

1 **Genomics of viruses infecting green and purple sulfur bacteria in two euxinic lakes**

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17 auxiliary metabolic genes

18

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20

21 **Abstract**

22 Viral infections of marine bacteria modulate the rates of primary production and the
23 cycling of organic and inorganic matter in the world's oceans. Here, we investigated the
24 hypothesis that viral infections influence the ecology of purple and green sulfur bacteria (PSB
25 and GSB) in anoxic and sulfidic (euxinic) lakes, modern analogs of early Earth oceans. Over 200
26 high and medium quality viral contigs were identified in long-read metagenomes from the
27 sediments and water column of Lime Blue and Poison Lake, respectively. We compared these
28 sequences with 94 predicted prophages identified in the complete genomes of PSB (n = 213) and
29 GSB (n = 33). Viral genomes carrying *psbA*, encoding the small subunit of photosystem II
30 protein, were present in all three datasets (sediment, water column, and complete genomes). The
31 ubiquity of these genes suggests that PSB and GSB viruses interfere with the light reactions of
32 sulfur-oxidizing autotrophs in a process similar to viral modulation of photosynthesis in
33 Cyanobacteria. Viruses predicted to infect PSB and GSB also encoded auxiliary metabolic genes
34 involved in reductive sulfur assimilation as cysteine, a pathway not yet described in these sulfur
35 bacteria, as well as genes involved in pigment production (*crtF*) and carbon fixation (CP12, *zwf*,
36 PGD). These observations highlight the potential for viral modulation of metabolic markers used
37 as proxies to interpret biogeochemical processes in early Earth oceans.

38 **Introduction**

39 Before the Great Oxygenation Event, culminating 2.33 billion years ago, anoxygenic
40 prototrophic bacteria catalyzed most marine primary production, influencing ocean stratification
41 and the planet's oxidant balance (Kappler and Straub, 2005; Johnston *et al.*, 2009; Farquhar *et*
42 *al.*, 2011). Our view of the biological processes mediated by microorganisms in ancient Earth
43 has largely been informed by the assumption that there is a direct feedback between
44 environmental gradients (such as pH, salinity, temperature, nutrients, oxygen/sulfide, carbon
45 source, sulfate availability) and microbial community composition and distribution (Borda *et al.*,
46 2001; Brocks *et al.*, 2005; Kappler and Straub, 2005; Brocks and Schaeffer, 2008; Johnston *et*
47 *al.*, 2009; Farquhar *et al.*, 2011; Fakhraee *et al.*, 2019; Ozaki *et al.*, 2019; Bosco-Santos *et al.*,
48 2020). While these assumptions may be broadly correct, they produce an aggregate view of the
49 complexity of microbial interactions that overlooks a critical regulator of pre-GOE
50 biogeochemical cycles. Here we propose that a largely unexplored biotic factor controls the
51 distribution and activity of anoxygenic sulfide oxidizing phototrophs: viral infection.

52 Anoxygenic sulfide oxidizing phototrophs from green (GSB, family *Chlorobiaceae*;
53 Garrity *et al.*, 2001) and purple (PSB, families *Chromatiaceae* and *Ectothiorhodospiraceae*;
54 Imhoff, 2003) sulfur bacteria inhabit the euxinic photic zone, where sulfide intercepts the sunlit
55 portions of stratified marine and lacustrine anoxic water columns. These primary producer
56 groups have narrow environmental optimal requirements as micro-oxic to anoxic conditions, free
57 sulfide, and sunlight, with GSB more adapted to lower light levels and PSB more tolerant to
58 dissolved oxygen (Hamilton *et al.*, 2014). Consequently, GSB and PSB light-harvesting
59 pigments and biomarkers are potential proxies for diagnosing basin depth and redox state in the
60 geologic record, providing clues about past biological processes and environmental conditions

61 (Koopmans *et al.*, 1996; Brocks and Schaeffer, 2008; Brocks and Banfield, 2009). In other
62 words, the presence or preservation (as diagenetic products) of GSB (chlorobactene and
63 isorenieratene) and PSB (okenone) biomarkers are interpreted as deep or shallow redoxcline,
64 respectively (Brocks *et al.*, 2005; Brocks and Schaeffer, 2008). Yet, a growing body of evidence
65 shows that the distribution of GSB and PSB in modern water columns is not as tightly correlated
66 to physical and chemical conditions (e.g., sulfide and light) as previously thought, suggesting
67 that biological interactions play a significant role in defining the distribution of these phototrophs
68 (Massé *et al.*, 2002; Hamilton *et al.*, 2014; Llorens-Marès *et al.*, 2017).

69 Bacteriophages, also known as phages, are viruses that infect bacteria and can laterally
70 transfer genes, modulate gene expression, and control host population dynamics (Breitbart,
71 2012). In the modern surface ocean, viral predation is responsible for the daily turnover of about
72 25% of the bacterioplankton (Breitbart *et al.*, 2018). Viruses of modern Cyanobacteria encode
73 genes for enzymes in the Calvin cycle, blocking carbon fixation during infection while
74 increasing nucleotide production through the Pentose Phosphate pathway (Thompson *et al.*,
75 2011). Most of these carbon metabolism pathways are shared between Cyanobacteria and sulfide
76 oxidizing phototrophs, and viral interference with carbon fixation in GSB and PSB is possible. A
77 recent study showed that lake GSB populations were concurrently infected with 2-8 viruses per
78 cell (Berg *et al.*, 2021). One GSB host was consistently associated with two prophages with a
79 nearly 100% infection rate for over 10 years (Berg *et al.*, 2021). GSB genomes have high
80 signatures of horizontal gene transfer, reaching 24% of all genes in *Chlorobaculum tepidum*
81 (Nakamura *et al.*, 2004). Likewise, phages infecting oxygenic phototrophs encode many genes
82 involved in the synthesis of light harvesting pigments (*hol*, *pebS*, *cpeT*, *pcyA*) (Breitbart *et al.*,
83 2018). Therefore, probing phage regulation of pigment synthesis in anoxygenic phototrophs is a

84 necessary step toward understanding the ecology of biomarker production in euxinic systems,
85 with implications for interpreting the deep time record based on diagenetic products of pigment
86 biomarkers.

87 Here, we identify through long-read metagenomic sequencing the genomes of viruses
88 putatively infecting GSB and PSB inhabiting euxinic lakes. These viruses encode several genes
89 involved in carbon fixation, sulfur metabolism, and pigment production. Based on these
90 observations, we propose that GSB and PSB viruses manipulate host metabolism, potentially
91 influencing these autotrophs' biogeochemical signatures in the geologic record.

92

93 **Methods**

94 *Sampling*

95 Poison Lake water column (2L) was collected from a boat using a peristaltic pump to
96 obtain a sample from the sulfidic zone. Subsamples (50ml) were immediately frozen until further
97 laboratory processing. In the laboratory, samples were defrosted and incubated overnight at 4 °C
98 with Polyethylene Glycol 8000 10 %. Samples were centrifuged at 5000 g for 2 hours at 4 °C
99 and the pellet was collected for DNA extraction with a DNeasy PowerSoil kit (Qiagen,
100 Germany). The sediment from Lime Blue was collected with a freeze core (modified from
101 Stocker and Williams, 1972). The sediments were sectioned within a sterile flow bench to
102 prevent organic contamination. An archive section (~1/3 of the core's width) was preserved and
103 stored at -80°C for future use. Sediment was collected every 2cm, for a total of 25 samples dating
104 back to the deposition year of 1424. Sediment subsamples (1g) were extracted using the DNeasy
105 PowerSoil kit (Qiagen, Germany), following manufacturer's instructions. Preliminary 16S
106 sequencing of these samples revealed an abundance of anoxygenic photosynthetic bacteria in the
107 sedimentary record of Lime Blue in the last ~580 years where it is possible to observe that above
108 15 cm deep the relative abundance of each family increased more than 100%. The top 2cm
109 sample was sequenced here.

110

111 *Long-read sequencing*

112 Metagenomic libraries were prepared using the ONT Ligation Sequencing Kit (SKQ-
113 LSK110, Oxford Nanopore Technologies) following the manufacturer's instructions. In short,
114 1mg of dsDNA was End-prepped and repaired to ligate a poly-A tail using the NEBNext
115 Companion Module for Oxford Nanopore Technologies Ligation Sequencing (cat # E7180S),

116 before sequencing adaptors were ligated onto the ends. Between each step, DNA was cleaned
117 using 1.8X Agencourt AMPure XP beads (Beckman, USA), washing the beads with 70%
118 molecular grade Ethyl alcohol (Sigma-Aldrich, USA) before suspending in Nuclease-free water
119 (Fisher, USA). Sequencing libraries were loaded onto and sequenced using a FLO-MINSP6 flow
120 cell, and sequencing protocol was run for 48 hrs.

121

122 *Identification of viruses in metagenomes and publicly available PSB and GSB genomes*

123 ONT sequencing adaptors were trimmed using Porechop v0.2.4
124 (<https://github.com/rrwick/Porechop>), and trimmed reads were assembled with Flye v2.9 (Lin *et*
125 *al.*, 2016; Kolmogorov *et al.*, 2020) using the *--meta* parameter. In parallel, low quality and short
126 reads were removed by NanoFilt v2.6.0 (De Coster *et al.*, 2018) to a minimum Q-value of 9 and
127 length of 1 kb. Both the metaFlye contigs and quality filtered ONT reads were utilized for the
128 detection of phages by VIBRANT v1.2.1, a bioinformatics pipeline using Hidden Markov Model
129 (HMM) searches to identify clusters of viral genes in unknown sequences, allowing the sorting
130 of high-confidence viral genomes and genome fragments within complex samples (Kieft *et al.*,
131 2020).

132 Publicly available bacterial genomes with a completion level of ‘complete genome’,
133 ‘scaffold’ and ‘contig’ belonging to the two PSB families *Chromatiaceae* (98 genomes) and
134 *Ectothiorhodospiraceae* (115 genomes), and the GSB phyla Chlorobiota (33 genomes) were
135 retrieved from NCBI in 2022 (Supplementary Table 1). Putative prophages were identified in
136 these genomes using VIBRANT v1.2.1.

137 The viral genomes and genome fragments were screened for the presence of carbon,
138 sulfur, and pigment-related auxiliary metabolic genes (AMGs) and their potential for lysogeny

139 (presence of transposases and integrases) through HMM comparisons with three databases:
140 Pfam, VOGs, and SEED. Viral genomes containing AMGs of interest were visualized using the
141 R package genoPlotR v0.8.11 (Guy *et al.*, 2010). For a small selection of phages containing
142 AMGs of interest, the Max Planck Institute (MPI) HHpred server (Zimmermann *et al.*, 2018)
143 was utilized to improve genome annotations (E-value <0.01 and Probability > 80%), in addition
144 to the Phage Artificial Neural Networks (PhANNs, Cantu *et al.*, 2020) to confirm phage
145 structural proteins (Confidence > 80%). To analyze the abundance and coverage of these putative
146 viral genomes in the environment, trimmed reads were mapped to the viral contig database at
147 high stringency (>95% identity). An outlined summary of the entire workflow can be seen in
148 Supplementary Figure 1.

149 *Generation and quality control of MAGs*

150 Metagenome-assembled genomes (MAGs) of Bacteria were generated by mapping raw
151 ONT reads to metaFlye contigs with Minimap2 v2.24 (Li, 2018). Subsequence .SAM files were
152 compressed, sorted, and indexed with samtools v1.9 (Danecek *et al.*, 2021). Metagenomic bins
153 were generated using three binning programs: CONCOCT v1.0 (Alneberg *et al.*, 2014),
154 MetaBAT2 v2.12.1 (Kang *et al.*, 2019), and MaxBin2 v2.2.6 (Wu *et al.*, 2016). Resulting bins
155 were refined using MetaWRAP v1.3 *bin_refinement* module (Uritskiy *et al.*, 2018), and refined
156 bins were assessed for contamination and completion with CheckM v1.2.0 (Parks *et al.*, 2015).
157 Bins with $\geq 50\%$ completion and $\leq 10\%$ contamination were kept for further analyses. MAG
158 depth of coverage (mean) was quantified by mapping clean reads to the metagenomic bins and
159 taking the mean percentage of reads mapped. ONT reads and contigs were taxonomically
160 classified by Kraken v2.0 (Wood and Salzberg, 2014; Wood *et al.*, 2019) and abundance
161 estimated by Bracken (Bayesian Re-estimation of Abundance after Classification with Kraken)
162 v2.7 (Lu *et al.*, 2017).

163

164 *Phylogeny and taxonomic classification of MAGs*

165 The 16S rRNA gene, if present, was extracted from MAGs and inspected for
166 contamination directly from the genomes and metagenomic bins using ContEst16S. Neighbours
167 for MAG 16Sr rRNA gene were determined using BLASTn against the NCBI database, and
168 when an uncultured clone was the only match, additional BLASTn of the 16S rRNA was run
169 against the SILVA database. Sequences were aligned using MAFFT v7.5 (Katoh *et al.*, 2002;
170 Katoh and Standley, 2013), and a maximum-likelihood tree was generated using RAxML-NG

171 v0.9 at 200 bootstraps (Kozlov *et al.*, 2019). The tree was visualized and edited for readability
172 using the interactive tree of life (iTOL) v6 (Letunic and Bork, 2007, 2021).

173

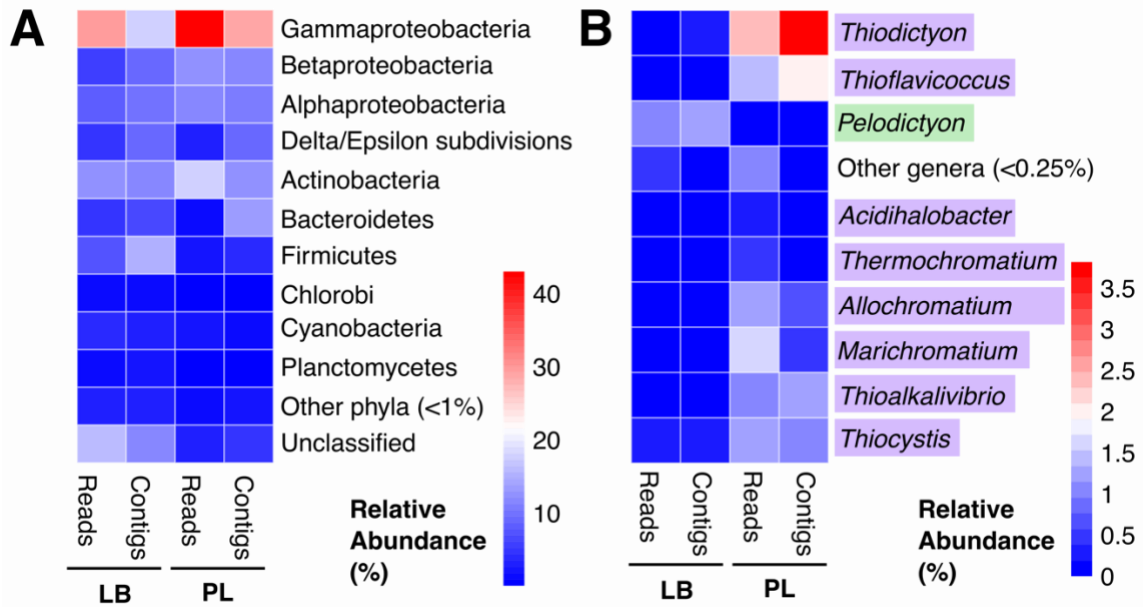
174 *Phage host prediction*

175 Viral genomes observed within bacterial genome fragments were identified as lysogenic.
176 Viral hosts were identified using a combination of gene homologies, the presence of tRNAs, and
177 CRISPR (clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats) spacers (Coutinho *et al.*,
178 2017; Borges *et al.*, 2022). (I) Sequence homology matches were made from the phages
179 identified from Lime Blue and Poison Lake to databases generated from PSB/GSB genomes
180 retrieved from NCBI, and MAGs generated in this study using BLASTn (Camacho *et al.*, 2009).
181 Only hits >80% sequence identity across a minimum alignment of 1,000 nucleotides were
182 considered as possible hosts for NCBI and RefSeq genomes, and 95% sequence identity against
183 MAGs. (II) A database was created with the CRISPR spacers from PSB, GSB genomes and
184 MAG using minCED v0.4.3 (Mining CRISPRs in Environmental Datasets;
185 <https://github.com/ctSkennerton/minced>), which uses CRISPR Recognition Tools (CRT) v1.2
186 (Bland *et al.*, 2007), and sequence homology matches were made against the phages using
187 BLASTn with the parameter *-task "blastn-short"*, hits were only considered with a maximum of
188 2 mismatches/gaps, 100% sequenced identity, and minimum length of 20 nucleotides. (III) Phage
189 tRNAs were detected using tRNAScan-SE v2.0 (Lowe and Chan, 2016), and matched against
190 PSB/GSB/MAG genomes database for hits using BLASTn, a confident hit was considered at \geq
191 90% sequence identity and \geq 90% coverage. (IV) Phylogenomic analysis was performed against
192 the GL-UVAB (Gene Lineage of Uncultured Viruses of Archaea and Bacteria) reference
193 database, as previously described (Coutinho *et al.*, 2019).

194 **Results**

195 *Bacterial community composition*

196 Nanopore sequencing generated 3.9×10^6 reads from Lime Blue (LB) sediment and 19.2
197 $\times 10^6$ reads from Poison Lake (PL) water. Trimming, quality filtering short (reads ≤ 1000 bp) and
198 low-quality reads (Q -value < 9) removed 96 and 93% of reads from LB and PL, respectively.
199 Assemblies generated 40,807 LB contigs and 4,310 PL contigs. A broader GSB and PSB
200 bacterial diversity was identified by taxonomic classification of reads than by metagenomic
201 binning (Supplementary Figure 2-3). According to Kraken2 classification, clean reads from LB
202 and PL were dominated by members of the phylum Proteobacteria (reads: 48.77% LB and
203 70.51% PL; contigs: 45.11% LB and 59.31% PL) (Figure 1A), of which Gammaproteobacteria
204 was the most abundant class for both. For LB sediment, at read level, LB was dominated by the
205 anaerobic specialist order Enterobacterales (22.50%), but this was not reflected post assembly,
206 with only 5.89% of contigs classified as Enterobacterales. For PL, the order of phototrophic
207 sulfur bacteria Chromatiales was the most abundant Gammaproteobacteria (reads: 11.38%;
208 contigs: 8.60%).



209

210 **Figure 1. Phylum and genus level taxonomic classification of reads and contigs from Lime**

211 **Blue (LB) and Poison Lake (PL).** (A) Phylum level read and contig diversity with members of

212 the phylum Proteobacteria split into class level, and (B) genus level diversity of Chlorobi,

213 *Chromatiaceae* and *Ectothiorhodospiraceae*, with PSB highlighted in purple and GSB

214 highlighted in green.

215 Within the order Chromatiales, PL water samples show higher relative abundances of

216 families *Chromatiaceae* (reads: 8.45%; contigs: 8.38%) and *Ectothiorhodospiraceae* (reads:

217 1.98%; contigs: 1.25%) and contained a variety of PSB genera in abundances ranging from

218 <0.25% to 3.82%, with *Thiodictyon* spp. (reads: 2.34%; contigs: 3.82%) being the most

219 abundant. In contrast, phototrophic sulfur bacteria represented a smaller fraction of the

220 metagenomic dataset in LB sediment, with a greater abundance of GSB from phylum Chlorobi

221 (reads: 1.26%; contigs: 1.24%) than PSB, order Chromatiales (reads: 0.83%; contigs: 1.05%).

222 The genera *Pelodictyon* spp. was the most abundant GSB (reads: 0.10%; contigs: 1.15%), and

223 *Thiocystis* spp. (reads: 0.25%; contigs: 0.36%) was the most abundant PSB.

224

225 *Bacterial MAG recovery and phylogeny*

226 Bacterial genomes were binned from LB sediment and PL water assemblies, resulting in
 227 17 MAGs with a minimum completion of 50% and maximum contamination of 10% (Table 1).
 228 Of these MAGs, seven were classified as high quality ($\geq 70\%$ completion, $\leq 10\%$ contamination).
 229 The most abundant MAG, as measured by mean coverage of Nanopore reads mapped to the bins,
 230 was the PL_bin01 (mean = 2.74%), classified as a potential PSB belonging to the genera
 231 *Thiohalocapsa*, and LB_bin03 (mean = 0.11%), classified as Candidatus Komeilibacteria (Supp.
 232 Figure 2).

233 **Table 1. Taxonomy and quality of MAGs.** Quality was estimated by CheckM and taxonomy
 234 by 16S rRNA gene using the SILVA ACT service. Values above the threshold for a high-quality
 235 MAG are denoted in bold ($\geq 70\%$ completion, and $\leq 10\%$ contamination). (*) denotes potential
 236 PSB MAG, and (†) denotes a MAG identified as potential host to a phage by CRISPR spacers.
 237 (Comp., bin completeness; Contam., bin contamination; Strain het., proportion of the
 238 contamination that originates from the same or similar strains)

Bin	CheckM Marker lineage	16S rRNA placement base on the SILVA-ACT		Comp.	Contam.	Strain het.	Mean cov. (%)
		Phylum	Lowest taxonomic classification				
LB_bin01	k_Bacteria (UID2569)	Spirochaetota	g_Treponema	60.12	1.10	0.00	0.009
LB_bin02	k_Bacteria (UID2569)	Latescibacterota	p_Latescibacterota	58.63	1.10	0.00	0.016
LB_bin03	k_Bacteria (UID2569)	Patescibacteria	o_Candidatus Komeilibacteria	62.23	0.00	0.00	0.106
LB_bin04	k_Bacteria (UID2569)	Latescibacterota	o_WCHB1-41	55.01	1.10	0.00	0.011
LB_bin05	k_Bacteria (UID2569)	No 16S rRNA gene detected		70.8	4.65	33.33	0.015
LB_bin06	k_Bacteria (UID2569)	Verrucomicrobiota	p_Verrucomicrobiota	36.55	3.49	0.00	0.008
LB_bin07	k_Bacteria (UID2569)	Chloroflexi	o_MSBL5 (contaminated)	74.72	7.59	20.0	0.005
LB_bin08	k_Bacteria (UID2569)	No 16S rRNA gene detected		61.32	2.63	16.67	0.018
LB_bin09	k_Bacteria (UID2569)	k_Archaea	f_Candidatus Iainarchaeum	56.63	0.00	0.00	0.005
LB_bin10	k_Bacteria (UID2569)	Bacteroidota	g_Ignavibacterium	58.8	3.03	28.57	0.012

LB_bin11	p_Bacteroidetes (UID2605)	No 16S rRNA gene detected		59.05	9.14	0.00	0.005
PL_bin01*†	c_Gammaproteobacteria (UID4274)	Proteobacteria	g_Thiohalocapsa (Chromatiales)	85.17	1.17	40.0	2.724
PL_bin02	k_Bacteria (UID2569)	Latescibacterota	o_WCHB1-41	76.74	3.05	9.09	0.009
PL_bin03	k_Bacteria (UID2569)	Deinococcota	g_Truepera	76.11	2.97	71.43	0.010
PL_bin04	c_Deltaproteobacteria (UID3217)	Desulfobacterota	g_Desuloanatronum	89.53	0.60	100	0.016
PL_bin05	k_Bacteria (UID2569)	Planctomycetota	f_KCLunmb-38-53	82.29	3.42	11.11	0.027
PL_bin06	k_Bacteria (UID2569)	No 16S rRNA gene detected		68.8	0.00	0.00	0.01

239

240 Diversity of PSB-infecting phages

241 From publicly available PSB and GSB genomes, VIBRANT identified a total of 32
 242 phages of high quality (HQ), 36 of medium quality (MQ) and 183 of low quality (LQ). Of the
 243 HQ and MQ phages, 64 were from Chromatiales genomes (33 *Chromatidales* phages, and 31
 244 *Ectothiorhodospiraceae*). The majority (63) of HQ and MQ phages were classified as lysogenic,
 245 and of the eight phages classified as lytic, three were complete/circular. No Chlorobi phages
 246 were identified as lysogenic, indicating the absence of known integration enzymes in these
 247 integrated prophages identified within their hosts' genomes. In total, four complete genomes
 248 were predicted, one from the GSB *Chlorobium limicola* strain Frassasi, one from *Thiocystis*
 249 *violacea* strain DSM 207, and two from *Thiohalocapsa* sp. ML1 and *Halochromatium roseum*
 250 DSM 18859.

251 From the metagenomic sequences, VIBRANT identified 2,742 phages from LB contigs
 252 (100 MQ phages and 24 HQ phages). From PL metagenomic reads, 5,806 phages were
 253 identified, all of which were LQ phages. Two phages were classified as complete and circular
 254 from LB and none from PL. Contigs did not improve the quality of predicted phages in PL, and
 255 filtered PL reads were utilized for further viral analyses.

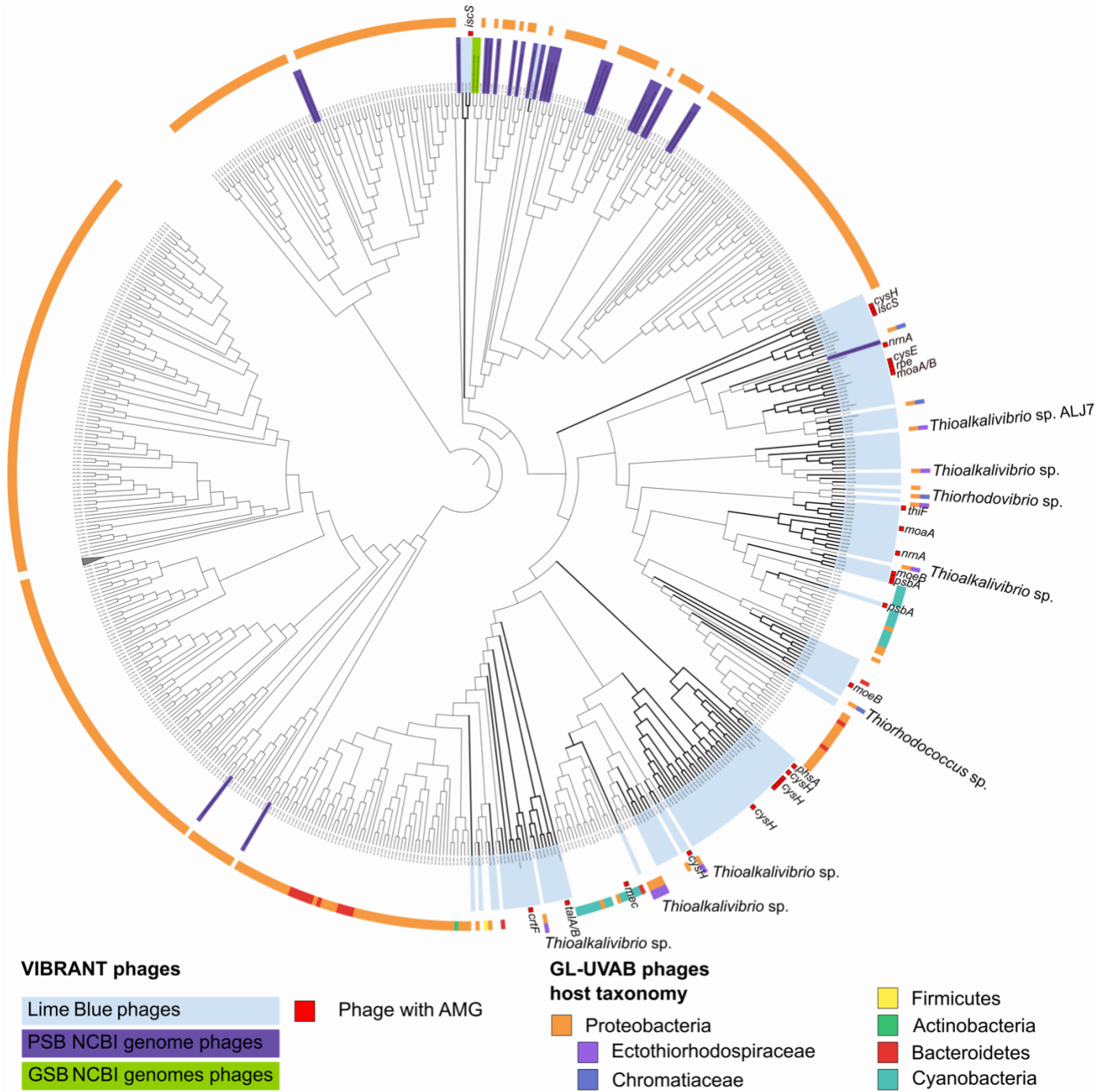
256 Bacterial MAGs and publicly available PSB and GSB genomes were utilized to predict
 257 hosts of PSB- and GSB-infecting phages using a combination of BLASTn against PSB and GSB

258 genomes, CRISPR-spacers of the putative host and, if available, tRNA sequences (Supp. Table
259 2). Homology matches against a database of PSB/GSB genomes predicted hosts for 5,451 phages
260 (12 LB phages, and 5,439 PL), with the most common host for phages from both samples being
261 *Chromatium weissei* DSM 5161. Homology matches against MAGs resulted in 547 high
262 confidence predictions, with the PSB PL_bin01 (*Thiohalocapsa* sp.) and the PL_bin04
263 (*Desuloanatronum* sp.) as the most common predicted phage hosts. High confidence phage-host
264 linkages based on CRISPR-spacer homology matches with 100% identity, and > 20 nucleotide
265 coverage predicted hosts for 54 phages (44 LB phages, and 10 PL phages). The most common
266 host for LB phages was *Ectothiorhodospira* spp., while for PL phages predicted hosts included
267 *Allochromatium* spp., *Chlorobium* spp. and *Thiohalocapsa* spp. Homology matches to a database
268 of tRNA sequences only yielded four predictions, with *Thiohalocapsa* sp. ML1 being the only
269 predicted hosts for three PL phages, and *Thiorhodovibrio winogradskyi* strain 6511 for one LB
270 phage.

271 The LB and PL phages were compared to reference viral genomes using clustering based
272 on gene sharing distance (Coutinho *et al.*, 2019) (Figure 2). Most LB phages and PSB and GSB
273 phage clusters had long branch lengths, evidence of low similarity between phages predicted by
274 VIBRANT in this study and the reference viral genomes (Supplementary Figure 4). Several
275 clusters were formed exclusively of LB phages. Only one cluster of LB phages closely relates to
276 a predicted phage from PSB genomes, despite clustering with reference GL-UVAB phages with
277 PSB hosts. This may indicate that many of the phages detected in this study infect
278 uncharacterized bacterial hosts. The GL-UVAB viruses related to the viruses identified here
279 infected *Chromatidales* and *Ectothiorhodospiraceae*, with the taxonomy of most hosts

280 unresolved beyond family level, including viruses of *Thioalkalivibrio*, *Thiorhodococcus*, and
281 *Thiorhodovibrio*.

282

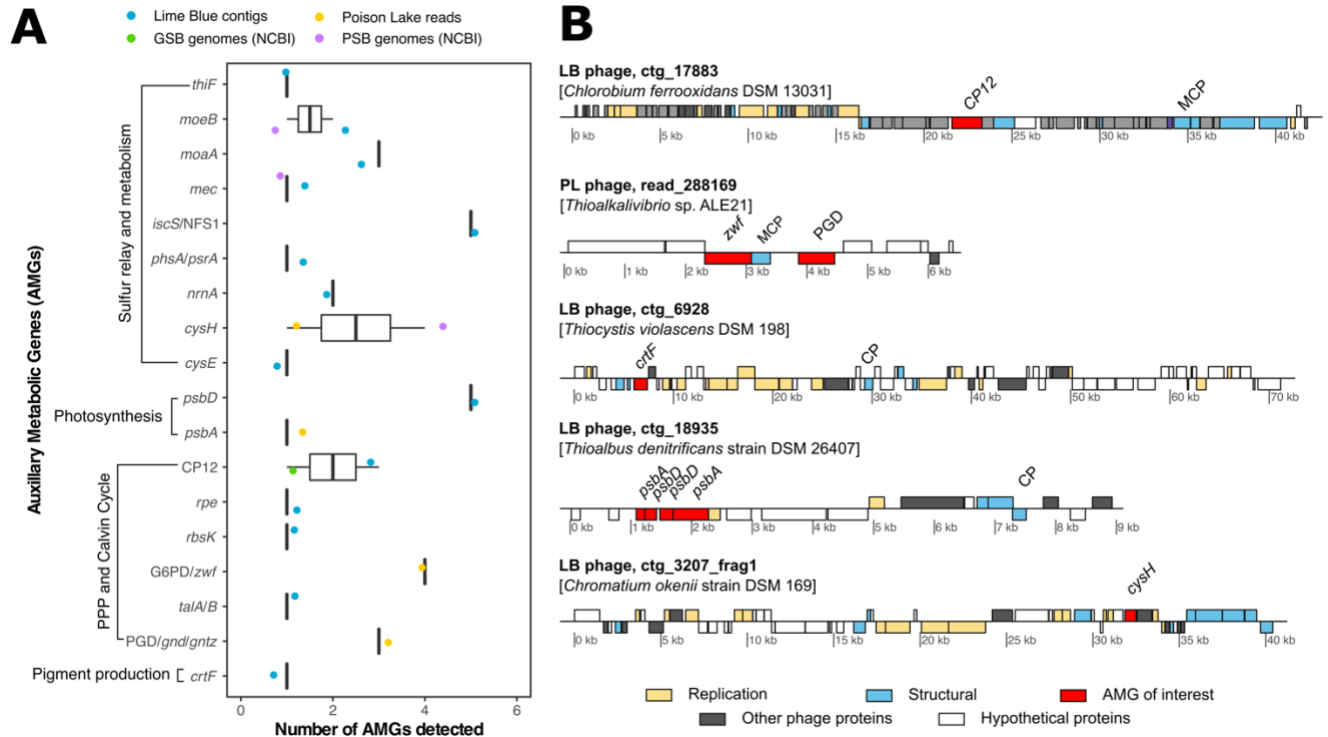


283

284 **Figure 2. Clustering of VIBRANT phages from LB metagenome (blue) and PSB genomes**
285 **(purple) and GSB genomes (green) and the reference phage genomes based on their gene-**
286 **sharing Dice distances.** The VIBRANT phages from Lime Blue, many of which contained
287 AMGs of interest (inner ring), form novel branches with low similarity to reference phage
288 genomes. Where known, the host genera of the reference PSB infecting phage were listed. The
289 branch lengths are ignored to better display clustering topology, for a version displaying branch
290 length, see Supplementary Figure 4.

291 *Phage AMGs influencing diverse metabolic pathways*

292 A total of 52 and 96 AMGs were detected from PL and LB phages respectively, with the
293 AMGs representing 153 distinct KEGG pathways, including photosynthesis, sulfur metabolism
294 and relay, pigment synthesis, Calvin Cycle, and Pentose Phosphate Pathway (PPP) (Figure 3A).
295 Five phages from the *Chromatidales* genomes contained AMGs involved in sulfur metabolism
296 and relay (*cysH*, *moeB*, and *mec*). The bacterial hosts of these phages included *C. weisse* DSM
297 5161 (*cysH* and *mec*), *T. violacea* DSM 207 (*cysH*), *Thiospirillum jenense* DSM 216 (*moeB*), and
298 *Allochromatium humboldtianum* DSM 21881 (*mec*). The phages predicted from *T. jenense* and
299 *A. humboldtianum* encoding AMGs were classified as lysogenic. A single lysogenic phage from
300 an *Ectothiorhodospirales* genome contained a *cysH* that was detected from the plasmid pTK9001
301 of *Thioalkalivibrio* sp. K90mix. A single lytic phage from the GSB *Chlorobium limicola* strain
302 Frasassi contained the CP12 gene involved in blocking carbon fixation through the Calvin Cycle
303 in Cyanobacteria.



304

305 **Figure 3. (A) AMG abundances and (B) genome maps of putative phages containing AMGs**

306 **of interest.** AMGs were identified by VIBRANT except for CP12, which was identified by

307 BLASTp of phage ORFs to a database of available CP12 proteins from UniProt. Putative hosts

308 identified based on CRISPR spacers are indicated for each phage (LB, Lime Blue; PL, Poison

309 Lake; MCP; major capsid protein; CP; putative capsid protein)

310 LB phages encoded several AMGs involved in sulfur metabolism (*cysE*, *nrnA* and *psbA*)

311 and sulfur relay (*moeB*, *thiF* and *iscS*). While most of the AMGs were detected in phages

312 predicted to be lytic, four LB lysogenic phages contained a copy of *cysH*, *moeA*, and *nrnA*. No

313 PL phages were observed to contain sulfur metabolism or relay AMGs. AMGs related to

314 photosynthesis (*psbA* and *psbD*) were present in both PL and LB lytic phages, with four phages

315 containing multiple copies of the AMGs that were adjacently positioned, such as was seen for

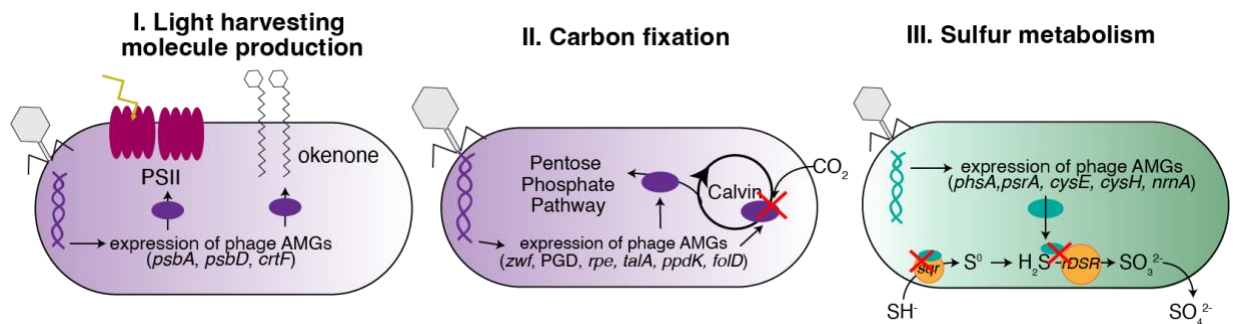
316 LB phage contig_18935 (Figure 3B). A copy of the *crtF* gene, part of the okenone synthesis

317 pathway of pigment production was identified in a putative lytic phage. Among the phages with

318 AMGs of interest, three LB phage-host linkages could be made with high confidence based on
319 CRISPR-spacer homology matches, two were predicted to infect the GSB *Chlorobium*
320 *chlorochromatii* CaD3 (encoding *moeB* and *iscS*), and one infecting *Pararheinheimera soli* BD-
321 d46 (encoding *nrnA*). From the lower confidence matches (100% identity, 18-20 nucleotide
322 coverage, and <2 mismatches), we identified nine LB phage-host pairings among the phages
323 with AMGs of interest. This included the *crtF*-containing LB phage (contig_6928) predicted to
324 infect the PSB *Thiocystis violascens* DSM 198, a lysogenic phage with two copies of *cysH*
325 (contig_11073) predicted to infect the GSB *Chlorobium phaeobacteroides* DSM 266, and a
326 phage with *thiF* (contig_43205) infecting the PSB *Arsukibacterium* sp. MJ3.

327 **Discussion**

328 Here we identified viral genomes recovered from LB and PL metagenomes that include
329 novel lineages infecting GSB and PSB, as evidenced by the long branch lengths during
330 phylogenomic analysis (Supplementary Figure 4). Many of these novel phage lineages include
331 phages with AMGs with potential to modify hosts' metabolism and ecology. From this
332 preliminary work on two proxy lakes in the Pacific Northwest, we propose that bacteriophages
333 have the potential to affect the distribution and the energetic metabolism of GSB and PSB by
334 modulating (I) light harvesting molecule production, (II) carbon fixation, and (III) sulfur
335 metabolism (Figure 4).



336

337 **Figure 4. Conceptual hypotheses for viral infection influence on PSB and GSB**

338 **communities.** Viral predation and gene transfer affect the biosignatures of PSB and GSB by
339 modulating their I. pigment production; III. carbon fixation; and III. sulfur metabolism.

340 *Viruses encode pigment and reaction center genes*

341 Ecological distributions of GSB and PSB in euxinic water bodies and the presence or
342 preservation of their light harvesting biomarkers (i.e., chlorobactene, isorenieratene, okenone,
343 and their diagenetic products) in the fossil record as proxies of photic zone euxinia (Brocks *et al.*,
344 2005; Brocks and Schaeffer, 2008) are not fully explained by physical and chemical bottom-up
345 controls. Our metagenomes from LB and PL presented an alternative explanation for this
346 observation, as we identified a putative viral genome encoding a gene for the second-to-last step
347 in okenone synthesis (*crtF*) (Vogl and Bryant, 2011) and predicted to infect the PSB *T.*
348 *violascens* DSM 198 (Figure 3B). We hypothesize that viral-encoded auxiliary metabolic genes
349 may increase the production of okenone by PSB in LB, despite the dominance of GSB in this
350 lake. If true, this work will have important implications for interpretation of the deep time record
351 of the diagenetic products of pigment biomarkers. This hypothesis is consistent with previous
352 work showing that horizontal gene transfer in Lake Banyoles (Spain) results in the unexpected
353 synthesis of BChl *e* and isorenieratene by *Chlorobium luteolum*, a bacterium that usually
354 synthesizes BChl *c* (Llorens-Marès *et al.*, 2017). This gene transfer event offered fitness
355 advantage to *C. luteolum* over green-coloured GSB by expansion of photo-adaptation range in a
356 deep basin. GSB genomes have high signatures of horizontal gene transfer, reaching 24% of all
357 genes in *Chlorobaculum tepidum* (Nakamura *et al.*, 2004). We also identified putative viral
358 genome fragments carrying genes encoding the D1 and D2 subunits of the PSII (*psbA* and *psbD*).
359 By modifying light reaction rates through the expression of these genes, viral infection could
360 indirectly affect the metabolism of pigment molecules associated with reaction centers.

361 *Viruses encode carbon fixation genes*

362 PSB and GSB are the main autotrophs in euxinic lakes, yet their abundances are
363 unreliable proxies for photosynthetic activity, as demonstrated in Lake Cadagno, Switzerland
364 (Musat *et al.*, 2008). In one growing season, the PSB *C. okenii* accounted for only 0.3% of cell
365 abundance and 70% of the carbon uptake. In subsequent growing seasons, GSB became
366 dominant, representing 95% of the community, but the PSB *T. syntrophicum* was responsible for
367 25.9% of carbon fixation (Storelli *et al.*, 2013). Given that PSB are more depleted in ^{13}C than
368 GSB using the same carbon source, their carbon isotope fractionation patterns can be used to
369 determine the relative contributions of PSB and GSB to photosynthetic production (Posth *et al.*,
370 2017). During a spring bloom in Lake Cadagno three PSB strains contributed 38% to the bulk
371 isotope signal while a single GSB contributed 62%. By fall, these PSB strains contributed 55%
372 to the bulk isotope signal, while a single GSB contributed 45% (Posth *et al.*, 2017). Seasonal
373 changes in the relative contribution of PSB and GSB activity to carbon isotope composition were
374 positively correlated with cell counts (GSB were dominant in October) but had unexplained
375 relationships with pigment concentration (Bchl a increased and Bchl e decreased). Viral
376 infections that increase rates of light reactions of photosynthesis while lowering carbon fixation
377 by inhibiting the Calvin Cycle, as observed in cyanophages, could explain this pattern (Figure 4,
378 Thompson *et al.*, 2011).

379 The reductive pentose phosphate and reverse tricarboxylic acid cycle pathways utilized
380 for carbon fixation in PSB and GSB, respectively, are shared with Cyanobacteria (Sirevåg, 1995;
381 Tabita, 1995). Phage infections of Cyanobacterial hosts alter light reactions, the Calvin Cycle,
382 the PPP and nucleotide biosynthesis through the expression of AMGs (e.g., *rpi*, *talC*, *tkt* and *can*;
383 Breitbart *et al.*, 2018). Viral infections can shut down carbon fixation while maintaining or even

384 supplementing light reactions to support phage replication (Sullivan *et al.*, 2010; Philosof *et al.*,
385 2011; Thompson *et al.*, 2011; Puxty *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, viral modification of host
386 photosynthetic machinery could be the source of unexplained patterns of carbon isotope
387 fractionation observed in PSB and GSB. Our metagenomic analysis of LB and PL identified viral
388 AMGs capable of interfering with the Calvin Cycle (CP12) and PPP (PGD, G6PD, *tal*; Figure 3).
389 These observations suggest that carbon fixation rates, and therefore carbon isotope fractionation
390 by GSB and PSB, can be modified by viral infection similar to the phage modification of
391 Cyanobacterial carbon metabolism.

392

393 *Viruses encode sulfur cycling genes*

394 Phototrophic sulfur bacteria oxidize inorganic sulfur compounds under anaerobic
395 conditions. All phototrophic *Chromatiaceae* and most *Ectothiorhodospira* and GSB oxidize
396 sulfide and elemental sulfur to sulfate, using them as electron donors for photosynthesis
397 (Frigaard and Dahl, 2009). In our metagenomic survey of LB and PL, we found phage genomes
398 encoding at least nine genes involved in sulfur metabolism and relay system, including genes
399 involved in sulfur assimilation as cysteine (*cysH*, *mec*) and genes involved in the synthesis of
400 molybdopterin, a cofactor in sulfite reduction.

401 We hypothesize that these viral genes deviate sulfur from the bacterial energetic
402 metabolism towards amino acid synthesis for viral particle production. If true, viruses have the
403 potential to modify environmental sulfur isotopic fractionation that is used in the interpretation
404 of sulfur cycling in the geologic record. This is because the combined effects of sulfide
405 oxidation, sulfate reduction and disproportionation influence the apparent fractionation between
406 sulfate and sulfide isotopes (Brabec *et al.*, 2012; Zerkle *et al.*, 2012; Pellerin *et al.*, 2015; Findlay

407 et al., 2019). In euxinic lakes, isotopes of elemental sulfur are expected to correlate with
408 photosynthetic activity (sulfide consumption) and sulfate reduction (sulfide production)
409 (Hamilton *et al.*, 2014). Viruses encoding genes that deviate sulfur from energetic metabolism
410 towards viral particle production may significantly modify the apparent sulfur fractionation. The
411 presence of the gene *cysE* (serine biosynthesis) in putative phage genomes predicted to infect
412 PSB in LB supports this hypothesis (Figure 3).

413 Additionally, several putative phage genomes encoding *cysH* in LB and PL may affect
414 assimilatory sulfate reduction. *CysH* encodes a reductase that catalyzes the conversion of
415 phosphoadenosine phosphosulfate to sulfite and is repressed under photoautotrophic growth
416 using hydrogen sulfide as electron donor and derepressed under conditions of sulfate deficiency
417 in PSB (Haverkamp and Schwenn, 1999). Phage alteration of this fine enzymatic regulation is a
418 potential source of deviations in sulfur isotope fractionation.

419

420 **Conclusion**

421 Here we describe hundreds of novel putative viral genomes from modern euxinic lakes
422 that are analogs of early Earth oceans. We identified widespread PSB and GSB phage infections
423 with the potential to regulate pigment production, photosynthesis, carbon fixation and sulfur
424 metabolism, suggesting that these viruses can affect host physiology and ecology. Our
425 preliminary observations impact the interpretation of paleoecology, paleochemistry and
426 paleosedimentation based on biological signatures of PSB and GSB in the geologic record.

427 **Availability of data and materials**

428 The Nanopore metagenomic sequencing data generated for this study for Lime Blue
429 sediment (SRS13178833) and Poison Lake water (SRS13178834) is available in the Sequence
430 Reads Archives (SRA) repository, under the BioProject PRJNA842402.

431 **Acknowledgements**

432 We thank Molly O'Beirne for comments and discussions about the decoupling between
433 PSB and GSB activity, abundance and biomarkers.

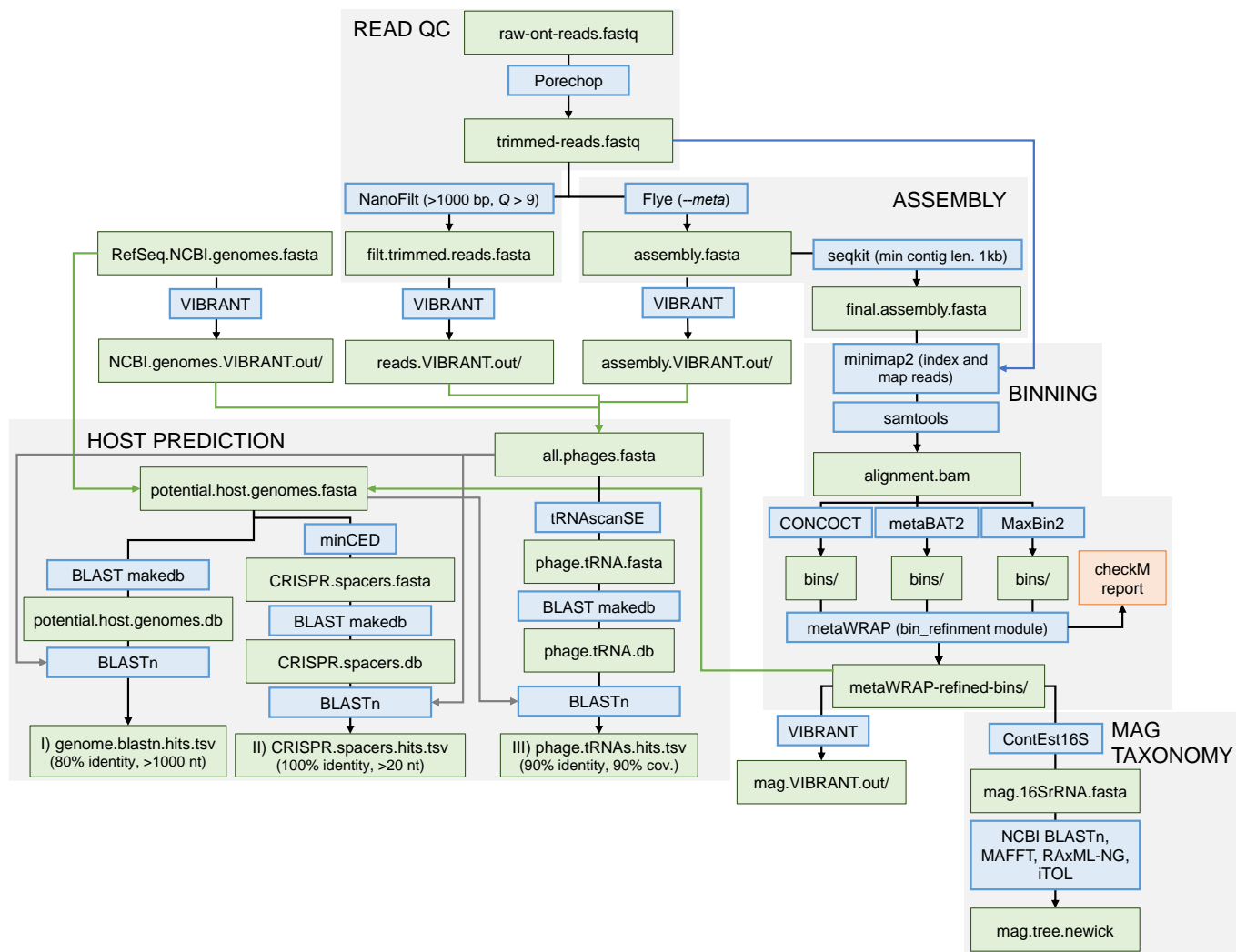
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441 **Authors contributions**

442 A. Bosco-Santos and C.B. Silveira designed the study. A. Bosco-Santos, W. Gilhooly and
443 J. Werne collected samples and extracted DNA. S. Garcia and C. B. Silveira sequenced samples.
444 P.J. Hesketh-Best performed bioinformatics analyses and data visualisation. First draft was
445 written by A. Bosco-Santos, P.J. Hesketh-Best, and C.B. Silveira. All authors contributed to
446 editing the manuscript.

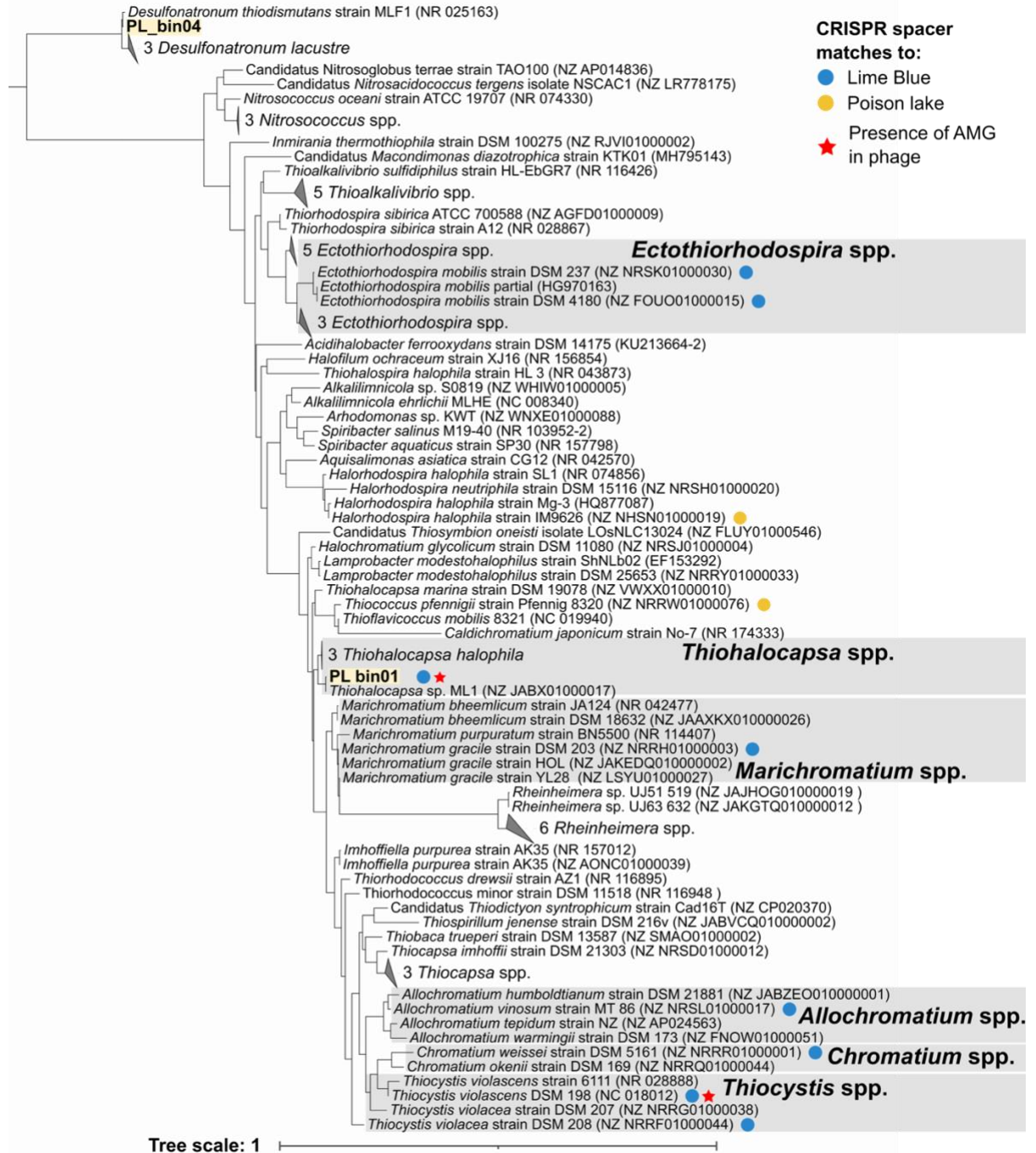
447 **Supplementary data**



448

449 **Supplementary Figure 1.** Workflow outline of metagenomic analysis conducted as part of this

450 study.

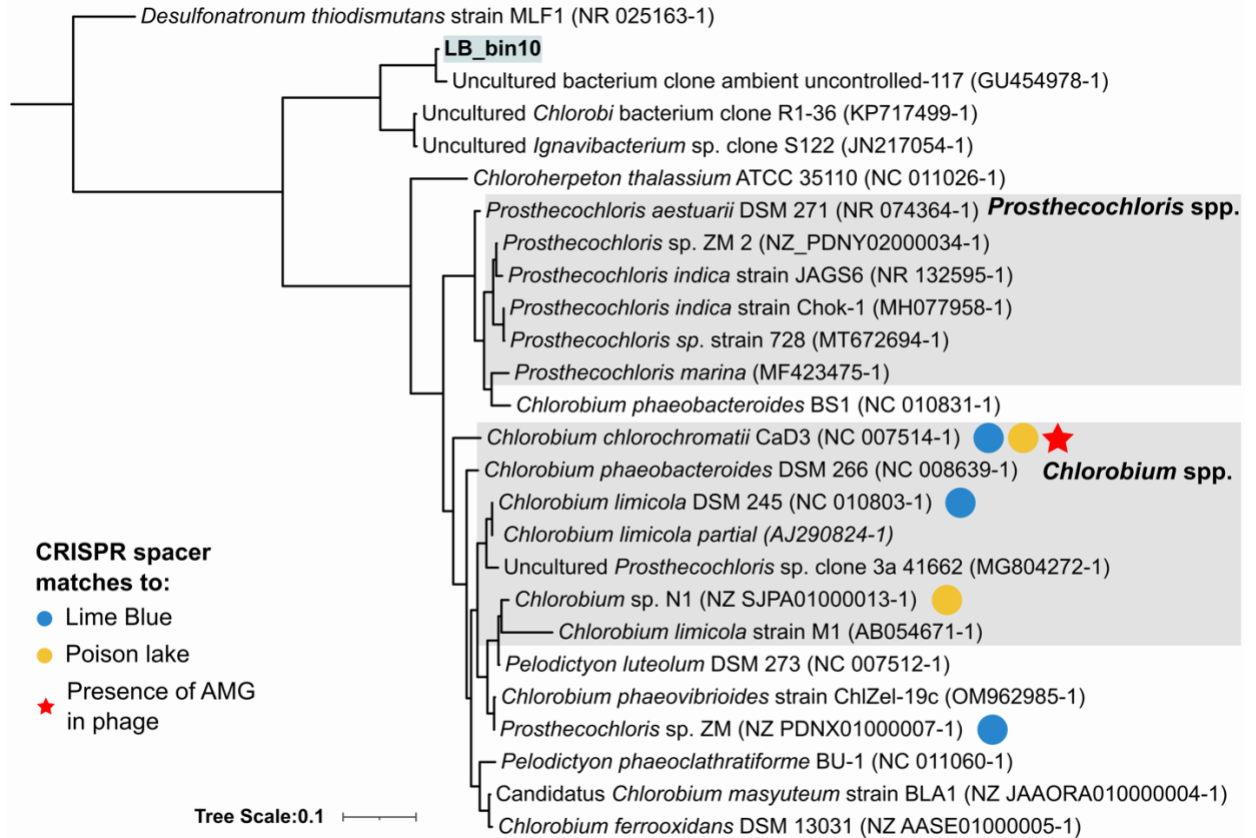


451

452 **Supplementary Figure 2.** Phylogenetic tree of phages, and MAG phylogeny displaying phage

453 hosts from the PSB as predicted by CRISPR spacer matches (minimum length 20 nt; 100%

454 identity, maximum of 2 mismatches/gaps).

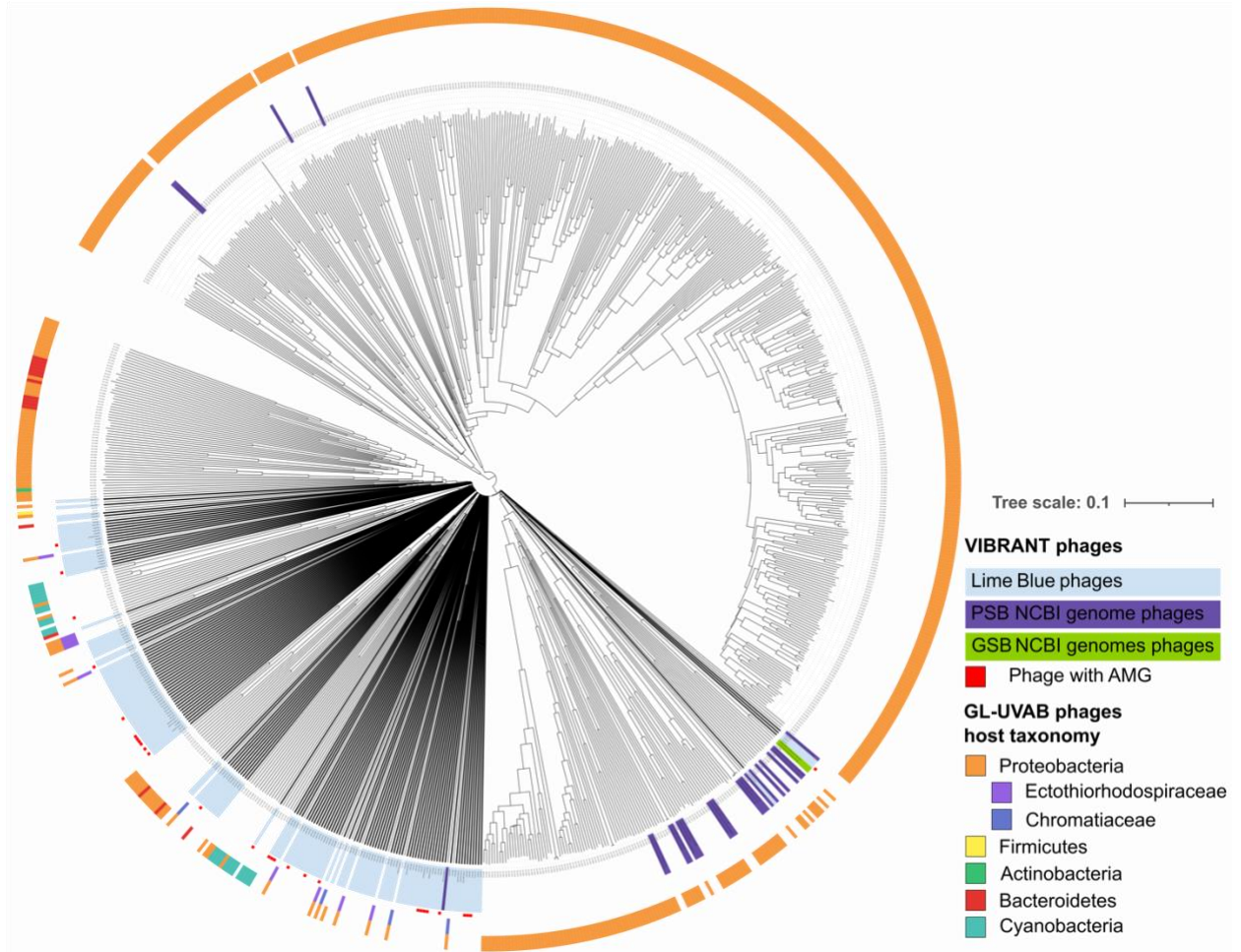


455

456 **Supplementary Figure 3.** Phylogenetic tree of phages, and MAG phylogeny displaying phage

457 hosts from the GSB as predicted by CRISPR spacer matches (minimum length 20 nt; 100%

458 identity, maximum of 2 mismatches/gaps).



459

460 **Supplementary Figure 4.** Clustering of VIBRANT identified phages from LB metagenome and
461 PSB genomes GSB genomes and the reference phage genomes based on their Dice distance with
462 supporting branch lengths.

463 **Supplementary Table 1.** Summary of purple and green sulfur bacteria genomes retrieved from
464 the National Centre for Biotechnology Informations (NCBI).

465 **Supplementary Table 2.** Complete results of the predicted phage hosts pairings by sequence
466 homology marches of complete genomes, CRISPR-spacers and tRNA sequences.

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