

Loss of inner kinetochore genes is associated with the transition to an unconventional point centromere in budding yeast

Nagarjun Vijay^{Corresp. 1}

¹ Computational Evolutionary Genomics Lab, Department of Biological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Bhopal, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India

Corresponding Author: Nagarjun Vijay
Email address: nagarjun@iiserb.ac.in

Background: The genomic sequences of centromeres as well as the set of proteins that recognize and interact with centromeres are known to quickly diverge between lineages potentially contributing to post-zygotic reproductive isolation. However, the actual sequence of events and processes involved in the divergence of the kinetochore machinery is not known. The patterns of gene loss that occur during evolution concomitant with phenotypic changes have been used to understand the timing and order of molecular changes.

Methods: We screened the high quality genomes of twenty budding yeast species for the presence of well-studied kinetochore genes. Based on the conserved gene order and complete genome assemblies we identified gene loss events. Subsequently, we searched the intronic regions to identify any un-annotated genes or gene remnants to obtain additional evidence of gene loss.

Results: Our analysis identified the loss of four genes of the inner kinetochore constitutive centromere-associated network (CCAN) in both the *Naumovozyma* species for which genome assemblies are available. Surprisingly, this collective loss of four genes of the CCAN coincides with the origin of unconventional centromeres in *N.castellii* and *N.dairenensis*. Our study suggests a tentative link between the origin of unconventional point centromeres and turnover of kinetochore genes in budding yeast.

1
2 **Loss of inner kinetochore genes is associated with the transition to an unconventional point**
3 **centromere in budding yeast**

4
5 Nagarjun Vijay¹

6 ¹Computational Evolutionary Genomics Lab, Department of Biological Sciences, IISER Bhopal,
7 Bhauri, Madhya Pradesh, India

8 *Correspondence: nagarjun@iiserb.ac.in

9
10 **Keywords:** point centromere, unconventional centromeres, kinetochore, interaction network, speciation

11
12 **Abstract**

13
14 **Background:** The genomic sequences of centromeres as well as the set of proteins that recognize
15 and interact with centromeres are known to quickly diverge between lineages potentially
16 contributing to post-zygotic reproductive isolation. However, the actual sequence of events and
17 processes involved in the divergence of the kinetochore machinery is not known. The patterns of
18 gene loss that occur during evolution concomitant with phenotypic changes have been used to
19 understand the timing and order of molecular changes.

20 **Methods:** We screened the high quality genomes of twenty budding yeast species for the
21 presence of well-studied kinetochore genes. Based on the conserved gene order and complete
22 genome assemblies we identified gene loss events. Subsequently, we searched the intronic
23 regions to identify any un-annotated genes or gene remnants to obtain additional evidence of
24 gene loss.

25 **Results:** Our analysis identified the loss of four genes of the inner kinetochore constitutive
26 centromere-associated network (CCAN) in both the *Naumovozyma* species for which genome
27 assemblies are available. Surprisingly, this collective loss of four genes of the CCAN coincides
28 with the origin of unconventional centromeres in *N.castellii* and *N.dairenensis*. Our study
29 suggests a tentative link between the origin of unconventional point centromeres and turnover of
30 kinetochore genes in budding yeast.

31
32 **Introduction**

33
34 Increasing availability of genomic datasets across diverse species has allowed the use of
35 comparative genomic approaches to study kinetochore evolution. Such comparative approaches

36 have led to interesting evolutionary insights from species with unique kinetochores (Drinnenberg
37 and Akiyoshi 2017). The kinetochore associated protein interaction network has undergone
38 frequent changes in gene content and also exhibits strong signatures of adaptive evolution (Malik
39 and Henikoff 2001; Talbert et al. 2004; Schueler et al. 2010). The frequent turnover in the gene
40 content of the kinetochore machinery while essentially performing the same function has even
41 been equated to a “Ship of Theseus” (Drinnenberg et al. 2016). Kinetochore genes that form
42 protein complexes also show patterns of co-evolution with interacting components through
43 correlated gene loss events (Tromer 2017). Large-scale systematic screening for kinetochore
44 genes in the genomes of numerous eukaryotes has shown that majority of the components of the
45 CCAN (constitutive centromere-associated network) are lost in many lineages (van Hooff et al.
46 2017). Another unexpected observation is that the CENH3 (CSE4 homolog) gene which
47 performs a central role in kinetochore function is lost in many insect species. This potentially
48 recurrent loss of the CENH3 gene in insect species coincides with their transition to
49 holocentricity (Drinnenberg et al. 2014). Interestingly, it has been shown that *C.elegans*
50 holocentromeres are actually point centromeres that are dispersed at transcription factor hotspots
51 (Steiner and Henikoff 2014). Hence, it has been speculated that changes in the gene content of
52 kinetochores might be functionally related to transitions in the centromere type (Drinnenberg and
53 Akiyoshi 2017).

54
55 Centromere sequences in the vast majority of species are repeat rich regions that are thought to
56 be defined epigenetically and/or through recognition of dyad rich regions with non-B-form DNA
57 structures (Kasinathan and Henikoff 2018). Despite advances in genome sequencing and
58 assembly methods, the high repeat content of these centromeres makes it harder to assemble and
59 study them. Hence, as a proxy to the study of centromere regions comparison of tandem repeats
60 across large phylogenetic distances have been performed to understand the evolution of
61 centromere sequences (Melters et al. 2013).

62
63 One of the most interesting transitions during centromere evolution is the origin of genetically
64 defined point centromeres in budding yeasts (Malik and Henikoff 2009). These ~150bp long
65 centromeres found in Saccharomycetaceae have been easier to study due to the lack of repetitive
66 regions, availability of complete high quality genome assemblies for multiple closely related

67 species, gene knockout libraries and ease of experimental manipulation. Hence, budding yeast
68 species are a popular system to study the evolution of centromeres and the set of proteins that
69 interact with them (Roy and Sanyal 2011).

70

71 In addition to changing their sequences, centromeres are also known to change their genomic
72 positions without any change in the karyotype (Montefalcone et al. 1999). However, centromere
73 evolution can also be accompanied by changes in the karyotype (O'Neill et al. 2004). Within
74 mammals, centromeres are known to have undergone multiple re-positioning events (Rocchi et
75 al. 2012). Centromere repositioning events seem to be fairly common and could have a role in
76 driving speciation or at the very least have a non-negligible role in affecting the local genomic
77 selection landscape. Recently, it has been shown that in *Naumovozyma* an unconventional
78 centromere has come into existence at a location that is largely distinct from that expected based
79 on synteny with other *Saccharomycetaceae* species (Kobayashi et al. 2015). The *Naumovozyma*
80 genus has been suggested as model for comparative genomics and study of adaptive evolution
81 due to the various phenotypic differences compared to other yeast species (Karademir Andersson
82 and Cohn 2017).

83

84 In this study, we first screened the genome assemblies of eight Pre-WGD and twelve Post-WGD
85 yeast species for the presence/absence of homologs of 67 kinetochore genes. We find evidence
86 for the concurrent loss of multiple genes from the CTF19 protein complex in *Naumovozyma*
87 species and corresponding sequence divergence of the N-terminal region of the CSE4 gene that
88 interacts with the CTF19 complex. In contrast to this we see high levels of sequence
89 conservation of the C-terminal region of the CSE4 gene that mediates an interaction between the
90 kinetochore and centromere. Our analysis finds an association between gene loss events and the
91 origin of novel centromeres in *Naumovozyma* species.

92

93 **Materials and Methods**

94

95 **Gene presence/absence screening**

96

97 We compiled a list of 67 kinetochore associated genes in the yeast *S. cerevisiae* by downloading
98 genes annotated with the GO term GO: 0000776 in Ensembl 91. Orthologs of these genes in all
99 twenty yeast species were identified from the Yeast Gene Order Browser (YGOB). We screened

100 the genomes of all twenty yeast species for the presence of all 67 genes. Kinetochores are
101 known to evolve at a very fast rate, making it hard to identify orthologs of these genes even in
102 closely related species (van Hooff et al. 2017). Despite our precautions, it is possible that these
103 genes have evolved at a very fast rate making it unfeasible to establish homology of these genes.
104 Fortunately, the YGOB provides not only the order of the genes but also the intergenic sequences
105 between genes. Based on flanking genes with conserved synteny in other species we identified
106 the intergenic regions that correspond to the location of the missing genes. We checked these
107 intergenic sequences for the presence of open reading frames (ORFs). The ORFs that were found
108 in the intergenic regions did not show any homology to the genes that we have inferred to be
109 lost. Based on the evidence from identification of syntenic regions using YGOB and additional
110 screening of intergenic regions we are fairly confident of these gene loss events.

111

112 **Multiple sequence alignments of CSE4 gene**

113 The complete open reading frame of the CSE4 gene was used for multiple sequence alignment.
114 To ensure that the results we see is not the result of alignment artifacts we performed the
115 multiple sequence alignment at the nucleotide sequence level and amino acid residue level using
116 three different programs (Clustal omega, M-coffee and Guidance with PRANK as the aligner).
117 The presence of additional sequences in the genus *Naumovozyma* was seen in all of the multiple
118 sequence alignments that we have analysed. It is possible that longer ORF's have been
119 incorrectly annotated as the CDS for both *Naumovozyma* species. However, the second
120 methionine codon in the CDS occurs at the 226th and 40th residue from the currently annotated
121 start codon in *N. castellii* & *N. dairenensis* respectively. If the second methionine is the correct
122 start codon, the *N. castellii* protein would be just 39 residues. This suggests that the correct ORF
123 is annotated in *Naumovozyma* species. To further rule out the possibility of erroneous annotation
124 of shorter ORF's in non-*naumovozyma* species we took the flanking introns and searched them
125 for ORF's. We found that the longest ORF that could be identified in the sequence spanning
126 across both flanking introns was the currently annotated ORF itself. This further supports the
127 validity of the annotation and multiple sequence alignments generated by us.

128

129 **Results**

130

131 **Patterns of kinetochore gene loss**

132

133 Our study system consists of eight Pre-WGD and twelve Post-WGD yeast species at varying
134 evolutionary distances (see **Fig. 1**). Based on our screening of twenty yeast genomes we
135 identified seven genes that are lost in Pre-WGD species and eight genes that have lost both
136 copies in Post-WGD species (see **Table S1**). Intriguingly, five of the eight genes (see **Table S1**)
137 that have lost both their copies in the Post-WGD species are also the ones that are lost in the Pre-
138 WGD species. This hints at the dispensability of these genes over the course of evolution. The
139 gene presence/absence matrix for six selected genes that have lost both gene copies in Post-
140 WGD species is presented in **Fig. 2**. First, we focus on the set of four genes (NKP1, NKP2,
141 IML3, and CHL4) that are lost in *Naumovozyma*. As the name suggests, the Non-essential
142 Kinetochores Protein genes NKP1 & NKP2 produce proteins that localise to kinetochores and
143 produce viable single gene mutants (Cheeseman et al. 2002). However, both single gene mutants
144 are known to show elevated rates of chromosome loss (Fernius and Marston 2009). Despite
145 being non-essential genes, at least one copy of both of these genes is found in 15 of the 20 yeast
146 species screened in this study. A broader phylogenetic search for homologs of these genes has
147 shown repeated loss of these two genes in various taxa (Tromer 2017).

148

149 The CHL4 (CHromosome Loss 4) single gene knockouts are also viable but are known to show
150 increased levels of chromosome loss, miss-segregation and abnormal kinetochores (Roy et al.
151 1997). However, based on the chromatin state CHL4 mutant cells are known to show two
152 distinct (high and low) levels of mitotic mobility (Roy and Sanyal 2011). This suggests that
153 CHL4 mutants can be compensated through changes in the chromatin state. IML3 (Increased
154 Minichromosome Loss) protein forms a stable heterodimer with CHL4 protein (Hinshaw and
155 Harrison 2013). Although IML3 and CHL4 are known interactors, the phylogenetic distribution
156 of IML3 seems to be more restricted than that of CHL4. The association of cohesin with the
157 pericentromeric regions is ensured by the action of IML3 and CHL4. The lack of these two genes
158 leads to reduced cohesin binding at the pericentromere that results in miss-segregation of
159 chromosomes (Fernius and Marston 2009). While the gene loss events in *Naumovozyma* are
160 very interesting, they are not the only kinetochores genes that we identify as missing both copies
161 among the twenty species screened. Two other genes (CNN1 & WIP1) of the CCAN are lost in
162 another yeast species *T. blattae* (see **Fig. 2**).

163

164 **N-terminal divergence of CSE4 gene in Naumovozyma**

165

166 Detailed study of the interactions between kinetochore proteins in *S. cerevisiae* has led to a better
167 understanding of their individual roles (Measday et al. 2005; Baetz et al. 2006). However, the
168 evolution of the kinetochore network across Eukaryotes has been shown to be a complex process
169 that requires further investigation (van Hooff et al. 2017). In the current study, we have focussed
170 on well-studied genetic interactions (see **Fig. 3A**) of the selected genes that have lost both copies
171 in Post-WGD yeast species. Chromatin Immuno-Precipitation (ChIP) of CSE4 protein followed
172 by sequencing of DNA fragments was used by Kobayashi et al. (2015) to identify all the CSE4
173 binding sites in the *N. castellii* genome. Based on this experimental data for CSE4 along with
174 similar ChIP-seq data for the NDC10, NDC80 and CEP3 proteins the locations of the new
175 centromeres in *N. castellii* have been validated (Kobayashi et al. 2015). The multiple sequence
176 alignment of amino-acid sequences across the study species (see **Fig. 3B**) shows that the CSE4
177 genes of *N. castellii* and *N. dairenensis* have a stretch of approximately 10 amino acid residues
178 at the very beginning of the CSE4 gene that are absent in other species. It is known that the C-
179 terminal of the CSE4 protein binds to centromeric DNA sequence and the N-terminal interacts
180 with the CTF19 complex (Chen et al. 2000). The N-terminal region has overall reduced sequence
181 conservation across all species compared to the C-terminal region. The N-terminal of the CSE4
182 protein has been shown to play a role in the ubiquitin-mediated proteolysis of the CSE4 protein
183 (Au et al. 2013). More recently, sumoylation and ubiquitination of the N-terminal have been
184 shown to be required to prevent mislocalization of CSE4 to non-centromeric chromatin (Ohkuni
185 et al. 2018). The lysine 65 residue (K65) in the CSE4 gene has been identified as the residue
186 important for proper localisation. Changes in the N-terminal region of CSE4 gene could have led
187 to changes in the post-translational modifications resulting in changes in the localisation patterns
188 and subsequent movement of centromeres in *Naumovozyma*.

189

190 In Post-WGD species, most (58 out of 67) of the kinetochore genes have lost at least one of the
191 copies that resulted during the WGD event. Only nine genes have retained both copies in at least
192 one Post-WGD species. This set of nine genes could have been retained to maintain a certain
193 dosage of expression or might have diverged in function through neo or sub functionalisation

194 (Zhang 2003; Qian and Zhang 2014). The YBP1 gene is the only kinetochore gene that is present
195 in all Pre-WGD species that has also retained both copies in all Post-WGD species. HRR25 is
196 found in two copies in *K. africana*, *K. naganishii*, *N. castellii*, *N. dairenensis*, *T. blattae*, *T.*
197 *phaffii*, and *V. polyspora*. The CIN8 gene has retained two copies each in both *T. phaffii* and *V.*
198 *polyspora*. MAD1 gene is present in two copies only in *V. polyspora* and RTS1 occurs twice
199 only in *T. blattae*. BUB1 is present in two copies in all Post-WGD species except *T. blattae*, *T.*
200 *phaffii* and *V. polyspora*. The gene CRM1 has the most intricate pattern of gene loss with single
201 copies found in *K. naganishii*, *S. uvarum*, *S. cerevisiae*, *S. kudriavzevii*, *S. mikatae* and *T.*
202 *blattae*.

203

204 The MPS1 gene has retained two copies in *N. castellii* but has lost one of the copies in all other
205 Post-WGD species including *N. dairenensis*. Interestingly, the copy that has been lost in *N.*
206 *dairrenensis* is different from the copy that has been lost in the other Post-WGD species (see
207 **Table S1**). This suggests a more recent potentially independent gene loss in *N. dairenensis*.
208 MIF2 has retained two copies only in *N. castellii*. These gene copy differences within
209 *Naumovozyma* might reflect the ongoing process of kinetochore evolution in this genus. It is of
210 special interest to note that MPS1 gene is required for correct localisation of kinetochore
211 components (Vigneron 2004). Experimental evaluation of the roles of these genes in terms of
212 gene dosage as well as compensation ability with respect to chromosome segregation phenotypes
213 would be able to provide a better idea about the molecular details.

214

215 A recent study has established that centromere regions are defined by the presence of Non-B-
216 form DNA structures resulting from the presence of dyad symmetry in the nucleotide sequence
217 (Kasinathan and Henikoff 2018). This same study found that while the new *Naumovozyma*
218 centromeres are enriched for dyad symmetries and non-B-form DNA, the dyad symmetry was
219 less and the SIST DNA melting and cruciform extrusion scores were lower in *Naumovozyma*
220 (*sensu lato*) compared to *sensu strictu* species (see Figure 6 of Kasinathan and Henikoff 2018).
221 However, they utilised the contrast of *sensu stricto* vs *sensu lato* with very few species to make
222 this comparison. Using a larger sample size (centromeres from various budding yeast species) we
223 show that the GC content shows a significant negative correlation (Pearson's correlation
224 coefficient r of -0.33 , p -value: $1.157e-6$) with dyad density (see **Fig. 4**). This correlation is

225 reflective of the genome-wide pattern seen in *S. cerevisiae* (Lisnić et al. 2005). By establishing
226 the presence of this correlation even for the nucleotide sequences of centromeres we are able to
227 understand some of the variance seen in dyad density across budding yeast species.

228
229 The unconventional centromeres in the yeast species *N. castellii* and *N. dairenensis* are in most
230 cases located at a different genomic locus compared to the point centromeres found in other
231 budding yeast species such as *S. cerevisiae* (Kobayashi et al. 2015). This movement of
232 centromeres has partly been attributed to chromosomal re-arrangements. We show that the GC
233 content of the introns corresponding to the older (*S. cerevisiae* like) centromeres is very high and
234 dyad density is low (see **Fig. 4**; red coloured circles and squares). On the other hand the new
235 unconventional centromeres that have been identified in *Naumovozyma* (see **Fig. 4**; blue
236 coloured circles and squares) are having higher dyad densities and lower GC content. We note
237 that the pattern is the same for both *Naumovozyma* species (see **Fig. 4**; filled squares for *N.*
238 *castellii* and filled circles for *N. dairenensis*). This change in dyad density and GC content
239 probably reflects a divergence that occurred after the change in the location of the centromere.

240 **Discussion**

241
242 The role of gene-flow during the process of speciation has been the focus of considerable debate
243 especially with respect to natural hybrid zones (Barton and Hewitt 1985; Slatkin 1987). The
244 recent availability of large-scale genomic datasets has accentuated the role of gene-flow resulting
245 in the development of models of speciation with gene flow (Feder et al. 2012). Prevalence of
246 such unexpected gene-flow across relatively large evolutionary distances has important
247 implications for how reproductive isolation builds up between species (Harrison and Larson
248 2014; Payseur and Rieseberg 2016). This has motivated re-evaluation of the speciation phases at
249 which karyotype and centromere evolution are important (Brown and O'Neill 2010; Faria and
250 Navarro 2010). Another aspect that has received considerable attention is the nucleotide
251 sequence divergence of centromere proximal regions (Stump et al. 2005; Ellegren et al. 2012).
252 However, there is no consensus on the role, if any, that restricted recombination at centromeres
253 has on maintaining species boundaries (Noor and Bennett 2009; Cruickshank and Hahn 2014).

254
255 Nucleotide sequence divergence at the centromeres themselves as well as in the genes that
256 recognise and bind to centromeres have been proposed as potential mechanisms for the build-up

257 of post-zygotic reproductive isolation (Borodin et al. 2001). The paradoxical behaviour of
258 centromeres to evolve rapidly while still being inherited stably makes them good candidates for
259 loci that contribute to the process of speciation (Henikoff et al. 2001). However, the observation
260 that *Drosophila* species produce fertile offspring despite the extensive divergence of the
261 sequence of centromere binding proteins seems to contradict this idea (Sainz et al. 2003; but see
262 Thomae et al. 2013). Computational identification and functional characterisation of the effects
263 of sequence divergence, loss and duplication of the kinetochore genes in diverse species will
264 help clarify the role of the centromere in facilitating reproductive isolation.

265
266 In this study, we provide evidence that suggests that both copies of four genes of the CCAN are
267 lost in *Naumovozya* budding yeast species that have transitioned to unconventional
268 centromeres (Kobayashi et al. 2015). The loss of these CCAN genes that are from the CTF19
269 complex is potentially mediated by changes in the N-terminal region of the CSE4 gene (see **Fig.**
270 **3B**). Although we have no experimental data to suggest that the changes in the N-terminal region
271 of the CSE4 gene are a consequence of changes in the sequence of the centromere being bound
272 by the C-terminal region, it is one potential scenario that could explain the observed association
273 between gene loss and transition to unconventional centromeres. In contrast to the well-studied
274 case of loss of CENH3 (CSE4 homolog) gene in multiple insect lineages (Drimmenberg et al.
275 2014) and the multiple cases of exon gain and loss (Fan et al. 2013), we show that transition to a
276 new centromere sequence might be sufficient for the loss of CCAN genes. Understanding the
277 sequence of events involved in the loss of the CCAN genes and origin of the unconventional
278 centromere in budding yeast species would help understand the loss of CCAN genes in various
279 eukaryotic lineages (van Hooff et al. 2017). The CSE4 gene has an additional sequence in
280 *Naumovozya* compared to other species suggesting that the unconventional centromeres might
281 potentially be remnants of the ancestral state of point centromeres. We discuss few other
282 potential scenarios for the sequence of events that could have led to the association observed.

283 The dispensability of the genes that are lost in *Naumovozya* is supported by the viability of *S.*
284 *cerevisiae* knockouts and independent loss in the two Pre-WGD *Eremothecium* species. It is
285 possible that initially these genes were sequentially lost and the origin of novel centromeres was
286 an adaptive response to compensate for the lost genes. Yet, the loss of three out of these four
287 genes in *Eremothecium* species (*E. gossypii* and *E. cymbalariae*) does not seem to be associated

288 with any noticeable changes in centromere type. The evolution of novel centromeres could just
289 be one possible solution to the loss of these genes from the CCAN and Eremothecium species
290 might have come up with a different solution. Further phenotypic characterisation of
291 Eremothecium species might shed light on this.

292
293 It has been shown that loss of RNAi leads to a shortening of the centromeres and is an important
294 determinant of centromere evolution in fungi (Yadav et al. 2018). The *N. castellii* species in
295 addition to having unconventional point centromeres have also been shown to have a functional
296 RNA interference pathway (Drinnenberg et al. 2009). Despite having a role in fission yeast
297 heterochromatin specification at the centromeres, siRNA's have not been found to have any
298 centromere specific role in *N. castellii* (Kobayashi et al. 2015). Nonetheless, it would be
299 interesting to know what role the presence of RNAi machinery in *Naumovozyma* might have had
300 in the loss of CCAN genes. The Drinnenberg et al. study (2009) reports the gene expression fold
301 change of ago1 knockout and dcr1 knockout in *N. castellii* compared to the wild type. However,
302 none of the genes showing a fold-change greater than two are part of the kinetochore gene set.

303
304 The function of the genes lost in *Naumovozyma* may be performed by genes that are found in
305 *Naumovozyma* but are absent in *S. cerevisiae*. *Naumovozyma* species have 46 genes that are
306 absent in the other 18 species analysed in this study. To evaluate whether any of these genus
307 specific genes could have taken over the role performed by the four missing genes, we identified
308 homologs of each of these genes by performing blastp search against the non-redundant protein
309 database with an e-value cut-off of 10^{-3} . None of the identified homologs had a characterised role
310 related to the kinetochore machinery.

311
312 The current study does not perform any experimental characterisation of phenotypes across the
313 twenty yeast species that would be caused by knocking out the genes that we identify as lost.
314 However, kinetochore genes have been studied extensively in *S. cerevisiae*. Single and double
315 gene knockouts have been phenotypically characterised in great detail (Measday et al. 2005).
316 This functional data from *S. cerevisiae* can be extrapolated to other species by supplementing it
317 with computational predictions. Such extrapolation would, of course, have to be experimentally
318 verified by subsequent studies in the focal species. Hence, our study is merely focussed on

319 demonstrating strong patterns of associations that suggests kinetochore network rewiring in
320 Naumovozya.

321

322 Stable separation of chromosomes into daughter cells requires proper functioning of the
323 kinetochore machinery. Reduced efficiency in such segregation of chromosomes would result in
324 reduced fertility. The high levels of gene turnover seen in kinetochore genes suggest frequent
325 changes in the interactome of kinetochore genes. Such frequent changes in gene content could
326 lead to differences in the interactome of closely related species. These differences in the
327 interactome can have a prominent role in mediating speciation through reproductive isolation.
328 Reconstruction of the sequence of events leading to turnover of kinetochore machinery and
329 centromere sequence at the molecular level in budding yeast species might serve as good test
330 case for understanding its role in speciation.

331

332 **Conclusions**

333 Rapid changes in the genomic sequence of centromeres and associated kinetochore proteins
334 between closely related species are thought to have an important role in speciation. Yet, it is not
335 conclusively known whether the centromere sequence divergence occur first or kinetochore
336 proteins evolve to use a different centromere sequence. We look at patterns of kinetochore gene
337 loss in twenty species of yeast to identify major lineage specific events. Interestingly, the loss of
338 four genes of the CCAN coincides with the origin of unconventional centromeres in *N.castellii*
339 and *N.dairenensis*. We speculate that loss of these genes might have occurred subsequent to the
340 divergence of the centromere sequences as their role might have been taken over by other genes.
341 While our results cannot establish the sequence of events, the identified lineage specific loss of
342 kinetochores genes that are known to functionally interact serves as a molecular footprint of
343 genetic changes that contribute to reproductive isolation between species.

344

345 **References**

346

347 Au, W. C., A. R. Dawson, D. W. Rawson, S. B. Taylor, R. E. Baker, and M. A. Basrai. 2013. A
348 novel role of the N terminus of budding yeast histone H3 variant Cse4 in ubiquitin-mediated
349 proteolysis.

350 Baetz, K., V. Measday, and B. Andrews. 2006. Revealing hidden relationships among yeast
351 genes involved in chromosome segregation using systematic synthetic lethal and synthetic

- 352 dosage lethal screens.
- 353 Barton, N. H., and G. M. Hewitt. 1985. Analysis of hybrid zones. *Annu. Rev. Ecol. Syst.*
354 16:113–148.
- 355 Borodin, P. M., S. Henikoff, K. Ahmad, and H. S. Malik. 2001. Speciation and centromere
356 evolution [3] (multiple letters).
- 357 Brown, J. D., and R. J. O’Neill. 2010. Chromosomes, Conflict, and Epigenetics: Chromosomal
358 Speciation Revisited. *Annu. Rev. Genomics Hum. Genet.* 11:291–316.
- 359 Cheeseman, I. M., S. Anderson, M. Jwa, E. M. Green, J. seog Kang, J. R. Yates, C. S. M. Chan,
360 D. G. Drubin, and G. Barnes. 2002. Phospho-regulation of kinetochore-microtubule
361 attachments by the Aurora kinase Ipl1p.
- 362 Chen, Y., R. E. Baker, K. C. Keith, K. Harris, S. Stoler, and M. Fitzgerald-Hayes. 2000. The N
363 terminus of the centromere H3-like protein Cse4p performs an essential function distinct
364 from that of the histone fold domain. *Mol. Cell. Biol.* 20:7037–7048.
- 365 Cruickshank, T. E., and M. W. Hahn. 2014. Reanalysis suggests that genomic islands of
366 speciation are due to reduced diversity, not reduced gene flow. *Mol. Ecol.* 23:3133–3157.
- 367 Delpont, W., A. F. Y. Poon, S. D. W. Frost, and S. L. Kosakovsky Pond. 2010. Datamonkey
368 2010: A suite of phylogenetic analysis tools for evolutionary biology. *Bioinformatics*
369 26:2455–2457.
- 370 Drinnenberg, I. A., and B. Akiyoshi. 2017. Evolutionary Lessons from Species with Unique
371 Kinetochores. Pp. 111–138 *in* Centromeres and Kinetochores.
- 372 Drinnenberg, I. A., D. deYoung, S. Henikoff, and H. S. ingh Malik. 2014. Recurrent loss of
373 CenH3 is associated with independent transitions to holocentricity in insects. *Elife* 3.
- 374 Drinnenberg, I. A., S. Henikoff, and H. S. Malik. 2016. Evolutionary Turnover of Kinetochore
375 Proteins: A Ship of Theseus?
- 376 Drinnenberg, I. A., D. E. Weinberg, K. T. Xie, J. P. Mower, K. H. Wolfe, G. R. Fink, and D. P.
377 Bartel. 2009. RNAi in budding yeast. *Science* (80-.). 326:544–550.
- 378 Ellegren, H., L. Smeds, R. Burri, P. I. Olason, N. Backström, T. Kawakami, A. Künstner, H.
379 Mäkinen, K. Nadachowska-Brzyska, A. Qvarnström, S. Uebbing, and J. B. W. Wolf. 2012.
380 The genomic landscape of species divergence in *Ficedula* flycatchers. *Nature* 491:756–60.
381 Nature Publishing Group, a division of Macmillan Publishers Limited. All Rights Reserved.
- 382 Fan, X. Y., L. Yu, H. L. Xu, and Y. Li. 2013. Multiple intron gain and loss events occurred
383 during the evolution of Cenp-A gene. *Chinese Sci. Bull.* 58:2174–2178.
- 384 Faria, R., and A. Navarro. 2010. Chromosomal speciation revisited: rearranging theory with
385 pieces of evidence. *Trends Ecol. Evol.* 25:660–9.
- 386 Feder, J. L., S. P. Egan, and P. Nosil. 2012. The genomics of speciation-with-gene-flow. *Trends*
387 *Genet.* 28:342–50. Elsevier.
- 388 Fernius, J., and A. L. Marston. 2009. Establishment of cohesion at the pericentromere by the
389 Ctf19 kinetochore subcomplex and the replication fork-associated factor, Csm3. *PLoS*
390 *Genet.* 5.
- 391 Harrison, R. G., and E. L. Larson. 2014. Hybridization, introgression, and the nature of species
392 boundaries. Pp. 795–809 *in* *Journal of Heredity*.
- 393 Henikoff, S., K. Ahmad, and H. S. Malik. 2001. The centromere paradox: Stable inheritance with
394 rapidly evolving DNA.
- 395 Hinshaw, S. M., and S. C. Harrison. 2013. An Iml3-Chl4 Heterodimer Links the Core
396 Centromere to Factors Required for Accurate Chromosome Segregation. *Cell Rep.* 5:29–36.
- 397 Hinshaw, S. M., V. Makrantonis, S. C. Harrison, and A. L. Marston. 2017. The Kinetochore

- 398 Receptor for the Cohesin Loading Complex. *Cell* 171:72–84.e13.
- 399 Karademir Andersson, A., and M. Cohn. 2017. Naumovozyrna castellii: an alternative model for
400 budding yeast molecular biology. *Yeast* 34:95–109.
- 401 Kasinathan, S., and S. Henikoff. 2018. Non-B-Form DNA Is Enriched at Centromeres. *Mol.*
402 *Biol. Evol.*
- 403 Kobayashi, N., Y. Suzuki, L. W. Schoenfeld, C. A. Müller, C. Nieduszynski, K. H. Wolfe, and
404 T. U. Tanaka. 2015. Discovery of an Unconventional Centromere in Budding Yeast
405 Redefines Evolution of Point Centromeres. *Curr. Biol.* 25:2026–2033.
- 406 Kosakovsky Pond, S. L., and S. D. W. Frost. 2005a. Datamonkey: Rapid detection of selective
407 pressure on individual sites of codon alignments. *Bioinformatics* 21:2531–2533.
- 408 Kosakovsky Pond, S. L., and S. D. W. Frost. 2005b. Not so different after all: A comparison of
409 methods for detecting amino acid sites under selection. *Mol. Biol. Evol.* 22:1208–1222.
- 410 Lisnić, B., I. K. Svetec, H. Šarić, I. Nikolić, and Z. Zgaga. 2005. Palindrome content of the yeast
411 *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* genome. *Curr. Genet.* 47:289–297.
- 412 Malik, H. S., and S. Henikoff. 2001. Adaptive evolution of Cid, a centromere-specific histone in
413 *Drosophila*. *Genetics* 157:1293–1298.
- 414 Malik, H. S., and S. Henikoff. 2009. Major Evolutionary Transitions in Centromere Complexity.
415 Malvezzi, F., G. Litos, A. Schleiffer, A. Heuck, K. Mechtler, T. Clausen, and S. Westermann.
416 2013. A structural basis for kinetochore recruitment of the Ndc80 complex via two distinct
417 centromere receptors. *EMBO J.* 32:409–423.
- 418 Measday, V., K. Baetz, J. Guzzo, K. Yuen, T. Kwok, B. Sheikh, H. Ding, R. Ueta, T. Hoac, B.
419 Cheng, I. Pot, A. Tong, Y. Yamaguchi-Iwai, C. Boone, P. Hieter, and B. Andrews. 2005.
420 Systematic yeast synthetic lethal and synthetic dosage lethal screens identify genes required
421 for chromosome segregation. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci.* 102:13956–13961.
- 422 Melters, D. P., K. R. Bradnam, H. A. Young, N. Telis, M. R. May, J. Ruby, R. Sebra, P. Peluso,
423 J. Eid, D. Rank, J. Garcia, J. L. DeRisi, T. Smith, C. Tobias, J. Ross-Ibarra, I. Korf, and S.
424 W. Chan. 2013. Comparative analysis of tandem repeats from hundreds of species reveals
425 unique insights into centromere evolution. *Genome Biol.* 14:R10.
- 426 Montefalcone, G., S. Tempesta, M. Rocchi, and N. Archidiacono. 1999. Centromere
427 repositioning. *Genome Res.* 9:1184–1188.
- 428 Noor, M. A. F., and S. M. Bennett. 2009. Islands of speciation or mirages in the desert?
429 Examining the role of restricted recombination in maintaining species. *Heredity (Edinb).*
430 103:439–44.
- 431 O'Neill, R. J., M. D. B. Eldridge, and C. J. Metcalfe. 2004. Centromere dynamics and
432 chromosome evolution in marsupials. Pp. 375–381 *in* *Journal of Heredity*.
- 433 Ohkuni, K., R. Levy-Myers, J. Warren, W.-C. Au, Y. Takahashi, R. E. Baker, and M. A. Basrai.
434 2018. N-terminal Sumoylation of Centromeric Histone H3 Variant Cse4 Regulates Its
435 Proteolysis To Prevent Mislocalization to Non-centromeric Chromatin. *G3 (Bethesda).*
436 g3.300419.2017.
- 437 Payseur, B. A., and L. H. Rieseberg. 2016. A genomic perspective on hybridization and
438 speciation.
- 439 Qian, W., and J. Zhang. 2014. Genomic evidence for adaptation by gene duplication. *Genome*
440 *Res.* 24:1356–1362.
- 441 Rocchi, M., N. Archidiacono, W. Schempp, O. Capozzi, and R. Stanyon. 2012. Centromere
442 repositioning in mammals. *Heredity (Edinb).* 108:59–67.
- 443 Roy, B., and K. Sanyal. 2011. Diversity in requirement of genetic and epigenetic factors for

- 444 centromere function in fungi. *Eukaryot. Cell* 10:1384–1395.
- 445 Roy, N., A. Poddar, A. Lohia, and P. Sinha. 1997. The *mcm17* mutation of yeast shows a size
446 dependent segregational defect of a mini-chromosome. *Curr. Genet.* 32:182–189.
- 447 Sainz, A., J. A. Wilder, M. Wolf, and H. Hollocher. 2003. *Drosophila melanogaster* and *D.*
448 *simulans* rescue strains produce fit offspring, despite divergent centromere-specific histone
449 alleles. *Heredity (Edinb).* 91:28–35.
- 450 Schueler, M. G., W. Swanson, P. J. Thomas, and E. D. Green. 2010. Adaptive evolution of
451 foundation kinetochore proteins in primates. *Mol. Biol. Evol.* 27:1585–1597.
- 452 Slatkin, M. 1987. Gene Flow and the Geographic Structure of Natural Populations. *Science*
453 236:787–792.
- 454 Steiner, F. A., and S. Henikoff. 2014. Holocentromeres are dispersed point centromeres localized
455 at transcription factor hotspots. *Elife* 2014.
- 456 Stump, A. D., M. C. Fitzpatrick, N. F. Lobo, S. Traoré, N. Sagnon, C. Costantini, F. H. Collins,
457 and N. J. Besansky. 2005. Centromere-proximal differentiation and speciation in *Anopheles*
458 *gambiae*. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U. S. A.* 102:15930–5.
- 459 Talbert, P. B., T. D. Bryson, and S. Henikoff. 2004. Adaptive evolution of centromere proteins in
460 plants and animals. *J. Biol.* 3:18.
- 461 Thomae, A. W., G. O. M. Schade, J. Padeken, M. Borath, I. Vetter, E. Kremmer, P. Heun, and A.
462 Imhof. 2013. A Pair of Centromeric Proteins Mediates Reproductive Isolation in *Drosophila*
463 *Species*. *Dev. Cell* 27:412–424.
- 464 Tromer, E. C. 2017. Evolution of the Kinetochore Network in Eukaryotes. Utrecht University.
- 465 van Hooff, J. J., E. Tromer, L. M. van Wijk, B. Snel, and G. J. Kops. 2017. Evolutionary
466 dynamics of the kinetochore network in eukaryotes as revealed by comparative genomics.
467 *EMBO Rep.* e201744102.
- 468 Vigneron, S. 2004. Kinetochore Localization of Spindle Checkpoint Proteins: Who Controls
469 Whom? *Mol. Biol. Cell* 15:4584–4596.
- 470 von Mering, C., M. Huynen, D. Jaeggi, S. Schmidt, P. Bork, and B. Snel. 2003. STRING: A
471 database of predicted functional associations between proteins.
- 472 Yadav, V., S. Sun, R. B. Billmyre, B. C. Thimmappa, T. Shea, R. Lintner, G. Bakkeren, C. A.
473 Cuomo, J. Heitman, and K. Sanyal. 2018. RNAi is a critical determinant of centromere
474 evolution in closely related fungi. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci.* 201713725.
- 475 Zhang, J. 2003. Evolution by gene duplication : an update. *Evolution (N. Y).* 18:292–298.

476

477

478

479 **Figure legends**

480 **Figure 1: Phylogenetic relationship between budding yeast species.** The whole genome
481 duplication event separating the Pre-WGD and Post-WGD species is denoted by a green
482 dot. Point centromeres are common to all twenty budding yeast species and their origin is
483 depicted by a dark blue dot. Origin of unconventional point centromere in *Naumovozyma* is
484 depicted by a light blue dot.

485 **Figure 2: Patterns of kinetochore gene loss events across the twenty species.** Gene IDs of
486 NKP1, NKP2, IML3, CHL4, CNN1 and WIP1 from YGOB are provided for each species.

487 The genes missing in both Post-WGD copies are coloured red. Missing in only one Post-
488 WGD copy is coloured light blue. Missing in the Pre-WGD copy is coloured orange.
489 Present in Pre-WGD is coloured light green.

490 **Figure 3: Known genetic and physical interactions between lost kinetochore genes. (A)**

491 Network representing the known/predicted biological interactions between various
492 kinetochore genes in *S. cerevisiae* as annotated in the String database (von Mering et al.
493 2003). **(B)** Multiple sequence alignment (Clustal omega) of the amino acid residues in the
494 CSE4 gene from twenty yeast species. *Naumovozyma* species show additional stretches of
495 amino acids that are missing in the other yeast species.

496
497 **Figure 4: Negative correlation between GC content and dyad density at the point**

498 **centromeres across budding yeast species.** The filled squares represent *N. castellii* and
499 filled circles show *N. dairenensis*. Red colour is used for the intronic regions corresponding
500 to the older (*S. cerevisiae* like) centromeres. Blue colour is used for the new unconventional
501 centromeres that have been identified in *Naumovozyma*. Centromeres of the remaining
502 budding species are coloured black except for four of the centromeres that are coloured
503 brown (*S. uvarum* centromeres that have gaps in the genome assembly).

504

Figure 1

Phylogenetic relationship between budding yeast species

The whole genome duplication event separating the Pre-WGD and Post-WGD species is denoted by a green dot. Point centromeres are common to all twenty budding yeast species and their origin is depicted by a dark blue dot. Origin of unconventional point centromere in *Naumovozya* is depicted by a light blue dot.

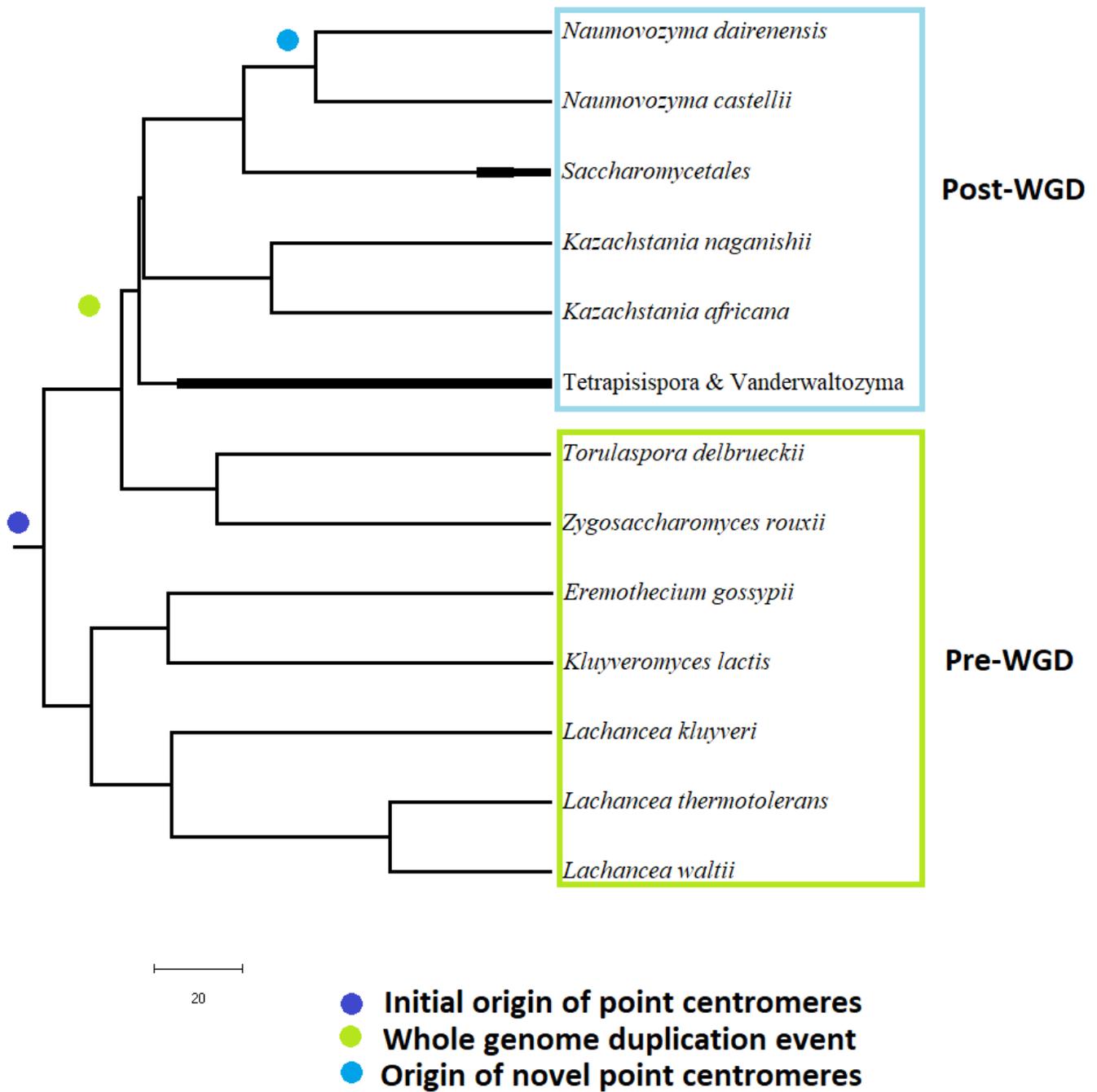


Figure 2

Patterns of kinetochore gene loss events across the twenty species

Gene IDs of NKP1, NKP2, IML3, CHL4, CNN1 and WIP1 from YGOB are provided for each species. The genes missing in both Post-WGD copies are coloured red. Missing in only one Post-WGD copy is coloured light blue. Missing in the Pre-WGD copy is coloured orange. Present in Pre-WGD is coloured light green.

Gene name	<i>N.castellii A</i>	<i>N.castellii B</i>	<i>N.dairenensis A</i>	<i>N.dairenensis B</i>	Color Legend					
NKP1	---	---	---	---	---	---	Missing in both copies (Post-WGD)			
NKP2	---	---	---	---	---	---	Missing (Pre-WGD)			
IML3	---	---	---	---	---	---	Two copies in Post-WGD			
CHL4	---	---	---	---	---	---	Missing in one copy (Post-WGD)			
CNN1	NCASF03940	---	NDAIOB06250	---	---	---	Present (Pre-WGD)			
WIP1	NCAS0A11780	---	NDAIOA04510	---	---	---				
Gene name	<i>C.glabrata A</i>	<i>C.glabrata B</i>	<i>S.savaranum A</i>	<i>S.savaranum B</i>	<i>S.kudrivzevii A</i>	<i>S.kudrivzevii B</i>	<i>S.mikatae A</i>	<i>S.mikatae B</i>	<i>S.cerevisiae A</i>	<i>S.cerevisiae B</i>
NKP1	CAGL0A03190g	---	Sava_2_558	---	Skud_4_655	---	Smik_4_653	---	YDR383C	---
NKP2	---	CAGL0F08591g	Sava_10_412	---	Skud_12_400	---	Smik_12_401	---	YLR315W	---
IML3	CAGL0K12298g	---	Sava_4_354	---	Skud_2_233	---	Smik_2_247	---	YBR107C	---
CHL4	CAGL0B02673g	---	Sava_2_420	---	Skud_4_516	---	Smik_4_501	---	YDR254W	---
CNN1	CAGL0C01991g	---	Sava_12_11	---	Skud_6_137	---	Smik_7_366	---	YFR046C	---
WIP1	Cgls_YGOB_YDR374W-A	---	Sava_2_547	---	Skud_4_644	---	Smik_4_642	---	YDR374W-A	---
Gene name	<i>K.kafiriana A</i>	<i>K.kafiriana B</i>	<i>K.naganishii A</i>	<i>K.naganishii B</i>	<i>T.blattae A</i>	<i>T.blattae B</i>	<i>T.phaffii A</i>	<i>T.phaffii B</i>	<i>V.polyspora A</i>	<i>V.polyspora B</i>
NKP1	KAFR0E03690	---	KNAG0C04700	---	TBLA0A08000	---	TPHA0E01560	---	Kpol_543.1	---
NKP2	KAFR0J01380	---	KNAG0C05870	---	---	---	TPHA0K01510	---	Kpol_1062.50	---
IML3	KAFR0D02720	---	KNAG0B01510	---	TBLA0B02410	---	TPHA0A03580	---	Kpol_1065.19	---
CHL4	KAFR0E02910	---	KNAG0A04020	---	---	TBLA0A01560	TPHA0L01360	---	---	Kpol_1031.77
CNN1	KAFR0I00200	---	KNAG0D02930	---	---	---	---	TPHA0N01270	---	Kpol_460.17
WIP1	---	---	---	---	---	---	TPHA0E01670	---	---	---
Gene name	<i>L.waltii</i>	<i>L.thermotolerans</i>	<i>L.klayveri</i>	<i>E.cymbalariae</i>	<i>E.gossypii</i>	<i>K.lactis</i>	<i>T.delbrueckii</i>	<i>Z.rouxii</i>		
NKP1	Kwal_55.21322	KLTH0F1535g	SAKLOG03190g	---	---	KLLA0E02883g	TDEL0A03270	ZYRO0B02420g		
NKP2	Kwal_47.17669	Kbe_YGOB_Abc_4.132	SAKLOH22726g	---	---	KLLA0C18425g	TDEL0D03200	ZYRO0G10802g		
IML3	Kwal_23.3739	KLTH0F10670g	SAKLOH07766g	---	---	---	TDEL0C05000	ZYRO0C16302g		
CHL4	Kwal_27.11838	KLTH0E11440g	SAKLOH11308g	Ecym_2542	AGL251C	KLLA0D11770g	TDEL0B01450	ZYRO0F08316g		
CNN1	Kwal_47.19240	KLTH0G00902g	SAKLOF01012g	Ecym_2588	AFR256C	KLLA0A00913g	TDEL0D06270	ZYRO0E09350g		
WIP1	Kwal_YGOB_YDR374W-A	Kbe_YGOB_YDR374W-A	Sku_YGOB_YDR374W-A	---	Agos_YGOB_YDR374W-A	KLLA0E02465g	TDEL0D02540	ZYRO0G01694g		

Figure 4

Negative correlation between GC content and dyad density at the point centromeres across budding yeast species

The filled squares represent *N. castellii* and filled circles show *N. dairenensis*. Red colour is used for the intronic regions corresponding to the older (*S. cerevisiae* like) centromeres. Blue colour is used for the new unconventional centromeres that have been identified in *Naumovozyma*. Centromeres of the remaining budding species are coloured black except for four of the centromeres that are coloured brown (*S. uvarum* centromeres that have gaps in the genome assembly).

