

Research paper

Phylogenomics of *Allium* section *Cepa* (Amaryllidaceae) provides new insights on domestication of onionZiyoviddin Yusupov^{a, b, c}, Tao Deng^a, Sergei Volis^a, Furkat Khassanov^b, Dilmurod Makhmudjanov^{a, b, c}, Komiljon Tojibaev^{b, **}, Hang Sun^{a, *}^a CAS Key Laboratory for Plant Diversity and Biogeography of East Asia, Kunming Institute of Botany, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Kunming, 650201, China^b International Joint Lab for Molecular Phylogeny and Biogeography, Institute of Botany, Academy Sciences of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, 100125, Uzbekistan^c University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China

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ABSTRACT

Allium sect. *Cepa* (Amaryllidaceae) comprises economically important plants, yet resolving the phylogenetic relationships within the section has been difficult as nuclear and chloroplast-based phylogenetic trees have been incongruent. Until now, phylogenetic studies of the section have been based on a few genes. In this study, we sequenced the complete chloroplast genome (plastomes) of four central Asian species of sect. *Cepa*: *Allium oschaninii*, *A. praemixtum*, *A. pskemense* and *A. galanthum*. Their chloroplast (cp) genomes included 114 unique genes of which 80 coded proteins. Seven protein-coding genes were highly variable and therefore promising for future phylogenetic and phylogeographic studies. Our plastome-based phylogenetic tree of *Allium* sect. *Cepa* revealed two separate clades: one comprising the central Asian species *A. oschaninii*, *A. praemixtum*, and *A. pskemense*, and another comprising *A. galanthum*, *A. altaicum*, and two cultivated species, *A. cepa* and *A. fistulosum*. These findings contradict previously reported phylogenies that relied on ITS and morphology. Possible explanations for this discrepancy are related to interspecific hybridization of species ancestral to *A. galanthum* and *A. cepa* followed by chloroplast capture; however, this is impossible to prove without additional data. Our results suggest that the central Asian *Allium* species did not play a role in the domestication of the common onion. Among the chloroplast genes, *rpoC2* was identified as a gene of choice in further phylogeographical studies of the genus *Allium*.

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1. Introduction

Allium sect. *Cepa* (Mill.) Prokh. (Amaryllidaceae) is a small group within the genus *Allium* L. that includes ten wild species and two economically important cultivated species, *Allium cepa* L. (common or bulb onion) and *Allium fistulosum* L. (bunching onion) (Fritsch and Friesen, 2002; Gurushidze et al., 2007). The wild species of this section occur naturally on dry rocky slopes in mountain areas in Asia. They are characterized by a long juvenile phase (3–10 years), are morphologically variable, and sometimes resemble *A. cepa*.

Allium altaicum Pall., the most likely progenitor of *A. fistulosum*, grows in southern Siberia and Mongolia. *Allium rhabdotum* Stearn. occurs in Bhutan, *Allium roylei* Baker. in North-West India, *Allium asarense* R.M. Fritsch et Matin in Iran, and *Allium farctum* Wendelbo in Afghanistan and Pakistan. *Allium vavilovii* Popov et Vved. grows in the Kopetdag Range in Turkmenistan and northeastern Iran (Fritsch and Friesen, 2002). The ranges of the other species of sect. *Cepa* (*Allium galanthum* Kar. et Kir., *Allium oschaninii* O. Fedtsch., *Allium praemixtum* Vved. and *Allium pskemense* O.Fedtsch.) are within the Tien-Shan and Pamir-Alai mountain chains with isolated occurrences in northeastern Iran (*A. oschaninii*) and northeastern Kazakhstan (*A. galanthum*) (Fig. 1).

Over last three decades, several hypotheses have been proposed regarding the phylogeny of sect. *Cepa*, the role of central Asia in the evolution in this group and the domestication of *A. cepa*. The central Asian species *A. oschaninii* was for some time treated as the most ancestral species of the cultivated onion (Wendelbo, 1971; Hanelt,

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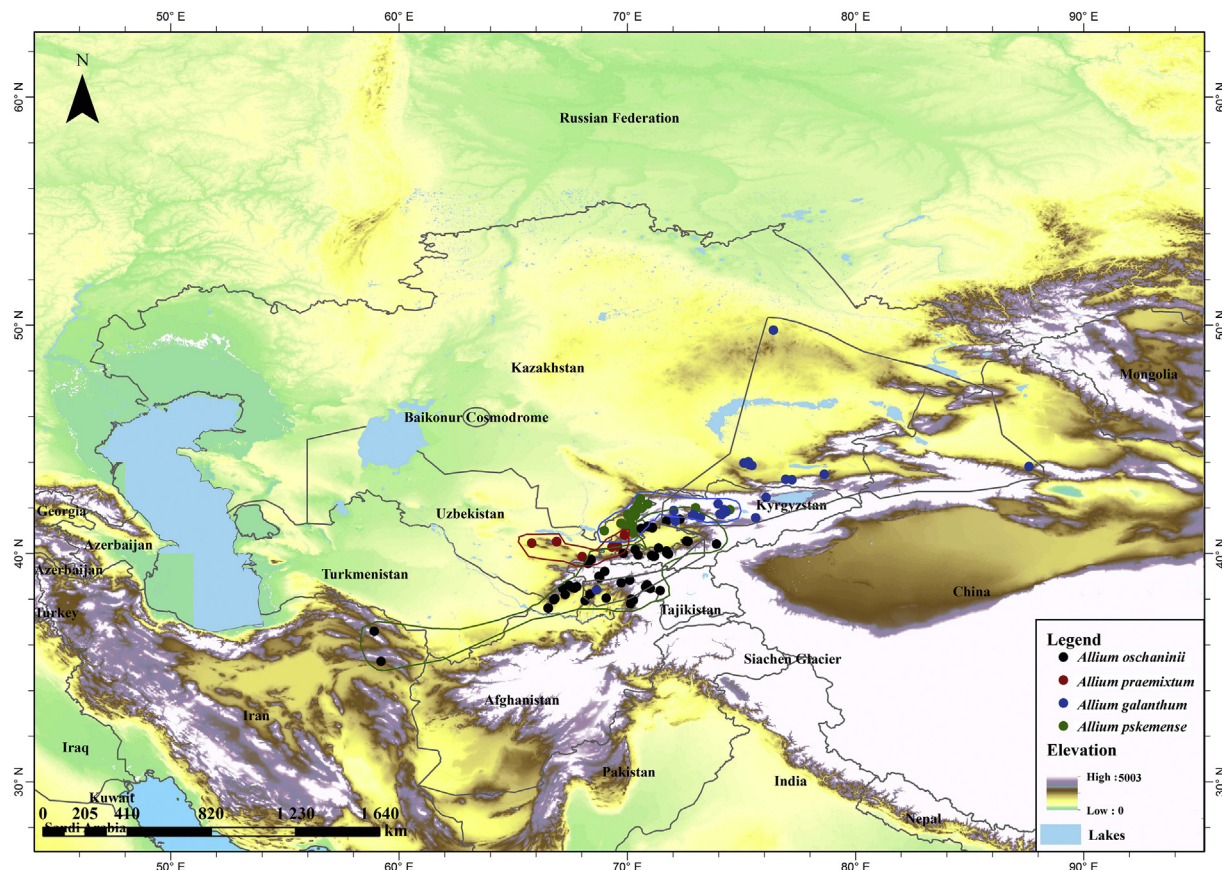


Fig. 1. Distribution of central Asian species of *Allium* sect. *Cepa*.

1985, 1990), but was shown to have different heterochromatic banding patterns and severe crossing barriers with *A. cepa* (Vosa, 1976; van Raamsdonk et al., 1992). In contrast, *A. cepa* and *A. vavilovii* (morphologically similar to *A. oschaninii*) have been successfully hybridized (van Raamsdonk et al., 1992). *A. vavilovii* resembles *A. oschaninii* in having a bubble-like hollow stem but its leaves are completely flat and falcate. Fritsch et al. (2001) proposed that the closest relatives of the common onion are four species with a bubble-like swelling in the lower part of the hollow scape (*A. oschaninii*, *A. praemixtum*, *A. asarense* and *A. vavilovii*). Based on morphological and distributional evidence, Fritsch and Friesen (2002) later excluded *A. oschaninii* and *A. praemixtum* from consideration as the closest relatives of *A. cepa*. Due to differences in morphology, *A. galanthum* has never been considered a close relative of *A. cepa*.

Determining the closest wild relative to the common onion is impossible without using molecular markers that have a phylogenetic signal. Unfortunately, the molecular phylogeny of sect. *Cepa* lags behind its morphological and karyological characterization.

Plastomes are a reliable source of information for inferring phylogeny and evolutionary history due to the absence of recombination and their low mutation rate (Jansen et al., 2012; Moore et al., 2010; Shaw et al., 2014); however, few studies have used plastomes to analyze the phylogeny of sect. *Cepa* (Havey, 1992; Lilly and Havey, 2001; van Raamsdonk et al., 2003). The only study based on selected chloroplast sequences (van Raamsdonk et al., 2003) used only three cpDNA fragments (*trnL-F*, *rps16*, *rbcl*). This low coverage of existing cpDNA variation may explain the observed disagreement between phylogenetic trees based on cpDNA and nrDNA (ITS region) (Friesen and Klaas, 1998; Gurushidze et al., 2007), including the placement of *A. pskemense* in sect.

Rhizirideum and *A. roylei* in an intermediate position between sections *Cepa* and *Schoenoprasum*, while both species were located within sect. *Cepa* based on nuclear DNA analysis (van Raamsdonk et al., 2003). To resolve this issue, we analyzed 16 sequenced plastomes of seven species from sect. *Cepa*, focusing on the central Asian species whose phylogenetic position in sect. *Cepa* is the most unclear and poorly understood. We characterized plastomes of the central Asian species by assessing the arrangement and variation of their genes, and used these plastome sequences to construct a phylogeny of *Allium* sect. *Cepa*.

2. Material and methods

2.1. Taxon sampling and DNA extraction

Samples of the central Asian species of *Allium* were collected during botanical expeditions to central Asia from 2014 to 2019 (Table 1). The sampled leaves were dried in silica-gel upon collecting. Total DNA was isolated by the CTAB protocol (Doyle and Doyle, 1987) from 1 g of well-dried leaves.

2.2. Plastome sequencing, assembly and annotation

Libraries were constructed from 150 bp pair-end reads with insert sizes of 350 bp using the Genomic DNA Sample Prep Kit (Illumina), according to the manufacturer's protocol, and then sequenced on Illumina HiSeq 4000 system at Beijing Novogene Bioinformatics Technology Co., Ltd, Beijing, China. The plastid genomes were assembled with *A. fistulosum* as a reference (NC_040222, Yusupov et al., 2019) using software NovoPlasty

Table 1
Source of new chloroplast genomes used in this study and location of voucher specimens.

No	Species name	Location	Voucher
1	<i>Allium galanthum</i> Kar. & Kir	Almaty province, Kazakhstan, h = 741 m, N44.0119, E75.31301	ZD1108(KUN)
2	<i>A. galanthum</i> Kar. & Kir	Jalalabad province, Kyrgyzstan, h = 1093 m, N41.6737, E72.8623	ZD0932(KUN)
3	<i>A. pskemense</i> B. Fedtsch	Parkent, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, h = 989 m, N 41.3268, E69.7272	FM201902(TASH)
4	<i>A. pskemense</i> B. Fedtsch	Pskem, Tashkent, Uzbekistan. h = 1336 m, N 41.924956, E70.316807	F201901(TASH)
5	<i>A. oschaninii</i> O. Fedtsch	Anzob Pass, east side of the Varzob River, Tajikistan, h = 1850 m, N38.994222, E68.7654	ZD0708(KUN)
6	<i>A. oschaninii</i> O. Fedtsch	Sukh, Fergana province, Uzbekistan, h = 1171 m, N40.0263 E71.1334	ZD0346(KUN)
7	<i>A. oschaninii</i> O. Fedtsch	Imomota, Andijan province, Uzbekistan, h = 795 m, N40.548118, E72.607991	FKZ022(TASH)
8	<i>A. praemixtum</i> Vved	Jizzakh province, Uzbekistan, h = 900 m, N40.5236, E66.9111	KT201903(TASH)

v.3.8.3 (Dierckxsens et al., 2017). In accordance with the reference, start and stop codons and intron/exon boundaries for protein-coding genes were checked manually in Geneious v.10.0.2 (Kearse et al., 2012). The physical map of the circular cp genomes (Fig. 2) was created using the OGDRAW program (Greiner et al., 2019).

2.3. Assessment of gene variability in plastome comparisons

Single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNP) were assessed for 80 protein-coding genes used in phylogenetic analyses by Geneious v.10.0.2 (Kearse et al., 2012). SNP variability was assessed at several

levels: with and without the outgroup, for two species clusters corresponding to two geographic regions, and within the two species, *A. oschaninii* and *A. galanthum*.

2.4. Phylogenetic analysis

The reconstruction of the phylogeny of sect. *Cepa* utilized 17 samples in total, including newly collected samples, all available plastomes of sect. *Cepa* in the NCBI database, plus one outgroup (*Allium sativum* L.). Eight of these plastomes were annotated and uploaded to the NCBI database (Tables 1 and 2).



Fig. 2. General plastome map of central Asian species of *Allium* sect. *Cepa*.

Table 2
Characteristics and GenBank accessions of plastomes of *Allium* sect. *Cepa*.

Species	Total		Large single copy (LSC)	Small single copy (SSC)	Inverted repeats (IRs)	GenBank accessions
	Length (bp)	G + C (%)	Length (bp)	Length (bp)	Length (bp)	
<i>A. pskemense</i>	153,788	36.70	82,720	18,034	26,517	NC_044411
<i>A. pskemense</i>	153,813	36.80	82,747	18,032	26,517	MT300496
<i>A. oschaninii</i>	153,580	36.80	82,521	18,031	26,514	NC_044470
<i>A. oschaninii</i>	153,643	36.80	82,549	17,984	26,555	MT300495
<i>A. oschaninii</i>	153,581	36.80	82,522	18,031	26,514	MT300494
<i>A. praemixtum</i>	153,226	36.80	82,162	18,042	26,511	NC_044412
<i>A. fistulosum</i>	153,164	36.80	82,237	17,907	26,510	NC_040222
<i>A. fistulosum</i>	153,162	36.80	82,235	17,907	26,510	MK335927
<i>A. alataicum</i>	153,129	36.70	82,196	17,913	26,510	NC_040972
<i>A. galanthum</i>	153,227	36.90	82,408	17,887	26,466	MT300496
<i>A. galanthum</i>	153,222	36.90	82,402	17,888	26,466	MT300497
<i>A. cepa_1</i>	153,529	36.80	82,698	17,931	26,450	KM088013
<i>A. cepa_2</i>	153,568	36.80	82,738	17,930	26,450	KM088015
<i>A. cepa_3</i>	153,538	36.80	82,694	17,922	26,461	KF728080
<i>A. cepa_4</i>	153,586	36.80	82,719	17,931	26,468	MK335926
<i>A. cepa_5</i>	153,440	36.80	82,577	17,927	26,468	KM088014

Multiple-sequence alignments were performed with MAFFT software (Kato et al., 2002). Phylogenetic trees were reconstructed using Maximum likelihood (ML) and Bayesian inference (BI). For ML we employed RAXML-HPC BlackBox v.8.1.24 software (Stamatakis et al., 2006) with 1000 bootstrap replicates, and for BI we used MrBayes v.3.2.6 (Ronquist et al., 2003) with 1,000,000 generations with random trees sampled every 200 generations. In the latter analysis, after discarding the first 25% trees as burn-in, a 50% majority-rule consensus tree was constructed from the remaining trees to estimate posterior probabilities (PP). For analyses, a model of nucleotide substitution was selected based on the

Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) using MrModelTest 2 (Nylander, 2004).

3. Results

3.1. Characterization of the plastomes of central Asian species of *Allium* sect. *Cepa*

The total length of the complete chloroplast genomes within sect. *Cepa* species ranged from 153,129 to 153,813 bp. The small single copy (SSC), large single copy (LSC) and inverted repeats (IR) regions

Table 3
List of genes identified in plastomes of *Allium* sect. *Cepa*.

Category of Genes	Gene group	Gene name
Self-replication	Ribosomal RNA genes	<i>rrn4.5</i> × 2, <i>rrn5</i> × 2, <i>rrn16</i> × 2, <i>rrn23</i> × 2
	Transfer RNA genes	<i>trnC</i> -GCA, <i>trnD</i> -GUC, <i>trnE</i> -UUC, <i>trnF</i> -GAA, <i>trnG</i> -GCC, <i>trnG</i> -UCC ^a , <i>trnH</i> -GUG × 2, <i>trnK</i> -UUU ^a , <i>trnL</i> -UAA ^a , <i>trnL</i> -UAG, <i>trnM</i> -CAU, <i>trnP</i> -UGG, <i>trnQ</i> -UUG, <i>trnR</i> -UCU, <i>trnS</i> -GCU, <i>trnS</i> -GGA, <i>trnS</i> -UGA, <i>trnT</i> -UGU, <i>trnT</i> -GGU, <i>trnV</i> -UAC ^a , <i>trnY</i> -GUA, <i>trnW</i> -CCA, <i>trnJ</i> -CAU, <i>trnA</i> -UGC ^a × 2, <i>trnI</i> -CAU × 2, <i>trnI</i> -GAU ^a × 2, <i>trnL</i> -CAA × 2, <i>trnN</i> -GUU × 2, <i>trnR</i> -ACG × 2, <i>trnV</i> -GAC × 2
	Ribosomal protein (small subunit)	<i>rps2</i> , <i>rps3</i> , <i>rps4</i> , <i>rps7</i> × 2, <i>rps8</i> , <i>rps11</i> , <i>rps12</i> ^b × 2, <i>rps14</i> , <i>rps15</i> , <i>rps16</i> ^a , <i>rps18</i> , <i>rps19</i>
	Ribosomal protein (large subunit)	<i>rpl2</i> ^a × 2, <i>rpl14</i> , <i>rpl16</i> ^a , <i>rpl20</i> , <i>rpl22</i> , <i>rpl23</i> × 2, <i>rpl32</i> , <i>rpl33</i> , <i>rpl36</i>
	RNA polymerase	<i>rpoA</i> , <i>rpoB</i> , <i>rpoC1</i> ^a , <i>rpoC2</i>
	Translational initiation factor	<i>infA</i>
	Genes for photosynthesis	Subunits of photosystem I
Subunits of photosystem II		<i>psbA</i> , <i>psbB</i> , <i>psbC</i> , <i>psbD</i> , <i>psbE</i> , <i>psbF</i> , <i>psbH</i> , <i>psbl</i> , <i>psbj</i> , <i>psbK</i> , <i>psbl</i> , <i>psbM</i> , <i>psbN</i> , <i>psbT</i> , <i>psbZ</i>
Subunits of cytochrome		<i>petA</i> , <i>petB</i> ^a , <i>petD</i> ^a , <i>petG</i> , <i>petL</i> , <i>petN</i>
Subunits of ATP synthase		<i>atpA</i> , <i>atpB</i> , <i>atpE</i> , <i>atpF</i> ^a , <i>atpH</i> , <i>atpI</i>
Large subunit of Rubisco		<i>rbcl</i>
Subunits of NADH dehydrogenase		<i>ndhA</i> ^a , <i>ndhB</i> ^a × 2, <i>ndhC</i> , <i>ndhD</i> , <i>ndhE</i> , <i>ndhF</i> , <i>ndhG</i> , <i>ndhH</i> , <i>ndhI</i> , <i>ndhJ</i> , <i>ndhK</i>
Other genes		Maturase
	Envelope membrane protein	<i>cemA</i>
	Subunit of acetyl-CoA synthesis gene	<i>accD</i>
	ATP-dependent protease	<i>ccsA</i>
	Component of TIC complex	<i>clpP</i> ^b
	Component of TIC complex	<i>ycf1</i> × 2
	Conserved open reading frames	<i>ycf2</i> × 2, <i>ycf15</i> × 2

×2: Two gene copies in the IR regions.

^a With one intron.

^b With two introns.

Table 4
Number of SNPs in plastome protein-coding genes in different clades of *Allium* sect. *Cepa*.

Data type	Total number of SNPs	Number of SNPs						
		matK	rpoC2	ycf1	ndhF	rpoB	accD	ycf2
Section <i>Cepa</i> plus one outgroup	2239	79	101	255	93	62	35	30
Section <i>Cepa</i>	1482	51	60	179	67	42	31	19
Central Asian species (<i>A. praemixtum</i> , <i>A. oschaninii</i> , <i>A. pskemense</i>)	451	25	31	75	24	23	13	7
Northeast Asian species (<i>A. galanthum</i> , <i>A. altaicum</i>) plus <i>A. fistulosum</i> and <i>A. cepa</i>	290	14	14	68	22	14	15	4
<i>A. oschaninii</i>	52	7	3	8	2	2	2	0
<i>A. galanthum</i>	18	0	0	5	2	4	1	1

of cp genomes ranged from 17,887 to 18,042 bp, 82,162 to 82,747 bp and 26,450 to 26,555 bp, respectively. For the central Asian species *A. oschaninii*, *A. pskemense*, and *A. praemixtum*, the SSC regions ranged from 17,984 to 18,042 bp (IR: 26,511–26,555 bp) for four species (*A. cepa*, *A. galanthum*, *A. fistulosum*, *A. altaicum*); the SSC regions ranged from 17,887 to 17,931 bp (IR: 26,450–26,510 bp). The complete chloroplast genomes of *A. oschaninii* from Uzbekistan (NC_044470 and MT300495) and Tajikistan (MT300494) differed in size due to the presence of indels (Tables 1 and 2).

The chloroplast genome of species of sect. *Cepa* encodes 134 genes, including 80 protein-coding genes, 30 tRNA genes, four rRNA genes, and 20 duplicated genes (Fig. 2; Table 3).

3.2. Variation in protein-coding genes

Plastome protein-coding genes of 17 *Allium* species contained a total of 2,239 SNPs. Within sect. *Cepa*, however, without including *A. sativum*, the number of SNPs was substantially lower (1,482

SNPs). Comparison of six plastomes representing three central Asian species (*A. oschaninii*, *A. praemixtum* and *A. pskemense*) revealed 451 SNPs, 10 plastomes representing four species (wild *A. altaicum* and *A. galanthum*, and cultivated *A. cepa* and *A. fistulosum*) revealed 290 SNPs. The number of SNPs in three plastomes of *A. oschaninii* collected in different areas and two of plastomes of *A. galanthum* collected in different areas was 52 and 18, respectively (Table 4).

Of the 80 protein-coding genes examined, seven (*accD*, *ycf2*, *ycf1*, *rpoC2*, *ndhF*, *rpoB*, *matK*) were highly variable (number of SNPs ≥ 30). The *ycf1* gene was the most variable. The ranking of gene variability was unchanged when the outgroup species was included. Several genes showed a high level of variability in two intra-specific variability assessments (two plastomes of *A. galanthum* and three plastomes of *A. oschaninii*): *ycf1* (*A. galanthum* – 8 SNPs and *A. oschaninii* – 5 SNPs), *matK* (*A. oschaninii* – 7 SNPs), *rpoB* (*A. galanthum* – 4 SNPs) and *rpoC2* (*A. oschaninii* – 3 SNPs) (Table 4).

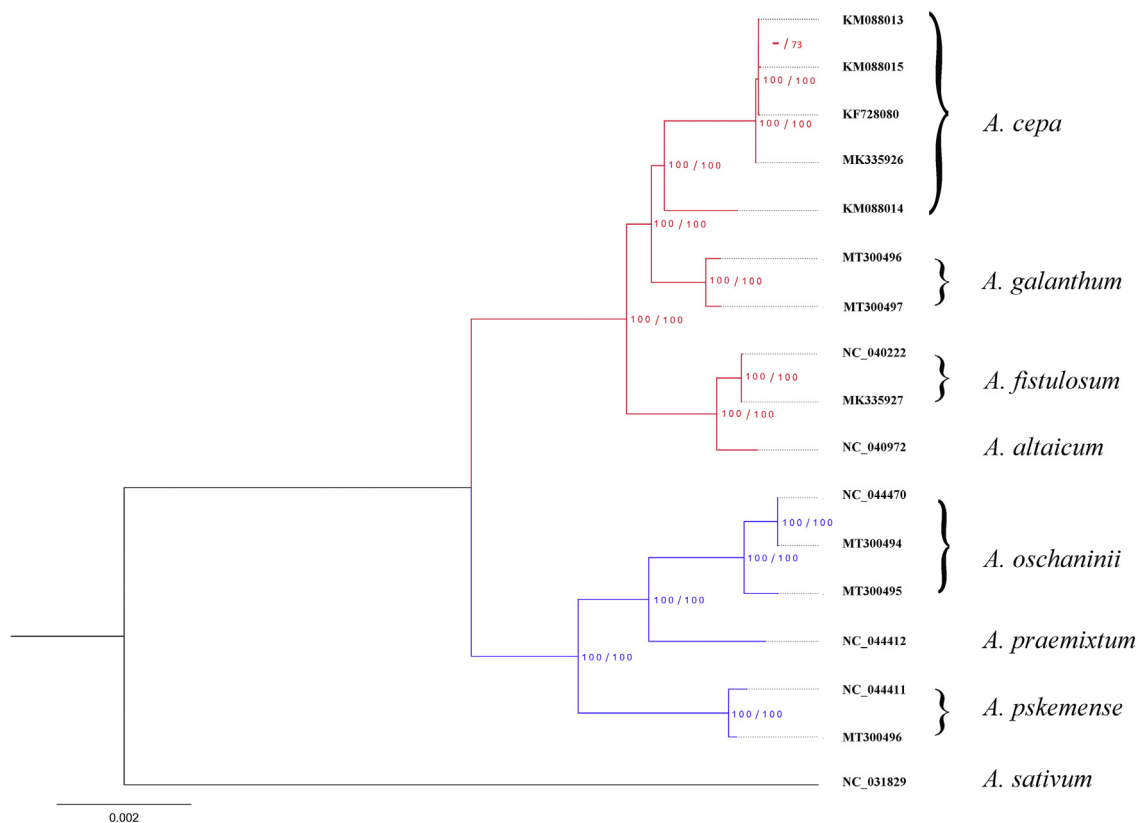


Fig. 3. Phylogenetic tree based on 80 protein-coding genes of 16 plastomes of *Allium* sect. *Cepa* plus an outgroup plastome (*A. sativum*). In the phylogenetic tree Maximum Likelihood bootstrap proportion values and Bayesian posterior probabilities are shown next to the nodes, and a dash (–) indicates support at a node < 50%. Scale bar represents the expected substitutions per site.

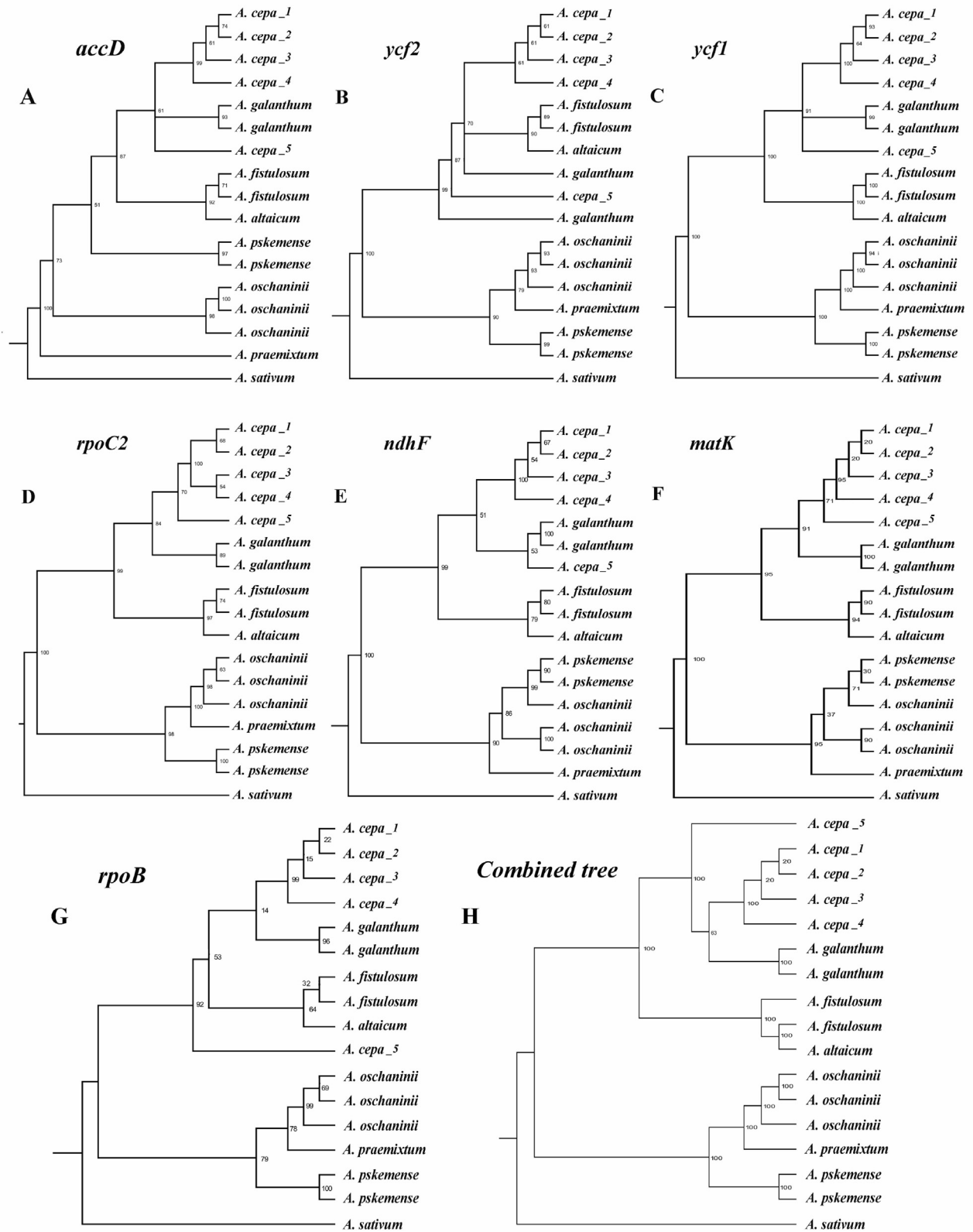


Fig. 4. Seven phylogenetic trees based on a single protein-coding gene each plus tree from the combination of all seven genes. Maximum likelihood values are given next to nodes.

4.2. Phylogenetic analysis

The plastome-based phylogenetic tree agrees well with the tree produced by Havey (1992) from cpDNA RFLPs in the distant position of *A. oschaninii* and *A. pskemense*, which were placed at the root of the clade of sect. *Cepa*. In comparison, the plastome-based phylogenetic tree differed from the tree van Raamsdonk et al. (2003) obtained using three cpDNA fragments (*trnL-F*, *rps16* and *rbcl*). In the latter tree *A. oschaninii* was sister to *A. fistulosum*, *A. altaicum*, and *A. galanthum* and distant from *A. pskemense*. This discrepancy is due to the limited number of loci of cpDNA fragments used by van Raamsdonk et al. (2003). As we show here, there is always some incongruence among the phylogenetic relationships based on particular genes. This incongruence disappears, however, with an increase in the number of genes used (Figs. 3 and 5).

Our results are important in light of a long-standing debate about the most probable ancestor of the domesticated species *A. cepa*. Although *A. vavilovii* is accepted as the closest wild relative of *A. cepa* based on nrDNA (Friesen and Klaas, 1998; Fritsch et al., 2001; Gurushidze et al., 2007), the immediate ancestor is still unknown. *A. oschaninii*, once considered to be closest to the ancestral species, is no longer considered as such based on the results of crossing experiments (van Raamsdonk and de Vries, 1992). Our analyses of *Allium* plastomes indicates that the closest wild relative of *A. cepa* is *A. galanthum*, which is consistent with the crossability dendrogram constructed by van Raamsdonk et al. (1992) (Fig. 3). In contrast, the latter crossability dendrogram corresponds poorly to the similarity of the nuclear DNA of these two species (e.g., van Raamsdonk et al., 2000; Gurushidze et al., 2007). Unfortunately, an appealing conclusion from the two species cpDNA similarity, that *A. galanthum* played a role in the domestication of the onion, several lines of evidence contradict this interpretation. First, *A. cepa* and *A. galanthum* differ in scape characteristics (fistulose vs. solid). Second, there are large differences in the nuclear DNA of the two species (Gurushidze et al., 2007). Most importantly, although crosses between *A. cepa* and *A. galanthum* produce F1 hybrids, the chromosomes of the F1 hybrids of *A. galanthum* are discriminated from chromosomes of *A. cepa* in the continuing backcrosses, in which *A. galanthum* acts as the cytoplasmic donor and *A. cepa* acts as the nucleus donor. The chromosome regions from *A. galanthum* decrease in number and completely disappear by B3 (Yamashita and Tashiro, 1999), indicating that *A. galanthum* and *A. cepa* do not share a common ancestor.

Allium galanthum was a member of the clade including, besides *A. cepa*, another cultivated species *A. fistulosum* and its accepted wild progenitor *A. altaicum*, while *A. oschaninii*, *A. praemixtum* and *A. pskemense* formed another clade. The phylogenetic position of three species native to Central Asian mountains (*A. oschaninii*, *A. praemixtum*, *A. pskemense*) contradicts previously reported ITS results (Fritsch et al., 2001; Gurushidze et al., 2007). Morphological characteristics of the three species also correspond to the phylogenetic tree of nrDNA. The possible reasons for this discrepancy are probably related to interspecific hybridization between species ancestral to *A. galanthum* and *A. cepa* followed by chloroplast capture, but this is impossible to prove without additional data.

A serious limitation of our study for understanding the evolution of *Allium* sect. *Cepa* is unavailability of chloroplast genomes of *A. rhabdotum*, *A. roylei*, *A. farctum*, *A. sarensense* and *A. vavilovii*. Further progress is impeded by these gaps in our knowledge. Future efforts in reconstructing the evolution of sect. *Cepa* and domestication of the onion must be directed towards studying these five species.

5. Conclusions

In this study, we tested the hypothesis that central Asian species of *Allium* sect. *Cepa* (*A. oschaninii*, *A. praemixtum*, *A. pskemense* and

A. galanthum) are the closest wild relatives of the cultivated *A. cepa*. Our results suggest that none of these species could have played a role in domestication of the common onion and therefore it is highly unlikely that central Asia was the origin of *A. cepa* domestication. Our analysis also revealed that the plastid gene *rpoC2* produced exactly the same tree topology as the phylogenetic tree based on 80 protein-coding genes, whole-genome plastomes, SSC and LSC regions, and therefore is a gene of choice in further phylogeographical and phylogenetic studies of the *Allium*.

Author contributions

ZY and TD carried out this research, ZY, DM, KT collected the material. HS and KT conceived and designed the research, SV, KT, FK, TD and HS discussed the results and revised the manuscript. TD and HS funded the research. All of the authors read and approved the manuscript.

Declaration of Competing Interest

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.

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