Diverse viruses have restricted biogeography in deep-sea hydrothermal vent fluids

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Running title: Viruses in deep-sea hydrothermal vents

Abstract

In the ocean, viruses impact microbial mortality, regulate biogeochemical cycling, and alter the metabolic potential of microbial lineages. At deep-sea hydrothermal vents, abundant viruses infect a wide range of hosts among the archaea and bacteria that inhabit these dynamic habitats. However, little is known about viral diversity, host range, and biogeography across different vent ecosystems, which has important implications for how viruses manipulate microbial function and evolution. Here, we examined viral diversity, viral and host distribution, and viral-host interactions in venting fluids from two geographically distant hydrothermal systems, the Mid-Cayman Rise in the Caribbean Sea and Axial Seamount in the Pacific Ocean. Analysis of viral sequences and CRISPR spacers revealed highly diverse viral assemblages and abundant lysogenic viruses, with 40% of metagenome-assembled genomes encoding a putative prophage. Network analysis revealed that viral host range was relatively narrow, with very few viruses infecting multiple microbial lineages. Viruses were largely endemic to individual vent sites, indicating restricted dispersal, and in some cases viral assemblages persisted over time. Thus, while the viruses at deep-sea hydrothermal systems play an important role in driving the evolution and ecology of resident vent microbial communities, their influence is highly localized to specific regions and taxa.

Introduction

Deep-sea hydrothermal vents are regions on the seafloor where high-temperature hydrothermal vent fluid is created from water-rock reactions deep within the oceanic crust, mixing with seawater beneath and at the seafloor to create a dynamic, gradient-dominated habitat that supports diverse microbial communities. These low-temperature diffuse vent fluids are hotspots of primary production in the deep ocean, dominated by diverse chemolithoautotrophic bacteria and archaea carrying out a variety of metabolisms utilizing hydrogen, sulfur compounds, nitrate, and methane [1–7]. An important, though understudied, driver of microbial diversity and evolution in hydrothermal systems is viruses. Viruses are major sources of microbial mortality in marine systems and play key roles in mediating biogeochemical cycling and shaping microbial community structure [8–11]. At deep-sea hydrothermal vents, viruses are abundant [12] and infect a wide range of microbial hosts [13]. Lysogenic viruses, which integrate into the genomes of their microbial hosts, are particularly abundant in hydrothermal fluids compared to other marine habitats [14, 15]. The high abundance of lysogenic viruses suggests that there are unique attributes to the vent environment that influence viral infection strategies. Viruses can "metabolically reprogram" their microbial hosts via the introduction and expression of auxiliary metabolic genes (AMGs) [16], which has profound impacts on the ecology and evolution of microbial populations. Like horizontally transferred genes, integrated prophage with AMGs can alter the functional potential of a given organism, allowing it to adapt to changing conditions or expand to new ecological niches. Viruses in hydrothermal habitats have been found to encode AMGs [17–19], and thus can manipulate the metabolic potential of microbial populations in hydrothermal vents.

Viruses also function as vectors of horizontal gene transfer via transduction. Previous work has suggested that horizontal gene transfer is particularly prevalent among microbes inhabiting high-temperature environments [20–22]. Transposases, which catalyze the movement

of mobile genetic elements within and between genomes [23, 24], are especially abundant in
hydrothermal vent sites [18, 25] Given the abundance of viruses and the inferred high rates of
transduction at deep-sea vents, it is likely that viruses are an important vector for horizontal gene
transfer in these dynamic systems. Therefore, a clear understanding of which viruses infect
which hosts, and what genes those viruses carry, can provide insight into highways of gene
sharing in the deep sea.
53
One large gap in our understanding of eco-evolutionary dynamics in the deep sea is how
broadly viruses are distributed within and between vent systems, and how viral interactions shift
across hydrothermal vent types. Previous work has shown that microbial communities exhibit
high endemism locally [4, 7, 26, 27], but some cosmopolitan species are distributed globally
[28–30]. However, less is known about the geographic distribution of viral populations. If
viruses exhibit restricted biogeographic distribution, this would limit their role as vectors of gene
flow across and between hydrothermal systems. Microbial populations and their viruses are also
limited by environmental conditions: hydrothermal systems hosted in basalt rocks are
characterized by metal-enriched, low pH fluids up to 400˚C [31]. In contrast, hydrothermal
systems hosted in peridotite are influenced by serpentinization and feature organic carbon-
enriched, high pH fluids with slightly lower temperature [32]. Microbial populations in basalt-
hosted and peridotite-hosted vents exhibit distinct patterns of genomic variation [33], suggesting
that microbes are subject to different selection pressures depending on the vent type, but we
know little about the role viruses play in driving those differences, nor how viral diversity varies
across hydrothermal systems.
69
To gain further insight into viral diversity, biogeography and host range across
hydrothermal systems, we compared viral sequences recovered from microbial metagenomes
collected from two hydrothermal regions in two distinct ocean basins: Axial Seamount, a
submarine volcano located on the Juan de Fuca Ridge in the Pacific Ocean at ~1520 meters
depth, and the Mid-Cayman Rise, an ultraslow spreading ridge in the Caribbean Sea. Axial
Seamount is a basalt-hosted, magma-driven system with fluids that are low in pH and high in
carbon dioxide and hydrogen sulfide [34]. In contrast, the Mid-Cayman Rise hosts two
geologically and geochemically distinct hydrothermal vent fields in close proximity to each
other: Piccard hydrothermal field, located in basalt rocks along the ridge axis, is the deepest
hydrothermal field discovered to date (~4950 meters depth) and is characterized by fluids that
are acidic with high hydrogen and hydrogen sulfide content, whereas Von Damm vent field,
located approximately 20 km away on a nearby massif at ~2350 meters depth, is influenced by
serpentinization and is characterized by fluids that are high in hydrogen, methane, and small
carbon compounds [35–38]. Previous work found distinct community composition but similar
functional potential in the microbial communities at Piccard and Von Damm [7, 27, 33, 39, 40]
spatially restricted but temporally stable at individual vent sites over time [4, 27]. Here, we
compare viral sequences across venting fluids from both the Mid-Cayman Rise and Axial
Seamount in a comparative survey of viral diversity and gene content across geographically
distinct hydrothermal vent sites. We show that viral populations have severely restricted
biogeographic distribution and host range in hydrothermal systems, limiting the capacity of
viruses to act as vectors of gene flow between disparate hosts and vent locations.
91
92   **Methods**

93
Sample collection and DNA preparation and sequencing
Low-temperature diffuse flow fluid samples were collected from the Mid-Cayman Rise
vent fields Piccard and Von Damm in January 2012 and June 2013 during research cruises on the
R/V Atlantis and R/V Falkor, respectively. Sample locations, depth, and metagenomic data are
described in Supplementary Table 1. The ROV Jason II and Mat Sampler were used to collect
the 2012 Mid-Cayman Rise samples, as previously described in [41]. The 2013 Mid-Cayman
Rise samples were collected using the SUPR version 2 sampler and HROV Nereus [42]. For
microbial DNA collection, approximately 3 to 6 L of diffuse flow fluid were pumped through
0.22 µm Sterivex filters (Millipore). Shipboard, the filters were flooded with RNALater
(Ambion), sealed with Luer Caps, stored in sterile Falcon tubes, and frozen at −80 °C. Sample
collection and preservation are further described in Anderson et al. [33] and Reveillaud et al.
[40]. Genomic DNA was extracted and metagenomic libraries constructed as described in
Anderson et al. [33]. Sequencing was done on an Illumina Hi Seq 1000 at the W.M. Keck
Facility in the Josephine Bay Paul Center at the Marine Biological Laboratory.
108
Diffuse flow fluid samples were collected from Axial Seamount in September 2013,
August 2014, and August 2015 (approximately five months after the eruption of Axial
Seamount) during research cruises on the R/V Falkor and R/V Thompson in 2013, R/V Brown in
2014, and R/V Thompson in 2015 (Supplementary Table 1). Diffuse flow samples were
collected from four different vent fields at Axial (ASHES, International District, North Rift
Zone, and Dependable) using the ROVs ROPOS and Jason. For collection of microbial DNA, 3
L of diffuse fluid was pumped through 0.22 µm, 47 mm GWSP filters (Millipore) and the filters
were flooded with RNALater (Ambion) on the seafloor, as described in Fortunato et al. [4].
Fluids from a hydrothermal plume above Anemone and background seawater were collected
using a Seabird SBE911 CTD and 10 L Niskin bottles and 3 L of the plume and seawater fluid
was filtered through 0.22 µm Sterivex filters (Millipore). DNA was extracted from the filters
using a phenol-chloroform method adapted from Crump et al. [43] and Zhou et al. [44]. The
Ovation Ultralow Library DR multiplex system (Nugen) was used to prepare metagenomic
libraries following the manufacturer instructions. DNA extraction and metagenomic library
construction is further described in Fortunato and Huber [45]. The 2013 and 2014 samples were
sequenced on an Illumina HiSeq 1000 and the 2015 samples on a NextSeq 500. Sequencing was
done at the W.M. Keck sequencing facility at the Marine Biological Laboratory.
126
For all metagenomes, paired-end partially overlapping reads were merged and quality
filtered using the illumina-utils package [46] using the iu-quality-filter-minoche flag, then
assembled using idba-ud [47] v1.1.2 with default settings. All data from both sites is available in
the European Nucleotide Archives archives under study accession number PRJEB15541 for the
Mid-Cayman Rise and under study accession numbers PRJEB7866, PRJEB12000, and
PRJEB19456 for Axial samples in the years 2013, 2014 and 2015 respectively (Supplementary
Table 1).
134
Identification of CRISPR loci, viral clusters, and spacer clusters
Crass [48] v1.0.1 was used to identify CRISPR loci (i.e., unique direct repeat types) and
CRISPR spacers in the metagenomic reads. Viral contigs in the metagenomic assemblies were
identified with VirFinder [48, 49] v1.1 using a p-value threshold of 0.05. To cluster the CRISPR

spacers, we performed an all-v-all blast using BLASTn v2.5.0 (E-value threshold of 10^{-08}) and
then clustered using Markov Cluster Algorithm (MCL) [50] v14-137 (inflation 1.2 and scheme
7) based on bitscore. We used ClusterGenomes (https://bitbucket.org/MAVERICLab/stampede-
clustergenomes) v1.1.3 (95% identity, 80% coverage) to cluster viral contigs.
143
Recovery of MAGs
Metagenome assembled genomes (MAGs) were recovered from Mid-Cayman Rise
assemblies using anvi'o [51]. Supervised clustering was used to recover bins from Mid-Cayman
Rise contigs using anvi'o v2.1.0. MAGs from Axial Seamount assemblies were recovered using
unsupervised binning with CONCOCT [50, 52, 53] within the anvi'o v4.0 pipeline, followed by
manual refinement within anvi'o. Only bins with >=70% completeness and <=10% redundancy
were retained as MAGs for this analysis. The MAGs were assigned taxonomies using PhyloSift
[50, 52] v1.0.1 as described in Anderson et al. [33]. Only MAGs for which taxonomies could be
identified were used in analyses. MAG coverage was normalized by the number of merged reads
in the metagenome. All of the Mid-Cayman Rise MAGs were previously described in Anderson
et al. [33].
155
Identification of reads matching 16S rRNA genes
The reads from the Mid-Cayman Rise and Axial Seamount metagenomes were mapped to
the Silva SSU and LSU Parc databases [54, 55] (release 132) with bowtie2 [56] v2.2.9 using
default settings and local alignment. Matching reads were then mapped to the Greengenes 13_5
16S rRNA database [57] and reads that mapped were retained for downstream analysis. Mapped
reads were assigned taxonomies using the classify.seqs function in mothur [57, 58] v1.38.1 with
the Silva 16S rRNA database (release 119) and a cutoff of 50. Reads mapping to 16S rRNA gene
sequences that were classified as eukaryotes were excluded from analyses.
164
Viral, spacer, and host diversity
Rarefaction curves for viral clusters, CRISPR spacer clusters, and reads matching 16S
rRNA genes categorized at the class level were created using the Vegan R package [59] v2.4-5.
The number of viral clusters per contig and spacer clusters per read (paired reads) were used as
proxies for viral diversity, and the number of different taxa at the class level matching 16S rRNA
genes reflected microbial diversity, calculated on a per read basis (merged reads).
171
Viral, spacer, and CRISPR relative abundance
To calculate relative viral abundance, the reads in each of the Mid-Cayman Rise and
Axial Seamount metagenomes were mapped against all of the viral contigs from the
corresponding geographic region using bowtie2 [56] v2.2.9. The reads from each sample were
mapped against all of the viral contigs from the corresponding geographic region rather than
solely the viral contigs in the sample because there were viral reads in samples that did not
assemble into viral contigs. This method therefore allowed the identification of more viral
sequences. The number of reads that mapped to viral contigs was normalized by the number of
merged reads as a measure of relative viral abundance. This measure of relative viral abundance
reflects only the proportion of viruses that were retained on the filter as viral capsids or
prophages. We used the number of spacers per read and CRISPR direct repeat types per read as
measures of spacer and CRISPR relative abundance, respectively. Paired rather than merged

reads were used for these analyses. Relative abundance and diversity of viruses, microbes,
CRISPR spacers and CRISPR loci were visualized using the Seaborn library within Python [60].
186
Taxonomic distribution of viral clusters, spacer clusters, and hosts
The relative compositions of the microbial community, the viral assemblage, and
CRISPR spacers were compared between vent sites within the Mid-Cayman Rise and Axial
Seamount. To calculate the relative abundance of each viral cluster in each sample, the number
of reads in the sample that mapped to the viral contigs in the viral cluster was determined using
bowtie2 [56] v2.2.9. The number of reads in each metagenome that mapped to the viral cluster
was normalized by the total length of the viral contigs in the viral cluster and the number of
merged reads in the metagenome. We defined the most common viral clusters as the six clusters
with the highest relative abundance in each sample. The relative abundance of each CRISPR
spacer cluster in each sample was calculated as the percent of spacers in the sample that were
part of the spacer cluster. For spacer clusters, we defined the most common as the three) clusters
with the highest relative abundance in each sample. To compare the compositions of viral
contigs and CRISPR spacers, all of the spacers were blasted against all of the viral contigs using
blastn (E-value $<=10^{-05}$, $<=1$ mismatch, as per Emerson et al. [61]. The relative abundance of
each microbial host was measured as the number of reads that mapped to 16S rRNA gene
sequences of the given taxon, normalized by the number of 16S rRNA gene reads in the sample.
Analyses of microbial taxa were done at either the class level or the lowest taxonomic level
available, depending on the analysis.
205
Microbiome datasets are compositional in nature because sequencing instruments impose
an arbitrary total [62]. Therefore, to conduct hierarchical clustering of samples based on viral,
spacer, and host composition, we used the protocol outlined by Gloor et al. [62] and Gloor and
Reid [63] for computing distances between samples containing compositional data. For
hierarchical clustering, we did not normalize; we performed analyses on the number of reads that
mapped to each viral cluster, the number of CRISPR spacers in each spacer cluster, and the
number of reads that mapped to 16S rRNA gene sequences of each microbial host in each
sample; for microbial hosts, we did not include reads that mapped to unclassified sequences or
sequences classified as eukaryotes. We replaced zero counts with estimates using the count zero
multiplicative method for viral clusters and hosts and the Bayes-Laplace Bayesian multiplicative
method for spacer clusters via the zCompositions R package [64] v1.2.0. Using the CoDaSeq R
package (https://github.com/ggloor/CoDaSeq) [62] v0.99.3, we applied a centered log-ratio (clr)
transformation to the count data (that lacked zero counts), thereby capturing the ratios between
parts. To calculate distances between samples for hierarchical clustering, we used the ward.D2
method on the transformed counts.
221
Networks of viral infection
Infection networks of viral-host interactions were created using CRISPR sequences to
connect microbial hosts with clusters of viral contigs, adapted from the methods used by Daly et
al. [65] and Emerson et al. [61]. First, MAGs were connected to CRISPR direct repeat types
within each sample using BLASTn v2.5.0 (E-value $<=10^{-10}$, 100% nucleotide identity, as per
Emerson et al. [61]. Then, each CRISPR direct repeat type was matched to a set of CRISPR
spacers as identified by Crass (Skennerton et al. 2013) v1.0.1. Finally, the CRISPR spacers in
each sample were matched to viral contigs in the corresponding region using BLASTn v2.5.0

with an E-value cutoff of 10^{-05} and a maximum of one mismatch, as per Emerson et al. [61].
Only one mismatch was allowed because resistance has been found to be lost by single
nucleotide differences between bacterial spacers and target phage sequences [66]. In contrast,
resistance by archaeal CRISPR systems can still be provided when there are up to three
mismatches between spacers and target phage sequences [67, 68]. We did not allow for more
mismatches between archaeal spacers and phage sequences because resistance is weakened by
more mismatches [68]. Each direct repeat type provided by Crass v1.0.1 does not necessarily
represent an individual CRISPR locus [48].
238
Viruses and prophages in MAGS and viral and prophage genes
VirSorter [69] v1.0.3 was used to extract putative viral and prophage sequences from
metagenomic assemblies and from individual MAGs. Category one, category two, category four
(prophage), and category five (prophage) VirSorter sequences were used in analyses. Putative
viral and prophage sequences from all assembled contigs were annotated via Prokka [69, 70]
v1.14 with the taxonomic identifier set to "bacteria" as well as to "viruses." We assigned
categories to the ORFs that had been identified with the "bacteria" taxonomic identifier using the
Clusters of Orthologous Groups of proteins (COG) database [71, 72]. We conducted a second
round of annotation for ORFs identified by Prokka using the "viruses" taxonomic identifier using
VirSorter; we classified these ORFs as having viral function if they were annotated with terms
that included "capsid," "tail," "spike," "terminase large subunit," "portal," and "coat."
250
251 *Data analysis software*
252   The majority of analyses were conducted in RStudio [73] v1.0.136. R packages used
253 were readr [74] v1.1.1, readxl [75] v1.0.0, tidyr [76] v0.7.2, stringr [77] v1.3.0, dplyr [78] v0.7.4,
254 ggnetwork [79] v0.5.1, statnet [80] v2016.9, ggpubr [81] v0.1.7, ggplot2 [82] v2.2.1, and svglite
255 [83] v1.2.1.
256
257
258 **Results**
259
Relative abundance of viral and microbial reads
In order to examine the distribution and abundance of viruses across individual vent sites,
vent fields, and regions, we quantified the relative abundance of viral sequences, CRISPRs, and
spacers in each of the metagenomes (Figure 1, Supplementary Table 2). It is possible to examine
viruses in 0.22 µm-filtered fluids because this fraction includes integrated prophage, lytic
infections in progress, and free viral particles captured on filters. However, our analysis misses
free viral particles that were not retained on the filters, and we are only capturing the viral
diversity and variation across sites based on the viral sequences identified in the metagenomes. It
is also important to note that CRISPR loci vary in number across microbial genomes, and we did
not distinguish between CRISPR loci with the same direct repeat type. Therefore, our measure of
CRISPR relative abundance is not a direct proxy for the abundance of viruses but instead gives a
sense of how microbes respond to viral infection across samples.
272
Our results indicate that the relative abundance of viral sequences was similar both across
and within the Axial and Mid-Cayman Rise hydrothermal vent regions. Excluding the
background seawater samples, there was a higher relative abundance of CRISPR loci in Axial

Seamount than the Mid-Cayman Rise (Figure 1A; p = 0.000389, t-test). However, there was no
difference in the relative abundance of viral sequences between the Mid-Cayman Rise and Axial
metagenomes (Figure 1B; p = 0.2392, t-test), nor in the number of spacers within CRISPR loci
per read (Figure 1C; p = 0.071, t-test). Within the Mid-Cayman Rise, we compared samples from
mafic-hosted (Piccard) versus ultramafic-hosted (Von Damm) hydrothermal systems. We did not
observe significant differences in the relative abundance of viral sequences, CRISPR loci, or
CRISPR spacers between Piccard and Von Damm (viral sequences: p = 0.66, t-test, CRISPR
loci: 0.40, t-test, spacers: 0.37, t-test). Similar results emerged from comparisons among vent
fields within Axial Seamount: we did not observe significant differences in the relative
abundance of viral sequences, CRISPR loci, or CRISPR spacers between vent fields at Axial
Seamount (viral sequences: p = 0.17, t-test, CRISPR loci: 0.41, t-test, spacers: 0.11, t-test).
Finally, within Axial Seamount, we also compared the relative abundance of viruses in samples
taken from plume and diffuse flow hydrothermal fluid at Anemone vent. The Anemone diffuse
flow samples had a higher relative abundance of CRISPR spacers and CRISPR loci compared to
the Anemone plume sample, but the relative abundance of viral sequences did not differ between
the Anemone plume and diffuse flow samples.
292
Diversity of viral assemblage and microbial community
Overall, viral diversity analyses revealed that the viral assemblages within these vents had
high richness and were not dominated by specific viral strains. With the exception of a few
samples, the rarefaction curves for the viruses and microbes did not reach saturation
(Supplementary Fig. 1), indicating relatively high viral and microbial diversity at this resolution
across vent sites at both the Mid-Cayman Rise and Axial Seamount. In each sample, there were
no dominant viral or spacer clusters, and each of the viral and spacer clusters present was
relatively rare (Supplementary Figs. 2-3). Moreover, the viral and spacer clusters with the
highest coverage did not correspond to each other across samples: in both the Mid-Cayman Rise
and Axial Seamount, only one of the most common spacer clusters matched with one of the most
common viral clusters by BLAST. Thus, there were no dominant viral sequences that were
consistently found across all samples.
305
We observed a more diverse viral assemblage at Axial Seamount compared to the Mid-
Cayman Rise. We observed higher richness of both viruses (Figure 1D; p = 0.002086, t-test) and
their microbial hosts (Figure 1E; p = 0.00392, t-test) in samples from vents at Axial Seamount
compared to the Mid-Cayman Rise. However, we did not observe significant differences in
either viral or host diversity between the Piccard and Von Damm vent fields at the Mid-Cayman
Rise (viral diversity: p = 0.05306071, t-test, host diversity: p = 0.6648, t-test). Finally, we did not
observe a significant difference in the diversity of CRISPR spacers between the Mid-Cayman
Rise and Axial Seamount (Figure 1F, p = 0.06592, t-test).
314
We observed significant differences in viral diversity between vent sites within Axial
Seamount (p = 0.02165, t-test). However, no significant differences emerged in terms of the
diversity of microbial hosts and CRISPR spacers (host diversity: p = 0.7444, t-test, spacer
diversity: p = 0.1081, t-test). At Anemone vent, the diffuse flow samples had higher CRISPR
spacer and microbial diversity than the plume sample, but viral diversity did not differ between
these samples.
321

Biogeography and relative abundance of viral clusters, spacer clusters, and hosts
In order to characterize viral biogeography and community similarity across hydrothermal
vent fluids, we evaluated the extent to which viral sequences and CRISPR spacers were
distributed across samples, then compared these results to the host microbial community. As
before, we clustered sequences based on similarity to compare across samples. On the whole,
viral sequences and CRISPR spacers had fairly limited distributions. Only a few viral clusters
(0.17%) appeared at both the Mid-Cayman Rise and Axial Seamount, while almost no CRISPR
spacer clusters were identified in both regions (Table 1). The most cosmopolitan viruses and
CRISPR spacers did not match each other: at the Mid-Cayman Rise, three of the 100 most
widely distributed viral clusters matched with only four of the 100 most widely distributed
CRISPR spacer clusters according to BLAST; and at Axial Seamount, one of the 100 most
widely distributed viral clusters matched with two of the 100 most widely distributed CRISPR
spacer clusters. In contrast, microbial taxa were much more cosmopolitan, with ~41% of taxa
shared between the Mid-Cayman Rise and Axial Seamount according to 16S rRNA gene
classification at the lowest taxonomic level available (Table 1). Viral and CRISPR spacer
clusters were shared more widely among vent sites within the Mid-Cayman Rise compared to
Axial Seamount, but microbial lineages were shared more widely among vent sites at Axial
Seamount than the Mid-Cayman Rise (Table 1).
340
We created hierarchical dendrograms to assess the similarity of samples based on their
viral content. Viral assemblages in samples from the Mid-Cayman Rise and Axial Seamount
grouped separately (Figure 2a). Within Axial Seamount, samples taken in successive years from
the same vent tended to have similar viral assemblage compositions (Figure 2a). In contrast, at
the Mid-Cayman Rise, samples taken from the same site in two different years did not cluster
together, and we observed weak clustering of samples by location (Figure 2a). At the Mid-
Cayman Rise and Axial Seamount, grouping of microbial communities based on classification of
16S rRNA reads in the metagenomes showed similar patterns to the viral assemblages, with
Axial and Mid-Cayman Rise communities grouping separately from each other, and with
microbial communities at specific sites within Axial showing more similarity across years than at
the Mid-Cayman Rise (Figure 2b).
352
353   In contrast to the viral and microbial assemblages, hierarchical dendrograms based on
354 CRISPR spacer compositions showed little clustering by location (Figure 3). Based on spacer
355 assemblages, samples from either Axial Seamount or the Mid-Cayman Rise did not cluster
356 together, and samples taken from the same vent sites in different years did not cluster together.
357 Very few CRISPR spacer clusters were found at multiple vent sites (Table 1).
358
Networks of viral infection
Networks of viral infection generated from viral sequences, CRISPRs, and MAGs were
used to examine the distribution and host specificity of vent viruses. Networks show connections
between CRISPR spacers, which represent a record of viral infection in the host, and viral
sequences, which represent viral sequences present in the community at the time of sampling.
Virus-host networks made for Axial Seamount (Figure 4) and Mid-Cayman Rise (Figure 5)
indicate that vent viruses are restricted in both their host range and their biogeographic range.
We did not observe any virus-host connections shared between the Mid-Cayman Rise and Axial
Seamount. Within Axial Seamount, there were 89 viral clusters linked to 18 MAGs, and 105

connections between distinct pairs of viral clusters and MAGs (Figure 4). We did not observe
any connections between MAGs and viral clusters in any of the non-diffuse flow samples
(Background, CTD1200 and the Anemone plume sample). The number of viral connections
appeared to be related to, but was not significantly correlated with, the microbial hosts' relative
abundance (Supplementary Table 3): for example, a Clostridia MAG in the 2015 North Rift
Zone sample (Clostridia_35) had high normalized coverage and was linked to nine viral clusters.
We observed a high number of viruses shared among *Aquificae* MAGs sampled from the
Anemone vent in 2013 and 2014 (Figure 4). Finally, we observed only a single viral cluster that
was linked to MAGs of different taxonomic classes from different vent sites, with a viral cluster
connected to an *Ignavibacteria* MAG (Ignavibacteria_15) in the 2014 Marker 33 sample and an
Aquificae MAG (Aquificae_43) in the 2013 Anemone sample (Figure 4).
379
The viral infection network from the Mid-Cayman Rise was larger than the Axial
Seamount network, with 110 viral clusters linked to 16 MAGs, and 130 connections between
distinct pairs of viral clusters and MAGs (Figure 5). While most viral clusters in the network
represented relatively rare viruses, one viral cluster was among the top six most abundant in both
X-19 and Shrimp Gully #2. This cluster linked to a Campylobacterales and a Desulfobacterales
MAG, both from Shrimp Gully #2. This was the only viral cluster with high relative abundance
in at least one sample that was present in either the Axial Seamount or the Mid-Cayman Rise
viral infection network (Figures 4-5). Some MAGs had more viral connections than others: for
example, a *Methanomicrobia* MAG (Methanomicrobia_41) from the 2012 Shrimp Hole sample
was linked to 35 viral clusters (Figure 5). However, this is not a direct indication of the number
of different viruses infecting a specific strain because some MAGs had more CRISPR spacers
than others, increasing the possibility of finding a viral connection. As with Axial Seamount,
there were instances of highly abundant MAGs with many viral connections (Supplementary
Table 3): a *Sulfurovum* MAG in the 2012 X-19 sample (Sulfurovum_99) had the highest
normalized coverage at the Mid-Cayman Rise and was linked to 18 viral clusters, making it the
MAG with the third highest number of viral connections within the network. Another
Sulfurovum MAG (Sulfurovum_37), had a high relative abundance in the 2012 Shrimp Gulley #2
sample, and had two viral connections. At the Mid-Cayman Rise, we observed several cases in
which viruses were connected to multiple microbial hosts within the network (Figure 5).
However, the MAGs were linked to these shared viral clusters through the same CRISPR direct
repeat type and were in the same sample, suggesting that these connections may have been due
to matching CRISPR direct repeat types rather than true cross-infection. For example, at the
Mid-Cayman Rise, 9.62% of the CRISPR direct repeat types that were found in a MAG were
found in multiple MAGs in the same sample. When direct repeat types are found in multiple
MAGs in the same sample, it cannot be conclusively determined which MAG the CRISPR
spacers associated with the direct repeat type came from. This is because Crass, the software
used for CRISPR identification, creates networks of direct repeats and spacers based on reads
rather than contigs. Therefore, all viral clusters connected to multiple MAGs in the Mid-Cayman
Rise may either be true examples of viral-host cross-infection or may instead result from shared
direct repeats.
410
Viruses and prophages in MAGs
To determine whether there were prophages integrated in the MAGs we recovered, we
used VirSorter to identify putative viral contigs within each MAG. Of the 74 Mid-Cayman Rise

MAGs, 28 (38%) had at least one putative prophage sequence (VirSorter categories one, two,
four, or five) (Supplementary Table 4). Of the 98 Axial Seamount MAGs, 41 (42%) had at least
one putative viral or prophage sequence (VirSorter categories one, two, four, or five)
(Supplementary Table 4).
418
Gene content of viral and prophage sequences
To determine whether viruses and prophage in these samples carried auxiliary metabolic
genes (AMGs), we annotated and characterized viral and prophage gene content in the viral
sequences recovered from the metagenomes. The vast majority of genes within the putative viral
and prophage sequences were annotated as belonging to the COG categories replication and
repair; nucleotide metabolism and transport; and post-translational modification, protein
turnover, chaperone functions. Many genes were also annotated as belonging to the cell
wall/membrane/envelope biogenesis category. Within the Mid-Cayman Rise, a total of 106
ORFs within putative viral or prophage sequences identified in 10 different metagenomes fell
within the broad COG category of "metabolism" (Supplementary Fig. 4). This included genes
categorized as energy production and conversion, amino acid transport and metabolism,
nucleotide transport and metabolism, carbohydrate transport and metabolism, coenzyme
transport and metabolism, lipid transport and metabolism, and inorganic ion transport and
metabolism. Samples taken from X-19 and Shrimp Hole (2012) had a high number of
metabolism genes (30 and 28, respectively) on putative viral or prophage sequences compared to
the other Mid-Cayman Rise samples. A higher proportion of genes on putative viral or prophage
sequences were related to metabolism at the Mid-Cayman Rise than Axial Seamount
(Supplementary Fig. 4). At Axial Seamount, we identified a total of 185 ORFs on putative viral
or prophage sequences from 14 different metagenomes that fell within the broad COG category
of "metabolism." However, it is important to note that none of the observed metabolism genes
were surrounded by confirmed virus genes (i.e., known viral ORFs both upstream and
downstream of the metabolic ORF), and therefore we cannot rule out the possibility that some of
these genes were microbial in origin.
442
443 **Discussion**
444
Viruses are important drivers of microbial mortality, ecology and evolution in the ocean,
but studies of their distribution and impact in the deep sea are lacking. Our results indicate that
viral diversity is high in venting fluids from hydrothermal systems, and the viruses we analyzed
have restricted biogeographic distributions and host ranges. This implies that viruses do not
spread widely between vent sites and that the viral role in mediating horizontal gene transfer
across taxa and between vent sites is relatively restricted. However, the high abundance of
integrated proviruses and the large number of virus-host CRISPR connections implies rapid viral
mutation and ongoing viral infection, indicating active and ongoing interactions between viruses
and their microbial hosts in venting fluids from both Axial and Mid-Cayman Rise hydrothermal
vents.
455
Vents host diverse and active assemblages of viruses with restricted host range
Our viral infection networks show diverse microbial lineages across several samples
infected by many different viruses at the time of sampling. Although individual microbial
lineages could be targeted by multiple viral strains, the viruses we identified in these

hydrothermal habitats had fairly restricted host ranges, infecting specific individual microbial
strains. The only clear example of viral infection across microbial taxa emerged at Axial
Seamount, where viral sequences associated with Ignavibacteria were also linked to Aquificales
(Figure 5). All other examples of viral infection across microbial taxa may either be true
examples of viral-host cross-infection or may instead result from shared direct repeats. The
limited host range of viruses from hydrothermal systems is consistent with previous work
indicating that viruses generally tend to be host-specific [84], and we found very little evidence
for generalist viruses, despite the fact that this has been reported previously [84, 85]. We
identified many viral connections to Epsilonbacteraeota, which are abundant and active at both
Axial Seamount and the Mid-Cayman Rise [4, 33, 39, 40, 86], showing that these highly
successful microbial groups in hydrothermal vent fluids are also susceptible to viral infection.
471
Matches between CRISPR loci and viruses provide an indication of which viruses are
being targeted by the CRISPR immune response. We found that while some CRISPR spacers
target relatively abundant viruses, most CRISPRs target relatively rare viruses in these systems.
At the Mid-Cayman Rise, we found only one viral cluster with high relative abundance to be
targeted by a host CRISPR system (Figure 5), and we did not find any instances of viral clusters
with high relative abundance targeted by CRISPRs at Axial Seamount (Figure 4). This is
consistent with previous observations in an archaea-dominated hypersaline lake [87], where the
vast majority of CRISPRs were found to target viruses with populations too small to allow for
the assembly of contigs. The relative scarcity of viruses targeted by CRISPRs may result from an
evolutionary arms race: CRISPRs limit the abundance of the viral populations they target, while
concurrently, viruses undergo mutations, limiting the ability of CRISPR spacers to target them.
Alternatively, these observations could result from an abundance of inactive spacers inherited
over multiple generations. However, we do not believe this to be the case because CRISPR
spacer clusters were infrequently present across multiple samples, suggesting that spacers were
integrated on subgenerational timescales.
487
Viral assemblages are spatially restricted across vent sites
Previous studies of viruses in marine systems have observed viral populations to be
commonly found across multiple samples [88], whereas others have found that most viruses are
biogeographically restricted, with only a few cosmopolitan groups [84, 89]. In Mid-Cayman Rise
and Axial Seamount hydrothermal vents, we found high viral diversity with a limited
distribution, potentially indicating rapid diversification at vent sites. Most viral clusters we
observed were found only at individual vent sites, with very few cosmopolitan viruses, and the
clustering of viral assemblages by location further indicated restricted dispersal. Thus, viral
biogeographic patterns correspond to those of their microbial hosts: previous work examining
microbial distribution in hydrothermal systems through fine-scale 16S rRNA gene analyses
indicates that while some microbial lineages are endemic to individual vent sites, others are
widespread across vent fields [28, 40]. Often, sample sites in close proximity are often more
similar to each one another in terms of microbial community structure than to geographically
distant sites [4, 27, 40, 90]. This may result from subseafloor plumbing that restricts fluid flux
between sites, creating "islands" of microbial diversity that are distinct from one vent site to the
next [26]. Here, we show barriers to dispersal apply to viruses as well, and our results suggested
that viruses were even more spatially restricted than their microbial hosts. Microbial lineages that
spread between vent sites may face infection from novel viral strains not found in other vent

sites. These endemic viral populations thus further shape distinct microbial community structure
at individual vent sites.
508
Although the viral assemblages at hydrothermal vents had high diversity and restricted
dispersal between vent sites and vent fields, our results show that the viral assemblages in vents
persist over time, particularly at Axial Seamount. Viral assemblages from samples from the same
vent sites at Axial across three years clustered together in the hierarchical dendrograms (Figure
2a), and our viral infection networks revealed that a number of viruses at Axial Seamount were
linked to specific microbial hosts at the same vent over multiple years (Figure 4). These patterns
match those observed in the microbial communities (Figure 2b) and are consistent with previous
work showing spatially restricted but temporally stable microbial communities over time at Axial
Seamount [4, 27]. Our work extends this to the viral world at Axial Seamount, indicating that
viral assemblages follow the same temporal patterns as their microbial hosts, and that virus-host
relationships persist over time.
520
However, temporal stability in the viral and microbial community was generally not
preserved at the Mid-Cayman Rise for sites sampled in both 2012 and 2013. Viral and CRISPR
spacer clusters were also more widespread (i.e., more often found at multiple locations) in the
Mid-Cayman Rise than Axial Seamount, potentially implying more rapid dispersal or slower
diversification of both viruses and their microbial hosts at the Mid-Cayman Rise compared to
Axial. It is unclear whether this is due to sampling bias (fewer time points), to abiotic factors,
such as higher degrees of fluid flux facilitating exchange at the Mid-Cayman Rise, or biotic
factors, such as a set of conditions that encourage slower viral replication and diversification at
the Mid-Cayman Rise compared to Axial.
530
Patterns recorded in microbial CRISPR loci do not reflect the contemporary viral assemblage
In contrast to the viral clusters, the CRISPR spacers did not demonstrate any clear
biogeographic patterns. We expected CRISPR spacers to be more widespread than viruses since
viral composition represents the virus community at the time of sampling, while spacers
represent a history of viral infection. In contrast to our predictions, while both had limited
distributions, we found viruses to be more widespread than CRISPR spacers at all scales
examined (Table 1). These results are in contrast to previous studies of CRISPR spacer
biogeography in terrestrial hot springs, where both viral and CRISPR spacers showed clear
biogeographic structure [91] This suggests that there is selective pressure for CRISPR spacer
composition to evolve more rapidly than viral sequences via the loss or mutation of CRISPR
spacers. However, it is also possible that we found viruses to be more widespread because of
undersampling of CRISPR spacers, or our use of different clustering algorithms for viruses and
spacers: spacers may have been clustered at a finer resolution, resulting in a more narrow
distribution for each spacer.
545
Given that CRISPR spacers provide a history of infection, comparing the record of past
viral infections via CRISPR arrays with viral sequences in the metagenomes can provide insights
into whether CRISPR arrays provide an accurate representation of the viral assemblage at the
time of sampling, as well as the rate at which CRISPR spacers are accumulated. We did not find
that the most common or cosmopolitan viruses and CRISPR spacers matched each other. This
may arise from a temporal mismatch: it takes time for spacers to be incorporated into and lost

from CRISPR loci as virus abundances shift and viruses evolve. Additionally, just one SNP
(which we allowed for when aligning spacers to viruses) can prevent a CRISPR spacer from
providing resistance against a virus [66]. This could explain the discrepancy between viruses and
spacers: once resistance of a spacer to a particular virus is suppressed, the population of the virus
is freed to shift independently from the spacer in the host population. The discrepancy we
observed between viruses and spacers is important to note when attempting to use CRISPR
spacers to study viral populations or vice versa.
559
Auxiliary metabolic genes and the role of virus-driven horizontal gene transfer in these systems
Previous work has suggested that viruses in hydrothermal systems have the genomic
capacity to alter their hosts' microbial metabolism through harboring auxiliary metabolic genes
(AMGs) [17–19]. We found a higher percentage of microbial genomes with putative viral
sequences (40%) than has been previously reported for single-cell genomes (SAGs, 10%) in
diffuse flow hydrothermal fluids [15]. The high abundance of prophage identified here is
consistent with previous work documenting a high incidence of prophage in diffuse flow systems
compared to deep seawater [14].
568
The ORFs on the viral contigs identified in these hydrothermal vent metagenomes
encoded a wide range of functions, some of which may function as auxiliary metabolic genes.
Many viral contigs contained genes related to cell wall or membrane proteins. The function of
these genes is unknown; it is possible that these genes are involved in the synthesis of
membranes surrounding viral capsids. Genes related to outer membrane proteins and protein
glycosylation are commonly observed as variable genes within microbial pangenomes [92–98],
possibly as a means to vary membrane proteins to evade viral infection. Viruses often act as a
source of genes for horizontal gene transfer via transduction, and it is possible that the
introduction of these novel genes may enable some microbial strains to avoid infection by other
viruses. We also observed several genes with functions related to energy metabolism, inorganic
ion transport, and signal transduction. Previous work has found that genes related to inorganic
ion transport are differentially distributed in the *Sulfurovum* pangenome according to nutrient
availability [39] and further work on viral sequences across vent sites is needed to determine
whether these genes are carried by viruses to benefit their hosts. Moreover, work on viruses in
hydrothermal plumes [19] and in diffuse flow vent fluid [18] has indicated that viruses in these
systems encode energy-metabolizing AMGs, potentially to supplement the host's ability to
generate sufficient energy for cellular processes during the course of infection. The abundance
and diversity of metabolic genes observed on these contigs provide further evidence that viral-
encoded AMGs are widespread and diverse within hydrothermal vent ecosystems. These genes
also have the potential to be horizontally transferred via viral transduction. However, our
analyses of viral biogeography in hydrothermal vents has revealed virus-host interactions to have
limited distributions because viruses are spatially restricted and highly host-specific. Thus, the
potential for viruses to act as mechanisms for horizontal gene transfer between spatially and
phylogenetically distant hosts is likely limited.
593
Taken together, our results show that hydrothermal vent viruses are active, abundant,
diverse, are commonly found as integrated prophage in microbial genomes, and carry auxiliary
metabolic genes with the potential to alter the phenotype and evolutionary trajectory of their
microbial hosts. These viruses are restricted in their host range and biogeographic extent, but

their interactions with hosts persist over time. Thus, while viruses in venting fluids from deep-
sea hydrothermal systems have the capacity to play an important role in driving the evolution
and ecology of microbial communities, their influence appears to be highly localized to specific
regions and taxa. Future work examining viral diversity and distribution across higher resolution
transects over space and time should reveal further insights into the extent of the viral influence
in deep-sea hydrothermal vents.
604

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Tables

Table 1. Distribution of viral clusters, CRISPR spacer clusters, and microbial hosts (classified at the lowest taxonomic level available based on 16S rRNA genes) across vent sites and vent fields in the Mid-Cayman Rise and Axial Seamount. The Background and CTD1200 samples were excluded. Reads that mapped to 16S rRNA sequences that were classified as eukaryotes were excluded.

Region	Type	Percent in more than one vent site	Percent in all vent sites in region	Percent in more than one vent field	Percent in all vent fields in region
Mid-Cayman Rise	Viral clusters	14.19	0.00	3.28	3.28
Mid-Cayman Rise	Spacer clusters	6.34	0.00	0.05	0.05
Mid-Cayman Rise	16S rRNA host	49.41	1.19	32.81	32.81
Axial Seamount	Viral clusters	8.88	0.05	7.06	0.22
Axial Seamount	Spacer clusters	1.01	0.00	0.34	0.00
Axial Seamount	16S rRNA host	54.55	2.36	49.83	9.43

Type	Percent in both the Mid-Cayman Rise and Axial Seamount
Viral clusters	0.17
Spacer clusters	1.71E-03
16S rRNA host	40.66

Figure captions

Figure 1. Abundance and diversity of viral sequences, CRISPR spacers, CRISPR loci, and microbes in diffuse flow samples from the Mid-Cayman Rise (blue) and Axial Seamount (orange). Values for individual samples are indicated with black dots. Violins represent the kernel density estimation of the underlying data distribution. Variables with significant differences between the Mid-Cayman Rise and Axial Seamount are indicated with asterisks. For these comparisons, samples from background seawater and plumes were excluded.

Figure 2. Hierarchical clustering of the Mid-Cayman Rise (black; Von Damm is bold; Piccard is non-bold) and Axial Seamount (red) diffuse flow samples based on A) viral assemblage and B) microbial host composition. For viral composition, the number of reads in each sample that mapped to each viral cluster was calculated; the zero counts were replaced with estimates and a centered log-ratio (clr) transformation was applied. For the host composition, the number of reads that mapped to 16S rRNA sequences of each host (classified at the lowest taxonomic level available) in each sample was calculated; the zero counts were replaced with estimates and a centered log-ratio (clr) transformation was applied. Reads that mapped to 16S rRNA sequences that were either unclassified or classified as eukaryotes were excluded. The y-axes indicate distance between samples as calculated by the ward.D2 method based on the transformed counts.

Figure 3. Hierarchical clustering of CRISPR spacer composition of the Mid-Cayman Rise (black; Von Damm is bold; Piccard is non-bold) and Axial Seamount (red) diffuse flow samples. For all samples, the number of CRISPR spacers in each sample in each spacer cluster was calculated; the zero counts were replaced with estimates and a centered log-ratio (clr) transformation was applied. The y-axis indicates distance between samples as calculated by the ward.D2 method based on the transformed counts.

Figure 4. Infection network showing the links between viral clusters and MAGs at Axial Seamount. Viral clusters were linked to MAGs via the spacers and direct repeats in CRISPR loci. There are no red edges because there are no viral clusters linked to multiple MAGs in the same sample through the same direct repeat type. No viral clusters are outlined in black because none of the viral clusters with high relative abundance (top six most abundant) in at least one sample are present in the network.

Figure 5. Infection network showing the links between viral clusters and MAGs at the Mid-Cayman Rise. Viral clusters were linked to MAGs via the spacers and direct repeats in CRISPR loci. Edges are colored red when a viral cluster is linked to multiple MAGs in the same sample through the same direct repeat type. Due to the Crass algorithm, when the same direct repeat type is found in multiple MAGs in the same sample, it cannot be determined which MAG the spacers associated with direct repeat type came from. Therefore, the red edges are links between viral clusters and MAGs that could not be definitely proven. Viral clusters with high relative abundance (top six most abundant) in at least one sample are outlined in black.

Supplementary Figure captions

Supplementary Figure 1. Rarefaction curves for viral clusters, spacer clusters, and 16S rRNA host classes from samples collected at A) the Mid-Cayman Rise and B) Axial Seamount. There is no viral rarefaction curve for Old Man Tree, 2012 because there were no viral clusters in this sample.

Supplementary Figure 2. Rank abundance curves of viral clusters at A) the Mid-Cayman Rise and B) Axial Seamount. The y-axis represents the number of reads that mapped to each viral cluster divided by the total length of the viral contigs in the cluster and the number of reads in the sample. The x-axis represents the viral clusters ordered according to relative abundance, with the most abundant viral clusters at the left. The Axial viral clusters in all cases were too rare to be seen on the graphs.

Supplementary Figure 3. Rank abundance curves of CRISPR spacer clusters in A) the Mid-Cayman Rise and B) Axial Seamount. The y-axis represents the percent of all CRISPR spacers in a sample falling into that cluster. The x-axis represents the CRISPR spacer clusters ordered according to relative abundance, with the most abundant clusters at the left.

Supplementary Figure 4. COG categories assigned to ORFs on contigs identified as being derived from viruses or prophage by VirSorter. A) Samples from the Mid-Cayman Rise; B) Samples from Axial Seamount.

Supplementary Table captions

Supplementary Table 1. Information regarding sample location, sample type, metagenomic sequencing, and assembly of metagenomic reads.

Supplementary Table 2. Relative abundance of viral sequences, spacers, and CRISPRs in metagenomes; in addition, diversity of viral clusters, spacer clusters, and 16S rRNA host classes. The number of reads that mapped to viral contigs per read, spacers per read, and CRISPR direct repeat types per read were used to measure the relative abundance of viral sequences, spacers, and CRISPRs, respectively. We used the number of viral clusters per contig, spacer clusters per read, and different classes per read matching 16S rRNA as measures of viral diversity, spacer diversity, and host class diversity, respectively. Reads mapping to 16S rRNA sequences that were classified as eukaryotes were excluded.

Supplementary Table 3. Percent completeness, percent redundancy, and normalized coverage of each MAG.

Supplementary Table 4. The number of viral and prophage contigs identified by VirSorter in each MAG in addition to the number of viral clusters linked to each MAG through CRISPR sequences**.**

Relative abundance of CRISPR loci*

Relative abundance of viruses

Relative abundance of CRISPR spacers

Viral diversity*

Microbial diversity*

CRISPR spacer diversity