

Genetic diversity and population structure of *Triticum araraticum* and *Triticum timopheevii*

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Abstract

Genetic diversity is an important resource to improve new wheat cultivars in the breeding program. In this study, fluorescence in situ hybridization (FISH) and genotyping by sequencing (GBS) were used to evaluate the genetic diversity and population structure of the timopheevii group (A^tA^tGG , $2n = 4x = 28$) including 15 *Triticum timopheevii* Zhuk. accessions and 35 *Triticum araraticum* Jakubz. accessions. FISH analysis showed that there were 14 and 19 FISH signal variations in the A^t and G genome of *T. araraticum*, respectively. But there were only two signal variations in the G genome of *T. timopheevii*. In this study, 190,402 SNP markers were obtained from GBS, in which the lowest and highest frequencies of SNPs were found in the G and A^t genomes, respectively. Genetic diversity analysis of the 50 accessions indicated that the mean GD and PIC were 0.30 and 0.26, with the ranges of 0.1–0.5 and 0.1–0.4, respectively. The highest and lowest numbers of SNPs identified on the chromosomes 4G and $2A^t$ were 7,748 and 17,527, respectively. Structure and cluster analyses divided 50 accessions into two subpopulations (POP1 and POP2). POP1 mainly consisted of most *Triticum araraticum* accessions, and POP2 comprised all accessions of *Triticum timopheevii* and one *Triticum araraticum* accession AS273. In addition, the genetic variance showed that genetic variation was greater within populations (97%) than between populations (3%). POP1 and POP2 had high levels of genetic diversity and POP1 showed higher genetic diversity. The POP1 ($I = 0.53$, $He = 0.35$, $uh = 0.35$) showed higher genetic diversity than POP2. The present results provided important information for the improvement of cultivated durum and hexaploid wheat production in future breeding programs of China and other countries.

Introduction

The genus *Triticum* contains tetraploid emmer ($2n = 2x = 28$, AABB), diploid einkorn wheat ($2n = 2x = 14$, AA), timopheevii ($2n = 2x = 28$, A^tA^tGG) wheat, and hexaploid common wheat ($2n = 6x = 42$, AABBDD) and *Triticum zhukovskyi* ($2n = 6x = 42$, A^tA^tGGAA) (Lilienfeld 1951; Menabde and Ericzjan 1960). The Timopheevii group of species *Triticum timopheevii* Zhuk. and *Triticum araraticum* Jakubz. belong to the secondary pool of common wheat, have partial homology with the common wheat genome (Timonova et al. 2013). The degree of sequence divergence between the B and G genomes is greater than that between the A and A^t genomes (Rodríguez et al. 2000; Huang et al. 2002; Salina et al. 2006). The single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) derived from genotyping-by-sequencing (GBS) indicated that the *T. timopheevii* genome is clustered more closely to the AABB(DD) lineage than the species AA genome based on the B genome tree (Hyun et al. 2020).

T. timopheevii is a cultivated tetraploid wheat species endemic to western Georgia (Dorofeev et al. 1979), which was first discovered by the Russian botanist Piotr Zhukovsky in western Georgia in 1922 (Zhukovsky et al. 1924). Later, it was also found in other regions of western Georgia, where the local inhabitants consume a kind of gruel prepared by naturally mixing *Triticum monococcum* and *T. timopheevii* (Belea 1992; Zohary et al. 2012). Recently, ten accessions collected in Turkey and Iraq that were originally classified as *Triticum turgidum* were identified as *T. timopheevii* by *Ppd-1* typing (Czajkowska et al. 2019). Caferhöyük, Eastern Turkey is the oldest site where the “new” glume wheat (NGW, assumed to be *T. timopheevii*) has been identified (de Moulins 1993). The NGW of early Eurasian agriculture, grown by prehistoric farmers throughout western Asia and eastern Europe, is a cultivated member of the *T. timopheevii* group, as proven by ancient DNA typing (Czajkowska et al. 2020). The remains of NGW spikelet bases have been documented in two settlements in Turkey: Yenikapı (eastern Thrace) and Yumuktepe (Cilicia) (Ulaş and Fiorentino 2021). Currently, this species is held within seed banks and special collections ex situ, and is no longer cultivated as an agricultural crop (Dorofeev et al. 1979; Badaeva et al. 1994a; Czajkowska et al.

2020). *T. timopheevii* is resistant to fungal diseases such as leaf rust, powdery mildew, smut and stem rust, and therefore can be used for wheat breeding improvement by directly crossing it with common wheat or using synthetic amphiploids as a bridge (McIntosh and Gysuch 1971; Badaeva et al. 1991; Peusha et al. 1996; Järve et al. 2002; Mikó et al. 2015; Liu et al. 2018).

T. timopheevii was domesticated from the wild species *T. araraticum* (Dorofeev et al. 1979; Badaeva et al. 1994a; Kilian et al. 2009; Mori et al. 2009). *T. araraticum* was first collected in 1925–1930 in Armenia and classified as a separate species by Dr. Jakubziner in 1931 (Badaeva et al. 1994b). Geographical distribution of *T. araraticum* covers southeastern Turkey, western Iran, northern Iraq, and some regions of Transcaucasia: the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic, Armenia, and northeastern Azerbaijan (Badaeva et al. 1994b; Zohary and Hopf 2012). The A-genome donor of *T. araraticum* and *T. timopheevii* is *Triticum urartu* (Dvorak et al. 1993; Edet et al. 2018; Hyun et al. 2020). However, the G-genome donor is *Aegilops speltoides* or *Aegilops searsii* (Mori et al., 1997; Golovnina et al. 2007; Kilian et al. 2007; Takahashi et al. 2010; Edet et al. 2018). Analysis of nucleotide sequence divergence in different cereal species revealed that the progenitor of *T. timopheevii* wheat might have emerged around 3–9 million years ago (Huang et al. 2002; Gornicki et al. 2014). To date, four possible domestication sites have been reported about the origin of *T. timopheevii* in Georgia, including the Transcaucasian mountains (Jakubziner 1933, 1950; Nesbitt and Samuel 1996), northern Iraq (Wagenaar 1966), northern Syria or southern Turkey (Mori et al. 2009), and the southeastern part of the Taurus region of Turkey (Ulaş and Fiorentino 2021)..

The karyotype of *T. araraticum* and *T. timopheevii* has been comprehensively characterized using chromosome banding (C-banding) (Badaeva et al. 1994b). Although C-banding technology can clearly reveal the distribution of constitutive chromatin on chromosomes, it is impossible to determine the composition of heterochromatin. Even though some chromosomes have similar C-banding pattern distributions, it cannot be guaranteed that they have the same origin. In recent years, fluorescence in situ hybridization (FISH) has been found as an effective tool for precisely identifying the chromosomes of the A^t and G genomes of *T. timopheevii* (Mikó et al. 2015; Badaeva et al. 2016; Liu et al. 2018). Oligo-pTa535-1 preferentially targets tandem repeats on A^t-genome chromosomes of *T. timopheevii* (Mikó et al. 2015; Badaeva et al. 2016; Liu et al. 2018). Oligo-pSc119.2-1 mainly hybridizes to the G-genome chromosomes of *T. timopheevii*, and Oligo-pTa71-2 mainly hybridizes to the subterminal regions of the short arms of 6A^t and 6G (Mikó et al. 2015; Liu et al. 2018). The combination of oligonucleotide probes Oligo-pSc119.2-1, Oligo-pTa535-1, and Oligo-pTa71-2 can distinguish individual chromosomes originating from *T. timopheevii* (Liu et al. 2018).

SNP is the most common type of sequence variation in plant genomes (Batley and Edwards 2007) and is appropriate for the analyses of population structure, genetic variation, genomic selection, marker-trait association, QTL mapping and so on (Kumar et al. 2012). Numerous SNPs can be discovered using high-throughput sequencing technology (He et al. 2014). With the advent of next-generation sequencing (NGS) technologies, GBS has been commonly applied for biomarker discovery and detection in plant breeding programs (Elshire et al. 2011; Poland et al. 2012; He et al. 2014). An improved GBS protocol has been successfully employed in cereal crops, including oat, wheat and barley (Poland et al. 2012; Huang et al. 2014; Alipour et al. 2017; Hyun et al. 2020).

Plant genetic diversity analysis is a crucial aspect for plant evolution, conservation, inheritance and breeding (Peterson et al. 2014). Intraspecific divergence of *T. araraticum* was generated by structural rearrangements using C-banding analysis (Badaeva et al. 1990; Badaeva et al. 1994b). Up to now, genetic diversity in *T. timopheevii* was only showed by C-banding patterns and chloroplast DNA fingerprinting (Badaeva et al. 1994a; Mori et al. 2009). In the present study, genetic diversity was evaluated by FISH and GBS using 15 *T. timopheevii* accessions and 35 *T.*

araraticum accessions. The objectives were to evaluate the population structure and genetic diversity of the 50 *timopheevii* accessions and to characterize genetic differentiation within and between the subpopulations. This study lays a foundation for the future genomic selection in wheat breeding program.

Material And Methods

Plant samples

Thirty-five *T. araraticum* and fifteen *T. timopheevii* accessions were employed in the present study (Table S1 and Table S2). *T. timopheevii* accessions were from nine countries and *T. araraticum* accessions were from four countries. Among them, the spike type of AS273 was different from the typical spike type of *T. timopheevii* and *T. araraticum*, although it was classified into *T. araraticum* because of its fragility of rachis similar to *T. araraticum* (Fig. 1). In addition, 10 different *T. turgidum* accessions were used as controls in FISH signal cluster analysis (Table S3). The lines with code AS and D were maintained at our institute, while those with code PI were supplied by the USDA-ARS germplasm bank (<http://www.ars-grin.gov>).

FISH karyotyping and data analysis

Cytological observation of the root tip cells was conducted as described previously (Zhang et al., 2007), and their chromosome number was also calculated. The FISH procedure was the same as that reported by Hao et al. (2013). Three probes, namely, Oligo-pSc119.2-1, Oligo-pTa535-1, and Oligo-pTa71-2, were used in this study. The probes were synthesized and labelled with TAMRA or FAM by TSINGKE Biological Technology Company (Chengdu, China). At least 3 split phases with good signals were selected in each wheat FISH image for observation. Olympus BX-63 epifluorescence microscope was used to observe hybridization signals, and the images were recorded using a Photometric SenSys Olympus DP70 CCD camera (Olympus, Tokyo, Japan). Photoshop ver. 7.1 (Adobe Systems Incorporated, San Jose, CA) was used to process raw images. The identification of A^t- and G-genome chromosomes was conducted as described previously (Liu et al., 2018). The signal sites were counted using Excel. NTSYS 2.10 software (Rohlf 2000) was employed to measure genetic similarity and distance between samples. Cluster analysis was conducted using the unweighted pair-group method with arithmetic mean (UPGMA) approach according to the matrix of genetic similarity coefficients, and a dendrogram was plotted.

GBS library preparation and sequencing

Hi-DNAsecure Plant Kit DP350 (TIANGEN, Beijing, China) was used to extract total genomic DNA from fresh young leaves of 2-week-old seedlings. The quality and integrity of DNA extracts were assessed by 1% agarose gel electrophoresis with a standard DNA ladder of size λ , and the yields were measure using a NanoDrop 2000 (Thermo Scientific, MA, USA) and Qubit® 2.0 fluorometer (Invitrogen, Carlsbad, USA). GBS library was constructed according to a previous protocol (Poland et al. 2012). Genome sequencing was conducted on 50 samples using an Illumina HiSeq PE150 platform. Burrows-Wheeler Aligner v0.7.8 was used to map the paired-end reads to the *Triticum dicoccoides* reference genome (Li and Durbin 2009). The reference genome was from the NCBI database (*T. dicoccoides* WEW_v2.0). The comparison results were sorted by SAMTOOLS (Li et al. 2009). The obtained SNPs were filtered by eliminating those with MAF < 0.01 and missing rate > 30% (Danecek et al. 2011; Luo et al. 2019). The markers were delivered as HapMap and variant call format (VCF) (v0.1.10) files (Danecek et al. 2011).

Population structure analysis

ADMIXTURE software was used to estimate population structure (Alexander et al. 2009; Li et al. 2019). The best K with minimum cross-validation error was evaluated according to a previous method (Alexander et al. 2009). TreeBeST (<http://treesoft.sourceforge.net/treebest.shtml>) was used to construct unrooted neighbor-joining phylogenetic trees. The confidence intervals of the genetic association among the accessions were measured by conducting 1,000 bootstraps. The value was expressed as a percentage at the main nodes of each branch. GCTA software (<http://cns.genomics.com/software/gcta/pca.html>) was used to calculate the feature vectors and eigenvalues of the PCA. The distribution map of the PCA was constructed with R software v3.5.0.

Statistical analysis

PowerMarker 3.25 software was used to calculate the basic summary statistics, including polymorphism information content (PIC), gene diversity (GD), observed heterozygosity (H_o) and MAF (Liu and Muse 2005). All SNPs were mapped to the *Triticum dicoccoides* reference genome (*T. dicoccoides* WEW_v2.0). The SNPs with a PIC of 0.27–0.30 were chosen and 7,212 SNPs were analyzed by AMOVA. The number of subpopulations measured by STRUCTURE analysis was selected for AMOVA. Genetic indices containing number of effective alleles (N_e), number of alleles (N_a), observed heterozygosity (H_o), expected heterozygosity (H_e), Shannon's information index (I) and unbiased diversity index (u_h) were determined. GeneAIEx 6.41 was used to perform AMOVA and estimate genetic indices (Peakall and Smouse 2006).

Results

FISH karyotype polymorphism of *T. araraticum* and *T. timopheevii*

Probe Oligo-pTa535-1 generated signals predominately on the A^t -genome chromosomes. However, several G-genome chromosomes showed different hybridization locations, and only a small number of signals were distributed on chromosomes 4G, 6G, and 7G. Oligo-pSc119.2-1 mainly hybridized with the G-genome chromosomes, and signals were located in the interstitial and subterminal regions, which allow the identification of 9 out of 14 chromosomes of *T. timopheevii*. There were a small number of signals on 1A and 5A^t. Oligo-pTa71-2 mainly hybridized with the 6A^t and 6G chromosomes, and the signal was on the short arm.

There were FISH signal polymorphisms in the 50 accessions used in this study (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3). There was no signal variation in the A^t genome but two signal variations in the G genome of *T. timopheevii* (Fig. 2). PI119442 was the most typical FISH karyotype among the 15 *T. timopheevii* accessions. Seven chromosomes of the A^t genome were monomorphic and very conserved in all 15 *T. timopheevii* accessions (Fig. 2a). Both chromosomes 2G and 7G had one kind of signal variation in the G genome of all 15 *T. timopheevii* accessions (Fig. 2b). However, there were 14 kinds of FISH signal variations in the A^t genome (Fig. 3a) and 19 kinds of FISH signal polymorphisms in the G genome of *T. araraticum* (Fig. 3b). Chromosome 1A^t had four kinds of signal variations, showing the highest polymorphism. Chromosomes 4A^t and 5A^t each had three kinds of signal variations, showing strong signal polymorphism. Chromosome 2A^t had two kinds of signal variations. Chromosomes 3A^t and 7A^t each had one kind of signal variation, showing the lowest signal polymorphism. Notably, chromosome 6A^t was monomorphic. Chromosome 2G had seven kinds of signal variations, showing the highest signal polymorphism. Chromosomes 6G and 7G each had four kinds of signal variations, showing strong signal polymorphism. Chromosomes 1G and

4G each had two kinds of signal variations, showing low signal polymorphism. Similarly, it is worth noting that both chromosomes 3G and 5G were monomorphic. However, compared with the FISH signal of *T. timopheevii* PI119442, additional sets of red signals were observed on the short arms of 5A^t and 2G in *T. araraticum* AS273 (Fig. 4), and on the long and short arms of the chromosomes 1A^t and 6G, respectively, in *T. araraticum* AS274 and PI427414 (Fig. 4).

FISH signal cluster analysis

Cluster analysis was performed according to the physical location of the FISH signals from 50 accessions using 10 different *T. turgidum* accessions as outgroup, with a similarity coefficient of 0.57 as the standard (Fig. 5). Sixty accessions were divided into two groups based on their different FISH signals. The 50 accessions with the A^tA^tGG genome were clustered together, and the 10 accessions with the AABB genome were clustered together. Fifty accessions with the A^tA^tGG genome were classified as 5 clusters according to a similarity coefficient of 0.89. Among the clusters, cluster 1 was mostly composed of *T. timopheevii*, and clusters 2, 3, 4, and 5 were mostly composed of *T. araraticum*. *T. araraticum* and *T. timopheevii* showed strong genetic differentiation, with *T. araraticum* showing strong genetic diversity. However, three *T. araraticum* accessions, AS273, AS274 and PI427414, were included in the *T. timopheevii* group, showing that these 3 accessions were closely related to this group. *T. araraticum* was concentrated in Iraq, and the geographical distributions of *T. araraticum* and *T. timopheevii* overlapped in Turkey (Fig. 6).

Chromosome distribution of SNPs

Illumina HiSeq PE150 generated a total of 7,141,920 raw single-end sequence reads from 50 samples. It is assumed that G genome SNPs from the *T. timopheevii* accessions mapped to the B genome of the *T. dicoccoides* reference sequence, in view due to a close similarity between these two genomes (Hyun et al. 2020). After quality filtering, 190,402 SNPs were identified in the A^t, G genomes (Table S4, <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.17032322.v1>), including 104,180 SNPs from the A^t genome, 84,930 SNPs from the G genome and 1,292 SNPs from unanchored scaffolds (Fig. 7a, Table S5). In the A^t genome, the chromosomes 1A^t and 2A^t harbored the lowest (1,1982) and highest (17,527) number of SNPs, respectively. In the G genome, the chromosomes 4G and 5G had the lowest (7,748) and highest (14,637) numbers of SNPs, respectively (Fig. 7b). The highest and lowest numbers of SNPs identified on the chromosomes 4G and 2A^t were 17,527 and 7,748, respectively (Fig. 7b). The ratio of SNP numbers in the A^t to G genomes was 1.23. Thus, the SNP number of A^t genome exceed that of G genome.

Population structure

The resulting dataset of 190,402 high-quality SNPs from GBS was used for cluster analysis. *T. araraticum* and *T. timopheevii* were clearly divided into two subpopulations (Fig. 8). Subpopulation 1 (POP1) contained most *T. araraticum* accessions except for AS273. Subpopulation 2 (POP2) contained all *T. timopheevii* accessions including one *T. araraticum* accession AS273. Two *T. timopheevii* accessions, Cltr15590 and Cltr15205 from Greece were grouped together with PI94760 from Georgia, with bootstrap values reaching 100%. PI221421 from Serbia was grouped together with PI251018 from Hungary, with bootstrap values of 100%. Most *T. timopheevii* are related

to PI119442 from Turkey, with bootstrap values of 65%. *T. araraticum* accessions from Iraq were divided into 6 subgroups (Fig. 8). Two *T. araraticum* accessions PI352265 and AS272 from Azerbaijan were grouped together with PI427339 from Iraq. Similarly, two *T. araraticum* accessions PI427366 and PI427370 from Iran were grouped together with PI427363 from Iraq.

When K had an inflection point, the cross-validation (CV) errors were low, with K = 2 minimizing the CV errors (Fig. 9). Clustering information for 50 individuals was shown when K = 1 to 8 (Fig. 10). K = 2, *T. araraticum* was first distinguished from *T. timopheevii*. The separation of these two sub-populations was also well supported by PCA (Fig. 11). K = 3, *T. araraticum* were divided into two subgroups, one subgroup includes three taxa A2, A6, and A8, and the other subgroup includes three taxa A4, A7, and A10. Nearly 70% of the genetic information for A5 was originated from the ancestors A4, A7, and A10. Almost half of the genetic information for AS273 (A9) came from the ancestor A11, and the remaining information was derived from the ancestor A2, A6, and A8.

One hundred percent different SNPs corresponding to the same physical location were screened among 35 and 15 accessions of *T. araraticum* and *T. timopheevii* to ensure that the SNPs at each corresponding physical location were common to all accessions in the respective populations. A total of 4139 SNPs were screened out (Table S6). The different SNPs between *T. araraticum* and *T. timopheevii* were widely distributed over all of the chromosomes (Fig. 12), and the most different SNPs were distributed on chromosomes 2A^t, 3A^t, 5A^t, and 6A^t. A special *T. araraticum* accession AS273, having an intermediate spike type was grouped with *T. timopheevii*, corresponding to the result of FISH signal cluster analysis. The analysis of 3034 specific SNPs from AS273 indicated that chromosomes 2A^t, 5A^t, 7A^t, 3G, 4G and 6G were from *T. araraticum* and chromosomes 1A^t, 3A^t, 4A^t, 6A^t, 1G, 2G, 5G, and 7G were from *T. timopheevii* (Fig. 13).

Genetic diversity

Genetic diversity analysis of the 50 accessions indicated that the mean GD and PIC were 0.30 and 0.26, with the ranges of 0.1–0.5 and 0.1–0.4, respectively (Fig. 14a, b). The *H_o* values ranged from 0 to 1, and the value was 0.1 when the samples were genotyped on a large number of markers (Fig. 14c). The average MAF was 0.26 (Fig. 14d). Intra-population genetic diversity analysis demonstrated that mean *N_a* and *N_e* values were 1.97 and 1.50 for the two subpopulations, respectively (Table 1). The *N_e* value of Pop1 (1.54) was higher than that of Pop2 (1.46). The mean values of *H_e*, *H_o*, *I* and *u_h* were 0.32, 0.35, 0.49 and 0.33, respectively. As shown in Table 1, the Pop1 (*I* = 0.53, *H_e* = 0.35, *u_h* = 0.35) showed higher genetic diversity than Pop2 (*I* = 0.45, *H_e* = 0.29, *u_h* = 0.31). In addition, the results of AMOVA showed that much greater variation within populations (97%) was observed than among the populations (3%) (Table 2). Notably, the *N_m* value was relatively high (8.39), suggesting high gene flow between subpopulations (Table 2). These findings demonstrate a high genetic diversity within subpopulations, but a low genetic diversity between subpopulations.

Table 1

Means of genetic parameters for each subpopulation of the 50 *timopheevii* accessions. Number of alleles (N_a), number of effective allele (N_e), Shannon's index (I), observed heterozygosity (H_o), expected heterozygosity (H_e), and unbiased diversity index (uh).

Population	N_a	N_e	I	H_o	H_e	uh
Pop1	2.00	1.54	0.53	0.35	0.35	0.35
Pop2	1.94	1.46	0.45	0.36	0.29	0.31
Mean	1.97	1.50	0.49	0.35	0.32	0.33

Table 2

Analysis of molecular variance using 7212 SNP markers of genetic differentiation among and within two subpopulations of the 50 *timopheevii* accessions.

Source	df	SS	MS	Est. Var.	%	P value
Among Pops	1	9167.11	9167.11	167.97	3%	0.001
Within Pops	48	270708.25	5639.76	5639.76	97%	0.001
Total	49	279875.36		5807.73	100%	0.001
Nm	8.39					

Discussion

Plant genetic diversity offers opportunities for plant breeders to create new and improved varieties with desirable character (Govindaraj et al. 2015). *T. timopheevii* and *T. araraticum* are important genetic resources for improving wheat production. In the present study, FISH and GBS were used to evaluate genetic diversity in 35 and 15 accessions of *T. araraticum* and *T. timopheevii*, respectively, which were collected from 13 countries. In the FISH karyotype analysis of *T. timopheevii*, all 15 accessions had quite limited FISH signal variation, which was relatively stable throughout the distribution area. In the FISH karyotype analysis of *T. araraticum*, 33 FISH signal variations were found among the 35 accessions. However, chromosomes 6A^t, 3G, and 5G showed only one signal type, indicating that these three chromosomes remained more stable than other chromosomes during domestication, which is inconsistent with the findings of C-banding (Badaeva et al. 1990; Badaeva et al. 1994b). Cluster analysis indicated that the 50 *timopheevii* accessions with the A^tA^tGG genome were clustered, and the 10 *T. turgidum* accessions with the AABB genome were clustered, indicating different evolutionary lineages of *T. timopheevii* and *T. turgidum* (Oliveira et al. 2020). However, 50 accessions with the A^tA^tGG genome were divided into 5 clusters based on a similarity coefficient of 0.89.

In this study, 190,402 SNP markers were obtained from GBS, in which the lowest and highest frequencies of SNPs were found in the G and A^t genomes, respectively. The highest and lowest numbers of SNPs identified on the chromosomes 4G and 2A^t were 7,748 and 17,527, respectively. Genetic diversity and PIC values are greatly useful for assessing the polymorphism levels among genotypes in populations (Salem and Sallam 2016). In the present study, the mean PIC and GD were 0.26 and 0.3, respectively, (Fig. 14A, B). The PIC values were classified into three categories by Botstein et al. (1980): (1) if PIC > 0.5, the SNP is highly informative, (2) if 0.25 < PIC < 0.5, the SNP is a moderately informative, and (3) if PIC < 0.25, then the SNP is slightly informative. Yang and co-workers (2020)

analyzed 180 Asian and European common wheat accessions, and found a mean PIC of 0.27, indicating that the population has moderate genetic diversity. Our results showed that the mean PIC value was 0.26, suggesting that the 50 accessions have moderate polymorphism.

In the current study, the findings of AMOVA revealed high genetic diversity within populations (97%), while the variation between the populations was low (3%). The low genetic diversity between subpopulations was caused by high gene flow (Arora et al. 2014). It has been shown that the N_m (haploid) values of < 1 indicate low gene flow between subpopulations (Wright 1965). In this study, the N_m value was considerably high (8.39), suggesting high gene flow between subpopulations. These findings demonstrate high genetic diversity within subpopulations, while low genetic diversity between subpopulations. Population structure analysis is useful in understanding genetic diversity. The 50 timopheevii accessions were classified as 2 subpopulations according to the population structure data (Fig. 10). The PCA results (Fig. 11) were in agreement with STRUCTURE results.

Cluster analysis of 190,402 high-quality SNPs from GBS showed high genetic differentiation between *T. araraticum* and *T. timopheevii*, which agrees with previous studies revealed by C-banding (Badaeva et al. 1990; Badaeva et al. 1994b; Badaeva et al. 2016) and the study of storage proteins (Jakobashvili 1989). Based on the different SNPs derived from GBS, two main subpopulations were identified. In total, 4139 different SNPs between *T. araraticum* and *T. timopheevii* were obtained. These specific chromosomal regions may have been involved in the domestication of *T. timopheevii*. Most of the different SNPs were distributed on chromosomes 2A^t, 3A^t, 5A^t, and 6A^t. A special *T. araraticum* accession AS273, having an intermediate spike type, was clustered with all *T. timopheevii* accessions as revealed by cluster analysis. The analysis of specific SNPs from AS273 indicated that chromosomes 2A^t, 5A^t, 7A^t, 3G, 4G and 6G were from *T. araraticum* and chromosomes 1A^t, 3A^t, 4A^t, 6A^t, 1G, 2G, 5G, and 7G were from *T. timopheevii*. It was showed that more than half of the genetic information of AS273 came from *T. timopheevii*, and the remaining information was derived from *T. araraticum*. We speculated that there were two possibilities about the origin of AS273. One possibility is that AS273 may have different evolutionary pathway of having A^t and G genome from the same parentage. The other possibility is that AS273 may result from the gene flow between *T. araraticum* and *T. timopheevii* because of cross-pollination, which does occur in bread wheat when florets open and self-pollination fails (Keydal 1978; Barradas and Romano 1979-80; Griffin 1987; Martin 1990; Hucl 1996; Okada et al. 2018).

To date, *T. timopheevii* was mainly used for wheat disease resistance breeding by directly crossing it with common wheat or using synthetic amphiploids as a bridge because of its resistance to fungal diseases, including leaf rust, powdery mildew, smut and stem rust (McIntosh and Gysuch 1971; Badaeva et al. 1991; Peusha et al. 1996; Järve et al. 2002; Mikó et al. 2015; Liu et al. 2018). Our results indicated that high genetic differentiation existed within *T. araraticum* and *T. timopheevii* populations collected from 35 countries. *T. timopheevii* was cultivated more extensively in regions with a humid climate (average rainfall per year 900–1200 mm) at altitudes of 300–1200 m (Badaeva et al. 1994b), and adapted to the colder and wetter regions of European countries (Ulaş and Fiorentino 2021). *T. araraticum* was distributed in regions with a drought climate, including southeastern Turkey, western Iran, northern Iraq, and some regions of Transcaucasia: the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic, Armenia, and northeastern Azerbaijan (Badaeva et al. 1990). Therefore, both *T. araraticum* and *T. timopheevii* can be used as potential genetic sources for biotic and abiotic stress tolerance. Breeders can use them for overcoming resistance to biotic and abiotic stresses in future wheat breeding programs of China and other countries.

Conclusion

In this study, FISH and GBS were utilized to evaluate the population structure and genetic diversity of 50 timopheevii wheat accessions. Structure and cluster analyses divided 50 accessions into two subpopulations (POP1 and POP2). POP1 mainly consisted of most *Triticum araraticum* accessions, and POP2 comprised all accessions of *Triticum timopheevii* and one *Triticum araraticum* accession AS273. In addition, the genetic variance showed that genetic variation was greater within populations (97%) than between populations (3%). POP1 and POP2 had high levels of genetic diversity and POP1 showed higher genetic diversity. This study showed that the 50 timopheevii accessions having high genetic diversity could be employed for future breeding programs to establish new durum and hexaploid wheat cultivars.

Declarations

Availability of data and materials

The data that support the findings of this study are available in 'figshare' with the identifier data DOIs, including two dataset (Tetraploid wheat-GBS.vcf, <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.16692490.v1> and <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.17032322.v1>)

Authors' contributions

TP and LQZ designed the research and wrote the manuscript. TP, XMJ, DHW, MHZ and XL performed the experiments. MH and XC helped with data analysis, and WL, BJ, LH, SZN, ZWY, DCL, BHW, ZHY and XJC supervised the study. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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Conflict of interest statement

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Research involving human participants and/or animals None.

Informed consent None.

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Figures



Figure 1

Spike type of *T. timopheevii* and *T. araraticum*. *T. timopheevii* accessions PI94761 (1), PI266850(2), PI119442(3), PI282932(4), PI272530(5), PI221421(6) and *T. araraticum* accessions PI427410(7), PI427414(8), PI427421(9), PI427413(10), PI427415(11) and AS273 (12).

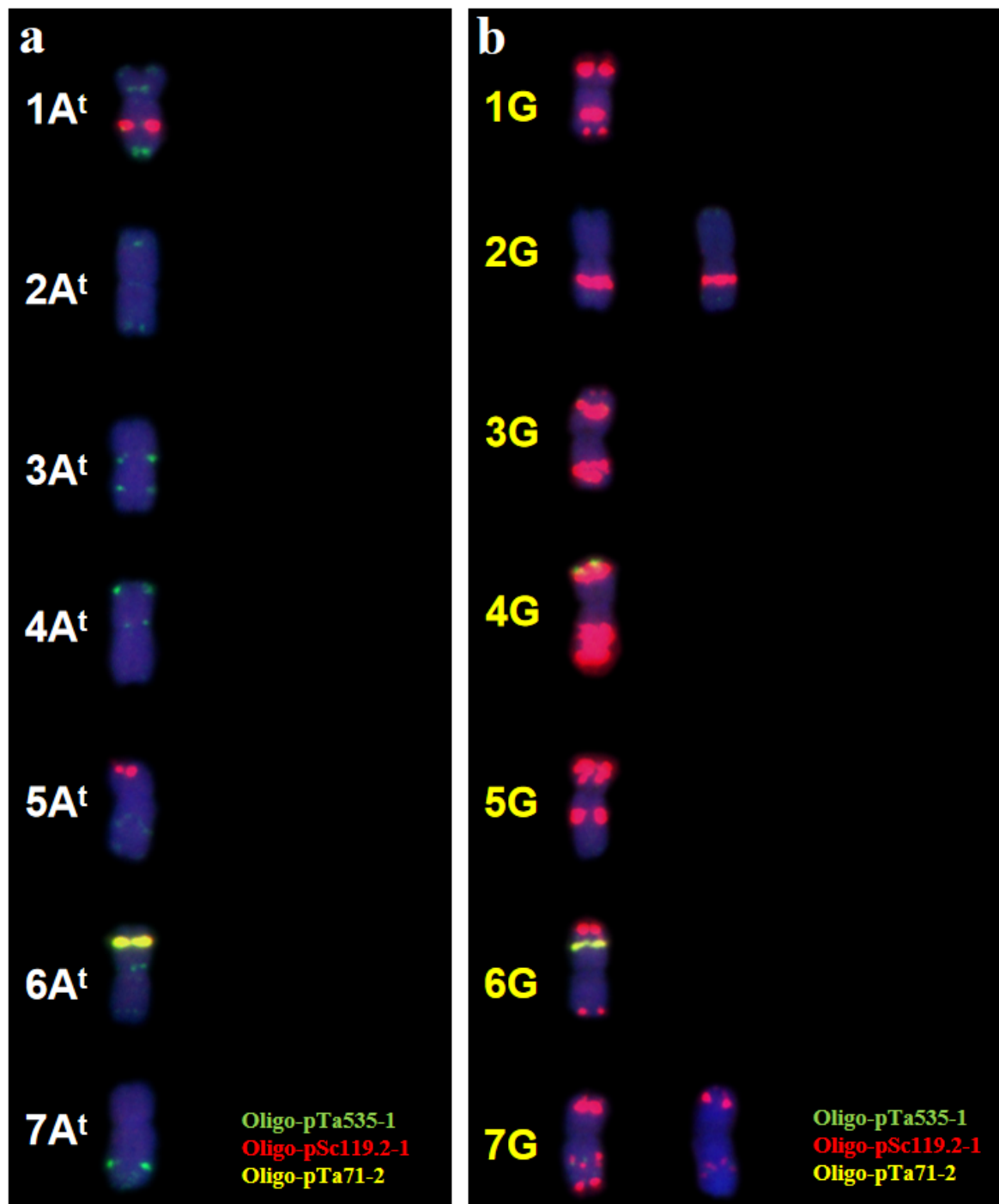


Figure 2

FISH karyotype diversity of the A^t (a) and G (b) genomes in *T. timopheevii* using Oligo-pSc119.2-1 (red), Oligo-pTa71-2 (yellow) and Oligo-pTa535-1 (green) as probes.

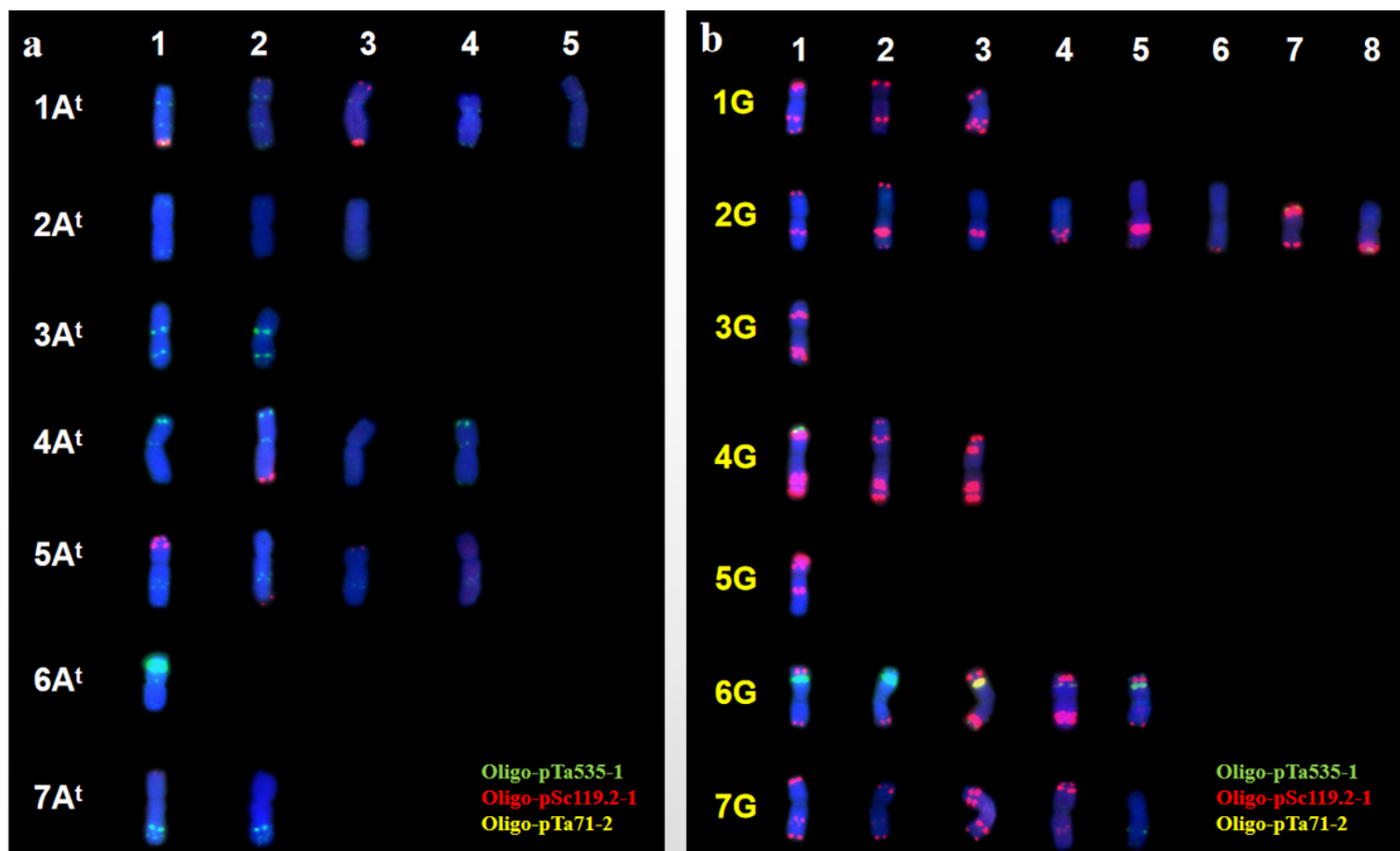


Figure 3

FISH karyotype diversity of the A⁺ (a) and G (b) genomes in *T. araraticum* using Oligo-pSc119.2-1 (red), Oligo-pTa71-2 (yellow) and Oligo-pTa535-1 (green) as probes.

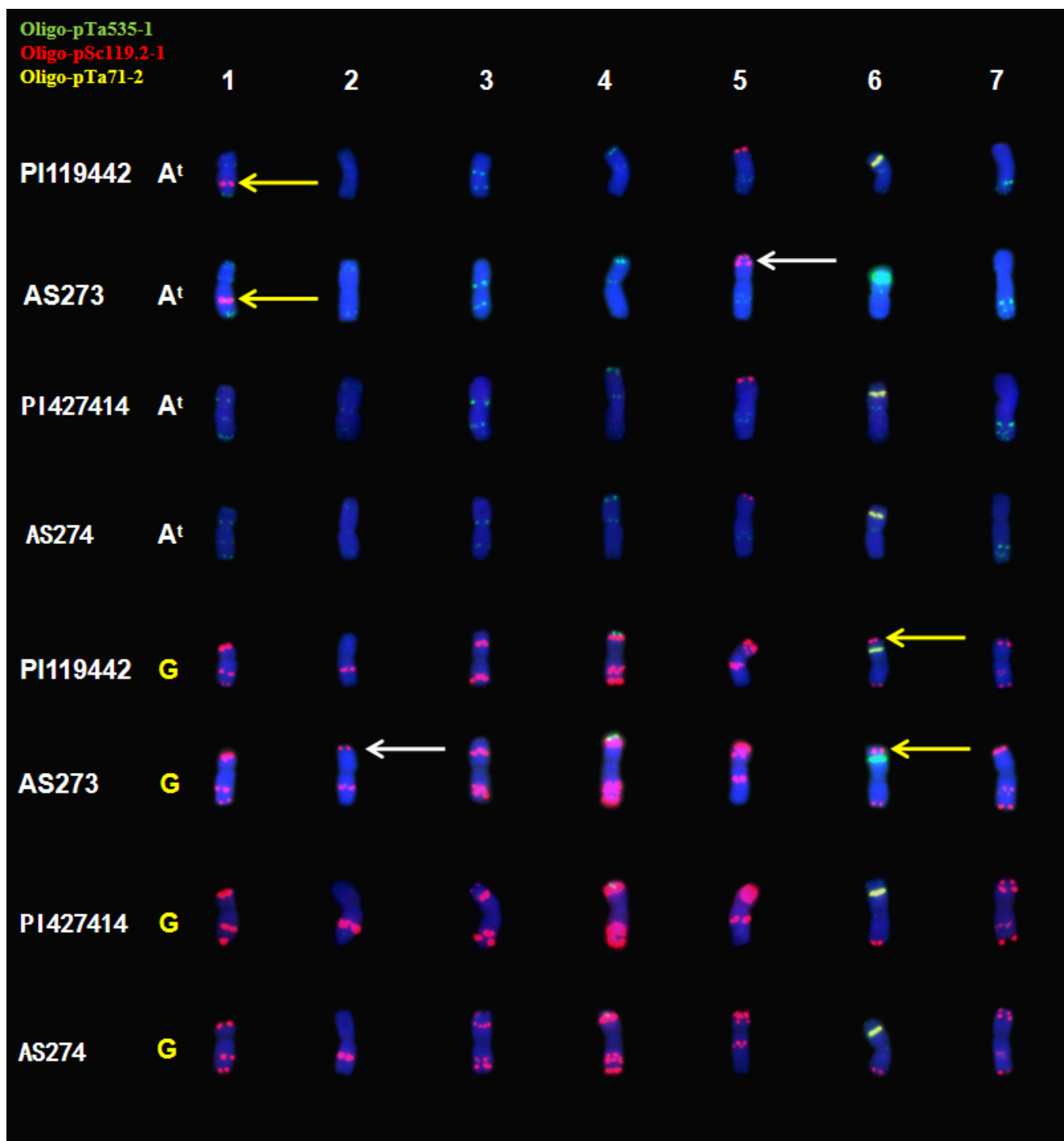


Figure 4

Comparisons of FISH signals between *T. timopheevii* PI119442 and *T. araraticum* AS273, AS274, and PI427414 using Oligo-pSc119.2-1 (red), Oligo-pTa71-2 (yellow) and Oligo-pTa535-1 (green) as probes. An extra pair of red signals was indicated by the white arrow in AS273 compared with *T. timopheevii* and *T. araraticum*, and a pair of the same red signals with *T. timopheevii* was indicated by the yellow arrow in AS273.

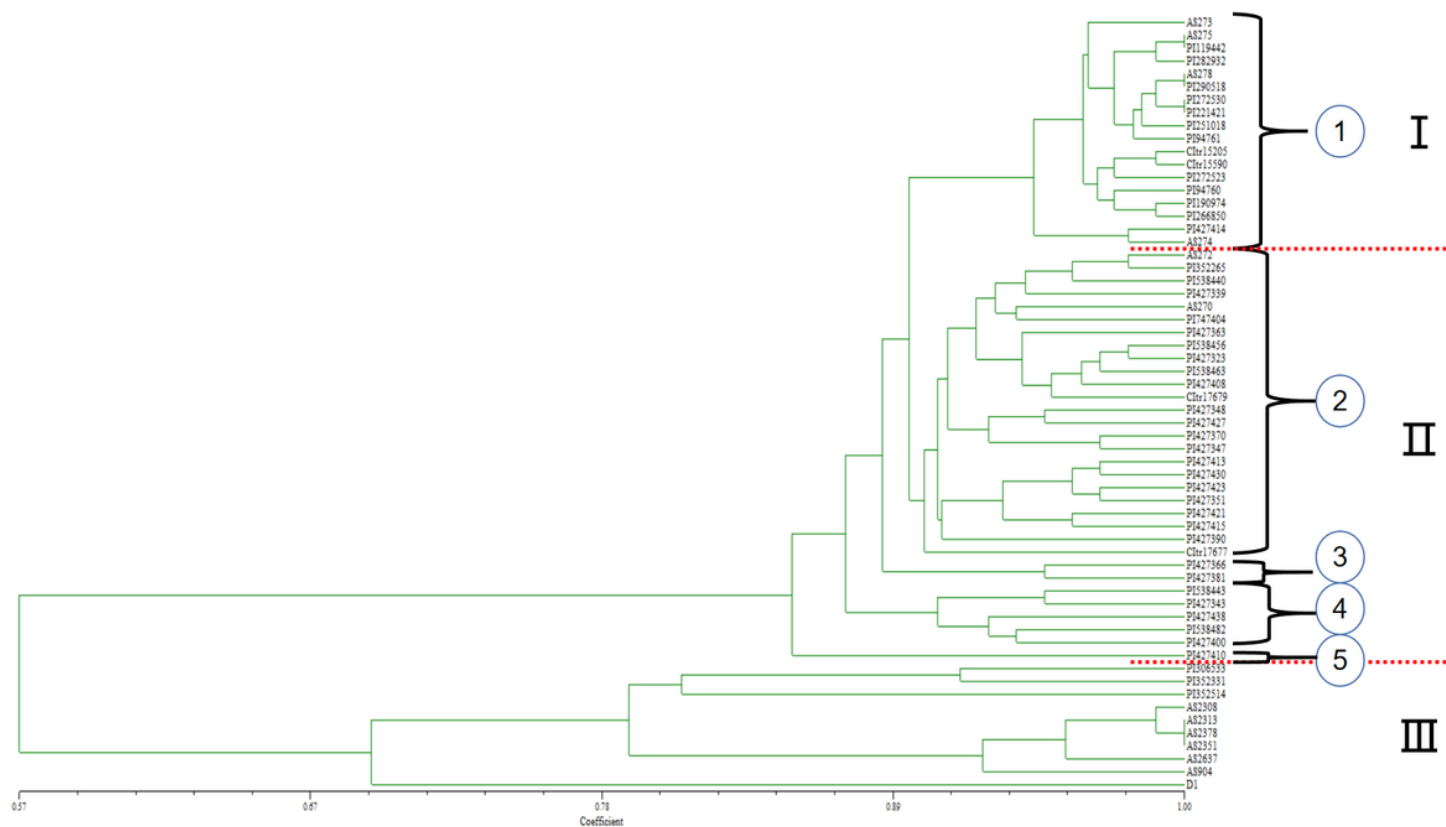


Figure 5

Genetic association among 60 tetraploid wheat accessions established according to the signal types of different chromosomes. Red, oligo-pSc119.2-1; yellow, oligo-pTa71-2; green, oligo-pTa535-1. I, II, and III represent the populations of *T. timopheevii*, *T. araraticum*, and *T. turgidum*, respectively.

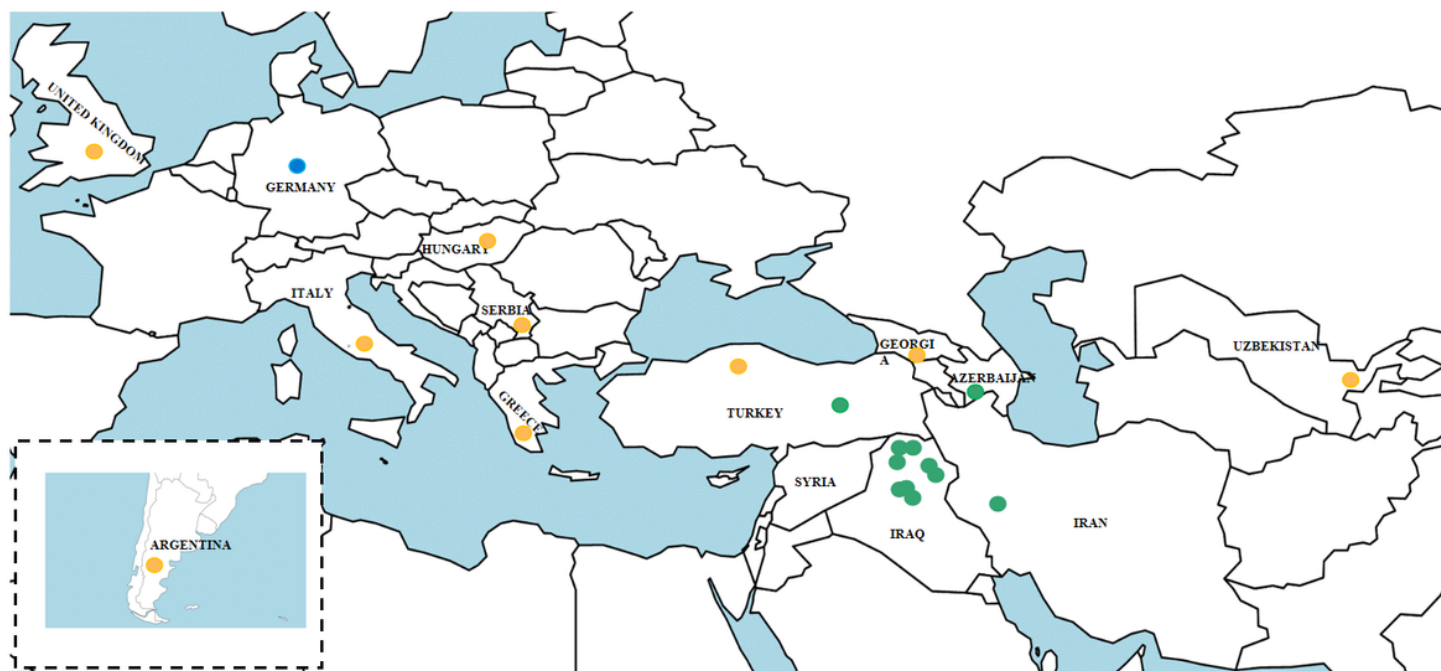


Figure 6

Geographical distributions of plastotypes observed in 32 and 13 accessions of wild and domesticated *T. timopheevii*, respectively. Species assignments from genetic analyses are indicated in different colours: *T. araraticum* in green, *T. timopheevii* in yellow, and AS273 in blue.

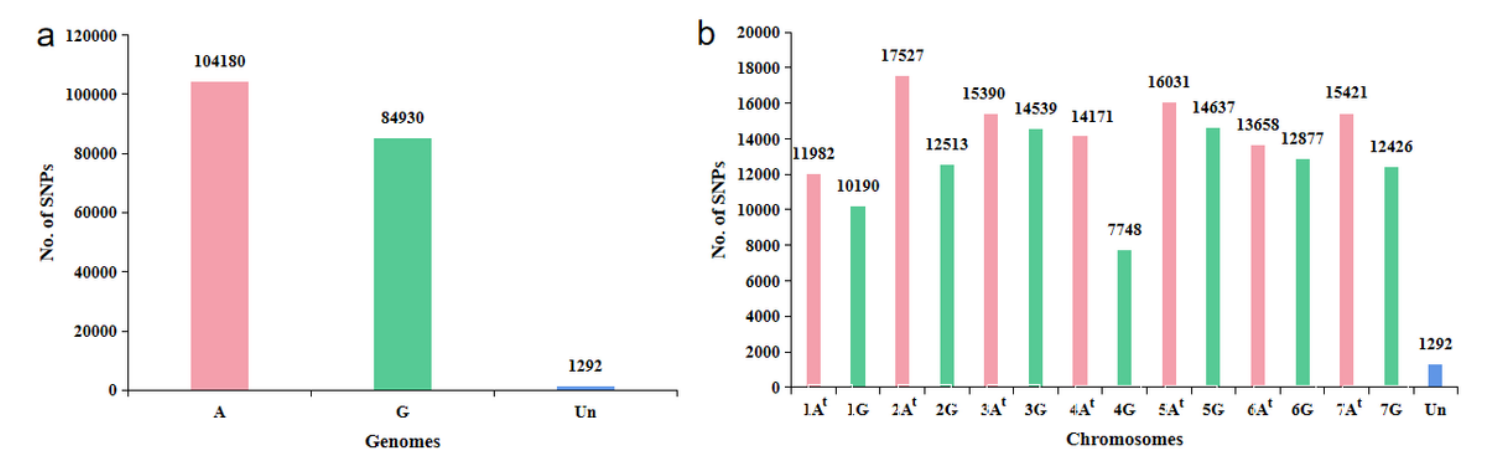


Figure 7

(a, b) SNP distribution on all chromosomes in the *timopheevii* wheat genomes A[†] and G.

Tree scale: 0.1

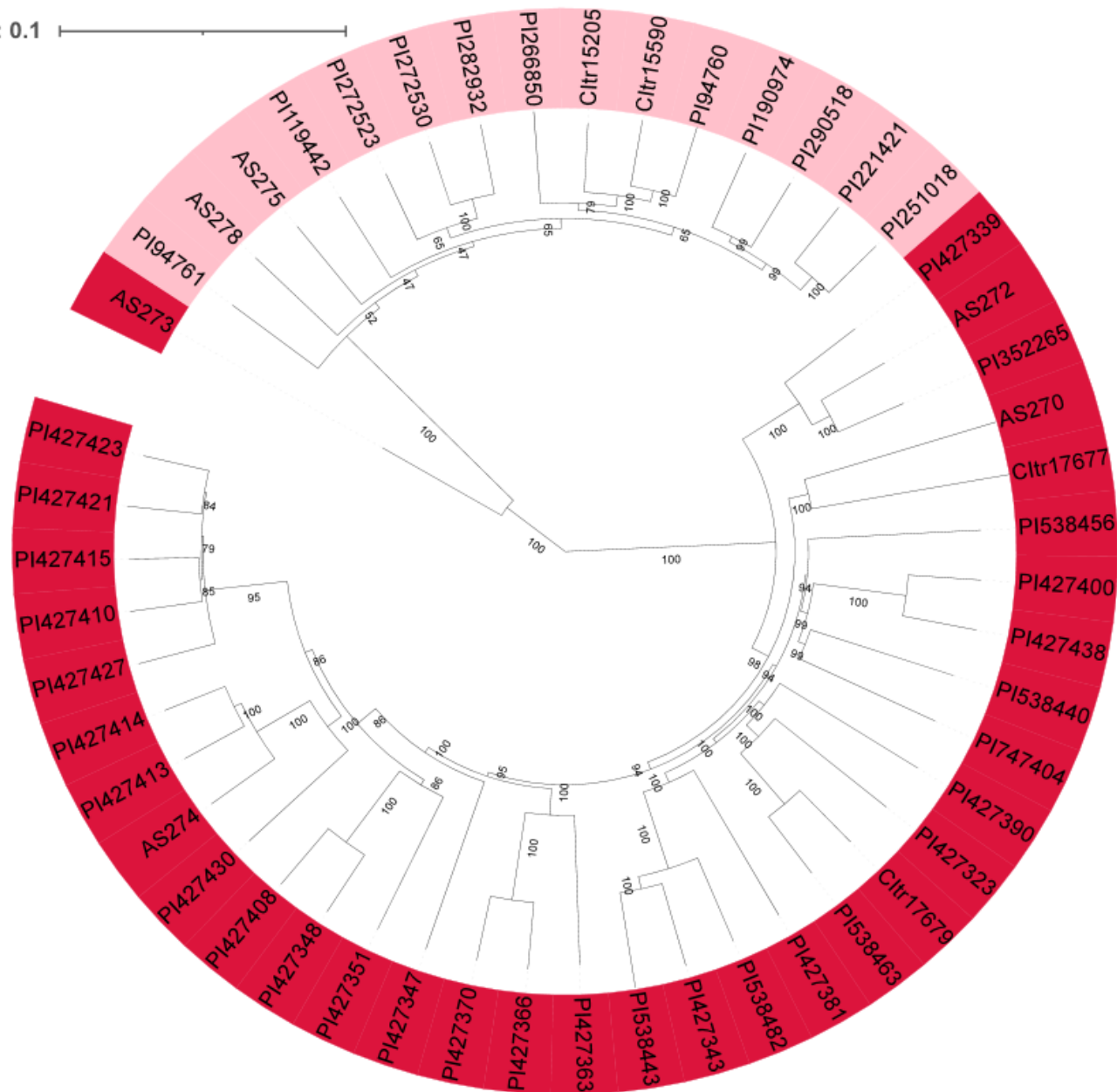


Figure 8

Neighbour-joining tree based on SNP markers of 35 *T. araraticum* accessions and 15 *T. timopheevii* accessions. *T. araraticum* is marked in dark red, while *T. timopheevii* is marked in light red.

CV error

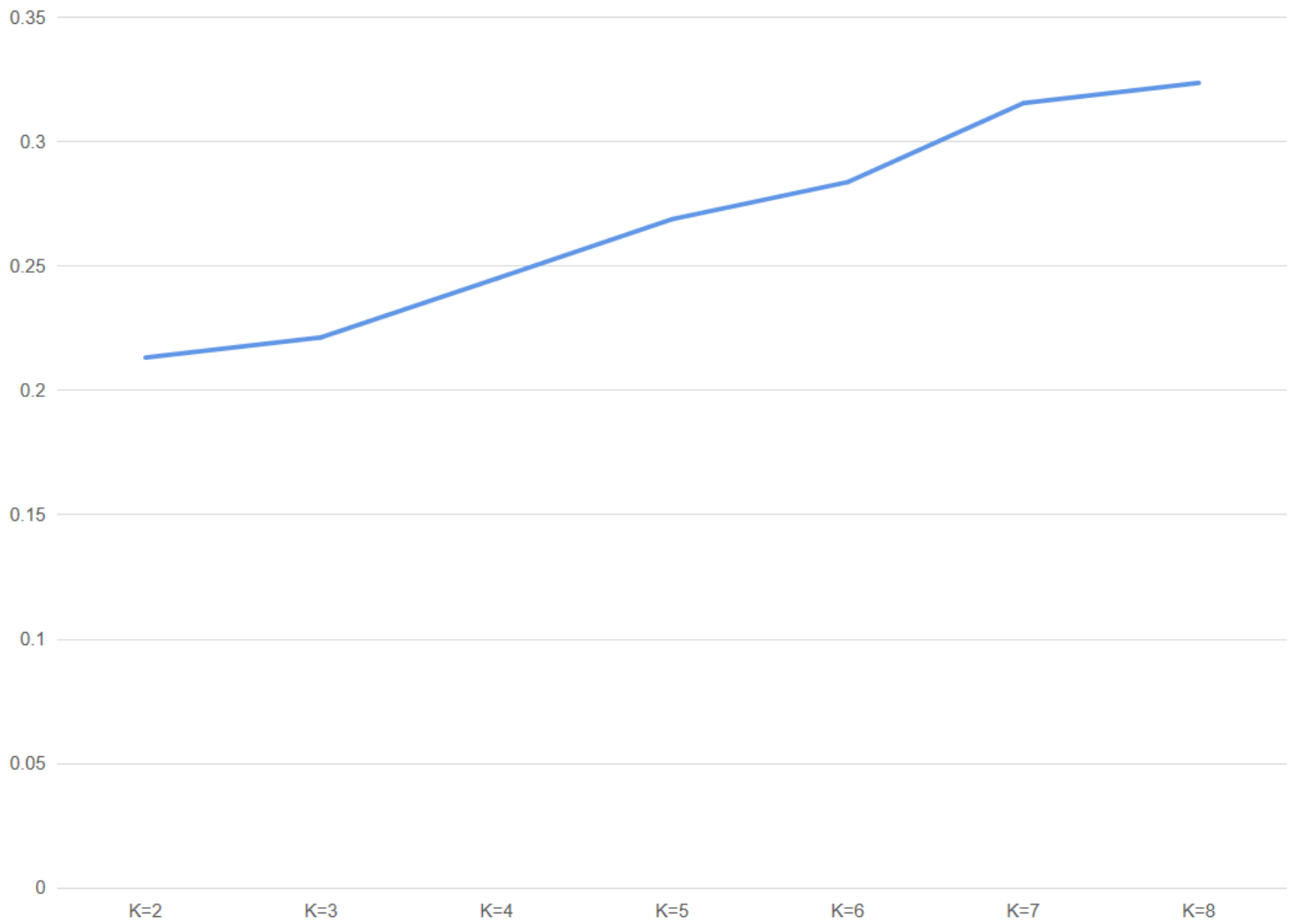


Figure 9

The CV errors vary among K values.

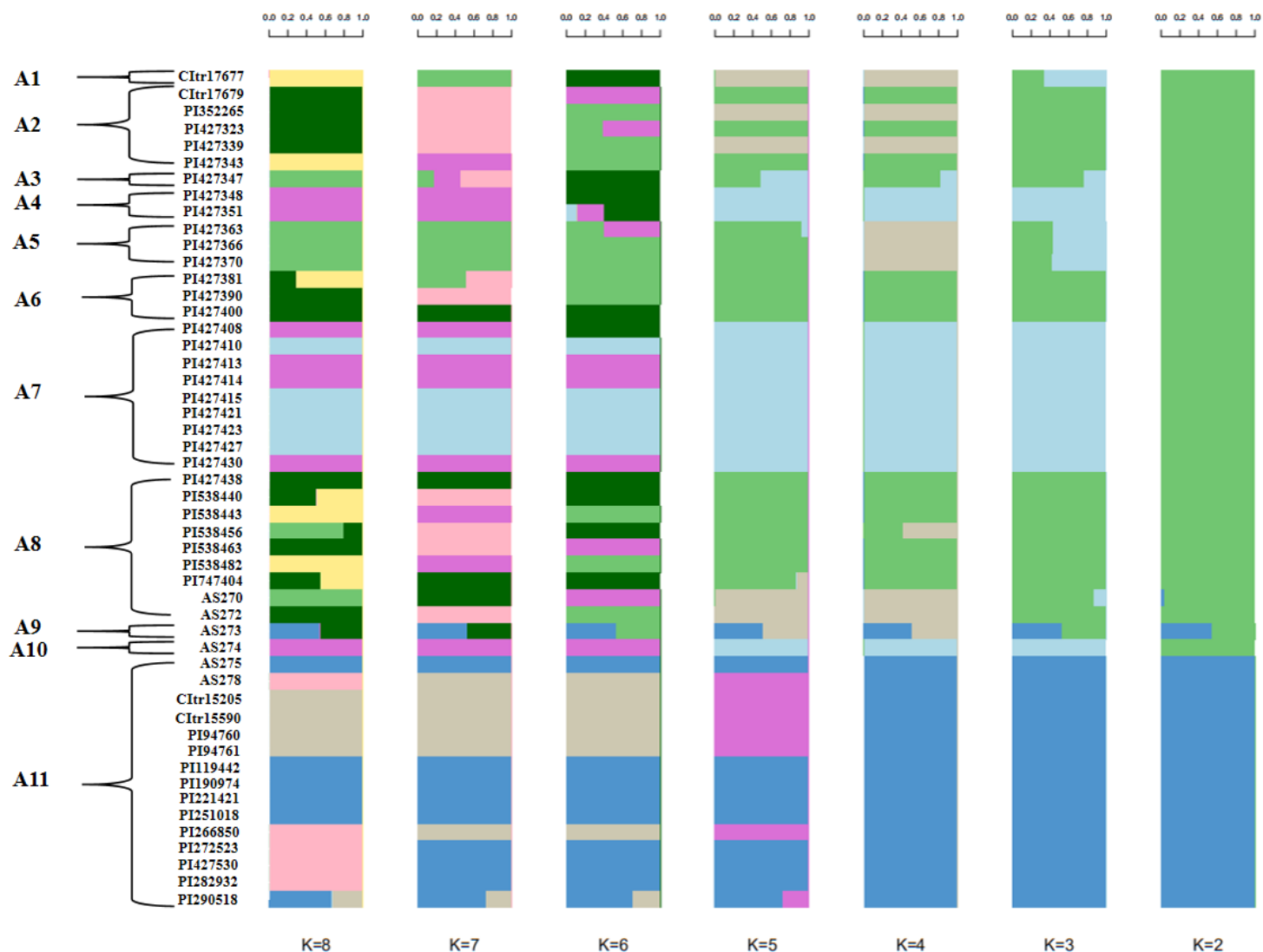


Figure 10

Analysis of population genetic structure according to the SNP markers of 50 germplasms (K = 1 to 8). Each individual is represented by a vertical bar, and the likelihood of it belonging to a particular population is indicated by the colors. When K=3, the population can be divided into the A1-A11 taxa.

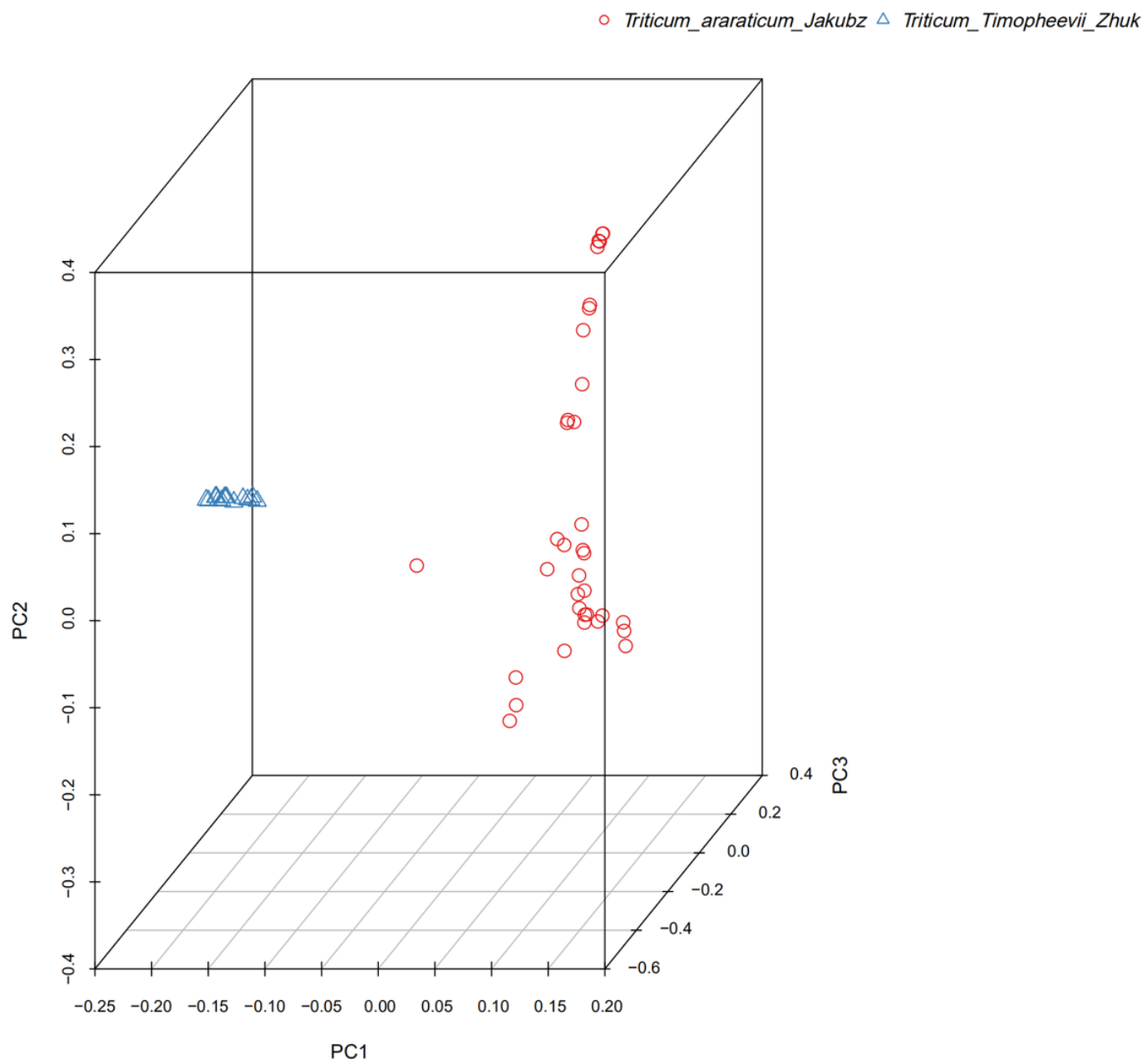


Figure 11

Principal coordinate analysis (PCA) based on SNP markers of 35 *T. araraticum* accessions and 15 *T. timopheevii* accessions.

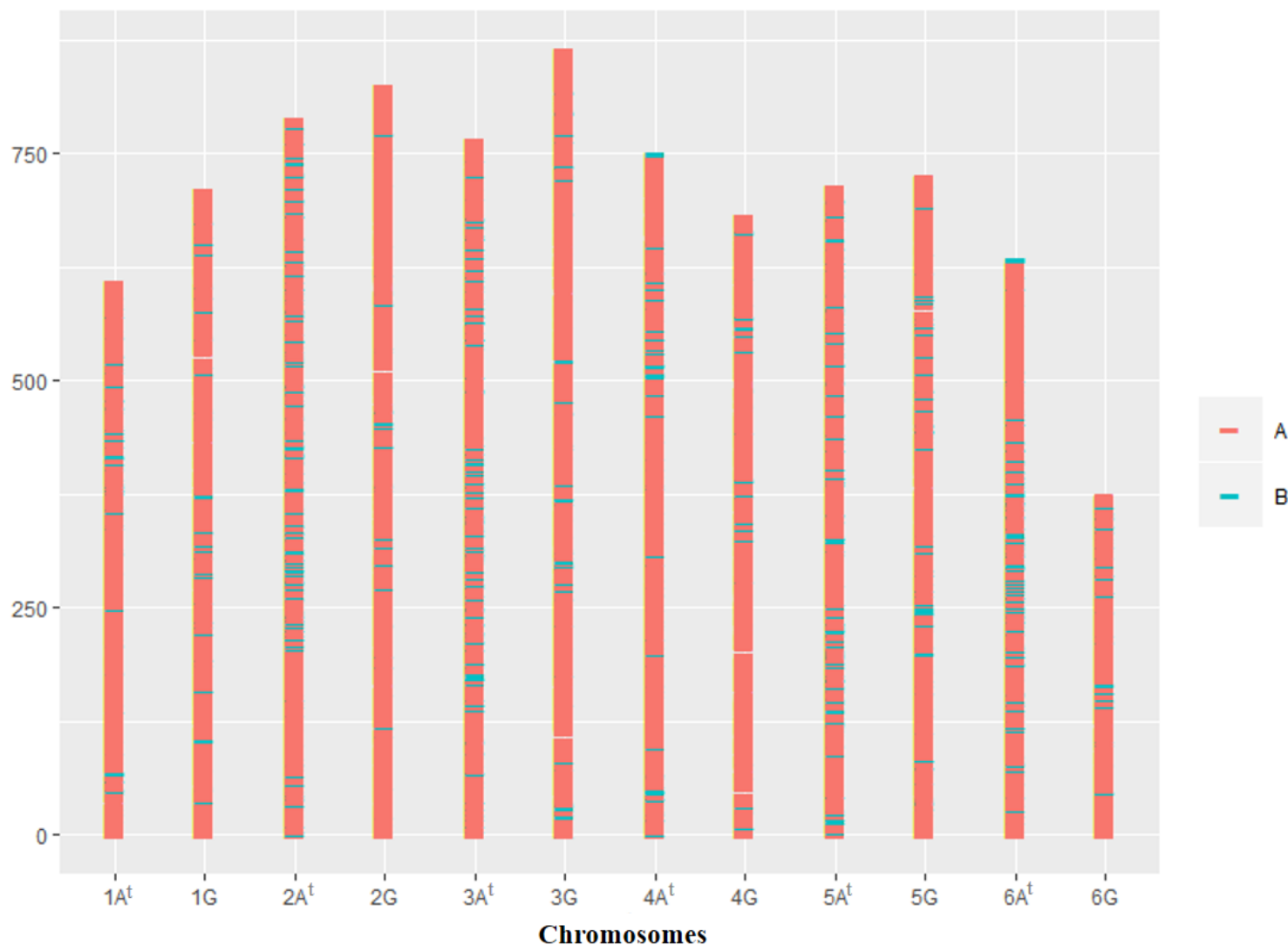


Figure 12

Chromosomal distribution of fixed nucleotide differences between *T. araraticum* and *T. timopheevii*. A represents the same SNP markers at the same physical location, and B represents different SNP markers at the same physical location.

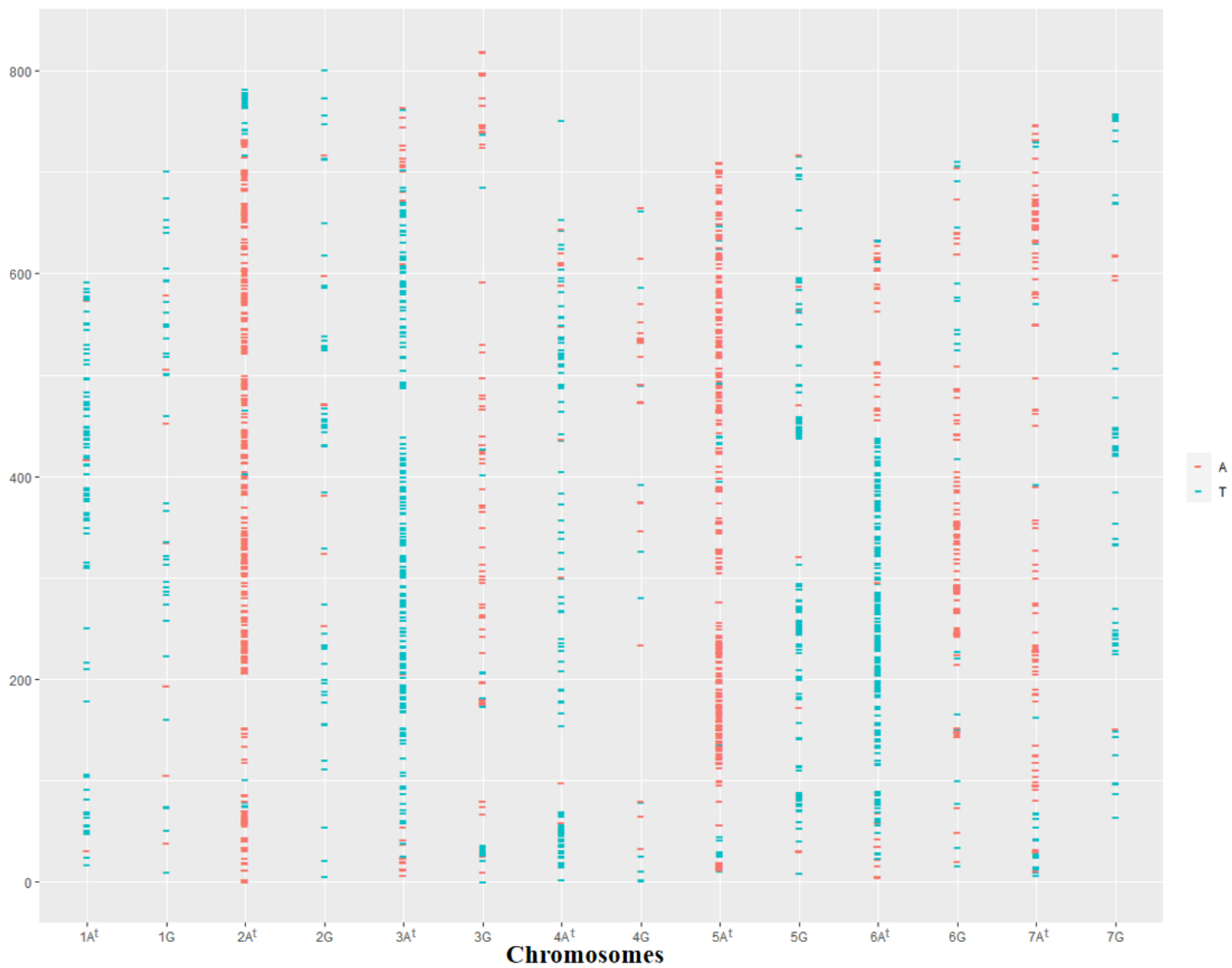


Figure 13

Different SNPs between *T. araraticum* and *T. timopheevii* were distributed on 14 chromosomes of AS273. A indicates the SNPs markers from *T. araraticum*. T indicates the SNPs markers from *T. timopheevii*.

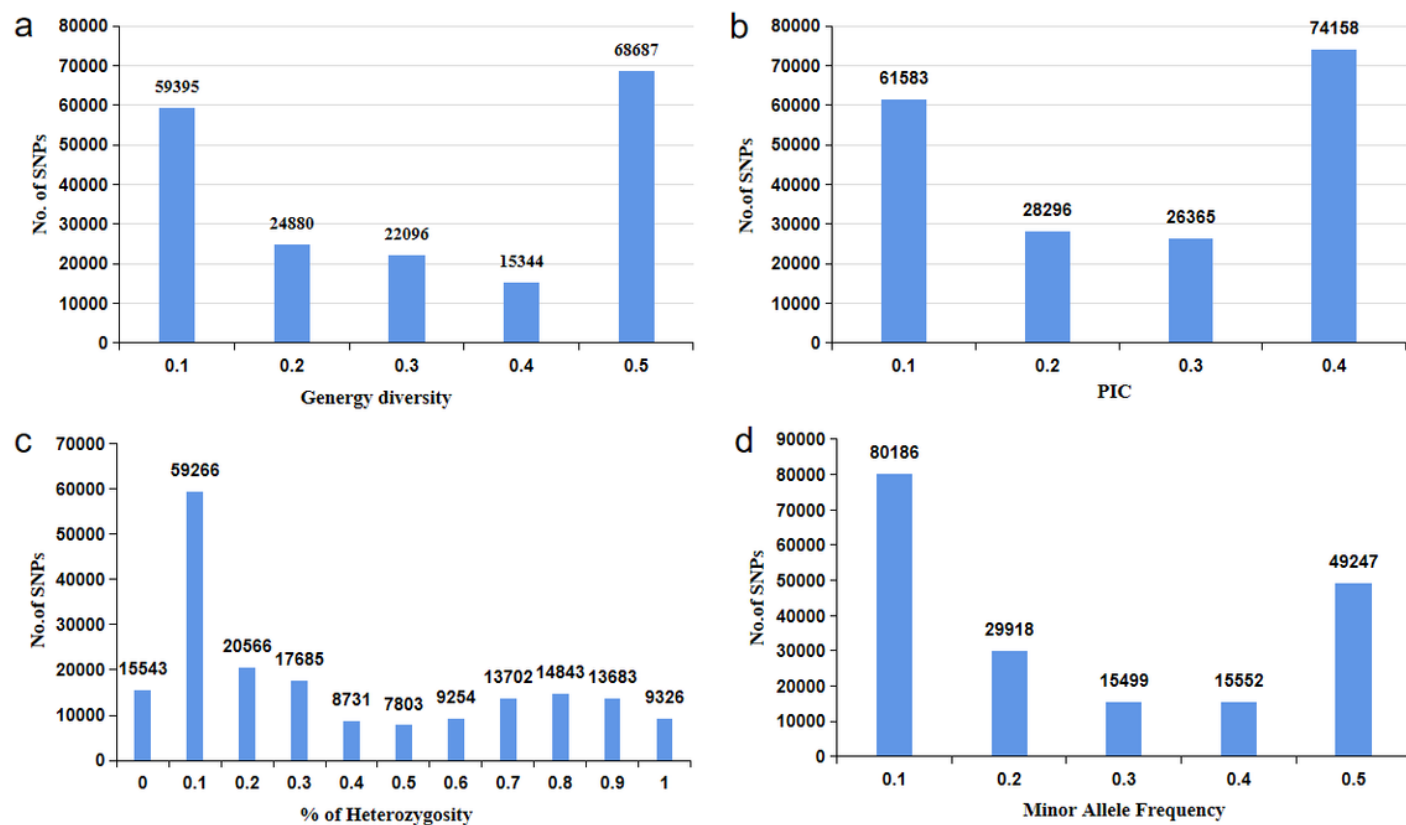


Figure 14

Distribution of the genetic diversity indices of 190,402 SNPs in the 50 *timopheevii* wheat accessions.

Supplementary Files

This is a list of supplementary files associated with this preprint. Click to download.

- [TableS1.xlsx](#)
- [TableS2.xlsx](#)
- [TableS3.xlsx](#)
- [TableS5.xlsx](#)
- [TableS6.xlsx](#)