# 1 Extensive genome evolution distinguishes maize within a

# 2 stable tribe of grasses

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4	Michelle C. Stitzer <sup>1</sup> , Arun S. Seetharam <sup>2</sup> , Armin Scheben <sup>3</sup> , Sheng-Kai Hsu <sup>1</sup> , Aimee J. Schulz <sup>4</sup> ,
5	Taylor M. AuBuchon-Elder <sup>5</sup> , Mohamed El-Walid <sup>4</sup> , Taylor H. Ferebee <sup>6</sup> , Charles O. Hale <sup>4</sup> , Thuy La <sup>1</sup> ,
6	Zong-Yan Liu <sup>4</sup> , Sarah J. McMorrow <sup>1</sup> , Patrick Minx <sup>5</sup> , Alyssa R. Phillips <sup>7</sup> , Michael L. Syring <sup>2</sup> , Travis
7	Wrightsman <sup>4</sup> , Jingjing Zhai <sup>1</sup> , Rémy Pasquet <sup>8</sup> , Christine A. McAllister <sup>9</sup> , Simon T. Malcomber <sup>10</sup> ,
8	Paweena Traiperm <sup>11</sup> , Daniel J. Layton <sup>12</sup> , Jinshun Zhong <sup>13</sup> , Denise E. Costich <sup>1</sup> , R. Kelly Dawe <sup>14</sup> ,
9	Kevin Fengler <sup>15</sup> , Charlotte Harris <sup>15</sup> , Zach Irelan <sup>15</sup> , Victor Llaca <sup>15</sup> , Praveena Parakkal <sup>15</sup> , Gina
10	Zastrow-Hayes <sup>15</sup> , Margaret R. Woodhouse <sup>16</sup> , Ethalinda K. Cannon <sup>16</sup> , John L. Portwood II <sup>16</sup> ,
11	Carson M. Andorf <sup>16</sup> , Patrice S. Albert <sup>17</sup> , James A. Birchler <sup>17</sup> , Adam Siepel <sup>3</sup> , Jeffrey Ross-Ibarra <sup>7,18</sup> ,
12	M. Cinta Romay <sup>1</sup> , Elizabeth A. Kellogg <sup>5</sup> , Edward S. Buckler <sup>1,19</sup> , Matthew B. Hufford <sup>2</sup>
13	
14	
15	<sup>1</sup> Institute for Genomic Diversity, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14850 USA
16	<sup>2</sup> Ecology, Evolution, and Organismal Biology, Iowa State University, Ames IA 50011 USA
17	<sup>3</sup> Simons Center for Quantitative Biology, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, Cold Spring Harbor, NY
18	11724 USA
19	<sup>4</sup> Department of Plant Breeding and Genetics, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14850 USA
20	<sup>5</sup> Donald Danforth Plant Science Center, St. Louis, Missouri 63132, USA
21	<sup>6</sup> Department of Computational Biology, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14850 USA
22	<sup>7</sup> Department of Evolution and Ecology and Center for Population Biology, University of
23	California, Davis, Davis CA 95616 USA
24	<sup>8</sup> DIADE, IRD, CIRAD, University of Montpellier, Montpellier, France
25	<sup>9</sup> Principia College, Elsah, IL 62028 USA
26	<sup>10</sup> National Science Foundation, Alexandria, VA 22314 USA
27	<sup>11</sup> Department of Plant Science, Faculty of Science, Mahidol University, Ratchathewi, Bangkok,
28	Thailand
29	<sup>12</sup> Indiana University, Department of Biology, Bloomington, IN 47405 USA
30	<sup>13</sup> South China Agricultural University, Guangzhou, Guangdong, 510642 China
31	<sup>14</sup> Department of Genetics, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602 USA
32	<sup>15</sup> Corteva Agriscience, Johnson, IA 50131 USA
33	<sup>16</sup> USDA-ARS, Corn Insects and Crop Genetics Research Unit, Ames, IA 50011 USA
34	<sup>17</sup> Division of Biological Sciences, University of Missouri, Columbia MO 65211 USA
35	<sup>18</sup> Genome Center, University of California, Davis, Davis, CA 95616 USA
36	<sup>19</sup> USDA-ARS, Ithaca, NY 14850 USA
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#### 39 Abstract

#### 40

41 Over the last 20 million years, the Andropogoneae tribe of grasses has evolved to 42 dominate 17% of global land area. Domestication of these grasses in the last 10,000 years has 43 yielded our most productive crops, including maize, sugarcane, and sorghum. The majority of 44 And ropogoneae species, including maize, show a history of polyploidy -a condition that, while 45 offering the evolutionary advantage of multiple gene copies, poses challenges to basic cellular 46 processes, gene expression, and epigenetic regulation. Genomic studies of polyploidy have 47 been limited by sparse sampling of taxa in groups with multiple polyploidy events. Here, we 48 present 33 genome assemblies from 27 species, including chromosome-scale assemblies of 49 maize relatives Zea and Tripsacum. In maize, the after-effects of polyploidy have been widely 50 studied, showing reduced chromosome number, biased fractionation of duplicate genes, and 51 transposable element (TE) expansions. While we observe these patterns within the genus Zea, 52 12 other polyploidy events deviate significantly. Those tetraploids and hexaploids retain 53 elevated chromosome number, maintain nearly complete complements of duplicate genes, and 54 have only stochastic TE amplifications. These genomes reveal variable outcomes of polyploidy, 55 challenging simple predictions and providing a foundation for understanding its evolutionary 56 implications in an ecologically and economically important clade.

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#### 58 Introduction

59 Andropogoneae grasses have been integral to the origins and spread of grasslands, 60 relevant to human culture and agriculture for thousands of years, and are of growing 61 importance for their ability to rebalance the carbon cycle. These 1,200 species of warm-season 62 grasses dominate ecosystems in Africa, North and South America, and portions of South and 63 Southeast Asia (Gibson, 2009; Kellogg, 2015). The ancestor of these grasses evolved the highly 64 efficient C4 photosynthesis (Bianconi et al., 2020), and all are adapted for low or variable CO<sub>2</sub> 65 abundance, meaning these species are nitrogen and water use efficient (Ghannoum et al., 66 2011; Morison & Gifford, 1983; Rawson et al., 1977). Today, these grasses include the largest 67 production crops maize and sugarcane, drought resistant sorghum, the bioenergy crop 68 Miscanthus, and numerous forage grasses. Altogether, Andropogoneae grasses cover 17% of 69 global land (Lehmann et al., 2019). 70 Allopolyploidy has been a major force in the evolution of Andropogoneae grasses, with

71 at least <sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> of all speciation events associated with polyploidy (Estep et al., 2014). Newly formed

72 polyploids often face meiotic abnormalities and establishment challenges (Ramsey & Schemske, 73 2002), and genome doubling can induce epigenetic instability (Comai, 2005). Considering these 74 challenges, it is surprising there are so many polyploids, not only in the Andropogoneae, but 75 across the plant kingdom (Alix et al., 2017). Explanations for their prevalence range from 76 ecological novelty of polyploids, allowing them to exploit niches or stressful environments 77 unavailable to their diploid progenitors (Van de Peer et al., 2017), to the increased fitness and 78 adaptive potential arising from the permanent hybridity of polyploids (Roose & Gottlieb, 1976; 79 Stebbins, 1959). Over longer time scales, polyploids frequently revert to a diploid-like state 80 (Baduel et al., 2018; Comai, 2005; Leitch & Leitch, 2008; Otto, 2007; J. F. Wendel, 2000, 2015), 81 via three oft-cited mechanisms - chromosomal reduction, gene loss via fractionation, and 82 transposable element amplification.

83 Despite these general patterns, there are major gaps in our understanding of even the 84 best known polyploid systems (Soltis et al., 2016). Mounting evidence suggests that at least 85 some polyploid lineages undergo minimal genome evolution (cotton, Wendel & Cronn, 2003, 86 bamboo, Ma et al., 2024; Arabidopsis suecica, Burns et al., 2021), and other plant lineages 87 rarely produce polyploids (gymnosperms, Ickert-Bond et al., 2020), illustrating exceptions to the 88 conventional models. Here, we present genome assemblies of 33 Andropogoneae individuals 89 from 27 species, capturing 14 independent polyploid formation events. Of these, twelve have 90 little evidence of large-scale genomic reorganization, show unpredictable TE dynamics, and 91 retain multiples of the base chromosome number and most genes. In contrast, the lineage 92 leading to Zea exhibits notable changes, with expanded TEs, and only retaining a subset of 93 progenitor genes in a radically rearranged karyotype.

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#### 95 **Results and Discussion**

#### 96 Genome assemblies of Andropogoneae

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98 We generated highly contiguous assemblies of 33 members of Andropogoneae, 99 representing 27 species (Supplemental Table S1). Sequencing technologies evolved throughout 100 our project, so while most individuals were sequenced with PacBio HiFi (27 plants), 5 plants

101 were sequenced with PacBio Continuous Long Read (CLR) sequencing, and one with Oxford Nanopore Technology (ONT) (Table S2). To further improve contiguity, 24 assemblies were
 scaffolded using BioNano optical maps, HiC, or genetic maps (Table S2). Most samples come
 from outbred accessions, and many come from species with multiple ploidy levels and mixed ploidy populations.

106 Our assemblies include nine chromosome-scale assemblies of all diploid (2n=20) 107 teosinte species and subspecies within Zea, as well as two individuals of Tripsacum dactyloides 108 (2n=36), together representing the subtribe Tripsacinae. The 22 additional species sequenced 109 within the tribe Andropogoneae (Supplemental Table S1) represent major clades in the 110 phylogeny (Figure 1A) and the global distribution (Figure 1C). We observed a broad range of 111 haploid assembly sizes, from 663 Mb to 4,767 Mb (Figure 1B; Supplemental Table S3), and 112 found assembly size to nearly perfectly mirror genome size estimated from flow cytometry 113 (Pearson's correlation, r=0.916, p=5.75e-09) (Supplemental Figure S1). The presence of 114 telomere repeats on both terminal ends of chromosome-length contigs in 22 species further 115 supports assembly completeness, as does contig N50 (median 10.2 Mb; range 152 kb-189 Mb) 116 and scaffold N50 (median 72.0 Mb; range 13-198 Mb) (Supplemental Table S2). This contiguity 117 is high in spite of high levels of repetitive transposable element (TE) and tandem repeat 118 sequence, ranging from 54.7-93.3% of assembled sequence (Figure 1B). We generated gene 119 model annotations for each assembly using Helixer (Stiehler et al., 2021), and predicted 120 transcriptomes show a high level of completeness with most (median 98.54, range 95.7%-121 99.8%) Poales BUSCO genes identified (Supplemental Table S2). 122 Combined with publicly available assemblies of *Sorghum bicolor* and *Zea mays* subsp.

mays, these assemblies offer a dense sample of recent (ca. 0.650 million years of evolution;
 Tripsacinae (Chen et al., 2022)) and a broad sample of deeper history (ca. 17.5 million years;
 Andropogoneae (Welker et al., 2020)).

#### 126 Relationships between Andropogoneae species

127 To reconstruct phylogenetic relationships of these genomes, we used gene trees 128 constructed from 7,725 syntenic gene anchors (details provided below) to generate a species 129 tree (Fig 1A). We find pervasive conflict across gene tree topologies, with most bipartitions

- 130 along the internal branches of the radiation supported by alternative topologies (Figure 1A).
- 131 This conflict has been noted in previous studies of nuclear and chloroplast markers (Estep et al.,
- 132 2014; Grass Phylogeny Working Group III, 2024; Welker et al., 2020). The success of these
- 133 radiations and large effective population sizes likely contribute to these conflicting topologies,
- as does extensive allopolyploidy in the clade (Estep et al., 2014). Extensive diversification of
- these species occurred in the late Miocene 12-20 million years ago (Estep et al., 2014) after the
- 136 origin of C4 photosynthesis (Bianconi et al., 2020). Today they are estimated to cover 15-17% of
- 137 vegetated land globally (Lehmann et al., 2019).



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139 Figure 1: Assemblies of Andropogoneae from throughout the phylogenetic and geographic range have 140 varying divergence, ploidy, and genome size. A) Species phylogeny built from 7,725 syntenic genes, 141 including multiple copies in polyploids, using ASTRAL-PRO3. Pie charts at nodes show the quartet 142 support for the main topology in blue, indicated by the tree, the first alternative topology in teal, and 143 the second alternative in yellow. Polyploidy events are shown in diamonds, with colors corresponding to 144 ploidy. Throughout all figures, diploids are shown in yellow, tetraploids in purple, paleotetraploids in 145 blue, and hexaploids in red. The x-axis position of diamonds reflect timing of divergence of parental 146 genomes, so may predate estimated species divergence. The WGD shared by all Tripsacinae is shown 147 with one point at the median parental divergence of all taxa except obligate annual subspecies in Zea 148 mays. Subtribes are shown as gray boxes, with names listed when we sampled more than one 149 representative. Single representative subtribes are: 1. Germainiinae, 2. Sorghinae, 3. Ischaeminae, 4. 150 Apludinae, 5&6 are Incertae sedis pending taxonomic revision, and 7. Chrysopogoninae B) Haploid size 151 in gigabases of assembly (circle) and TEs and tandem repeats (TR) (triangle), colored by ploidy as in A, 152 with diploids in yellow. Scaffolded assembly size, including N's, shown with a gray circle. Individuals with 153 \* after sample name represent haploid assemblies. Across all assemblies, average assembly size is 1.9 154 Gb, and average repeat size is 1.5 Gb. C) Map showing collection locations for our 33 samples in points 155 colored by ploidy, as in A. The range of all Andropogoneae species is shown in green, constructed from 156 wild occurrences in AuBuchon-Elder et al. (2023). Digitized collections are limited in the Indian 157 subcontinent, although Andropogoneae are abundant there (Welker et al., 2020). D) Heterozygosity 158 between alleles versus synonymous substitutions between homeologs for each assembly, with circles 159 designating allopolyploids, triangles autopolyploids, and squares diploids. Diploids, which do not have 160 homeologs, are assigned a Ks value of 0. The gray line indicates a 1:1 relationship between 161 heterozygosity and synonymous substitution rate. Chrysoposon serrulatus is excluded from this plot, as 162 it showed elevated nucleotide substitutions arising from nanopore sequencing. As it can be difficult to 163 associate an individual plant with a point, figures with each assembly highlighted are available at 164 https://mcstitzer.github.io/panand assemblies/.

#### 165 Diversity within species reflects differences in reproductive mode and population histories

166 Comparison of alleles within individuals showed segregating variation ( $\pi$ ) across several 167 orders of magnitude (from 0.0002% to 6%; Figure 1D), ranging from nearly homozygous 168 individuals arising from self-fertilization, to high diversity consistent with large effective and 169 census population sizes of these keystone grassland species. For example, low-heterozygosity 170 Anatherum virginicum self-seeds extensively, facilitated by cleistogamous flowers (Campbell, 171 1982), while high-heterozygosity *Heteropogon contortus* is a weedy apomict, found throughout 172 tropical and subtropical latitudes (Carino & Daehler, 1999; Emery & Brown, 1958), and high-173 heterozygosity Thelepogon elegans has populations with permanent translocation

174 heterozygosity facilitated by the formation of ring chromosomes (Sisodia, 1970). In general,

heterozygosity values are congruent with expectations from reproductive mode, life history,and range size (Supplemental Text).

#### 177 **Polyploidy in Andropogoneae is common**

178 We characterized ploidy in our sequenced accessions by counting chromosomes and 179 estimating copy number of syntenic regions derived from whole genome duplications (WGD). 180 Amplification of genomes through polyploidy generates duplicated gene copies, inherited in 181 blocks of conserved syntenic order along chromosomes. The number of times each syntenic 182 region is present in a polyploid can thus give estimates of past WGDs. We used genes from 183 diploid *Paspalum vaginatum* (Sun et al., 2022), which only shares ancestral grass WGDs with 184 Andropogoneae, and is closely related in the sister tribe Paspaleae (Grass Phylogeny Working 185 Group III, 2024). Paspalum genes are found in syntenic blocks with 1 to 6 copies in 186 Andropogoneae, after adjusting values based on whether the assembly was haploid or allelic 187 (as described in Li & Durbin, 2024). We integrated our results with cytological literature and 188 chromosome counts to assign ploidy to our samples (Supplemental Figure S2; Supplemental 189 Text). Our studied assemblies include 10 diploids, 9 tetraploids, 4 hexaploids, and 12 190 paleotetraploids (cytological diploids arising from the Tripsacinae WGD; Figure 1). Their 191 phylogenetic distribution provides fourteen independent polyploid formation events with 192 which to study the impact of polyploidy on genome evolution.

193 Commonly observed consequences of polyploidy often include reductions in 194 chromosome number, fractionation of duplicate genes, and expansions of transposable 195 elements (Soltis et al., 2016; Wendel, 2015). In our analyses, we see elevated chromosome 196 number in tetraploids and hexaploids (Figure 2A), variable reductions in duplicated genes in all 197 polyploids (Figure 2B), and few expansions of repeat content beyond the multiplication 198 expected from polyploidy (Figure 2C). Given that these patterns deviate from our expectations, 199 we aimed to understand the genomic and temporal factors associated with polyploidy, to 200 understand how these factors influence patterns of genome evolution.



201

202 Figure 2: Polyploids in Andropogoneae are abundant. A) Haploid chromosome number of each 203 sampled individual, versus ploidy. Diploid median and multipliers to tetraploid and hexaploid 204 expectations are shown with dotted lines. For A-C, statistical comparisons of each polyploid group to the 205 diploids were performed using a Wilcoxon rank-sum test. P-values for each comparison shown at top of polyploid group, with \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05, and ns for nonsignificant. **B)** Number of syntenic 206 207 genes found in each individual, versus ploidy. Diploid median and multiplier to tetraploid and hexaploid 208 expectations are shown with dotted lines. C) Megabases of repeats in each sampled individual, versus 209 ploidy. Diploid median and multipliers up to 7x the diploid median are shown with dotted lines. D) 210 Relatedness of duplicate copies in each polyploid across 7,725 gene trees. Each bar matches labels in E. 211 Purple are gene trees where all tips of the given species are monophyletic, and pink are gene trees 212 where the tips are found in paraphyletic or polyphyletic (non-monophyletic) arrangements. As the 213 Tripsacinae paleotetraploidy is shared by multiple species, we downsampled gene trees so only the focal 214 Tripsacinae sample was present in the tree. E) Median synonymous substitutions (Ks) between syntenic 215 homologs in polyploids by alignment block, colored by ploidy.

216	Polyploids form with a mitotic or meiotic "catastrophe" (Comai, 2005), generating
217	gametes with additional sets of chromosomes. Similarity between the subgenomes derived
218	from these parental chromosomes varies from nearly identical (autopolyploid) to fully

219 distinguishable (allopolyploid) (Comai, 2005; Doyle & Egan, 2010; Kellogg, 2016; Ramsey & 220 Schemske, 1998), but this relatedness exists along a continuum. When allelic diversity within 221 subgenomes is indistinguishable from homeologous diversity between subgenomes, the species 222 are likely autopolyploids (Figure 1D; Vossia cuspidata, "Andropogon" burmanicus, Hemarthria 223 compressa, H. contortus, Cymbopogon citratus; Individual species can be viewed at 224 https://mcstitzer.github.io/panand assemblies/). Each of these species is mixed-ploidy, and 225 diploid cytotypes are known (Mehra 1982, Darlington and Janaki-Ammal, 1945). Further, H. 226 compressa polyploids show formation of multivalents, supporting autopolyploid meiotic pairing 227 (Gupta et al., 2017). Disomic inheritance in polyploids is facilitated by sequence divergence 228 (Bingham, 1980; Mason & Wendel, 2020), as in allopolyploids where allelic diversity within 229 subgenomes is lower than homeologous diversity between subgenomes (Figure 1D). 230 Homeologous diversity in the remainder of Andropogoneae polyploids is consistent with 231 allopolyploidy, with divergent gene copies captured from each parental species (Figure 1D). 232 Allopolyploidy also leaves a signature in gene trees. If the parental taxa are extant and sampled, 233 gene copies in the polyploid will be more closely related to their diploid progenitor than to the 234 other polyploid (homeologous) copy; we call such gene tree patterns "non-monophyletic" with 235 respect to the subgenomes. Our taxon sample places a majority of non-monophyletic 236 relationships of gene copies in four polyploidy events (Figure 2D; Tripsacinae, Andropogon 237 *aerardi*, Schizachyrium scoparium, C. citratus), strongly supporting allopolyploidy in each case. 238 Two more polyploids have appreciable proportions of non-monophyletic gene trees (Figure 2D; 239 Andropogon chinensis, Bothriochlog laguroides), likely reflecting our sampling of more distant 240 relatives of potential allopolyploid parents. The distinction between auto and allopolyploidy can 241 be hazy, as evidenced by C. citratus with low allelic diversity but with a closely related sampled 242 congener *Cymbopogon refractus*, making a single label difficult. 243 To estimate the time the parents of these allopolyploids diverged, we used synonymous

243 To estimate the time the parents of these allopolyploids diverged, we used synonymous
244 site divergence (Ks) between homeologous copies (Figure 2E). Using a grass mutation rate
245 (6.5e-9, Gaut et al., 1996) and assuming clock-like substitution rates, median divergences range
246 from 1.05 Mya in *V. cuspidata* (median ks=0.014) to the Tripsacinae WGD at 12.33 Mya (median
247 perennial ks=0.160). Although the Tripsacinae WGD is shared between *Zea* and *Tripsacum*

(Estep et al., 2014; McKain et al., 2018), subspecies within *Zea mays* have a derived annual life
history (Doebley, 1990; Kempton & Popenoe, 1937), which is expected to increase the number
of generations per year and hence estimated divergence (Figure 2E).

251 The divergence of parental genomes sets an upper limit on the timing of polyploid 252 formation, but does not necessarily reflect when the polyploid nucleus was established 253 (Kellogg, 2016). For instance, while the subgenome progenitors of tetraploid wheat diverged 254 seven million years ago, they formed a tetraploid nucleus only ~800,000 years ago (Marcussen 255 et al., 2014). Using SubPhaser (Jia et al., 2022), we identified divergent repetitive sequences 256 between homeologous sequences, focusing on subgenome-specific TEs. However, only one 257 assembly, the hexaploid Urelytrum digitatum, assigned homeologous sequences into the 258 expected number of groups based on ploidy and chromosome count. In this species, diploid 259 progenitors diverged 1.3 million years before polyploid formation (Supplemental Figure S3). 260 The lack of differentiation in the remaining allopolyploids likely reflects uniform TE invasion and 261 turnover following polyploidization, with insertions distributed evenly across chromosomes.

#### 262 Chromosome stability is higher in polyploids than diploids

263 Chromosome number is a powerful yet simple descriptor of recent polyploidy. Elevated 264 homologous chromosome number poses challenges to cellular processes like mitosis and 265 meiosis (Comai, 2005), so is often countered by chromosome fusions and other rearrangements 266 that reduce chromosome number (Mandáková & Lysak, 2018; Tayalé & Parisod, 2013). Rapid 267 reduction of chromosomes in a newly formed allopolyploid can occur in tens of generations 268 (Buggs et al., 2012; Xiong et al., 2011), and rediploidization via reduced chromosome number 269 appears to be a general consequence of polyploidy, evidenced by its prevalence across 270 flowering plants (Bowers & Paterson, 2021; J. F. Wendel, 2015). Most Andropogoneae 271 genomes, including diploids (Figure 3A), tetraploids (Figure 3B), and hexaploids (Figure 3C) are 272 almost entirely collinear to Paspalum, with limited rearrangements. However, paleotetraploid 273 Tripsacum dactyloides show more rearrangements (Figure 3D), and all Zea individuals (Figure 274 3D) share a massively rearranged karyotype with a reduction to 10 haploid chromosomes. In

- 275 contrast to an expectation of rediploidization via chromosome reduction, most Andropogoneae
- 276 polyploid species show remarkable chromosome stability.



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278 Figure 3: Chromosome stability is higher in polyploids than diploids in Andropogoneae. A-D Genespace 279 riparian plots showing synteny of four genomes of each ploidy level, with *Paspalum* on the bottom. 280 Syntenic blocks of each Paspalum chromosome are shown as ribbons for A) Diploids, B) Tetraploids, C) 281 Hexaploids, and D) Paleotetraploids. E) Dotplot of syntenic anchor genes in blocks of 20 or more genes 282 from Paspalum chromosomes versus diploid A. virginicum chromosomes. The A. virginicum assembly is 283 haploid, so only homologous regions are present for each *P. vaginatum* chromosome. Inset in the top 284 left shows a riparian plot comparing chromosomes, and inset in bottom right shows the karyotype of A. 285 virginicum with 2n=2x=20, scale bar 10  $\mu$ m. F) Dotplot of syntenic anchor genes in blocks of 20 or more 286 genes from Paspalum chromosomes versus hexaploid B. laguroides scaffolds. The B. laguroides 287 assembly has all six alleles assembled, so each homologous region can be present six times for each P. 288 vaginatum chromosome. Inset in top left shows riparian plot comparing assemblies, and inset in bottom 289 right shows karyotype of *B. laquroides* with 2n=6x=60, scale bar 10  $\mu$ m. G) Chromosomal

rearrangements show a negative relationship to haploid chromosome number. Each assembly is
 represented by a point, diploids in yellow, tetraploids in purple, paleotetraploids in blue, and hexaploids
 in red, as in Figure 1. H) Rearrangements are not significantly related to time since divergence of
 polyploid parents. For G and H, the median value within each species *Zea* and *Tripsacum* was used for
 calculating the relationship, due to multiple sampling of this polyploidy.

295 Contemporary research suggests x=10 is the base chromosome number of 296 Andropogoneae (Spangler et al., 1999), and the majority of polyploids retain multiples of this – 297 only five polyploidy events show chromosome fusions that give rise to reduced chromosome 298 counts (Supplemental Table S3). Among these, only in Zea species and Elionurus tripsacoides 299 does the reduction reinstate the base diploid chromosome number. To quantify 300 rearrangements, we counted synteny breakpoints that merged two Paspalum chromosomes in 301 a single scaffold of each assembly. Diploids have an average of 2 rearrangements, with no 302 significant differences from the mean of tetraploids (1.67 rearrangements), and hexaploids 303 (1.88 rearrangements), while paleotetraploids in Zea (mean 20.3 rearrangements) and 304 *Tripsacum* (mean 6 rearrangements) have significantly higher values. However, on a per-305 chromosome basis, polyploids have fewer rearrangements. When scaled to match a diploid 306 chromosome complement, chromosome number is negatively associated with rearrangement 307 count (R2=-0.416; p=0.035; Figure 3G), suggesting that rather than promoting chromosomal 308 instability, polyploidy stabilizes the chromosome complement. Further, rearrangement 309 abundance does not appear to be solely due to differential amounts of time for rearrangements 310 to occur, as the two do not have a significant relationship (p=0.28; Figure 3H). The underlying 311 mechanisms of this observed retention of elevated chromosome number among most 312 Andropogoneae polyploidy events remain unclear. It may involve selection for gene flow from 313 mixed ploidy populations within the species (Kolář et al., 2017), or a filtering effect that favors 314 the survival of only meiotically and mitotically stable polyploids (Otto, 2007; Ramsey & 315 Schemske, 2002).

The ten Zea chromosomes show extensive rearrangements, including several
integrations of an entire ancestral chromosome to the center of another (Figure 3D;
Supplemental Figure S4), as seen previously (H. Wang & Bennetzen, 2012). Yet aside from
inversions and rare translocations, the Zea karyotype is unchanged throughout the genus (Braz

320 et al., 2020; Laurie & Bennett, 1985). Of the 14 rearrangements that differentiate Zea from 321 Tripsacum, seven contain tandemly repeated knob sequences within one megabase of the 322 breakpoint, a major enrichment relative to their average of 1.1% of chromosomal sequence. In 323 maize, chromosomal knobs can act as neocentromeres, mediating meiotic drive by favoring 324 their own segregation (Buckler IV et al., 1999; Dawe et al., 2018; Rhoades, 1942). Such tandem 325 repeats have been linked to genomic shock, as in response to broken chromosomes or cell 326 culture (Lee & Phillips, 1987; McClintock, 1941, 1984; Rhoades & Dempsey, 1972). The tandem 327 array of genes responsible for meiotic drive arose contemporaneously with the divergence of 328 the two genera (L. Chen et al., 2022; Dawe et al., 2018), suggesting meiotic drive may have 329 initiated Zea's pronounced chromosomal rearrangements. However, across Andropogoneae, TE 330 and tandem repeat content is not significantly correlated to rearrangement count 331 (Supplemental Figure S5). These findings suggest that while large tandem arrays are prone to 332 rearrangements, their presence alone does not drive them, as many taxa with large arrays show 333 no rearrangements (Figure 5D). Interestingly, cytological constrictions at knobs have been 334 observed in the genus *Elionurus* (Celarier, 1957; Supplemental Text), the only other instance 335 where we observe a major reduction in chromosome number.

#### 336 Most genes are retained in multiple copies, but regulatory sequence turns over rapidly

337 After a whole genome duplication, functional redundancy leads to decay of 338 homeologous copies, but stoichiometry of protein complexes and pathways leads to 339 preferential retention of some duplicates, particularly transcription factors, developmental 340 genes, and proteins in multi-protein complexes (Birchler & Veitia, 2012; Blanc & Wolfe, 2004; 341 Freeling, 2009). To investigate duplicate retention in our species, we standardized copy number 342 to the genome median, then identified genes showing differential copy number between 343 diploids and polyploids, and conducted a gene ontology (GO) analysis on the top 100 genes. The 344 most strongly enriched GO category included genes encoding ribosomal proteins ("polysomal 345 ribosome," GO:0042788), consistent with constrained stoichiometry of interacting subunits 346 (Birchler & Veitia, 2012) and with observations of retained duplicates in other plant polyploids 347 (Barakat et al., 2001; Rosado & Raikhel, 2010; Roulin et al., 2013). Signal transduction and

348 stress-response categories were also enriched (Supplementary Table S4). Several 349 developmental processes showed elevated copy number in polyploids, notably root hair 350 initiation, including a gene homologous to brittle culm 10 of rice (Zhou et al., 2009). Increased 351 root hair density following polyploidization has been observed in both Arabidopsis (Stetter et 352 al., 2015) and wheat (Han et al., 2016), particularly under nutrient-poor conditions (Salazar-353 Henao et al., 2016). Other enriched developmental genes relate to cellulose deposition, 354 potentially reflecting the increased mechanical demands on cell walls that accompany altered 355 cell volumes (Corneillie et al., 2019; Morrison, 1980; Serapiglia et al., 2015).

356 Immediately after polyploidy, all genes exist in multiple copies. Subsequent loss of 357 duplicates can occur through genetic drift (Lynch & Conery, 2000), or may arise from selective 358 processes, such as targeted gene removal (Paterson et al., 2006) or the resolution of dosage 359 conflicts (De Smet et al., 2013; Edger & Pires, 2009). In Andropogoneae, polyploid gene counts 360 suggest such loss, with fewer syntenic genes than suggested from a multiplication of the diploid 361 genome (Figure 2B, 2D, Supplemental Figure S6). To determine whether gene loss is a gradual 362 neutral process, we relate this diploid-equivalent gene count to time since polyploidy, as 363 measured by parental divergence. We observed a negative correlation (p=0.008, R2=0.23, 364 Figure 4E), with a slope implying a loss of 141 genes per million years. However, among 365 tetraploids and hexaploids there is a positive correlation (p=0.03, R2=0.301), such that older 366 polyploids retain more duplicates. This suggests a filtering effect – polyploid lineages that 367 persist over time may do so by maintaining more of their duplicate genes.

368 We next asked whether subgenomic ancestry impacts the gene loss that does occur. 369 When more genes are lost from one homeologous chromosome, it is often attributed to biased 370 fractionation. The maize genome is a classic example of this process, with almost two times as 371 many duplicate genes retained in one subgenome as the other (Schnable et al., 2011). To 372 explore biased fractionation among our polyploids, we measured gene retention in 100 gene 373 windows along Paspalum chromosomes for each assembly. Diploids show high retention of 374 syntenic genes (Figure 4A), but most tetraploids (Figure 4B) and hexaploids (Figure 4C) also 375 show near-complete retention of all duplicate copies. In contrast, all Tripsacinae 376 paleotetraploids (Figure 4D) show uneven gene retention across sugenomes: *Tripsacum* retains 85% and 56.8% of genes on each subgenome, while Zea retains 81.5% and 49.5%, indicating
greater gene loss in Zea. Although some polyploids exhibit considerable gene loss (e.g., S. *nutans* retains only 51.4%; Figure 4B), none show the degree of biased fractionation as seen in
Tripsacinae. Although lack of biased fractionation may be expected for autopolyploids (Zhao et
al., 2017) if recombination equalizes loss across chromosomes, we also found minimal
differential fractionation in many allopolyploids. Genome-wide retention of gene copies
suggests that polyploidy may act to retain dosage of quantitative traits.









392 Regression for the solid line uses the median value across more densely sampled genera Zea and

393 Tripsacum. F) Enrichment of Z. mays genomic features relative to genomic abundance in our non-coding 394 sequence most conserved across Andropogoneae. Absolute fold enrichment is displayed above each 395 point. G) Turnover of predicted transcription factor binding sites (TFBS) and genes between Z. mays and 396 other Andropogoneae species by genomic divergence. A single representative subgenome was used for 397 TFBS turnover calculations in polyploid species. Loess smooth linear regression lines with 95% 398 confidence intervals are shown. Genomic divergence was calculated using alignments to all fourfold 399 degenerate sites in Z. mays.

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423

#### 401 Conservation and acceleration of genome-wide conserved elements

402 Polyploidization duplicates not only genes, but also noncoding regions, expanding the 403 potential for regulatory diversification and expansion (Ebadi et al., 2023; Osborn et al., 2003). 404 To assess the conservation of noncoding sequences, we generated a syntenic multiple 405 sequence alignment of all taxa. We identified 2,302,710 highly conserved Andropogoneae 406 sequence elements covering 72.4 Mbp, enriched in genic regions and potential regulatory 407 sequences associated with binding sites, accessible chromatin, and chromatin loops (Figure 4F, 408 Supplemental Figure S7). After excluding genic sequences (coding sequence, introns, and 409 untranslated regions (UTRs)), we found a set of 1,664,343 conserved non-coding sequences 410 (CNS), each averaging 22 bp, and comprising a total of 36.2 Mbp (Supplemental Table S5), 411 numbers consistent with previous characterizations of CNS in grasses (Liang et al., 2018; Song 412 et al., 2021) and with functional evidence of conserved chromatin accessibility between maize 413 and sorghum (Lu et al., 2019). The Tripsacinae showed substantial sequence-level divergence 414 from other Andropogoneae, with only 34.8% of the non-repetitive maize genome aligning in at 415 least half of the Andropogoneae species sampled, reflecting their deep divergence. 416 Nevertheless, Andropogoneae CNS, including Tripsacinae-accelerated CNS, share features with 417 CNS in other plants including their short size and association with developmental and 418 transcriptional regulation genes (Burgess & Freeling, 2014). 419 Transcription factor binding sites (TFBS) are an important subset of noncoding 420 sequences and were recently shown to explain the majority of phenotypic variation in many 421 maize traits (Engelhorn et al., 2024). Despite their importance, TFBS turn over more rapidly 422 than genes. For example, in Brassicaceae, CNS turnover is rapid (Haudry et al., 2013) and 74% of

experimentally validated TFBS have turned over between Arabidopsis thaliana and A. lyrata

424 which diverged 10 Mya (Muiño et al., 2016). We investigated whether the Tripsacinae lineage 425 has experienced accelerated evolution in CNS, finding 15,989 CNS with significant signal of 426 acceleration (Supplemental Table S5). GO enrichment analysis revealed that CNS-associated 427 genes were strongly enriched for core physiological and developmental processes 428 (Supplemental Table S6). The Tripsacinae-accelerated CNS were also enriched for terms linked 429 to development including "response to red or far red light" (GO:0009639, fold enrichment=2.7, 430 adjusted p=0.001) and "photoperiodism, flowering" (GO:0048573, fold enrichment=2.1, 431 adjusted p=0.006) (Supplemental Table S7). TFBS found in CNS were most strongly enriched for 432 motifs of the auxin response factor ARF27 (motif MA1691.1, fold enrichment=1.5, adjusted 433 p<1E-300), which is involved in developmental processes (Supplemental Table S8). 434 To further assess cis-regulatory region turnover across the Andropogoneae, we assessed 435 pairwise TFBS turnover between Z. mays and the other Andropogoneae in 11,173 genes 436 meeting our functional and conservation criteria (Methods). TFBS turnover was linked to overall 437 sequence divergence (Figure 4G). Compared to Z. mays, the mean pairwise turnover of 438 predicted TFBS is 0.19 in other Zea species, 0.37 in Tripsacum and 0.44 in other 439 Andropogoneae. In contrast, the coding sequence of these same genes turned over 7 times 440 slower, at a rate of 0.06 across all Andropogoneae. This suggests that the Andropogoneae 441 experience rapid evolutionary turnover of TFBS. Because we focused only on putative 442 regulatory regions that could be aligned between species and thus exclude highly diverged 443 regions, the turnover rates we determined could be underestimates. However, the 444 unexpectedly high rate of turnover of 19% between maize and the closely related teosinte 445 species suggests that a substantial proportion of the predicted TFBS may not be functional, 446 underlining the need for experimentally validated TFBS in maize to improve estimates of TFBS 447 turnover.

448

#### 449 Genes are further apart in polyploids

This rapid turnover of TFBS over relatively short timescales led us to explore potential drivers, with TEs emerging as key candidates. The maize genome has been described as having tight clusters of genes separated by large swaths of retrotransposons (Fu & Dooner, 2002;

453 Morgante et al., 2005; SanMiguel & Bennetzen, 1998), and across plants, high-density gene 454 regions seem to be evenly spaced independent of genome size (Feuillet & Keller, 1999; Llaca & 455 Messing, 1998). This arrangement suggests that critical regulatory sequences are compressed 456 within short intergenic regions and maintained by selection. We measured median gene-gene 457 distance of syntenic genes across ploidy levels, finding similar values in diploids (4.98 kb) and 458 tetraploids (5.21 kb apart), slightly larger in hexaploids (6.95 kb), but greater in paleotetraploids 459 (19.06 kb) (Supplemental Figure S8). This tighter spacing in diploids and tetraploids aligns with 460 A. thaliana's ~5kb gene density (Kellogg & Bennetzen, 2004). Gene spacing shows a strong 461 correlation with repeat content (Figure 5A) when excluding paleotetraploids, with genome size 462 alone explaining 72% of the variance in median gene-gene distances (p=2.04e-07). These 463 findings suggest that TE activity may be expanding intergenic regions in paleotetraploid 464 Tripsacinae, introducing new TFBS and disrupting existing ones.

#### 465 **Polyploidy is not associated with TE bursts**

466 Besides polyploidization (Figure 2C), the primary driver of increases in genome size 467 between plant taxa is the amplification of transposable elements (Bennetzen et al., 2005; 468 Bennetzen & Kellogg, 1997; Pulido & Casacuberta, 2023). The genomic shock of allopolyploidy 469 has been hypothesized as a force that can release silencing of TEs, allowing them to expand 470 (McClintock, 1984; Pikaard, 2001). Our data show diploids have lower proportions of their 471 genome coming from TEs (mean=64.8%) than polyploids (mean=75.0%) (p=0.0043) (Figure 5B), 472 but this difference is driven by the paleotetraploid Tripsacinae species and is no longer 473 significantly different after removing them (tetraploid and hexaploid mean=66.9%, p=0.509). 474 This suggests no global expansion of TEs following polyploidy, consistent with certain 475 reconstituted interspecific and intergeneric hybrids (Parisod et al., 2010), young polyploidy 476 events like wheat (Papon et al., 2023), and old polyploidies in animal genomes (Mallik et al., 477 2023). Despite this general pattern, specific Andropogoneae lineages do exhibit massive TE 478 expansions, most notably *U. digitatum*, which has the largest genome among our samples. 479 Rather than the three-fold expansion expected from hexaploidy, it has over seven times more 480 TE base pairs than expected given the diploid median (Fig 2C). E. tripsacoides and H. compressa

481 also show large increases in repeat bases relative to diploid multiplications. Thus, while 482 polyploidy may enable TE expansion in some lineages, it does not guarantee it. We modeled TE 483 accumulation as a function of time since polyploidy, and observed a positive correlation, with 484 an estimated gain of 110 Mb of TE sequence per million years (R2=0.23, p=0.008, Figure 5C). 485 This rate exceeds the 38 Mb per million years estimated for diploid rice (Bennetzen et al., 2005; 486 Ma & Bennetzen, 2004), but additional comparative studies across taxa are warranted. Overall, 487 these data do not support global unregulated transposition upon polyploid formation, rather, a 488 gradual accretion of TEs as the polyploid establishes through evolutionary time.





489

498 The solid line includes the median value of Zea and Tripsacum, which are positively correlated (r= 0.51, 499 p= 0.008). D) Proportion of repeats in each genome belonging to different TE superfamilies. TR is 500 Tandem Repeats of all length classes, red colors show LTR retrotransposons (RLX-Unknown; RLC-501 Ty1/Copia; RLG-Ty3), and blue colors DNA transposons (DTT-Tc1/Mariner; DTM-Mutator; DTH-502 pIF/Harbinger; DTC-CACTA; DTA-hAT; DHH-Helitron). E) Pielou's evenness metric versus number of 503 families in each assembly. These are calculated only including families with at least 10 copies in the 504 genome. The evenness metric ranges from 0 (one family contributing all copies) to 1 (all families equally 505 sized). Points are scaled by the amount of repeat base pairs in the genome, and colored by ploidy. F) 506 Divergence between parental subgenomes and median timing of amplification of LTR retrotransposons. 507 Point size is scaled by the number of structurally intact LTR retrotransposons identified in the genome, 508 and colored by ploidy. G) Mean TE base pairs in 100 bp windows away from the transcriptional start site 509 (TSS), left, and transcriptional termination site (TTS), right, of all Helixer genes, colored by ploidy. 510

511 Polyploidy can disrupt the epigenetic environment of the cell (Doyle & Coate, 2019), and 512 these alterations can allow lineages of TEs that were well-silenced in diploid progenitors to 513 exploit novel vulnerabilities in epigenetic silencing. These amplifications are often observed 514 when single TE families reach high copy number (Baduel et al., 2019; J. Chen et al., 2020; 515 Hawkins et al., 2006; Tsukahara et al., 2009). We first identified variation in the proportion of 516 the genome coming from each TE superfamily across Andropogoneae (Figure 5D). As observed 517 in all grass genomes (Vicient et al., 2001), LTR retrotransposons, and particularly Ty3 LTR 518 retrotransposons, contribute the highest proportion of repeat sequence. This simple 519 description of superfamily abundance showed proportional expansions of gene-proximal DNA 520 transposons in specific species, like DTM Mutator elements in V. cuspidata and DHH Helitron 521 elements in Chrysopogon serrulatus and A. chinensis. 522 To understand whether TE amplifications involved many families or were driven by just 523 a few, we applied species diversity metrics to explore the relative abundance of TE families in

524 each genome. Pielou's evenness ranges from 0 (where a single family dominates) to 1 (where

525 all families are equally represented). Although evenness varies among genomes (Figure 5E),

526 only paleotetraploids show significantly different evenness compared to other ploidy groups

527 (Wilcoxon rank sum test, W=240, p=2.45e-05). Species with high evenness tend to have lower

528 repeat content (Figure 5E), supporting a lack of successful bursts that overcome epigenetic

529 silencing.

530 We were curious whether the timing of TE amplification could be linked to polyploidy. 531 However, the rapid turnover of TEs in genomes makes it challenging to directly identify those 532 inserted during polyploidy (Fedoroff, 2012; Vitte & Bennetzen, 2006; Wicker et al., 2018), as 533 repeat landscapes are constantly overwritten. To address this, we estimated the mean age of 534 LTR retrotransposons in the genome by measuring the divergence between their LTRs 535 (SanMiguel et al., 1998). Our analysis reveals a general trend – that diploids have younger LTR 536 retrotransposons, while polyploids harbor older copies, with no clear relationship to the timing 537 of polyploidy (Figure 5F). Young TE insertions have been shown to be more deleterious than 538 older ones (Stitzer et al., 2023), contributing disproportionately to genetic load. As a result, the 539 buffering effect of polyploidy masking deleterious TE insertions may provide an adaptive 540 benefit in these grasses.

541 Much of the impact of TEs on genome function is via their relationship to generating 542 genetic diversity near genes. We measured the proportion of sequence 20 kilobases upstream 543 and downstream (Figure 5G) of genes that is occupied by TEs. Although all species plateau to 544 values near genome-wide averages 20 kb from genes, the shape of the relationship near genes 545 differs (Figure 5G). For example, diploids and tetraploids reach 50% TEs at a median of 9 kb and 546 8.4 kb away from the 5' UTR of the gene, while paleotetraploids (0.5kb) and hexaploids (0.8kb) 547 do so much closer. TEs are well known to affect gene expression (Hirsch & Springer, 2017; Lisch, 548 2013), disrupting regulatory sequence and introducing new ones. We anticipate incorporating 549 these differences in TE content in key regulatory regions near genes will help understand 550 differences in gene expression.

551

#### 552 Conclusion

Together, these observations underscore a general stasis of genome evolution in these 33 newly assembled Andropogoneae grasses, even under the altered genomic environment of polyploidy. Contrary to the expected patterns of chromosome reduction, gene loss, and TE amplification, most polyploid events deviate from these "rules." This long-term genomic stability may be facilitated by perennial life cycles of these grasses, which supports persistence

on the landscape and exploration of diverse allele combinations, enhancing their adaptivepotential.

560 While polyploidy can sometimes reduce fitness, its broader benefits, beyond simple 561 genome doubling, include fixed heterozygosity, buffering against deleterious genetic load, and 562 increased phenotypic flexibility through gene dosage (Doyle & Coate, 2019; Stebbins, 1971; 563 Tayalé & Parisod, 2013). The large census population sizes, wind-pollination, and high fecundity

of Andropogoneae grasses likely enable the exploration of genotypic space, potentially purging

565 genetic load thought to accumulate in polyploids (Haldane, 1933) and exploring gene dosage

566 landscapes.

567 Modern maize cultivation epitomizes the benefits of hybridization, leveraging heterosis

568 from the combining ability of divergent parental gene pools (Duvick, 2001). Studying how

569 distant relatives of maize adapt to the permanent heterozygosity of polyploidy can provide

570 valuable insights into the complexities of heterosis and its evolutionary significance.

571

#### 572 Methods

#### 573 Germplasm

574 Plant material was sourced from seed banks or collected in the wild (Supplemental 575 Table S1), and grown in the greenhouses at the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center in St. 576 Louis, MO, Cornell University in Ithaca, NY, and the University of California, Davis, in Davis, CA. 577 Permits for collection, export and import were obtained as specified by local governments and 578 nature reserves. Most plants were grown to flowering and voucher specimens were collected 579 and deposited at the herbarium of the Missouri Botanical Garden (MO) and the Australian 580 National Herbarium (CANBR). All specimens were imaged, with the image and metadata 581 uploaded to the Tropicos database following standard protocols (Supplemental Table S1).

582

## 583 DNA Extraction and Library Preparation

584 Approximately 5 g of fresh tissue from each plant was extracted for PacBio (Pacific 585 Biosciences, USA) sequencing using one of three high molecular weight DNA approaches. One 586 was based on the Circulomics Big DNA Kit (Circulomics, USA), another on Doyle and Doyle 587 (1987), and another based on the Macherey-Nagel NucleoBond kit (Macherey-Nagel, USA). This 588 DNA was used to generate PacBio libraries, after size selection with either BluePippin (Sage 589 Science, USA), PippinHT (Sage Science, USA), or Ampure beads (Beckman Coulter, USA). 590 Sequencing was completed on the Sequel II or Sequel IIe across 1 to 8 flow cells depending on 591 genome size and output of individual sequencing runs. DNA extraction and sequencing were 592 completed by Corteva Agriscience, Arizona Genomics Institute, and the USDA Genomics and 593 Bioinformatics Research Unit, Stoneville, MS. Nanopore reads for *C. serrulatus* were previously 594 generated (Song et al., 2021).

#### 595

#### 596 Optical Map and HiC Generation

597 For optical map construction, DNA was extracted from ~ 0.7 g of fresh leaf tissue from 598 each plant using agarose embedded nuclei and the Bionano Prep Plant Tissue DNA Isolation kit 599 (Bionano, USA). DNA extraction, labeling, and imaging followed the methods previously 600 described in Hufford et al., 2021 and was completed by Corteva Agriscience.

601 For Hi-C Sequencing, *Tripsacum dactyloides* FL chromatin was crosslinked and isolated 602 from approximately 1g frozen leaf tissue. One Hi-C Seq library was constructed using the 603 Proximo system (Phase Genomics, Seattle) according to the manufacturer's recommendations 604 and sequenced in a PE150 format in an Illumina Novaseg 6000 analyzer.

605

## 606 Genome Assembly

607

608 We used three sequencing technologies, PacBio Hifi, PacBio CLR, and Oxford Nanopore 609 MinION. Each was assembled into contigs using the detailed methods below (Supplemental 610 Table S2). For 24 samples, we used additional information to further scaffold contigs. This took 611 the form of Bionano optical maps, and HiC for one *Tripsacum dactyloides* individual. For taxa in 612 the genus *Zea*, we used pan-genome anchors to further scaffold into chromosomes.

613614 Contig assembly

We generated PacBio Hifi data for 27 individuals, and generated contig assemblies using Hifiasm. HiFi reads obtained from the Circular Consensus Sequencing (CCS) (v6.4.0) pipeline were converted to FASTA format, and HiFiasm (v0.19.5-r590) (Cheng et al., 2021) was used to assemble contigs from the FASTA input reads, using parameters dependent on the scaffolding information available.

For genomes with only PacBio HiFi data, we set the purge level to 3 (-1 3) to generate contigs, purging haplotigs in the most aggressive way. The assembly graph of primary contigs (\*.bp.p\_ctg.gfa) was used as the representative set of contigs.

For genomes with PacBio HiFi data plus a BioNano optical map, we set the purge level to 0 (-1 0) to prevent the purging of duplicate haplotigs. This generated primary and alternative haplotypes, which were combined to generate contigs.

For the *T. dactyloides* FL genome with HiC data, we used Hi-C partitioning, supplying the HiC FASTQ reads (-h1 -h2), with purge level set to 3 (-l 3). This generated two phased contig assemblies.

629 We generated PacBio Continuous Long Read (CLR) data for 5 individuals, and generated 630 contig assemblies using Canu (v1.9) (Koren et al., 2017). Pacbio (CLR) data were converted from 631 the native output (Binary Alignment Map, or BAM) format to FASTA format using

632 samtools(v1.17) (Danecek et al., 2021) fasta subcommand, and were then error corrected using

633 Falcon (v1.8.0) (Chin et al., 2016). Briefly, Falcon's first stage (overlap detection and error

634 correction module) was run, specifying genome size (-genome\_size, for auto coverage

estimation) and with error correction options of a minimum of two reads, maximum of 200

reads, minimum identity of 70% for error corrections, average read correction rate set to 75%,

637 and maximum seed coverage of 40X, and a chunk size for local alignments of at least 3,000 bp.

638 For the DAligner step, the identical kmer match length was set to 18 bp (-k 18) with a read

639 correction rate of 80% (-e 0.80) and local alignments of at least 1,000 bp (-l 1000). Contigs were 640 generated using Canu (v1.9), after merging the error-corrected reads from Falcon jobs, using 641 the default options except for ovlMerThreshold=500 (kmers that occur more than 500 times are 642 not used as seeds).

643 We used Oxford Nanopore MinION reads for one individual, Chrysopogon serrulatus 644 (Song et al., 2021). Basecalling was performed using Guppy (v 2.1.3), and FASTQ files were used 645 for error correction. The porechop package (Wick et al., 2017) was used to clean for adapter 646 trimming and error correction of ~ 52 Gb of MinION reads. The reads were then assembled 647 using Canu v1.8 with the default parameters as described above in the section on CLR, but with 648 the default ovIMerThreshold.

649

#### 650 Scaffolding

651 We generated Bionano optical maps for 21 individuals. The Bionano optical maps were

652 processed using Bionano Solve (v3.4) and Bionano Access (v1.3.0), following the methodology

- 653 outlined in Hufford et al., (2021). For the hybrid assembly, default settings from the
- 654 configuration file (hybridScaffold DLE1 config.xml) and parameters file (optAr-
- 655 guments nonhaplotype noES noCut DLE1 saphyr.xml) were utilized. The scaffolding phase in
- 656 Bionano Solve incorporates 1) estimated gaps of varying N-size, excluding 100 bp or 13 bp gaps,
- 657 as determined through calibrated distance conversion of the optical map to base pairs, 2)
- 658 unknown gaps (100-N gaps), and 3) 13-N gaps, which are introduced when two contigs overlap.
- 659 Due to polyploidy and high heterozygosity of many genomes, the 13-N gaps were curated
- 660 manually, using Bionano Access (v1.3.0). Alignments of contigs to the optical map were
- 661 examined in detail, and contigs were either trimmed near overlapping regions or exact 662 duplicates were labeled as alternative haplotypes (e.g. alt-scaf NNN).
- 663 We generated Hi-C reads from Tripsacum dactyloides FL. Hi-C reads in FASTQ format 664 were first mapped to both haplotypes of the phased haploid genomes of Tripsacum dactyloides 665 FL (contigs assembled using Hi-C partitioning) using the Burrows-Wheeler Aligner (BWA) 666 (v0.7.12) (H. Li & Durbin, 2009). The juicer pipeline (v1.6) (Durand et al., 2016) was used to filter 667 out erroneous mappings (MAPQ = 0) and duplicates, and to generate the interaction matrix. 668 The 3D-DNA pipeline (v180) (Dudchenko et al., 2018) was then used to anchor the contigs to 669 chromosomes and error correct the contigs using default parameters. The resulting Hi-C 670 contact maps were manually examined using JUICEBOX Assembly Tools (v2.15.07) (Dudchenko 671 et al., 2018) and a few out-of-place contigs were manually corrected. A final assembly for each 672 phased haplotype was generated and the genome with fewer Ns was designated as primary
- 673 haplotype.
- 674 To scaffold the *Tripsacum dactyloides* KS genome, we used ALLMAPS (Tang et al., 2015) 675 to order and orient the primary and alternative contigs. Briefly, haplotype 1 of T. dactyloides FL 676 was aligned against T. dactyloides KS. Randomly sampled regions of the alignment were used as 677 markers for input into ALLMAPS.
- 678 For nine individuals in the genus Zea, pan-genome anchor markers were used to further 679 scaffold contigs or scaffolds to chromosomes, as in Hufford et al. (2021).
- 680

#### 681 Genome size estimation

682 We estimated genome size of sequenced individuals outside the Tripsacinae using 683 methods modified from (Doležel et al., 2007), and described in Phillips et al., (2023). Two 684 internal standards were used, depending on the reference: maize B73 inbred line (5.16 pg/2C)685 and our A. virginicum accession (2.17 pg/2C). We placed approximately  $10 \times 1$  cm of fresh leaf 686 tissue for the target and sample standard in a plastic square petri dish, and added 1.25 mL of a chopping solution composed of 1 mL LB01 buffer solution, 250  $\mu$ L propidium iodide (PI) stock (2 687 688 mg/mL), and 25  $\mu$ L RNase (1 mg/mL) (Doležel et al., 2007). We next chopped the tissue into 2–4 689 mm lengths and mixed the chopping solution through the leaves by pipetting. The solution was 690 then pipetted through a 30  $\mu$ m sterile single-pack CellTrics filter into a 2 mL Rohren tube on ice. 691 At least three replicates were chopped separately and analyzed for each individual. The 692 samples were left to chill for 20 min before analysis with a BD Accuri C6 flow cytometer. 693 Samples were run in Auto Collect mode with a 5-minute run limit, slow fluidics option, a 694 forward scatter height (FSC-H) threshold with less than 200,000 events, and a one-cycle wash. 695 The cell count, coefficient of variation of FL2-A, and mean FL2-A were recorded for the target 696 and reference sample with no gating. Results were analyzed separately for each replicate and 697 manually annotated to designate the set of events. We averaged values across all replicates of 698 each individual (Supplemental Table S3).

699

#### 700 Chromosome counts

701 Newly formed root tips were harvested from greenhouse-grown reference plants 702 approximately one week after transplanting to new growth medium. Two or more roots were 703 examined for each species. Exposure to nitrous oxide (160 psi for 2.5 - 3 hr) was used to stop 704 mitosis in metaphase (Kato, 1999). Methods used for fixation, enzymatic digestion of 705 meristematic tissue, and slide preparation have been described in detail (Kato et al., 2011; 706 Phillips et al., 2023). The digestion times and amount of acetic acid-methanol solution used to 707 resuspend the digested meristem varied based on meristem size. The cross-linked suspension 708 was stained with a 1/20 dilution of Vectashield with 4',6-diamidino-2-phenylindole (DAPI) 709 (Vector Laboratories, Burlingame, CA). Images were acquired with Applied Spectral Imaging 710 (ASI) software (Carlsbad, CA) on an Olympus BX61 fluorescence microscope and saved in 711 grayscale. The background was reduced using Adobe Photoshop Brightness/Contrast and/or 712 Curves functions. Some images were sharpened with either ASI or Microsoft PowerPoint 713 software.

714

#### 715 Gene annotation and homolog identification

716 We used Helixer (Stiehler et al., 2021), a deep learning gene prediction model to 717 produce annotations for each genome. We used the plant model, trained on 51 land plant 718 genomes. As these models often generate false positive gene annotations, often including 719 transposable elements in the gene set, we aimed to filter these annotations. We ran 720 Orthofinder v2.5.5 (Emms & Kelly, 2019) within GENESPACE v1.3.1 (Lovell et al., 2022) on all 721 assemblies and the Paspalum vaginatum outgroup. We retained orthogroups with >40 and 722 <200 copies, generating an "orthology filtered gene set," which we use for analyses involving 723 gene copy number (detailed in *Gene Ontology searches* section).

724 We generated another set of "traditional" gene annotations using ab initio predictions 725 from BRAKER (v2.1.6) (Brůna et al., 2021), direct evidence inferred from transcript assemblies 726 using the BIND strategy (Li et al., 2022), and homology predictions using Sorghum bicolor and 727 Zea mays subsp. mays (B73v5) annotations were generated using GeMoMa (v1.8) (Keilwagen et 728 al., 2018) Annotation Filter tool. Predictions were prioritized using weights, with the highest for 729 homology (1.0), followed by direct evidence (0.9), and the lowest for gene predictions from ab 730 initio methods (0.1). Weights were assigned based on reliability, and the Annotation Filter 731 ensured prediction completeness, external evidence support, and RNAseq support. The

canonical transcript for each gene was predicted using TRaCE (Olson & Ware, 2021).

Traditional gene annotation pipelines can struggle in polyploid and allelic assemblies, due to multiple mapping across homologous copies. Additionally, the close gene spacing in some of our assemblies led to inappropriate merging of adjacent gene models, particularly in genomes less than 1 gigabase. We provide these traditional gene models for consistency with community standards, but for comparisons across taxa and analyses in this paper, we use the "orthology filtered gene set" derived from Helixer models and a set of syntenic anchor genes described below in analyses throughout this paper.

#### 740 **Repeat annotation**

We ran EDTA (Ou et al., 2019) with default parameters on each assembly, generating a repeat library and gff annotation. We used the "traditional" gene annotations as input to EDTA. As no gene annotation was produced for *Zea luxurians*, we supplied the B73v5 gene sequences for masking purposes. Although EDTA can be supplied with a reference TE library, such curated libraries are only available for maize. In order to compare TEs across our taxonomic sampling, we performed de novo searches on each assembly, so methods were consistent.

To calculate TE family evenness, we used Pielou's evenness metric (Pielou, 1966), counting the number of copies in each TE family in each genome. Pielou's evenness is a ratio between the Shannon Index and the hypothetical value if all families had the same relative abundance.

## 751 **Tandem repeat identification and masking**

752 Initial investigation of EDTA outputs suggested many megabases of Zea knob sequences 753 were annotated as different TE superfamilies in each assembly. To identify tandem repeats that 754 may be falsely annotated as TEs, we used TRASH (Wlodzimierz et al., 2023) with default 755 parameters to annotate tandem repeats in each assembly. Within each assembly, we filtered to 756 unique primary consensus sequences at least 40 bp long and found in at least five positions 757 (discontinuous tandem arrays). We used these sequences as a repeat library to mask the 758 assembly it was generated from, using RepeatMasker v.4.1.0 (Smit et al., 2013) with 759 parameters (-q -no is -norna -nolow -div 40), generating gff output with (-gff). We merged this 760 RepeatMasker output with the EDTA gff, first using bedtools subtract to remove EDTA TEs that 761 overlapped tandem repeats, then concatenating this output with the tandem repeats. There 762 was one remaining knob-related sequence incorporated into a Ty3 family that makes up ~200 763 Mb of sequence in Z. nicaraguensis (TE 00015576), which we removed for analyses of TE

764 content.

To identify terminal telomere sequence, we searched contigs greater than 1 Mb for the Poales AAACCCT telomere repeat using tidk (Brown et al., 2023). We consider the telomere present at a sequence end if >100 repeats are present in the terminal 30 kilobases.

#### 768 Gene synteny identification

769 We used AnchorWave (Song et al., 2022) to generate syntenic paths through each 770 assembly, with values informed by evidence of polyploidy (Supplemental Table 3). We used the 771 haploid assembly and gene annotation of the non-Andropogoneae outgroup Paspalum 772 vaginatum (v3.1; Sun et al., 2022) as the reference, and allowed each gene anchor to 773 participate in up to 2 paths for diploids, 4 for tetraploids and paleotetraploids, and up to 6 for 774 hexaploids. In cases of uncertain ploidy, we increased the number of paths allowed to 6. For 775 each *Paspalum* gene, we counted how many paths it participated in per taxon, and recorded 776 the start/end coordinates of each genic CDS alignment. We filtered to anchors present in at 777 least one copy in 32/35 assemblies (>90%), to generate a set of 9,168 conserved syntenic 778 anchors, which we refer to as our "syntenic gene anchors."

Due to the extensive chromosome collinearity between *Paspalum* and Andropogoneae, we used these syntenic blocks to count chromosome rearrangements in each assembly. We used syntenic blocks containing at least 30 genes, and considered each contig that contained syntenic blocks that matched two *Paspalum* chromosomes as a rearrangement. We excluded four low-contiguity assemblies from these calculations (*Thelepogon* elegans, *"Andropogon" burmanicus, Rhytachne rottboelloides, Cymbopogon* citratus).

#### 785 Ploidy

786 To estimate ploidy, we integrated cytology, gene synteny counts, heterozygosity, and 787 literature reports. Historical conflict over the base chromosome number of Andropogoneae can 788 complicate interpretations, as n=5 and n=10 can be indistinguishable when conflated with 789 different ploidy levels. For example, a n=5 tetraploid would have 20 pachytene chromosomes, 790 as would a n=10 diploid. Additionally, whether alleles are assembled into distinct contigs 791 impacts the depth of syntenic blocks, as a tetraploid with alleles collapsed into two contigs 792 would have a depth of 2, just as a diploid with both alleles assembled would. Using literature 793 searches of chromosome counts and our own chromosome squashes as a guide to possible 794 ploidy, we first assigned assemblies as allelic tetraploids or hexaploids if their synteny depth 795 reached 4 or 6, and haploid hexaploids when the modal synteny depth was 3. As we measured 796 1C genome size, an allelic assembly will have ~2 times the Mb of DNA as the flow cytometry 797 measurement, allowing us to further classify tetraploid and diploid taxa. Our final assignments 798 of ploidy are shown in Supplementary Table S3, and haploid assemblies are designated with a 799 (\*) after their name in Figure 1. When presenting genome assembly size in Figure 1B, we divide 800 allelic assemblies by two to present haploid size, and when presenting gene counts and repeat 801 content throughout the paper, we divide values for allelic assemblies by two to present 802 comparable haploid equivalents.

#### 803 Heterozygosity

For taxa with haploid assemblies, we mapped raw reads back to the reference genome using minimap2 (H. Li, 2018) with -ax map-pb, and called SNPs using DeepVariant 1.6.1 (Poplin et al., 2018). We used the number of heterozygous SNPs in the resulting gvcf divided by

- 807 homozygous reference calls in the same gvcf as a measurement of heterozygosity. This helped
- 808 classify ploidy for two taxa with ambiguous assignment, *E. tripsacoides* and *R. tuberculosa*. As
- 809 both these assemblies showed very low heterozygosity, we assigned *E. tripsacoides* as a haploid
- 810 assembly of a tetraploid, and *R. tuberculosa* as a haploid assembly of a diploid. However, such a
- 811 result could arise after many generations of selfing, which may be possible for congener
- 812 *Rottboellia exalta* (Supplemental Text). We do not report heterozygosity values for *C*.
- 813 serrulatus, as it appears to have elevated heterozygosity estimates arising from base errors of
- 814 early generation Nanopore reads.

#### 815 Gene tree reconstruction

- 816 For each *Paspalum* syntenic anchor, we extracted the corresponding genomic sequence
- 817 from each assembly using samtools faidx (Danecek et al., 2021). From these syntenic anchors,
- 818 we combined each sequence into a multiple-fasta of CDS and intronic sequence of each anchor
- 819 gene, and aligned them with MAFFT (parameters --genafpair --maxiterate 1000 --
- adjustdirection) (Katoh & Standley, 2013). We generated a gene tree from this multiple
- 821 sequence alignment using RAxML (Stamatakis, 2014) with 100 rapid bootstrap replicates
- 822 (parameters -m GTRGAMMA -p 12345 -x 12345 -# 100 -f a). As we included introns, some
- alignments failed to align due to memory issues, so we produced gene trees for 7,725 syntenic
- 824 anchors. We note that this set of genes is not reliant on the gene annotation of each assembly,
- 825 so it likely captures both genes and pseudogenes.

To calculate synonymous diversity between copies, we extracted codon positions based on the alignment and the *Paspalum* gene used as an anchor. We calculated all pairwise comparisons of all tips in the gene tree and filtered to gene copies within a polyploid to characterize intraspecific Ks values.

## 830 Species tree reconstruction

We adjusted the tip labels in each gene tree to be the species name, such that gene
trees were multilabelled for allelic and homeologous copies, and provided these 7,725 gene
trees as input to ASTRAL-PRO3 (Tabatabaee et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2020) using default
parameters.

## 835 Gene Ontology searches

836 We used Blast2GO (Conesa et al., 2005) to generate Gene Ontology categories for each 837 Helixer gene in each species, then merged GO terms across all copies within an orthogroup. We 838 tested for enrichment using TopGO (Alexa & Rahnenführer, 2009). We identified a set of 839 orthogroups with copy number deviations from the standardized genome count for polyploids 840 vs diploids. To determine whether gene copy number deviated between the groups, we first 841 calculated the median copy number for each gene within each assembly. We then standardized 842 the assembly's copy number by subtracting this median. For each orthogroup, we used a 843 Wilcoxon rank-sum test to compare deviations in copy number between the groups. P-values 844 were obtained for each orthogroup-specific comparison, and ranked to select the top 100 845 genes for exploration with GO via TopGO.

## 846 Subgenome phasing

847We ran SubPhaser (Jia et al., 2022), with a k-mer length of 17 and a minimum k-mer848count of 200. Homologous sequences were defined based on the AnchorWave syntenic regions.

849

# 850 Conservation and acceleration of genomic elements at different phylogenetic scales and851 ploidies

852 Andropogoneae genomes soft-masked for EDTA repeats were aligned with Cactus 2.1.1 853 (Armstrong et al., 2020) and a multiple alignment based on the B73 reference was extracted 854 from the alignment graph. Syntenic alignments to B73 were retained based on MCScanX (Y. 855 Wang et al., 2012) syntenic gene blocks using traditional gene annotations. No gene 856 annotations were generated to annotate the Zea luxurians genome, so the annotation used for 857 MCScanX was generated by lifting over the Z. nicaraquensis annotation using LiftOff 1.6.2 858 (Shumate & Salzberg, 2021) with the "polish" flag. Chimeric subgenomes were assigned for all 859 polyploid species based on MCScanX synteny to the ancestral *Paspalum vaginatum* genome, 860 clustering scaffolds syntenic to each P. vaginatum chromosome into subgenomes based on a 861 custom greedy algorithm that minimized overlap between subgenomes. The resulting 862 subgenomes are chimeric as each chromosome may be composed of different biological 863 subgenomes. We do not expect this to impact our analysis of conserved elements as divergence 864 between subgenomes was relatively low.

865 A neutral model of evolution was fit to the Andropogoneae phylogeny using fourfold 866 degenerate sites from maize chromosome 10 with phyloFit from the PHAST 1.4 package (Hubisz 867 et al., 2011). A set of most conserved elements was generated using the PhastCons "most-868 conserved" flag from the PHAST package with an expected length of 8bp, after training to generate models of conserved and non-conserved elements using genome-wide multiple 869 870 alignments with "--coverage 0.45". To prevent reference-bias in the discovery of CNS, the B73 871 reference was masked and all other Tripsacinae were excluded for the phastCons analyses. The 872 resulting 2,302,710 conserved elements were then filtered to exclude elements shorter than 5 873 bp or with  $\geq 1$  bp overlap with CDS, introns, or untranslated regions (UTR). In addition, 874 conserved elements with BLASTX hits with e-value <= 0.01 to the Swissprot Viridiplantae 875 protein database were removed, to ensure unannotated genes and pseudogenes were 876 excluded.

877 To determine the presence of a CNS element in each Andropogoneae genome, we 878 required an alignment covering at least 50% of the element, excluding gaps. CNS were classified 879 as "downstream", "upstream", "downstream distal", or "upstream distal" based on the B73 880 gene annotation and a threshold of 1 kbp distance from the nearest gene feature to determine 881 whether a CNS was distal. Fold enrichment of genomic features in the conserved elements was calculated following Song et al., (2021) by dividing the proportion of bp of a feature that were 882 883 conserved by the proportion of bp in the genome that overlap the feature. Chromatin loops 884 were determined based on HiC data (Ricci et al., 2019), and accessible chromatin regions (ACR) 885 were based on single-cell ATAC experiments from (Marand et al., 2021). MNase-defined 886 cistrome-Occupancy Analysis motifs were obtained from Savadel et al., (2021) and transcription 887 factor bound regions were based on ChIP-seq provided by Tu et al., (2020). Other genomic 888 annotations including of TEs and noncoding RNA were based on the MaizeGDB B73v5 genome 889 annotation. We used phyloP with "--method LRT --mode ACC" from the PHAST package to test 890 for lineage-specific acceleration in Tripsacinae in elements conserved across Andropogoneae. 891 Multiple testing correction of LRT p-values was conducted using the Benjamini-Hochberg

method with an FDR threshold of 0.05. A GO enrichment analysis of all CNS and Tripsacinae accelerated CNS was conducted using rGREAT 1.1.0 (Gu & Hübschmann, 2023) using the B73 v5
 annotation and default parameters. For Tripsacinae-accelerated CNS the CNS was used as the
 background. GO terms with a fold enrichment <2 and an adjusted p-value >=0.1 were filtered.

896 We assessed the turnover of TFBS across Andropogoneae based on alignments to B73 897 predicted TFBS in the multiple alignment as well as predicted TFBS for each genome. TFBS were 898 predicted based on the 46 representative plant motifs in the JASPAR 2022 plant-specific 899 database (Castro-Mondragon et al., 2022), which were trimmed using universalmotif 4.3 900 (Tremblay, 2024) with a minimum allowed information content of 0.5 bits. Motif scanning was 901 conducted using a custom kotlin script with a detection threshold of 70% of the maximum 902 position weight matrix score. To focus on the potentially most functionally relevant TFBS, we 903 used TFBS in the 1kb region upstream of the translation start sites of B73 genes, which also met 904 the following criteria: has gene expression >0 TPM (Hufford et al., 2021), is a core gene across 905 maize NAM lines (Hufford et al., 2021), is not a tandem duplicate in B73, the 1kb upstream of 906 the translation start site intersects with >=1 ChIP sequencing peak from data generated by Tu et 907 al. (2020), and has  $\geq 1$  syntenic collinear ortholog across the other Andropogoneae species. For 908 each Andropogoneae query species, we compared the TFBS in the 1kb region upstream of the 909 translation start sites of the selected B73 genes and the TFBS in the 1kb region upstream of the 910 translation start sites of the collinear gene in the query species, selecting a single random 911 ortholog if there were multiple orthologous collinear genes in the query species. A single 912 representative subgenome for each polyploid query species was used. To account for 913 limitations of the alignment and structural variation, a reference TFBS was considered present 914 in a query species if it was aligned and a matching prediction was present or if it was not 915 aligned but a matching prediction was present in the query region. To compare the TFBS 916 turnover, genic turnover was also calculated using the Orthofinder orthogroups for the same 917 set of genes analyzed for TFBS turnover, excluding orthogroups with multi-copy B73 genes. Z. 918 nicaraquensis was excluded from these analyses because its gene annotation was incomplete 919 due to missing sequences in the main haplotype assembly, and Z. luxurians was excluded 920 because it did not have a high-quality gene annotation. To compare the turnover rates with the 921 phylogenetic distance to Z. mays, sequence divergence to each species was calculated using the 922 set of fourfold degenerate sites used to calculate the neutral model.

923

## 924 Data Availability

- 925 Raw data will be available under NCBI/EBI BioProject PRJEB50280 and genome
- 926 assemblies at USDA Ag Data Commons upon publication. The code used to generate assemblies
- 927 and conserved noncoding sequence analyses is available at
- 928 <u>https://github.com/HuffordLab/panand\_genome\_evolution</u>, and code for other analyses and
- 929 figures at https://github.com/mcstitzer/panand assemblies. Additionally, figures highlighting
- 930 each plant can be viewed at <u>https://mcstitzer.github.io/panand\_assemblies/</u>
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