



Camino, E., Cruz-Lopez, F., de Juan, L., Dominguez, L., Shiels, B. and Coultous, R. M. (2020) Phylogenetic analysis and geographical distribution of *Theileria equi* and *Babesia caballi* sequences from horses residing in Spain. *Ticks and Tick-borne Diseases*, 11(6), 101521. (doi: [10.1016/j.ttbdis.2020.101521](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ttbdis.2020.101521)).

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Deposited on: 16 September 2021

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1 Original Research

2 **Phylogenetic analysis and geographical distribution of *Theileria equi* and *Babesia caballi***  
3 **sequences from horses residing in Spain.**

4

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29 **Abstract**

30 The intraerythrocytic protozoans *Theileria equi* and *Babesia caballi* are the causative agents of  
31 equine piroplasmosis (EP), one of the most important equine tick-borne diseases due to its  
32 significant impact on global international horse trade. Although EP is known to be endemic in  
33 Spain, previous phylogenetic studies have only been conducted for limited geographical  
34 regions. Therefore, the objective of this study was to evaluate the genetic diversity and  
35 distribution of these parasite species nationwide. This was performed by amplification of the  
36 18S small subunit (SSU) rRNA gene from 100 EP positive equine blood samples using a nested  
37 PCR protocol, and sequencing the obtained amplicons. Seventy-seven *T. equi* and six *B. caballi*  
38 isolates were successfully sequenced and phylogenetic analysis revealed that the *T. equi*  
39 isolates grouped into the previously described clades A (n = 21/77), D (n = 1/77) and E (n =  
40 55/77), while *B. caballi* isolates were placed into clades A (n = 5/6) and B (n = 1/6). Isolates  
41 from *T. equi* clade D and *B. caballi* clade B have not previously been reported in Spain. A  
42 greater intra-clade diversity (97.3-98.3% identity) was observed between *T. equi* clade E  
43 isolates compared to those within clade A (99.7-100% identity). Additionally, a multivariable  
44 logistic regression model was used to analyse associations between the clade of *T. equi*  
45 infection and available epidemiological data. Horses residing in Spanish northern regions were  
46 statistically more likely to be infected with *T. equi* clade E (p=0.01). We conclude that while  
47 extensive sequence variation of equine piroplasms exists in Spanish infected horses, a  
48 requirement for increased equine movement controls between Spain and EP-endemic countries  
49 should be considered.

50

51 *Keywords:* Piroplasmosis; horses; nPCR; genotypes; Spain.

52

## 53 **1. Introduction**

54 *Theileria equi* and *Babesia caballi* are the primary pathogens of the intra-erythrocytic  
55 Apicomplexan parasitic disease, equine piroplasmosis (EP) (Wise et al., 2014). Natural  
56 transmission of EP occurs via specific ixodid tick vectors (Scoles and Ueti, 2015), of which  
57 *Ixodes*, *Haemaphysalis*, *Dermacentor* and *Rhipicephalus* species have been described in Spain  
58 (Nagore et al., 2004), although iatrogenic infection through the use of contaminated  
59 hypodermic needles or blood transfusions is also possible (Short et al., 2012).

60 EP is widespread worldwide and is of great economic importance to the Spanish equine  
61 industry (Camino et al., 2019b), not just due to the impact of acute clinical disease, but also  
62 because chronically infected horses often become asymptomatic carriers, a status that limits  
63 their movement to EP-free countries (Dewaal, 1992; Friedhoff et al., 1990). Both *T. equi* and  
64 *B. caballi* cause similar clinical signs (Wise et al., 2014), although a recent survey of Spanish  
65 EP cases indicated a greater severity of anaemia associated with *B. caballi* infection (Camino  
66 et al., 2019a).

67 Phylogenetic analysis based on 18S SSU rRNA gene sequences has revealed the presence of  
68 multiple genotypes that segregate in up to five gene clades (A, B, C, D and E) within *T. equi*  
69 (Qablan et al., 2013; Qablan et al., 2012), and three gene clades (A, B and C) within *B. caballi*  
70 (Qablan et al., 2013). Recent work has also indicated the presence of a new species, *Theileria*  
71 *haneyi*, within clade C of the current *T. equi* umbrella (Knowles et al., 2018), suggesting that  
72 the observed genetic diversity may represent more than intra-species clade multiplicity.

73 At present, there have been limited reports describing the genetic diversity of EP in Spain.  
74 Previously, Nagore et al. (2004) described the presence of two *T. equi* and two *B. caballi*  
75 genotypes in isolates from Spanish horses. One isolate from each parasite species showed a  
76 high degree of identity with previously described Spanish *T. equi* (Criado-Fornelio et al.,

77 2003b), and *B. caballi* (Allsopp et al., 1994) isolates. However, the other *T. equi* and *B. caballi*  
78 isolates demonstrated greater genetic diversity (96.8 and 97.4% identity respectively) which  
79 suggested the presence of novel genotypes (Criado-Fornelio et al., 2004). Therefore, the main  
80 goals of this study were (1) investigate the presence of *T. equi* and *B. caballi* clades currently  
81 in Spain, (2) describe the distribution of parasite clades within the country and (3) evaluate any  
82 potential epidemiological factors associated with detected species' clades.

83

## 84 **2. Materials and methods**

### 85 2.1 Sampling procedures

86 A total of 100 samples were selected from a larger set of 740 equine blood samples, submitted  
87 by private veterinarians from asymptomatic horses across Spain as part of a national EP  
88 prevalence survey (unpublished data). This sub-set of 100 samples was selected based on  
89 having strongly detectable parasite DNA (<35 quantification cycles (C<sub>q</sub>)) when screened using  
90 a previously described multiplex real-time PCR using primers and TaqMan probes to  
91 specifically amplify the V4 hypervariable region of the 18S rRNA gene of *T. equi* and *B.*  
92 *caballi* (Camino et al., 2019a). Genomic DNA was extracted from whole blood samples using  
93 the QIAamp DNA mini kit (Qiagen, Spain) and stored at -40°C until analysis. A questionnaire  
94 to provide basic epidemiological data was completed by the submitting veterinarian from each  
95 sampled horse, including information regarding gender, age, breed, aptitude (purpose of use),  
96 geographical residence, tick presence at sampling and any history of de-worming or  
97 vaccination.

### 98 2.2 Nested PCR

99 All 100 DNA extractions were analysed by means of a *Theileria/Babesia* species catch-all  
100 nested PCR to amplifying a portion of the hypervariable V4 region of the 18S SSU rRNA gene.

101 Outer (BT1-F and BTH-1R) and inner (RLB-F2 and RLB-R2) primers were described in  
102 Criado-Fornelio et al. (2003a) and Oura et al. (2004) respectively, and the reaction conditions  
103 and PCR product visualization were conducted as described by Coultous et al. (2019a).

### 104 2.3 Purification and sequencing of PCR amplified products

105 PCR amplicons were purified using the QIAquick PCR Purification Kit (Qiagen, Spain), before  
106 being send to Eurofins Genomics (Germany) for Sanger sequencing.

### 107 2.4 Phylogenetic analysis

108 Species identification of sequences obtained in this study was achieved using the basic local  
109 alignment search tool (BLAST) and comparison with sequences deposited in the non-  
110 redundant National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) database  
111 (<https://blast.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>). The MUSCLE function (Edgar, 2004), within the AliView  
112 alignment viewer and editor (Larsson, 2014), was used to compare the study sequences with  
113 those previously determined and deposited in GenBank for *T. equi* and *B. caballi*.

114 In order to assess the genetic diversity of both haemoparasites within the study samples, two  
115 species specific maximum likelihood phylogenetic trees were constructed using MEGA 7.0.26  
116 software (Kumar et al., 2016). The 18S SSU rRNA gene sequences of *Theileria parva*  
117 (L02366) and *Theileria annulata* (KX375830) were included in the trees as outgroups. All  
118 sequences generated in this study were submitted to the NCBI GenBank database (accession  
119 numbers MN818861-MN818863 inclusive and MT563458-MT563531 inclusive for *T. equi*  
120 isolates; accession numbers MN818859, MN818860 and MT563454-MT563457 inclusive for  
121 *B. caballi*).

### 122 2.5 Statistical analyses

123 Potential associations between horse epidemiological data and phylogenetic groups were  
124 evaluated by means of a multivariable logistic regression model using the software Small  
125 STATA version 12.0, with consideration of the odds ratios (ORs) and their corresponding 95%  
126 confidence intervals (CIs). To construct the model, epidemiological data were considered as  
127 individual variables and classified in several categories: sex (male/female), age (1-7/8-15/16-  
128 26 years), breed (Iberian/cross-breed/Central-European), aptitude (breeding/sport),  
129 geographical residence (north/south of Spain), presence of ticks on the horse (yes/no),  
130 deworming (previous treatment/never treated) and vaccination programme application  
131 (previous vaccination/no vaccination). The initial model contained all variables showing  $p <$   
132 0.25 in the univariable screening analysis along with confounders (sex, breed, age and  
133 aptitude). The final model was constructed by retaining the variables with  $p < 0.05$  or where  
134 their removal resulted in a significant change in the effect of other variables, indicating  
135 confounding. Collinearity between variables was checked and excluded. Biologically plausible  
136 first-order interactions were determined between significant and confounders variables.  
137 Finally, the area under the receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curve and the Hosmer-  
138 Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test were calculated to evaluate fitting of the proposed model  
139 (Hosmer, 2000).

140

### 141 **3. Results**

#### 142 3.1 EP detection by nested PCR

143 Nested PCR product was successfully generated and EP specific amplicons from 83 of the 100  
144 samples sequenced. Only a single parasite species was detected in each sample.

#### 145 3.2 Phylogenetic analysis of *T. equi* 18S rRNA gene

146 In total, 77 samples produced sequences identified as *T. equi*, and these were partitioned into  
147 three different clades (A, D and E). A representative sequence for each distinct *T. equi* clade  
148 detected in this study (accession numbers MN818861, MN818862 and MN818863) was  
149 selected to demonstrate this phylogenetic positioning (Figure 1). The sequences that clustered  
150 within clade A (27.3%, n = 21/77) shared 99.7% to 100% identity to each other (representative  
151 sequence MN818862). These sequences showed high identity (99.5-100%) to those from  
152 previous studies in Spain (AY150062.2-AY150064.2) (Criado-Fornelio et al., 2003b), and  
153 grouped with sequences derived from samples isolated in South Africa, Brazil, Jordan and  
154 USA. Sequences clustering in clade E (71.4%, n = 55/77) demonstrated 97.3-98.3% identity to  
155 each other (representative sequence MN818861), and showed high identity (99.5-100%) with  
156 previous sequences from Spanish isolates (AY534882.1 and DQ287951.1) (Nagore et al.,  
157 2004; Criado et al., 2006), as well as isolates from China, Korea, Mongolia, Saudi Arabia and  
158 Switzerland. Notably, only one sequence obtained clustered in clade D (MN818863). This  
159 clade has not been previously reported in Spanish samples, and grouped with isolates obtained  
160 from Turkey, Palestine, Israel and Sudan. An alignment of all *T. equi* isolates sequenced in this  
161 study is available in Appendix A.

### 162 3.3 Phylogenetic analysis of *B. caballi* 18S rRNA gene

163 Six *B. caballi* isolates were successfully sequenced in total, and these were distributed across  
164 two of the three previously described *B. caballi* clades, with the positioning demonstrated with  
165 a representative sample from each clade (Figure 2). Five isolates (representative sequence  
166 MN818860) clustered within clade A, showing 100% identity to each other and a previously  
167 reported *B. caballi* isolate from Spain (AY309955.1) (Criado-Fornelio et al., 2004), and  
168 displayed high identity (99.7%) to another sequence previously reported for a Spanish isolate  
169 (AY534883.1) (Nagore et al., 2004). This clade also contains isolates in China, Mongolia,  
170 South Africa and Italy. Only one isolate (MN818859) was clustered within a second clade,



171 clade B, and showed high identity (97.9-100%) to sequences of isolates from Israel, South  
172 Africa and Italy, but not with any previously reported Spanish *B. caballi* isolates. An alignment  
173 of all *B. caballi* isolates sequenced in this study is available in Appendix B.

#### 174 3.4 Geographic distribution of the isolates and epidemiological data analyses

175 The samples in this study were collected from 12 of Spain's 17 autonomous communities;  
176 *Theileria equi* was detected in all the autonomous communities studied, but *B. caballi* was only  
177 detected in four communities (Table 1).

178 Figure 3 shows the geographic distribution of the detected parasite species and their  
179 representative clade types. The *T. equi* isolates grouped in clade E were present in all the  
180 sampled communities, however clade A parasites appear to be more restricted to central and  
181 southern communities. The singular *T. equi* isolate belonging to clade D was identified in  
182 Asturias, in the north of the country. Within the *B. caballi* isolates, all clade A sequences were  
183 only found in northern communities, whereas the single clade B isolate was detected in the far  
184 south in Andalusia.

185 Multivariable logistic regression analysis was performed to assess the statistical significance  
186 between *T. equi* clade and available epidemiological data. Since a clade D genotype was only  
187 represented by a single isolate, only clades A and E were considered in the analysis. The  
188 Hosmer–Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test indicated that the multivariable logistic regression  
189 analysis fitted the data adequately ( $p = 0.38$ ). The area under the ROC curve was 0.86 (95% CI  
190 0.77 to 0.96), indicating that the model had good overall predictive power. Location of  
191 residence was the only variable significantly associated with the distribution of clade types ( $p$   
192 = 0.01). Thus, *T. equi* clade E was 5.6 times more likely to be detected in horses located in the  
193 north of Spain (OR = 5.6, 95% CI 1.50-21.22). Furthermore, a positive association, although  
194 not statistically significant, was identified between sport horses and clade E type infection ( $p$

195 = 0.07; OR = 3.70, 95% 0.89-15.41). No statistical association was found between clade group  
196 and other variables tested: sex, age, breed, aptitude, presence of ticks on the horse, deworming  
197 and vaccination programme application.

198 The low number of *B. caballi* isolates obtained prevented meaningful statistical analyses of the  
199 sequences derived from these samples.

#### 200 **4. Discussion**

201 This study set out to investigate the diversity and distribution of parasites that cause equine  
202 piroplasmosis in Spain. The large proportion of *T. equi* isolates compared to *B. caballi* isolates  
203 that were detected in the current study confirmed *T. equi* as the predominant EP parasite in  
204 Spain. This matches findings from other EP-endemic European countries such as Italy (Manna  
205 et al., 2018), France (Guidi et al., 2015) and Portugal (Ribeiro et al., 2013), as well as the  
206 situation seen in non-endemic European countries such as the UK (Coulthous et al., 2019a).  
207 Although *T. equi* was overwhelmingly predominant in this study, it should be noted that for *B.*  
208 *caballi* natural recovery is possible, compared to the life-long asymptomatic carriers seen with  
209 *T. equi* infection, where parasitemia peaks may recrudescence in times of stress or  
210 immunocompromise (Bruning, 1996). Therefore, *B. caballi* infections are more difficult to  
211 detect in asymptomatic horses, so the real occurrence in Spain may be underrepresented in this  
212 study.

213 Although equi merozoite antigen (EMA-1), rhoptry associated protein (RAP-1),  $\beta$ -tubulin and  
214 mitochondrial cytochrome B (cytB) genes have been targeted by PCR to diagnose EP  
215 (Battsetseg et al., 2002; Montes Cortes et al., 2019; Nicolaiewsky et al., 2001), the 18S SSU  
216 rRNA gene is the most appropriate target for piroplasm identification and genetic variation  
217 analysis, primarily due to a level of sequence conservation that allows meaningful phylogenetic  
218 comparisons, and the occurrence of multiple copies within the genome (Allsopp and Allsopp,

219 2006; Hunfeld et al., 2008). Early studies of EP phylogeny based on this gene initially  
220 identified only two genotypes for both equine piroplasms (Nagore et al., 2004). However,  
221 further studies rapidly established the current systems of three clades for *B. caballi* (A-C), and  
222 five clades for *T. equi* (A-E) (Bhoora et al., 2009; Qablan et al., 2013; Salim et al., 2010),  
223 although recent authors have suggested combining *T. equi* clades B and E to give a four clade  
224 system (Hall et al., 2013; Alanazi et al., 2014; Coultous et al., 2019b). The present report  
225 indicates high heterogeneity for both hemoparasites across Spain, with the identification of  
226 isolates from three *T. equi* clades (A, D and E) and two *B. caballi* clades (A and B). This genetic  
227 variability among the *T. equi* and *B. caballi* 18S SSU rRNA sequences has been observed in  
228 previous studies performed in European (Criado-Fornelio et al., 2004; Manna et al., 2018) and  
229 non-European countries (Bhoora et al., 2009; Campos et al., 2019).

230 The majority of *T. equi* sequences were derived from clade E, showing a relatively higher  
231 genetic diversity (97.3-98.3% identity) between sequences compared to those isolates placed  
232 in clade A (99.7-100% identity). Both these clades have been previously described in Spain  
233 (Criado et al., 2006; Criado-Fornelio et al., 2003a; Nagore et al., 2004). As genetic diversity  
234 will have occurred over time due to recombination or SNPs within the genome (Mans et al.,  
235 2011), the greater sequence diversity of clade E samples, combined with their greater  
236 geographical distribution, may suggest that parasites within this clade could be related to the  
237 original EP strain that became endemic in Spain. *Theileria equi* clade E has been notably linked  
238 to Asian countries (Alanazi et al., 2014; Munkhjargal et al., 2013; Tian et al., 2013), but has  
239 also previously been described in Europe (Liu et al., 2016). A different situation is observed in  
240 the Americas, where a predominance of clade A isolates, and absence of clade E isolates, has  
241 been reported in studies carried out in North America (Hall et al., 2013) and Brazil (Peckle et  
242 al., 2018). An absence of clade E isolates has also been reported in southern and western Africa  
243 (Bhoora et al., 2009; Coultous et al., 2019b) and the Middle-East (Ketter-Ratzon et al., 2017).

244 Interestingly, Criado-Fornelio et al. (2003a) previously reported PCR detection of a *T. equi*  
245 clade A isolate from an asymptomatic Spanish dog (AY150064.2), suggesting a reduced host  
246 specificity of the piroplasm. However, this finding has been directly criticized by Uilenberg et  
247 al. (2018), arguing that a current trend of over-reliance on highly sensitive PCR detection  
248 methods may simply be detecting the transient presence of the parasite in a dead-end host; after  
249 all evidence of parasite detection is not evidence of host competence, but may indicate a degree  
250 of host persistence.

251 The present study is the first to report a *T. equi* clade D isolate from Spain. This clade was first  
252 reported in horses in Sudan (Salim et al., 2010), and later described in Tunisia (Ros-Garcia et  
253 al., 2013), Israel (Ketter-Ratzon et al., 2017) and Turkey (Ozubek and Aktas, 2018). The known  
254 movement of horses between African countries and Spain via Morocco has been cited as a  
255 potential route for EP strain introduction (Salim et al., 2010), and may explain the route of  
256 incursion for the isolate detected in this study.

257 Previous Spanish studies have only reported *B. caballi* isolates from the currently defined clade  
258 A (Criado-Fornelio et al., 2004; Nagore et al., 2004). Our results have revealed the existence  
259 of two *B. caballi* clades: clade A as the predominant genotype, and a single previously  
260 unreported clade B isolate. The novel presence of this clade may indicate increased incursion  
261 of *B. caballi* in the Spanish horse population, as suggested by our previous work (Camino et  
262 al., 2019b). Most likely, incursion occurs as a result of the introduction of asymptomatic  
263 carriers, as freedom from piroplasmosis is not a requirement when moving horses within the  
264 European Union (EU Directive 2009/156/CE).

265 Although only a single piroplasmid species was identified in each sample in our study, the  
266 detection of co-infected animals was not a study goal, and their existence cannot be discounted  
267 with our methods. Equally, the presence of mixed clade infections within single samples, or

268 indeed the presence of undetected genotypes, cannot be ruled out. Such investigation would  
269 require additional cloning of the generated amplicons, or further molecular screening, for  
270 example using species or clade-specific probes (Coultous et al., 2019b).

271 Widespread distribution of *T. equi* clade E throughout Spain was demonstrated, a result that  
272 agrees with the findings of previous work (Criado et al., 2006). In contrast, a more restricted  
273 geographic distribution of *T. equi* clade A was observed with these parasites detected in just  
274 four communities (Andalusia, Castile and Leon, Extremadura and Madrid) in central and  
275 southern Spain. This geographic division was shown to be statistically significant with horses  
276 residing in Spanish northern regions more likely to be infected with *T. equi* clade E genotypes  
277 ( $p=0.01$ ). Clade A also had greatest occurrence in the community of Madrid, home to the  
278 country's capital, which has a higher risk of infectious disease transmission due to the frequent  
279 movement of horses for trade and equestrian competitions (Camino et al., 2018). Due to the  
280 high trafficking of horses in this region, it is possible that clade A was first introduced through  
281 this region, and subsequently spread to neighboring regions as a result of the continued national  
282 movement of horses. However, further investigation of the isolates with additional markers and  
283 epidemiological modeling would be required to fully investigate this hypothesis.

284 To evaluate whether any of the *T. equi* clades detected present a particular risk of disease to  
285 horses in Spain we tested for association of clade type with a number of risk factors. A previous  
286 study by Manna et al. (2018) reported a statistical correlation between horse clinical status  
287 (symptomatic and asymptomatic) and the phylogenetic clades, suggesting that clade A is more  
288 associated with horses showing clinical signs. In our study, no statistically significant  
289 correlations were obtained relating to biological parameters of the horses (sex, age or breed),  
290 or the management associated factors of vaccination, deworming and tick presence. However,  
291 our results did show that infections associated with *T. equi* clade E are more likely to be found  
292 in horses residing in northern regions. This might be related to the species of tick vectors

293 endemic to these regions, as speculated by previously (Hall et al., 2013). However, no studies  
294 have been carried out to date recording the distribution of tick vectors in Spain, or the possible  
295 affinity of different *T. equi* competent tick species for certain parasite genotypes. Additionally,  
296 the model suggested a trend ( $p=0.07$ ) for clade E to be more associated with sport horses than  
297 breeding animals, a result which could be explained by the frequent trips of sport horses to  
298 national competitions and the widespread distribution of clade E parasites throughout the  
299 country.

## 300 **5. Conclusions**

301 This is the first study to assess the genetic diversity of equine piroplasmid isolates circulating  
302 within the national horse population of Spain. Our results indicate the presence of *T. equi* and  
303 *B. caballi* clades previously described in other limited Spanish studies, as well as identifying  
304 new circulating *T. equi* and *B. caballi* genotypes. These newly identified genotypes are likely  
305 a consequence of the currently uncontrolled equine movement between EP-endemic countries  
306 and Spain. Following multivariable logistic regression analysis, *T. equi* clade E was  
307 significantly more associated with Spanish northern regions, with clade A having a more  
308 restricted geographic distribution in the south of the country. Further large-scale  
309 epidemiological studies of EP in Spain are recommended to investigate risk factors association  
310 with the different parasite genotypes and whether the horse population is at risk from incursion  
311 of parasites from clades that are not regionally common. Additionally, a national survey of tick  
312 vector distribution would be beneficial for identification of any association between parasite  
313 genotype and tick species. The currently identified genetic diversity in both *T. equi* and *B.*  
314 *caballi* will help to further inform both clinicians, horse owners and government officials in  
315 the selection of appropriate diagnostic tools for the detection of infected carrier horses, helping  
316 to reduce the future risk of introducing new genotypes into parasite free or endemic regions of  
317 Spain.

318

319 **Acknowledgments**

320 We are grateful to all the veterinary surgeons and stud farm owners that participated in this  
321 study.

322

323 **Funding**

324 Eliazar Camino was supported by the Grants for Predoctoral Researchers of the Complutense  
325 University of Madrid (CT27/16). Robert Coultous at the University of Glasgow is currently  
326 supported by a Horserace Betting Levy Board (HBLB) research fellowship (VET/EPDF/2019-  
327 1).

328

329 **Animal welfare**

330 This study was exempt from undergoing the Ethical Committee of the Veterinary Faculty,  
331 Universidad Complutense, Madrid. However, all the owners from the horses included in the  
332 study received an information sheet with the details of the study and signed an informed  
333 consent for the collection and use of the blood sample.

334

335 **Conflict of interest statement**

336 The authors declare no conflict of interest in the subject, matter or materials discussed in this  
337 manuscript.

338

339 **Appendices**

340 Appendix A. Alignment of all *T. equi* isolate sequences.

341 Appendix B. Alignment of all *B. caballi* isolate sequences.

342

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530 **Figure legends**

531

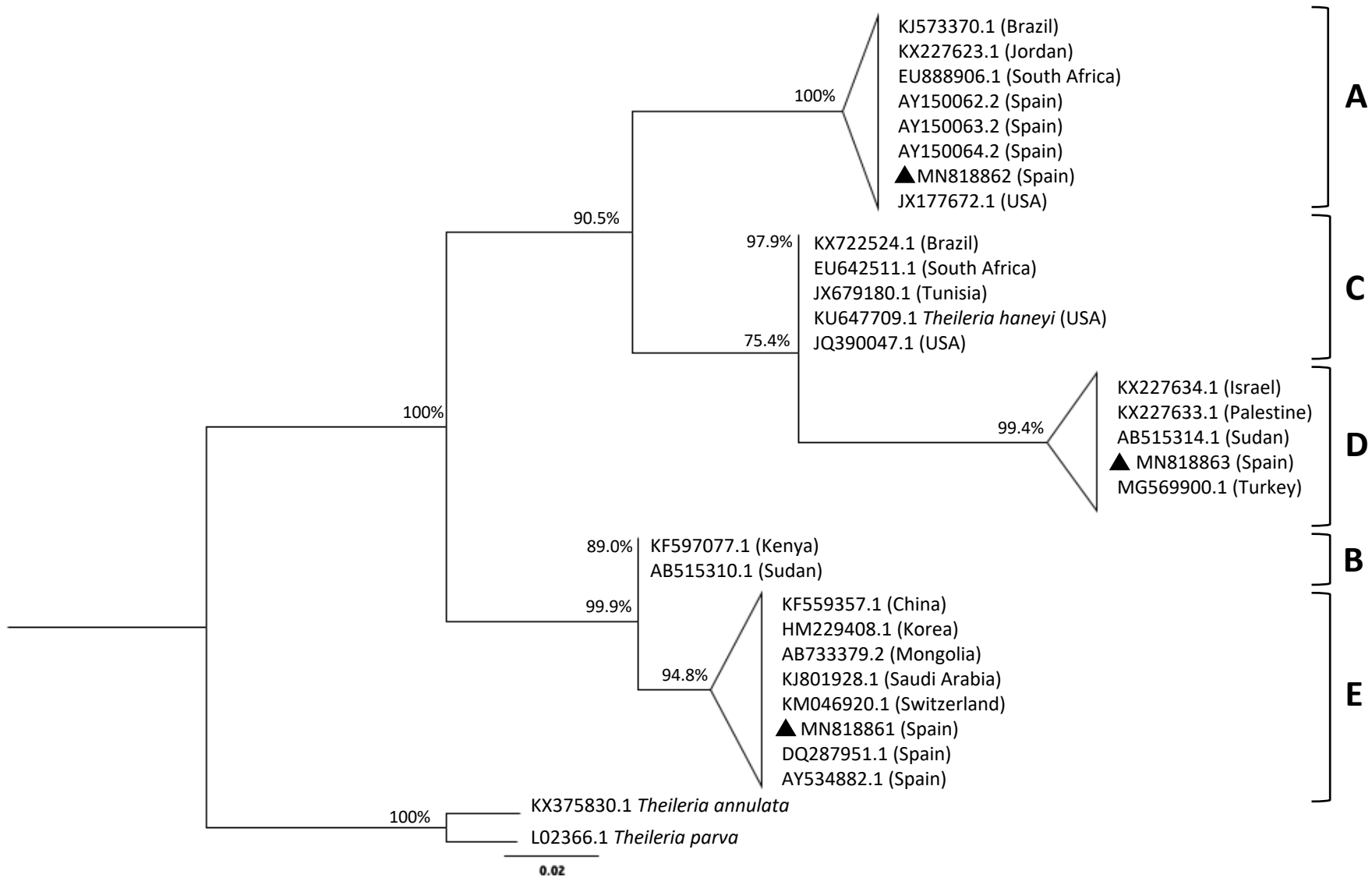
532 **Figure 1.** A maximum likelihood tree of *Theileria equi* isolates based on sequences derived  
533 from the amplified 18S SSU rRNA V4 hypervariable region; *Theileria equi* sequences  
534 reported previously are denoted by GenBank accession number and country of isolation. Bold  
535 triangles refer to sequences obtained from the present study. Numbers above the branches  
536 correspond to bootstrap values (1000 replications). Previously described clades (A-E) are  
537 highlighted.

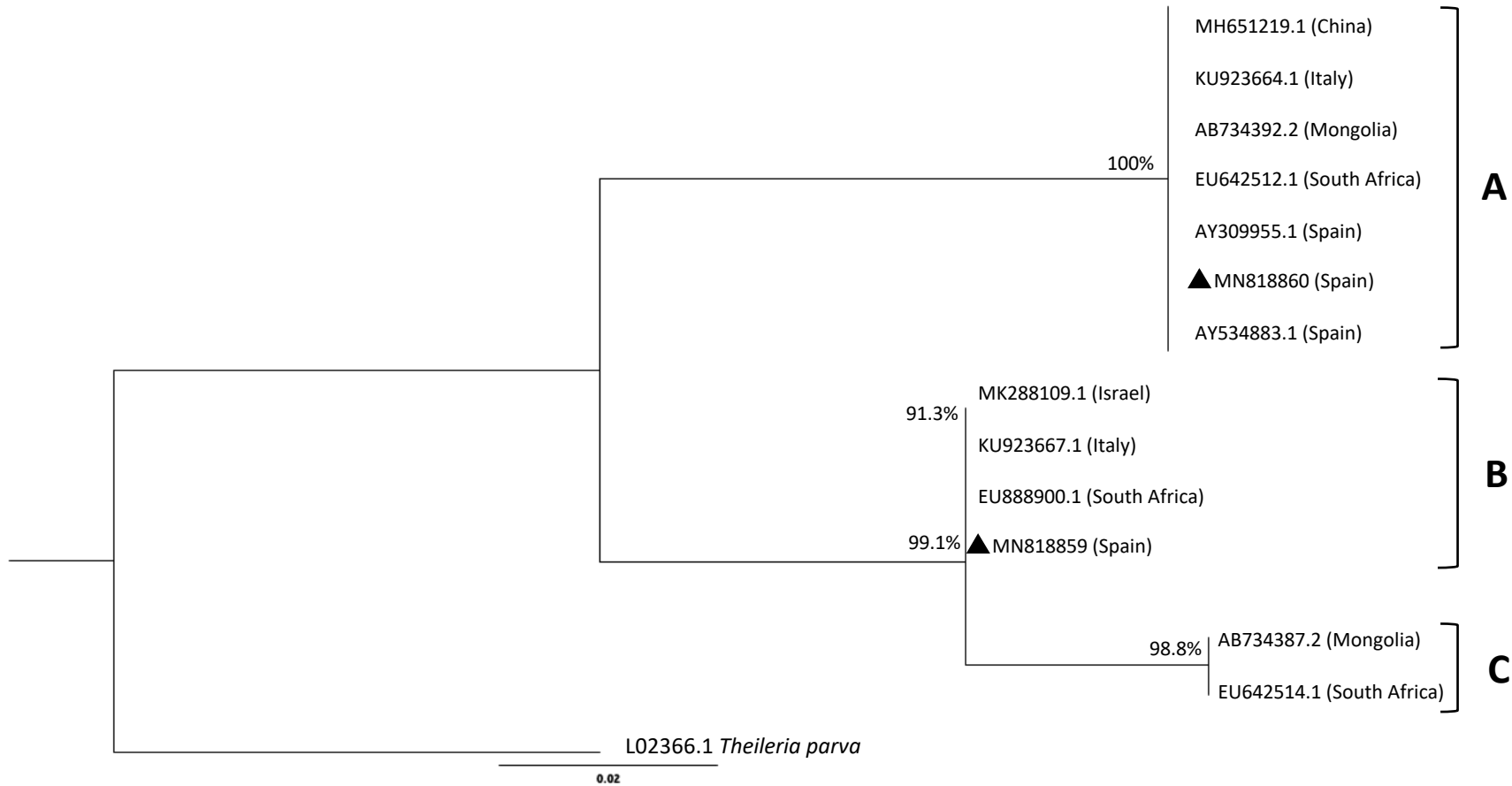
538 **Figure 2.** A maximum likelihood tree of *Babesia caballi* isolates based on sequences derived  
539 from the amplified 18S SSU rRNA V4 hypervariable region; *Babesia caballi* sequences  
540 reported previously are denoted by GenBank accession number and country of isolation. Bold  
541 triangles refer to sequences obtained in the present study. Numbers above the branches  
542 correspond to bootstrap values (1000 replications). Previously described clades (A-C) are  
543 highlighted.

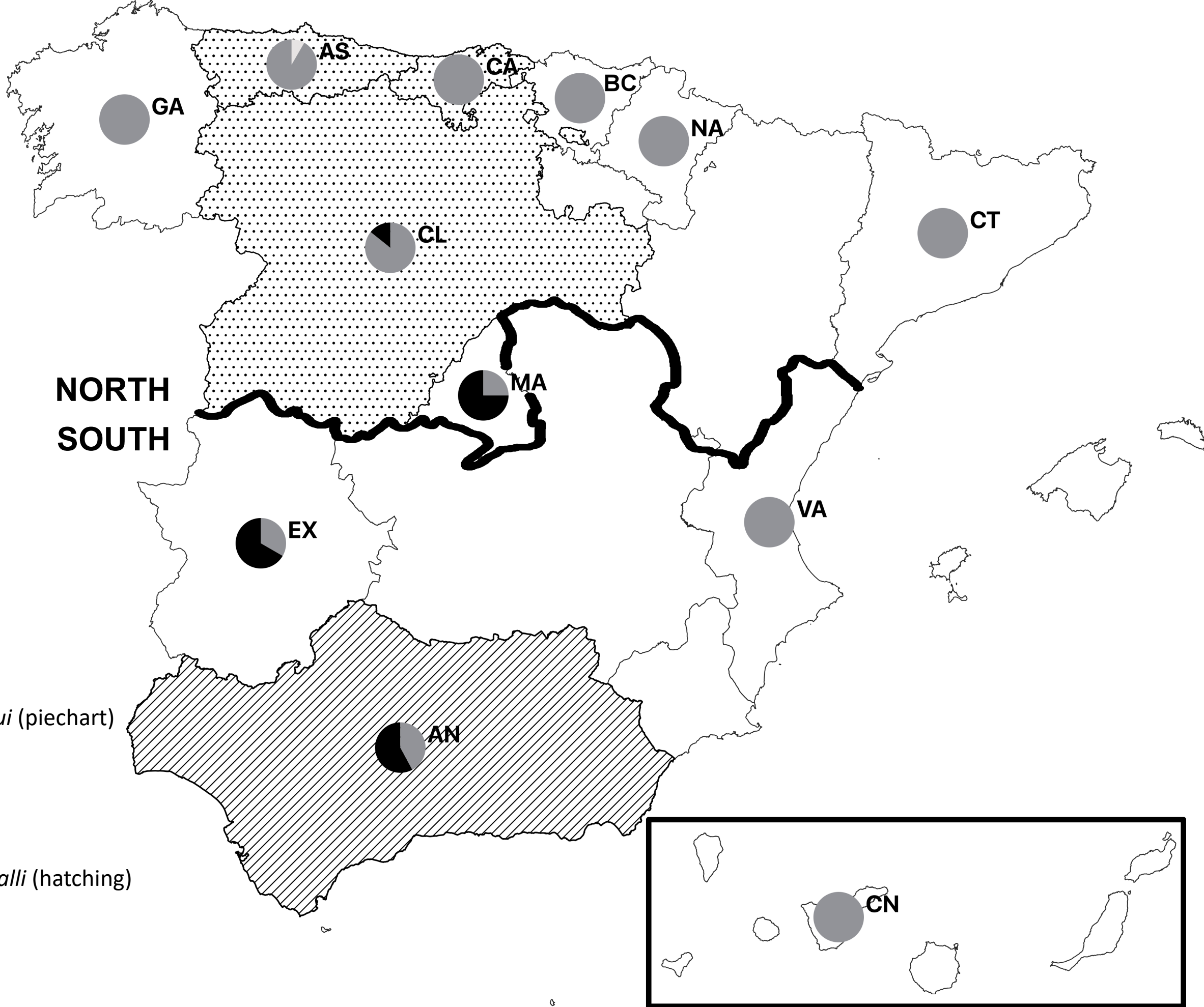
544 **Figure 3.** The geographic distribution of *Theileria equi* and *Babesia caballi* clade types  
545 within the sampled communities across Spain. The abbreviations of the autonomous  
546 communities are expanded in Table 1.

Table 1. A breakdown by community of the total number of samples analysed, and the parasite clades detected.

Communities	Number of samples collected	<i>T. equi</i> -clade	<i>B. caballi</i> -clade
Andalusia	22	A, E	B
Asturias	17	D, E	A
Basque Country	4	E	-
Canary Islands	1	E	-
Cantabria	12	E	A
Castile and Leon	16	A, E	A
Catalonia	2	E	-
Extremadura	5	A, E	-
Galicia	4	E	-
Madrid	9	A, E	-
Navarre	6	E	-
Valencia	2	E	-







*Theileria equi* (piechart)

- Clade A
- Clade D
- Clade E

*Babesia caballi* (hatching)

- Clade A
- Clade B











## Appendix B – Alignment of all *Babesia caballi* isolate sequences

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MN818859_B      1  ATGATGGCGACTTAAACCCTCGCCAGAGTAACAATTGGAGGGCAAGTCTGGTGCCAGCAG
MT563454_A      1  ATGATGGCGACTTAAACCCTCGCCAGAGTAACAATTGGAGGGCAAGTCTGGTGCCAGCAG
MT563455_A      1  ATGATGGCGACTTAAACCCTCGCCAGAGTAACAATTGGAGGGCAAGTCTGGTGCCAGCAG
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MT563457_A      1  ATGATGGCGACTTAAACCCTCGCCAGAGTAACAATTGGAGGGCAAGTCTGGTGCCAGCAG
MN818860_A      1  ATGATGGCGACTTAAACCCTCGCCAGAGTAACAATTGGAGGGCAAGTCTGGTGCCAGCAG

MN818859_B      61 CCGCGGTAATTCAGCTCCAATAGCGTATATTAAACTTGTTCAGTTAAAAAGCTCGTAG
MT563454_A      61 CCGCGGTAATTCAGCTCCAATAGCGTATATTAAACTTGTTCAGTTAAAAAGCTCGTAG
MT563455_A      61 CCGCGGTAATTCAGCTCCAATAGCGTATATTAAACTTGTTCAGTTAAAAAGCTCGTAG
MT563456_A      61 CCGCGGTAATTCAGCTCCAATAGCGTATATTAAACTTGTTCAGTTAAAAAGCTCGTAG
MT563457_A      61 CCGCGGTAATTCAGCTCCAATAGCGTATATTAAACTTGTTCAGTTAAAAAGCTCGTAG
MN818860_A      61 CCGCGGTAATTCAGCTCCAATAGCGTATATTAAACTTGTTCAGTTAAAAAGCTCGTAG

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MT563455_A     121 TTGAACTTTTGCCTTGTCCTTTTCCCTGCTTTGTGCGGGTTATTGACTTCGCTTTTTCTTT
MT563456_A     121 TTGAACTTTTGCCTTGTCCTTTTCCCTGCTTTGTGCGGGTTATTGACTTCGCTTTTTCTTT
MT563457_A     121 TTGAACTTTTGCCTTGTCCTTTTCCCTGCTTTGTGCGGGTTATTGACTTCGCTTTTTCTTT
MN818860_A     121 TTGAACTTTTGCCTTGTCCTTTTCCCTGCTTTGTGCGGGTTATTGACTTCGCTTTTTCTTT

MN818859_B     181 TTACTTTGAGAAAATTAGAGTGTTTATCGCAGACTTTTGTCTTGAATACTTCAGCATGGA
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MT563455_A     181 TTACTTTGAGAAAATTAGAGTGTTTATCGCAGACTTTTGTCTTGAATACTTCAGCATGGA
MT563456_A     181 TTACTTTGAGAAAATTAGAGTGTTTATCGCAGACTTTTGTCTTGAATACTTCAGCATGGA
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MT563457_A     241 ATAATAGAGTAGGACTTTGGTTCATTTTGTGGTTTGGAACTTGGTAATGG
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