

1 **Biogenic methane cycling is controlled by microbial cohorts**

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21 **Abstract**

22 The generation and consumption of methane by aquatic microbial communities is an
23 important contribution to the global carbon budget. We sought to broaden understanding of
24 consortia members and interactions by combining multiple methods including analysis of
25 natural and cultivated microbial communities. By analysing the microbial community
26 composition and co-occurrence patterns of a lake time-series we were able to identify
27 potential consortia involved in methane cycling. In combination with methane flux, we also
28 analysed the community composition and co-occurrence patterns of reduced microbial model
29 communities with inoculum from the same lake. While the network analyses confirmed many
30 known associations, when combined with results from mixed cultures, we noted new players
31 in methane cycling. Cultivated model communities were shown to be an effective method to
32 explore the rarer but still important players in methane cycling and for identifying new
33 putative members. Here we show that using multiple methods to approach the complex
34 problem of methane cycling consortia yields not just insights into the known taxa but
35 highlights potential new members creating new hypotheses to be tested.

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37

38 **Introduction**

39 Methane emissions from biogenic sources are determined by the ratio and activity of
40 methanogenic microbes producing and methanotrophic microbes consuming this powerful
41 greenhouse gas. Considering that methane is responsible for 17% to 20% of the radiative
42 forcing component of global warming (1, 2), elucidating all players in the methane cycle
43 involved in the net methane emissions from various biogenic sources is of utmost importance.
44 It is known that methanotrophs can oxidize between 30 and 99% of CH₄ produced in the
45 sediments and the water column before it reaches the atmosphere (3–6). However, the
46 detection of methanotrophs in an environment does not necessarily correlate with
47 methanotrophic activity, and other factors may determine whether methane is oxidized (7).
48 One factor that may affect the rate or existence of methanotrophy is the composition of the
49 microbial community. For example, it has been shown that aerobic methanotrophs can be
50 active in anoxic waters when co-occurring with photosynthetic organisms (8), suggesting that
51 the methanotrophs utilize oxygen liberated by these phototrophs for methane oxidation.
52 However, discovering and pinpointing more of these symbiotic interactions is difficult in
53 natural environments as the number of possible interacting organisms is very high. Methods
54 to cultivate communities with reduced diversity have been developed (9) to overcome this
55 limitation and study organisms in a model communities in conditions mimicking their natural
56 habitat. In this method, environmental samples are diluted in filtered water from their own
57 environment and microorganisms subsampled for cultivation. These so-called model
58 communities are a powerful way to study the microbial interaction in a semi-natural
59 environment (10). Model communities also provide tools for building hypotheses that could
60 then be further tested by looking into interaction networks in time series of natural
61 environments (11).
62 For this study, we established 177 dilution-cultures model communities using samples from

63 Lake Lomtjärnan, a lake in Sweden with high methane concentrations in the water column to
64 examine the methane cycling capacity of microbial assemblages. We also utilized a 2-week
65 depth discrete timeseries taken from March to April 2016 to examine the network around the
66 methane oxidizing communities in the actual lake. We hypothesize that the capacity to
67 produce or oxidize methane is not only related to the presence of organisms with the known
68 ability to produce or use methane, but that their cohorts might be key controllers in methane
69 cycling.

70

71 **Materials and methods**

72 *Lake water collection and media preparation*

73 Environmental samples for the time-depth-series were collected and published previously
74 (12). In brief, a sampling campaign including six time points was done in winter the last week
75 of March and the first week of April 2016 on Lake Lomtjärnan. This small forest lake had an
76 ice cover at the time of sampling and is located in central west region (Jämtland) of Sweden
77 (Fig 1A). The surface area of the lake is about 1 ha, and the maximum depth is 3.5 m. The
78 lake is located on a mire surrounded by a coniferous forest. At each sampling occasion,
79 samples at six different depths (0.65 m, 1.0 m, 1.35 m, 1.85 m, 2.35 m, 2.75 m) were taken to
80 create a time-depth-series of the lake totalling 35 samples. The deepest depth was not taken
81 on the first sampling because samples were taken in a location where the max depth was
82 around 2.35 m.

83 Water for the time-depth-series was collected using a depth-discrete Limnos tube-sampler
84 (Limnos, Poland) and the water was subsequently filtered through a Sterivex filter (0.22 μm)
85 and the filters were stored immediately in liquid nitrogen for later DNA extraction. Water to
86 be used for both growth media and inoculum was collected from the anoxic layer on the sixth
87 sampling occasion of the lake in April 2016 and again in September 2017.

88 The water for media was collected using the same depth-discrete Limnos tube-sampler
89 (Limnos, Poland) and was quickly poured into 1 litre Schott bottles which were filled and let
90 to overflow to remove all the oxygenic water prior to closing the bottles. These bottles were
91 then kept in the dark at 4°C for 2 days to ensure anoxia. The water for media was filtered
92 twice through 0.2 µm Sterivex filters (Millipore) inside the anaerobic glove box, and the
93 filtered-sterilized media was collected in a sterile Schott bottle and closed. These bottles were
94 further exposed to UV light for 10 min.

95 The inoculum for the cultures was collected using the Limnos tube-sampler in a falcon tube
96 and was then flash frozen with liquid nitrogen and kept in -80 °C until the cultures were
97 established. The following steps of the preparation were performed under anoxic atmosphere
98 using an anaerobic glove box.

99

100 *Preparation of serum bottles, cell inoculant and cultures*

101 20 ml serum bottles, crimps, and stoppers were autoclaved at 120°C for 20 min. To limit the
102 risk of potential bactericides such as benzyltoluenes and phenylalkanes, the stoppers were
103 autoclaved submerged in deionized water, and subsequently rinsed and boiled in sterile
104 deionized water and finally cooled in sterile deionized water. After autoclaving, the serum
105 bottles were sealed with these sterilised and detoxified butyl rubber stoppers and aluminium
106 crimps. The incubation vessels were assembled under a laminar flow, using autoclaved tools,
107 before being flushed at least 3 times with nitrogen to remove O₂. To maintain the sterility of
108 the bottles during the flushing operation, new sterile needles were used for each bottle and the
109 stoppers were carefully disinfected with 90% ethanol. Furthermore a 0.2 µm filter was used
110 to prevent contamination from the N₂ gas flow.

111 The sealed sterile and anaerobic serum bottles were supplemented with 10 ml of media,
112 a.k.a. filtered lake water. Subsamples of the unfiltered lake water from Lomtjärnan April

113 2016 (average 5×10^6 cells/ml) and September 2017 were run through a flow cytometer to
114 estimate cell concentration. Based on those values, another subsample, not exposed to the
115 atmosphere was diluted with lake-water-media to approximately 50 cells/ml. To inoculate
116 the bottles, 1 ml of this 50 cells/ml solution was then injected using sterile needles and
117 syringes into the 20 ml serum bottles. The number of cultures prepared were: 98 from 2016
118 and 79 from 2017. A few bottles were incubated without inoculum as media control cultures.
119 To test for the potential for anoxic methane oxidation 4 ml of a mix of CH₄ and CO₂ with a
120 ratio of 80/20 % were injected into each bottle (Figure 1B).

121 Bottles were then incubated at 11°C for two months in the dark, to mimic lake conditions, for
122 the samples taken in the autumn and under dim light for the samples collected in the spring.
123 After the two-month incubation, 1 ml of the headspaces was sampled for gas analysis.
124 Methane content was measured using the gas analyser Biogas 5000 (Geotechnical
125 Instruments, UK) and gas chromatography (Clarus 500, Perkin Elmer, USA, Polyimide
126 Uncoated capillary column 5m x 0.32mm, FID detector). At the same time as gas sampling
127 200 µl of the cultures were collected and preserved at -80°C for DNA analysis.

128

129 *16S rRNA gene amplicon preparation and sequencing*

130 DNA was amplified directly from 1 µl of culture. Library preparation for 16S rRNA gene
131 analysis was done following a two-steps Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) protocol, as
132 described in Mondav et al 2020 (11). All PCRs were conducted in 20 µl of volume using 0.02
133 U/µl Phusion high fidelity DNA polymerase, 1X Q5 reaction buffer (NEB, UK), 0.25 µM
134 primers and 200 µM dNTP mix and 1 µl mixed culture template. The first step was
135 performed in triplicate with primers 341F (3'-CCTACGGGNGGCWGCAG-5') and 805NR
136 (3'-GACTACNVGGGTATCTAA-5') (13). The thermal program consisted of 20 cycles with
137 an initial 98°C denaturation step for 10 min, a cycling program of 98°C for 10 seconds, 48°C

138 for 30 seconds, and 72°C for 30 seconds and a final elongation step at 72°C for 2 minutes.
139 Triplicate PCR reactions were then pooled and purified with magnetic beads (Sera-Mag™
140 Select, GE Healthcare, Chicago, United States of America), and 2 µl of the purified products
141 were used as a template for a second stage PCR, where indexed primers were added. The
142 second thermal program consisted of 15 cycles with an initial 98°C denaturation step for 30
143 seconds, a cycling program of 98°C for 10 seconds, 66°C for 30 seconds, and 72°C for 30
144 seconds and a final elongation step at 72°C for 2 minutes. Following amplification, PCR
145 products were again purified with magnetic beads and quantified with Qubit™ using the
146 Qubit™ dsDNA HS Assay Kit (Invitrogen™). Finally, 15.6 µg of each indexed and purified
147 PCR product were pooled before submission of the sample to the Science for Life Laboratory
148 SNP/SEQ sequencing facility hosted by Uppsala University (Uppsala, Sweden). Sequencing
149 was done using Illumina Miseq in paired-end mode with 300bp and v3 chemistry.

150

151 *Amplicon bioinformatics*

152 Sequence processing was performed with Mothur 1.41.0 following the MiSeq SOP (14), with
153 the exception that clustering to operational taxonomic units (OTUs) was done using
154 VSEARCH (15) as implemented in Mothur (16). Taxonomy was assigned against the Silva
155 132 database (17). Amplicon sets were separated into groups of sample or inoculant origin:
156 time-depth-series lake communities, anaerobic lake cultures 2016, anaerobic lake cultures
157 2017, and 2 un-inoculated media controls. Nine lake-2017 cultures produced only a few
158 sequences (<20) and were removed from the dataset. Remaining sequences were then
159 subsampled once using Qiimes (18) single rarefaction to an even depth of 600 reads per
160 sample for the un-inoculated media, and 2000 reads per sample for all others. This resulted in
161 final sample counts: 35 lake time-depth-series, 93 lake-2016 cultures and 70 lake-2017
162 cultures. These normalized OTU tables were used for compositional and comparative

163 analyses. Column graphs of the ten most abundant phylotypes from each dataset were made
164 for compositional analyses. OTU tables were processed and visualised in R 4.0.3 (19) using
165 phyloseq 1.34.0 (20) and ggplot2 (21).

166 Prior to co-occurrence analysis for network visualisation, OTUs present in less than 10% of
167 each culture group, 50% of the lake water samples, or with a relative abundance always
168 below 1 % were removed. This was done to reduce sparcity to below 50%. A network
169 ensemble approach was used where any correlation (edge) between OTUs (node) that was
170 found in at least two of the three following methods was included in the final visualisation:
171 SPIEC-EASI (22), SparcCC (23), and Pearsons correlation. All co-occurrence methods were
172 implemented in R 4.0.3 using spiec-easi 1.1.1 for SPIEC-EASI, SparcCC and the psych 2.1.3
173 package for Pearsons correlation. Networks were visualised in cytoscape.

174 To identify communities that had unbalanced methane cycling (flux), all cultures that had a
175 recorded change in methane concentration and all cultures that had at least one phylotype
176 associated with methane generation or consumption were retained and analysed for OTU co-
177 occurrence.

178

179 *Data availability and source code*

180 All scripts used to calculate network correlations are available at:
181 https://github.com/rmondav/methane_cycling_networks, v1.0.0 recorded at
182 <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5531947>. Time-depth-series amplicons are available under
183 BioProject PRJEB27633 (12). Mixed culture sequence data has been deposited at the
184 European Nucleotide Archive (ENA) at EMBL-EBI under accession number BioProject
185 PRJEB48661 (<https://www.ebi.ac.uk/ena/browser/view/PRJEB48661>).

186

187 **Results**

188 *Change in dominant lake community with depth*

189 The most abundant OTUs in the lake time-depth-series belonged to just three phyla:
190 Bacteroidetes, Chloroflexi, and Proteobacteria. The surface lake microbial community was
191 dominated by the α -proteobacterial Rhodospirillum rubrum OTU25 and Polaromonas OTU11 and
192 Methylobacteriaceae OTU24 while the deeper lake community was increasingly dominated by
193 a Chlorobium OTU9 and Oscillochloris OTU21 (Fig. 1C). Polynucleobacter OTU2 was
194 highly abundant throughout the lake water (Fig 1C) showing no preference for depth. It was
195 also abundant in most of the mixed cultures (Fig 1D) and was present at low abundance in
196 media controls from Sept 2017 (0.2 μ m filterable microbes).

197

198 *Communities in lakes associated with methane cycling*

199 Known methanotrophs (obligate methane consumers) in the lake time-depth-series network
200 were associated with either a phototrophic cluster of bacteria (green circle top left) or
201 clustered around a methanogen (gold circle top centre, Figure 2). Carbon fixing phototrophs
202 as detected in this cluster, methanotrophs, and the methanogen are all obligate C1-carbon
203 molecule cyclers. Sulphate-reducing bacteria were also associated with these two clusters.
204 The Oscillochloris OTU21 and Chlorobium OTU9 were dominant phylotypes of deeper lake
205 (green circle Figure 2). The methanotroph Methylobacteriaceae OTU24 and Polaromonas
206 OTU11 (grey circle bottom Figure 2) were dominant in lake Lomtjärnan surface waters (Fig
207 1B). This cluster (grey circle) was negatively correlated to the other methanotrophs, the
208 phototrophs and the methanogen. Methylobacteriaceae (facultative methane consumers) had no
209 clear association with any of these metabolic clusters.

210

211 *Percentage of mixed cultures with growth varied with inoculum source*

212 All inoculated cultures from the 2016 inoculum grew and produced sequences, while 71% of
213 the cultures from 2017 sampling produced sequences. Despite similar culture conditions,
214 there were distinct differences in the dominant genera in the cultures inoculated with water
215 samples from early spring 2016 compared to autumn 2017 (Fig. 1D).

216

217 *Abundant lineages can both pass through and be retained by 0.22 μ m filters*

218 On average half of the top ten most abundant phylotypes in the time-depth-series and the
219 2017 culture-series were also detected in the media control sequenced from 2017.
220 Specifically, five of the most prevalent phylotypes in the 2017 cultures (Pelomonas,
221 Betaproteobacteriales - T34, Polynucleobacter, Sphingomonas, and Staphylococcus) were
222 also detected in the 2017 media control. Seven of the top 25 most abundant OTUs in the
223 time-depth series (Polaromonas, Polynucleobacter, Rhodoferrax, Betaproteobacteriales - T34,
224 an unclassified genus of the Sporichthyaceae family, Flavobacterium, and an unclassified
225 genus of Burkholderiaceae) were abundant in media controls.

226

227 *Detection of methane cycling phylotypes does not always correlate to methane flux* 228 *measurements*

229 The majority (91%) of cultures had no detectable change in methane concentration or (60%)
230 had no known methane cycling phylotypes (Figure 3A). Of note in our search for new
231 organisms with a putative role in methane cycling were the 5% of cultures that had methane
232 flux but no methane cycling phylotypes detected. Also of note were the 36 % of mixed
233 cultures where obligate methane cycling phylotypes were detected but no methane flux was
234 recorded. These two culture groups were noted and selected for further investigation.

235

236 *Putative cohorts and potential newcomers to methane cycling*

237 Due to the poor correlation between methane flux and methane cycling phylotypes, the co-
238 occurrence patterns of the cultures of note were examined. Organisms detected uniquely in
239 cultures that had unexplained methane concentration were recorded and a putative role in
240 methane cycling proposed (Table 1). Eight microbes associated with the production of
241 methane without detection of archaeal methanogens were noted by “CH₄ production without
242 methanogen”. One of these candidates, *Rhodopseudomonas*, is already annotated as a
243 putative methane producer via the recently documented Fe-only nitrogenase methane release
244 pathway (24, 25). Another cohort candidate, *Desulfobulbaceae*, is a putative sulphate reducer.
245 Many cultures had abundant obligate methane consumers but no change in methane
246 concentration, twenty-five microbes were uniquely associated with these cultures and were
247 noted with “CH₄ balance in the presence of methanotroph”. There were many *Patescibacteria*
248 and one putative ammonia oxidizer, *Nitrosomonadaceae*, in this group. Six bacteria
249 associated with consumption of methane without detection of methane consumers were noted
250 by “CH₄ consumption without CH₄ consumer”. In total, 39 lineages were identified as
251 potential contributors to methane cycling assemblages.

252

253 **Discussion**

254 *Assembly of microbial communities is cell density and diversity dependent*

255 The 71 % to 100 % success rate of culturing in this experiment is in stark contrast to the 10%
256 to 30% success rate of dilution to extinction where only a few to maybe 20 cells are used in
257 inoculant mixed cultures (11, 26). It therefore seems that around 50 cells of a natural
258 community per inoculum (for anaerobic cultures from Lake Lomtjärnan) capture sufficient
259 metabolic breadth to form a functional self-sustaining non-photoc community, or cohorts.
260 This for the first time places an upper limit on the minimum metabolic diversity required for
261 functional (anaerobic) aquatic cohorts (27, 28).

262

263 *Filterable microbes play a significant role in natural and laboratory systems*

264 A growing literature has discussed and evaluated the aquatic microbial filterable microbes in
265 relation to the concept and efficacy of filter sterilisation of media used for laboratory
266 culturing and environmental role (29–32). Here we also found that some phylotypes e.g.,
267 *Polynucleobacter*, can both pass through filters to be detected in filter ‘sterilised’ media, and
268 be captured on filters as seen here in the time-depth-series. While the debate over whether
269 filter sterilisation works is mostly complete, a discussion on the effect on abundance
270 estimates of the loss of the filterable microbes might be worth re-opening.

271

272 *Associations between methanotrophs and other lifestyles in the lake*

273 The lake time-series network shows an association between photoautotrophic *Chlorobium*, a
274 methanotrophs, and sulphate reducing bacteria. This connection could be, for example, via
275 carbon fixation by the autotrophic bacteria which also oxidise sulphur species to sulphate
276 which is then consumed by the sulphate reducers. The *Methylobacter* phylotype, based on
277 associations visualised in the network, is not reliant on proximity to a methanogen to thrive
278 but rather is integral to the phototrophic cohort. The remainder of the methanotrophs in the
279 cluster are associated with a methanogen and sulphate reducers. One of these sulphate
280 reducers, *Desulfobulbaceae* is a putative methane consumer cohort member, while the other,
281 *Geobacter*, is a known consort of *Methanotherix* (synonym *Methanosaeta* (40)) whereby
282 direct electron transfer allows the methanogen to switch to CO₂ utilisation for methane
283 generation (44, 45). Methane is then released into the water and consumed by the cohort of
284 methanotrophs.

285 Except for two cyanobacteria OTUs (*Planktothrix* and *Pseudoanabaena*) most of the taxa in
286 the green and gold circles are associated with oxic-anoxic interfaces. Besides the phototrophs

287 all of the taxa present in the upper cohort and correlated to methanotrophs are potential
288 microaerophiles e.g. Polyangjaceae or Gallionaceae (33–35). Also included in the circles
289 are potential anaerobe with known ability to live in microaerophile condition like Geobacter,
290 or Rhodocyclaceae a taxa known to use a wide range of electron acceptor, including but not
291 limited to O₂ (36). These correlations between methanotrophs and taxa associated with the
292 oxic anoxic interface is in line with the fact that this interface is a hotspot for methanotrophy
293 (37–39). Based only on correlation it is impossible to tell if the cooccurrence of different
294 OTU is due to shared environmental preference of by necessary interactions. The fact that all
295 the organisms represented in the gold and green circles appear to favorize low oxygen
296 environment suggests that the cooccurrence might be driven by environmental preferences. It
297 is nevertheless interesting to observe that three different OTUs attributed to methanotrophic
298 taxa are directly correlated to a methanogen, Methanotrix (synonym Methanosaeta (40)).
299 The presence of an archaeal methanogen in a potentially oxic environment might seem
300 surprising, but again there is also mounting evidence that methanogenesis isn't limited to
301 anoxic environments (41, 42). Furthermore Methanotrix is among the methanogen with a
302 potential to thrive in oxic conditions (42, 43). Interestingly though the Methanotrix OTU
303 correlates with two OTUs that lean more on the anaerobic side of the interface (Geobacter
304 and Crenothrix).

305 Others interesting correlation are the ones with iron cycling phylotypes (i.e Geobacter and
306 Gallionaceae). Indeed both methanogen and methanotrophs have high iron demand for
307 cofactor production (46). Furthermore, it has been suggested that interactions can be
308 favorable to methanotrophs (47, 48). But if notable it is, again, impossible to clearly state the
309 nature of the relation between those methane cycling taxa with the iron cycling ones.

310

311 All in all, the clusters in the top of the figure suggest that most of the methanotrophs detected
312 are attached to an environment with little oxygen favorizing taxa with the ability to deal with
313 change in O₂ concentration through mobility (like Gallionella or Chlorflexi) or metabolic
314 plasticity (e.g Chloroflexi or Rhodocycladeae). Interestingly, the Methylococcales OTU
315 abundances correlates with both anoxic leaning OTU (Chrenothrix, Methanothrix, Geobacter)
316 and an oxygenic phototroph (Planktothrix and Pseudanabaena, both cyanobacteria). This
317 again suggest microoxic condition, and is in line with work suggesting that aerobic
318 methanotrophy can be enhanced by phototroph in low oxygen environment (49).

319

320 The most probable explanation for the negative correlation between the upper circle clusters
321 (Figure 2) and the grey circle cluster in the bottom of the figure are due to spatial separation
322 likely controlled by temperature. Several OTU present in the grey cluster belongs to taxa
323 including both aerobic and anaerobic species like Polaromonas, Flavobacterium or
324 Burkholderiaceae. Both Polaromonas and Flavobacterium are generally considered
325 psychrophilic and psychrotolerant taxa respectively (50, 51) (52). Furthermore Both
326 Pedobacter and Rhodoferrax also include psychrophilic taxa (53, 54). The association of these
327 psychrophilic and tolerant taxa with the surface water, might be explained considering that
328 sampling was performed during the ice-covered season it make sense as during winter,
329 stratification is inverted, with the coldest water found at the surface directly beneath ice. It
330 seems therefor very likely that the grey cluster is associated with cold temperature compared
331 to rather than by oxygen concentration.

332

333 *Associations between methanotrophs and other lifestyles in the cohorts in model communities*

334 Over the last two decades there has been a large increase in the catalogued number of
335 microbes and metabolic pathways capable of generating, releasing, or consuming methane

336 (55, 56). Both increases are likely to continue as we explore deeper genomic and metabolic
337 space. For these reasons it is not a surprise that methane consumption and production did not
338 correlate clearly with detection of known methane cycling phylotypes. It was surprising
339 however, the degree to which these were decoupled. It therefore not clear if this uncoupling is
340 due to poor flux detection, or low abundance of methane cycling organisms. Previously, it
341 has been demonstrated that methanotroph abundance can be uncoupled from methane
342 oxidation rates (58–60).

343

344 The generation here of a list of 39 novel phylotypes that may be directly or indirectly
345 involved in methane cycling is a mere indicator of how much more work can be done to
346 identify key players effecting cycling of methane and other C1 molecules.

347 We hypothesize that the participate in methane cycle is not only related to the presence of
348 organisms with the known ability to produce or use methane, but that their cohorts as found
349 in the model communities might be key controllers in methane cycling.

350

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366

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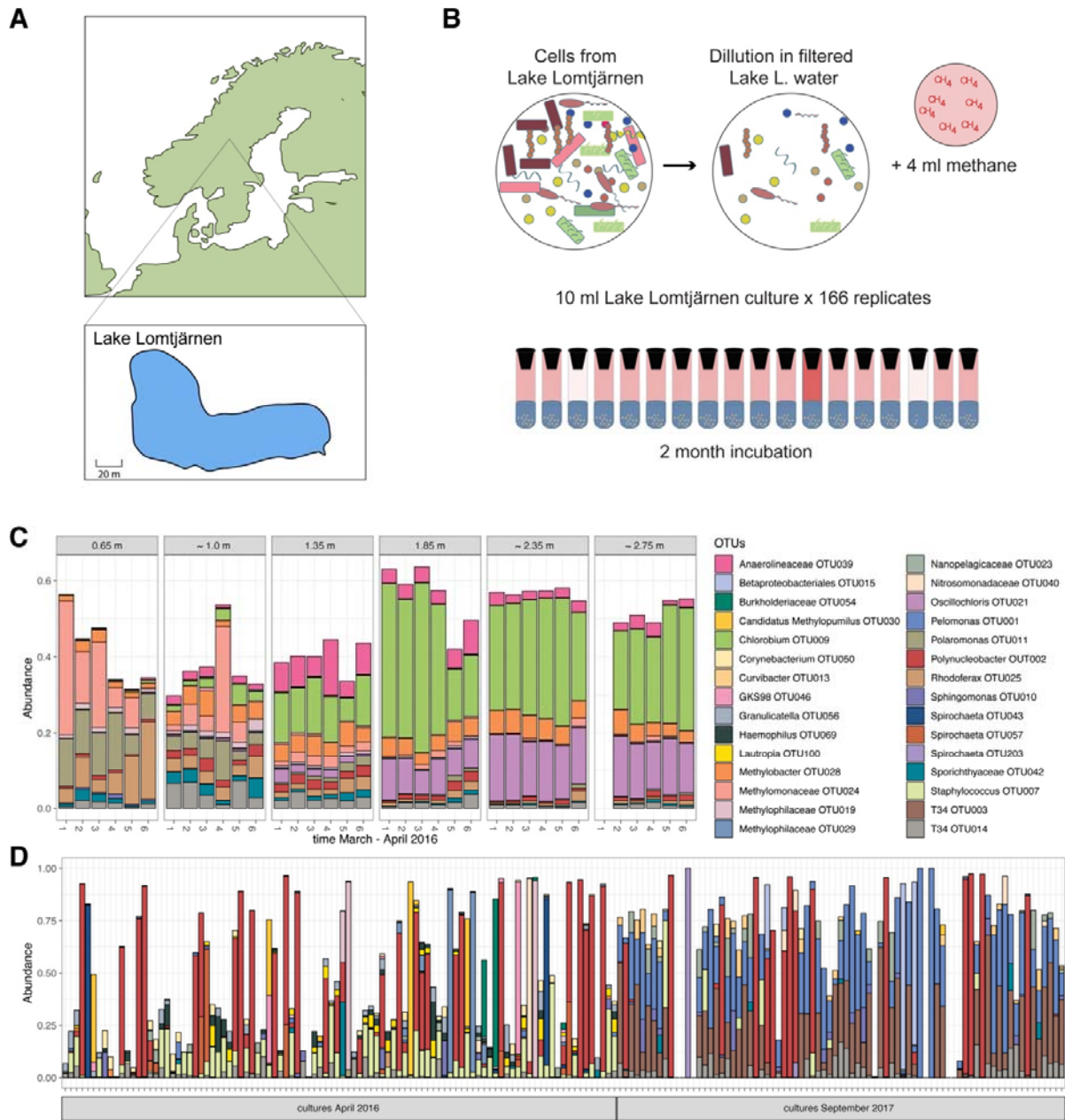
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543 **Figures and Table**



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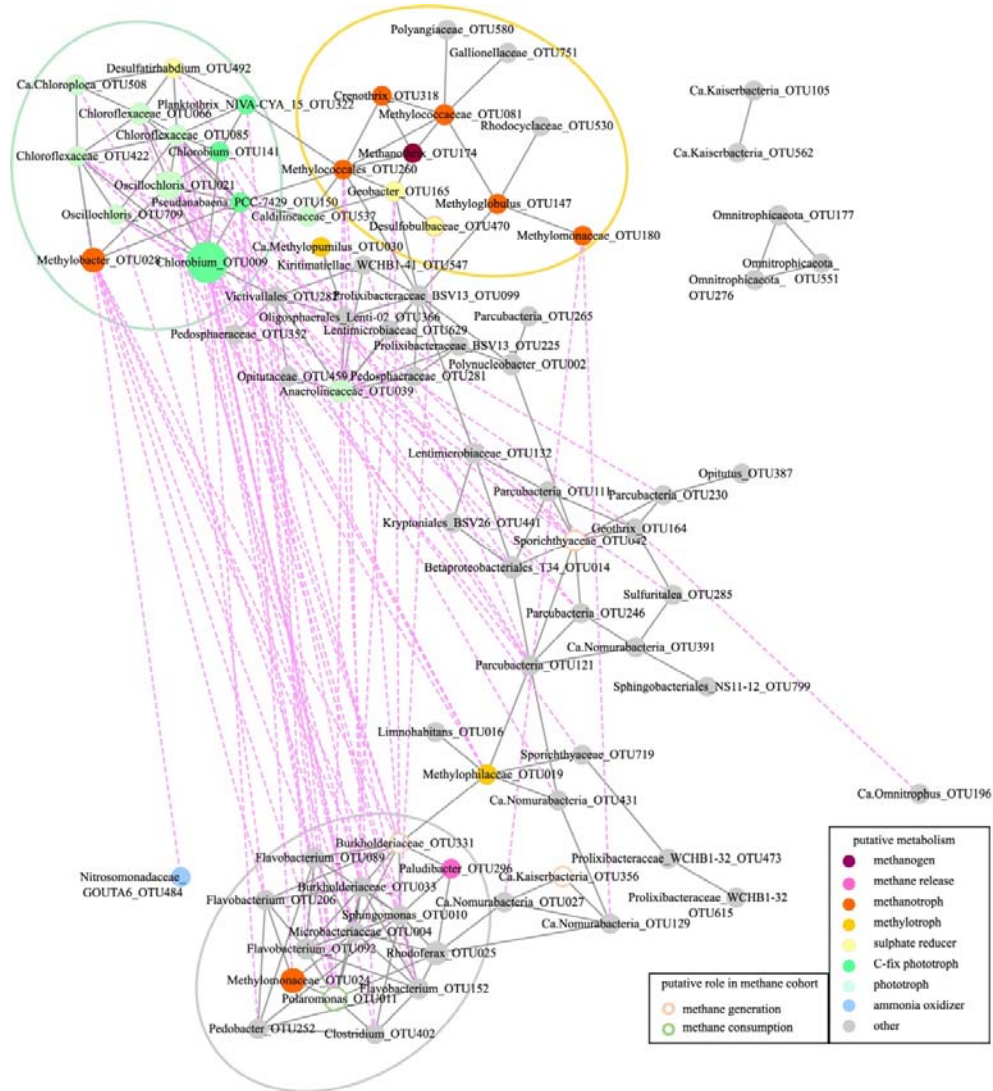
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546 **Figure 1.** Sample location [A], schematic of dilution and set up of model communities [B],

547 most abundant OTUs detected in lake timeseries [C], and most abundant OTUs from model

548 communities [D]. The legend in C is also for D.

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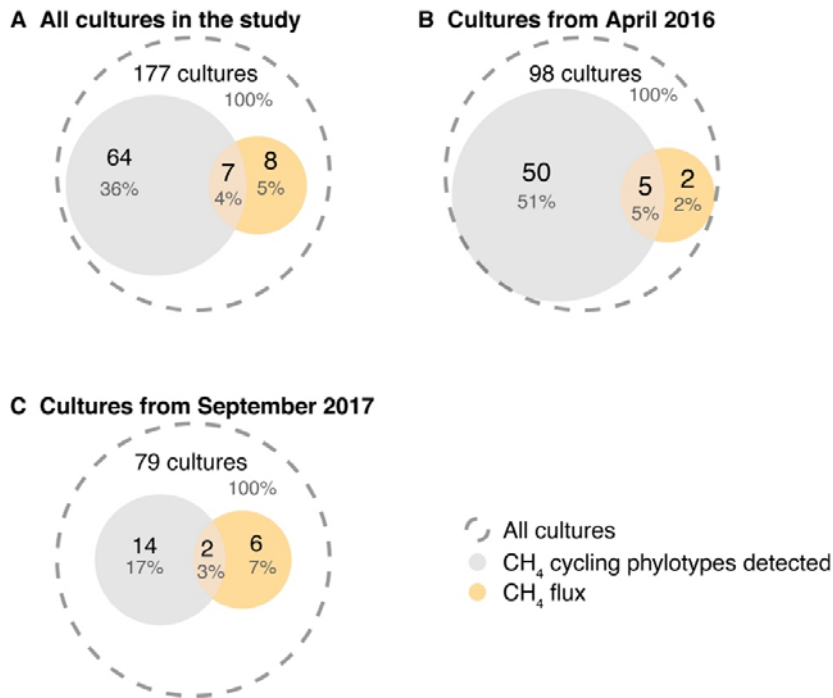


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551 **Figure 2.** Lake time-depth-series network. Filled node-circles are OTUs with the following
 552 color codes: methanogens-red, methanotrophs-orange, methylotrophs-golden, C-fixing
 553 phototrophs-bright green, other phototrophs-pale green, sulphate reducers-yellow. Grey lines
 554 show positive correlations and pink-dotted lines show negative correlations. Green, golden,
 555 and grey bigger circles designate cohort clusters. We designated putative roles in methane
 556 consumption from observations in the dilution model communities and they are shown in not-
 557 filled node-circles in peach and green.

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562 **Figure 3.** Venn diagram of all cultures in this study [A], cultures from April 2016 [B] and

563 cultures from September 2017 [C]. In orange the cultures with measured methane flux and in

564 grey the cultures with detection of (known) methane cycling phylotypes.

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567 **Table 1.** Phylotypes in this study with a potential role in methane cycling.

phylum	family	genus	metabolism	culture note	putative role in CH4 cycling
Patescibacteria	Ca.Vogelbacteria_fa	Ca.Vogelbacteria_ge	unknown	CH4 production without methanogen	CH4 producer or their cohort
Nanoarchaeaeota	Woesearchaeia_fa	Woesearchaeia_ge	unknown	CH4 production without methanogen	CH4 producer or their cohort
Patescibacteria	Ca.Adlerbacteria_fa	Ca.Adlerbacteria_ge	unknown	CH4 production without methanogen	CH4 producer or their cohort
Patescibacteria	Ca.Staskawiczbacteria_fa	Ca.Staskawiczbacteria_ge	unknown	CH4 production without methanogen	CH4 producer or their cohort
Proteobacteria	Burkholderiaceae	Burkholderiaceae_ge	unknown	CH4 production without methanogen	CH4 producer or their cohort
Patescibacteria	Parcubacteria_fa	Parcubacteria_ge	unknown	CH4 production without methanogen	CH4 producer or their cohort
Proteobacteria	Desulfobulbaceae	Desulfobulbaceae_ge	SO4_reductn	CH4 production without methanogen	methanogen cohort
Proteobacteria	Xanthobacteraceae	Rhodospseudomonas	put N2, CH4	CH4 production without methanogen	CH4 producer
Actinobacteria	Corynebacteriaceae	Corynebacterium_1	unknown	CH4 balance in the presence of methantroph	CH4 producing cohort or methantroph inhibitor
Actinobacteria	Kineosporiaceae	Kineosporiaceae_ge	unknown	CH4 balance in the presence of methantroph	CH4 producing cohort or methantroph inhibitor
Actinobacteria	Micrococcaceae	Rothia	unknown	CH4 balance in the presence of methantroph	CH4 producing cohort or methantroph inhibitor
Actinobacteria	Streptomycetaceae	Streptomyces	unknown	CH4 balance in the presence of methantroph	CH4 producing cohort or methantroph inhibitor
Bacteroidetes	SB-5	SB-5_ge	unknown	CH4 balance in the presence of methantroph	CH4 producing cohort or methantroph inhibitor
Firmicutes	Erysipelotrichaceae	Solobacterium	unknown	CH4 balance in the presence of methantroph	CH4 producing cohort or methantroph inhibitor
Nanoarchaeaeota	Woesearchaeia_fa	Woesearchaeia_ge	unknown	CH4 balance in the presence of methantroph	CH4 producing cohort or methantroph inhibitor
Patescibacteria	Berkelbacteria_fa	Berkelbacteria_ge	unknown	CH4 balance in the presence of methantroph	CH4 producing cohort or methantroph inhibitor
Patescibacteria	Ca.Adlerbacteria_fa	Ca.Adlerbacteria_ge	unknown	CH4 balance in the presence of methantroph	CH4 producing cohort or methantroph inhibitor
Patescibacteria	Ca.Azambacteria_fa	Ca.Azambacteria_ge	unknown	CH4 balance in the presence of methantroph	CH4 producing cohort or methantroph inhibitor
Patescibacteria	Ca.Kaiserbacteria_fa	Ca.Kaiserbacteria_ge	unknown	CH4 balance in the presence of methantroph	CH4 producing cohort or methantroph inhibitor
Patescibacteria	Ca.Moranbacteria_fa	Ca.Moranbacteria_ge	unknown	CH4 balance in the presence of methantroph	CH4 producing cohort or methantroph inhibitor
Patescibacteria	Ca.Nomurabacteria_fa	Ca.Nomurabacteria_ge	unknown	CH4 balance in the presence of methantroph	CH4 producing cohort or methantroph inhibitor
Patescibacteria	Ca.Staskawiczbacteria_fa	Ca.Staskawiczbacteria_ge	unknown	CH4 balance in the presence of methantroph	CH4 producing cohort or methantroph inhibitor
Patescibacteria	Ca.Woesebacteria_fa	Ca.Woesebacteria_ge	unknown	CH4 balance in the presence of methantroph	CH4 producing cohort or methantroph inhibitor
Patescibacteria	Ca.Yanofskybacteria_fa	Ca.Yanofskybacteria_ge	unknown	CH4 balance in the presence of methantroph	CH4 producing cohort or methantroph inhibitor
Patescibacteria	CPR2_fa	CPR2_ge	unknown	CH4 balance in the presence of methantroph	CH4 producing cohort or methantroph inhibitor
Patescibacteria	Parcubacteria_fa	Parcubacteria_ge	unknown	CH4 balance in the presence of methantroph	CH4 producing cohort or methantroph inhibitor
Patescibacteria	WWE3_fa	WWE3_ge	unknown	CH4 balance in the presence of methantroph	CH4 producing cohort or methantroph inhibitor
Planctomycetes	Pirellaceae	uncultured	unknown	CH4 balance in the presence of methantroph	CH4 producing cohort or methantroph inhibitor
Proteobacteria	Burkholderiaceae	Acidovorax	unknown	CH4 balance in the presence of methantroph	CH4 producing cohort or methantroph inhibitor
Proteobacteria	Burkholderiaceae	Ralstonia	unknown	CH4 balance in the presence of methantroph	CH4 producing cohort or methantroph inhibitor
Proteobacteria	Coxiellaceae	Coxiella	unknown	CH4 balance in the presence of methantroph	CH4 producing cohort or methantroph inhibitor
Proteobacteria	Hyphomonadaceae	Hirschia	unknown	CH4 balance in the presence of methantroph	CH4 producing cohort or methantroph inhibitor
Proteobacteria	Nitrosomonadaceae	uncultured	NH3 oxidizer	CH4 balance in the presence of methantroph	CH4 producing cohort or methantroph inhibitor
Bacteroidetes	Weeksellaceae	Cloacibacterium	unknown	CH4 consumption without CH4 consumer	CH4 consumer or their cohort
Proteobacteria	Burkholderiaceae	Tepidimonas	unknown	CH4 consumption without CH4 consumer	CH4 consumer or their cohort
Firmicutes	Clostridiaceae_1	Fonticella	unknown	CH4 consumption without CH4 consumer	CH4 consumer or their cohort
Proteobacteria	Xanthomonadaceae	Pseudoxanthomonas	unknown	CH4 consumption without CH4 consumer	CH4 consumer or their cohort
Actinobacteria	Corynebacteriaceae	Lawsonella	unknown	CH4 consumption without CH4 consumer	CH4 consumer or their cohort
Proteobacteria	Beijerinckiaceae	Beijerinckiaceae_ge	unknown	CH4 consumption without CH4 consumer	CH4 consumer or their cohort

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