Title

Central carbon metabolism switching in lytic versus temperate coral reef viral communities

Authors

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List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: Central carbon metabolism genes shown in Figures 2, 3, and 4.

Figure 1: Correlations between metabolic function and community temperateness across the breadth of cellular metabolism (SEED Level 1).

Figure 2: Correlation between central carbon metabolism genes and viral community temperateness.

Figure 3: Pathway map of changes in the frequency of central carbon metabolism genes across the lytic to temperate spectrum.

Figure 4: Correlations between viral community temperateness and central carbon gene frequency across pathways and gene function.

Figure 5: Schematic model incorporating viral metabolic effects on resilience of healthy coral reefs and exacerbation of reef degradation.

List of Supplementary Tables and Figures

Supplementary Table 1: Summary of samples analyzed, including sample accession numbers, the total number of base pairs, reads, and locations of viral metagenomes.

Supplementary Table 2: Parameters and values used in the qualitative ecosystem model.

Supplementary Table 3: The frequency of photosynthesis genes across the lytic-temperate spectrum.

Supplementary Figure 1: Temperate viral communities are more cell-like, and have higher gene diversity and evenness, but not richness.

Supplementary Figure 2: Bootstrapped distribution of ρ_s from 1,000 iterations correlating the frequency of central carbon metabolism genes with viral community temperateness.

Significance (114 words)

Coral reefs are collapsing worldwide due to "microbialization," where algae-fueled bacteria overgrow corals. Viruses that infect these bacteria can suppress this process through lysis, but on degraded reefs they often switch to nonlethal temperate lifestyles, accelerating decline. Here we show that similar shifts occur in virus-encoded metabolism. On healthy reefs, lytic viruses carry genes that drain host metabolites to fuel virus production, which likely enhances infection and lysis rates and limits bacterial overgrowth. On degraded reefs, temperate viruses encode reactions that expand host metabolite pools, supporting bacterial proliferation. Thus, viral metabolism can either reinforce reef resilience or exacerbate collapse, making it a hidden driver of ecosystem fate and a potential target for conservation strategies.

Abstract (235 words)

Coral reefs are declining globally due in part to bacterial overgrowth, a process known as microbialization. However, the role of bacteriophages that may inhibit microbialization by infecting and killing these bacteria remains poorly understood, especially their metabolic impacts on bacterial proliferation. To address this, we analyzed central carbon metabolism gene frequencies in viral communities from healthy (lytic-dominated) and degraded (temperate-dominated) Central Pacific coral reefs. We found that viral metabolism shifted broadly from being dominated by metabolism that builds up pools of central intermediates on degraded reefs dominated by temperate viral infection ('anaplerotic' reactions) to metabolism that consumes these pools to prioritize production of metabolic precursors for virion construction on healthy reefs dominated by lytic infection ('cataplerotic' reactions). This switch was shown by the over-representation of Entner-Doudoroff (ED) glycolysis genes on degraded, temperate-dominated reefs and of pentose phosphate pathway (PPP) and reductive tricarboxylic acid cycle (TCA) genes on healthy, lytic-dominated reefs. As a result of this metabolic dichotomy, our qualitative compartment modeling revealed two distinct ecosystem states: (i) healthy reefs, where lytic viral metabolism enhances viral production and suppresses bacterial overgrowth, and (ii) degraded reefs, where temperate viral metabolism accelerates bacterial proliferation. Because viral switching between lytic and temperate lifestyles is a known function of host physiological state, these findings position viral metabolism as both a driver of reef decline and a conservation lever, with metabolically mediated 're-viralization' offering a novel strategy to restore reef resilience.

115 **Introduction** (704 words)

116 Ecosystem overgrowth by microbes, a process known as microbialization, is a
117 major threat to coral reefs worldwide[1–3]. Microbialized reefs are subject to a
118 positive feedback loop in which proliferating algae generate excess dissolved
119 organic carbon (i.e., sugar) that fuels the growth of increasingly pathogenic and
120 copiotrophic microbes that thrive in nutrient-rich environments[1,4,5]. This process
121 exacerbates coral diseases and clears space for further algal growth[2,6–8].

122 Bacterial metabolism on degraded coral reefs is directed towards high-
123 throughput rather than efficient carbohydrate utilization[1,9]. For instance, while
124 bacterial metabolism on healthy reefs is dominated by genes for the efficient
125 but multi-step Embden-Meyerhof-Parnas (EMP) pathway, degraded reefs exhibit
126 greater representation of genes for the inefficient but short Entner-Doudoroff
127 (ED) glycolysis pathway [1,10–12]. This shift on degraded reefs enable bacteria to
128 readily exploit ecosystem organic carbon enrichment to build up cellular
129 stockpiles of central metabolites like glyceraldehyde-3-phopshate (G3P) and
130 pyruvate ('anaplerotic' reactions) as well as use those central metabolite pools
131 to produce cellular energy such as ATP, reductants like NADH, and amino and
132 nucleic acid biosynthetic precursors required for bacterial over-proliferation
133 ('cataplerotic' reactions)[1,7,11].

134 Viral predation could, in principle, preclude microbialization by killing
135 proliferating microbes, as lytic infection and lysis rates are predicted by
136 established predator-prey models to rise with host densities and growth rates[13–
137 16]. However, viral communities switch from lytic to temperate infection during
138 eutrophication and microbialization[14]. This transition towards non-lethal,
139 temperate infection can facilitate further increases in microbial biomass due to
140 suppressed lysis[14,17]. Further, temperate viral communities encode higher
141 frequencies of pathogenicity genes that could protect bacteria from
142 consumption by eukaryotic grazers[14,18–20]. These genes could facilitate

143 microbialization by limiting protist predation, the major non-viral predation guild
144 in the ocean[21,22]. Altogether, rather than controlling bacterial populations,
145 viruses may form a second 'Temperate Ratchet' feedback loop that traps
146 ecosystems in persistent microbialization through suppressed lysis rates and
147 protist grazing on pathogenic copiotrophs[14,23].

148 In addition to these population-level effects, viruses may also exert gene-level
149 effects on microbialization by reshaping bacterial metabolism. Viruses shuttle a
150 broad array of metabolic genes between hosts via horizontal gene transfer,
151 thereby altering bacterial metabolism and ecology[24–27]. These include central
152 carbon metabolism genes implicated in the metabolic switching of bacterial
153 communities on microbialized reefs, such as the pentose phosphate pathway
154 (PPP) and the ED and EMP glycolysis pathways[1,28]. In lytic viruses, these pathways
155 support virion synthesis by converting general cellular metabolic pools like G3P
156 and pyruvate to specialized metabolic precursors (i.e., they are cataplerotic
157 reactions). For example, the PPP provides nucleic acid and amino acid
158 precursors, whereas EMP generates cellular energy like ATP and NADH[27,29,30].
159 However, these genes can also be co-opted by bacteria during infection. As a
160 result, while viral metabolic genes can combat microbialization by promoting
161 the production of lytic viruses that would suppress bacterial abundance, they
162 are also capable of exacerbating reef decline by enhancing bacterial
163 proliferation. Together, these processes introduce a novel viral-mediated
164 metabolic mechanism of reef decline or resilience beyond lytic-to-lysogenic
165 switching.

166 However, the role of viral-encoded metabolic genes in coral reef
167 microbialization remains unexplored. To address this gap, we analyzed the
168 frequencies of metabolic genes in 19 metagenomes of virus-like particles (VLPs),
169 concentrates containing primarily viruses but also including virus-like gene
170 transfer agents[31,32], from Pacific coral reefs spanning a gradient from healthy to

171 degraded states and from lytic to temperate infection dominance. We found
172 that temperate viral communities were enriched in anaplerotic central carbon
173 metabolism genes, particularly those associated with copiotrophic growth like
174 Entner-Doudoroff glycolysis and the generation of central metabolite pools that
175 can be used for diverse cellular processes[33]. Lytic communities had higher levels
176 of cataplerotic non-oxidative pentose phosphate pathway genes and
177 oxidoreductases that generate specialized metabolic precursors, cellular energy
178 and redox potential. Incorporating our findings into a conceptual model
179 revealed that lytic viral metabolism can enhance viral production and microbial
180 surveillance on healthy reefs ("viralization")[34], while temperate viral metabolism
181 may accelerate microbialization in degraded systems. These findings implicate
182 viral metabolism in feedback loops that either enhance reef resilience or
183 exacerbate decline. Because viral lifestyle switching is a known function of
184 cellular physiological state, with elevated nutrient availability driving non-lethal
185 temperate infection, while nutrient limitation promotes lytic infection, our work
186 suggests that metabolic management, such as limiting nutrient inputs, could
187 promote rapid recovery of degraded reefs.

188 **Methods** (1764 words)

189 *Metagenome sampling and processing:* Viral metagenomes were sampled from
190 coral reefs across the central Pacific Ocean (n = 19; see **Supplementary Table 1**
191 for sample details) and samples processed as described previously[14,35]. Note
192 that viruses and gene transfer agents (GTAs) likely co-purify using this technique,
193 making our analysis primarily focused on viruses but also encompassing GTAs,
194 that together comprise virus-like particles (VLPs)[31]. For each viral metagenome,
195 approximately 60-100 L of seawater were pumped from the reef surface into
196 acid-washed, triple-rinsed low-density polyethylene bags and concentrated to <
197 500 mL using a 100 kDa tangential flow filter. Concentrates were then 0.45 µm-
198 filtered to remove bacteria and 0.5 % final concentration chloroform was added
199 to destroy any residual cells and extracellular vesicles[36]. Samples were stored at
200 4 °C until subsequent processing. The presence of concentrated VLPs was
201 confirmed by epifluorescence microscopy of Sybr Gold stained viruses on
202 anodisc filters[35].

203 VLPs were purified from concentrates using a cesium chloride step gradient
204 approach[14,35,37]. The absence of cells in step gradient outputs was confirmed by
205 microscopy. Purified samples were then DNAse I-treated at 37 °C for 2 hours and
206 denatured at 65 °C for 15 minutes to remove extra-virion free DNA (peDNA;
207 protected environmental DNA)[32]. Viral DNA was extracted using the
208 formamide/chloroform isoamyl alcohol technique[14,35,37]. The absence of
209 contaminating host DNA was confirmed by the lack of PCR amplification of the
210 universal 16S rDNA gene using primers 27F (AGA GTT TGA TCC TGG CTC AG)
211 and 1492R (TAC GGY TAC CTT GTT ACG ACT T) on all samples[14,35,37]. Note that
212 our analysis is based on correlations across many samples, minimizing the impact
213 of any contamination on our findings. DNA was amplified using the Linker
214 Amplified Sequencing Library approach[19] prior to sequencing on an Illumina
215 MiSeq platform.

216 *Bioinformatic processing:* Low-quality reads < 100 bp in length and with mean
217 PHRED quality scores of < 25 were excluded using Prinseq[38]. Samples were then
218 dereplicated with TagCleaner[39], human contaminants were removed using
219 DeconSeq[40], and sequences were posted to MG-RAST (www.mg-rast.org; see
220 Data Availability section). Accession numbers and summary statistics for the viral
221 metagenomes used in this paper are shown in **Supplementary Table 1**. All the
222 viromes were published as part of the Piggyback-the-Winner project (n = 17)[14]
223 except Pearl and Hermes Reef and Caroline Atoll Wreck samples (n = 2; PHR
224 Wreck and CWS), which were unpublished prior to this work.

225 *Annotating metagenomes:* Viral metagenomes were annotated by BLAST
226 against the SEED database on MG-RAST using the default MG-RAST parameters
227 as a very commonly used balance of accuracy and specificity[41]: e-value = -5
228 (annotated in MG-RAST as e-value = 5), 60 % identity, > 15 base length, a
229 minimum abundance of 1, and all analyses conducted using representative
230 hits[14,42]. Level 1 Gene categories with average frequencies below 0.5 % were
231 omitted. Temperateness of each viral metagenome was assessed as the
232 frequency of genes annotated in the Level 3 SEED category of
233 "Phage_integration_and_excision" (i.e., how common genes involved in
234 integration and excision were in each metagenome)[14]. The frequency of genes
235 in high-order classification (e.g., SEED level 1 with categories shown in **Figure 1**)
236 was calculated by summing the frequency of the genes making up each
237 category. All analyses were normalized to account for different sequencing
238 depth between samples. This was done by calculating gene frequency as the
239 number of hits to a given gene divided by all known genes in that sample
240 ("percent known")[15], making all analyses comparable and unaffected by the
241 effects of varied sequencing depth between samples.

242 *Pathway annotation:* Pathway visualizations were guided by KEGG maps
243 (www.genome.jp/), pathway-specific Wikipedia pages (www.wikipedia.org/),

244 and enzyme Wikigenes entries (www.wikigenes.org/). Pathway maps were
245 drawn using EC Number names of each enzyme (**Table 1**).

246 *Anaplerotic and cataplerotic gene categorization:* Genes were categorized
247 based on whether they (i) generated central metabolite pools like
248 glyeraldehyde-3-phopshate (G3P) and pyruvate ('anaplerotic' or 'filling up'
249 reactions) that are flexibly used in multiple pathways by cells, or (ii) used these
250 central metabolite pools to generate cellular energy or metabolic precursor
251 products that are used for specific purposes (i.e., the products are 'used'
252 metabolically; known together as 'cataplerotic' or 'drawing down' reactions),
253 or (iii) were neither anaplerotic nor cataplerotic ('neither'). Note that although
254 anaplerotic and cataplerotic reactions often refer to steps in the TCA, we are
255 using the term more generally here[33].

256 *Statistical analyses:* The correlation between gene frequency, either at a Level 1
257 SEED category or individual gene level, and viral community temperateness
258 were assessed using Spearman's Rho (ρ_s), a non-parametric rank-based
259 measure of how monotonic the relationship between x- and y-values is (i.e., it is
260 a non-parametric correlation coefficient). For supplementary diversity and
261 photosynthesis gene analyses we estimated ρ_s using the R cor.test() function
262 with exact = FALSE to avoid ties. For our main analyses shown in **Table 1** and in
263 **Figures 1**, **2**, **3**, and **4**, we estimated ρ_s values using the stat.spearmanr() function
264 in the Python scipy.stats package with bootstrapping to ensure robust median ρ_s
265 assessment over 1000 iterations of bootstrapping with replacement (see
266 **Supplementary Figure 2** for resulting distributions for central carbon metabolism
267 genes). Confidence intervals of the median were assessed as the values
268 corresponding to the 2.5th and 97.5th percentiles of the median values
269 obtained from bootstrapping (95 % CI). For clarity, 95 % confidence intervals are
270 listed in square brackets, as ρ_s [95 % CI minimum, 95 % CI maximum].
271 Bootstrapping code can be found at https://tinyurl.com/viral-metabolic-ratchet-

272 code. Diversity metrics were assessed using the R vegan package, with the
273 diversity() command used for Shannon diversity (natural log-transformed; H').
274 Median ρ_s at the pathway level were calculated as the median value of all of
275 the ρ_s values for each enzyme in the pathway (i.e., they are a simple overall
276 median).

277 *Qualitative model:* We created a conceptual model to demonstrate qualitative
278 trends in bacterial, viral, coral, and algae abundance stemming from the
279 changes in viral metabolism found here (**Figure 5**). Note that this model is not
280 intended to be quantitative and was designed aid our understanding of trends
281 in organismal abundance in response to the incorporation of viral metabolic
282 capacity. Parameter values were implemented as high or low relative values to
283 reflect known processes on healthy and degraded reefs (**Supplementary Table 2**
284 for parameter values). For example, high rates of disease[8,43] and bacterial
285 metabolism[1] were used in degraded coral reef simulations, while high lysis rates
286 were used in healthy systems[14,17].

287 Bacterial, viral, coral, and algae populations were initialized at 0.5 arbitrary units.
288 The model was implemented using an iterative loop over six iterations (i.e., time
289 in arbitrary units). This number of iterations was chosen as a balance of having
290 enough iterations to see qualitative population trends, but without the need to
291 make a more complicated model to generate long-term dynamics. At the
292 beginning of each time step, new abundance values for each species (B_{new},
293 C_{new}, V_{new}) except algae were calculated based on the previous values (A_{new}).
294 These updated values were applied at the end of each time step. Algae
295 abundance was calculated last, occupying any remaining share of the benthos
296 not occupied by coral. Once a population reached or fell below zero, it was
297 excluded from further dynamics and not allowed to re-enter the ecosystem.
298 Code can be found at https://tinyurl.com/viral-metabolic-ratchet-code

For the 'no viruses' model shown in **Figures 5a** and **5d**, we used the following equations, where terms with changed parameter values between **Figures 5a** and **5d** are in bold (see **Supplementary Table 2**):

$$B_{new} = B + a * A + \mathbf{m * B} \qquad \text{Equation 1}$$

$$C_{new} = C + c * C - i * A - \mathbf{d * B} \qquad \text{Equation 2}$$

$$A_{new} = 1 - C_{new} \qquad \text{Equation 3}$$

In **Equation 1**, bacteria (B) proliferate due to carbon provided by algae, with carbon supply itself a product of algal population (A) as well as the rate of delivery (a). To make the model as conservative as possible, we did not vary the rate of carbon delivered to bacteria by the algae, although it likely is higher on degraded reefs and enhances bacterial grow more than shown by the model[10]. Bacterial proliferation is also enhanced by metabolic changes (m) reinforced by bacterial population size on degraded reefs[1]. Note that, in the absence of viruses the bacteria have no loss processes, including natural mortality, even though their proliferation may be constrained by a lack of algae to support growth.

In **Equation 2**, coral populations (C) proliferate as a product of coral population size and growth rate (c). Coral growth is limited by algal population size and allelochemical inhibition (i)[44] as well as by bacterial pathogenicity causing coral disease (d)[8,45]. To make the model as conservative as possible, we did not alter the direct inhibitory effect of algae on coral across healthy and degraded reefs, although it is enhanced on unhealthy reefs[44,45].

In **Equation 3**, algal population size (A) is solved in the last step of each iteration as the remainder of the benthos not occupied by coral (1 – C) to account for the fact that the benthos is a finite space.

Note that **Equations 2** and **3** are used for all iterations of the model with or without viral lysis and metabolism.

For the 'with lytic viruses' model shown in **Figures 5b** and **5e** we used the following equations, with bold terms reflecting varied parameter values and with new terms compared to **Equations 1** and **Equation 2** underlined:

$$B_{new} = B + a * A + \mathbf{m * B} \underline{\mathbf{- k * V}} \qquad \text{Equation 4}$$

$$\underline{V_{new} = V + \mathbf{k * B}} \qquad \text{Equation 5}$$

Building on **Equation 1**, lytic viruses are introduced in **Equation 4** as a mortality term for bacteria as an outcome of viral population size (V) and lysis rate (k).

A viral population (V) is added to the model in **Equation 5**, where viruses proliferate at burst size (k) from lysis if bacteria. Note that k changes between healthy and degraded reef scenarios, consistent with Piggyback-the-Winner dynamics suppressing lysis on degraded reefs[14].

For the 'with viral lysis and metabolism' model shown in **Figures 5c** and **5f** we used the following equations, with bold terms reflecting varied parameter values and with new terms compared to **Equations 4** and **5** underlined:

$$B_{new} = B + a * A + \mathbf{m * B - k * V} \underline{\mathbf{+ t * V}} \qquad \text{Equation 6}$$

$$V_{new} = V + \mathbf{k * B} \underline{\mathbf{+ l * V}} \qquad \text{Equation 7}$$

This model builds on **Equation 4** by adding viral metabolic function (t) that enhances bacterial proliferation in degraded reef scenarios associated with temperate Piggyback-the-Winner dynamics in **Equation 6**[14]. **Equation 7** builds on **Equation 5** by adding lytic functions that enhance virion production in healthy reefs (l).

347 **Results** (1724 words)

348 *Hallmarks of viral temperateness:* To assess how viral metabolism across the lytic-
349 temperate spectrum could affect coral reefs, we examined how the fraction of
350 sequenced reads that mapped to known genes in broad metabolic categories
351 (SEED Database Level 1 annotation) changed with community temperateness.
352 Building on prior work[14], we used the frequency of integrase and excisionase
353 genes as a proxy for community temperateness (i.e., hallmarks of
354 temperateness) in viral communities across the Central Pacific Ocean
355 (**Supplementary Table 1**). As a measure of how consistently or monotonously
356 gene frequency and sample temperateness covary, Spearman Rho (ρ_s) values
357 reflect the strength and sign of their correlation. In this analysis, temperate-
358 associated genes have positive correlations ($\rho_s > 0$) while lytic-associated genes
359 have negative correlations ($\rho_s < 0$. For clarity, 95 % confidence intervals are
360 listed in square brackets as ρ_s [95 % CI minimum, 95 % CI maximum].

361 Gene names and corresponding pathways, EC numbers, median ρ_s and 95 %
362 CIs, gene category (anaplerotic vs cataplerotic), and reports of the gene in
363 viruses are shown in **Table 1**. **Figure 1** and **Figure 2** display the sample-level
364 patterns of temperateness vs gene frequency in all Level 1 SEED categories and
365 in central carbon metabolism functions, respectively. The correlations shown in
366 **Figure 2** are represented in a metabolic pathway map in **Figure 3** and analyzed
367 according to **Table 1** categories in **Figure 4**. Finally, the implications of our
368 central findings are incorporated into a schematic ecosystem model shown in
369 **Figure 5**.

370 *Temperate viral communities are enriched in metabolic genes:* The frequency of
371 genes in the Phages, Prophages, Transposable Elements, and Plasmids category
372 declined with increasing temperateness of viral communities (**Figure 1**; ρ_s = -0.81
373 [-0.95, -0.58]). In contrast, the frequency and diversity of 'bacterial' metabolic
374 genes that encode known cellular functions increased in temperate viral

375 communities (**Supplementary Figure 1**; ρ_s = 0.63 and 0.81, respectively; c.f.,
376 genetic diversity declines with temperateness when unknown genes are
377 included[14]). Altogether, this analysis indicates that temperate viral communities
378 are more metabolically similar to bacteria than are lytic communities.

379 *Functional homologues as viral lifestyle markers:* Analogous to taxonomic
380 markers in cells, where the prevalence of class I and class II homologues of
381 fructose bisphosphate aldolase EC4.1.2.13 genes relates to bacterial
382 taxonomy[46], the divergent correlations in these genes across a viral
383 temperateness spectrum may reflect viral life strategies (EC 4.1.2.13 I ρ_s = -0.65 [-
384 0.86, 0.33] while EC4.1.2.13 II ρ_s = 0.56 [-0.18, 0.83]; see **Table 1** for summary
385 statistics).

386 *Photosynthesis genes in lytic communities:* The decline in 'Phages, Prophages,
387 Transposable Elements, and Plasmid' genes from ~ 50 % of the known genes in
388 lytic viromes to ~ 5 % in temperate viromes caused the gene frequency in almost
389 all other categories to increase (as total gene frequencies sum to 100 %; 17 of 22
390 categories had ρ_s > 0.5; **Figure 1**). A notable exception is Photosynthesis genes:
391 these had higher frequencies in lytic communities vs. temperate communities in
392 the Level 1 analysis (ρ_s = -0.78 [-0.92, -0.53]; **Figure 1**). Photosynthesis genes,
393 including rhodopsins, were also lytic-associated at the individual-gene level,
394 where 16 out of 20 photosynthesis genes had negative ρ_s values (**Supplementary**
395 **Table 3**). Finally, photosynthesis-related electron transport (Pet) genes that
396 couple Photosystems II and I are absent from the viromes (**Supplementary Table**
397 **3**).

398 *Carbohydrate metabolism genes:* Given the high prevalence of carbohydrate
399 genes in the viromes, their elevated frequency in temperate communities
400 (**Figure 1;** ρ_s > 0), and their ecological importance, we next focused on genes
401 comprising central carbon metabolism[26,27]: Embden-Meyerhof-Parnas (EMP) and
402 Entner-Doudoroff (ED) glycolysis pathways, the pentose phosphate pathway

403 (PPP) and the Tricarboxylic Acid Cycle (TCA; **Figure 2**). Note that for this and
404 subsequent analyses we retained only sequences with hits to SEED database
405 entries with high-confidence Enzyme Commission (EC) annotations[47].

406 *Entner-Doudoroff genes are enriched in temperate viromes:* Few patterns were
407 readily apparent from the ρ_s values for genes in each pathway (**Figure 2;**
408 **Supplementary Figure 2**). When viewed as a pathway map, though, the ED
409 pathway was more clearly enriched in temperate viral communities (i.e., the red
410 arrows running through the center of **Figure 3**). This map identified the ED
411 pathway as the only pathway that changed consistently across the lytic-
412 temperate spectrum (**Figure 4a**), and was exclusively over-represented in
413 temperate viral communities (i.e., $\rho_s > 0$; EC 1.1.1.49 $\rho_s = 0.26$ [-0.24, 0.68],
414 EC3.1.1.31 $\rho_s = 0.43$ [0.03, 0.77], EC4.1.2.14 $\rho_s = 0.67$ [0.36, 0.90], and EC4.2.1.12 ρ_s
415 $= 0.71$ [0.47, 0.89]). Altogether, this gave the ED pathway an overall median $\rho_s =$
416 0.55 in contrast to overall median $\rho_s = 0.03$ for EMP glycolysis, $\rho_s = 0.175$ for
417 gluconeogenesis (GNG), $\rho_s = 0.03$ for the PPP, and $\rho_s = -0.10$ for the TCA (see
418 **Figure 4a**).

419 *Anaplerotic temperate metabolism:* Given the role of ED glycolysis in generating
420 central metabolite pools for use in diverse pathways (i.e., ED is an anaplerotic
421 pathway), we investigated whether temperate viral communities were enriched
422 in anaplerotic genes more generally (see **Table 1** for a list of anaplerotic and
423 cataplerotic genes)[33]. Temperate viral communities were, indeed, enriched in
424 anaplerotic genes, with an overall median $\rho_s = 0.44$ for anaplerotic reactions
425 and only one gene even weakly lytic associated (6-phosphogluconate
426 dehydrogenase EC 1.1.1.44 from the PPP; $\rho_s = -0.06$ [-0.54, 0.45]; **Figure 4b**).

427 *Amino acid precursor genes are enriched in lytic viromes:* In contrast to the ED-
428 enrichment of temperate communities, the pathway map does not show many
429 areas of contiguous lytic-associated genes (**Figure 3**). However, the enrichment
430 of non-oxidative PPP genes in lytic communities, especially transaldolase EC

431 2.2.1.2 (ρ_s = -0.49 [-0.87, 0.02]). This enzyme consumes the central metabolite
432 pool of glutaraldehyde-3-phosphate (G3P) to produce fructose 6-phosphate
433 and erythrose 4-phosphate. Given that other fructose-6-phosphate producing
434 genes are not similarly enriched in lytic communities (e.g., EC 2.2.1.1 in the PPP
435 ρ_s = -0.08 [-0.52, 0.35], EC5.3.1.9 in EMP ρ_s = 0.45 [0.12, 0.73], and EC3.1.3.11 in
436 gluconeogenesis ρ_s = 0.24 [-0.20, 0.66]), this suggests that the primary outcome
437 of the non-oxidative PPP in lytic viral communities is the cataplerotic
438 consumption of G3P for the generation of erythrose-4-phosphate, a precursor
439 for amino acid biosynthesis[48].

440 *Redox genes are over-represented in lytic communities:* Given this cataplerotic
441 focus in lytic communities, we investigated whether lytic communities were
442 more strongly associated with individual cataplerotic reactions regardless of
443 pathway rather than with whole pathways. Focusing on the distribution of
444 anabolic redox steps across all the central carbon metabolism pathways, we
445 found that NADPH-generating reactions were not consistently associated with
446 either lytic or temperate communities (EC1.1.1.44 ρ_s = -0.06, EC1.1.1.42 ρ_s = -0.19,
447 and EC1.1.1.49 ρ_s = 0.26, giving a median ρ_s = -0.06). In contrast, NADH-
448 producing oxidoreductase genes were universally over-represented in lytic
449 communities (i.e., all $\rho_s < 0$; median ρ_s = -0.13 across all NADH-producing
450 reactions from EC1.1.1.37 ρ_s = -0.19 [-0.61, 0.29], EC1.1.1.41 ρ_s = -0.13 [-0.54, 0.34],
451 EC1.2.1.12 ρ_s = -0.20 [-0.60, 0.26], EC1.2.4.1 ρ_s = -0.12 [-0.60, 0.36], EC1.2.4.2 ρ_s = -
452 0.10 [-0.59, 0.42]; **Table 1**; **Figures 2**, **3,** and **4**). This included all redox genes in the
453 TCA being lytic associated (i.e., $\rho_s < 0$, with an overall median ρ_s = -0.13) in
454 contrast to the other, non-oxidoreductase genes which had a median ρ_s = 0.15,
455 highlighting the specific overrepresentation of redox genes in lytic communities
456 (**Figure 4a**).

457 *Cataplerotic lytic metabolism:* Given the association between lytic communities
458 and cataplerotic reactions observed in the PPP and the TCA, we then

459 investigated whether lytic communities are broadly enriched in cataplerotic
460 genes. We observed that the overall median ρ_s of cataplerotic reactions was -
461 0.125 (i.e., these genes were enriched in lytic communities) compared to ρ_s =
462 0.44 and ρ_s = 0.11 for anaplerotic reactions and reactions that are neither
463 cataplerotic nor anaplerotic, respectively. This result highlights the association
464 between lytic viral communities and cataplerotic metabolism.

465 *Implications for Healthy Coral Reefs:* To qualitatively describe the ecosystem
466 effects of viral metabolism, we constructed a schematic model of algal-
467 bacterial-viral-coral interactions, with all population sizes measured in illustrative
468 arbitrary units (**Figure 5**). Parameterizing the model to healthy reef values (**Figure**
469 **5a**; note that parameterization of the healthy reef scenario largely insulates
470 coral from the effects of bacterial overgrowth due to the small d value used;
471 see **Supplementary Table 2** for parameters and values)[1,8,9,14,43], the system
472 became coral-dominated by t = 5, with coral-bacterial coexistence (coral and
473 bacteria had increased from 0.5 a.u. initial values to 1.0 a.u. and 0.89 a.u.,
474 respectively, by t = 6). While the addition of viral lysis (**Figure 5b**) did not
475 markedly change coral or algal dynamics, it led to the extinction of bacteria by
476 t = 6 and to an ecosystem dominated by coral and viruses (coral and viruses
477 had increased from 0.5 a.u. to 1.0 a.u. and 0.97 a.u., respectively, by the end of
478 the simulation). Finally, adding in viral metabolism led to an earlier extinction of
479 bacteria (by t = 5) and enhanced viral population size (viruses were 2.29 a.u. by
480 t = 6), although coral and algal population dynamics were unaffected (**Figure**
481 **5c**). Altogether, the model recaptured the coral-dominated status of healthy
482 coral reefs and showed that viral metabolism likely exerts a profound negative
483 effect on bacterial populations and a strongly positive effect on viral
484 populations on healthy reefs.

485 *Implications for Degraded Coral Reefs:* In contrast to healthy systems, our model
486 suggests that degraded coral reefs would be overgrown with algae rather than

487 coral (**Figure 5**). Note that the parameterization of the degraded reef scenarios
488 leads to enhanced deleterious bacterial effects on coral health. Coral went
489 extinct by t = 5 in the degraded scenarios without viruses and with viral lysis only
490 (**Figure 5d and e**), as algal overgrew the benthos and bacterial proliferated to
491 levels much higher than in any of the healthy scenarios (B = 2.75 a.u. and 2.64
492 a.u. in the no virus and lysis-only models, respectively, by t = 6). In contrast to
493 bacteria, viral populations did not proliferate markedly in the viral-lysis model,
494 increasing from 0.5 a.u. to only 0.64 a.u. by t = 6 (**Figure 5e**). Adding in viral
495 metabolism that enhanced bacterial proliferation (t) allowed bacteria to
496 proliferate even further (reaching 3.80 a.u.), supporting a modest rise in viruses
497 (to 0.75 a.u.), and driving the coral to extinction sooner (by t = 4; **Figure 5f**).
498 Altogether, our qualitative model suggests that viral metabolism supporting
499 bacterial proliferation can enhance microbial overgrowth of reefs and promote
500 shifts towards algal dominance of the benthos.

501 **Discussion** (551 words)

502 The role of microbial overgrowth in coral reef decline is well established[1–3,8]. It is
503 further intensified by shifts in bacterial metabolism and viral lifestyles that
504 promote bacterial proliferation[14,17]. Here, we show that this process is further
505 exacerbated by viral-encoded metabolic genes, whereas healthy ecosystems
506 may be protected by viral lysis and metabolic genes that enhance virion
507 production. Because temperate viral infection is tightly linked to host physiology
508 and environmental conditions such as nutrient availability[14,49,50], targeting
509 bacterial metabolic states through manipulation of nutrients could enable a shift
510 in viral effects from degradative to protective, presenting a promising new
511 conservation strategy.

512 Viruses become increasingly temperate on degraded reefs, following
513 Piggyback-the-Winner (PtW) dynamics[14,23], in which abundant, rapidly
514 proliferating bacterial hosts select for non-lethal, lysogenic infection. This switch
515 in viral lifestyle suspends the top-down control exerted by lytic viruses, allowing
516 bacterial populations to expand unchecked by lethal infection[14,50]. Temperate
517 infection not reduces lysis but also promotes horizontal gene transfer of
518 pathogenicity genes[51], which can help bacteria evade predation by eukaryotic
519 grazers and potentially compromise coral health[14,23]. This forms a positive
520 feedback loop wherein bacterial growth triggers viral lifestyle switching, which in
521 turn facilitates further bacterial growth, establishing a 'Temperate Ratchet'[23]
522 that locks ecosystems into ever-exacerbating bacterial overgrowth and coral
523 disease[14]. Worse, here we show that the temperate viruses on degraded reefs
524 also harbor metabolic genes, such as those for Entner-Doudoroff glycolysis, that
525 can directly support bacterial proliferation and overgrowth of reefs[1], thereby
526 enhancing the Temperate Ratchet[23].

527 Healthy reefs, in contrast, appear to be guarded by lytic viruses. Lytic infection
528 rates are driven by virus-host predator-prey encounter frequencies that are the
529 outcome of host and viral abundances[13–15]. As a result, as bacterial populations
530 grow, so should lytic infections and lysis, precluding bacterial overgrowth[14,17].
531 Further, the viral communities on healthy reefs do not harbor the high frequency
532 of pathogenicity genes seen on degraded reefs, meaning that grazing and
533 coral health are not being hindered by viral-encoded genes, which also helps
534 to keep bacterial densities low[8]. Here we show that lytic viral communities on
535 healthy reefs are enriched in metabolic genes associated with efficient energy
536 production and biosynthesis, such as those for the Embden-Meyerhof-Parnas
537 glycolysis pathway[1,10] and oxidoreductases involved in ATP generation and
538 NADH reduction[52]. These metabolic features support robust virion production
539 that can support reef 'viralization' through high viral abundances and high rates
540 of virus-host encounters, infection, and lysis. In this way, lytic viral metabolism
541 and reef viralization acts as a counterbalance to the Temperate Ratchet,
542 helping to stabilize healthy reef ecosystems[34].

543 Viral metabolism associated with the lytic-to-temperate shift likely exacerbates
544 coral reef decline, as shown here. Building on ecosystem-scale processes like
545 viral lifestyle switching[14,17], the metabolic capacity of temperate and lytic viruses
546 can further drive reefs into two stable states: healthy reefs protected by
547 metabolically enhanced lytic control of bacteria, and degraded reefs
548 ratcheted into persistent microbialization under temperate infection and
549 metabolism. Ultimately, degraded coral reefs experience a metabolic disorder,
550 where excess nutrients trigger ecosystem-scale dysregulation through microbial
551 and viral lifestyle and metabolic switching[1–3,7]. However, the physiological basis
552 of this switch also suggests that conservation measures targeting nutrient supply
553 could undercut copiotrophic bacterial and viral metabolism[4,10,11]. Our findings
554 suggest that doing so could lead to a 're-viralization' of the reef system,

555 harnessing viral metabolic and lifestyle switching to enhance reef restoration
556 and resilience.

557 **Data Availability**

558 Viral metagenomes can be found on MG-RAST under the accession numbers
559 4683670.3, 4683674.3, 4683677.3, 4683680.3, 4683683.3, 4683684.3, 4683686.3,
560 4683703.3, 4683704.3, 4683712.3, 4683718.3, 4683720.3, 4683731.3, 4683733.3,
561 4683745.3, 4683746.3, and 4683747.3 (see **Supplementary Table 1** for library data
562 summaries; www.mg-rast.org). Fasta files for each sample can also be found at
563 https://tinyurl.com/viral-metabolic-ratchet. Statistical and modeling code can
564 be found at https://tinyurl.com/viral-metabolic-ratchet-code.

565

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722

723 **Tables and Figures.**

724 **Table 1: Central Carbon Metabolism genes shown in Figures 2 and 3.** Genes are categorized
725 by pathway and gene function, identified by EC number and gene name, and annotated
726 with prior references if they have been observed in viruses before. The Spearman's
727 correlation between the frequency of each gene and viromes temperateness is indicated
728 by bootstrapped mean ρ_s values and 95 % confidence intervals from 1,000 iterations are
729 shown. Please refer to **Supplementary Figure 2** for bootstrap ρ_s distributions. Genes shared
730 between pathways are shown with a slash. Note, although anaplerotic and cataplerotic
731 reactions often refer to steps in the TCA, we are using the term more generally here to refer
732 respectively to the generation of central intermediate metabolites ('filling up'; anaplerotic) and
733 the consumption of central metabolites to generate specialized pre-cursor or cellular energy
734 pools ('drawing down'; cataplerotic) more generally[33]. Bootstrapping code can be found at
735 https://tinyurl.com/viral-metabolic-ratchet-code.

EC number	SEED database gene name	Pathway	Gene activity	ρ_s	95 % CI	Observed in viruses
1.1.1.37	Malate dehydrogenase	Tricarboxylic Acid	Cataplerotic	-0.19	-0.61, 0.29	
1.1.1.41	Isocitrate dehydrogenase [NAD]	Tricarboxylic Acid	Cataplerotic	-0.13	-0.54, 0.34	
1.1.1.42	Isocitrate dehydrogenase [NADP]	Tricarboxylic Acid	Cataplerotic	-0.19	-0.63, 0.29	52,53
1.1.1.44	6-phosphogluconate dehydrogenase	Pentose Phosphate	Anaplerotic	-0.06	-0.54, 0.45	29,52,54
1.1.1.49	Glucose-6-phosphate 1-dehydrogenase	ED glycolysis/ Pentose Phosphate	Anaplerotic	0.26	-0.24, 0.68	
1.2.1.12	NAD-dependent glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate dehydrogenase	EMP glycolysis/ Gluconeogenesis	Cataplerotic	-0.20	-0.60, 0.26	
1.2.4.1	Pyruvate dehydrogenase	Tricarboxylic Acid	Cataplerotic	-0.12	-0.60, 0.36	52
1.2.4.2	2-oxoglutarate dehydrogenase	Tricarboxylic Acid	Cataplerotic	-0.10	-0.59, 0.42	
2.2.1.1	Transketolase	Pentose Phosphate		-0.08	-0.52, 0.35	29,52,54
2.2.1.2	Transaldolase	Pentose Phosphate	Cataplerotic	-0.49	-0.87, 0.02	7,45,47
2.3.3.1	Citrate synthase	Tricarboxylic Acid		0.15	-0.32, 0.56	
2.3.3.9	Malate synthase	Tricarboxylic Acid	Anaplerotic	0.61	0.20, 0.90*	55
2.7.1.11	6-phosphofructokinase	EMP glycolysis	Cataplerotic	-0.03	-0.48, 0.45	
2.7.1.40	Pyruvate kinase	EMP glycolysis	Cataplerotic	0.42	0.04, 0.74*	
2.7.2.3	Phosphoglycerate kinase	EMP glycolysis/ Gluconeogenesis	Cataplerotic	0.03	-0.41, 0.47	
3.1.1.31	6-phosphogluconolactonase	ED glycolysis/ Pentose Phosphate	Anaplerotic	0.43	0.03, 0.77*	
3.1.3.11	Fructose-1,6-bisphosphatase	Gluconeogenesis	Anaplerotic	0.24	-0.20, 0.66	55
4.1.1.31	Phosphoenolpyruvate carboxylase	Gluconeogenesis	Anaplerotic	0.45	0.00, 0.77*	
4.1.1.32	Phosphoenolpyruvate carboxykinase [GTP]	Gluconeogenesis		0.11	-0.39, 0.57	55,56
4.1.2.13 I	Fructose-bisphosphate aldolase class I	EMP glycolysis/ Gluconeogenesis	Cataplerotic	-0.65	-0.86, 0.33	
4.1.2.13 II	Fructose-bisphosphate aldolase class II	EMP glycolysis/ Gluconeogenesis	Cataplerotic	0.56	-0.18, 0.83	
4.1.2.14	2-dehydro-3-deoxyphosphogluconate aldolase	ED glycolysis	Anaplerotic	0.67	0.36, 0.90*	

4.1.3.1	Isocitrate lyase	Tricarboxylic Acid		-0.10	-0.54, 0.37	
4.2.1.11	Enolase	EMP glycolysis/ Gluconeogenesis		0.43	0.02, 0.76*	[55]
4.2.1.12	Phosphogluconate dehydratase	ED glycolysis	Anaplerotic	0.71	0.47, 0.89*	
4.2.1.2	Fumarate hydratase class II	Tricarboxylic Acid		0.29	-0.15, 0.68	
4.2.1.3	Aconitate hydratase	Tricarboxylic Acid		-0.35	-0.71, 0.13	[55,57]
5.1.3.1	Ribulose-phosphate 3-epimerase	Pentose Phosphate		0.03	-0.45, 0.49	[58]
5.3.1.1	Triosephosphate isomerase	EMP glycolysis/ Gluconeogenesis		-0.02	-0.44, 0.41	[55]
5.3.1.6	Ribose 5-phosphate isomerase	Pentose Phosphate		0.32	-0.14, 0.68	[54]
5.3.1.9	Glucose-6-phosphate isomerase	EMP glycolysis/ Gluconeogenesis		0.45	0.12, 0.73*	
5.4.2.11	Phosphoglycerate mutase	EMP glycolysis/ Gluconeogenesis		-0.46	-0.80, 0.01	[55,56]
5.4.2.12	2,3-bisphosphoglycerate-independent phosphoglycerate mutase	EMP glycolysis/ Gluconeogenesis		0.41	-0.01, 0.73	
6.2.1.5a	Succinyl-CoA ligase [ADP-forming] alpha chain	Tricarboxylic Acid		0.17	-0.33, 0.61	
6.2.1.5b	Succinyl-CoA ligase [ADP-forming] beta chain	Tricarboxylic Acid		-0.04	-0.52, 0.41	

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737

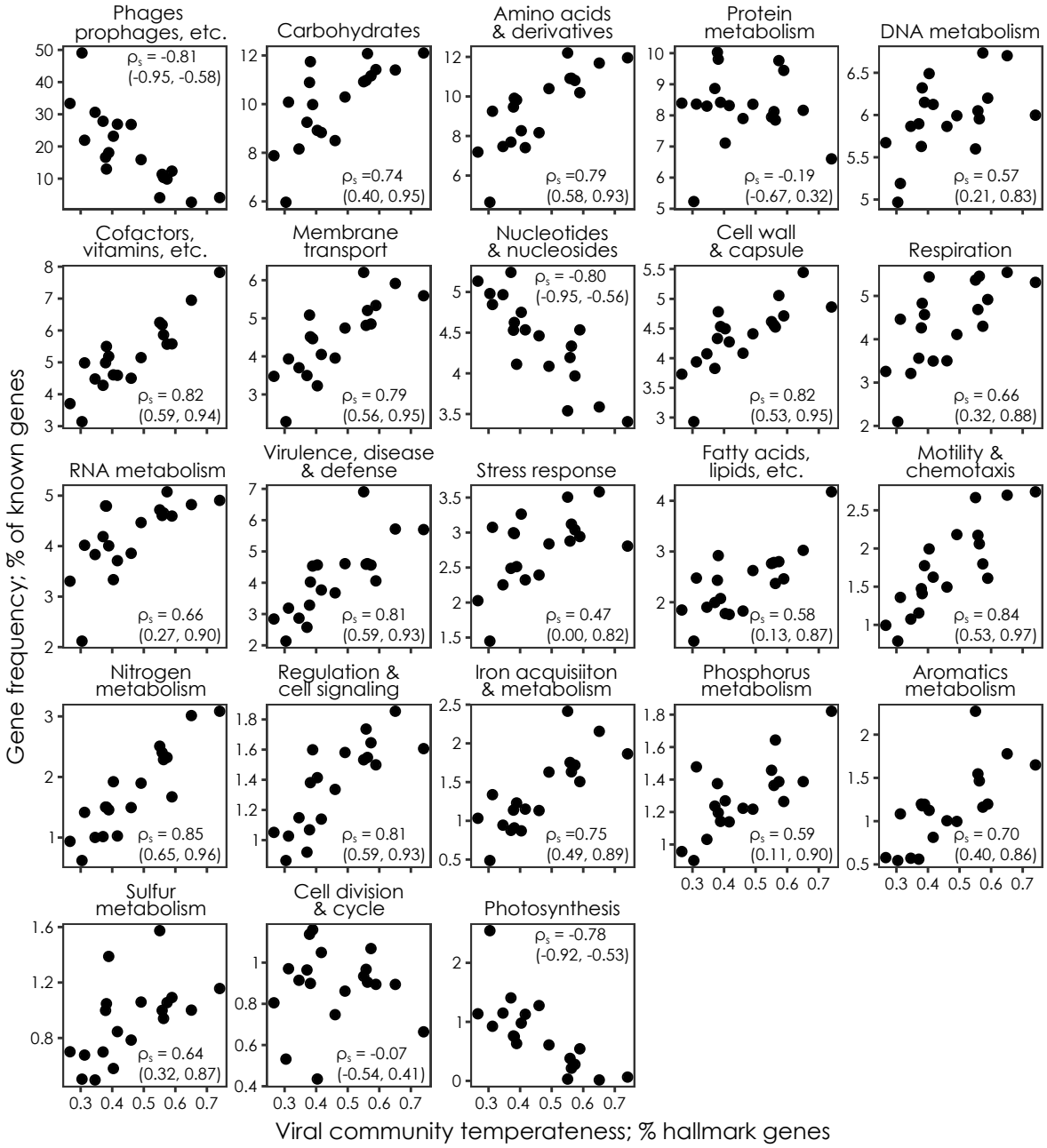

Figure 1: Correlations between metabolic function and community temperateness across the breadth of cellular metabolism. Spearman's rho estimates (ρ_s) are shown with 95 % confidence intervals (CIs) in parentheses from 1,000 bootstrapped simulations. Panels are ordered by mean gene frequency. The y-axis shows the gene frequency as a percentage of known genes, an internally normalized and relative metric where all of the frequencies for a given sample across all panels sums to 100 %. Gene categories with average frequencies below 0.5 % were omitted. Viral community temperateness was calculated as the percentage of integrase and excision genes in the known genes in each virome. Bootstrapping code can be found at https://tinyurl.com/viral-metabolic-ratchet-code.

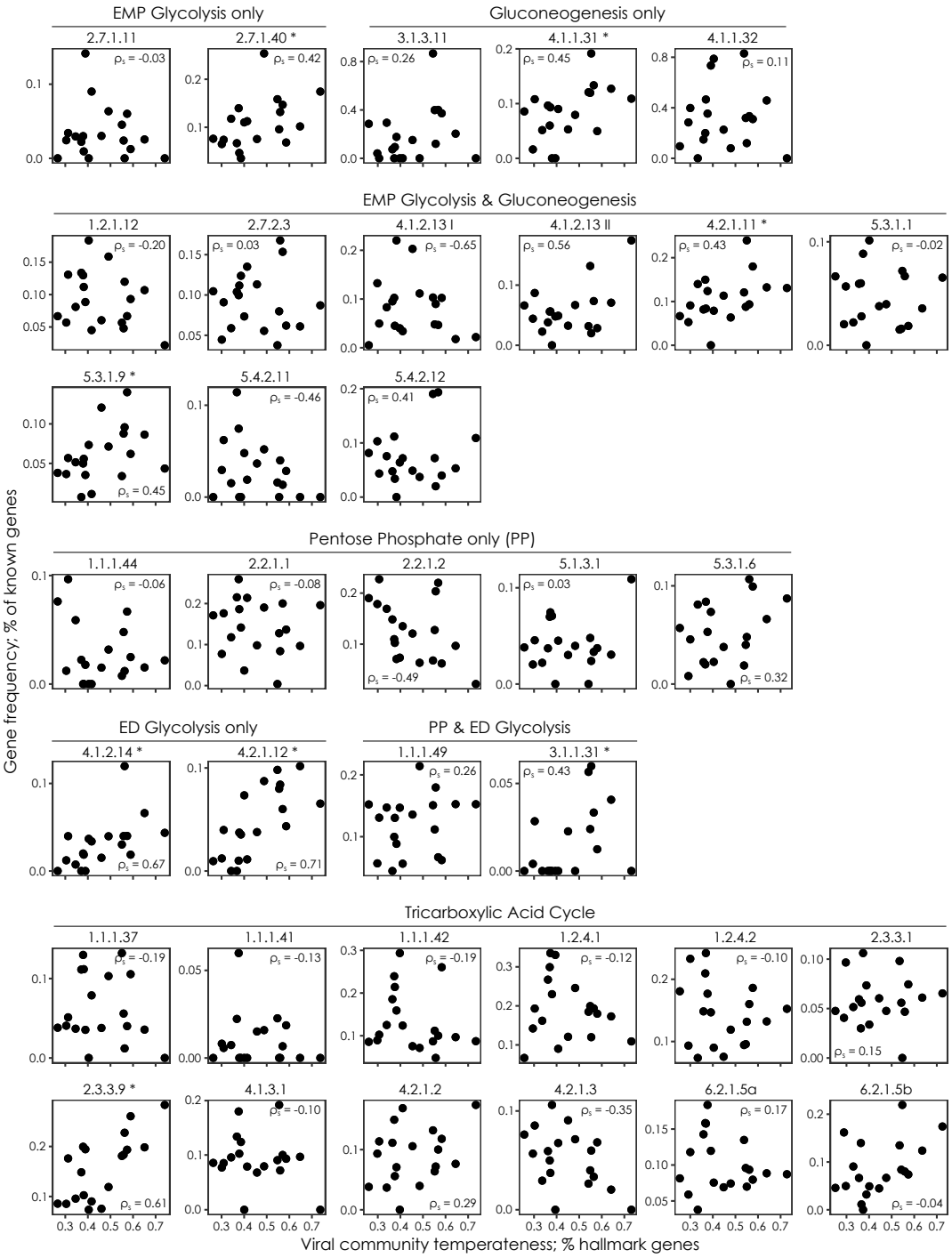

Figure 2: Correlation between central carbon metabolism genes and viral community temperateness. Spearman's rho correlation coefficients (ρ_s) are shown from 1,000 bootstrapped simulations correlating central carbon metabolism gene frequency as a percentage of known genes vs viral community temperateness. Panels are ordered by pathway, including Embden-Meyerhof-Parnas glycolysis (EMP), Entner-Doudoroff glycolysis (ED), pentose phosphate (PP), and tricarboxylic acid cycle pathways. Viral community temperateness was calculated as the percentage of integrase and excision genes in the known genes in each virome. Enzymes with rho values significantly different to zero are indicated by asterisks. Genes are labeled by EC numbers; see **Table 1** for gene names and summary statistics.

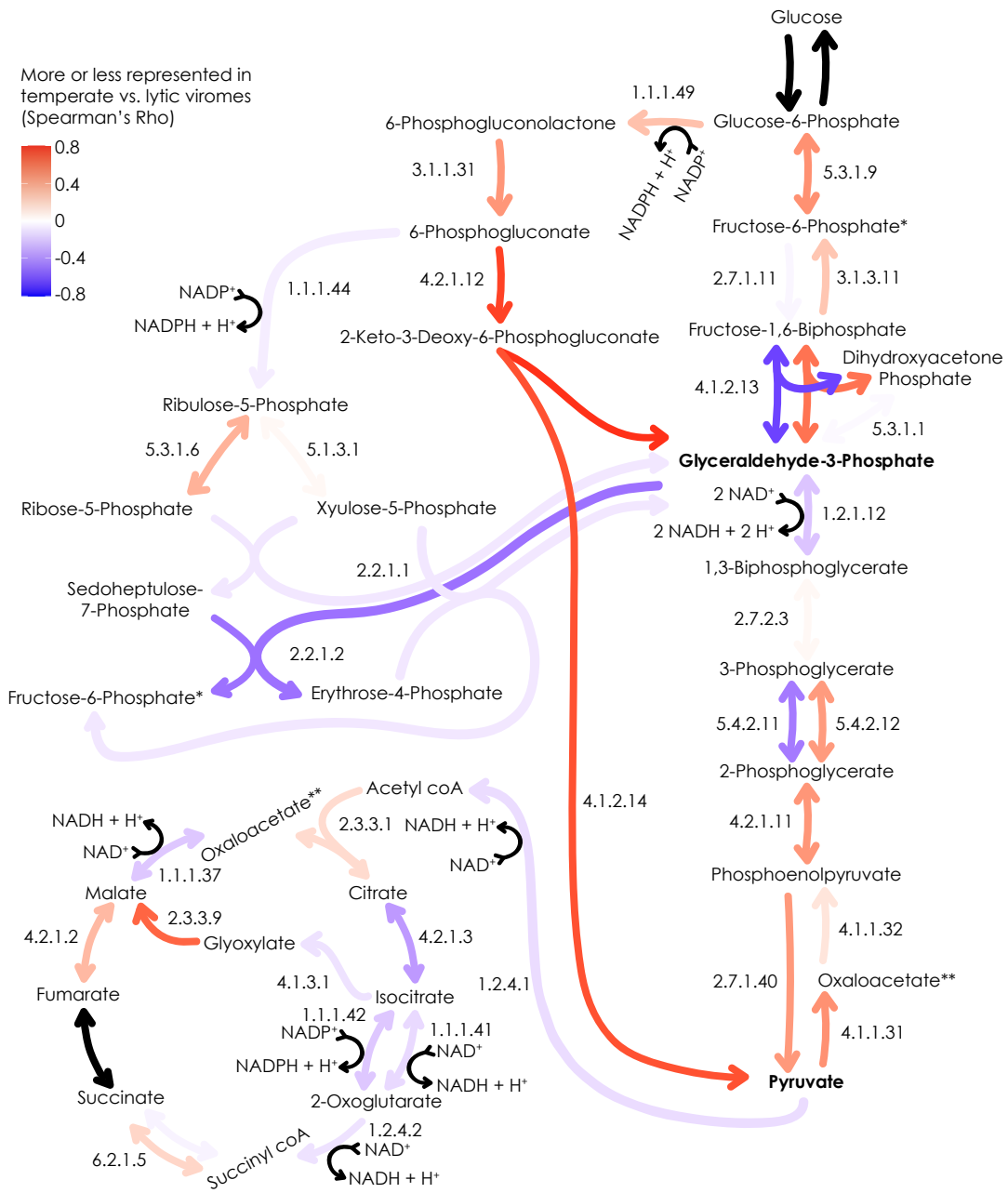

Figure 3: Pathway map of changes in the frequency of central carbon metabolism genes across the lytic to temperate spectrum. Map of central carbon metabolism with each enzymatic step colored by the change in enzymatic metagenomic gene frequency across lytic to temperate viral communities. Red arrows show higher frequency in temperate communities while blue arrows are lytic associated, reflecting ρ_s values for each enzyme as seen in **Table 1** and **Figure 2**. Enzymes are labeled by EC numbers (see **Table 1** for gene names). Single-headed and double-headed arrows represent irreversible and reversible reactions, respectively. Black arrows show genes that were absent from all viromes. Central intermediate metabolites glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate (G3P) and pyryvate are shown in bold. *Note that fructose-6-phosphate is found in the EMP/gluconeogenesis pathways as well as the PPP, ** that oxaloacetate is produced in both the TCA and gluconeogenesis, and that EC1.1.1.42 in the TCA has an oxalosuccinate intermediate. Code can be found at https://tinyurl.com/viral-metabolic-ratchet-code.

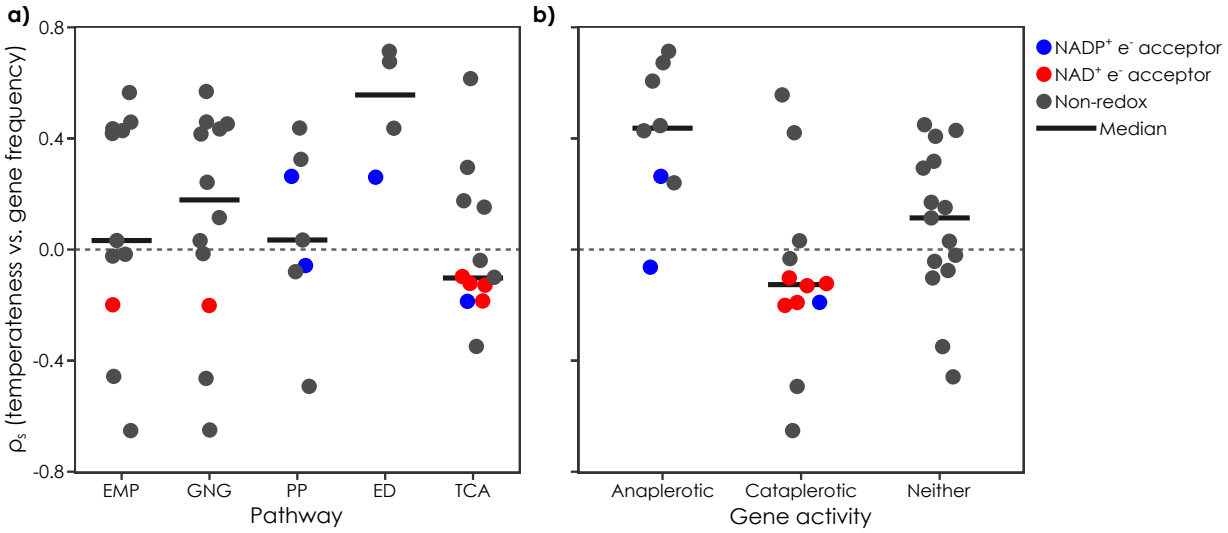

Figure 4: Correlations between viral community temperateness and central carbon gene frequency across pathways and gene function. (a) Spearman's rho correlation coefficients (ρ_s) for genes in the Embden- Meyerhof-Parnas glycolysis (EMP), gluconeogenesis (GNG), pentose phosphate (PP), Entner-Doudoroff glycolysis (ED, and tricarboxylic acid cycle (TCA) pathways are shown with median values marked by horizontal bars in each pathway. (b) Coefficients are also shown for genes involved in building up central intermediate metabolite pools like pyruvate and glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate (anaplerotic reactions) or consuming general metabolites to make specialized pools of precursors and cellular energy (cataplerotic reactions) in central carbon metabolism, compared with genes involved in neither anaplerosis nor cataplerosis, also with median values shown. Oxidoreductase genes are colored by their electron acceptor: blue for $NADP^+$ electron acceptors involved in biomass generation, and red for NAD^+ electron acceptors involved in cellular energy generation. Dashed horizontal lines indicate $\rho_s = 0$. Note, although anaplerotic and cataplerotic reactions often refer to steps in the TCA, we are using the term more generally here to refer respectively to the generation ('filling up'; anaplerotic) of flexible general intermediate metabolites and the consumption of general metabolites towards precursor and cellular energy production ('drawing down'; cataplerotic) more generally[33].

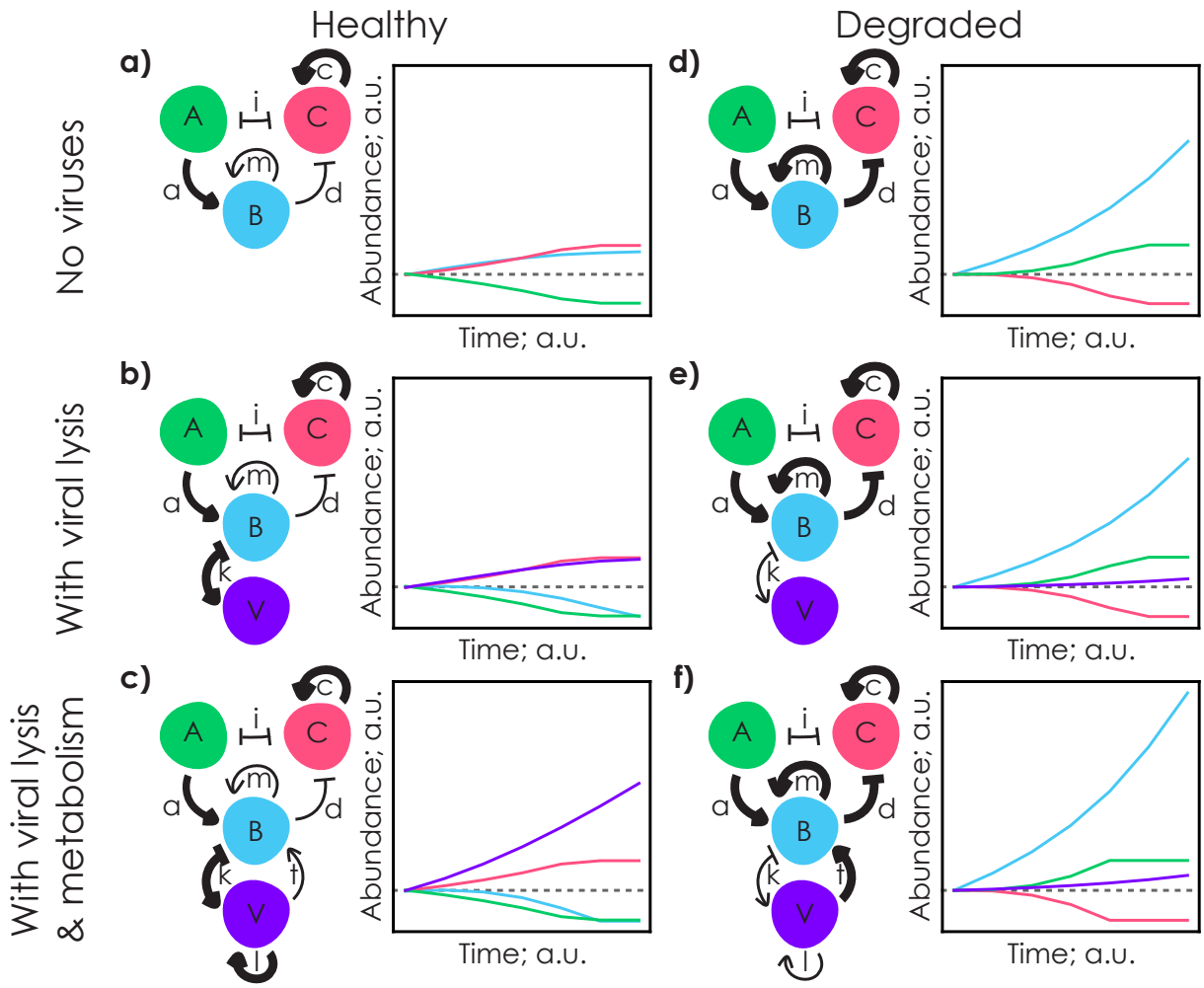

Figure 5: Schematic model incorporating viral metabolic effects on resilience of healthy coral reefs and exacerbation of reef degradation. The predicted effects of viral lysis and metabolic capability on algal (A; green), coral (C; coral), bacteria (B; blue) and viral (V; violet) population sizes in healthy and degraded reef scenarios with no viruses (a and d, respectively), with viral lysis (b and e, respectively), and with viral lysis and metabolism (c and f, respectively). Compartment models showing how the model was implemented for each panel are shown (left) as well as resulting dynamics (right). Dynamics show changes in populations over time, in arbitrary units (a.u.), reflecting the qualitative nature of the model. In each iteration, algal population size A was solved as the 1 – C to reflect the finite space available on the benthos. Parameter values, shown as line weights, qualitatively reflect known processes on healthy vs degraded reefs, and can be found in **Supplementary Table 2**. Rates include: (i) coral-algal inhibition, (c) coral proliferation, (a) algal-mediated DOC supply to bacteria, (m) bacterial anabolic metabolism, (d) bacterial-mediate coral disease, (k) viral lysis of bacteria, (l) lytic viral metabolism, and (t) temperate viral metabolism. Note that panels **(b)** and **(e)** depict the Kill-the-Winner and Piggyback-the-Winner models, respectively. Algal, coral, bacteria, and viral pools were initialized at 0.5 a.u. for all simulations where present. To make the model as conservative as possible, rates of algal carbon delivery (a), and direct coral-algal interference (i) were not changed across scenarios; doing so would lead to enhanced loss of coral. Note that flat lines at minimal values reflect functional population extinction.

810 **Legends only**

811 **Table 1: Central Carbon Metabolism genes shown in Figures 2 and 3.** Genes are
812 categorized by pathway and gene function, identified by EC number and gene
813 name, and annotated with prior references if they have been observed in
814 viruses before. The Spearman's correlation between the frequency of each
815 gene and viromes temperateness is indicated by bootstrapped mean ρ_s values
816 and 95 % confidence intervals from 1,000 iterations are shown. Please refer to
817 **Supplementary Figure 2** for bootstrap ρ_s distributions. Genes shared between
818 pathways are shown with a slash. Note, although anaplerotic and cataplerotic
819 reactions often refer to steps in the TCA, we are using the term more generally
820 here to refer respectively to the generation of central intermediate metabolites
821 ('filling up'; anaplerotic) and the consumption of central metabolites to
822 generate specialized pre-cursor or cellular energy pools ('drawing down';
823 cataplerotic) more generally[33]. Bootstrapping code can be found at
824 https://tinyurl.com/viral-metabolic-ratchet-code.

825 **Figure 1: Correlations between metabolic function and community**
826 **temperateness across the breadth of cellular metabolism.** Spearman's rho
827 estimates (ρ_s) are shown with 95 % confidence intervals (CIs) in parentheses from
828 1,000 bootstrapped simulations. Panels are ordered by mean gene frequency.
829 The y-axis shows the gene frequency as a percentage of known genes, an
830 internally normalized and relative metric where all of the frequencies for a given
831 sample across all panels sums to 100 %. Gene categories with average
832 frequencies below 0.5 % were omitted. Viral community temperateness was
833 calculated as the percentage of integrase and excision genes in the known
834 genes in each virome. Bootstrapping code can be found at
835 https://tinyurl.com/viral-metabolic-ratchet-code.

836 **Figure 2: Correlation between central carbon metabolism genes and viral**
837 **community temperateness.** Spearman's rho estimates (ρ_s) are shown from 1,000

838 bootstrapped simulations correlating central carbon metabolism gene
839 frequency as a percentage of known genes vs viral community temperateness.
840 Panels are ordered by pathway, including Embden- Meyerhof-Parnas glycolysis
841 (EMP), Entner-Doudoroff glycolysis (ED), pentose phosphate (PP), and
842 tricarboxylic acid cycle pathways. Viral community temperateness was
843 calculated as the percentage of integrase and excision genes in the known
844 genes in each virome. Enzymes with rho values significantly different to zero are
845 indicated by asterisks. Genes are labeled by EC numbers; see **Table 1** for gene
846 names and summary statistics.

847 **Figure 3: Figure 3: Pathway map of changes in the frequency of central carbon**
848 **metabolism genes across the lytic to temperate spectrum.** Map of central
849 carbon metabolism with each enzymatic step colored by the change in
850 enzymatic metagenomic gene frequency across lytic to temperate viral
851 communities. Enzymes are labeled by EC numbers (see **Table 1** for gene names).
852 Red arrows show higher frequency in temperate communities while blue arrows
853 are lytic associated, reflecting ρ_s values for each enzyme as seen in **Table 1** and
854 **Figure 2**. Single-headed and double-headed arrows represent irreversible and
855 reversible reactions, respectively. Black arrows show genes that were absent
856 from all viromes. Central intermediate metabolites glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate
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858 in the EMP/gluconeogenesis pathways as well as the PPP, ** that oxaloacetate is
859 produced in both the TCA and gluconeogenesis, and that EC1.1.1.42 in the TCA
860 has an intermediate oxalosuccinate product/substrate. Code can be found at
861 https://tinyurl.com/viral-metabolic-ratchet-code.

862 **Figure 4: Correlations between viral community temperateness and central**
863 **carbon gene frequency across pathways and gene function. (a)** Spearman's
864 rho correlation coefficients (ρ_s) for genes in the Embden- Meyerhof-Parnas
865 glycolysis (EMP), gluconeogenesis (GNG), pentose phosphate (PP), Entner-

866 Doudoroff glycolysis (ED, and tricarboxylic acid cycle (TCA) pathways are shown
867 with median values marked by horizontal bars in each pathway. (b) Coefficients
868 are also shown for genes involved in building up central intermediate
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870 reactions) or consuming general metabolites to make specialized pools of
871 precursors and cellular energy (cataplerotic reactions) in central carbon
872 metabolism, compared with genes involved in neither anaplerosis nor
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881 production ('drawing down'; cataplerotic) more generally.

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884 of viral lysis and metabolic capability on algal (A; green), coral (C; coral),
885 bacteria (B; blue) and viral (V; violet) population sizes in healthy and degraded
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888 Compartment models showing how the model was implemented for each
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890 changes in populations over time, in arbitrary units (a.u.), reflecting the
891 qualitative nature of the model. In each iteration, algal population size A was
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895 Rates include: (i) coral-algal inhibition, (c) coral proliferation, (a) algal-mediated
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903 would lead to enhanced loss of coral. Note that flat lines at minimal values
904 reflect functional population extinction. Code can be found at
905 https://tinyurl.com/viral-metabolic-ratchet-code.

906

Figures only

Figure 1

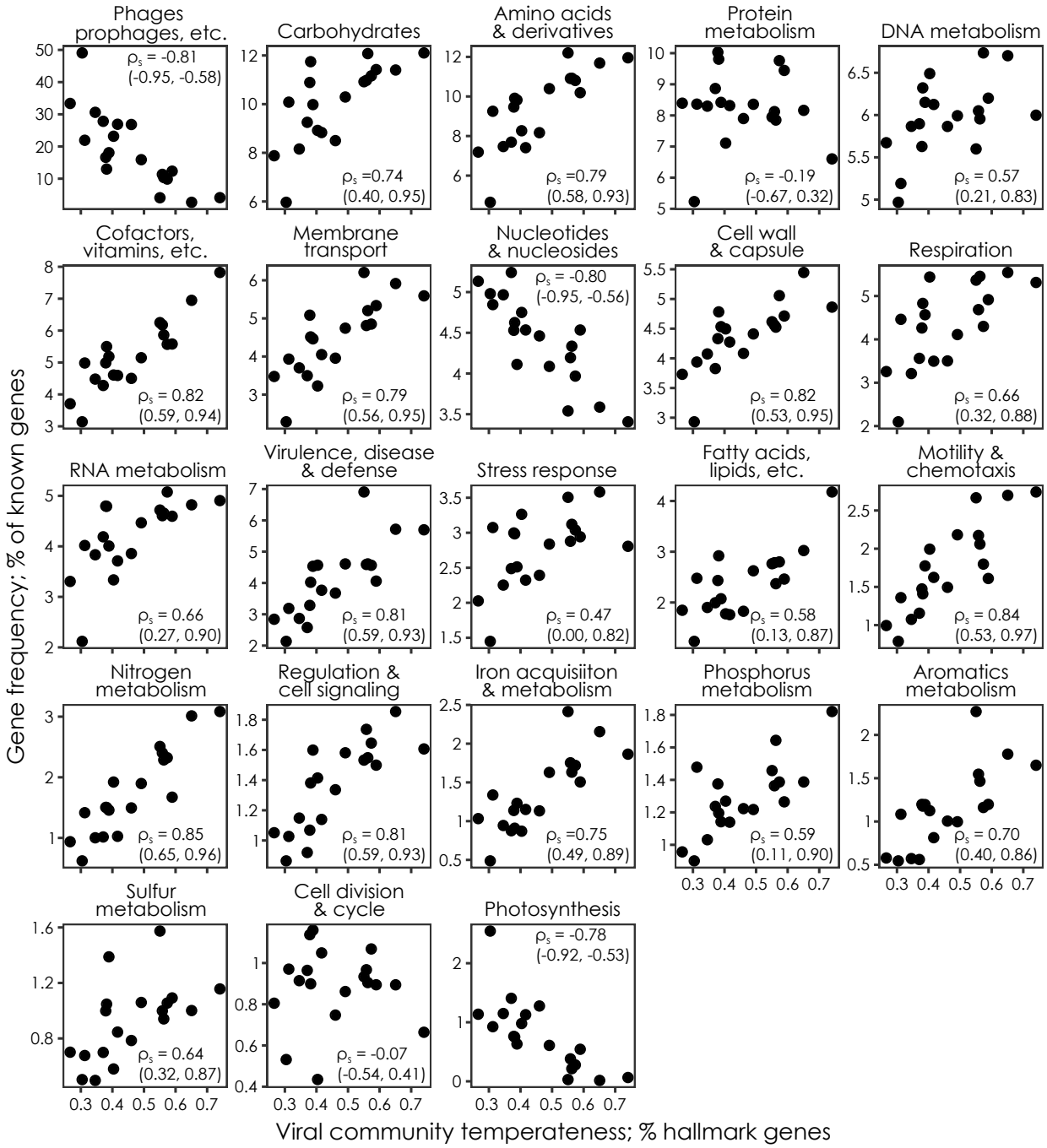
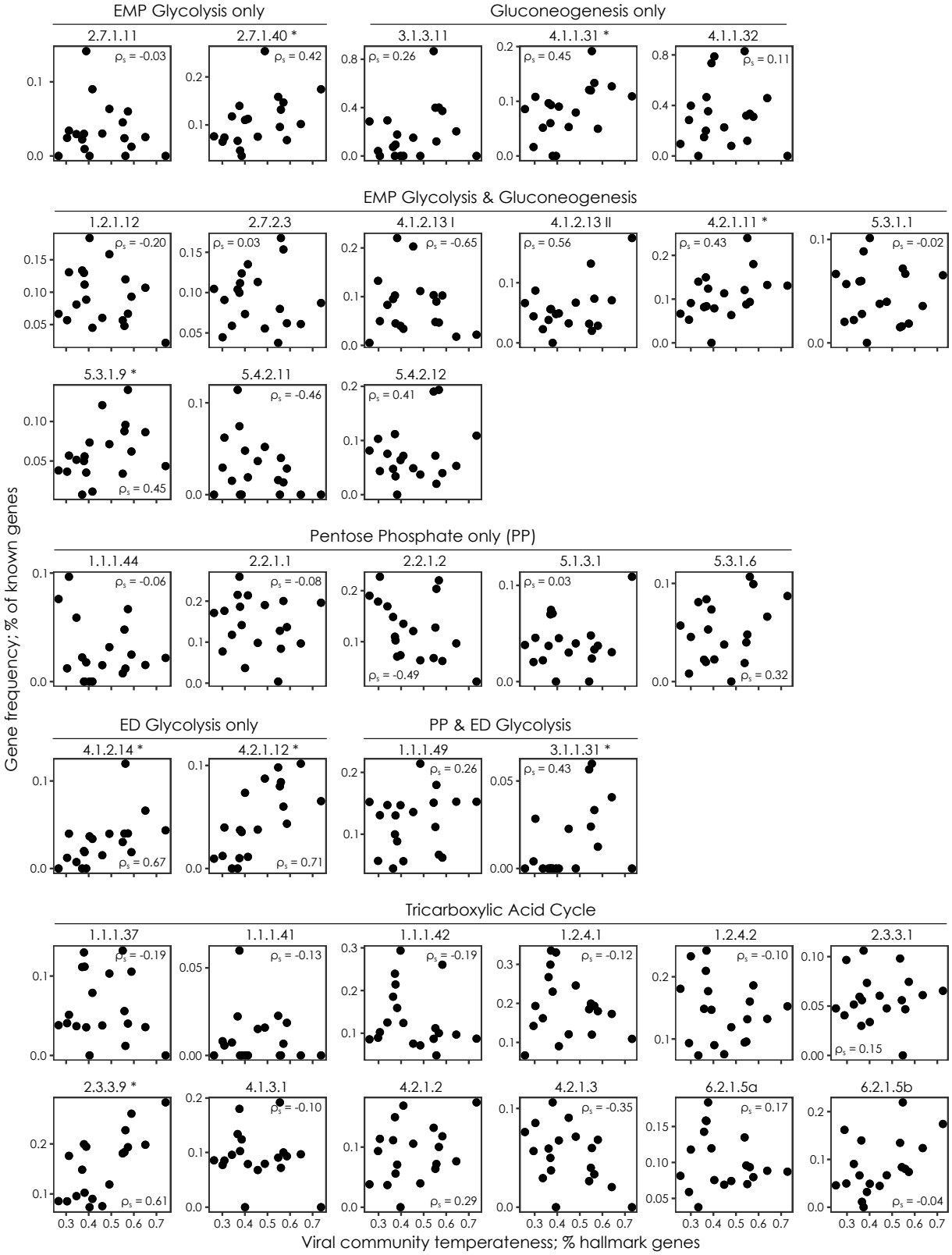
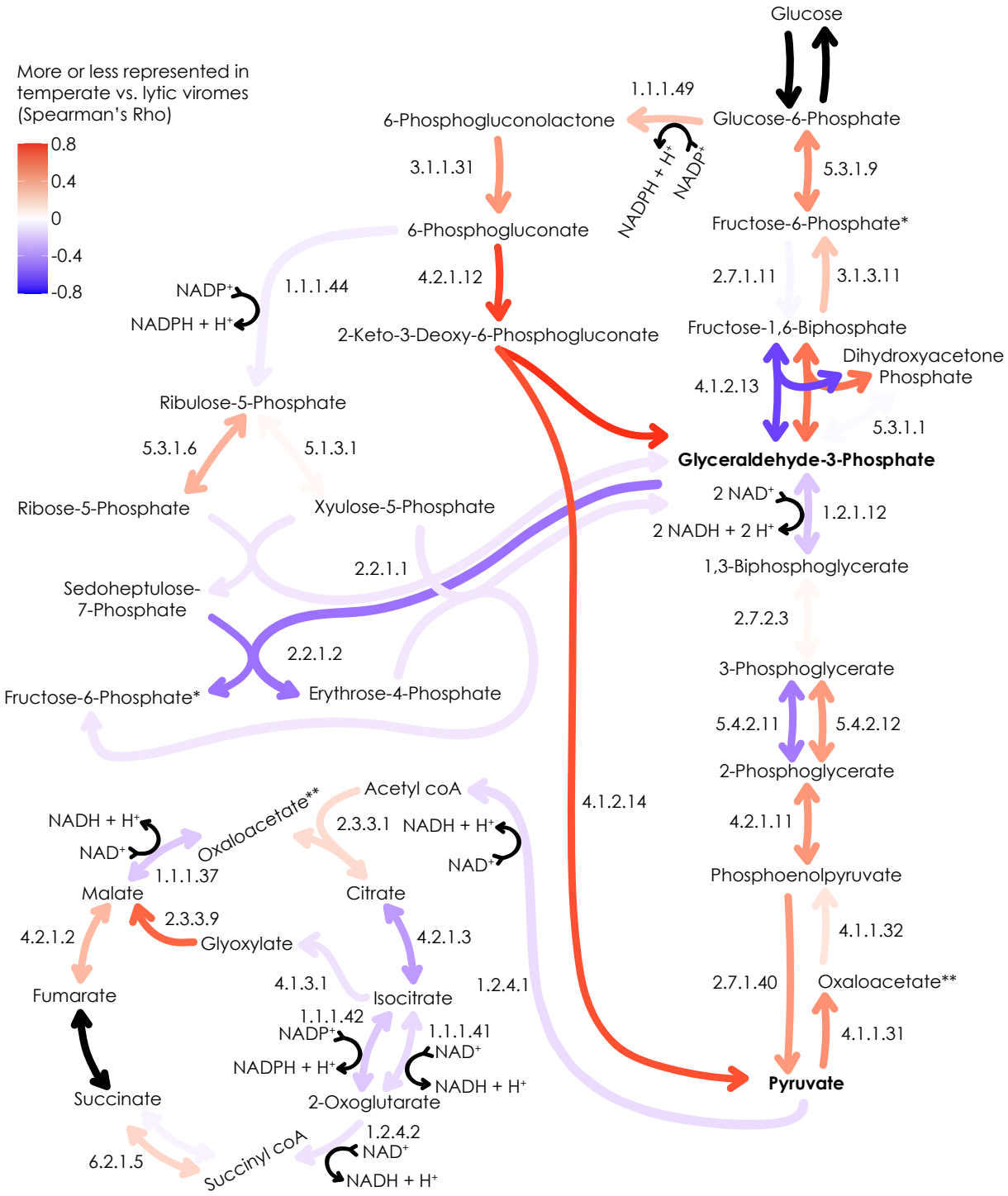


Figure 2


EMP Glycolysis only
Gluconeogenesis only
2.7.1.11
2.7.1.40 *
3.1.3.11
4.1.1.31 *
4.1.1.32
EMP Glycolysis & Gluconeogenesis
1.2.1.12
2.7.2.3
4.1.2.13 I
4.1.2.13 II
4.2.1.11 *
5.3.1.1
5.3.1.9 *
5.4.2.11
5.4.2.12
Pentose Phosphate only (PP)
1.1.1.44
2.2.1.1
2.2.1.2
5.1.3.1
5.3.1.6
ED Glycolysis only
PP & ED Glycolysis
4.1.2.14 *
4.2.1.12 *
1.1.1.49
3.1.1.31 *
Tricarboxylic Acid Cycle
1.1.1.37
1.1.1.41
1.1.1.42
1.2.4.1
1.2.4.2
2.3.3.1
2.3.3.9 *
4.1.3.1
4.2.1.2
4.2.1.3
6.2.1.5a
6.2.1.5b
Gene frequency; % of known genes
Viral community temperateness; % hallmark genes

912 **Figure 3**



913

914 **Figure 4**

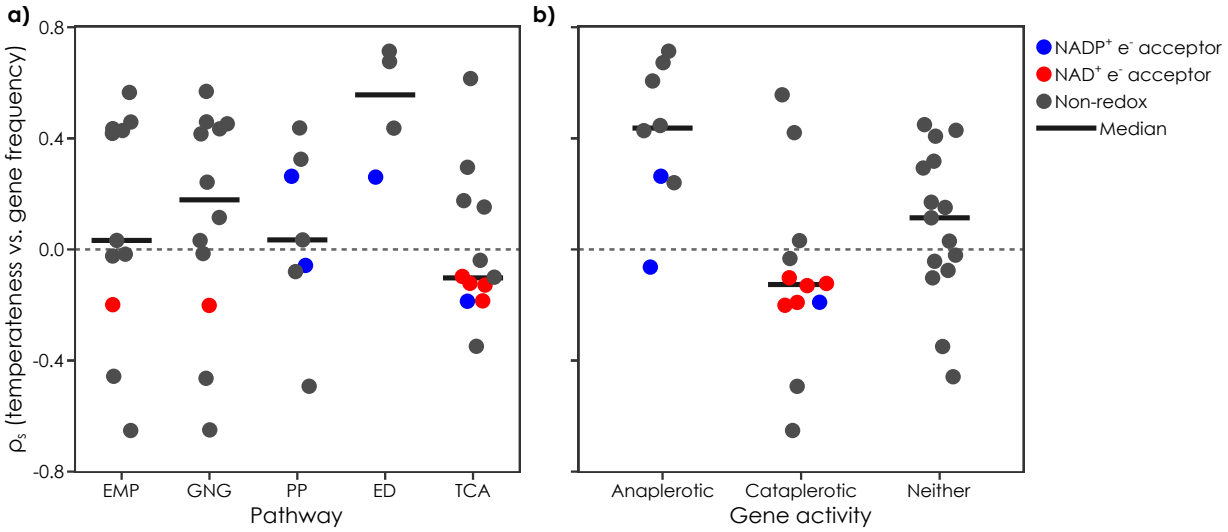


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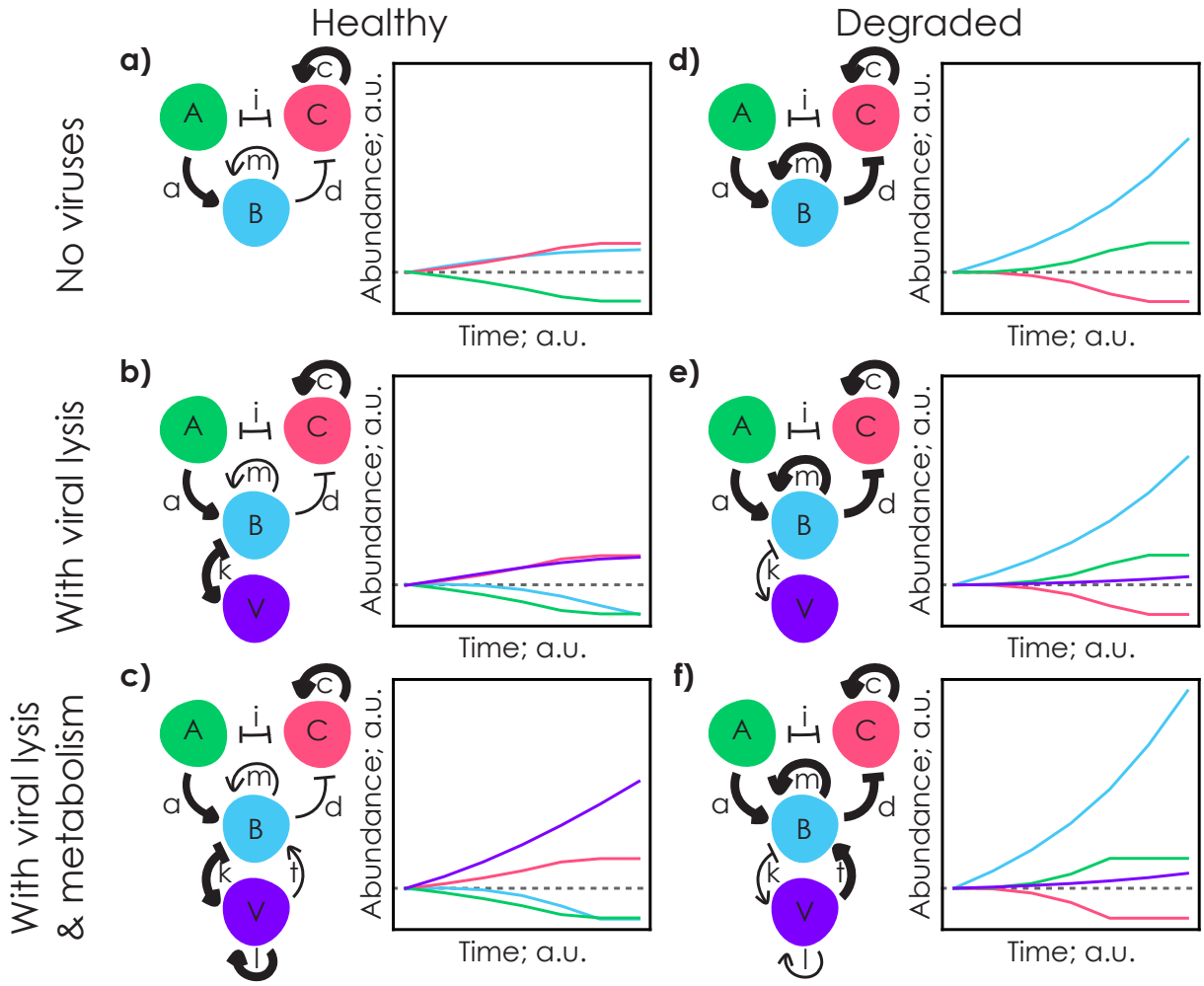
Figure 5


Healthy
Degraded
No viruses
With viral lysis
With viral lysis & metabolism
a)
b)
c)
d)
e)
f)
A
B
C
V
a
c
d
i
k
l
m
†
Abundance; a.u.
Time; a.u.

921 **Supplementary Tables and Figures**

922 **Supplementary Table 1: Summary of the 19 samples analyzed, including sample**
923 **accession numbers, the total number of base pairs, reads sequenced, and**
924 **locations of viral metagenomes.** Note that all metagenomes have been
925 previously published except Pearl and Hermes Reef Wreck and Caroline Wreck
926 Site samples indicated by an asterisk. Caroline Island is now named Millenium
927 Atoll. Fasta files for all metagenomes can be found at https://tinyurl.com/viral-
928 metabolic-ratchet.

Sample Location	MG-RAST Accession Number	bp count	Sequence count	Latitude	Longitude
Millennium Atoll	4683670.3	47624434	173813	-9.9138	-150.2038
Flint Atoll	4683674.3	7294624	26673	-11.43	-151.8192
Starbuck	4683677.3	28130343	102666	-5.6384	-155.8811
Maui	4683680.3	48918703	178536	20.86447	-156.13911
Oahu	4683683.3	28708747	104972	21.4389	-158
Pearl & Hermes Reef	4683684.3	211441921	771690	27.8557	-175.8318
Kaui	4683686.3	14722075	53831	22.0964	-159.5261
Starbuck	4683703.3	51673568	188592	-5.6384	-155.8811
Niihau	4683704.3	17098607	62505	21.85115	-160.18327
Molokai	4683712.3	31626104	115424	21.17481	-156.8214
Lisianski	4683718.3	51289619	187189	25.98702	-173.99438
Malden Atoll	4683720.3	68368950	249522	-4.0123	-154.9178
French Frigate Shoals	4683731.3	12353528	45131	23.87748	-166.29115
Hawaii	4683733.3	30728163	112147	20.00324	-155.83318
French Frigate Shoals	4683745.3	64763334	236363	23.6417	-155.8778
Lanaii	4683746.3	38160746	139273	20.76167	-156.8334
Millenium Atoll	4683747.3	71166319	259736	-9.9138	-150.2038
Pearl & Hermes Reef Wreck*	4574481.3	24339533	88980	27.8666	-175.7468
Caroline Wreck Site*	4574475.3	11555298	42262	-9.9957	-150.2161

929

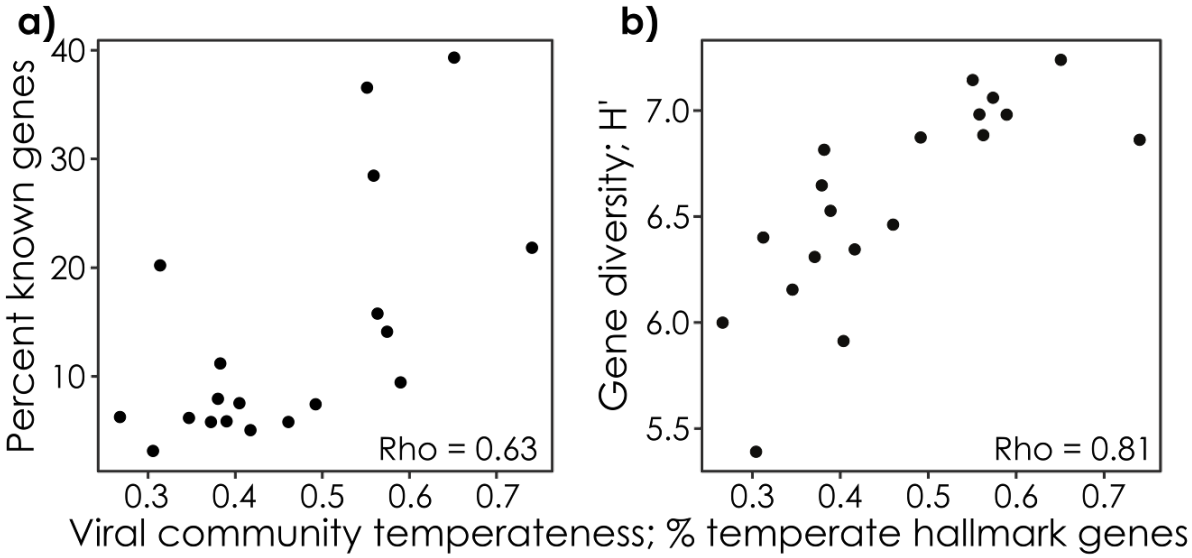
Supplementary Table 2: Parameters and values used in the qualitative ecosystem model. To isolate the effect of bacterial and viral proliferative genes on algal, coral, bacteria, and viral populations, as many parameters as possible were held constant, and only those relating directly to bacterial and viral proliferation and pathogenicity changed (listed in **bold**). All populations, shown with arbitrary units to show relative change in Figure 5, were initialized at 0.5. Note that, to account for finite space on the benthos, algal population size A is solved from coral population size C as A = 1 – C each iteration. Code can be found at https://tinyurl.com/viral-metabolic-ratchet-code.

Parameter	Symbol	Healthy reef without viruses	Degraded reef without viruses	Healthy reef with viruses	Degraded reef with viruses	Healthy reef with viruses and viral metabolism	Degraded reef with viruses and viral metabolism
Bacterial replication	m	0.02	0.2	0.02	0.2	0.02	0.2
Bacterial inhibition of coral	d	0.02	0.2	0.02	0.2	0.02	0.2
Coral replication	c	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Algal inhibition of coral	i	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Algal support of bacteria	a	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Viral replication	l	-	-	-	-	0.2	0.02
Viral lysis of bacteria	k	-	-	0.2	0.02	0.2	0.02
Bacterial support of viral replication	k	-	-	0.2	0.02	0.2	0.02
Viral support of bacterial replication	t	-	-	-	-	0.02	0.2
Bacterial initial population	B	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Coral initial population	C	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Algal initial population	A	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Viral initial population	V	-	-	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5

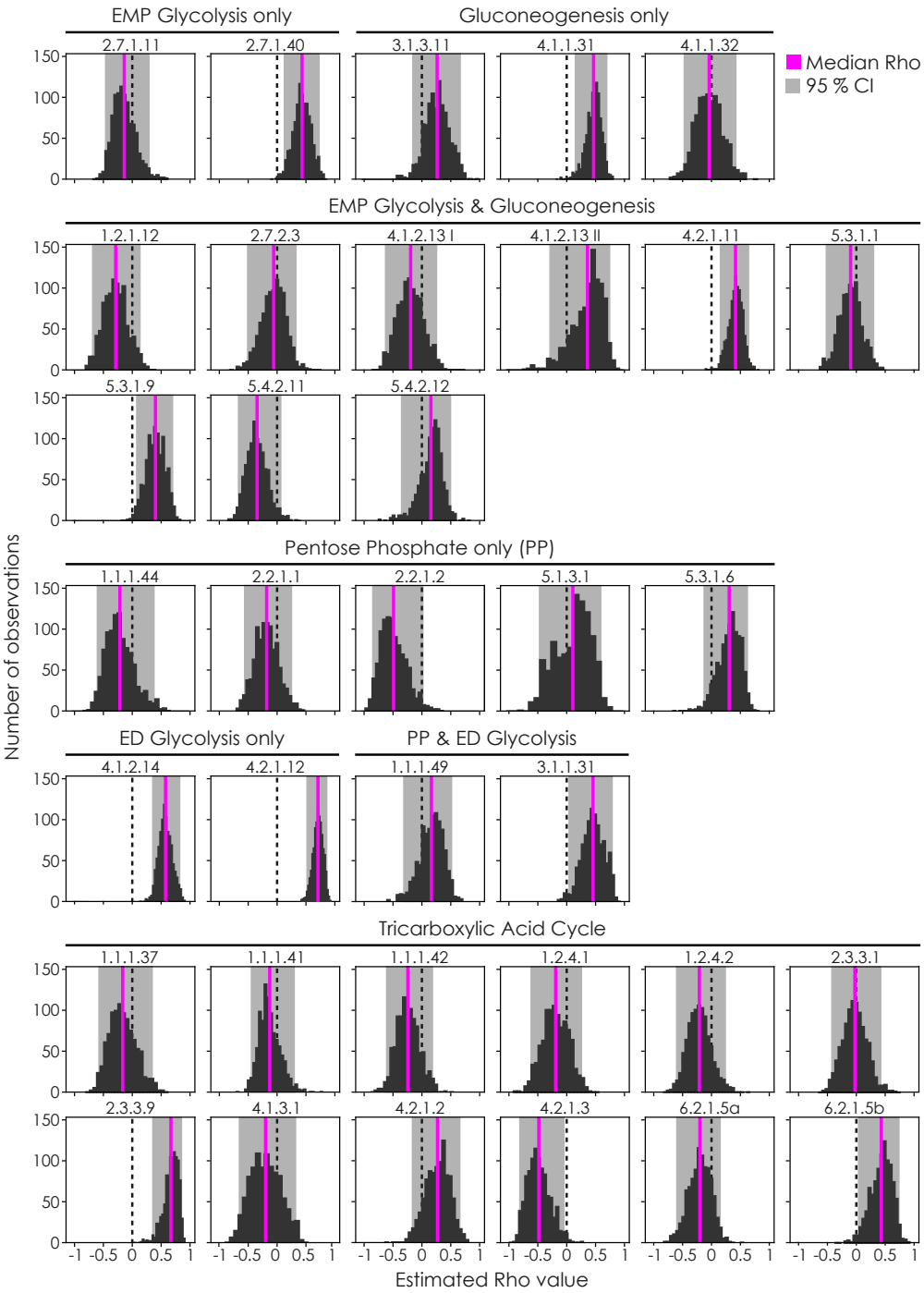
940 **Supplementary Table 3: The frequency of photosynthesis genes across the lytic-**
941 **temperate spectrum.** Genes were identified using SEED Level 2 categorization
942 and are organized according to the KEGG photosynthesis map. Spearman's
943 Rho values indicate whether genes are over-represented (value < 0) or under-
944 represented (value > 0) in lytic versus temperate viral communities.

Level 2 Category	Photosystem	Function	Gene	Rho
Electron transport and photophosphorylation	Photosystem_II	photosystem II protein D1	PsbA	-0.845344
Electron transport and photophosphorylation	Photosystem_II	photosystem II protein D2	PsbD	-0.7327776
Electron transport and photophosphorylation	Photosystem_II	Cytochrome b559 beta chain	PsbF	-0.3442652
Electron transport and photophosphorylation	Photosystem_II	Photosystem II 10 kDa phosphoprotein	PsbH	0.04303315
Electron transport and photophosphorylation	Photosystem_II	Photosystem II protein	PsbN	-0.400914
Electron transport and photophosphorylation	Photosystem_II	Photosynthetic reaction center H subunit		-0.1290994
Electron transport and photophosphorylation	Photosystem_II	Putative photosynthetic complex assembly protein		0.2581989
Electron transport and photophosphorylation	Photosystem_I	photosystem I P700 chlorophyll a apoprotein subunit Ia	PsaA	-0.5610839
Electron transport and photophosphorylation	Photosystem_I	photosystem I P700 chlorophyll a apoprotein subunit Ib	PsaB	-0.6837071
Electron transport and photophosphorylation	Photosystem_I	photosystem I iron-sulfur center subunit VII	PsaC	-0.4461846
Electron transport and photophosphorylation	Photosystem_I	photosystem I subunit II	PsaD	-0.5711162
Electron transport and photophosphorylation	Photosystem_I	photosystem I subunit IV	PsaE	-0.502189
Electron transport and photophosphorylation	Photosystem_I	photosystem I subunit III plastocyanin docking protein	PsaF	-0.04303315
Electron transport and photophosphorylation	Photosystem_I	photosystem I subunit IX	PsaJ	-0.3442652
Electron transport and photophosphorylation	Photosystem_I	photosystem I subunit X	PsaK	-0.2484191
Light-harvesting complexes	Bacterial_light-harvesting_proteins	Light-harvesting LHI, beta subunit		0.1290994
Light-harvesting complexes	Chlorosome	Chlorosome protein I, 2Fe-2S ferredoxin		-0.2151657
Rhodopsins	Bacteriorhodopsin	Brp-like protein		-0.1844696
Rhodopsins	Proteorhodopsin	Octaprenyl-diphosphate synthase		0.1290994
Rhodopsins	Proteorhodopsin	Proteorhodopsin		-0.4655338

945



Supplementary Figure 1: Temperate viral communities are more cell-like and are more genetically diverse in known genes. (a) The percent of genes with hits against the SEED database (i.e., percent known genes), and (b) the diversity of those known genes in the viral communities across the lytic to temperate spectrum. Note that the percent known genes is indicative of how metabolically similar the viruses are to cells given that known genes are commonly of identified in the study of cells. Viral community temperateness was calculated as the percentage of integrase and excision genes in the known genes in each virome.



Supplementary Figure 2: Bootstrapped distribution of ρ_s from 1,000 iterations correlating the frequency of central carbon metabolism genes with viral community temperateness (number of observations vs ρ_s value). Genes are grouped by pathway. Histogram shows the distribution of bootstrapped ρ_s values, with pink lines showing the median bootstrapped value and shaded grey areas showing the 95 % confidence interval of the median ρ_s. Dashed vertical lines show $\rho_s = 0$. Bootstrapping code can be found at https://tinyurl.com/viral-metabolic-ratchet-code.