

CHROMOSOMAL DIFFERENTIATION OF *ANOPHELES FUNESTUS* FROM LUANDA AND HUAMBO PROVINCES, WESTERN AND CENTRAL ANGOLA

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Abstract. The chromosomal polymorphism of *Anopheles funestus* sensu stricto from Angola was analyzed from indoor-resting samples collected in 11 peri-urban and rural sites of the Luanda and Huambo Provinces, which are > 450 km apart and have distinct eco-climatic conditions. Five polymorphic paracentric inversions were observed (scored chromatids range = 202 to 248): 2*Ra*, 2*Rh*, 3*Ra*, 3*Rb*, and 3*La*. Inversions 3*Rb* and 3*La* were highly polymorphic; the 2*Ra* and 3*Ra* arrangements were absent in Luanda. No significant departures from Hardy-Weinberg and linkage equilibria were found at the locality, commune, or province level (sites ≤ 50 km from each other), indicating panmixia in each locale. Pooling the Luanda and Huambo samples produced a Wahlund effect, with significant levels of genetic differentiation suggestive of restrictions to gene flow due to geographic distance. The observation that differentiation was limited to inversions 2*Ra* and 3*Ra* can also be interpreted as divergent selection acting on these chromosomal regions between populations from the two provinces.

INTRODUCTION

Anopheles funestus Giles sensu stricto (s.s.) is one of the most important and widespread malaria vectors in sub-Saharan Africa, second only to *Anopheles gambiae* Giles s.s. with respect to the overall contribution to transmission across the continent. Previous studies indicated that in Angola, *An. funestus* can play a significant role in malaria transmission, with sporozoite rates ranging from 0% to 13% in the central regions.¹ Vector control can benefit from a detailed knowledge of the bionomics and genetic structure of *An. funestus*, and such knowledge is, to date, still insufficient for Angolan populations of this species.

In the face of significant advances in the molecular scrutiny of *An. funestus* and its relatives,² cytogenetic analysis remains a reliable and useful tool for the identification of the species constituting the *Funestus* group, and, perhaps more importantly, in ecological genetic studies, analogous to investigations with other anophelines, most notably the sister species of the *An. gambiae* sensu lato (s.l.) complex.³ Moreover, in Malian populations of the nominal species of the *An. gambiae* complex, chromosomal markers were instrumental in the detection of assortative mating phenomena that led to the definition of three chromosomal forms assumed to represent the diverging taxonomic units of an incipient speciation process.^{4,5} This view has been largely confirmed, at least in its general outline, by several classes of molecular markers, although the original simple relationship established in Mali between chromosomal forms and operational taxonomic units appears nowadays more complex on the basis of further cytogenetic and molecular evidence on a regional and continental scale.⁶

Analogously, previous cytogenetic studies of *An. funestus* populations from West Africa have shown the presence of marked chromosomal heterogeneities associated with behavioral and vectorial differences among carriers of alternative arrangements.^{7,8} In Burkina Faso, spatially and temporally

stable departures from Hardy-Weinberg and linkage equilibria at three common inversions (2*Ra*, 3*Ra*, and 3*Rb*) were observed in strictly sympatric populations, suggesting the existence of two chromosomal forms with limitations to gene flow. These forms were named with a non-Linnean nomenclature “Kiribina”, which is mainly characterized by the standard arrangement over all the polytenic complement, and “Folonzo”, which is characterized by a high degree of polymorphism especially for inversions 3*Ra*, 3*Rb*, and 2*Ra*.⁷ Similar findings have been confirmed with an independent and extensive data set from a different region of Burkina Faso (Guelbeogo and others, in press). Molecular analyses of the same data set using simple tandem repeats (microsatellites) and the mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) ND5 gene support the view of an incipient speciation process and suggest a role for selection in the differentiation of the two chromosomal forms Michel and others.⁸

However, in analogy with what has been observed for the vector species of the *An. gambiae* complex, a composite picture has emerged from the molecular and chromosomal inversion analysis of other *An. funestus* populations across the continent, in West Africa,^{9–11} as well as in central,^{12,13} eastern,^{14–16} and southern Africa¹⁷ and in Madagascar.¹⁸ With a few exceptions in Senegal and Cameroon, the common feature of these studies is the panmixia of *An. funestus* in all locales. Transects along eco-climatic clines associated with humidity, however, have revealed intergrading chromosomal inversion frequencies^{10,13}; significant genetic differentiation has been found with both chromosomal^{14,15} and molecular¹⁶ markers between populations separated by geographic barriers, such as the Rift Valley in Kenya. Genetic differentiation in allopatry associated with no evidence for reproductive isolation in sympatry, as observed in *An. funestus* from countries other than Burkina Faso, is in agreement with a population structure model of diverging populations isolated by distance or other geographic features. Divergence could be the outcome of any combination of interacting evolutionary forces such as genetic drift, founder effects, or selective pressures on carriers of alternative karyotypes. These observations suggest that population genetic structuring of *An. funestus* between West and East Africa could be different. Despite these dif-

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ferences, however, it is clear that such structuring may well affect the spread of insecticide resistance genes, such as those conferring resistance to pyrethroids reported from South African populations of this species.²

Thus, in this paper we report the results of a preliminary study on the population structure of *An. funestus* from Angola using chromosomal inversion markers. We have collected samples from several sites of the Luanda and Huambo Provinces with the aim to test whether Angolan populations are in panmixia, as well as to assess the geographic and environmental effects on the chromosomal polymorphism of this mosquito.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study area. The study was carried out in peri-urban and rural sites of the Luanda and Huambo provinces in Angola (Figure 1). These regions lie in quite distinct eco-climatic zones. The Luanda Province is located on the northwestern coastal lowland, an area of arid savanna, characterized by 300–500 mm annual rainfall. The rainy season lasts approximately from November to the beginning of May. In the cool dry season, from mid-May to September, average temperatures drop to 22°C. Here, adult mosquitoes were collected in two peri-urban and in six rural sites (Figure 1). The peri-urban sites were represented by two *bairros* located on the outskirts of Cacuaço town along the Atlantic coast (Saõ Francisco da Praia and Nazarè-Vidrul: 08°42'S, 13°23'E) and another four rural *bairros* close to the small town of Funda (Kilunda: 08°51'S, 13°36'E; Mulundu, 08°49'S, 13°29'E; Pinto, 08°47'S, 13°28'E; and Saõ Miguel, 08°50'S, 13°31'E). The other rural sites were two villages of the Viana Commune: Calumbo Pembele (09°09'S, 13°24'E) and Bita Tanke (09°09'S, 13°20'E). (Note: The term *bairros* usually indicates

the town's residential quarters, but in this case it denotes temporary settlements of refugees from the rural populations that, due to insecurity procured by the Angolan civil war, were forced to move to towns or their environs. Such settlements have evolved during the past three decades into permanent shanty towns characterized by an extremely high density of houses and the absence of basic urban facilities).

The Huambo Province lies on the high plateau of central Angola. The area is a humid savanna (miombo woodland) interspersed with tropical montane forest. Annual rainfall ranges from 1,500 to 2,000 mm, with a single rainy season lasting from October to April; during this period, the mean temperature can fall to 20°C. Here, mosquito collections were carried out in one peri-urban site and in two rural villages (Figure 1): Camussamba, Commune of Cacilhas, which is a *bairro* around the extensive peripheral outskirts of the large Huambo town (12°46'S; 15°44'E; 1,721 m a.s.l) and in the villages of Cossango and Tchilonga, Commune of Chipipa (12°33'S; 15°44'E; 1,608 m a.s.l.).

Mosquito collection and processing. Mosquito sampling was carried out in June–July 2001, in April 2002 (during the dry season, and at the peak of the rainy season, respectively) in the Luanda Province, and in December 2003–January 2004 (in the middle of the rainy season) in the Huambo Province. Resting anophelines were collected manually in the morning (0700–0800) with mouth-operated aspirators inside human dwellings. Mosquitoes were kept alive in moistened cool-boxes until they reached the proper gonotrophic stage for polytene chromosome analysis (Christophers Stage III of ovarian development, also known as half-gravid stage by the external appearance of the abdomen). At that time, either whole female mosquitoes or their cropped ovaries were dropped in Carnoy's fixative solution (1 part of glacial acetic acid in 3 parts of absolute ethanol). Specimens were stored at

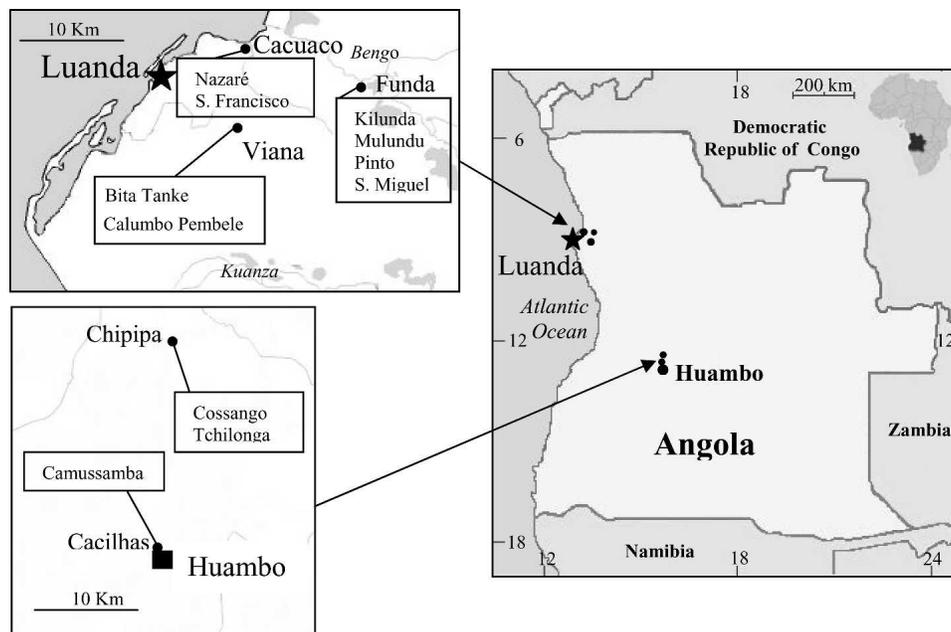


FIGURE 1. Maps showing the location of the sites near Luanda and Huambo where the *Anopheles funestus* samples of this study were collected. For analytical purposes, samples were regrouped at commune level: S. Francisco da Praia and Nazarè under Cacuaço; Kilunda, Mulundu, Pinto, and S. Miguel under Funda; Bitá-Tanke and Calumbo Pembele under Viana; Cossango and Chilonga under Chipipa; and Camussamba under Cacilhas.

–20°C until processing. Preparations of polytene chromosomes were obtained by squashing the ovarian nurse cells stained with orcein according to the protocol of Green.¹⁹ Chromosomes were examined under a phase-contrast microscope (160×; 400×), and inversions were identified and scored according to the map and nomenclature of Sharakhov and colleagues.²⁰

Data analysis. Statistical analysis was performed with the software FSTAT v. 2.9.3.2²¹ and GENEPOP v. 3.4.²² Statistical inference in FSTAT is based on randomization tests, whereas GENEPOP implements several test algorithms. For analytical purposes, the standard and inverted arrangements of each chromosomal inversion system were considered as alternative alleles at a locus. Because the two inversions 2Ra and 2Rh overlap, they were considered as multiple alleles of the same 2Rah inversion system. Due to the limited number of chromosomal scorings from each site, to compare levels of population differentiation, we pooled samples from ecologically comparable sites whose distance is < 15 km. Thus, five samples (i.e., areas), which are identified by the name of the corresponding commune, were distinguished: the peri-urban *bairros* of Cacucaco and Cacilhas, the rural *bairros* of Funda, and the villages of Viana and Chipipa (Figure 1). Pooling was warranted by the absence of statistically significant differences in the distribution of genotypes across neighboring sites, as inferred by log-likelihood exact tests in GENEPOP. Inbreeding coefficients and genetic differentiation between geographical populations was examined by F-statistics calculated as in Weir and Cockerham.²³ Conformance to Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium was tested in GENEPOP with Fisher's exact test or its Markov chain equivalent²⁴ whenever sample size was too large to allow for the construction of all the contingency tables needed by the exact test. By pooling samples in a nested spatial fashion, Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium was assessed at different hierarchical level of geographic structure, namely countrywide, between the two provinces of Luanda and Huambo, and at commune level. Significance of F_{ST} values of pairwise population comparisons was tested using the G-based exact test of genotypic differentiation²⁵ using the Bonferroni correction as implemented in FSTAT.

RESULTS

A total of 196 half-gravid females suitable for chromosomal analysis were collected; of these, 123 (63%) were successfully scored for at least one inversion. Five polymorphic paracentric inversions were observed: two on arm 2R (2Ra, 2Rh), two on arm 3R (3Ra, 3Rb), and one on arm 3L (3La). A diagrammatic representation of their location over the polytenic complement is reported in Figure 2. Inversion 2Rh was observed only in heterozygotes. In accordance with previous studies, no inversions were found on the autosomal arm 2L and the X heterosome.

Inversions 3La and 3Rb were observed in populations from all communes. Inversion 2Rh was found only in Funda and Viana from the Luanda Province. Inversions 2Ra and 3Ra were observed only in populations of the Huambo Province. Overall, inversions 3La and 3Rb were the most frequent, followed by inversions 3Ra, 2Ra, and 2Rh, in decreasing order of frequency (Table 1).

In view of the heterogeneous distribution of inversion fre-

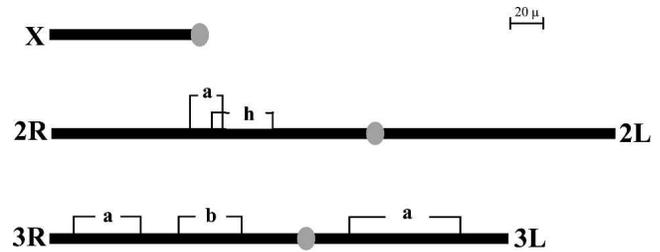


FIGURE 2. Diagrammatic representation of the polytene chromosomes of *Anopheles funestus*, showing the location of the paracentric inversions observed in Angolan samples of this species.

quencies, a significant Wahlund effect emerged from the nested spatial analysis when samples were pooled across increasingly larger geographical areas: samples from individual localities (i.e., communes) were in Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium at all loci, even when assessed by Fisher's exact test across loci (Table 1). The same was found when samples were pooled at the province level (Table 1). When analyzing all our Angolan samples pooled together, however, highly significant departures from Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium due to a deficit of heterokaryotypes were found for inversions 2Ra and 3Ra (Table 1). The global test across loci was highly significant. Population structure was also investigated by calculating pairwise F_{ST} values among populations across loci and for individual loci across populations. Geographical populations separated by less than 50 km showed lower and statistically non-significant F_{ST} values; conversely, large and significant F_{ST} values were observed for populations separated by more than 450 km (Table 2). Large F_{ST} values were observed only for inversions 2Ra ($F_{ST} = 0.877$) and 3Ra ($F_{ST} = 0.920$), the remaining three inversions 2Rh, 3Rb, and 3La having F_{ST} values ≤ 0.063 , demonstrating that significant differentiation between populations did not involve the whole polytenic complement. No linkage disequilibrium was detected for any locus (i.e., inversions) pair across samples (i.e., geographical populations at commune level) by Fisher's method.

DISCUSSION

The chromosomal analysis of *An. funestus* sensu stricto populations from several localities of the Luanda and Huambo provinces in Angola showed the presence of five paracentric inversions (2Ra, 2Rh, 3Ra, 3Rb, 3La) originally described by Green and Hunt,¹⁷ and—with the exception of inversion 2Ra—previously reported from other central African populations of this species.¹² High levels of chromosomal polymorphism were found in the samples collected from both provinces. Departures from panmictic conditions were not revealed in any population. A different distribution of inversion frequencies, however, was detected between the two provinces despite the availability of only a limited number of samples.

Inversion 2Rh has been described from populations of central and eastern Africa. In three villages of southern Cameroon, it was the most frequently observed on the 2R arm.¹² In Madagascar and in Kenya, it was rarely found in heterokaryotypes.^{18,26} Inversion 2Ra, which is commonly observed in many continental populations as well as in Madagascar, was found in our samples only in villages of the Huambo

TABLE 1

Frequencies of the chromosomal inversions of *Anopheles funestus* observed in samples from the Communes of Luanda and Huambo Provinces, Western and Central Angola

Geographic level	2N [range]	Inversion system 2Rah					Inversion system 3Ra			Inversion system 3Rb			Inversion system 3La			χ^2	d.f.	P
		2Ra	F _{IS}	2Rh	F _{IS}	P	3Ra	F _{IS}	P	3Rb	F _{IS}	P	3La	F _{IS}	P			
Country																		
Angola	202–248	0.05	0.79	0.14	-0.16	<0.0001	0.05	0.76	<0.0001	0.50	0.00	1.00	0.71	0.06	0.64	56.2	8	<0.0001
Province																		
Luanda	188–232	0.00	–	0.15	-0.17	0.21	0.00	–	–	0.48	-0.02	1.00	0.69	0.04	0.81	3.5	6	0.74
Huambo	14–18	0.71	0.37	0.00	–	0.44	0.81	-0.17	1.00	0.69	0.19	1.00	0.94	0.00	–	1.6	6	0.95
Commune																		
Cacuaco	12–16	0.00	–	0.00	–	–	0.00	–	–	0.50	-0.25	1.00	0.50	-0.36	0.51	1.3	4	0.85
Funda	134–172	0.00	–	0.18	-0.21	0.11	0.00	–	–	0.53	-0.05	0.81	0.70	-0.01	1.00	4.9	6	0.56
Viana	42–44	0.00	–	0.10	-0.08	1.00	0.00	–	–	0.31	0.11	1.00	0.71	0.32	0.27	2.6	6	0.86
Chipipa	6–8	1.00	–	0.00	–	–	0.63	-0.50	1.00	0.50	0.14	1.00	1.00	–	–	0.0	4	1.00
Cacilhas	8–10	0.50	0.14	0.00	–	1.00	1.00	–	–	0.88	0.00	–	0.90	0.00	–	–	–	–
Unweighted frequencies		0.30		0.06			0.33			0.54			0.76					

2N = number of scored chromatids; F_{IS} = inbreeding coefficient (negative values indicate an excess of heterozygotes, while positive values denote heterozygote deficiency). P = probability of conformance to Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium (null hypothesis: F_{IS} = 0); χ^2 , d.f., and P values of Fisher's exact test across inversions are reported in the last three columns of the table.

Province. On chromosomal arm 3R, arrangement 3Ra was found at high frequency only in the two villages of the Huambo Province, whereas inversion 3Rb floated at intermediate frequencies in all populations, without any evidence of linkage disequilibrium between this pair of arrangements. Thus, the high levels of linkage between 3Ra and 3Rb observed in some populations of Senegal,²⁷ Mali,¹¹ and Cameroon,¹² as well as in some villages of Burkina Faso⁷ did not apply to our Angolan samples. In the Huambo populations, the 3La inverted arrangement was found almost fixed, as previously observed in Cameroon¹² and in Madagascar.¹⁸

According to the algorithm proposed by Costantini and colleagues,⁷ the specimens from the Huambo Province fall within the definition of the Folonzo chromosomal form by virtue of the high degree of polymorphism for inversions 3Ra, 3Rb, and 2Ra. However, in the populations of the Luanda Province, inversions 3Ra and 2Ra—which are characteristic of the Folonzo form—were absent. The suitability of the algorithm constructed to define the chromosomal forms of *An. funestus* detected in Burkina Faso to other populations of this species across Africa is at the moment unclear, and most probably its application should not be attempted until further studies with other genetic markers clarify the relationships between the chromosomal forms in Burkina Faso and other continental populations of this species.

No significant departures from Hardy-Weinberg and linkage equilibria were observed when chromosomal data were

analyzed at the locality, commune, or province levels. These results suggest the presence of interbreeding populations in each locale, where geographical populations are separated by no more than 50 km. This is in accordance with findings from western and coastal Kenya, where significant differentiation began to appear beyond 50–80 km,¹⁶ as well as in populations from Senegal and Cameroon where an isolation by distance model estimated differentiation to appear at 20–50 km.^{10,13} Also, as the Luanda samples were collected on consecutive years and different seasons, this would suggest that in this area, the degree of polymorphism and inversion frequencies remained fairly consistent across time.

Conversely, departures from Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium emerged when samples from the Luanda and Huambo provinces (more than 450 km apart) were pooled and analyzed as a single population, thereby denoting a marked Wahlund effect; such genetic differentiation is suggestive of restrictions to gene flow between the populations of these two regions due to geographic distance. The Luanda and Huambo provinces lie in quite distinct geographic zones characterized by different rainfall values, average temperatures, altitude above sea level, and vegetation. There is extensive evidence in other anophelines, particularly species of the afro-tropical *An. gambiae* complex, for significant associations between some of these eco-climatic parameters and chromosomal inversions,^{3,5,28,29} thereby supporting the notion that chromosomal inversions can play a significant role in ecotypic adaptation. The observation that marked differentiation was limited only to inversions 2Ra and 3Ra, therefore, can also be interpreted as a consequence of divergent selection acting on these chromosomal regions between populations from the two geographic areas.

At present, the role of different evolutionary forces promoting differentiation between the Luanda and Huambo populations cannot be untangled. Selectively neutral markers such as, for example, microsatellites, mtDNA genes, or single nucleotide polymorphisms, can contribute to uncover the population structure of this species. Indeed, larger samples, collected at other sites and times are needed for a more comprehensive understanding of the spatial and temporal variability of the chromosomal inversion polymorphism of *An.*

TABLE 2

Matrix of pairwise F_{ST} values for *Anopheles funestus* populations from the Communes of the Luanda and Huambo Provinces (shown below the main diagonal)

	Cacuaco	Funda	Viana	Chipipa	Cacilhas
Cacuaco	–	23	50	498	519
Funda	0.020	–	43	477	498
Viana	0.033	0.031	–	460	480
Chipipa	0.598	0.509**	0.558**	–	25
Cacilhas	0.586*	0.515**	0.592**	0.261	–

Statistically significant values (P < 0.05) are formatted in bold. Asterisks denote statistical significance after the Bonferroni correction: *P < 0.05; **P < 0.01. Distances in km between localities are shown above the main diagonal.

funestus in Angola and of its relationship with other conspecific populations across Africa.

Despite these limitations, it is obvious from this study that genetically differentiated populations of *An. funestus* exist in the coastal lowlands and central highlands of Angola. On the basis of inversion frequencies, the populations from the coastal lowlands appears related somewhat more closely to those of central Africa (e.g., forest villages of southern Cameroon, except for the absence of the 3Ra arrangement), whereas populations of the central plateau show the pattern of chromosomal polymorphism observed in some southern African populations (e.g., Okavango river in Namibia¹⁶). The chromosomal inversions responsible of such differentiation have been sometimes associated with vectorial and behavioral heterogeneities.^{7,8} In this context, it is interesting to note that in the Luanda Province, the human blood index of indoor-resting *An. funestus* was reported to be 68%, a fairly low figure for such kind of samples of this species elsewhere in Africa, denoting a more zoophilic host selection pattern.³⁰ Thus, it will be worthwhile to investigate whether the observed genetic differences can affect the malaria transmission potential of this species in the two regions.

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