

# Transcriptome Analysis of Drought Induced Stress in *Chenopodium quinoa*

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## ABSTRACT

Quinoa (*Chenopodium quinoa* Willd.) is a halophytic, allotetraploid grain crop of the Amaranthaceae family with impressive drought tolerance, nutritional content and an increasing worldwide market. Here we report the results of an RNA-seq transcriptome analysis of *Chenopodium quinoa* using four water treatments (field capacity to drought) on the varieties “Ingapirca” (representing valley ecotypes) and “Ollague” (representing Altiplano Salares ecotypes). Physiological results, including growth rate, photosynthetic rate, stomatal conductance, and stem water potential, support the earlier findings that the Altiplano Salares ecotypes display greater tolerance to drought-like stress conditions than the valley ecotypes. cDNA libraries from root tissue samples for each variety × treatment combination were sequenced using Illumina Hi-Seq technology in an RNA-seq experiment. *De novo* assembly of the transcriptome generated 20,337 unique transcripts. Gene expression analysis of the RNA-seq data identified 462 putative gene products that showed differential expression based on treatment, and 27 putative gene products differentially expressed based on variety × treatment, including significant expression differences in root tissue in response to increasing water stress. BLAST searches and gene ontology analysis show an overlap between drought tolerance stress and other abiotic stress mechanisms.

## KEYWORDS

Quinoa; Drought Tolerance; RNA-Seq; Transcriptome Assembly

## 1. Introduction

Quinoa (*Chenopodium quinoa* Willd.) is an allotetraploid ( $2n = 4x = 36$ ) species belonging to the goosefoot (*Chenopodium*) genus, which consists of over 120 species of perennial and annual herbaceous flowering plants. Native to the Andean region of South America, this pseudocereal grain crop has been cultivated for thousands of years where it was considered a sacred grain within the ancient Incan and Tiwanakan civilizations [1]. Recent international attention to quinoa is due to its unusually high nutritional value [2], being referred to as the “supergrain of the future” because of its high protein content (reported to have reached 22.1%, [3]), composition and

quantity of lipids [4], and ideal balance of essential amino acids [5]. Quinoa has relatively high amounts of vitamins and minerals [6] and is gluten-free. The United Nations declared 2013 as the “International Year of Quinoa” [7].

More than six thousand accessions of improved varieties and landrace ecotypes of quinoa are held in germplasm banks throughout South America. Valencia-Chamorro [8] categorized these varieties and ecotypes into five groups according to an altitudinal gradient and environment: sea level, valleys, the Yungas (subtropics), the Salares (salt flats) and the Altiplano (high plains). Although valley ecotypes are cultivated at around 2000 - 4000 m, they receive similar amounts of annual rainfall as the sea level ecotypes cultivated at lower elevations

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(800 - 1500 m). The Salares and Altiplano ecotypes are adapted to extreme environmental conditions that typify the Andean Altiplano: high altitude, low precipitation, saline soils and frequent frost [2,9,10]. These regions are known to have below-freezing temperatures and frost for up to 200 days per year [11]. The Salares ecotypes grow in highly saline soils with pH > 8.0. Both Salares and Altiplano ecotypes are cultivated at altitudes around 4000 m and receive as little as 200 mm of annual rainfall [12,13].

Among all the abiotic and biotic stresses endured by crop plants, drought is considered the most important factor limiting crop productivity worldwide [14,15]. Current climate models of global warming indicate an increase in drought episodes and severity in regions prone to drought [16]. For example, in 2012 the United States experienced drought in almost 80% of its agricultural land—making 2012 the most extensive drought experienced by the United States since the 1950s. Yields for corn (122 bushels per acre) and soybean (37.8 bushels per acre) were the lowest since 1995 for corn and 2003 for soybean USDA [17]. Such changes will have devastating economic and sociological impact on human populations. The decrease in corn and soybean production in 2012 drastically affected the supply, demand and price conditions of other crops, meat, poultry, dairy as well as other packaged and processed foods that use these crops. The 2012 drought significantly increased the 2013 price index for beef (up 4% - 5%), dairy products (up 3.5% - 4.5%), poultry (up 3% - 4%), and cereals and bakery products (up 3% - 4%) [18]. Similar outcomes related to drought stress are appearing regularly across the globe in essentially all crops. Understanding how plants respond to drought so that adaptive agricultural strategies can be developed is an urgent and essential goal of plant and crop scientists.

While quinoa is commonly referred to as a drought and salt tolerant crop [19,20], no research has been reported that investigates the genomic basis for drought-tolerance differences among quinoa ecotypes. Transcriptome research conducted in *Arabidopsis thaliana* [21,22], *Oryza sativa* [23,24], and *Sorghum bicolor* [25] has been used to successfully identify differentially expressed genes, implicating several biosynthetic pathways that assist in the overall tolerance to drought stress. Recent genomic research in quinoa has successfully identified genes (e.g., *SOS1*, *NHX1*, etc.) associated with salt tolerance [26,27], further suggesting the possibility of unraveling the genetic basis of drought resistance in quinoa through transcriptome analysis.

In this study, we compared the response to different water treatments approximating drought-like conditions in two quinoa varieties, specifically “Ingapirca”, derived from a valley ecotype native to Ecuador, and “Ollague”,

derived from a Salares ecotype native to Chile [28]. We used RNA sequencing (RNA-Seq) technology to identify putative gene products that are differentially expressed during progressive water stress. We assembled the first root transcriptome of quinoa, using Illumina reads (created in this study) and 454-pyrosequencing and Sanger reads (obtained from previous studies and GenBank). Differentially expressed genes were identified and bioinformatic methods were employed to implicate specific pathways putatively associated with water stress in quinoa.

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1. Greenhouse Experiment

Plants were propagated in greenhouse facilities at Brigham Young University (40.245 N, -111.641 W, 1410 m above sea level) in September 2011. Ingapirca is a variety derived from a valley ecotype native to Ecuador and Ollague is a variety derived from a Salares ecotype native to Chile. Seeds of both varieties were kindly provided by Angel Mujica (Universidad del Altiplano, Puno, Peru). Daily average greenhouse conditions were maintained at a maximum temperature of 28°C, minimum temperature of 19°C, with a day length of 13 hours. Seedlings were thinned to three seeds per four-inch pot using Sunshine Basic Mix 1 soil (Sun Gro, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada) supplemented with Osmocote fertilizer (Scotts, Marysville, OH). Three replicates, including the two varieties and four watering treatments were set up using a randomized complete block design. All plants were watered and treated equally for an initial period of three weeks.

### 2.2. Phenotypic Measurements

Photosynthetic rate, stomatal conductance, transpiration rate, vapor pressure, and temperature of leaf were assayed using the LI-6400XT Portable Photosynthesis System (LI-COR, Lincoln, NE). Plant height was measured and averaged every third day. A pressure bomb (PMS Instrument Company, Albany, OR) with compressed nitrogen was used to measure the stem water potential, while chlorophyll a, b, and total chlorophyll contents were determined as described by Nagata and Yamashta [29] for one plant per replication randomly chosen *a priori*. Quantitative data were analyzed statistically using the computer program R 2.15.1 [30].

### 2.3. Drought Treatments

The four drought treatments were induced and maintained by differential watering using the method described by Earl [31]. To calibrate determination of different drought treatments, 130 g of soil was water satu-

rated and defined as the soil water holding capacity or “wet weight” (435.08 g). Oven-drying the saturated soil for four days resulted in a total “dry weight” of 72.58 g. The difference between the wet weight and dry weight (362.50 g) represents the soil water holding capacity of the pot. Field capacity was defined as 40% of the soil water holding capacity (145 g). The other estimated field capacities were calculated based on the 100% field capacity water weight of 145 g. The low, medium, and high water stress treatments were applied at 50%, 30% and 10% field capacity, respectively. Thus, the 100% field capacity treatment (hereafter referred to as the control) was maintained at 293 g (145 g water, 130 g soil, 18 g dry pot), while the low, medium, and high stress treatments were maintained at 220.5 g, 191.5 g, and 162.5 g respectively. Each pot was weighed independently three times per day, with water being added when the pot weight dropped below the weight thresholds.

These different drought treatments were initiated at day 23 when all plants reached the eight-leaf stage of development. The treatments were applied in a progressive manner by maintaining all samples at a particular treatment for 1 day prior to progressing to higher drought treatments. Soil moisture tension and temperature of the soil was measured in control pots using a Davis 6440 watermark soil moisture sensors (Davis Instruments, Hayward, CA). This particular soil moisture sensor converts electrical resistance to a calibrated reading of centibars of soil water suction, ranging from 10 - 200 centibars. Two sensors measured each drought treatment, which were averaged at the conclusion of the study to ensure distinct treatments (Table 1).

## 2.4. cDNA Library Construction

A flow chart that depicts cDNA library construction is provided as Supplemental Figure 1. Entire roots systems were collected from each variety-treatment combination. The tissue was immediately flash frozen in liquid

**Table 1. The different water treatments used in this study with reported weights maintained (g) throughout the experiment and average soil moisture tension (bars) that were measured once treatments reached their final maintained weights.**

Treatment	Weights maintained (g)	Average soil moisture tension (centibars)
1 (Control; 100% field capacity)	293	-10.33
2 (Low; 50% field capacity)	220	-19.00
3 (Medium; 30% field capacity)	190	-34.17
4 (High; 10% field capacity)	160	-176.17

nitrogen. RNA was extracted from root tissue using an RNeasy® Plant Mini Kit according to the manufacture’s instructions (Qiagen, Valencia, CA). RNA concentration and quality were assessed using an ND-1000 Spectrophotometer (NanoDrop, Wilmington, DE) and an Agilent 2100 Bioanalyzer (Agilent Technologies, Santa Clara, CA). Conversion of mRNA into cDNA libraries was accomplished using the reagents and protocol provided in the Illumina® TruSeq™ RNA Sample Preparation Kit (Illumina, San Diego, CA). This procedure includes fragmenting the mRNA, synthesis of first and second strand cDNA, followed by end-repair, adenylating the 3’ ends, and ligation of sequence adaptors. Adding unique sequence adaptors, also known as indexing or barcoding, allows for multiple libraries to be sequenced in a single lane. The quality of the synthesized cDNA libraries was verified using a DNA 7500 LabChip® Kit (Agilent Technologies, Santa Clara, CA) on a 2100 Bioanalyzer.

## 2.5. Sequencing and Assembly

Sequencing was performed at the Microarray and Genomic Analysis Core Facility at the University of Utah (Salt Lake City, UT). The libraries were quantified and checked for quality using an Illumina HiSeq 2000 instrument before being sequenced. The twenty-four cDNA libraries were divided evenly between two lanes of the flow cell (1 × 50 bases). The cDNA library numbering and sequencing layout is depicted in Supplemental Figure 2. The reads have been made publically available through NCBI’s Sequence Read Archive (GenBank SRA #SRR799899 and SRR799901). The resulting Illumina fastq reads were trimmed using the computer program Sickle with a phred quality threshold score of 20 (<https://github.com/najoshi/sickle>). In addition, 454-pyrosequencing (GenBank SRA #SRR315568-SRR315570) and Sanger sequence reads (GenBank dbEST ID #GI-47561370-GI47561793), obtained from previous studies, were also converted to fastq format. All reads were assembled *de novo* using the Trinity assembler (v. 2012-04-22; [32]). We then mapped the Illumina reads to the predicted Trinity contigs using GSNAP (v. 2012-05-23; [33]) with a max number of paths to print (-n) of 1, limiting mapping of each read to a single contig. The expression counts for each sample were calculated with a samtools script and the read counts for each gene were normalized by length and library size and rounded to the nearest whole number [34].

## 2.6. Differential Gene Expression Analysis

EdgeR is a Bioconductor package based on a negative binomial (NB) distribution. Robinson *et al.* [35] modeled the counts for each gene (*g*) and sample (*i*) using the following algorithm:

$$Y_{gi} \sim NB(M_i p_{gj}, \phi_g)$$

where  $M_i$  represents the library size,  $p_{gj}$  represents the proportion of gene  $g$  in the experimental group  $j$  to which sample  $i$  belongs, and  $\phi_g$  is the over-dispersion parameter that accounts for biological or sample-to-sample variation. Different models were also created that identified 1) genes that were differentially expressed between the two varieties (Ingapirca versus Ollague across all treatments), 2) genes that were differentially expressed among the four drought treatments, and 3) genes that were differentially expressed based on the variety  $\times$  treatment interaction, where the different variables represent the average expression of Ingapirca control, Ingapirca low stress, Ingapirca medium stress, Ingapirca high stress, Ollague control, Ollague low stress, Ollague medium stress, and Ollague high stress. Transcripts with false discovery rate (FDR)  $< 0.05$  were extracted for further analysis [36].

## 2.7. GO Annotation and Pathway Analysis

Differentially expressed transcripts were compared to the RefSeq Protein public database using BLASTX [37] with an E-value cut-off of  $10e^{-10}$  to provide a functional annotation for each contig. We imported all differentially expressed transcripts into Blast2GO (version 2.6.1; [38]) where gene ontology (GO) terms were assigned and

clustered based on biological process, cellular component, or molecular function. Mapping and annotation were performed using default parameters (E-value hit filter  $1.0e^{-6}$ , annotation cutoff 55, GO weight 5, HSP-hit coverage cut-off 20). GO enrichment was tested using the Fisher exact test, which uses the Gossip software integrated in the Blast2GO package [39]. This test assessed significant over-representation of GO terms in the list of the regulated genes (462 DE genes—test group) against the non-differentially expressed transcripts (20,337 contigs—reference group), using a cut-off threshold of FDR  $< 0.05$ . Specific gene products were identified as well as associated biological pathways as determined by the KEGG pathway [40] mapping functionality offered in the Blast2GO program.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Phenotypic Response

An initial greenhouse study compared the phenotypic responses associated with different water treatments between Ingapirca and Ollague. Measurements included heights, photosynthetic rate, stomatal conductance, and stem water potential. ANOVA analysis identified significant differences between the varieties and among all treatment levels ( $p = 3.01e-05$  and  $p = 0.00212$ , **Table 2**)

**Table 2.** ANOVA analysis of phenotypic responses associated with different water treatments between two quinoa varieties.

	Df	Mean Sq	Pr (>F) <sup>a</sup>
<b>Height:</b>			
Variety <sup>b</sup>	1	107.32	3.01e-05 <sup>***</sup>
Treatment <sup>c</sup>	3	24.96	0.00212 <sup>**</sup>
Variety $\times$ Treatment	3	1.48	0.71704
Residuals	16	3.25	
<b>Photosynthetic Rate:</b>			
Variety	1	19.03	0.17591
Treatment	3	51.76	0.00892 <sup>**</sup>
Variety $\times$ Treatment	3	4.21	0.72475
Residuals	16	9.49	
<b>Stomatal Conductance:</b>			
Variety	1	0.00003	0.92036
Treatment	3	0.023674	0.00265 <sup>**</sup>
Variety $\times$ Treatment	3	0.00194	0.62502
Residuals	16	0.00324	
<b>Stem Water Potential:</b>			
Variety	1	0.776	0.00476 <sup>**</sup>
Treatment	3	2.8115	1.44e-07 <sup>***</sup>
Variety $\times$ Treatment	3	0.2937	0.02551 <sup>*</sup>
Residuals	16	0.0725	

<sup>a</sup>Significance level: \*\*\* = 0.001; \*\* = 0.01; \* = 0.05; <sup>b</sup>Varieties: Ingapirca (valley ecotype) and Ollague (Salares ecotype); <sup>c</sup>Treatment: 100% field capacity, 50% field capacity; 30% field capacity; 10% field capacity.

for plant height. The effects of water stress on plant height was evident in both varieties but more pronounced in the valley variety, Ingapirca, which had a more dramatic decrease in average height between the control and high water stress treatments than the respective treatments for Ollague. The Ollague plants were also negatively affected by the water stress but had a statistically significant lower average height compared to controls in all treatments (**Figure 1(a)**).

Similar to height, photosynthetic rate and stomatal conductance measurements exhibited reduced metabolism due to stress treatments (**Figures 1(b)** and **(c)**). Ingapirca showed phenotypic effects typical of drought stress, including loss of turgor pressure, causing the plant stem and leaves to droop, and curling of the leaves. The phenotypic effects were symptomatic of the underlying physiology. Under the high water stress treatment Ingapirca had a lower average photosynthetic rate ( $5.5 \mu\text{mol CO}_2 \text{ m}^{-2} \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$ ) and stomatal conductance ( $0.031 \mu\text{mol H}_2\text{O m}^{-2} \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$ ) when compared to the Ollague plants ( $9.4 \mu\text{mol CO}_2 \text{ m}^{-2} \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$  and  $0.081 \mu\text{mol H}_2\text{O m}^{-2} \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$ , **Figures 1(b)** and **(c)**). Significant differences for photosynthetic rate and stomatal conductance measurements were identified among the different water treatments in the ANOVA analysis ( $p = 0.00892$  and  $p = 0.00265$ , **Table 2**).

Stem water potential is defined as the capacity of the plant to conduct water from the soil to the atmosphere. Increased negative water potential indicates greater tolerance to water stress conditions. Choné *et al.* [41] used stem water potential as an indicator of water deficiencies in plum orchards and grapevines. ANOVA analysis revealed significant differences between varieties ( $p = 0.00476$ ), among water treatments ( $p = 1.44 \times 10^{-7}$ ), and among the variety  $\times$  treatment interactions ( $p < 0.02551$ , **Table 2**). Ollague exhibited significantly lower average stem water potential ( $-2.97 \text{ MPa}$ ) when compared to Ingapirca ( $-1.95 \text{ MPa}$ , **Figure 1(d)**).

### 3.2. Sequencing and Assembly

Sequencing of 24 cDNA libraries, prepared from root tissue of each treatment and each variety, generated a total of 385,311,064 sequence reads ( $\sim 19.27 \text{ Gb}$ ). After assessing for quality, a total of 373,835,465 reads from the RNA-seq experiment were combined with previously identified quinoa EST sequences derived from various tissue sources (root, leaf, seedling, and seed tissue) and sequencing methodologies (454-pyrosequencing and Sanger sequencing [27,42]). All reads were assembled *de novo* using the Trinity assembler [32]. The combined assembly produced 20,337 unique consensus sequences (contigs), with contig read length ranging from 201 to 18,777 bp with an average and median length of 525 bp and 435 bp, respectively (**Figure 2**).

### 3.3. Differential Expression Analysis

Implementing different models, EdgeR identified 6170 differentially expressed (DE) contigs based on variety alone and 462 DE contigs based on the different water stress treatments. The variety  $\times$  treatment DE contigs identified not only showed differential expression based on the water stress treatment, but the manner in which they were differentially expressed was also influenced by variety. There were a total of 27 contigs (**Supplemental Table 1**) that showed differential expression based on interaction terms.

### 3.4. Homology and Functional Analysis

Of the 462 DE contigs identified based on different water stress treatments, 251 had sequences that could be annotated with a functional gene ontology (GO; Blast2Go) and assigned to a GO category (biological processes, cellular components, or molecular function). It should be noted that the different GO categories are non-exclusive, resulting in some contigs being annotated in more than one category. Of the sequences that expressed GO terms, 175 sequences were assigned to the biological process category, 166 sequences to the cellular component category, and 177 to the molecular function category. The most dominant terms seen in the biological process category were cellular and metabolic process. Other major biological processes identified were associated with various response stimuli: abiotic, abscisic acid, chemical, cold, endogenous, hormone, organic substance, osmotic, oxidative and salt stress (**Figure 3(a)**). Within the molecular-function category, the most dominant terms were catalytic activity and binding. Other major components were ATP-, DNA-, cation-, metal ion-, adenylyl ribonucleotide-, and protein binding as well as enzymatic activity such as hydrolase, oxidoreductase, transferase, peroxidase and kinase activity (**Figure 3(b)**). The GO enrichment test identified 58 GO categories in our study ( $\text{FDR} < 0.05$ ; **Table 3**). All of the GO terms identified were over-represented when comparing regulated genes (462 DE treatment genes—test group) against the non-differentially expressed transcripts (20,337 contigs—reference group).

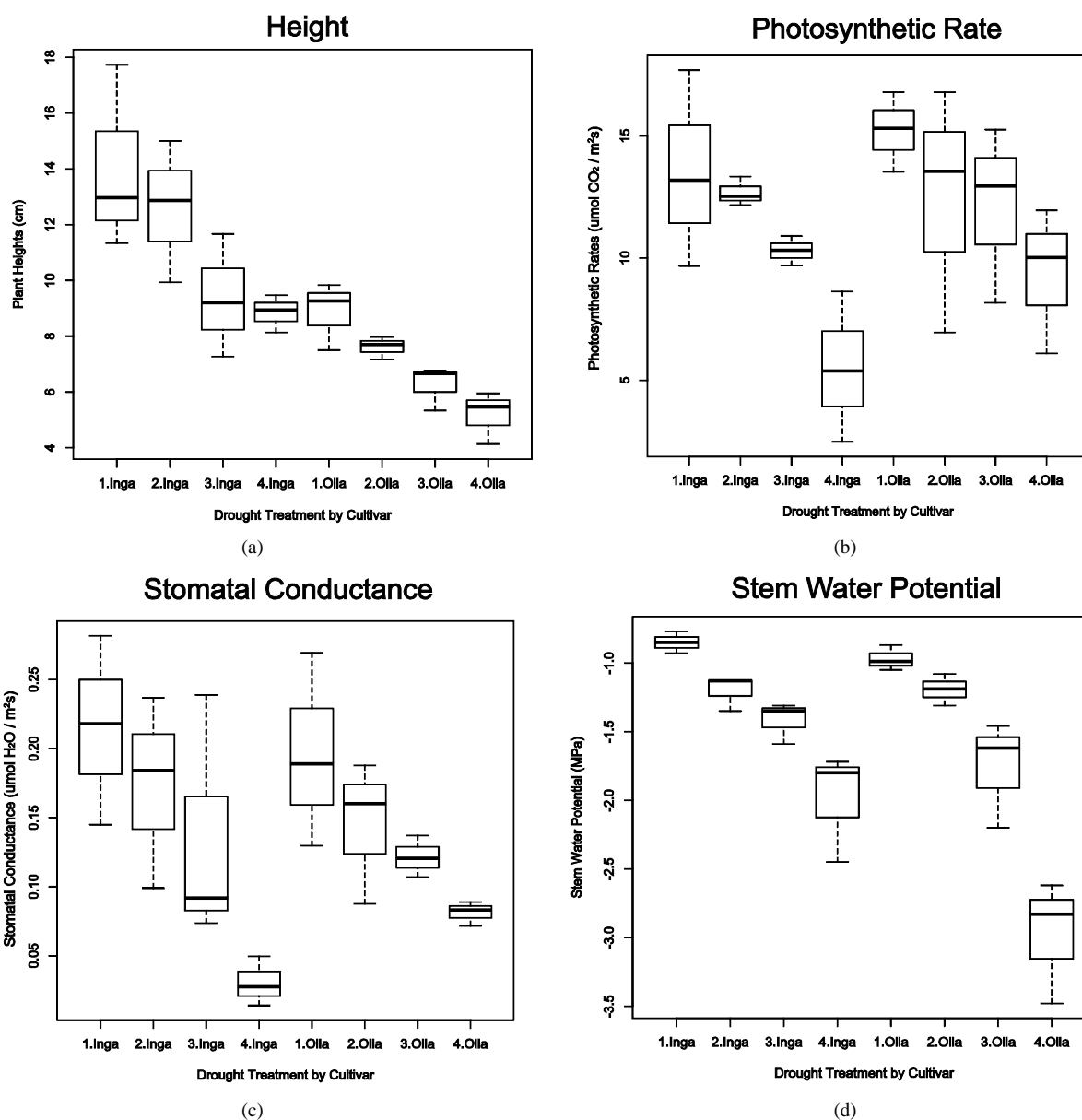
BLASTX searches of the RefSeq Protein database ( $E\text{-value} < 10 \times 10^{-10}$ ) identified homology of 21 of the 27 identified DE variety  $\times$  treatment interaction contigs. GO was performed on the 21 DE variety  $\times$  treatment genes using Blast2GO. Of the total 21 DE interaction genes, 17 expressed GO term(s). Transferase activity, metal ion binding, cation binding, protein binding, and oxidoreductase activity were the major activities of interaction gene products as indicated by molecular function; while cellular metabolic process, primary metabolic process, response to stress, and response to abiotic stimulus were

**Table 3.** Overrepresented GO terms in drought regulated genes. The test group is represented by the regulated genes with at least one GO assigned (462 sequences). The reference group is constituted by the non-regulated transcripts with at least one GO assigned (20,337 sequences). The cut-off threshold was FDR < 0.05.

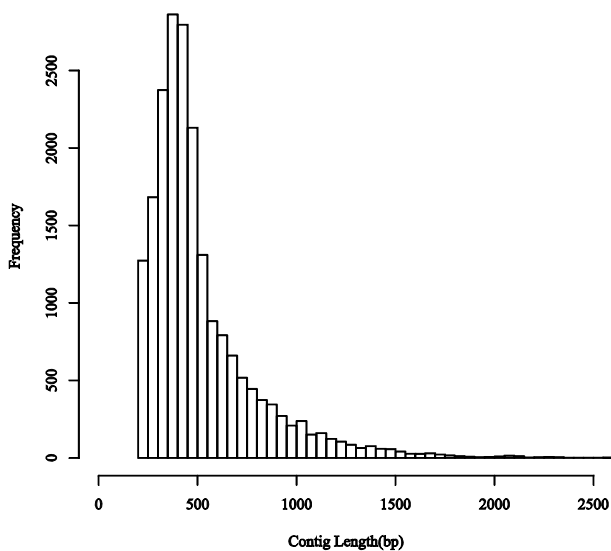
GO-ID	Go description	FDR	Test (%)	Reference (%)
GO:0016798	hydrolase activity, acting on glycosyl bonds	8.35E-08	12.0	2.2
GO:0004553	hydrolase activity, hydrolyzing O-glycosyl compounds	1.63E-07	11.1	2.0
GO:0005975	carbohydrate metabolic process	5.19E-06	21.7	8.3
GO:0042221	response to chemical stimulus	1.08E-04	33.6	18.2
GO:0050896	response to stimulus	1.15E-04	48.4	30.9
GO:0009719	response to endogenous stimulus	1.71E-04	18.4	7.5
GO:0044262	cellular carbohydrate metabolic process	1.71E-04	17.5	6.9
GO:0000272	polysaccharide catabolic process	1.71E-04	5.5	0.7
GO:0005976	polysaccharide metabolic process	2.42E-04	11.5	3.5
GO:0006979	response to oxidative stress	2.83E-04	10.1	2.8
GO:0016161	beta-amylase activity	3.58E-04	2.8	0.1
GO:0009505	plant-type cell wall	3.77E-04	8.3	2.0
GO:0006950	response to stress	5.27E-04	30.4	16.9
GO:0016684	oxidoreductase activity, acting on peroxide as acceptor	5.88E-04	4.6	0.6
GO:0006804	peroxidase reaction	5.88E-04	4.6	0.6
GO:0004601	peroxidase activity	5.88E-04	4.6	0.6
GO:0009725	response to hormone stimulus	0.0013	16.1	6.9
GO:0016491	oxidoreductase activity	0.0015	17.5	7.9
GO:0016052	carbohydrate catabolic process	0.0026	9.2	2.8
GO:0010033	response to organic substance	0.0035	18.9	9.2
GO:0016209	antioxidant activity	0.0043	4.6	0.8
GO:0016160	amylase activity	0.0044	2.8	0.2
GO:0005618	cell wall	0.0055	12.4	5.0
GO:0009409	response to cold	0.0055	9.2	3.1
GO:0044264	cellular polysaccharide metabolic process	0.0055	9.2	3.1
GO:0030312	external encapsulating structure	0.0061	12.4	5.1
GO:0009628	response to abiotic stimulus	0.0064	24.0	13.5
GO:0010480	microsporocyte differentiation	0.0064	1.8	0.0
GO:0003824	catalytic activity	0.0098	60.4	46.8
GO:0006970	response to osmotic stress	0.0098	11.1	4.4
GO:0009251	glucan catabolic process	0.0098	2.8	0.3
GO:0005983	starch catabolic process	0.0098	2.8	0.3
GO:0044247	cellular polysaccharide catabolic process	0.0098	2.8	0.3
GO:0009311	oligosaccharide metabolic process	0.0119	7.8	2.5
GO:0005985	sucrose metabolic process	0.0119	7.4	2.3
GO:0005984	disaccharide metabolic process	0.0133	7.4	2.3
GO:0006073	cellular glucan metabolic process	0.0154	8.3	2.9
GO:0044042	glucan metabolic process	0.0159	8.3	2.9
GO:0009737	response to abscisic acid stimulus	0.0162	9.2	3.4
GO:0051740	ethylene binding	0.0167	1.4	0.0
GO:0072328	alkene binding	0.0167	1.4	0.0
GO:0080167	response to karrikin	0.0213	4.6	1.0
GO:0009753	response to jasmonic acid stimulus	0.0242	5.1	1.3
GO:0009266	response to temperature stimulus	0.0268	10.6	4.5
GO:0016830	carbon-carbon lyase activity	0.0336	3.7	0.7
GO:0071369	cellular response to ethylene stimulus	0.0336	2.8	0.4
GO:0006026	aminoglycan catabolic process	0.0336	2.8	0.4

## Continued

GO:0055114	oxidation-reduction process	0.0346	15.2	7.9
GO:0008295	spermidine biosynthetic process	0.0346	1.4	0.0
GO:0016137	glycoside metabolic process	0.0355	7.8	2.9
GO:0009651	response to salt stress	0.0376	9.7	4.1
GO:0016829	lyase activity	0.0376	6.5	2.1
GO:0009814	defense response, incompatible interaction	0.0397	4.1	0.9
GO:0006595	polyamine metabolic process	0.0404	1.8	0.1
GO:0005982	starch metabolic process	0.0407	6.9	2.4
GO:0046351	disaccharide biosynthetic process	0.0409	2.8	0.4
GO:0009873	ethylene mediated signaling pathway	0.0491	2.3	0.3
GO:0005996	monosaccharide metabolic process	0.0498	7.8	3.0



**Figure 1.** Whisker plots of heights, photosynthetic rate, stomatal conductance, and steam water potentials measured. Inga-pirca and Ollague varieties that were subjected to one of four water stress treatments, including a 100% field capacity (1), 50% field capacity (2); 30% field capacity (3); 10% field capacity (4). “Inga” represents the Inga-pirca variety while “Olla” represents the Ollague variety. a: Heights; b: Photosynthetic rate; c: Stomatal conductance; d: Stem water potential.



**Figure 2.** Histogram depicting the unique contig lengths of 454, Illumina, and Sanger sequencing reads.

the major biological processes identified (Figure 4). While this study focused primarily on water deficiency effects, response to oxidative stress, oxidation-reduction process, and response to osmotic stress each contributed 5% and response to abscisic acid stimulus contributed 3% to the overall biological process ontology. The GO enrichment test failed to identify GO terms that were over or under represented among the 27 DE variety  $\times$  treatment interaction genes, a result likely due to the small number of genes tested.

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1. Phenotypic Response

The Salares ecotype (represented by the variety Ollague) was more tolerant to the water stress, as measured by growth rate, photosynthetic rate, stomatal conductance, and stem water potential, when compared to the valley ecotype (represented by variety Ingapirca [27]). Root sensing of water stress is an important mechanism in Salares ecotypes [43]. Sensing water stress, roots initiate an increase in ABA synthesis leading to a decrease in turgor of stomatal guard cells as well as inhibiting shoot growth. Stomatal closure decreases the  $\text{CO}_2$  levels within the leaf, reducing the light-independent reactions and causing the photosynthetic rate to also decrease. This relationship was seen by Jensen *et al.* [44] when the net photosynthesis of drought quinoa plants dropped from 14 - 24  $\mu\text{mol m}^{-2}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$  to 5 - 10  $\mu\text{mol m}^{-2}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$ . Certain quinoa varieties that have inherently higher leaf stomatal conductance to water vapor are capable of retaining higher photosynthesis rates [45]. While we did not measure ABA concentrations in the root or xylem, it appears that both varieties showed common drought responses with a

decrease in leaf stomatal conductance and net photosynthetic rate. Interestingly, Ollague appeared to tolerate the high water stress treatment better than Ingapirca, which may have resulted from higher ABA production in Ollague, manifest by higher leaf stomatal conductance and a higher net photosynthesis rate. Lowering water potentials is another mechanism by which Altiplano Salares ecotypes may avoid water stress. Vacher [9] showed that Altiplano Salares ecotypes under water stress had leaf water potential below  $-4.0$  MPa accompanied by decreased stomatal conductance and photosynthesis rate. Our results indicated that Salares ecotypes (represented by variety Ollague,) exhibited significantly reduced stem water potential level ( $-2.97$  MPa) under drought conditions when compared to the valley ecotype (represented by variety Ingapirca) ( $-1.95$  MPa). Tapia [46] reported that ecotypes from the Altiplano, specifically Salares ecotypes of Southern Bolivia, usually mature at 1.0 - 1.8 m height whereas the ecotypes from the valley regions grow to be 2 - 4 m. In our experiments, Ollague plants were significantly smaller at the eight-leaf stage when compared to the Ingapirca. A slower growth rate may represent a coping mechanism that allows Salares ecotypes to tolerate water-limited environments ( $<200$  mm yearly rainfall) of the Altiplano.

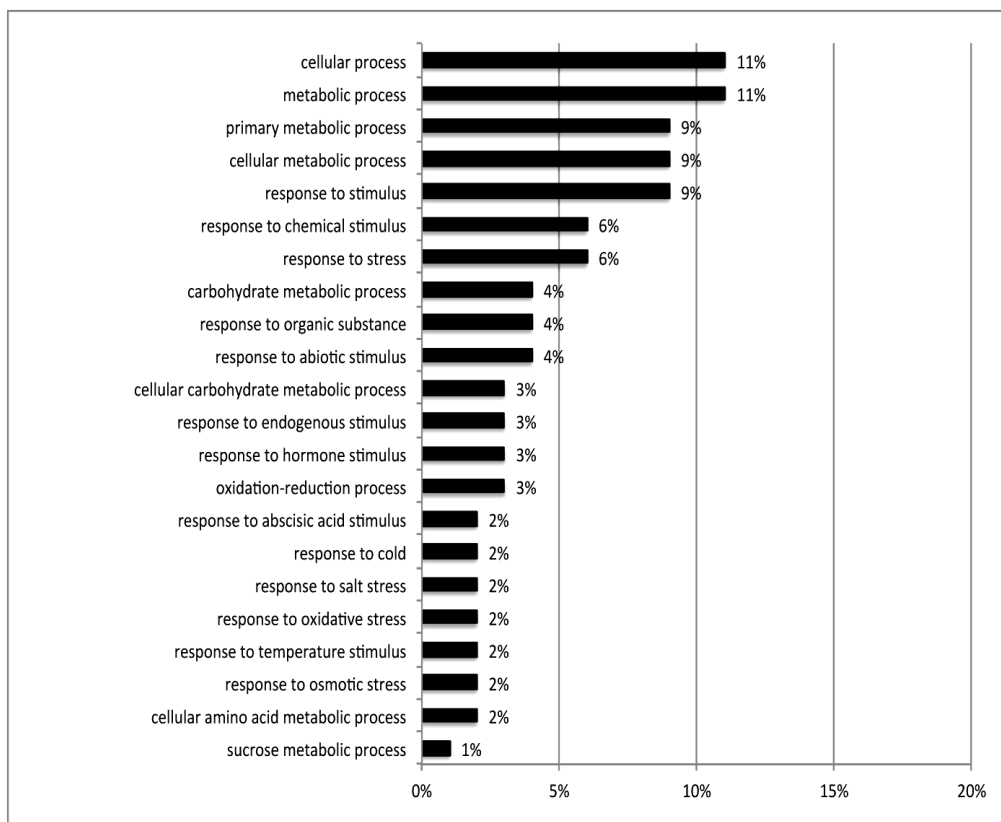
### 4.2. Transcriptome Assembly and Expression Analysis

The development of next-generation sequencing (NGS) technology has made possible cost-effective characterization of non-model plant transcriptomes [47,48]. We combined the Illumina Hi-Seq reads generated in this study with those developed through 454-pyrosequencing and Sanger sequencing to produce a reference root transcriptome for quinoa. Incorporation of reads from different NGS technologies with different read length and read depths created a long backbone of the transcriptional units while shorter read sequences improve accuracy of the assembly by providing sequencing depth coverage. Digital gene expression analysis, also termed RNA-seq, is one of many applications that can be performed using deep transcriptome sequencing [49]. Using edgeR we were able to identify differentially expressed genes based on variety, treatment, and the variety  $\times$  treatment interaction—indicating that it was a useful statistical method for detecting DE contigs in this study.

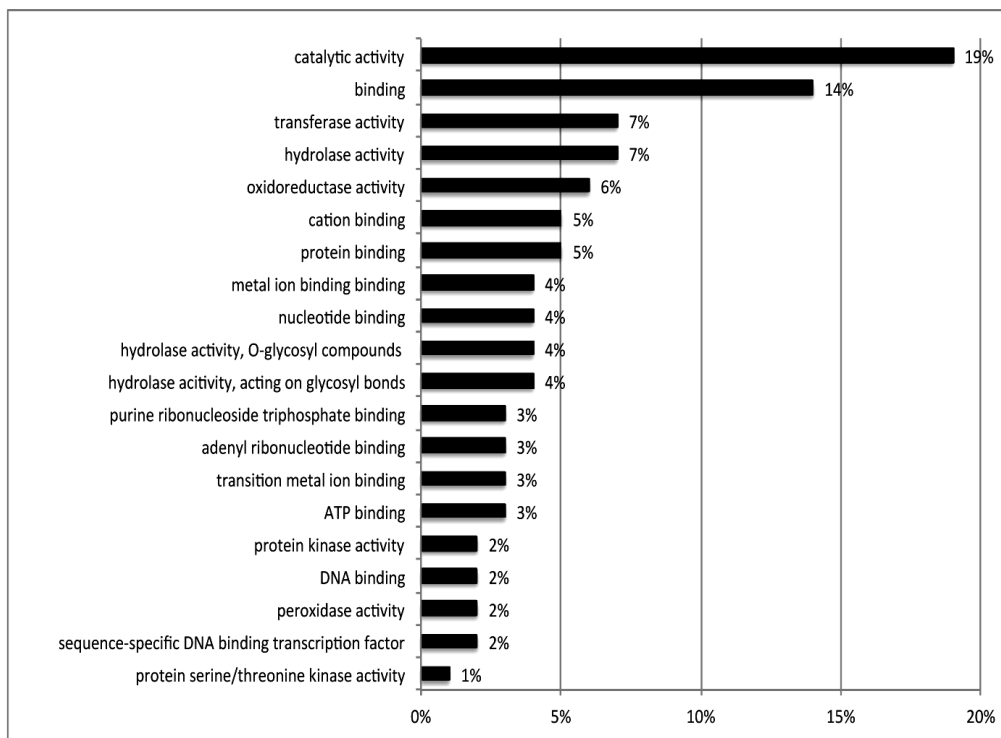
### 4.3. Biological Insight

Plants in general respond to water-deficit conditions through a series of complex cellular, molecular, and physiological processes. Shinozaki and Yamaguchi-Shinozaki [50] explained that the roles gene products play in conferring drought tolerance can be classified as



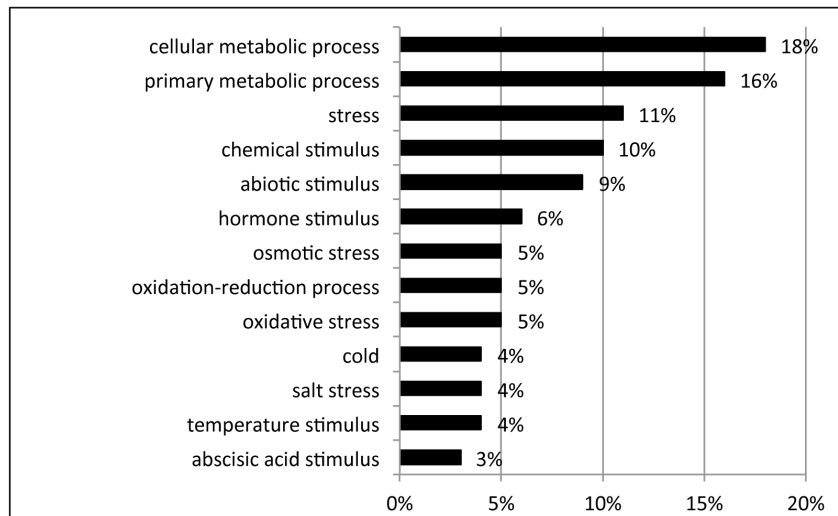


(a)

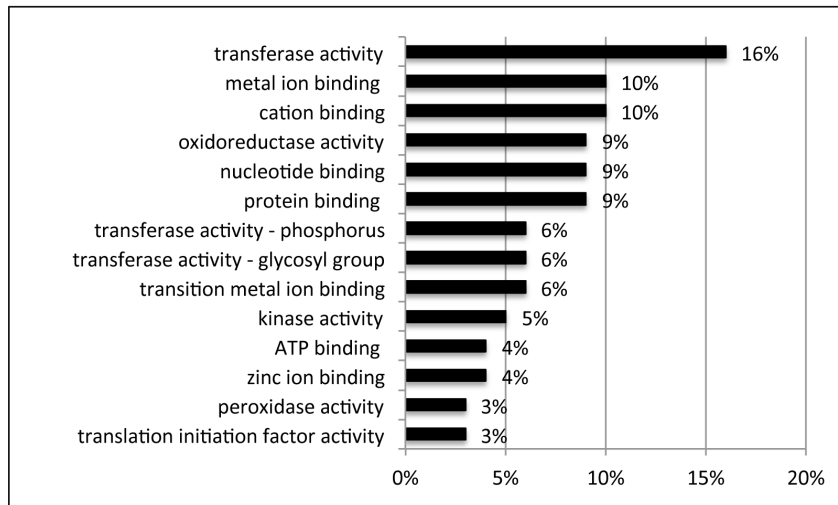


(b)

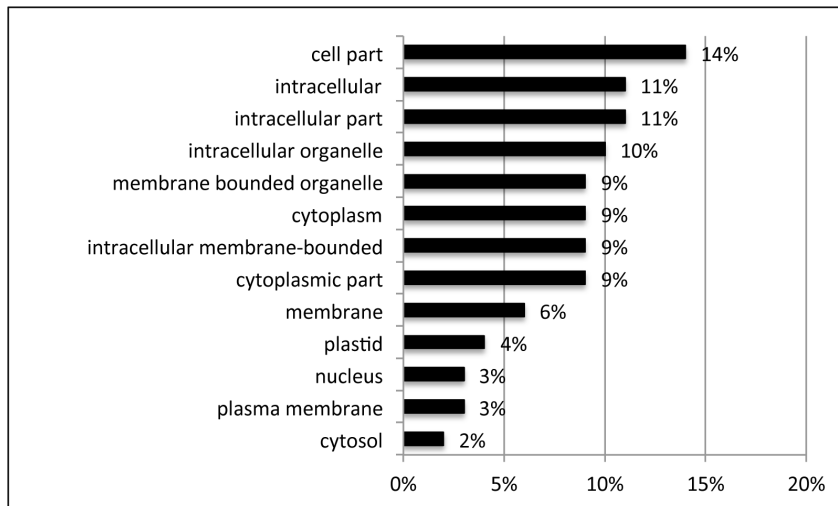
**Figure 3.** Distribution of 462 DE genes that were differentially expressed based on treatment according to GO annotation. a: Biological Process (BP); b: Molecular Function (MF).



(a)



(b)



(c)

**Figure 4.** Distribution of the 27 DE genes that were differential expressed based on the variety × treatment interaction in the three main GO categories. a: Biological process (BP); b: Molecular function (MF); c: Cellular component (CC).

functional or regulatory. While regulatory proteins are responsible for signal transduction and response signaling, functional proteins confer cell maintenance, cell protection, and damage repair through proteins such as chaperones, late embryogenesis abundant (LEA) proteins, water channel proteins, etc. [51].

At least two of the 27 interaction DE genes identified in this study can be classified as having regulatory functions, including one whose inferred polypeptide product showed high amino acid sequence homology to Naringenin, 2-oxoglutarate 3-dioxygenase (comp42593\_c0\_seq1) and one which showed high amino acid sequence homology with a receptor-like cytosolic serine threonine-protein kinase rbk1-like protein (comp1839\_c0\_seq1). The function of Naringenin, 2-oxoglutarate 3-dioxygenase is to catalyze the 3-beta-hydroxylation of 2S-flavonones to 2R, 3R-dihydroflavonols which are intermediates in the biosynthesis of flavonoids in plants. Hernández *et al.* [52] showed that in *Cistus clusil* and other Mediterranean plants, tolerance to drought-like conditions is in part due to flavonoids contributing to the antioxidant defense. Similarly, SnRK2.6/OST1 (OPEN STOMATA 1) is a specific serine threonine-protein kinase that has been implicated in drought-tolerance in *Arabidopsis thaliana* [53]. Contig comp56807\_c0\_seq1, which was overly expressed in Ollague, is a potential functional protein that has high homology with a putative chaperone-1-like protein that is known to function in response to high light intensity and heat in *Zea mays* [54]. Other gene products that showed high sequence homology in our BLAST searches were comp44207\_c0\_seq1 and comp38166\_c0\_seq1; both of which are associated with secologanin synthase, an enzyme that belongs to the family of oxidoreductases [55]. We also identified signal transducers, such as heat-shock proteins (contig comp 42870\_c0\_seq1) that appeared in greatest abundance in the high water stress treatment Ollague samples. These heat shock proteins may be related to indirect stress brought about by water deficiencies such as oxidative stress due to accumulation of reactive oxygen species (ROS) [56]. Homologs of both contig comp31939\_c0\_seq1, which was expressed at higher levels in Ollague, and contig comp56526\_c0\_seq1, which was expressed at higher levels in Ingapirca, respond to oxidation stress and showed lower expression levels in the high water stress treatment suggesting a potential role in protecting the plant from the effects of ROS. Finally, a pathogenesis-related gene protein (contig comp1469\_c0\_seq1) was overly expressed in Ollague in the severe drought-like treatment. Kitajima and Sato [57] reported that pathogenesis-related proteins are induced by hormones or ROS in response to biotic stress, while more recently Przymusiński *et al.* [58] showed that an increase of these proteins can be induced as a response to various abiotic stresses.

## 5. Conclusion

We report the first large transcriptome analysis of water stress in *C. quinoa*. Our greenhouse results support previous observations that Salares ecotypes display greater tolerance to drought-like stress conditions than the valley ecotypes, as determined by several phenotypic measurements: growth rates, photosynthetic rates, stomatal conductance, and stem water potential. A *de novo* assembly of the root transcriptome generated across two varieties and four water treatments generated 20,337 unique transcripts. Gene expression analysis of the RNA-seq data identified 462 putative gene products that showed differential expression based on treatment and 27 differentially expressed putative gene products based on variety × treatment interaction, including significant increases in expression in root tissue in response to increasing water stress. BLAST searches and gene ontology analysis show an overlap with drought tolerance stress and other abiotic stress mechanisms, suggesting an overlap in response to abiotic and biotic stresses.

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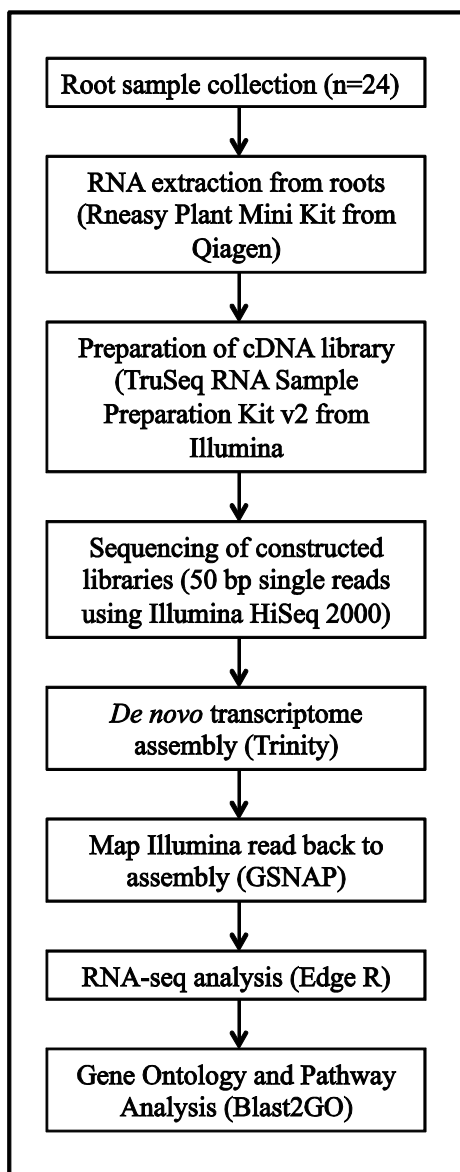
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Supplemental Figure 1. Flowchart of cDNA preparation, sequencing and RNA-seq analysis.

Replicate	Replicate 1								Replicate 2								Replicate 3											
	Ingapirca				Ollague				Ingapirca				Ollague				Ingapirca				Ollague							
Treatment	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Sequencing Lane	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	3	5	3	3	3	5	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
cDNA construction sample number	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
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Supplemental Figure 2. Experimental design, cDNA preparation and sequence layout. Each replicate consisted of both Ingapirca and Ollague varieties that were subjected to one of four water stress treatments, including a 100% field capacity (1), 50% field capacity (2); 30% field capacity (3); 10% field capacity (4). RNA was extracted from root tissue and synthesized into cDNA libraries (resulting in 24 total cDNA library samples). A unique adaptor was attached to each cDNA allowing 12 libraries to be sequenced on the Illumina HiSeq 2000. The reads have been made publically available through NCBI's Sequence Read Archive (GenBank SRA #SRR799899 and SRR799901).

**Supplemental Table 1. Sequences of the 27 differentially expressed genes based on variety × treatment interaction that were identified via edgeR.**

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