Multiple phase-variable mechanisms, including capsular polysaccharides, modify bacteriophage susceptibility in *Bacteroides thetaiotaomicron*

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Abstract

A variety of cell surface structures, including capsular polysaccharides (CPS), dictate interactions between bacteria and their environment including their viruses (bacteriophages). Members of the prominent human gut Bacteroidetes characteristically produce several phase-variable CPS, but their contributions to bacteriophage interactions are unknown. We used engineered strains of the human symbiont *Bacteroides thetaiotaomicron*, which differ only in the CPS they express, to isolate bacteriophages from two locations in the United States. Testing each of 71 bacteriophages against a panel of strains that express wild-type phase-variable CPS, one of eight different single CPS, or no CPS at all, revealed that each phage infects only a subset of otherwise isogenic strains. Deletion of infection-permissive CPS from *B. thetaiotaomicron* was sufficient to abolish infection for several individual bacteriophages, while infection of wild-type *B. thetaiotaomicron* with either of two different bacteriophages rapidly selected for expression of non-permissive CPS. Surprisingly, acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron* also escapes complete killing by these bacteriophages, but surviving bacteria exhibit increased expression of 8 distinct phase-variable lipoproteins. When constitutively expressed, one of these lipoproteins promotes resistance to multiple bacteriophages. Finally, both wild-type and acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron* were able to separately co-exist with one bacteriophage for over two months in the mouse gut, suggesting that phase-variation promotes resistance but also generates sufficient numbers of susceptible revertants to allow bacteriophage persistence. Our results reveal important roles for *Bacteroides* CPS and other cell surface structures that allow these bacteria to persist despite bacteriophage predation and hold important implications for using bacteriophages therapeutically to target gut symbionts.

44 **Introduction**

45 The community of cellular microorganisms in the human intestinal tract is dominated by
46 a diverse population of bacteria, with hundreds of different species typically coexisting within an
47 individual[1,2]. Frequent diet changes, host immune responses and bacteriophage infections are
48 among the many causes of intermittent perturbations to individual bacterial taxa. However, the
49 microbial communities within individuals generally remain stable over long time periods[3],
50 suggesting that bacteria have evolved strategies to survive these perturbations. One mechanism
51 that may promote bacterial resilience is the ability of individual strains to produce multiple
52 capsular polysaccharides (CPS), cell surface components that have been diversified in the
53 genomes of gut-dwelling Bacteroidetes and several other phyla[4,5]. While previous work showed
54 that CPS from *Bacteroides* and members of other phyla play roles in evading or modulating host
55 immunity[6-10], the diversity of CPS synthesis loci in gut bacteria suggests that they could fill other
56 roles[5,8,11,12].

57 The phylum Bacteroidetes—within which members of the genus *Bacteroides* are
58 typically the most abundant Gram-negative gut symbionts in industrialized human
59 populations[2,13]—provides excellent models to study persistence and competition mechanisms,
60 including the roles and diversity of CPS. For example, the type strains of the well-studied species
61 *Bacteroides thetaiotaomicron* and *Bacteroides fragilis* each encode 8 different CPS[14,15] and there
62 is broad genetic diversity of *cps* loci among different strains within these species (e.g., 47
63 different *cps* biosynthetic loci were identified in just 14 strains of *B. thetaiotaomicron*)[8]. In
64 *Bacteroides*, CPS structures appear to surround the entire bacterial cell[16,17] and the *cps*
65 biosynthetic loci that encode these surface coatings are often under the control of phase variable
66 promoters[8,15,18]. In conjunction with other regulatory mechanisms, phase variable CPS

67 expression generates phenotypic heterogeneity within an otherwise isogenic population that may
68 facilitate survival in the face of diverse disturbances[8,15,19,20].

69 Bacterial viruses or bacteriophages (herein, phages), like the bacteria on which they prey,
70 vary greatly across individual gut microbiomes and are even responsive to host dietary changes
71 and disease states[21-25]. Compared to gut bacteria, far less is understood about the phages of the
72 gut microbiome, especially the mechanisms governing phage-bacteria interactions. Specifically,
73 while phages that target several species of *Bacteroides* have been shown to exhibit species- or
74 strain-specificity[26-29], little is known about the molecular interactions that drive bacterial
75 susceptibility[30] or the mechanisms by which these bacteria persist despite an abundance of
76 phages in the gut. Given the observations that *Bacteroides* CPS are extremely variable, even
77 within members of a single species[8,11], and employ complex regulatory mechanisms that
78 diversify expression in members of a population[20], CPS are ideal candidates for modulating
79 *Bacteroides*-phage interactions.

80 Here, we tested the hypothesis that CPS mediate *Bacteroides*-phage interactions. We
81 employed a panel of engineered strains of the model symbiont *Bacteroides thetaiotaomicron* that
82 each constitutively expresses a different single CPS or none at all. While our results clearly
83 support the conclusion that individual CPS can either block or be required for phage infection,
84 they also reveal that *B. thetaiotaomicron* possesses additional phage-evasion strategies that
85 function in addition to CPS. For two different phages tested, CPS-independent survival involves
86 increased expression of phase-variable surface lipoproteins and altered expression of nutrient
87 receptors by the surviving bacteria. These phase-variable surface proteins may also encode
88 resistance mechanisms, an idea that is supported by increased resistance to several phages when
89 one of these lipoproteins is constitutively expressed experimentally. Our results provide a

90 mechanistic glimpse into the intricacy of bacterial-phage interactions that exist in the human gut
91 and provide a foundation for future work to leverage these interactions and to directly manipulate
92 the gut microbiome.

93 **Results**

94 **Bacteriophages infect *B. thetaiotaomicron* in a CPS-dependent fashion**

95 The genomes of human gut Bacteroidetes frequently encode multiple CPS[5], a
96 phenomenon that we explored in a phylogenetic context in currently available genomes of 53
97 different human gut species. The type strains of all but the *Prevotella* species searched encoded
98 between 2-13 CPS (mean = 4), suggesting that the ability to produce multiple CPS is typical and
99 some lineages have undergone substantial expansion of these surface structures (**Figure S1A**).
100 To test the hypothesis that *Bacteroides* CPS mediate interactions with phages, we isolated phages
101 that infect *B. thetaiotaomicron* VPI-5482 (ATCC 29148). To maximize our chances of collecting
102 phages that differ in their interactions with CPS, we used the wild-type strain that expresses 8
103 different CPS, which are each encoded by a different multi-gene *cps* locus and in some cases are
104 driven by phase-variable promoters (**Figure S1B**)[14], along with a panel of engineered strains
105 with reduced CPS expression. The latter included 8 single CPS-expressing strains (designated
106 "cps1" through "cps8")[8] and an acapsular strain in which all eight *cps* loci were deleted (Δ*cps*)[31]
107 as independent hosts for phage isolation. Primary sewage effluent from two cities within the
108 United States (Ann Arbor, Michigan and San Jose, California; separated by approximately 3,300
109 kilometers) was used as the phage source (for further details on phage isolation, see *Methods* and
110 **Table S1**). All phages were plaque purified at least 3 times and high titer lysates generated for
111 each of the 71 phages. Plaque morphologies varied among the individual phages, ranging in size
112 from <1 mm to >3 mm and in opacity from very turbid to clear (**Figure S2**).

113 To determine if phages isolated on individual *B. thetaiotaomicron* hosts are restricted by
114 the particular CPS they express, we systematically tested each phage against each of the 10 host
115 strains (n=3). Hierarchical clustering of the host infection profiles revealed a cladogram with 3
116 main branches that each encompasses phages from both collection sites, although substantial
117 variation in host tropism exists for phages within each branch (**Figure 1**). Furthermore,
118 individual phages within each branch displayed a range of plaque morphologies (**Figures 1, S2**),
119 suggesting additional diversity in the collection that is not captured by this assay. Finally, host
120 range assays were robust when performed by different experimenters at different research sites
121 (**Figure S3**).
122 Phages in Branch 1 generally exhibited robust infection of the acapsular strain, although
123 3 of these phages did not form plaques on this host. Furthermore, phages in Branch 1 generally
124 exhibited robust infection on strains expressing CPS7 or CPS8 alone, although a separate subset
125 of 3 phages did not form plaques on the CPS8 expressing strain. Some Branch 1 phages also
126 displayed less efficient infection of other strains with the exception of cps4, which was not
127 infected by any phages in this group. Interestingly, ARB154 exclusively infected cps8, an
128 uncommon CPS among *B. thetaiotaomicron* strains that appears to be contained in a mobile
129 element[8]. Phages in Branch 2 generally exhibited robust infection of all strains except cps2, cps3
130 and cps4. However, subsets of this group were unable to infect cps1 or cps6. Finally, Branch 3
131 tended to exhibit strong infection of wild-type, *cps*1, cps2, and cps3, with some variations. Some
132 Branch 3 phages also exhibited the ability to infect the cps7 and acapsular strains but were the
133 only branch that poorly infected cps8. Most notably, a subset of phages on Branches 1 and 3
134 failed to infect the acapsular strain, suggesting that they require the presence of certain CPS for
135 infection. Taken together, the observed variations in phage infectivity provide support for our

136 hypothesis that these surface structures are important mediators of *B. thetaiotaomicron*-phage
137 interactions.
138
139 **Elimination of specific CPS subsets alters bacterial susceptibility to phages**
140 The differences in host infectivity described above suggest that there are distinct
141 mechanisms of phage adsorption to the bacterial surface, some of which are influenced by CPS.
142 Several phages robustly infect the acapsular strain, indicating that a capsule-independent cell
143 surface receptor mediates infection. These same phages each infect subsets of the single CPS-
144 expressing strains, suggesting that some "non-permissive" CPS block access to cell surface
145 receptors, while other "permissive" CPS fail to do so. For phages that do not efficiently infect the
146 acapsular strain, one or more CPS may serve as a direct phage receptor(s) or as a required co-
147 receptor.
148 To further define the roles of specific CPS during phage infection, we investigated a
149 subset of 6 phages (ARB72, ARB78, ARB82, ARB101, ARB105, and ARB25; marked in blue
150 text in Figure 1). All 6 of these phages infect wild-type *B. thetaiotaomicron* that variably
151 expresses its 8 different CPS and 5 of them (all on Branch 3) infect the acapsular strain poorly or
152 not at all (**Figure 1**). We first tested the hypothesis that some CPS are required as receptors or
153 co-receptors by deleting only the subsets of CPS biosynthetic genes encoding permissive
154 capsules based on our prior experiments with single CPS-expressing strains. For ARB72, which
155 most robustly infects the cps1 and cps3 strains, simultaneous elimination of both of these
156 capsules from wild-type *B. thetaiotaomicron* reduced infection below the limit of detection
157 (**Figure 2A**). Likewise, elimination of the most permissive CPS for the four other Branch 3

158 phages (ARB78, ARB82, ARB101 and ARB105) significantly reduced *B. thetaiotaomicron*
159 infection by these phages, in some cases in the presence of permissive CPS (**Figure 2B-E**).
160 For ARB25, which infects 7 of the 10 strains tested in our initial plaque assays (**Figure**
161 **1**), some single and compounded *cps* deletions significantly reduced infection rates or reduced
162 them below the limit of detection (**Figure 2F**). While individual deletion of four permissive CPS
163 (CPS1,6,7,8) led to partially reduced infection, so did single eliminations of either of two CPS
164 initially determined to be non-permissive (CPS3 and CPS4). Moreover, deletion of non-
165 permissive CPS4 in combination with deleting the *permissive* CPS1 completely eliminated
166 detectable infection suggesting more complicated regulatory interactions, which are known to
167 occur with *Bacteroides* CPS[19,20]. Interestingly, strains lacking CPS4 or CPS1/CPS4 compensated
168 by significantly increasing relative expression of the non-permissive *cps2* locus, which could
169 contribute to ARB25 resistance (**Figure 2G**).
170 A strain expressing only two of the non-permissive CPS (CPS2 and CPS3) could not be
171 detectably infected by ARB25 (**Figure 2F**, "2,3 only"). However, a strain expressing CPS2,3,4
172 regained some susceptibility (**Figure 2F**, "2,3,4 only"), indicating that when CPS4 is present it is
173 capable of mediating some infection by this phage, which is different than the observation made
174 in Figure 1 and is discussed further below. In contrast to sole expression of CPS2 and CPS3
175 promoting resistance to ARB25, deletion of the *cps2* and *cps3* loci led to dominant expression of
176 *cps1* and *cps4* genes, which increased infection efficiency and led to the production of clearer
177 plaques (**Figure 2F-H**). Additional support for the idea that loss of CPS4 expression alone
178 modifies ARB25 susceptibility comes from plaque morphologies arising from infection of the
179 Δ*cps4* strain, which produced smaller and more turbid plaques, demonstrating that when
180 infection does occur it is less productive (**Figure 2H**). Additional experiments with another *B.*

181 *thetaiotaomicron* strain that encodes homologs of *cps2, cps5* and cps6 support the conclusion
182 that elimination of these permissive capsules reduces, in some cases, bacteria-phage interaction
183 (**Figure S4**). However, the exogenous presence of a stoichiometric excess of non-permissive
184 CPS2 (~10^9-fold more than phage) was not able to block the ability of ARB25 to infect the
185 acapsular strain, suggesting that non-permissive CPS do not inhibit phage infection *in trans*
186 (**Figure S5A**).
187
188 ***B. thetaiotaomicron* acquires transient resistance to phage infection**
189 Interestingly, we observed that liquid cultures of the various *B. thetaiotaomicron* strains
190 infected with ARB25 or SJC01 did not show evidence of complete lysis after 36 hours of
191 growth, as determined by optical density at 600 nm (OD_{600}) (**Figures 3, S6A**). Previous reports
192 demonstrated that *B. fragilis*[28] and *B. intestinalis*[29] exhibited transient resistance to phage
193 infection that could be "reset" through removal of the phage from the culture, although the
194 underlying mechanism of this transient resistance was not determined. Based on these
195 observations, we sought to determine if similar transient resistance occurs with *B.*
196 *thetaiotaomicron* and if this resistance is dependent on CPS.
197 Growth curves of each of the CPS-expressing strains inoculated with live or heat-killed
198 ARB25 confirmed our initial host range assays, except, in contrast to the plate-based assays,
199 cultures containing the CPS4-expressing strain were sensitive to killing by this phage in liquid
200 culture, while cultures of the CPS6-expressing strain had no decrease in OD_{600} (**Figure 3**). In
201 these experiments, most strains that appeared to be susceptible via plaque assay exhibited an
202 initial lag in growth or a drop in OD_{600} after growth began. As expected, the *cps*2 and *cps*3
203 strains did not exhibit any apparent growth perturbation by ARB25. While susceptible strains

204 initiated growth similarly to uninfected cultures and later showed loss of culture density, they
205 subsequently displayed either resumption of growth (wild-type, acapsular, cps1) that approached
206 the density achieved by uninfected controls or growth stagnation at an intermediate culture
207 density (cps4, cps5, cps7, cps8). The former observation suggested outgrowth of a resistant
208 subpopulation of bacteria and culture supernatants taken from ARB25 post-infected, wild-type *B.*
209 *thetaiotaomicron* still contained high phage titers when exposed to naïve bacteria, excluding the
210 possibility that the phages were inactivated (**Figure S5B**). The observation of growth stagnation
211 after initial loss of bacterial density suggests that a more complex equilibrium is achieved
212 between phage and resistant bacteria that prohibits either from becoming dominant. This
213 behavior was reproducible with 20 separate cultures of the cps4 strain (**Figure S6B**). A similar
214 correlation between plate-based assays and behavior in liquid culture was observed with SJC01,
215 a Branch 2 phage with an infection profile similar to ARB25 (**Figure S6A**). As expected from its
216 resistance to SJC01 in Figure 1, the cps3 strain showed no signs of disrupted growth, whereas
217 cps4, which was non-permissive for both ARB25 and SJC01 in plate-based assays, also showed
218 susceptibility in liquid culture.

219 We next determined whether strains that had survived or proliferated after exposure to
220 ARB25 retained resistance after removal of phage. In order to isolate phage-free bacterial clones,
221 we isolated individual colonies by sequentially streaking each twice from a subset of the cultures
222 that gained resistance to ARB25 (WT, acapsular, cps1 and cps4) as well as the inherently
223 ARB25-resistant cps2 strain. The majority of clones isolated using this process were free from
224 detectable phage (see *Methods*). We then re-infected each clone with live ARB25 and monitored
225 susceptibility by delayed growth or drop in the culture density as compared to infection with
226 heat-killed phage. As expected, the cps2 strain remained resistant. On the other hand, the

227 majority of clones (42/61 total, ~69%) derived from the other four strains regained susceptibility
228 (**Table S2**), suggesting that resistance to this phage is not predominantly caused by a permanent
229 genetic alteration.
230
231 **Phage-resistant, wild-type *B. thetaiotaomicron* populations exhibit altered *cps* locus**
232 **expression**
233 Given that CPS type is correlated with resistance to phage infection, we hypothesized that
234 wild-type *B. thetaiotaomicron* cells that are pre-adapted by expressing non-permissive capsules
235 would be positively selected in the presence of phage. To test this, we infected wild-type *B.*
236 *thetaiotaomicron* with ARB25 and monitored bacterial growth. Cultures treated with a high
237 multiplicity of infection (MOI ≈1) displayed similar growth kinetics as observed previously, with
238 an apparently resistant population emerging after 3-4 hours (**Figure 4A**). Interestingly, bacterial
239 cultures originating from different single colonies displayed variable growth kinetics, with the
240 growth of one clone barely delayed by treatment with live ARB25. Next, we measured if
241 infection with ARB25 resulted in altered CPS expression by the phage-resistant *B.*
242 *thetaiotaomicron* population. In support of our hypothesis, *B. thetaiotaomicron* exposed to heat-
243 killed phage predominantly expressed CPS3 and CPS4, which we typically observe *in vitro*.
244 Treatment with live ARB25 resulted in a dramatic loss of *cps*1 and *cps*4 expression with a
245 concomitant increase of expression of the non-permissive *cps*3 locus (**Figure 4B**). While
246 reduction in *cps4* expression did not correlate with increased *cps2* as observed with a Δ*cps4*
247 strain (**Figure 2G**), the high abundance of *cps3* expressing bacteria in the initial culture may
248 have enabled ARB25 to select for this population in the hours post-infection. Similar growth and
249 expression phenotypes occurred in cultures treated with a low (≈10^{-4}) MOI, but with higher

250 initial bacterial growth before a decline (**Figure S7**). Dirichlet regression (see *Methods*)
251 supported significant expression changes for the *cps1*, *cps3*, and *cps4* loci in response to ARB25
252 ($p < 0.01$ for experiments with both low and high MOI). Notably, the most resistant of the three
253 bacterial clones (as evidenced by faster outgrowth post-infection) in each of the two experiments
254 (low and high MOI) exhibited similar *cps* locus expression to the other clones after treatment
255 with live phage, but expressed lower levels of permissive *cps*1 and *cps4* and higher levels of
256 non-permissive *cps*3 in heat-killed phage treatment groups (**Figure S8)**. This pre-existing
257 variation in CPS expression may contribute to the ability of some clones to resume growth more
258 rapidly after phage challenge because it was already skewed towards non-permissive CPS.
259

260 **Multiple layers of phase-variable featuresequip *B. thetaiotaomicron* to survive phage**
261 **predation**

262 The results described above support the idea that some individual cells in a *B.*
263 *thetaiotaomicron* population are pre-adapted to resist phage through expression of different CPS.
264 However, ARB25-infected acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron* still grew significantly after initial
265 reduction by the phage (**Figure 3**) and most Δ*cps*-derived isolates after phage infection had
266 regained susceptibility (**Table S2**), suggesting it is also transient. To determine if additional
267 phage resistance mechanisms are involved, we performed whole genome transcriptional profiling
268 by RNA-sequencing (RNA-seq) to measure transcriptional differences between ARB25 post-
269 infected wild-type and acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron*. As expected in wild-type, the
270 transcriptional profiles of bacteria surviving after ARB25 infection (n=3) were largely
271 characterized by alterations in CPS expression (**Figure 5A, Table S3a**). Among 83 genes that
272 exhibited significant expression changes ≥3-fold between *B. thetaiotaomicron* exposed to live

273 and heat-killed ARB25, 63 belonged to 4 *cps* loci, with permissive *cps1* and *cps4* decreased and
274 non-permissive *cps2* and *cps3* increased. Interestingly, two additional gene clusters encoding
275 different outer-membrane "Sus-like systems", which are well-described mechanisms in the
276 Bacteroidetes for import and degradation of carbohydrates and other nutrients[32,33], were also
277 decreased in post-infected bacteria. The central features of these systems are outer membrane
278 TonB-dependent transporters (similar to *E. coli* TonA, or **T one** phage receptor **A**; the first
279 described phage receptor[34]), suggesting the possibility that the proteins encoded by these genes
280 are part of the receptor for ARB25.

281 In the transcriptome of acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron* subjected to the same live and heat-
282 killed ARB25 treatments described above, 118 genes showed significant expression changes and
283 most of these (100, 85%) were upregulated (**Figure 5B, Table S3b**). One of the two Sus-like
284 systems (*BT2170-73*) that was decreased in ARB25-exposed wild-type was also decreased to
285 similar levels in acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron*. Among the most highly upregulated genes (28
286 genes with ≥10-fold increase and an adjusted p-value ≤ 0.01) after ARB25 infection, 6 genes in
287 the well-characterized starch-utilization system (Sus)[32] were increased in post-infected cultures,
288 suggesting that surviving bacteria are exposed to and metabolize glycogen that is released from
289 lysed siblings. An additional 17 genes belong to 8 loci that encode predicted outer membrane S-
290 layer lipoproteins and OmpA β-barrel proteins. One of these (BT1927) was previously
291 investigated and found to be phase-variable and increase *B. thetaiotaomicron* resistance to
292 complement-mediated killing when locked in the "on" state[35]. The remaining S-layer clusters
293 share both syntenic organization and homology to this original S-layer gene cluster. Closer
294 scrutiny of the promoter regions upstream of the newly identified loci revealed that each is also
295 flanked by a pair of imperfect, 17 nucleotide palindromic repeats (**Figure 5C**). Three of these

296 repeats are identical to the repeats known to mediate recombination at the *BT1927* promoter[35].
297 The remaining 4 sequences only varied by the sequence of a trinucleotide located in the middle
298 of each imperfect palindrome (**Figure 5C**). Finally, amplicon sequencing of the promoter regions
299 using directionally-oriented primers supported the existence of the proposed recombination
300 events in 5 of the 7 newly identified loci, while two did not generate PCR products (**Figure S9)**.
301 Among the remaining genes that were significantly up- or down-regulated in post
302 ARB25-infected acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron*, there was an additional signature of genes for
303 which DNA recombination is involved in re-organizing expression of cell surface proteins.
304 Specifically, the expression of 3 of 4 genes in an operon (*BT1042-45*) involved in utilization of
305 host *N*-linked glycans[36,37] were expressed an average of 4.9-fold less in ARB25-infected
306 acapsular cells. Correspondingly, 5 genes in an adjacent operon (*BT1046-50*) with similar
307 arrangement and predicted functions exhibited an average of 11.9-fold increased expression.
308 Both of these operons have been previously linked to transcriptional regulation by a nearby
309 extra-cytoplasmic function sigma (ECF-σ), anti-σ factor pair, such that when the single ECF-σ
310 coding gene (*BT1053*) is deleted, the ability to activate the adjacent operons is eliminated[16].
311 Based on 1) the ARB25-dependent shift in gene expression described above; 2) the observation
312 that two genes encoding TonB-dependent transporters (*BT1040, BT1046*) appear to be truncated
313 at their 5' ends compared to *BT1042* (**Figure 5D**, **S10A**) and only the full-length BT1042
314 sequence harbors a required anti-σ contact domain[16]; and 3) the presence of a gene encoding a
315 putative tyrosine recombinase (*BT1041*) located in the middle of this locus, we hypothesized that
316 this gene cluster possesses the ability to undergo recombination at sites within the three TonB-
317 dependent transporter genes and that specific combinatorial variants are selected under phage
318 pressure.

319 To test this, we designed PCR primer pairs (**Figure 5D**, green dumbbells) to detect both
320 the originally annotated sequence orientation and 3 potential alternative recombination states
321 derived from either moving the full-length 5' end of *BT1042* to one of two alternative *susC*-like
322 genes or an internal rearrangement derived from recombination of two incomplete *susC*-like
323 genes (**Figure 5D**, variants 1-3). In support of our hypothesis, we were able to detect by both
324 PCR (**Figure 5E**) and amplicon sequencing (**Figure S10B**) the presence of all 5 predicted
325 alternative recombination states (**Figure 5D,E**), plus the 3 expected from the originally published
326 genome assembly[14]. In further support of our hypothesis, an insertion mutation in the associated
327 tyrosine recombinase-coding gene (*BT1041*) locked the corresponding mutant into the native
328 genomic architecture (**Figure 5E**). Further sequence analysis and tracking of single nucleotide
329 polymorphisms in the 5' ends of the three recombinationally active *susC*-like genes narrowed the
330 recombination site down to a 7 bp sequence that is flanked by an imperfect direct repeat (**Figure**
331 **S10B**). Thus, three separate operons that are under the transcriptional control of a single ECF-σ
332 regulator and are involved in utilization of host *N*-linked glycans, also undergo recombinational
333 shuffling. This strategy is similar to recombinational shufflons involving nutrient utilization
334 functions in *B. fragilis* [18,38]. One explanation is that these shufflons have evolved to subvert
335 phage infection by expressing alternate cell surface receptors that are involved in importing key
336 nutrients but are also targeted by phages. However, elimination of the genes spanning BT1033-
337 52 did not eliminate ARB25 infection in the acapsular strain, suggesting that an additional or
338 different receptor(s) exists. Interestingly, the BT1033-52 mutant exhibited variable plaquing
339 efficiency compared to the acapsular parent (**Figure S11**), suggesting that loss of these genes
340 might exert global effects that mediate susceptibility to ARB25.

341 To further understand the transcriptional response of *B. thetaiotaomicron* to phage
342 infection, we performed additional RNAseq experiments with ARB25 and the cps1 strain or with
343 a different Branch 2 phage, SJC01. Interestingly, the cps1 strain that is forced to express a
344 permissive capsule can also survive ARB25 infection (**Figure 3**) and mainly does so with
345 transcriptome alterations that involve increased expression of the S-layer proteins identified
346 above (**Figure S12A, Table S3c**). This suggests that, at least for CPS1, co-expression of capsule
347 and S-layer proteins may not be mutually exclusive. Wild-type bacteria infected with SJC01
348 exhibited similar alterations in CPS expression as were seen with ARB25 (**Figure S12B, Table**
349 **S3d**). In wild-type bacteria infected with SJC01, 61 of 67 differentially expressed genes
350 belonged to CPS1 and CPS4 (both downregulated) or CPS3 (upregulated), which is consistent
351 with the latter capsule being non-permissive for SJC01. As observed with ARB25, nutrient-
352 utilizing Sus-like systems were also down-regulated in SJC01-infected cells, including
353 previously described systems for ribose[39] and fungal cell wall α-mannan utilization[40]; notably,
354 these systems are different than those down-regulated in ARB25-exposed cultures. Finally, in
355 SJC01-infected acapsular cultures, expression of 4 of the 8 S-layer proteins was prominent, with
356 the *BT1927-25* locus being the most highly expressed feature (**Figure S12C, Table S3e**). An
357 interesting feature of this transcriptome was up-regulation between 6-16 fold of 2 genes
358 (*BT4014-13*) encoding predicted restriction endonucleases (**Figure S12D**). Closer examination
359 of this locus revealed a recombinase located upstream of *BT4014* and predicted 18 bp inverted
360 repeats flanking a near consensus promoter sequence that is oriented away from *BT4014* (*i.e.*,
361 "off") in the assembled genome. To test if this promoter undergoes DNA inversion, we designed
362 primers flanking the predicted recombination sites and performed PCR followed by amplicon

363 sequencing, which confirmed that expression of these genes is also under phase-variable control
364 (**Figure S12E**).
365
366 **S-layer expression promotes resistance to multiple phages and is a prominent evasion**
367 **strategy *in vivo***
368 The gene encoding the canonical outer membrane S-layer protein (*BT1927*), and its
369 downstream genes (*BT1926-25*) were among the most highly activated in acapsular *B.*
370 *thetaiotaomicron* that had survived infection with either ARB25 or SJC01 (**Figures 5B, S12C**).
371 We therefore focused on the effects of these proteins on phage infection. Expression of these
372 genes can be locked into the "on" or "off" orientations by mutating the recombination site
373 upstream of the phase-variable promoter[35] and we re-engineered acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron*
374 into these 2 expression states. Consistent with the hypothesis that the BT1927 S-layer promotes
375 phage resistance, acapsular S-layer "off" cells were more effectively inhibited by the presence of
376 live ARB25 relative to acapsular S-layer "on" cells (**Figure 6A**). The strength of this effect was
377 altered by the age of the colonies used for subsequent liquid culture experiments to test phage
378 infectivity (**Figure S13**), suggesting that other environmental factors alter the expression or
379 function of this S-layer. Testing of acapsular *BT1927* on/off strains that had been grown under
380 optimal conditions for ARB25 resistance revealed that constitutive expression of the BT1927 S-
381 layer promotes resistance to 3 additional phages from Branches 1 and 2 (**Figure 6B-D**). This
382 latter observation, in combination with previous findings that this S-layer promotes complement
383 resistance[35], suggests that BT1927 and perhaps the 7 other *B. thetaiotaomicron* S-layers
384 discovered here more broadly promote resistance to a variety of perturbations.

385 Based on our results, phase-variation of CPS, S-layers, nutrient receptors, and restriction
386 endonucleases are all selected for during phage predation. However, these same phase-variable
387 evasion mechanisms could also explain the previously described observation that *Bacteroides*
388 can co-exist with phage *in vitro* in the phenomenon termed "pseudolysogeny" [28,41]. We
389 hypothesized that if the phase-variable systems that promote resistance also spontaneously revert
390 some cells to a susceptible state, then the population could remain mostly resistant but generate a
391 enough susceptible bacteria to continuously propagate phage. To test this in an *in vivo* model
392 with high bacterial density and other features of the colonic environment, we colonized germfree
393 Swiss Webster mice separately with either wild-type or acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron* for 7 days,
394 then introduced ARB25 by oral gavage. As expected, both bacterial populations reached a high
395 colonization level within 1 day, which was not noticeably perturbed upon addition of phage
396 (**Figure 6E**). ARB25 levels also rose to a high level shortly after introduction and both host
397 bacteria and phage remained present for more than 70 days of co-colonization. Interestingly,
398 while ARB25 levels initially dropped at least 10-fold in all mice between 2 and 4 days after
399 introduction and remained lower than the number of colonizing bacteria, these trends diverged
400 after 30 days with ARB25 levels becoming significantly higher at several timepoints in Δ*cps*.
401 Because it lacks the ability to evade ARB25 through alterations in CPS expression, we
402 further hypothesized that the Δ*cps* strain might be more prone to accrue mutations that promote
403 full resistance after several weeks of constant ARB25 pressure. To address this, we isolated *B.*
404 *thetaiotaomicron* clones from feces and cecal contents of each of the colonized mice and
405 subjected them to serial passage to ensure they were phage-free (see *Methods*). We then
406 measured the susceptibility of these isolates to ARB25 after 10 days of repeated, daily passage *in*
407 *vitro* (**Table S4**). Contrary to our hypothesis, all of the Δ*cps* clones had regained susceptibility to

408 ARB25, while 5/13 wild-type isolates remained resistant, suggesting that longer-term (perhaps
409 permanent) resistance can occur after prolonged exposure to ARB25 *in vivo*, but this requires the
410 presence of CPS.

411 Lastly, to determine which of the phase-variable resistance mechanisms are operative *in*
412 *vivo* after prolonged ARB25 exposure, we performed RNAseq on bacteria recovered from the
413 cecal contents of mice after 72 days of phage infection. Compared to the respective wild-type
414 and acapsular strains grown *in vitro* and exposed to heat-killed ARB25, many genes were
415 induced *in vivo* as expected based on previous studies of *B. thetaiotaomicron* adaptation to the
416 diet and host derived nutrient conditions in the gut[36,42,43]. Wild-type *B. thetaiotaomicron* that had
417 co-existed with ARB25 for 72d *in vivo* surprisingly exhibited lower expression of non-
418 permissive CPS3 (average 5-fold lower than uninfected wild-type grown *in vitro*). While
419 expression of non-permissive CPS2 was increased, so was expression of several permissive CPS
420 (CPS5, CPS6, CPS7 and CPS8, **Figure S12F**, **Table S3F**), which may have been influenced by
421 growth *in vivo*, which we have previously shown to be selective for *B. thetaiotaomicron*
422 expressing CPS4, CPS5 and CPS6[8]. While wild-type bacteria did not display dominant
423 expression of non-permissive CPS *in vivo* like they did in short-term infection experiments *in*
424 *vitro*, they did increase expression of 6 of the S-layer loci, while repressing one. Finally, the
425 phase-variable restriction endonuclease system identified in vitro in SJC01 infected cells was
426 also upregulated in wild-type and acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron* after prolonged co-existence
427 with ARB25 *in vivo* (**Figure S12FG**).

428 As expected, acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron* exhibited expression of some of its S-layers
429 after 72 days of ARB25 exposure *in vivo* (**Figure S12G, Table S3g**). However, most of the 8 S-
430 layers only showed modestly increased or reduced expression relative to *in vitro* grown *B.*

431 *thetaiotaomicron* after prolonged *in vivo* existence with ARB25 and just one of the S-layers
432 (BT1826) became dominant with 2,738-fold increased expression. This latter result suggests that
433 this protein may confer optimal ARB25 resistance in this particular strain background and *in vivo*
434 growth condition. Surprisingly, acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron* displayed high expression of
435 another set of 3 genes (*BT0292-94;* increased 79-156-fold) and one of these genes BT0294
436 encodes a predicted lipoprotein of less than ~50% of the deduced size of the S-layer proteins.
437 Adjacent to this locus is a predicted recombinase. We were able to identify a near-consensus
438 promoter, assembled in the "off" orientation in the *B. thetaiotaomicron* genome, flanked by 18
439 bp repeats (**Figure S12D**). As with the newly identified S-layer proteins and restriction enzyme
440 system, combined PCR/sequencing demonstrated that this promoter is capable of undergoing
441 phase-variation (**Figure S12E)** bringing the total number of *B. thetaiotaomicron* phase-variable
442 features that show selection in response to phages to 19 members of 4 different functional groups
443 (CPS, S-layers, TonB-dependent transporters and restriction enzymes). Based on the results
444 described above, it is probable that this complex set of phase-variable functions equips *B.*
445 *thetaiotaomicron* with the versatility to optimally resist phage pressure, but also simultaneously
446 adapt to other environmental conditions such as nutrients and host immunity.
447

448 **Discussion**

449 Production of multiple phase-variable CPS is a hallmark of human gut Bacteroidetes
450 (**Figure S1A**). Previous work has revealed the importance of *Bacteroides* CPS in interactions
451 with the host immune system[7,8,44,45]. However, other biological roles for *Bacteroides* CPS have
452 remained unexplored. Using a panel of *B. thetaiotaomicron* strains that express individual CPS,
453 we tested a previously inaccessible hypothesis: that *Bacteroides*-targeting phage can be both

454 inhibited and assisted by the repertoire of CPS expressed by their host bacteria. Our data clearly
455 indicate that production of specific CPS is associated with alterations in phage susceptibility,
456 which is underscored by the observation that none of the 71 phages characterized here infect
457 every CPS-variant that we tested (**Figure 1**). Phage-mediated selection and interactions with the
458 host immune system help to explain both the extensive diversification of CPS structures in gut-
459 resident Bacteroidetes[8,11] and their complex phase-variable regulation within a given strain or
460 species[20]. Surprisingly, our results also reveal that additional phase-variable functions are
461 expressed by *B. thetaiotaomicron* during selection by phage, highlighting the diversity of
462 strategies in *Bacteroides* for surviving phage predation.

463 There are several mechanisms through which CPS could promote or prevent phage
464 infection[46]. First, CPS may sterically mask surface receptors to block phage binding, although
465 additional specificity determinants must be involved because no individual phage that infects the
466 acapsular strain is blocked by all *B. thetaiotaomicron* CPS. These specificity determinants could
467 be driven by CPS structure (physical depth on the cell surface, polysaccharide charge,
468 permeability) or be actively circumvented by the presence of polysaccharide depolymerases on
469 the phage particles, as has been described in other phage-bacterium systems (e.g., *E. coli* K1 and
470 phiK1-5[47]). Alternatively, certain permissive CPS could serve as obligate receptors[48] or more
471 generally increase the affinity of a phage for the bacterial cell surface. This latter type of
472 adherence to CPS might increase the likelihood that a phage would contact its receptor by
473 sustained interaction with the extracellular matrix. Some combination of these possibilities is
474 likely to explain the host range infection profile for the majority of the phages in this study.
475 Collectively, our observations provide the foundation for future mechanistic work, which will

476 begin with phage genome sequencing, aimed at understanding the physical and chemical
477 interactions that mediate infection of *B. thetaiotaomicron* and other *Bacteroides* by their phages.
478 Using ARB25 and SJC01 as representatives from our larger collection, we demonstrate
479 that infection with these single phages does not fully eradicate their target *B. thetaiotaomicron*
480 populations *in vitro* and *in vivo* (**Figures 3, 4, 6, S5-S7, S13**). Similar observations were
481 previously made with ΦCrAss001, a phage that infects *B. intestinalis*[29]. Specifically, though
482 ΦCrAss001 formed plaques on lawns of *B. intestinalis*, it failed to eradicate this bacterium in
483 long-term liquid culture. Given the roles of CPS in mediating *B. thetaiotaomicron*-phage
484 interactions, the outgrowth of a phage-resistant sub-population was especially surprising in the
485 context of acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron*, revealing the existence of multiple phase-variable
486 surface proteins, at least one of which (*BT1927-26*) confers increased resistance to several
487 phages when constitutively expressed (**Figures 6A-D, S13**).
488 A previous study measured that only 1:1000 *B. thetaiotaomicron* cells in a phage-free
489 environment express the S-layer encoded by *BT1927*[35]. Given that ARB25 non-permissive CPS
490 can comprise up to 40% of the expressed capsule population (e.g., CPS3 in **Figure 4B**), the rapid
491 emergence of cells expressing alternative CPS could be explained by the pre-existing abundance
492 of non-permissive CPS. Resistant cells expressing S-layer may be less frequent and therefore
493 only emerge after longer periods of phage exposure, such as those that we observed *in vivo*. The
494 original *B. thetaiotaomicron* S-layer study also demonstrated that locking the invertible promoter
495 for the *BT1927* S-layer into the "on" orientation facilitated survival against complement-
496 mediated killing[35], suggesting the existence of orthogonal roles for this and related proteins.
497 Combined with our data on CPS-mediated phage tropism, our observations that the *BT1927*-
498 encoded S-layer confers resistance to some phages, that 7 other homologous systems are also

499 upregulated after exposure to ARB25, that a shufflon exists that harbors three recombinationally-
500 variable nutrient acquisition operons, and that additional phase-variable restriction enzyme and
501 surface protein systems exist in *B. thetaiotaomicron* collectively reveal that that there are at least
502 19 independent cellular functions in *B. thetaiotaomicron* that could contribute to surviving phage
503 predation by this species.

504 Phages are the most abundant biological entities in the gut microbiome[49] and interest in
505 the roles and identities of these gut-resident viruses is increasing as metagenomic sequencing
506 approaches are unveiling a more comprehensive view of their dynamics during health and
507 disease[21,22,25]. Although sequence-based approaches are powerful for describing the phages that
508 are present, they do not generate information on the definitive hosts or the mechanisms of
509 individual bacteria-phage interactions, which are likely to be elaborate. These limitations will
510 prohibit full dissection of the ecological interactions that phage exert on bacterial populations in
511 the gut. The approach taken here of isolating phages for a particular host of interest, with added
512 layers of detail like systematic variation of surface CPS when possible, will be an essential
513 complement to high throughput sequencing studies and will help build a foundation of
514 mechanistic gut bacterium-phage interactions.

515 This work, which primarily focuses on a single strain of *B. thetaiotaomicron*, points to
516 the existence of a very complex relationship between bacteria and phage in the gut microbiome.
517 Considering the possibilities that these interactions could vary over time, differ by host
518 species/strain, and evolve differently within individuals or regionally distinct global populations,
519 the landscape becomes even more complex. Given the diverse adaptive and counter-adaptive
520 strategies that have apparently evolved in the successful gut symbiont *B. thetaiotaomicron* and
521 its relatives, our findings hold important implications for the use of phages to intentionally alter

522 the composition or function of the gut microbiota. While a cocktail of multiple phages could
523 theoretically be harnessed together to elicit more robust alteration of target populations within a
524 microbiome, the complexity of host tropisms and bacterial countermeasures that exist for *B.*
525 *thetaiotaomicron* imply that a deliberate selection of complementary phage would be needed. If
526 effective phage cocktails need to be further tailored to individual microbiomes or elicit resistance
527 within individuals or populations similar to antibiotics, the prospects for effective gut
528 microbiome-targeted phage therapy could indeed become very complicated. Given these
529 considerations, our findings contribute an important early step towards building a deep
530 functional understanding of the bacterium-virus interactions that occur in the human gut
531 microbiome.
532

533 **Methods**

534 ***Bacterial strains and culture conditions***

535 The bacterial strains used in this study are listed in **Table S5.** Frozen stocks of these
536 strains were maintained in 25% glycerol at -80˚C and were routinely cultured in an anaerobic
537 chamber or in anaerobic jars (using GasPak EZ anaerobe container system sachets w/indicator,
538 BD) at 37˚C in *Bacteroides* Phage Recovery Medium (BPRM), as described previously[50]: per 1
539 liter of broth, 10 g meat peptone, 10 g casein peptone, 2 g yeast extract, 5 g NaCl, 0.5 g L-
540 cysteine monohydrate, 1.8 g glucose, and 0.12 g $MgSO_4$ heptahydrate were added; after
541 autoclaving and cooling to approximately 55 °C, 10 mL of 0.22 µm-filtered hemin solution
542 (0.1% w/v in 0.02% NaOH), 1 mL of 0.22 µm-filtered 0.05 g/mL $CaCl_2$ solution, and 25 mL of
543 0.22µm-filtered 1 M Na_2CO_3 solution were added. For BPRM agar plates, 15 g/L agar was
544 added prior to autoclaving and hemin and Na_2CO_3 were added as above prior to pouring the

545 plates. For BPRM top agar used in soft agar overlays, 3.5 g/L agar was added prior to
546 autoclaving. Hemin, $CaCl_2$, and Na_2CO_3 were added to the top agar as above immediately before
547 conducting experiments. Bacterial strains were routinely recovered from the freezer stocks
548 directly onto agar plates of Brain Heart Infusion supplemented with 10% horse blood (Quad
549 Five, Rygate, Montana) (BHI-blood agar; or for the SJC phages used in **Figure 1**, on BPRM
550 agar), grown anaerobically for up to 3 days and a single colony was picked for each bacterial
551 strain, inoculated into 5 mL BPRM, and grown anaerobically overnight to provide the starting
552 culture for experiments (note that for the BT1927 S-layer protein experiment shown in **Figure 6**,
553 3 days of growth on BPRM medium was determined to promote the greatest phage resistance).
554 For the experiment described in **Figure 2G**, liquid cultures of *B. thetaiotaomicron* were
555 grown in BPRM using the pyrogallol method as described previously. Briefly, a sterile cotton
556 ball was burned and then pushed midway into the tube, after which 200 µL of saturated $NaHCO_3$
557 and 200 µL of 35% pyrogallol solution were added to the cotton ball. A rubber stopper was used
558 to seal the tubes, and tubes were incubated at 37 °C.
559
560 ***Bacteriophage isolation from primary wastewater effluent***
561 The bacteriophages described in this study were isolated from primary wastewater
562 effluent from two locations at the Ann Arbor, Michigan Wastewater Treatment Plant and from
563 the San Jose-Santa Clara Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility. After collection, the primary
564 effluent was centrifuged at 5,500 rcf for 10 minutes at room temperature to remove any
565 remaining solids. The supernatant was then sequentially filtered through 0.45 µm and 0.22 µm
566 polyvinylidine fluoride (PVDF) filters to yield "processed primary effluent." Initial screening for
567 plaques was done using a soft agar overlay method[51] where processed primary effluent was

568 combined with 1 part overnight culture to 9 parts BPRM top agar and poured onto a BPRM agar
569 plate (e.g. 0.5 mL overnight culture and 4.5 mL BPRM top agar was used for standard circular
570 petri dishes [100 mm x 15 mm]). Soft agar overlays were incubated anaerobically at 37 ˚C
571 overnight. Phages were successfully isolated using three permutations of this assay (see **Table**
572 **S1**): (1) Direct plating, where processed primary effluent was directly added to overnight culture
573 prior to plating. (2) Enrichment, where 10 mL processed primary effluent was mixed with 10 mL
574 2XBPRM and 3 mL exponential phase *B. thetaiotaomicron* culture and grown overnight. The
575 culture was centrifuged at 5500 rcf for 10 minutes and filtered through a 0.22 µm PVDF filter.
576 (3) Size exclusion, where processed primary effluent was concentrated up to 500-fold via 30 or
577 100 kDa PVDF or polyethersulfone size exclusion columns. Up to 1 mL of processed primary
578 effluent, enrichment, or concentrated processed primary effluent was added to the culture prior to
579 adding BPRM top agar, as described above. To promote a diverse collection of phages, no more
580 than 5 plaques from the same plate were plaque purified and a diversity of plaque morphologies
581 were selected as applicable. When using individual enrichment cultures, only a single plaque was
582 purified.

583 Single, isolated plaques were picked into 100 µL phage buffer (prepared as an autoclaved
584 solution of 5 ml of 1 M Tris pH 7.5, 5 ml of 1 M MgSO4, 2 g NaCl in 500 ml with ddH_2O).
585 Phages were successfully plaque purified using one of two methods: (1) a standard full plate
586 method, where the diluted phage samples were combined with *B. thetaiotaomicron* overnight
587 culture and top agar and plated via soft agar overlay as described above or (2) a higher
588 throughput 96-well plate-based method, where serial dilutions were prepared in 96-well plates
589 and 1 µL of each dilution was spotted onto a solidified top agar overlay. This procedure was
590 repeated at least 3 times to purify each phage.

591 High titer phage stocks were generated by flooding a soft agar overlay plate that yielded a
592 "lacey" pattern of bacterial growth (near confluent lysis). Following overnight incubation of each
593 plate, 5 mL of sterile phage buffer was added to the plate to resuspend the phage. After at least 2
594 hours of incubation at room temperature, the lysate was spun at 5,500 rcf for 10 minutes to clear
595 debris and then filter sterilized through a 0.22 µm PVDF filter.
596
597 ***Phylogenetic analysis of human gut Bacteroidetes and enumeration of cps biosynthetic gene***
598 ***clusters***
599 Phylogenetic analysis was performed by creating a core gene alignment using a custom,
600 publicly available software package, cognac, written for R (version 3.6.1) with C++ integration
601 via Rcpp (version 1.0.3)[52]. Briefly, genbank files for the 53 isolates were parsed to extract the
602 amino acid sequences and orthologous genes were identified with cd-hit (version 4.7) requiring
603 at least 70% amino acid identity and ensuring that genes were of similar length[53]. The cd-hit
604 output was parsed and core genes were identified as those present in a single copy in all
605 genomes. Amino acid sequences were concatenated and aligned with MAFFT (v7.310)[53,54]. The
606 concatenated gene alignment was then used as the input for fastTree (version 2.1.10) to generate
607 an approximate maximum likelihood phylogeny[55]. The tree created from the core genome
608 alignment was then midpoint rooted and visualized using phytools (version 0.6.99) ape (version
609 5.3) R packages respectively[56,57].
610 To identify *cps* loci within each of the 53 genomes, previously annotated *cps* genes[8] from
611 the type strains of *B. thetaiotaomicron* VPI-5482 (**Figure S1B**), *B. fragilis* NCTC9343, and *B.*
612 *vulgatus* ATCC 8482 *cps* loci were used to identify pfam models that correspond to the glycosyl
613 transferases (GTs) they contain, which revealed pfam00534, pfam00535, pfam01755,

614 pfam02397, pfam02485, pfam08759, pfam13439, pfam13477, pfam13579, pfam13692, and
615 pfam14305. In addition, we searched for *upxY* and *upxZ* (pfam02357, pfam13614), and protein
616 tyrosine kinase (PTK; pfam02706.) Genes corresponding to these pfam modules were extracted
617 for the 53 genomes. In addition, because we found that a number of apparent *upxY/Z* homologs,
618 which were in species more divergent than the *Bacteroides* noted above, we performed an
619 additional search for homologous genes using the UpxY/Z amino acid sequences from the 3
620 species listed above. For this, we searched the Integrated Microbial Genomes (IMG) database
621 IMG genome BLASTp tool and an E-value cutoff of 1e-5. Each *cps* locus was confirmed by
622 visually comparing homologous genes within each gene locus neighborhood. Positive hits for the
623 presence of a *cps* locus were required to contain at least one GT, along with at least one Upx or
624 PTK homolog in the adjacent locus.
625
626 ***Quantitative host range assays***
627 To accommodate the large number of phage isolates in our collection, we employed a
628 spot titer assay for semi-quantitative comparisons of infectivity on each bacterial strain. High
629 titer phage stocks were prepared on their "preferred host strain," which was the strain that
630 yielded the highest titer of phages in a pre-screen of phage host range (see **Figure 1, Table S1**).
631 Lysates were then diluted to approximately 10^6 PFU/mL, were added to the wells of a 96-well
632 plate, and further diluted to 10^5, 10^4, and 10^3 PFU/mL using a multichannel pipettor. One
633 microliter of each of these dilutions was plated onto solidified top agar overlays containing
634 single bacterial strains indicated in each figure. After spots dried, plates were incubated
635 anaerobically for 15-24 hours prior to counting plaques. Phage titers were normalized to the
636 preferred host strain.

637 ***Images of phage plaques***

638 To document the morphologies of plaques formed by the purified phages, two sets of
639 plaque pictures were captured: the first set were taken with a Color QCount Model 530
640 (Advanced Instruments) with a 0.01 second exposure. Images were cropped to 7.5 mm^2 but were
641 otherwise unaltered. The second set of images were taken on a ChemiDoc Touch instrument
642 (BioRad) with a 0.5 second exposure. Images were cropped to 7.5 mm^2 and unnaturally high
643 background pixels were removed (Image Lab, BioRad) to facilitate viewing of the plaques. Both
644 sets of images are shown in **Figure S2**. Plaque images in **Figure S4** were taken on a ChemiDoc
645 Touch instrument (BioRad).

646

647 ***Incubation of ARB25 phage with extracted CPS***

648 Approximately 50-100 PFU of ARB25 in 50 μL phage buffer were mixed with an equal
649 volume of H_2O or capsule (2 mg/mL) extracted by the hot water-phenol method (as described in
650 reference [8]) and incubated at 37 °C for 30 minutes. Samples were then plated on the acapsular
651 strain, and plaques were counted after 15-24 hours anaerobic incubation at 37 °C. Counts from
652 two replicates on the same day were then averaged, and the experiment was performed three
653 times. While the size of individual CPS2 polymers is unknown, an estimate of 1,000 hexose
654 sugars per molecule (180,000 Da) would be $9x10^{13}$ CPS glycans at 1mg/mL. If the CPS were
655 only 10% pure, incubation with 10^3 ARB25 PFU/mL was estimated to provide at least 10^9-fold
656 more CPS glycans than PFU.

657

658

659

660 ***Bacterial growth curves with phages***

661 For growth curve experiments, 3 or more individual colonies of each indicated strain
662 were picked from agar plates and grown overnight in BPRM. Then, for experiments in **Figures**
663 **3**, **6**, **S6** and **S13** each clone was diluted 1:100 in fresh BPRM and 100 µL was added to a
664 microtiter plate. 10 µL of approximately $5*10^6$ PFU/mL live or heat-killed phage were added to
665 each well, plates were covered with an optically clear gas-permeable membrane (Diversified
666 Biotech, Boston, MA) and optical density at 600 nm (OD_{600}) values were measured using an
667 automated plate reading device (BioTek Instruments). Phages were heat killed by heating to 95
668 °C for 30 minutes, and heat-killed phage had no detectable PFU/mL with a limit of detection of
669 100 PFU/mL.

670 In **Figure S5B**, wild-type *B. thetaiotaomicron* was infected with live or heat-killed
671 ARB25, and bacterial growth was monitored via optical density at 600 nm (OD_{600}) on an
672 automated plate reader for 12 hours. At 0, 6.02, 8.36, and 11.7 hours post inoculation, replicate
673 cultures were vortexed in 1:5 volume chloroform, centrifuged at 5,500 rcf at 4 °C for 10 minutes,
674 and the aqueous phase was titered on the acapsular strain. No phages were detected in heat-killed
675 controls.

676 ***Generation of phage-free bacterial isolates and determination of their phage susceptibility***

677 To isolate phage-free bacterial clones from ARB25-infected cultures (**Tables S2, S4**),
678 each culture was plated on a BHI-blood agar plate using the single colony streaking method.
679 Eighteen individual colonies were picked from each plate, and each of these clones was re-
680 isolated on a new BHI-blood agar plate. One colony was picked from each of these secondary
681 plates and was inoculated into 150 µL BPRM broth and incubated anaerobically at 37 °C for 2
682 days. Only one of the clones (a *cps*4 isolate) failed to grow in liquid media. To determine

683 whether cultures still contained viable phage, 50 µL of each culture was vortexed with 20 µL
684 chloroform, then centrifuged at 5,500 rcf for 10 minutes. 10 µL of the lysate was spotted on
685 BPRM top agar containing naïve acapsular bacteria and was incubated anaerobically overnight at
686 37 °C. Loss of detectable phage in the twice passaged clones was confirmed for most of the
687 clones (79/89, 89%) by the absence of plaques on the naïve acapsular strain.

688 To determine whether the resulting phage-free isolates were resistant to ARB25 infection,
689 each culture was diluted 1:100 in fresh BPRM, 100 µL was added to a microtiter plate, and 10
690 µL of either live or heat-killed ARB25 (approximately $5*10^6$ PFU/mL) was added. Plates were
691 incubated anaerobically at 37 °C for 48 hours, and OD_{600} was measured as described above.
692 Cultures were determined to be susceptible to ARB25 by demonstration of delayed growth or
693 drop in OD_{600} compared to heat-killed controls.

694

695 ***Measurement of* cps *gene expression***

696 For **Figures 2G**, **4B**, and **S7**, overnight cultures were diluted into fresh BPRM to an
697 OD_{600} of 0.01. For **Figure 4B**, 200 µL of approximately 2 x 10^8 PFU/mL live phage or heat
698 killed phage were added to 5 mL of the diluted cultures. For **Figure S7**, 200 µL of approximately
699 2 x 10^5 PFU/mL live phage or heat killed phage were added to 5 mL of the diluted cultures.
700 Bacterial growth was monitored by measuring OD_{600} every 15-30 minutes using a GENESYS 20
701 spectrophotometer (Thermo Scientific). Cultures were briefly mixed by hand before each
702 measurement. For determination of relative *cps* gene expression, cultures were grown to OD_{600}
703 0.6-0.8, centrifuged at 7,700 rcf for 2.5 minutes, the supernatant was decanted, and the pellet was
704 immediately resuspended in 1 mL RNA-Protect (Qiagen). RNA-stabilized cell pellets were
705 stored at -80 °C.

706 Total RNA was isolated using the RNeasy Mini Kit (Qiagen) then treated with the
707 TURBO DNA-free Kit (Ambion) followed by an additional isolation using the RNeasy Mini Kit.
708 cDNA was synthesized using SuperScript III Reverse Transcriptase (Invitrogen) according to the
709 manufacturer's instructions using random oligonucleotide primers (Invitrogen). qPCR analyses
710 for *cps* locus expression were performed on a Mastercycler ep realplex instrument (Eppendorf).
711 Expression of each of the 8 *cps* synthesis loci was quantified using primers to a single gene in
712 each locus (primers are listed in **Table S6**) and normalized to a standard curve of DNA from
713 wild-type *B. thetaiotaomicron*. The primers used were selected to target a gene specific to each
714 *cps* locus and were previously validated against the other strains that lack the target *cps* locus for
715 specificity[8]. Relative abundance of each *cps*-sepcific transcript was then calculated for each
716 locus. A custom-made SYBR-based master mix was used for qPCR: 20 µL reactions were made
717 with ThermoPol buffer (New England Biolabs), and contained 2.5 mM $MgSO_4$, 0.125 mM
718 dNTPs, 0.25 µM each primer, 0.1 µL of a 100 X stock of SYBR Green I (Lonza), and 500 U Hot
719 Start *Taq* DNA Polymerase (New England Biolabs). 10 ng of cDNA was used for each sample,
720 and samples were run in duplicate. A touchdown protocol with the following cycling conditions
721 was used for all assays: 95 °C for 3 minutes, followed by 40 cycles of 3 seconds at 95 °C, 20
722 seconds of annealing at a variable temperature, and 20 seconds at 68 °C. The annealing
723 temperature for the first cycle was 58 °C, then dropped one degree each cycle for the subsequent
724 5 cycles. The annealing temperature for the last 34 cycles was 52 °C. These cycling conditions
725 were followed by a melting curve analysis to determine amplicon purity.
726
727
728

729 ***Transcriptomic analysis of* B. thetaiotaomicron *after phage infection***

730 Whole genome transcriptional profiling of wild-type and acapsular *B.thetaiotaomicron*
731 infected with live or heat-killed ARB25 or SJC01, or from *in vivo* samples, was conducted using
732 total bacterial RNA that was extracted the same as described above (Qiagen RNAEasy, Turbo
733 DNA-free kit) and then treated with Ribo-Zero rRNA Removal Kit (Illumina Inc.) and
734 concentrated using RNA Clean and Concentrator -5 kit (Zymo Research Corp, Irvine, CA).
735 Sequencing libraries were prepared using TruSeq barcoding adaptors (Illumina Inc.), and 24
736 samples were multiplexed and sequenced with 50 base pair single end reads in one lane of an
737 Illumina HiSeq instrument at the University of Michigan Sequencing Core. Demultiplexed
738 samples were analyzed using SeqMan NGen and Arraystar software (DNASTAR, Inc.) using
739 EdgeR normalization and >98% sequence identity for read-mapping. Changes in gene expression
740 in response to live ARB25 infection were determined by comparison to the heat-killed reference:
741 retained were genes with $\geq$ 3-fold expression changes up or down and EdgeR adjusted P value $\leq$
742 0.01. All RNA-seq data have been deposited in the publicly available NIH gene expression
743 omnibus (GEO) database as project number GSE147071.

744

745 ***PCR and sequencing of phase variable* B. thetaiotaomicron *chromosomal loci***

746 We found that each of the 8 chromosomal loci shown in **Figure 5C** had nearly identical
747 301 bp promoter sequences, including both of the imperfect palindromes that we predict to
748 mediate recombination and the intervening sequence at each locus. While the 8 S-layer genes
749 and the 7/8 of the upstream regions encoding putative tyrosine recombinases (all but the BT1927
750 region) shared significant nucleotide identity and gene orientation, we were able to design
751 primers that were specific to regions upstream and downstream of each invertible promoter and

752 used these to generate an amplicon for each locus that spanned the predicted recombination sites.
753 After gel extracting a PCR product of the expected size for each locus, which should contain
754 promoter orientations in both the "on" and "off" orientations, we performed a second PCR using
755 a universal primer that lies within the 301 bp sequence of each phase-variable promoter and
756 extended to unique primers that anneal within each S layer protein encoding gene. Bands of the
757 expected size were excised from agarose gels, purified and sequenced using the primer that
758 anneals within each S layer encoding gene to determine if the predicted recombined "on"
759 promoter orientation is detected. (Note that the assembled *B. thetaiotaomicron* genome
760 architecture places all of these promoters in the proposed "off" orientation. We were able to
761 detect 6/8 of these loci in the "on" orientation in ARB25-treated cells by this method, **Figure**
762 **S9**). Similar approaches were used to determine the re-orientation of DNA fragments in the *B.*
763 *thetaiotaomicron* PUL shufflon shown in **Figure 5D** and restriction enzyme and additional
764 lipoprotein system shown in **Figure S12D**. For shufflon gene orientation, we used PCR primer
765 amplicons positioned according to the schematic in **Figure 5D** followed by sequencing with the
766 primer on the "downstream" end of each amplicon according to its position relative to the
767 shuffled promoter sequence. For a list of primers used see **Table S6**.
768
769 ***Construction of acapsular* B. thetaiotaomicron *S-layer 'ON' and S-layer 'OFF' mutants***
770 Acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron* S-layer 'ON' and 'OFF' mutants (Δ*cps* BT1927-ON and
771 Δ*cps* BT1927-OFF, respectively) were created using the Δ*tdk* allelic exchange method[58]. To
772 generate homologous regions for allelic exchange, the primers BT_1927_XbaI-DR and
773 BT_1927_SalI-UF were used to amplify the BT1927-ON and BT1927-OFF promoters from the
774 previously-constructed BT1927-ON and BT1927-OFF strains[35] via colony PCR using Q5 High

775 Fidelity DNA polymerase (New England Biolabs). Candidate Δ*cps* BT1927-ON and Δ*cps*
776 BT1927-OFF mutants were screened and confirmed by PCR using the primer pair
777 BT1927_Diagnostic_R and BT1927_Diagnostic_F and confirmed by Sanger sequencing using
778 these diagnostic primers. All plasmids and primers are listed in **Tables S5** and **S6**, respectively.
779

780 ***Construction of* B. thetaiotaomicron *mutants lacking one or more cps loci***

781 All publically available bacterial genomes in NCBI GenBank were queried via
782 MultiGeneBlast[59] to identify fully sequenced bacteria with *B. thetaiotaomicron* VPI-5482-like
783 cps loci. *B. thetaiotaomicron* 7330 was identified as having VPI-5482-like *cps2*, *cps5*, and *cps6*
784 loci. Mutants of strain 7330 lacking one or more *cps* loci constructed for this study (**Table S5**)
785 were created using the *tdk* allelic exchange method[58]. The *B. thetaiotaomicron* 7330 *tdk*- strain
786 was generated by UV mutagenesis by exposing a liquid culture of 7330 to 320 nm ultraviolet
787 light from a VWR-20E transilluminator (VWR) for 60 seconds and plating onto BHIS-Blood
788 agar supplemented with 200 micrograms/mL of 5-fluoro-2'-deoxyuridine (FUdR). All plasmids
789 and primers used to construct these strains are listed in **Tables S5** and **S6**, respectively.
790

791 ***Germfree mouse experiments***

792 Germfree Swiss webster mice were gavaged with either wild-type or acapsular *B.*
793 *thetaiotaomicron* for 7 days of mono-colonization. After 7 days, mice were gavaged with 1M
794 sodium bicarbonate followed immediately by $2x10^8$ PFU of ARB25 as previously described[24].
795 Feces were monitored for both colony forming units (CFU) or plaque forming units (PFU) every
796 7 days by plating fecal homogenates in SM buffer or fecal homogenate supernatant and serial
797 dilutions in SM buffer on BPRM top agar plates.

798 ***Data representation and statistical analysis***.

799 The heatmaps for **Figures 1** and **S3** and the dendrogram for **Figure 1** were generated in R
800 using the "heatmap" function. Other graphs were created in Prism software (GraphPad Software,
801 Inc., La Jolla, CA). Statistical significance in this work is denoted as follows unless otherwise
802 indicated: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$; **** $p < 0.0001$. Statistical analyses other than
803 Dirichlet regression were performed in Prism. Dirichlet regression was performed in R using the
804 package "DirichletReg" (version 0.6-3), employing the alternative parameterization as used
805 previously[8,60]. Briefly, the parameters in this distribution are the proportions of relative *cps* gene
806 expression and the total *cps* expression, with *cps7* expression used as a reference since we
807 previously determined this *cps* to be poorly activated and not subject to phase-variable
808 expression[8]. The variable of interest used in **Figure 2G** is bacterial strain, whereas the variable
809 of interest used in **Figure 4B** is phage viability (live versus heat-killed phage). Precision was
810 allowed to vary by group given this model was superior to a model with constant precision, as
811 determined by a likelihood ratio test at significance level $p < 0.05$.

812

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814

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823

824 **Author Contributions**

825

826 NTP, AJH, BDM, JOG, JJF, RWPG, and SS performed the experiments. NTP, AJH, JJF and
827 ECM designed the experiments, and analyzed and interpreted the data. RDC and ESS performed
828 whole genome phylogenetic analysis and JJF conducted the corresponding *cps* locus search. JLS
829 and ECM provided tools and reagents. NTP, AJH, JJF, and ECM prepared the display items.

NTP, AJH, JJF and ECM wrote the paper. All authors edited and approved the manuscript prior to submission.

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1006

1007 **Figure Legends**

1008 **Figure 1**. Host range of *B. thetaiotaomicron* phages on strains expressing different CPS.
1009 Seventy-one bacteriophages were isolated and purified on the wild-type, Δ*cps* (acapsular), or the
1010 8 single CPS-expressing *B. thetaiotaomicron* strains. High titer phage stocks were prepared on
1011 their "preferred host strain", which was the strain that yielded the highest titer of phages in a pre-
1012 screen of phage host range and is listed next to each phage. Phages were then tested in a
1013 quantitative host range assay. Phage titers were calculated for each bacterial host and normalized
1014 to the preferred host strain for each replicate, 3 replicates averaged for each assay and the results
1015 clustered based on plaquing efficiencies (see *Methods*). Images at the far right of the figure
1016 illustrate the range of plaque morphologies of select phages from the collection (see **Figure S2**
1017 for images of plaques for all phages). Several phages that are the subjects of additional follow up
1018 studies are highlighted in blue text. Scale bar = 2mm.
1019

1020 **Figure 2**. Infection of various CPS mutant strains by Branch 3 phages ARB72 (A), ARB78 (B),
1021 ARB82 (C), ARB101 (D) and ARB105 (E) is inhibited by eliminating most or all of the
1022 permissive CPS from wild-type *B. thetaiotaomicron*. Each phage was tested on the wild-type
1023 strain, the acapsular strain, their respective preferred host strain (blue bars), and a set of bacterial
1024 strains harboring selected *cps* locus deletions that correspond to their predetermined host range
1025 (n = 6 replicates/phage). (F) Elimination of permissive CPS from Branch 2 phage ARB25
1026 reduces infection, but complete reduction of infection only occurs in the context of deleting more
1027 than one permissive CPS. The number of replicates (n=6-21) conducted on each strain is
1028 annotated in parentheses next to the strain name. (G) Relative *cps* locus expression of the 8 *cps*
1029 loci in the indicated strains. (H) Representative pictures of phage plaques on the indicated host
1030 strains. The top row of images for each phage is unaltered; background and unnaturally saturated

1031 pixels were removed from images in in the bottom row to facilitate plaque visualization. Scale
1032 bar = 2mm. For panels A-F, significant differences in phage titers on the preferred host strain
1033 were calculated via Kruskal Wallis test followed by Dunn's multiple comparisons test. * $p <$
1034 0.05; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$, **** $p < 0.0001$. For panel G, significant changes in *cps2*
1035 expression were observed in Δ4 and Δ1,4 strains ($p < 0.05$ for each change, determined by
1036 Dirichlet regression). In panels A-F, bars are drawn at the median and individual points shown.
1037 In panel G, bars represent mean and error bars SEM, n=3.

1038

1039 **Figure 3.** Effects of ARB25 phage infection on growth of bacteria expressing different CPS. Ten
1040 strains: the wild-type (WT), the acapsular strain (Δ*cps*), or the eight single CPS-expressing
1041 strains were infected with either live or heat-killed ARB25. Growth was monitored via optical
1042 density at 600 nm (OD_{600}) on an automated plate reading instrument as described in *Methods* and
1043 individual growth curves for live and heat-killed phage exposure are shown separately.

1044

1045 **Figure 4.** ARB25 infection of wild-type *B. thetaiotaomicron* causes altered *cps* gene expression.
1046 Wild-type *B. thetaiotaomicron* was infected with live or heat-killed ARB25 at an MOI of ~1. (A)
1047 Growth was monitored by measuring OD_{600} every 15-30 minutes and individual growth curves
1048 for live and heat-killed phage exposure are shown separately (n=3). (B) *cps* gene transcript
1049 analysis was carried out by qPCR. The end of the growth curve in panel A represents the point at
1050 which cultures were harvested for qPCR analysis (i.e., the first observed time point where culture
1051 surpassed OD_{600} of 0.6). Significant changes in *cps1*, *cps3*, and *cps4* expression were observed
1052 between groups treated with live or heat-killed ARB25 ($p < 0.01$ for each, determined by

1053 Dirichlet regression; bars represent mean and error bars SEM, n=3). Individual replicates for
1054 high and low MOI experiments are displayed in **Fig. S8**.

1055

1056 **Figure 5.** Infection of acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron* selects for increased expression of multiple
1057 phase-variable loci, whereas wild-type mostly alters CPS expression. (A) Wild-type *B.*
1058 *thetaiotaomicron* was infected with ARB25 or was alternatively exposed to heat-killed (HK)
1059 ARB25 and cultures were grown to OD_{600}=0.6-0.7. Cells were harvested and RNA-seq analysis
1060 was carried out as described in *Methods* (n=3 independent experiments for each treatment
1061 group). Transcript abundance was compared between live and HK treatments to generate fold
1062 change (x axis), which is plotted against the adjusted P value (EdgeR) for each gene. (B)
1063 Acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron* was treated with ARB25 or HK ARB25 and fold change in
1064 transcript abundance was calculated, as described in panel A. (C) Among the genes with
1065 increased expression in post-infected acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron*, 25 genes were part of 8
1066 different gene clusters that encode predicted tyrosine recombinases along with outer membrane
1067 lipoproteins and OmpA-like proteins. These gene clusters are shown. The number inside the
1068 schematic for each gene represents the fold change in expression in ARB25-treated cells relative
1069 to those treated with HK ARB25. Flanking the promoters of each of these loci are pairs of
1070 imperfect, 17 nucleotide palindromic repeats. PCR analysis and amplicon sequencing of each
1071 orientation of these 8 promoters revealed expected confirmation of changes in orientation to the
1072 "ON" position in ARB25-exposed acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron*, although we were unable to
1073 quantify the on/off ratios due to high levels of sequence similarity between the 8 loci. (D)
1074 Another chromosomal locus with signatures of phage-selected recombination was identified by
1075 RNA-seq. Specifically, 3 of 4 genes in an operon (*BT1042-BT1045*) were significantly down-

1076 regulated after exposure to phage and 5 genes in an adjacent operon (*BT1046-BT1051*) were up-
1077 regulated. (E) PCR using oligonucleotides flanking direct repeats within the *BT1032-BT1053*
1078 locus (green dumbbells, panel D) were used to demonstrate locus architecture in wild type *B.*
1079 *thetaiotaomicron* and in a mutant lacking the tyrosine recombinase within this locus (*B.*
1080 *thetaiotaomicron* ΔBT1041). All RNAseq data is provided in **Table S3a-g**.

1081

1082 **Figure 6**. Expression of the BT1927 S-layer increases *B. thetaiotaomicron* resistance to four
1083 different phages. Acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron* S-layer 'ON' and 'OFF' mutants (Δ*cps*
1084 BT1927-ON and Δ*cps* BT1927-OFF, respectively) were infected with (A) ARB25, (B) SJC01 C)
1085 ARB19, or D) SJC03 in liquid culture. Growth was monitored via optical density at 600 nm
1086 (OD_{600}) as described in *Methods* and individual growth curves for live and heat-killed phage
1087 exposure are shown separately (n=3-6 per panel). (E) CFU (solid line) or PFU (dashed line) per g
1088 Feces for each monocolonized Germ-free swiss webster mouse with either wild-type (blue) or
1089 acapsular (Δcps; pink) *B. thetaiotaomicron* and challenged with ARB25 phage (*, p-value $\leq$ 0.05
1090 student's t test).

1091

1092 **Figure S1.** Diversification and structure of *cps* gene clusters in human gut Bacteroidetes. (A)
1093 The genomes of 53 different human gut Bacteroidetes (predominantly named type strains) were
1094 searched for gene clusters that contain two or more different protein families indicative of *cps*
1095 loci (see *Methods*). The number of *cps* loci detected in each genome is shown in the context of
1096 phylogenetic tree derived from the core genome of the 53 species used for this analysis; species
1097 for which *cps* loci were not detected using our search criteria are marked with a red "X". Due to
1098 gaps in several genomes, which often occur at *cps* loci, the numbers shown are likely to be an

1099 underestimate. (B) Schematics of the 8 annotated cps loci in *B. thetaiotaomicron* VPI-5482,
1100 which are singly present in the cps1-cps8 strains used in this study, or completely eliminated in
1101 the acapsular strain. Genes are color coded according to the key at the bottom and additional
1102 Pfam family designations are provided under most genes. The four main protein families used
1103 for informatics analysis are marked with asterisks and highlighted in bold in the key.

1104

1105 **Figure S2.** Representative pictures of phage plaques for all phages in this study: (A) phages from
1106 Ann Arbor (ARB); (B) phages from San Jose (SJC). The top row of images for each phage are
1107 unaltered; background and saturated pixels were removed from images in the bottom row to
1108 facilitate viewing of the plaques. Scale bar = 2 mm

1109

1110 **Figure S3.** Replication of a subset of host range assays of *B. thetaiotaomicron*-targeting phages
1111 on strains expressing different CPS types. Ten bacteriophages isolated and purified on the wild-
1112 type, acapsular, or the 8 single CPS-expressing strains were re-tested in a spot titer assay to
1113 determine phage host range. 10-fold serial dilutions of each phage ranging from approximately
1114 10^6 to 10^3 plaque-forming units (PFU) / ml were spotted onto top agar plates containing the 10
1115 bacterial strains. Plates were then grown overnight, and phage titers were calculated. Titers are
1116 normalized to the titer on the preferred host strain for each replicate. Each row in the heatmap
1117 corresponds to a replicate for an individual phage, whereas each column corresponds to one of
1118 the 10 host strains. One to three replicates of the assay were conducted for each phage by the two
1119 lead authors (AJH and NTP). Assays were carried out at the same time, and each author used the
1120 same set of cultures and phage stocks. For comparison, individual replicates from **Figure 1** are
1121 included (marked with *).

1122 **Figure S4.** Effects of eliminating permissive CPS from another *B. thetaiotaomicron* strain. (A)
1123 We identified *B. thetaiotaomicron* 7330[61] as the only sequenced and genetically tractable strain
1124 that contains VPI-5482-like *cps* loci (*cps2, cps5, and cps6*). We also observed that the Branch 2
1125 phage SJC01did not yield productive infection in *B. thetaiotaomicron* 7330, but could partially
1126 clears lawns of *B. thetaiotaomicron* 7330 at high titers. This ability to clear established lawns is a
1127 previously described phenomenon known as "lysis from without[62]". (B) Deletion of permissive
1128 capsules (*cps2, cps5*, and *cps6*) either alone or in combination affects VPI-5482 infection by
1129 SJC01. (C) Deletion of *B. thetaiotaomicron* VPI-5482-like *cps* loci from *B. thetaiotaomicron*
1130 7330 affects the "lysis from without" phenotype. While SJC01 plaques on WT *B.*
1131 *thetaiotaomicron* VPI-5482, it does not form plaques on wild-type *B. thetaiotaomicron* 7330.
1132 However, SJC01 does exhibit a "lysis from without" clearing phenotypes at high densities of
1133 phage (top two spots, made with 1 microliter of 1e8 and 1e7 PFU per mL, according to titers
1134 observed on wild-type VPI-5482). (D) *B. thetaiotaomicron* 7330 strains lacking *cps5* (with the
1135 exception of 7330 Δ*cps5* Δ*cps6*) show the lysis from without phenomenon less frequently than
1136 strains that have intact *cps5* (at least n=3 replicates per phage/host pair). For panel B, significant
1137 differences in phage titers on each mutant strain were compared to wild type via Mann-Whitney
1138 test, * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$, **** $p < 0.0001$.

1139

1140 **Figure S5.** Free CPS does not inhibit ARB25 infection when provided *in trans*. (A) ARB25 was
1141 incubated with purified CPS1 or CPS2 (1 mg/ml, an estimated 10^9 molar excess of CPS
1142 molecules to phage, see *Methods*) before plating on the acapsular strain, and plaques were
1143 counted after overnight incubation. Titers are normalized to mock (H_2O) treatment. No
1144 significant differences in titers were found compared to mock treatment, as determined by

1145 Welch's t test (n=3 biological replicates, bars represent mean ± SEM). (B) Post ARB25-infected,
1146 surviving cultures still contain infectious phages. Wild-type *B. thetaiotaomicron* was infected
1147 with live or heat-killed ARB25, and bacterial growth was monitored via optical density at 600
1148 nm (OD_{600}). At 0, 6.02, 8.36, and 11.7 hours post inoculation, replicate cultures were removed
1149 and phage levels were titered (n=3 and individual replicate curves are shown). No phages were
1150 detected in heat-killed controls. Note that the PFU/mL do not increase substantially after the
1151 initial "burst" corresponding to decreased bacterial culture density prior to re-growth.

1152

1153 **Figure S6.** Effect of CPS and phage infection on bacterial growth. (A) Ten strains: the wild-type
1154 (WT), the acapsular strain (Δcps), or the eight single CPS-expressing strains were infected with
1155 either live or heat-killed SJC01. (B) 20 different colonies of cps4 or cps5 strains were infected
1156 with ARB25. Growth was monitored via optical density at 600 nm (OD_{600}) on an automated
1157 plate reading instrument as described in *Methods* and individual growth curves for live and heat-
1158 killed phage exposure are shown separately.

1159

1160 **Figure S7.** Infection of wild-type *B. thetaiotaomicron* at a low multiplicity of infection and
1161 subsequent effects on *cps* gene expression. (A) The wild-type (WT) strain was infected at a low
1162 multiplicity of infection (MOI = 1×10^{-4}) of live or heat-killed ARB25, and bacterial growth was
1163 monitored via OD_{600} (n=3 biological replicates and separate curves are shown). (B) RNA was
1164 harvested from cultures after reaching an OD_{600} of 0.6-0.7, cDNA was generated, and relative
1165 expression of the 8 *cps* loci was determined by qPCR (histogram bars are mean ± SEM of 3
1166 biological replicates. Individual replicates are shown in **Fig. S8**).

1167 **Figure S8.** Single replicates of *cps* expression in heat-killed versus live phage-treated *B.*
1168 *thetaiotaomicron*. Relative *cps* transcript abundance in ARB25 infection experiments at high
1169 MOI (A) and low MOI (B). In the high MOI experiment, replicate 2 showed higher starting
1170 expression of the non-permissive CPS3 compared to others. In the low MOI experiment,
1171 replicate 3 showed higher starting expression of the non-permissive CPS3. In both experiments,
1172 post phage-exposed replicates displayed nearly identical CPS expression profiles characterized
1173 by high expression of CPS3.

1174

1175 **Figure S9.** Determination of phase-variable promoter switching for six loci encoding putative S-
1176 layer proteins. The hypothesis that the promoters associated with seven newly identified *B.*
1177 *thetaiotaomicron* S-layer like lipoproteins was validated using a PCR amplicon sequencing
1178 strategy. Because of high nucleotide identity in both the regions flanking the 7 new loci, a nested
1179 PCR approach was required to specifically amplify and sequence each site. In the first step, a
1180 primer lying in each S-layer gene (**Table S5** "S-layer gene" primers) was oriented towards the
1181 promoter and used in a PCR extension to a primer in the upstream recombinase gene (**Table S5**
1182 "recombinase gene 3" primer). The products of this PCR were purified without gel extraction
1183 and used in a second reaction with a nested primer that lies internal to the previous recombinase
1184 gene primer (**Table S5** "recombinase 2" primer). The expected PCR products from this reaction,
1185 which are ~1 kb and span promoter sequences in both the ON and OFF orientations, were
1186 excised and used for an orientation-specific PCR using the original S-layer gene primer for each
1187 site and a universal primer (green schematic) that was designed for each promoter and is oriented
1188 to extend upstream of the S-layer gene (e.g., OFF orientation). Resulting products from this third
1189 reaction, which should correspond to the ON orientation if a promoter inversion has occurred in

1190 some cells, were obtained for 5/7 of the newly identified loci and the BT1927 S-layer locus as a
1191 control. In all cases in which an amplicon and sequence were obtained, the expected
1192 recombination occurred between the inverted repeat site proximal to the S-layer gene start (new
1193 DNA junction), which would orient the promoter to enable expression of the downstream S-layer
1194 gene. The sequences shown are the consensus between forward and reverse reads for each
1195 amplicon. The putative core promoter -7 sequence is shown in bold/red text, the coding region of
1196 each S-layer gene is shown in bold/blue text and the S-layer gene proximal recombination site is
1197 noted and highlighted in bold/gold text. Note that the 5'-end of the sequenced amplicon was not
1198 resolved for the BT2486 locus.

1199

1200 **Figure S10.** Recombination between the genes BT1040, BT1042, and BT1046. (A) Pfam
1201 domain schematics of the amino acid sequences of these three genes highlighting that BT1040
1202 and BT1046, as originally assembled in the *B. thetaiotaomicron* genome sequence, lack
1203 additional N-terminal sequences that are present on BT1042. (B) Sequencing of the 8 PCR
1204 amplicons schematized in **Figure 5D**. Amplicons 1, 5 and 8 represent the original genome
1205 architecture, while the others represent inferred recombination events that are validated here by
1206 sequencing. The 5' and 3' ends of the BT1042, BT1040 and BT1046 genes are color-coded to
1207 assist in following their connectivity changes after recombination. A series of single-nucleotide
1208 polymorphisms (SNPs) present in BT1042, downstream of the proposed recombination site, are
1209 highlighted in yellow. The transfer of these SNPs to a fragment containing the 5' end of BT1040
1210 (Amplicon 4) was used to narrow the recombination region to the 7 nucleotide sequence
1211 highlighted in red. Additional SNPs that are specific to the regions upstream of this
1212 recombination site are shown in white text for each sequence.

1213 **Figure S11.** The BT1033-52 locus does not affect susceptibility of acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron*
1214 to ARB25. Ten-fold serial dilutions of ARB25 were spotted onto lawns of *B. thetaiotaomicron*
1215 Δ*cps* (n=5) and *B. thetaiotaomicron* Δ*cps* ΔBT1033-52 (n=5, n=3 independent clones each with
1216 all 15 replicates shown individually). Plaquing efficiency was determined by normalizing plaque
1217 counts on *B. thetaiotaomicron* Δ*cps* ΔBT1033-52 relative to plaque counts on *B.*
1218 *thetaiotaomicron* Δ*cps* for each replicate. Statistical significance was determined using the
1219 Mann-Whitney test.

1220

1221 **Figure S12.** Whole genome transcriptional analyses of several additional *B. thetaiotaomicron*
1222 strain and phage combinations. (A) Infection of the cps1 strain with ARB25, revealing a post-
1223 infection response that is largely characterized by increased expression of S-layer/OmpA
1224 proteins. (B) Infection of wild-type *B. thetaiotaomicron* with SJC01, revealing that, as with
1225 ARB25/wild-type, the bacteria survive phage infection by mostly altering CPS expression.
1226 Expression of the non-permissive CPS3 is prominently increased. (C) Infection of acapsular *B.*
1227 *thetaiotaomicron* with SJC01, revealing that in the absence of CPS survival is mostly promoted
1228 by increased S-layer/OmpA expression and expression of a newly identified, phase-variable
1229 restriction enzyme system. (D) Gene schematic of the newly identified phase-variable restriction
1230 enzyme system (top) and a lipoprotein contain locus (bottom) that is different from the 8 S-layer
1231 loci also revealed in this study. The inverted repeat sequence that was determined to mediate
1232 recombination in each locus is shown. (E) PCR analysis of the restriction enzyme system and
1233 new lipoprotein promoter orientations with primers designed to detect phase variation from off to
1234 on states. Amplicons were sequenced to confirm the re-orientation to the on orientation (not
1235 shown). (F) Global transcriptional responses of wild-type *B. thetaiotaomicron* in the ceca of

1236 mice after 72 d of co-existence with ARB25. Note that shifts in CPS expression are mostly
1237 characterized by increases in permissive CPS, which may be dictated by growth *in vivo* selecting
1238 for these capsules or against the non-permissive CPS3. Correspondingly, wild-type shows
1239 increased expression of some but not all S-layer/OmpA systems and the phase-variable
1240 restriction enzyme. (G) Global transcriptional responses of acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron* in the
1241 ceca of mice after 72 d of co-existence with ARB25. In the absence of CPS, surviving bacteria
1242 show increased expression of only a subset of the identified S-layer/OmpA proteins, with
1243 BT1826 expressed most dominantly, along with the newly identified BT0291-94 locus and
1244 expression of the restriction enzyme system.

1245

1246 **Figure S13.** ARB25 or SJC01 infection of the acapsular BT1927 locked on and off strains after
1247 1, 2 or 3 days of growth on BPRM. Three separate colonies were picked each day, grown
1248 overnight and used to setup infection cultures that were monitored for 24 hours in an automated
1249 plate reader. Colonies picked after only 1 day show the least resistance to either phage when
1250 BT1927 is locked on. After 2 days, resistance is increased and this continues to increase after 3
1251 days, becoming almost complete (compared to HK controls for ARB25).

1252

1253 **Table S1.** Phages used in this study and details on their isolation.

1254 **Table S2.** Susceptibility of strains to infection by ARB25 after infection and passaging.

1255 **Table S3.** Genes that are differentially regulated in post ARB25-infected wild-type and
1256 acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron*. Consists of sheets a.-g. corresponding to individual RNA-seq
1257 comparisons.

1258 **Table S4.** Resistance to ARB25 of wild-type and acapsular *B. thetaiotaomicron* strains after in

1259 vivo existence with ARB25 for 72 days and 10 d of repeated culture/passage outside of the

1260 mouse.

1261 **Table S5.** Bacterial strains and plasmids used in this study.

1262 **Table S6.** Primers used in this study.

1263

Figure 1

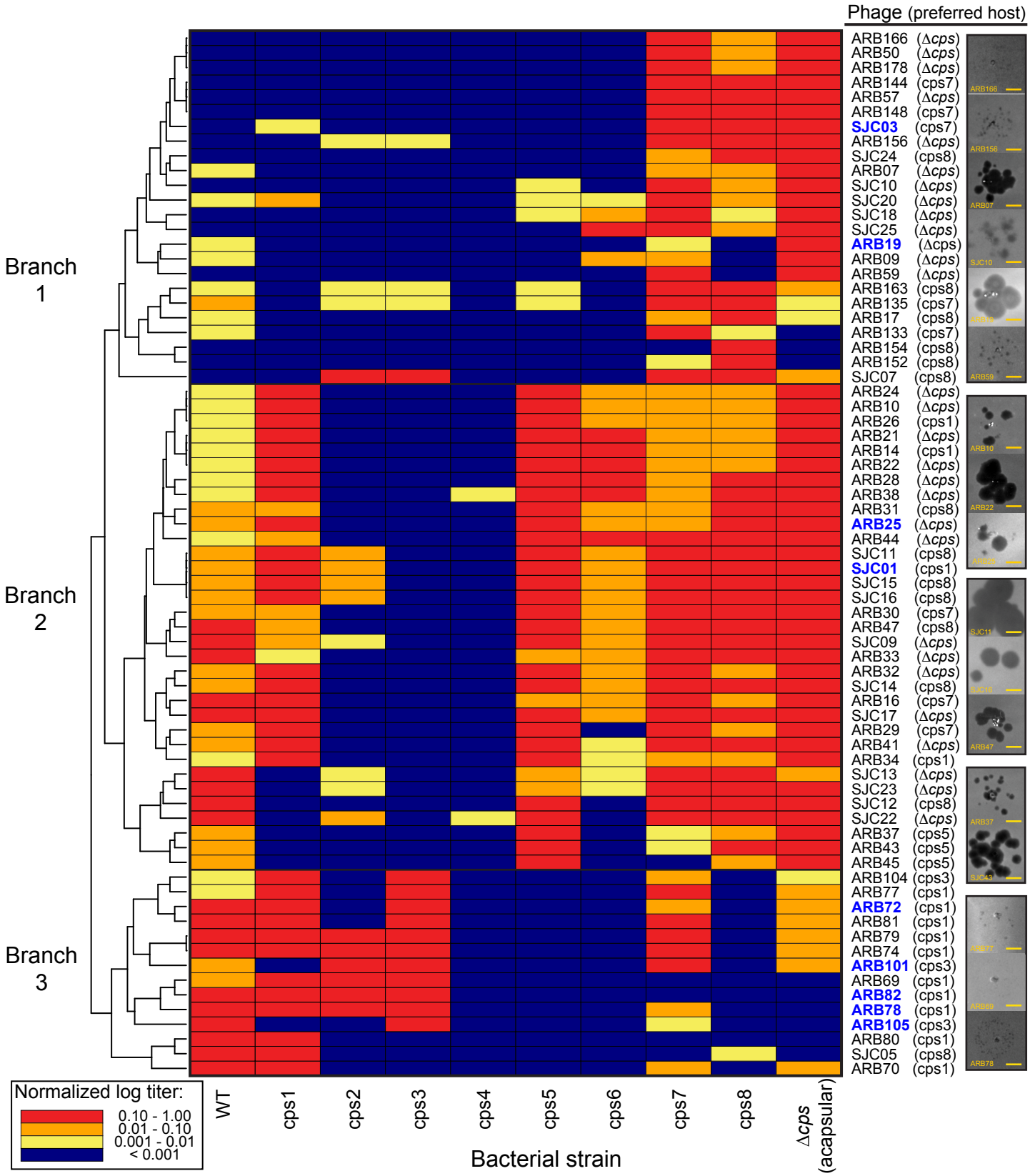

Phage (preferred host)
ARB166 (Δcps)
ARB50 (Δcps)
ARB178 (Δcps)
ARB144 (cps7)
ARB57 (Δcps)
ARB148 (cps7)
SJC03 (cps7)
ARB156 (Δcps)
SJC24 (cps8)
ARB07 (Δcps)
SJC10 (Δcps)
SJC20 (Δcps)
SJC18 (Δcps)
SJC25 (Δcps)
ARB19 (Δcps)
ARB09 (Δcps)
ARB59 (Δcps)
ARB163 (cps8)
ARB135 (cps7)
ARB17 (cps8)
ARB133 (cps7)
ARB154 (cps8)
ARB152 (cps8)
SJC07 (cps8)
ARB24 (Δcps)
ARB10 (Δcps)
ARB26 (cps1)
ARB21 (Δcps)
ARB14 (cps1)
ARB22 (Δcps)
ARB28 (Δcps)
ARB38 (Δcps)
ARB31 (cps8)
ARB25 (Δcps)
ARB44 (Δcps)
SJC11 (cps8)
SJC01 (cps1)
SJC15 (cps8)
SJC16 (cps8)
ARB30 (cps7)
ARB47 (cps8)
SJC09 (Δcps)
ARB33 (Δcps)
ARB32 (Δcps)
SJC14 (cps8)
ARB16 (cps7)
SJC17 (Δcps)
ARB29 (cps7)
ARB41 (Δcps)
ARB34 (cps1)
SJC13 (Δcps)
SJC23 (Δcps)
SJC12 (cps8)
SJC22 (Δcps)
ARB37 (cps5)
ARB43 (cps5)
ARB45 (cps5)
ARB104 (cps3)
ARB77 (cps1)
ARB72 (cps1)
ARB81 (cps1)
ARB79 (cps1)
ARB74 (cps1)
ARB101 (cps3)
ARB69 (cps1)
ARB82 (cps1)
ARB78 (cps1)
ARB105 (cps3)
ARB80 (cps1)
SJC05 (cps8)
ARB70 (cps1)
Branch 1
Branch 2
Branch 3
Normalized log titer:
0.10 - 1.00
0.01 - 0.10
0.001 - 0.01
< 0.001
WT
cps1
cps2
cps3
cps4
cps5
cps6
cps7
cps8
Δcps (acapsular)
Bacterial strain

Figure 2

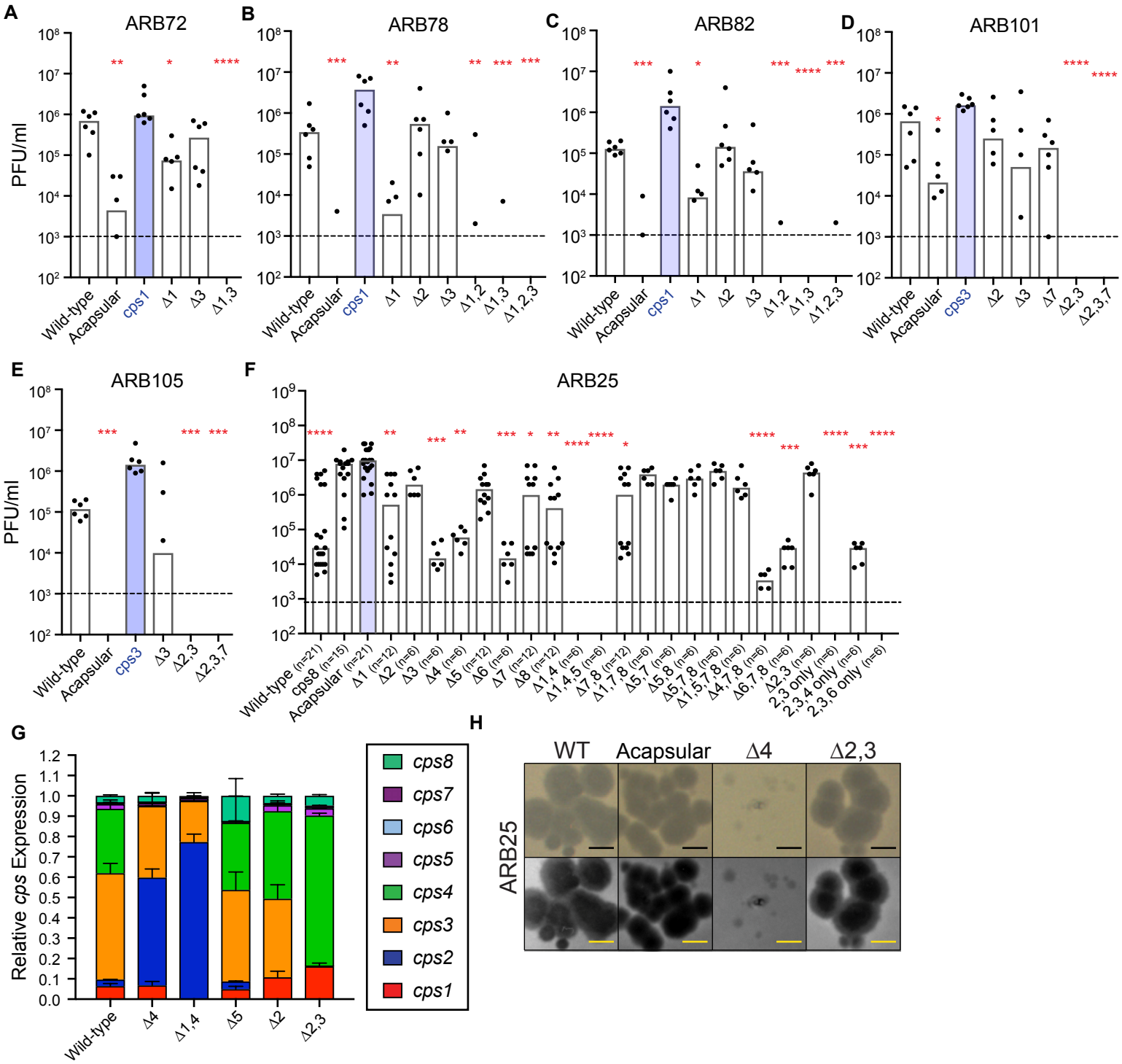

A
ARB72
B
ARB78
C
ARB82
D
ARB101
E
ARB105
F
ARB25
PFU/ml
Wild-type
Acapsular
cps1
cps3
Δ1
Δ2
Δ3
Δ4
Δ5
Δ6
Δ7
Δ8
Δ1,2
Δ1,3
Δ1,2,3
Δ2,3
Δ2,3,7
Δ1,4
Δ1,4,5
Δ7,8
Δ1,7,8
Δ5,7
Δ5,8
Δ5,7,8
Δ1,5,7,8
Δ4,7,8
Δ6,7,8
2,3 only
2,3,4 only
2,3,6 only
cps8
G
Relative cps Expression
cps8
cps7
cps6
cps5
cps4
cps3
cps2
cps1
H
WT
Acapsular
Δ4
Δ2,3
ARB25

Figure 3

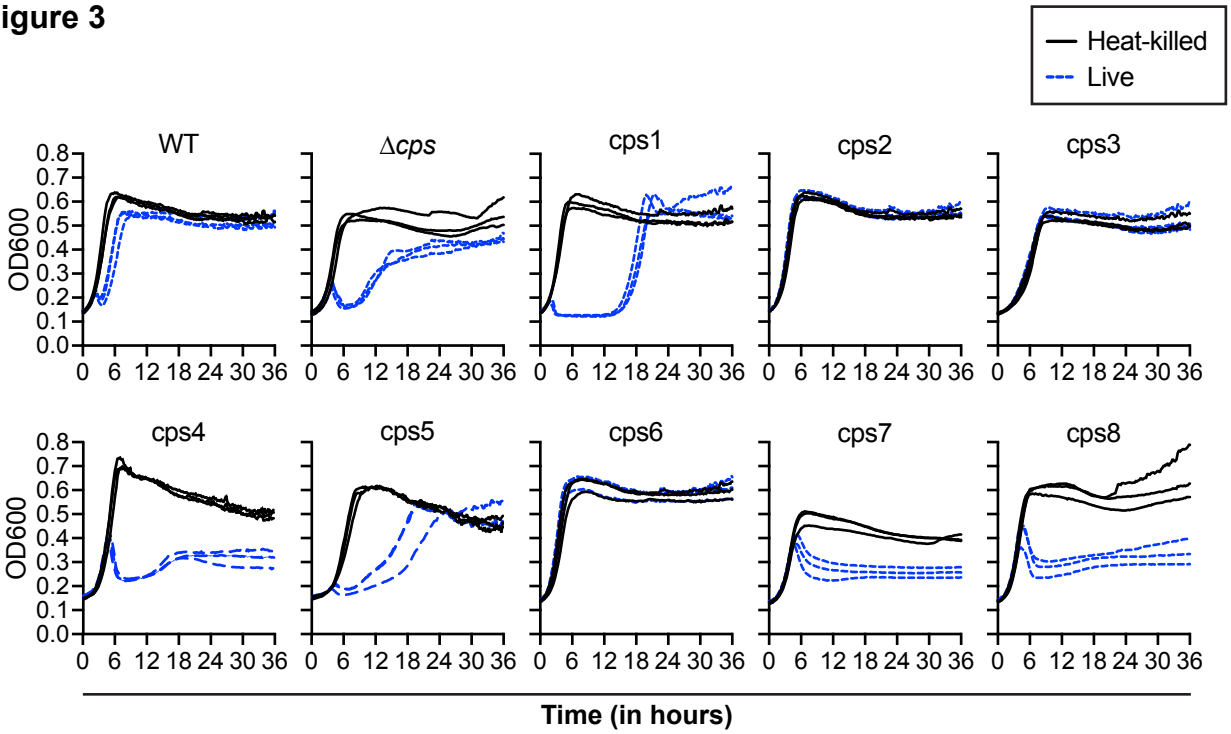

Heat-killed
Live
WT
Δcps
cps1
cps2
cps3
cps4
cps5
cps6
cps7
cps8
OD600
0.0
0.1
0.2
0.3
0.4
0.5
0.6
0.7
0.8
0 6 12 18 24 30 36
Time (in hours)

Figure 4

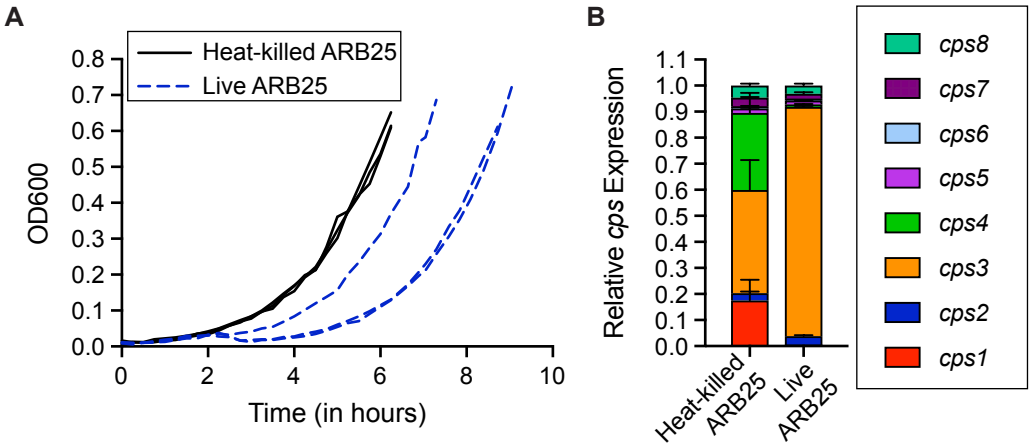

A
Heat-killed ARB25
Live ARB25
OD600
0.0
0.1
0.2
0.3
0.4
0.5
0.6
0.7
0.8
0
2
4
6
8
10
Time (in hours)
B
Relative cps Expression
0.0
0.1
0.2
0.3
0.4
0.5
0.6
0.7
0.8
0.9
1.0
1.1
Heat-killed ARB25
Live ARB25
cps8
cps7
cps6
cps5
cps4
cps3
cps2
cps1

Figure 5

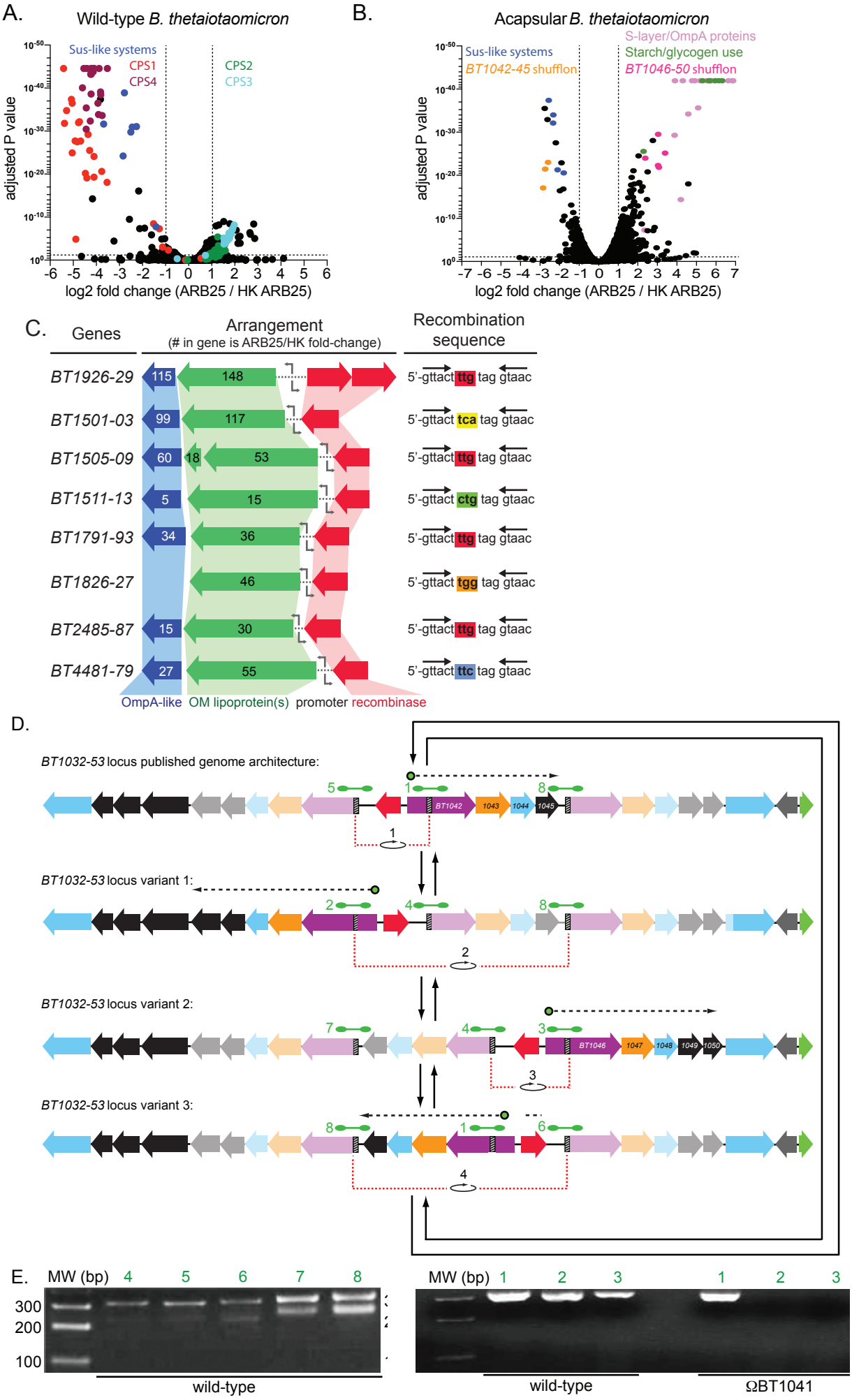
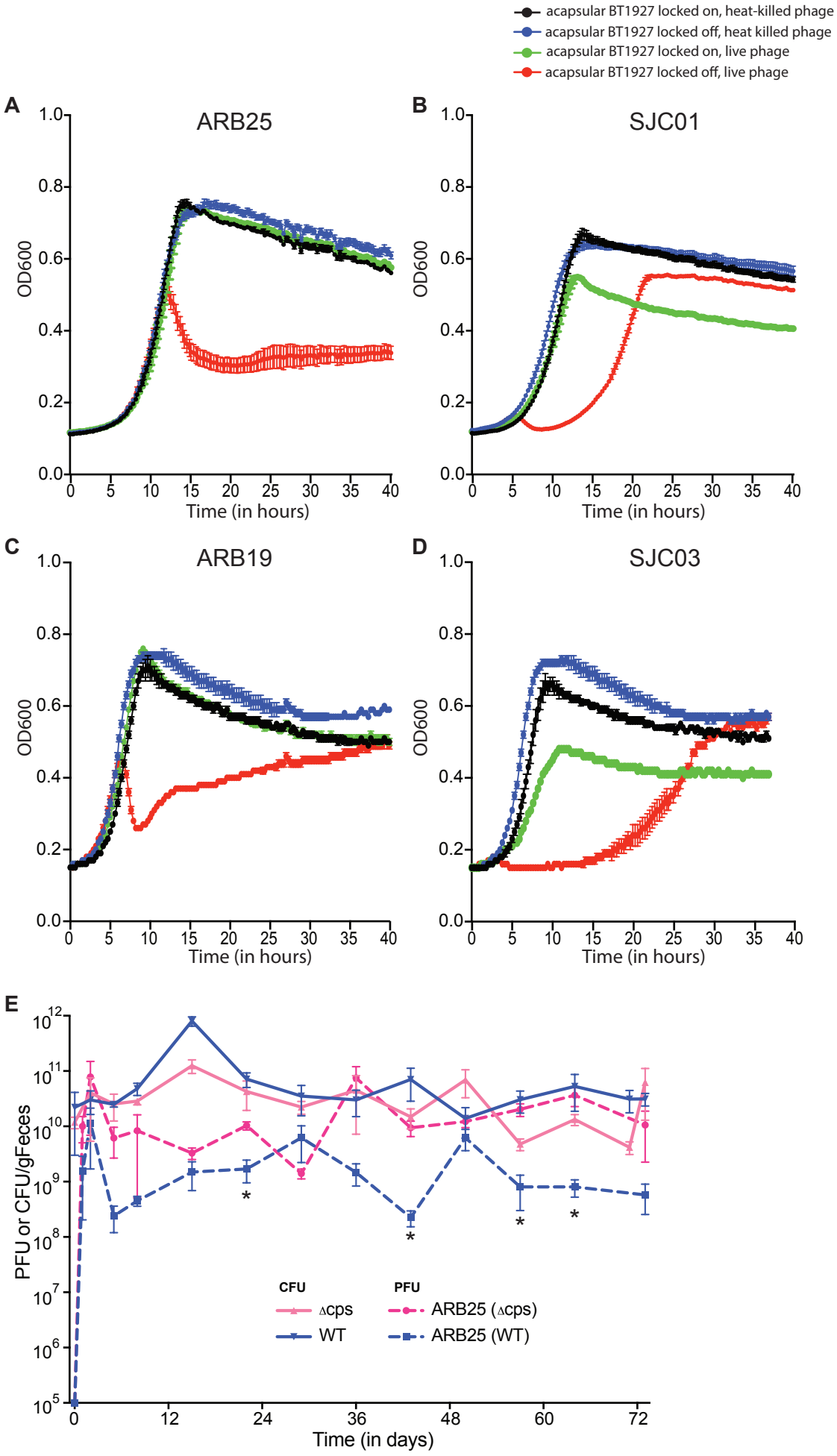

A.
Wild-type B. thetaiotaomicron
Sus-like systems
CPS1
CPS4
CPS2
CPS3
adjusted P value
log2 fold change (ARB25 / HK ARB25)
B.
Acapsular B. thetaiotaomicron
S-layer/OmpA proteins
Sus-like systems
Starch/glycogen use
BT1042-45 shufflon
BT1046-50 shufflon
adjusted P value
log2 fold change (ARB25 / HK ARB25)
C.
Genes
Arrangement
(# in gene is ARB25/HK fold-change)
Recombination sequence
BT1926-29
BT1501-03
BT1505-09
BT1511-13
BT1791-93
BT1826-27
BT2485-87
BT4481-79
5'-gttact ttg tag gtaac
5'-gttact tca tag gtaac
5'-gttact ctg tag gtaac
5'-gttact tgg tag gtaac
5'-gttact ttc tag gtaac
OmpA-like
OM lipoprotein(s)
promoter
recombinase
D.
BT1032-53 locus published genome architecture:
BT1032-53 locus variant 1:
BT1032-53 locus variant 2:
BT1032-53 locus variant 3:
BT1042
1043
1044
1045
BT1046
1047
1048
1049
1050
E.
MW (bp)
300
200
100
wild-type
ΩBT1041

Figure 6


acapsular BT1927 locked on, heat-killed phage
acapsular BT1927 locked off, heat killed phage
acapsular BT1927 locked on, live phage
acapsular BT1927 locked off, live phage
A
ARB25
B
SJC01
C
ARB19
D
SJC03
OD600
Time (in hours)
E
PFU or CFU/gFeces
Time (in days)
CFU
Δcps
WT
PFU
ARB25 (Δcps)
ARB25 (WT)