napus* and *B. carinata* were crossed in the first generation to create a hybrid with karyotype CCAB (Figure 1). An unreduced gamete from this hybrid combined with a reduced gamete from *B. juncea* ($n = \text{AB}$) to form a near-hexaploid (AABBCC) plant with $2n = 49$ chromosomes, 5 short of the full allohexaploid complement (Mason *et al.* 2012) (Figure 1). Low-resolution molecular karyotyping using microsatellite markers indicated that the missing chromosomes were all monosomic deletions [*i.e.*, one copy of each of five different homologous chromosomes was retained in the allohexaploid plant (Mason *et al.* 2012)]. This plant was highly fertile and provided plentiful self-pollinated progeny for the present study. We hypothesized that some lines produced from this allohexaploid may show $2n = 54$, as well as demonstrating greater meiotic stability and fertility than lines produced through crosses between diploid and allotetraploid species followed by colchicine treatment to induce chromosome doubling.

Materials and Methods

Generation and growth of plant material and experimental populations

Methods used in crossing *B. napus* $\times$ *B. carinata* to produce the first generation hybrid plant ($2n = \text{CCAB}$) are detailed

in Mason *et al.* (2011). Crossing to generate the allohexaploid hybrid plant (hereafter referred to as “A1”; previously N1C1.J1-1) and preliminary cytological and molecular marker characterization of this plant are detailed in Mason *et al.* (2012) and further details are provided in Figure 1. The source of cytoplasm in A1 was *B. napus*, with *B. carinata* and *B. juncea* used as paternal parents in the formation of A1. The A genomes in *B. juncea* and *B. napus* are hereafter referred to as subgenomes “A” and “Aⁿ,” respectively; the B genomes in *B. juncea* and *B. carinata* are hereafter referred to as subgenomes “B” and “B^c,” respectively; and the C genomes in *B. napus* and *B. carinata* are hereafter referred to as subgenomes “Cⁿ” and “C^c,” respectively, following the naming conventions of Li *et al.* (2004).

Seeds from self-pollination of hybrid plant A1 were sown and are subsequently referred to as the SP population. Data collected from each experimental plant in the SP population are summarized in supporting information, Table S1. We characterized subsets of plants for total DNA content (flow cytometry), for A- and C-genome transmission (Illumina Infinium *Brassica* 60K SNP array), and for fertility (sporadic observations, pollen viability, and self-pollinated seed set). A set of second-generation plants resulting from one of the most fertile SP progeny was then characterized by chromosome counts, and three plants with >50 chromosomes were tested for genome inheritance using fluorescent *in situ* hybridization (FISH).

The SP population was split into two groups. The first group (lines SP_001 to SP_050) were germinated in potting mix and grown to maturity in a controlled environmental room (16-hr photoperiod with a light intensity of $200 \mu\text{mol m}^{-2}\text{s}^{-1}$ at $18^\circ/10^\circ$ day/night) at The University of Western Australia (UWA), Perth, Australia. Lines SP_051 to SP_115 were germinated in potting mix and grown to maturity under air-conditioned glasshouse conditions at The University of Queensland (UQ), Brisbane, Australia. Self-pollinated seeds from plant SP_042 were germinated and grown under heated glasshouse conditions at the Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (INRA), Le Rheu, France. DNA was extracted from leaf tissue of plants SP_001 to SP_050 and parent species controls using a Nucleon Phytopure Genomic DNA Extraction Kit (Illustra). DNA was extracted from leaf tissue of SP lines SP_051 to SP_115 using the Microprep method of Fulton *et al.* (1995).

Flow cytometry

Samples SP_001 to SP_050 and controls (parent species genotypes, CCAB hybrids, and plant A1) were assessed for DNA content using flow cytometry. Young leaf tissue (5 mg) from each plant was individually sampled in 1.2-ml eight-strip tubes containing a 3-mm tungsten carbide bead on ice, following the methods of Cousin *et al.* (2009). To each sample, 500 μl of cold lysis buffer (0.1 M citric acid and 0.5% v/v Triton X-100 stored at 4°) was added. Samples were then placed at -20° for 10 min. Samples were shaken at 25 Hz for a total of 24 sec in a TissueLyser (Qiagen), with the rack orientation reversed at 12 sec to help evenly distribute the

Figure 1 Generation of experimental *Brassica* populations. (1) Interspecific hybridization between *B. napus* and *B. carinata* in the first generation. (2) Hybridization between the *B. napus* × *B. carinata* hybrid and *B. juncea* in the second generation, with the *B. napus* × *B. carinata* hybrid producing an aneuploid unreduced gamete. (3) Self-pollination of the resulting plant A1 to give rise to the SP lines. (4) Self-pollination of plant SP_042 to give rise to second generation SP42 progeny.

homogenization. Homogenate (120 μ l) was transferred by multichannel pipette to 96-well filter plates [800- μ l Unifilter microplate with a 25- to 30- μ m pore size and long drip directors (Whatman)] sitting over collection plates, which were gently vacuumed to collect the filtrate.

A reading plate with 2 μ l RNase A (3 mg/ml) per well was set up, and 60 μ l of the filtered samples was added to respective well locations. The reading plate was incubated at 37° for 30 min and treated with 150 μ l propidium iodide (PI) staining solution (Roberts 2007) following the methods of Cousin *et al.* (2009). Nuclear DNA content was measured on a BD FACSCanto II (BD Biosciences) flow cytometer, using FACS Diva V6.1.1 operating software at The University of Western Australia's Centre for Microscopy, Characterization and Analysis. The PI dye was excited with a 488-nm (blue) laser and PI emission collected with a 585/42 (564–606 nm) bandpass filter for 60 sec per sample or for 20,000 nuclei events (whichever came sooner). Samples that did not show a single clear peak in the first run (26 SP lines) were repeated up to five times. Lettuce (*Lactuca sativa* "Grand Rapids") was used as the internal standard for nuclear DNA content, and *B. rapa*, *B. napus*, and *B. carinata* were used as external standards. The *L. sativa* histogram peak was adjusted to fluorescence channel 200 at the beginning of each acquisition session. Experimental data were analyzed and coefficient of variation (CV) calculations performed using FlowJo V7.2.5 FC analysis software (Tree Star Inc.) to determine the CV, mean size of the gate and means for the standard and sample peaks (Cousin *et al.* 2009). Sample 2C DNA was calculated by (mean of sample peak/mean of standard peak)*2C DNA

amount of the standard species (*L. sativa*: 5.5 pg) (Zonneveld *et al.* 2005). Ploidy x -value was calculated by $2C \text{ value} / (0.97 + 2.36)$: (*B. rapa* AA-genome + *B. carinata* BBCC-genome, respectively).

Pollen viability

Flowers from all samples were collected, and anthers were dissected from flowers and placed on microscope slides with a few drops of 1% acetic acid–carmine solution (1 g carmine powder in 45% glacial acetic acid solution). Pollen viability was assessed as described in Nelson *et al.* (2009): stained and swollen pollen grains (oval shape) were considered viable, and non-stained and shrivelled pollen grains were counted as nonviable. A minimum of 300 pollen grains were counted per plant.

Sporad observations

Buds were collected in 6:3:1 ethanol:chloroform:glacial acetic acid solution (Carnoy's II) in the morning and incubated for 24 hr at room temperature before being transferred to 50% ethanol at 4° for storage. Anthers were dissected out from buds on glass microscope slides and gently squeezed to release sporads into 1% acetic acid–carmine solution. The number of sporads with one, two, three, four, five, or six nuclei post-meiosis (monads, dyads, triads, tetrads, pentads, and hexads, respectively) was counted for each of 58 individuals in the SP population, with at least 300 sporads observed per plant.

Chromosome counting

Twenty-five plants resulting from self-pollination of SP_042 (second-generation self-pollinated plants) were assessed for

chromosome number. Three to 10 (mode five) counts were performed for each plant on different chromosome spreads. Fresh root tips were collected into glass bottles containing 0.04% 8-hydroxyquinoline solution, incubated for 2 hr in the dark at room temperature, and then for another 2 hr at 4°. Samples were fixed in cold ethanol:glacial acetic acid (3:1) solution for 48 hr at room temperature and then stored in 70% ethanol at -20° until used. Fixed root tips were rinsed with deionized water for 2 × 10 min at room temperature to remove the fixative, then incubated in 0.01 M citrate solution (6 mM trisodium citrate-dihydrate, 4 mM citric acid monohydrate, pH 4.5) for 15 min at room temperature, and then in 250 µl of enzyme solution [5% cellulase (Sigma-Aldrich) and 1% pectolyase (Sigma-Aldrich) in 5 ml citrate solution] for 30 min at 37°. After incubation, the enzyme solution was removed with the aid of a Pasteur pipette, and roots were soaked in deionized water for 30 min. Washed meristem root tips were transferred to slides using a Pasteur pipette. One drop of DAPI (2 µg/ml of 4',6 diamidino-2-phenylindole in McIlvaine's citric buffer, pH 7; blue emission) (Vector Laboratories) was added. Fluorescence images were captured using a CoolSnap HQ camera (Photometrics) on an Axioplan 2 microscope (Zeiss) and analyzed using MetaVue (Universal Imaging).

FISH

FISH was carried out according to protocols detailed in Mason *et al.* (2010), at INRA, Le Rheu, France. The B genome was detected using Texas Red-labeled *B. nigra* DNA as a probe (GISH, Genomic *In Situ* Hybridisation), and the C genome was detected using Alexa 488-labeled BAC BoB014O06 to highlight a C-genome-specific repetitive sequence distributed over the nine C-genome chromosomes (Howell *et al.* 2002; Leflon *et al.* 2006). Three plants with chromosome counts of $\sim 2n = 54$ were chosen for FISH.

Molecular karyotyping using the Illumina Infinium Brassica 60K SNP chip

A SNP chip with 52,157 SNPs designed for *B. napus* (Illumina Infinium 60K bead array) was used to assess allele inheritance in SP_051 to SP_115, as well as parental controls [see Mason *et al.* (2014) for details of SNP data analysis]. Chip hybridization was carried out according to the manufacturer's instructions at The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia, and chips were scanned using a HiScanSQ (Illumina). Data were visualized using the genotyping module of Genome Studio V2011.1 (Illumina), and SNP locations were sorted with reference to the publically available sequenced *B. rapa* genome (X. Wang *et al.* 2011) and *B. oleracea* genome (<http://brassicadb.org/brad/>).

Statistical analyses and genetic segregation hypotheses

R version 2.15.2 (The R project for statistical computing) base and "sm" package were used to generate histograms and density distributions. Pearson's χ^2 test was used to assess whether allele inheritance followed Mendelian expectations

for an F_2 selfing population. For each locus at which both an A^j and an A^n allele was present in the A1 allohexaploid plant (A^j/A^n), a 1: 2:1 allelic segregation ratio was predicted for $A^n/A^n:A^j/A^n:A^j/A^j$ in the progeny. Likewise, for each locus at which both a C^n and a C^c allele was present in the allohexaploid plant A1 (C^n/C^c), a 1:2:1 allelic segregation ratio of $C^n/C^n:C^n/C^c:C^c/C^c$ was predicted in the segregating F_2 population. For univalent chromosomes A^j2 , A^j6 , and A^j9 , where no *B. napus* (A^n) homologous chromosome partner was present in the A1 hybrid, gametes from A1 would be expected to carry each chromosome at a frequency of 50%. As two parent gametes united in a self-pollination event to produce the SP progeny, 75% of plants should have at least one copy of the univalent *B. juncea* alleles at each locus (1:2:1 ratio for two copies of A^j :one copy of A^j :no copies of A^j). Hence, a 3:1 ratio of presence:absence was expected for A^j alleles for chromosomes A^j2 , A^j6 , and A^j9 .

Results

Flow cytometry

Of the 44 plants assessed for DNA content using flow cytometry in the SP population (Table S1), 43 had DNA contents ranging from 82 to 97% of the predicted DNA content for a $2n = AABBC$ allohexaploid (average 88%) and formed a normal distribution about the A1 plant DNA content (Figure 2). A single plant (SP_016) had a DNA content of 28% of the predicted allohexaploid DNA content, approximately the same as *B. rapa* ($2n = AA$).

Molecular karyotyping using the Illumina Brassica 60K SNP chip for the A and C genomes

A total of 7651 of the 52,157 A- and C-genome SNPs assessed were polymorphic between the *B. juncea* (A^j) and *B. napus* (A^n) A genomes or *B. napus* (C^n) and *B. carinata* (C^c) C genomes in the parent cultivars: 2667 in the A genome (A^j/A^n SNPs) and 4984 in the C genome (C^n/C^c SNPs). The number of SNPs per chromosome ranged from 123 to 1283 (average 402 per chromosome). On the basis of the SNP molecular karyotyping, we determined if chromosomes from *B. juncea* (A^j alleles), *B. napus* (A^n and C^n alleles), and *B. carinata* (C^c alleles) were absent (all alleles from that subgenome absent for that chromosome), present (all alleles from that subgenome present for that chromosome), or partially present (some alleles from that subgenome absent and some present for that chromosome, such as would result from homologous recombination between A^n and A^j chromosomes or between C^n and C^c chromosomes). Absence of both parental alleles (*i.e.*, both A^j and A^n or both C^n and C^c) was assumed to result from chromosome loss if a whole chromosome was missing and to result from nonhomologous recombination if only part of a chromosome was missing.

B. napus chromosomes A^n2 , A^n6 , and A^n9 were missing from the allohexaploid hybrid "A1": these *B. napus* chromosomes were not transmitted to A1 from the $C^nC^cA^jB^c$ parent and hence were also absent in the SP population. A previously

Figure 2 Approximate DNA content determined by flow cytometry in 44 SP plants derived from a plant (A1) resulting from the cross (*B. napus* × *B. carinata*) × *B. juncea*. A DNA content of 1.0 represents the expected value for a $2n = 6x = \text{AABBCC}$ allohexaploid, produced by summing values from *B. rapa* ($2n = 2x = \text{AA}$) and *B. carinata* ($2n = 4x = \text{BBCC}$).

characterized Aⁿ7-Cⁿ6 interstitial reciprocal translocation comprising about 1/3 of both chromosomes (Osborn *et al.* 2003) also existed within the *B. napus* cultivar but not in the *B. juncea*/*B. carinata* A^j and C^c genomes, as evidenced by haplotype block discontinuity and disrupted allelic inheritance in this region of the SP population. These events accounted for the vast majority of missing chromosome fragments in the 71 plants genotyped in the SP population (Figure 3): chromosomes A7 and C6 showed 16 and 12% loss of both parental alleles, respectively, across the population. The next largest percentage loss of both parental alleles (1–2%) was observed for chromosomes A1 and C2 (Figure 3). Part of chromosome Aⁿ10 in the *B. napus* parent line exhibited two-locus amplification patterns across all SNPs (as assessed by SNP marker cluster plots) for a distance of ~5 Mb at the distal end of chromosome A10. Two-locus patterns were not observed in the *B. juncea* A^j10 chromosome in the same region. This putative duplication in Aⁿ10 could not be readily matched to a haplotype pattern present in any other part of the genome.

Of the 71 SP progeny genotyped, 24 (32%) had complete complements of A- and C-genome alleles from at least one parent. For those chromosomes absent from the A1 hybrid (Aⁿ2, Aⁿ6, and Aⁿ9), their homolog equivalents from the *B. juncea* parent (A^j2, A^j6, and A^j9) were present. In these cases, it was not possible to determine if one or two copies of each A^j2, A^j6, or A^j9 allele was present.

Allele transmission and genomic bias in the A and C genomes

Allelic inheritance for most chromosomes followed normal Mendelian expectations for segregation at heterozygous loci (Figure 3). For loci that were heterozygous in the near-hexaploid parent, a 1:2:1 ratio of codominant parental alleles was expected in the self-progeny. For loci present as a single copy in the allohexaploid hybrid A1 (*i.e.*, part of univalent chromosomes), a dominant-type ratio of 3:1 present:absent was expected in the self-progeny.

In total, 877 SNP loci were fixed to homozygosity for either *B. napus* or *B. carinata* parental alleles in the allohexaploid hybrid A1 (and subsequently in the SP population) due to homologous recombination between the Cⁿ and C^c chromosomes during meiosis in the CⁿC^cAⁿB^c hybrid (Figure 1). Regions of homozygosity fixed by homologous recombination in the *B. napus* × *B. carinata* hybrid were present on every chromosome. Of the remaining 6774 loci, 626 (9.2%) showed distorted segregation toward retention of either parental allele at $P < 0.05$ (Pearson's χ^2 test for count data), with 28 loci (0.4%) significant at $P < 0.001$.

All loci with significant distortion at $P < 0.001$ were present in two clusters on chromosomes A7 and A10. The bottom part of *B. napus* Aⁿ7 that represented the small telomeric region of the chromosome adjacent to the interstitial A7/C6 translocation region was retained more often than predicted by chance. *B. napus* alleles were also preferentially retained for the putative duplicated region on chromosome Aⁿ10. In addition, 39% of the loci showing segregation distortion were present on *B. juncea* univalent chromosome A^j9. The univalent chromosome A^j9 from *B. juncea* was retained more often than predicted, although there was no such effect for the other univalent chromosomes A^j2 and A^j6 (Figure 3).

Taking into account only loci segregating for Cⁿ and C^c alleles, C-genome allele inheritance included a slight bias toward inheritance of a section of *B. napus* Cⁿ2, retention of *B. carinata* alleles in a section of C^c4, bias toward presence of either *B. napus* or *B. carinata* C7 alleles for different parts of the chromosome and bias toward presence of *B. carinata* alleles in part of C8. Sections of chromosomes A3, A4, and A5 showed bias toward retention of *B. juncea* alleles, and the top of chromosome A8 and the bottom of A10 showed bias toward retention of *B. napus* alleles (Pearson's χ^2 test, $P < 0.05$). No genome-wide bias toward inheritance of either alleles from a particular subgenome or alleles from a particular species was observed.

Figure 3 Inheritance of A-genome alleles (A^i and A^n from *B. juncea* and *B. napus*, respectively) and C-genome alleles (C^c and C^n from *B. carinata* and *B. napus*, respectively) in 71 SP progeny of a hybrid plant derived from the cross (*B. napus* × *B. carinata*) × *B. juncea*.

Fertility of the SP generation

Pollen viability was assessed for 109 SP individuals. There was no significant difference in pollen viability between the two groups of the SP population grown at UWA and UQ (Student's *t*-test, $P > 0.05$). Pollen viability ranged from 0 to 92% across the SP population, with an average of 39% (Figure 4). A bimodal distribution for pollen viability was weakly suggested by the density distribution (Figure 4). Of the 109, 12 individuals were male-sterile (11%).

The number of seeds per plant harvested from 109 progeny in the SP population ranged from 0 to 583, averaging 68 and with a median of 28 (Figure 5). Thirteen plants (12%) set no seeds, 34 plants (31%) set <10 seeds, and 28 plants (26%) set >100 seeds (Figure 5). There were no obvious relationships between genomic structure, including missing chromosomes, pollen viability, or self-pollinated seed set in the SP population.

Sporad observations

Fifty-eight individuals in the SP population were assessed for sporad production and produced an average of 95.2% tetrads, 1.3% triads, 1.9% dyads, and 1.5% monads. Tetrad production ranged from 61.3 to 99.7%, with a median of 96.7%. One (sterile, no self-seed produced) plant produced

36.2% dyads. The next highest dyad production was 8.8%, the median dyad production was 0.6%, and no dyads at all were observed in 13 plants. Triad production ranged from 0 to 6.9%, with a median of 0.8%, and 7 plants did not produce triads. Monad production ranged from 0 to 8.7% with a median of 0.9%, and 16 plants did not produce monads. Only one individual produced hexads (0.5%), as well as pentads (0.3%), and an additional two individuals also produced pentads at low frequencies (0.3–0.6%).

Chromosome counts, FISH, and fertility in the second selfing generation

Individual SP_042 had a high seed set (294), moderate pollen viability (62%), and DNA content 97% of a full hexaploid ($2n = AABBCC$). A set of 25 second-generation self-pollinated progeny from SP_042 were characterized by chromosome counts. The average chromosome number was 50, ranging from 46 to 54 with a standard deviation of 2.6. Three plants with >50 chromosomes were selected for investigation using FISH and are hereafter referred to as SP_042_01, SP_042_02, and SP_042_03 (Figure 6).

SP42_01 had 53 chromosomes, compared with the expected chromosome complement for an allohexaploid plant of 54 ($2n = AABBCC = 54$). SP42_01 was missing four

Figure 4 Distribution of pollen viability in 109 plants derived from self-pollination of a hybrid (A1) resulting from the cross (*B. napus* × *B. carinata*) × *B. juncea*, with overlaid density distribution (solid line) and normal distribution curve (dotted line).

A-genome chromosomes and one C-genome chromosome and had an additional four recombinant chromosomes (Table 1 and Figure 6). This plant produced three seeds from 27 self-pollinated flowers (Table 1). SP42_02 had an estimated 54 chromosomes, but was missing 11 A-genome chromosomes and gained an additional six C-genome chromosomes and five recombinant chromosomes (Table 1). This plant set two seeds from 18 self-pollinated flowers (Table 1). SP42-03 had an estimated 53 chromosomes, was missing seven A-genome chromosomes and three B-genome chromosomes, and gained an additional four C-genome chromosomes and five recombinant chromosomes (Table 1). This plant was the most fertile of the three plants with a seed set of 124 seeds from 73 self-pollinated flowers (1.7 seeds/flower). Representative chromosome spreads for each of SP42-01, SP42-02, and SP42-03 are shown in Figure 6 with chromosomes from each genome labeled by FISH and recombinant chromosomes labeled.

Correlations between fertility measures and DNA content/allele inheritance

No significant association was observed between the loss of chromosome segments and seed set or pollen viability in the SP population (one-way ANOVA). A weak but significant correlation (one-way ANOVA, $P = 0.02$, $r^2 = 0.12$) existed between DNA content as estimated by flow cytometry and seed set, excluding the plant with abnormally low DNA content (Figure 2). No significant association between DNA content and pollen viability was observed, although pollen viability and seed set in the subset of the SP population assessed for DNA content were significantly associated (one-way ANOVA, $P = 0.01$, $r^2 = 0.17$).

Discussion

In this study, we assessed fertility, chromosome transmission, and genomic stability in self-pollinated progeny of a near-allohexaploid *Brassica* hybrid, using a combination of high-throughput molecular marker genotyping, flow cytometry, fertility measurements, and cytogenetics techniques. Approximately one-third of the self-pollinated progeny retained all parental A- and C-genome alleles, and unbiased allelic segregation was observed for >90% of the loci assessed. Surprisingly, this is higher than observed for previously generated *B. napus* mapping populations. For example, 22–49% of alleles showed segregation distortion in three well-characterized doubled-haploid-derived populations of *B. napus* (J. Wang *et al.* 2011). This difference in segregation bias may be related to the use of microspore culture to produce these mapping populations, rather than fertilization and embryo development *in planta*. Genomic regions conferring better microspore survival in culture may be selected for during the novel pressures of the culture process, resulting in allele segregation distortion. DNA content followed a normal distribution about the A1 plant mean, and several plants were highly self-fertile, setting hundreds of self-pollinated seeds. SNP data indicated that there was relatively little homeologous recombination across most of the genome, and allele transmission followed patterns consistent with normal Mendelian segregation (Figure 3). This represents an improvement over previously detected meiotic stability in synthetic *Brassica* types (Song *et al.* 1995; Szadkowski *et al.* 2010; Tian *et al.* 2010; Xiong *et al.* 2011; Zou *et al.* 2011). This effect may be related to the heterozygosity of the initial hexaploid hybrid used in this study ($2n = \sim A^1A^nB^1B^nC^1C^n$), which could facilitate rapid

Figure 5 Distribution of self-pollinated seed set in 109 plants derived from self-pollination of a hybrid (A1) resulting from the cross (*B. napus* × *B. carinata*) × *B. juncea*, with overlaid density distribution (solid line).

allelic selection for meiotic stability and fertility in resulting progeny. Despite the confounding presence of the Aⁿ7-Cⁿ6 translocation and putative A10 duplication in the *B. napus* parental line used to generate this population, suggestive initial results for DNA content, allele inheritance, and fertility were obtained. Taken together, these results suggested that several self-progeny of the interspecific hybrid had “normal” or near-normal, substantially un-rearranged chromosome complements. This is a promising result supporting the development of stable allohexaploid *Brassica* lines using this approach.

In our study, there was no relationship between missing chromosome fragments and fertility in the SP population, and only a weak predictive correlation (11%) between DNA content and self-seed set. Although Nicolas *et al.* (2012) observed significantly reduced fertility in progeny of *Brassica* allohaploids (AC) with increasing loss of chromosome segments, the higher genome redundancy of the allohexaploids (AABBCC) may have protected against this effect. Loss of A7 and C6 chromosome regions in the allohexaploid population was also not significantly different from expected proportions for progeny resulting from selfing of a translocation heterozygote (12.5%), suggesting that rearrangement events were not discriminated against; similar results were observed by Nicolas *et al.* (2009) in allohaploid *B. napus*.

Surprisingly, there was no selection pressure for or against loss of univalent chromosomes Aⁱ2 and Aⁱ6 in the allohexaploid progeny, and univalent chromosome Aⁱ9 was present more often than predicted by chance (Figure 3). This contrasts with previous observations in *Brassica* of reduced (<50%) transmission of monosomic C-genome chromosomes in AA + C addition lines (Heneen *et al.* 2012) and biased transmission of univalents in AAC hybrid types

(Leflon *et al.* 2006) and may be related to the higher ploidy level or genome structure of the allohexaploid hybrid types. Selection pressure to retain alleles conferring beneficial meiotic stability may also be operating to retain univalent chromosomes or chromosome regions. A number of QTL with effects on meiotic behavior have been identified in *B. napus* (Liu *et al.* 2006), including the major locus *PrBn* (Jenczewski *et al.* 2003) with quantitative effects on crossover frequency between nonhomologous chromosomes (Nicolas *et al.* 2009). Recently, presence of chromosomes C6 and C9 and retention of additional univalent chromosomes were also found to increase crossover frequency between homologous A-genome chromosomes in AA + C hybrids (Suay *et al.* 2014). Little is known about nonhomologous chromosome pairing control in *B. juncea* and *B. carinata*, although some evidence for a genetic locus in *B. juncea* with a major effect on nonhomologous pairing has been obtained (Prakash 1974). Preferential retention of Aⁱ9 (and of univalents Aⁱ2 and Aⁱ6 relative to previous studies) in our population may be related to the presence of alleles for meiotic stability or fertility on those chromosomes or to the effect of additional univalent chromosomes on genome-wide meiotic behavior.

Higher chromosome numbers in the three second-generation progeny did not correspond to euploid AABBCC chromosome complements (Table 1 and Figure 6). In fact, these progeny showed evidence of large-scale recombination between all three genomes (Table 1 and Figure 6), as well as loss of A-genome chromosomes but putative retention of additional sets of putative C-genome homeologs (Figure 6). The retention of four homeologous chromosomes for each set of homeologs but with loss or gain of homologous pairs (e.g., A1/A1/C1/C1 to A1/A1/A1/A1) was also reported by Szadkowski *et al.* (2010) and Xiong *et al.* (2011) in resynthesized

Figure 6 FISH using genome labels for chromosomes in second-generation progeny derived from a near-allohexaploid *Brassica* ($2n = AABBC$) plant [(*B. napus* $\times$ *B. carinata*) $\times$ *B. juncea*]: A-genome chromosomes are blue (DAPI, background stain), B-genome chromosomes are labeled red, and C-genome chromosomes are labeled green. Recombinant chromosomes are labeled with an asterisk, and the two parent genomes involved are noted. Images were taken at $\times 50$ magnification. Bar, $\sim 5 \mu\text{m}$.

B. napus. Similarly, Nicolas *et al.* (2009) observed no discrimination against rearranged chromosome complements transmitted from haploid *B. napus*, supporting lack of selection pressure for euploid, unrearranged chromosome complements in *Brassica* hybrids. Therefore, even though several plants in the SP generation hypothetically could have had euploid $2n = AABBC$ chromosome complements (Figure 3), these plants may not have had a fertility advantage over their aneuploid counterparts: SP_042 was one of the most fertile of the SP generation, but gave rise to progeny with a standard deviation of ± 2.6 chromosomes. The SP42 plant is also predicted to have contained at least some chromosomal rearrangements and karyotype disturbances based on the commonality of the putatively rare A-B recombinant chromosomes observed in all three progeny using FISH (Figure 6), as well as the common loss of two to four pairs of A-genome chromosomes. A similar lack of correlation between fertility and aneuploidy, and even between aneuploidy and regularity of meiotic behavior, was also reported for *Brassica* hexaploids from the cross *B. carinata* $\times$ *B. rapa* (Iwasa 1964). The genome redundancy provided by the presence of three genomes may have reduced selection pressure for more normal chromosome comple-

ments, allowing retention of high frequencies of chromosome rearrangements, duplications, and deletions in the progeny.

Generally, regular gamete formation was observed at the sporad stage. Only three plants (5%) produced any pentads or hexads, and these were at very low frequency (0.3–0.6%), suggesting that few lagard chromosomes were being lost due to formation of micronuclei during cytokinesis. This finding contrasts with Iwasa (1964), who found more than four nuclei in 5–18% of sporads in three $2n = AABBC$ plants derived from the cross *B. carinata* $\times$ *B. rapa*, although no dyads, monads, or triads were observed in these allohexaploid hybrid types. On average, frequencies of unreduced gametes produced by the SP population were higher than in the parent *Brassica* species, but lower than in the *B. napus* $\times$ *B. carinata* hybrid types (Mason *et al.* 2011). Genetic factors related to unreduced gamete production in the parent plants (Mason *et al.* 2011) may have been partially transmissible to the majority of (*B. napus* $\times$ *B. carinata*) $\times$ *B. juncea* SP progeny, based on comparison with the results of Iwasa (1964). Several mutations resulting in high frequencies of unreduced gamete formation have been identified in *Arabidopsis* (D'Erfurth *et al.* 2008; De Storme and Geelen 2011), and genetic

Table 1 Number of chromosomes inherited per genome (A, B, or C) as detected by FISH in three second-generation plants derived from a near-allohexaploid $2n = AABBC$ plant

Plant	A	B	C	A/B	A/C	B/C	Total	Fertility
Expected for an AABBC allohexaploid	20	16	18	0	0	0	54	
SP42_01	16	16	17	1	1	2	53	0.1 seeds/flower
SP42_02	9	16	24	2	1	2	54	0.1 seeds/flower
SP42_03	13	13	22	1	1	3	53	1.7 seeds/flower

factors have been implicated in other species (Tavoletti *et al.* 1991). However, it is probable that univalent-induced meiotic restitution [the spread of univalents across the metaphase plate resulting in a restitution nucleus (Catchside 1934; De Storme and Geelen 2013)] was responsible for the unreduced gamete that contributed to the allohexaploid plant A1. The absence of similarly high frequencies of unreduced gamete production in the SP population may support a mode of bivalent formation for most plants, as suggested by the molecular karyotyping results (Figure 3).

We found that results from FISH in combination with molecular karyotyping were highly effective for determining detailed chromosome complements in cytogenetically complex hybrids, as has also been demonstrated in oats (Jellen *et al.* 1994), banana, and sugarcane (D'Hont 2005). This analysis highlighted the dangers of using simple chromosome counts to assess meiotic stability of *Brassica* allohexaploids, as has been done in other studies (*e.g.*, Howard 1942; Tian *et al.* 2010). In the future, molecular karyotyping with molecular cytogenetics may allow identification of genotypic and species-specific variability for meiotic stability in higher-ploidy *Brassica*. With molecular karyotyping, we could identify chromosomes and genomic regions with regular or irregular A- and C-genome allele transmission, and FISH helped to identify recombinant chromosomes and chromosome copy number. The addition of high-throughput molecular markers for the *Brassica* B genome would also be beneficial in characterization of *Brassica* allohexaploids to aid in the development of this new potential *Brassica* crop species. Production and characterization of additional hexaploid lines from different genotypes of *B. napus*, *B. carinata*, and *B. juncea* and intercrossing between different sources of allohexaploids (Geng *et al.* 2013) may also help in elucidating the complex interplay of genetic and genomic factors contributing to *Brassica* meiotic stability and contribute to the formation of stable, fertile allohexaploids.

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Supporting Information

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The Fate of Chromosomes and Alleles in an Allohexaploid *Brassica* Population

Annaliese S. Mason, Matthew N. Nelson, Junko Takahira, Wallace A. Cowling,
Gustavo Moreira Alves, Arkaprava Chaudhuri, Ning Chen, Mohana E. Ragu,
Jessica Dalton-Morgan, Olivier Coriton, Virginie Huteau, Frédérique Eber,
Anne-Marie Chèvre, and Jacqueline Batley

Table S1 Data collection for all populations used in this study. "NA" represents no data collected or available. Plants were grown in three locations: The University of Western Australia (UWA), Perth, Australia; The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia; and The French National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA), Le Rheu, France.

Table S1 is available for download as an Excel file at <http://www.genetics.org/lookup/suppl/doi:10.1534/genetics.113.159574/-/DC1>