Title: Horizontal transmission and recombination maintain forever young bacterial symbiont genomes

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Abstract

Bacterial symbionts bring a wealth of functions to the associations they participate in, but by doing so, they endanger the genes and genomes underlying these abilities. When bacterial symbionts become obligately associated with their hosts, their genomes are thought to decay towards an organelle-like fate due to decreased homologous recombination and inefficient selection. However, numerous associations exist that counter these expectations, especially in marine environments, possibly due to ongoing horizontal gene flow. Despite extensive theoretical treatment, no empirical study thus far has connected these underlying population genetic processes with long-term evolutionary outcomes. By sampling marine chemosynthetic bacterial-bivalve endosymbioses that range from primarily vertical to strictly horizontal transmission, we tested this canonical theory. We found that transmission mode strongly predicts homologous recombination rates, and that exceedingly low recombination rates are associated with moderate genome degradation in the marine symbionts with nearly strict vertical transmission. Nonetheless, even the most degraded marine endosymbiont genomes are occasionally horizontally transmitted and are much larger than their terrestrial insect symbiont counterparts. Therefore, horizontal transmission and recombination enable efficient natural selection to maintain intermediate symbiont genome sizes and substantial functional genetic variation.

Author summary

Symbiotic associations between bacteria and eukaryotes are ubiquitous in nature and have contributed to the evolution of radically novel phenotypes and niches for the involved partners. New metabolic or physiological capacities that arise in these associations are typically encoded by the bacterial symbiont genomes. However, the association itself endangers the retention of bacterial genomic coding capacity. Endosymbiont genome evolution theory predicts that when bacterial symbionts become restricted to host tissues, their populations cannot remove deleterious mutations efficiently. This ultimately results in their genomes degrading to small, function-poor states, reminiscent of organellar genomes. However, many ancient marine endosymbionts do not fit this prediction, but instead retain relatively large, gene-rich genomes, indicating that the evolutionary dynamics of this process need more thorough characterization. Here we show that on-going symbiont gene flow via horizontal transmission between bivalve hosts and recombination among divergent gammaproteobacterial symbiont lineages are sufficient to maintain large and dynamic bacterial symbiont genomes. These findings indicate that many obligately associated symbiont genomes may not be as isolated from one another as previously assumed and are not on a one way path to degradation.

Short title: Forever young bacterial symbiont genomes

Introduction

Bacterial genomes encode an enormous diversity of functions, which enable them to create

radically novel phenotypes when they associate with eukaryotic hosts. However, they are at

risk of genome degradation and function loss within these associations. Among the diversity of

eukaryotic hosts they inhabit, symbiont genome sizes range from nearly unreduced genomes

that are similar to their free-living relatives (~3-5 Mb) to highly reduced genomes that are less

than 10% of the size of their free-living ancestors (~0.2-0.6 Mb) [1,2]. The degradation process

often leaves genes required for the bacterium's role in the symbiosis, and removes seemingly

vital genes, such as those involved in DNA repair and replication [1]. Although genome erosion

may be enabled in some cases due to "streamlining" benefits [3], it is clear that the process can

become problematic and result in symbiont replacement or supplementation [1,4] to accomplish

the full repertoire of functions needed in the combined organism. Thus, to fully understand how

symbioses evolve, we must first understand the pressures their genomes experience.

Symbiont genome evolution theory predicts that upon host restriction, bacterial genomes begin

the steady and inexorable process of decay due to decreased population sizes and

homologous recombination rates, which result in inefficacious natural selection [5]. The

transmission bottleneck that occurs when symbionts are passed on to host offspring further

exacerbates these dynamics by making deleterious mutations more likely to drift to fixation in

the next generation [5,6]. Indeed, many endosymbiont taxa exhibit weak purifying selection at

the gene level [7–10]. In the early stages of bacterial symbiont-host associations, deleterious

mutations arise on each symbiont chromosome and a portion drift or hitch-hike with adaptive

mutations to fixation. Subsequently, pseudogenes are lost entirely via deletion [5]. Ultimately,

this process is thought to result in an organelle-like genome that is a fraction of the size of its

free-living ancestors and has relegated many of its core cellular functions (*e.g.*, DNA replication and repair, cell wall synthesis, etc.) to the host or lost them entirely.

While the degraded genomes of many endosymbionts are consistent with this theory, such as symbionts of terrestrial sap and xylem-feeding insects [1], a diversity of associations present discrepancies. In particular, most known marine obligate endosymbionts' genomes are at least one megabase in size and contain diverse coding content [11–17], although reduced representatives have recently been found [18]. Large symbiont genomes in obligate associations are usually interpreted as reflecting the earliest stages of genome degradation [19,20], which is surprising considering the antiquity of these associations (*e.g.*, [21,22]). Furthermore, even the vertically transmitted marine symbionts whose phylogenies mirror those of their hosts have only partially degraded genomes [23]. While important genes have been lost in some lineages, such as the recombination and repair gene *recA* and transversion mismatch-repair gene *mutY* [24], their loss did not portend an organelle-like fate.

Symbioses in marine environments exhibit significantly more horizontal transmission between hosts than those in terrestrial environments [25], suggesting that symbiont gene flow between hosts may prevent genome decay by enabling high rates of homologous recombination, efficient natural selection, and the maintenance of highly diverse genome contents. This hypothesis has so far not been tested and it is not known whether marine endosymbionts represent the early stages of genome degradation, as implied by the canonical endosymbiont genome theory, or if on-going gene flow and recombination can stall such genome decay over evolutionary time. Furthermore, although the general process of symbiont genome degradation is well-understood in theory (*e.g.*, [1,2,26]), no empirical study has directly evaluated the role of

horizontal transmission and recombination in facilitating efficient natural selection and, thereby, the suppression of degradation. Interspecific-population level comparisons are essential for testing these important and long-standing questions [26].

To determine which evolutionary forces prevent marine endosymbiont genomes from degrading despite host restriction, we leveraged both population and comparative genomics of six marine bacterial-animal symbioses from three host taxa that exhibit modes of transmission across the spectrum from strict horizontal transmission (*Bathymodiolus* mytilid mussels) [27–29], to mixed mode transmission (solemyid bivalves) [15,30–32], to nearly strict vertical transmission (vesicomyid clams) [23,33–35] (see Fig. 1A-B and S1-S3 Tables). Each of these three groups evolved independently to obligately host either a single intracellular gammaproteobacterial symbiont 16S rRNA phylotype within their gill cells or two or more phylotypes, in the case of some mussels [36,37]. These symbionts provide chemosynthetic carbon fixation, either through sulfide or methane-oxidation, to nutritionally support the association [25]. Hosts are nearly completely dependent on symbiont metabolism [38], and the solemyids have lost the majority of their digestive tracts in response [39]. These associations appear to be obligate for the symbionts as well as the hosts because either the symbionts have never been found living independently, *e.g.*, solemyid [31] and vesicomyid symbionts [40], or they have only been found in the host and surrounding environment, *e.g.*, bathymodiolin symbionts [27,41,42]. Both the vesicomyids and solemyids transmit symbionts to their offspring through allocating tens to hundreds of symbiont cells to their broadcast spawned oocytes [31,33]. While the mechanism of horizontal, host-to-host transfer has not been identified in the *Bathymodiolus* or solemyid symbionts, signatures of rampant horizontal transmission are

evident in the population genetics of both of these groups [15,27,28] and the developmental

biology of *Bathymodiolus* [29].

This group of marine symbioses presents an ideal system in which to test the impact of

transmission mode and homologous recombination rate on bacterial symbiont genome

evolution. The wealth of information known about how the vesicomyid, solemyid, and

bathymodiolin symbioses function and evolve makes this a powerful evolutionary model.

Furthermore, the similarity of these associations to other invertebrate-bacterial associations in

the marine environment, *e.g.*, in mode of reproduction (broadcast spawning), phylogeny

(Mollusca-Gammaproteobacteria), immunology (innate), ancestral feeding type (filter or deposit

feeders), symbiosis function (nutritional)), makes this an ideal microcosm for understanding

how symbiont population genetics impact the process of symbiont genome degradation. Here,

we use this model study system and a powerful population genomic approach (described in S1

Fig and S1-S3 Supporting Text), to show that homologous recombination is ongoing even in

the most strictly vertically transmitted associations and may enable the maintenance of large

and intermediate genome sizes indefinitely.

Results and Discussion

Comparative analyses of host mitochondrial and endosymbiont genome genealogies show

strong evidence for horizontal transmission in all six populations (Fig. 1C). Despite this

apparent similarity in transmission mode, the vesicomyid endosymbiont genomes are

approximately one half the size of the solemyid or mytilid endosymbiont genomes, which

themselves are approximately consistent with their free-living ancestors. Nonetheless, at 1-1.2

Mb, the partially degraded vesicomyid endosymbiont genomes are still ten times larger than the smallest terrestrial endosymbionts [1]. The genealogical discordance shown in Figure 1C indicates that horizontal transmission has occurred in the histories of these populations, however, it does not suggest how much because concordance is eroded even by exceedingly low rates of horizontal transmission [43], saturating the signal genealogies can provide. Thus, a finer scaled exploration of symbiont genetic diversity was necessary to characterize the population-level processes influencing genome erosion.

Homologous recombination is an important driver of genetic diversity in many bacterial populations [44,45], and could impact host-associated symbiont populations if diverse genotypes co-occur due to horizontal transmission. Novel genotypes are necessary because recombination among clonal strains, *e.g.*, within a host-restricted clonal population of vertically transmitted endosymbionts, has little impact on haplotypic diversity [46]. To explore the opportunity for recombination among divergent clades of chemosynthetic symbionts, we partitioned symbiont genetic variation to between and within-host variation (*e.g.*, Fig. 2A and S4-S5 Tables). Within vesicomyid symbionts, genetic diversity is strongly subdivided by hosts, and nearly all variation distinguishes host populations (Fig. 2B). Conversely, for mytilid and solemyid endosymbionts, hosts have little impact, and two endosymbionts within a host are almost as divergent as two from different hosts (Fig. 2B).

The distribution of genetic diversity within a single host is even more striking than the pattern between hosts. Within host individuals, *Bathymodiolus* endosymbionts are exceptionally genetically diverse and the allele frequency spectra are qualitatively similar to expectations for an equilibrium neutrally-evolving population (Fig. 2C left and S2 Fig.), consistent with the high

genetic diversities reported for other bathymodiolin symbionts [47]. Conversely, solemyid endosymbionts maintain intermediate and more variable within-host genetic diversity, consistent with a mixture of vertical and horizontal transmission (Fig. 2C middle and S3 Fig.). Finally, vesicomyid endosymbiont populations within hosts are virtually devoid of genetic variability (Fig. 2C right and S4 Fig.). Therefore, despite their literal encapsulation within host cells, mytilid and solemyid symbionts have abundant opportunities to recombine and create fitter chromosomes whereas vesicomyid symbionts must only rarely encounter genetically differentiated individuals.

Although opportunities are limited for vesicomyid endosymbionts, even relatively infrequent homologous recombination events might drive patterns of genome evolution. We therefore developed a theoretical framework of symbiont evolution during mixed transmission modes. Importantly, our model demonstrates that in some conditions these populations can be approximated using a standard Kingman-coalescent and that horizontal transmission is mechanisticanistically linked to observable recombination events between genetically diverse symbiont genomes (S2 Supporting Text and S5-S6 Figs). We then performed extensive coalescent simulations and used a Random Forest-based regression framework to estimate the effective recombination rates for each population (estimated as the population-scaled recombination rate (rho) per site (l); see S6 Table and Materials and Methods). Although our model is clearly an approximation, the results are generally consistent with our prior expectations. The resulting estimated recombination rates are substantially higher in mytilid and solemyid symbionts than in vesicomyid symbionts (Fig. 2D and S4 and S7 Tables), indicating that the potential for recombination within hosts is realized in these species. In fact, these populations have some of the largest effective recombination rates ever reported for

bacteria [48,49]. Nonetheless, we also found evidence for modest rates of recombination within both partially degenerate vesicomyid genomes, despite the loss of many requisite genes in the *Calyptogena magnifica* symbiont [24,50]. For all three symbiont taxa, recombination has a larger impact on genome evolution than mutation (estimated by rho*l/theta in S4 Table), in part due to the relatively low estimates of theta in the symbiont populations. Thus, these bacterial symbionts comprise what might be described as quasi-sexual, rather than clonal, populations.

A fundamental consequence of decreased homologous recombination rates for endosymbionts is that selected mutations cannot be shuffled to form higher fitness chromosomes and remain linked to neutral mutations for longer times. Ultimately, this competition among selected mutations on different haplotypes, termed clonal interference, can drive the fixation of deleterious mutations and reshape genealogies towards long terminal branches and excesses of rare alleles [51] (illustrated in Fig. 3A). Similarly, even in the absence of competition among selected haplotypes, recently completed selected sweeps can reshape linked neutral genealogies if recombination is infrequent [52]. Consistent with this theory, we find abundant rare alleles in the vesicomyid symbiont genomes (Fig. 3 and S4 Table; Tajima's D = -1.98 and -2.03 for *C. magnifica* and *Calyptogena fausta*, respectively), but little skew in the allele frequencies of other endosymbiont populations (D ranges from 0.196 to -1.01). Importantly, it is unlikely that differences in host species demography have driven these differences, *e.g.,* recent population expansions specifically in vesicomyid clams. In fact, we found less allele frequency skew in the mitochondrial genomes than in the vesicomyid symbionts for all species considered, and the strongest negative skew in the allele frequencies in the mitochondrial genome of *B. septemdierum* from the Lau Basin (D = -1.9, S4 Table). Additionally, relative rates of molecular evolution between symbiont populations follow the expected trend, with

dN/dS values of 0.14, 0.096, 0.083 for vesicomyid, solemyid and bathymodiolin genomes, respectively (pairwise Wilcoxon test p-values: bathymodiolin-vesicomyid p=4.60e-14, solemyid-vesicomyid p= 1.02e-11, and bathymodiolin-solemyid p= 0.0365), consistent with recombination enabling more efficacious purifying selection for sustained periods of time.

Genome structure stasis is thought to be another hallmark of canonical endosymbiont genome evolution, and many terrestrial endosymbioses have reported static, degenerate genomes [1]. Whole genome alignments reveal that the vesicomyid symbiont genomes are highly syntenic, with few rearrangements, insertions, or deletions; whereas the other symbiont genomes are far more structurally dynamic (Fig. 4 and S7 Fig.). Given the role of recombination in altering bacterial genome structure ([50]; Fig. 4A) and the signal of linked selected sites in the vesicomyid symbionts (Fig. 3), recombinational processes may partially underlie genome erosion. This could proceed in the following way: first, a rare recombination event induces a deletion that drifts to high frequency in the within-host population. With homologous recombination events occurring so rarely in these endosymbiont genomes, natural selection would be unable to efficiently purge deleterious deletions. Although, inversions, which can be highly mutagenic by inverting the translated strand, inducing replication-transcription machinery collisions [53], are nearly absent potentially due to their high fitness costs. If symbionts with chromosomes bearing the recombination-induced deletion are exclusively transmitted to offspring during vertical transmission, then the deletion would be fixed in all subsequent symbionts in that host lineage. Multiple instances of this process would incrementally reduce the size of the symbiont genome.

In contrast, the solemyid symbiont genomes exhibit increasing degrees of structural dynamics with increasing divergence time. Highly divergent solemyid symbionts, such as the *S. velum* and *S. pervernicosa* symbionts, exhibit genomes that are as structurally dynamic as strictly horizontally transmitted associations (Fig. 4B vs C). However, over shorter time scales, such as the duration of time since the *S. velum* and *S. elarraichensis* symbionts diverged (discussed below), structural changes appear to be dominated by insertions and deletions (indels; confirmed for 30 Kb segments of the *S. elarrachensis* symbiont draft genome in S7 Fig.). Rapidly evolving indels have also been reported at the species level for *S. velum* [15]. Potentially underlying indel dynamics, we found that the solemyid symbionts have far more mobile genetic elements than any of the other symbiont genomes (S8 Table). High mobile element content is consistent with a combination of environmentally-exposed and host-associated periods [54], and mirrors the early stages of symbiosis [19,20], as well as the early stages of eukaryotic asexuality [55]. The mobile elements exhibit homology to different environmental bacteria, implying many independent insertion events (S9 Table).

It is plausible that vesicomyid symbionts' horizontal transmission and recombination rates are at the beginning of the range of values that permit genome decay. Our data indicates that they undergo horizontal transmission (Figs. 1C) and recombine (Fig. 2D and S4 Table). Furthermore, signatures of genetic variation consistent with linked selection and sustained intermediate genome sizes indicate that selection is sufficiently efficacious to maintain some functional diversity in these populations, counter to the expectations for the original theory on endosymbiont genome evolution [5,6]. While the fossil record and previous phylogenetic analyses indicate that the vesicomyid symbionts and clades of solemyid symbionts have been

in continuous host association for long periods of time [21,22,56], and thus genome erosion has been prevented, precise divergence dates are needed to confirm this conclusion.

Divergence date estimates for hosts and symbionts indicate that the observed patterns in symbiont genome structure have been maintained over many millions of years (Fig. 5, S8 Fig., and S10-12 Tables). Similar to prior work [21], we estimated that the vesicomyid bivalves evolved from their non-symbiotic ancestors around 73 million years ago (mya) (95% highest posterior density (HPD) = 62.59 - 76.70 my; Fig. 5B). We estimated a similar divergence date for the vesicomyids' monophyletic symbionts of around 84 my (95% CI = 42.37 - 165.09 my; Fig. 5A), which is remarkable given that their loss of DNA repair genes and reduced selection efficacy has likely increased their substitution rate (and may have been accounted for by using a relaxed local molecular clock). Interestingly, the clade of gammaproteobacteria that contains the vesicomyid symbionts, termed the SUP05 clade, also contains the thiotrophic *Bathymodiolus* symbionts and free-living bacteria with genomes in the range of 1.17-1.71 Mb (Fig. 5A), from which the vesicomyid symbionts are approximately 220 my (95% CI = 127 - 381my) diverged. This indicates that the vesicomyid symbiont genomes have eroded 58% at most, depending on the symbiont lineage and the ancestral state. Thus, over tens of millions of years of host association, the vesicomyid symbiont genomes have exhibited high degrees of stasis and have only degraded moderately (*e.g.*, in vesicomyid symbionts with 1 Mb vs. 1.2 Mb genomes).

The solemyids present a similar, but more complicated situation, likely owing to their antiquity, as the hosts first appeared in the fossil record more than 400 mya [22], when the ocean basins had much different connectivity [57]. While host-switching and novel symbiont acquisition have

certainly occurred in Solemyidae, and our data indicates such an event may have happened after *S. velum* and *S. pervernicosa* diverged (Fig. 5A)*,* it may be relatively rare across geological time. Whole genome mitochondrial and symbiont phylogenies indicate that the North Atlantic *Solemya* species *S. velum* and *S. elarraichensis* are sisters that diverged around 129 mya (95% HPD = 124 - 152 my; Fig. 5B), and their symbionts likely co-speciated with them around the same time (170 mya, 95% CI = 89 - 325 my; Fig. 5A). Divergence and subsequent speciation may have been due to the opening of the Atlantic, which occurred contemporaneously (180-200 mya; [58]). Thus, the vertically transmitted *S. velum* and *S. elarriachensis* symbionts have maintained genomes similar in size to their free-living relatives over hundreds of millions of years of host association.

Given the extreme ages of the solemyid and vesicomyid associations, our data suggest that moderate rates of recombination have allowed their symbiont genomes to maintain functional diversity characteristic of a free-living or moderately reduced genome, respectively. Evidence from the insect endosymbionts experiencing extreme genome size reduction indicates that genome erosion is possible over time frames as short as 5-20 my (*e.g.*, [59–66]). Thus, ample time has passed for these symbiont genomes to erode, but horizontal transmission and recombination have likely prevented it.

Conclusion

Here we empirically show that symbiont genome sizes and functional diversity are predicted by the rate of gene flow into and among symbiont populations via horizontal transmission and homologous recombination. Although we have only investigated three independently evolved associations, we see this system serving as a microcosm for marine associations more

generally, as many other associations exhibit similar biologies (*e.g.,* intracellular, autotrophic, broadcast-spawning, etc. [36]) and all are governed by the same population genetic principles. Amazingly, we found that symbiont gene flow between hosts is ongoing in one of the most intimate marine associations, the vertically transmitted vesicomyids. These results suggest that there is a range of possible intermediate genome degradation states that can be maintained over millions of years with sufficient recombination. Therefore, symbiont genome evolution following host restriction is not a one-way, inescapable process that ends in an organelle-like state as it is commonly presented [2,5,6]. These results validate long-standing but untested theory and suggest that the diversity of symbioses found to exhibit intermediate rates of horizontal transmission and incomplete genome degradation may be undergoing similar population-level processes.

Materials and Methods

1. Samples and Genomic Data Production

Sample collection

We obtained chemosynthetic bivalve samples from hydrothermal vents, cold seeps, and reducing coastal sediments from around the world (S1 Table). *Calyptogena magnifica* samples were collected from the East Pacific Rise (EPR) hydrothermal vent fields between 1998 and 2004. *Calyptogena fausta* were collected from the Juan de Fuca (JDF) Ridge hydrothermal vent system in 2004. The single *Calyptogena extenta* specimen was collected from Monterey Canyon in 1995. *Solemya pervernicosa* samples were obtained from the Santa Monica sewage outfall in 1992 (as in [15]). *Solemya velum* were collected from Point Judith, RI, as described in [15]. *B. childressi* were sampled from the Veatch Canyon cold seep off of New England. *B.*

septemdierum was sampled from the ABE and Tu'i Malila hydrothermal vent sites in Lau Basin. All tissue samples were stored at -80°C until sterile dissection or subsection of previously sterile-dissected gill tissue as described in [15].

DNA extraction and Illumina sequencing

We extracted DNA from gill samples for each host individual sampled using Qiagen DNeasy kits and otherwise following the manufacturer's instructions. We quantified DNA concentrations using a qubit dsDNA kit and normalized each sample to 10 ng/ul for Illumina library preparations. We produced the majority of our Illumina sequencing libraries for each sample using a Tn5-based protocol for tagmentation followed by dual-indexing PCR using HiFi DNA polymerase (Kappa Bioscience) and custom primer sequences (IDT) designed to uniquely label both i5 and i7 indexes for each sample (Tn5 enzyme was expressed and purified in-house). Indexed samples were pooled and sequenced on single lanes of a Hiseq4000. We sequenced a total of four lanes of Hiseq4000 paired-end 150 bp sequencing across the entire study. Additionally, we obtained a subset of samples for *C. magnifica* using genomic methods from our previous work ([15], S1 Table). We also used a dataset we have previously collected for *S. velum*, specifically the population from Point Judith, Rhode Island ([15], S1 Table). The specific library preparation methods and number of read pairs obtained for each sample included in this work are listed in S1 Table.

Nanopore sequencing

For each *de novo* genome assembly in this work, we selected a representative from each host population based on DNA quality as determined using genomic tapestation and DNA concentration based on qubit readings. We sequenced each sample on a single minion flow cell

using the ligation-based 1D chemistry, SQK-LSK109 kit per ONT instructions with minor

adjustments. The end-repair reaction was incubated for 30 minutes each at 20℃ and 65℃ and

the ligation reaction was performed for 30 minutes instead of the recommended 10 minutes.

Read counts obtained and mean read lengths are available in S1 Table. We performed

basecalling using the Albacore basecaller v2.0.1 and we discarded the subset of reads whose

mean quality score was less than 7. These are the set marked nominally as "failed" by the

basecaller software.

De novo symbiont genome assembly

Reference genomes for the _B. septemdierum_, _B. childressi_, _S. pervernicosa,_ and _C. fausta_

symbionts were assembled using combined Nanopore and Illumina reads. First, we assembled

the Nanopore reads using the long read assembly program wtdbg2 [67] using the "ont" presets

option and setting the parameter -k to 15. Then, we performed two rounds of reference genome

improvement by aligning Illumina sequencing reads from the same individual to the resulting

unfiltered assembly and polishing the Pilon software package [68]. We used BWA-MEM [69] to

align Illumina reads in each subsequent polishing round.

We assembled the _C. extenta_ symbiont genome from an Illumina library prepared for the single

sampled individual using IDBA [70] and SPAdes [71]. While both assemblies were highly

contiguous (N50=596007 and 604961 bp, respectively), the SPAdes assembly was able to

merge two contigs that were split in the IDBA assembly, so the two contig SPAdes assembly

was used for downstream analyses. Comparisons of synteny demonstrated that this join was

found in other Vesicomyid endosymbiont genomes suggesting it is correct (see below).

Because read mixtures include both host genomic DNA, mitochondrial DNA, and genomic DNA from other bacterial species, we then rigorously filtered the resulting contigs to extract only high confidence contigs contributed by bacteria of the study species. To identify symbiont contigs, we called ORFs with Prodigal v2.60 [72] and annotated coding sequences with BLAST [73] as described in [15] (NCBI nr, TrEMBL, and UniProt database accessed on April 7, 2019). We annotated ribosomal RNAs with RNAmmer [74] and transfer RNAs with tRNAscan [75]. Using the taxonomic information encoded in the annotation, we identified contigs that were confidently of symbiont origin. Then, using these contigs, we filtered the remaining contigs by GC content, read coverage, and coding density using custom scripts. Finally, we evaluated the quality of the assemblies with CheckM [76] and by testing for the presence of core bacterial phylogenetic markers [77] (see S2 Table).

Host mitochondrial genome assembly

Mitochondrial genomes were assembled from Nanopore reads, which were subsequently corrected with Illumina data, as described above, or they were assembled from Illumina reads directly. As the different samples contained different mitochondrial coverage, higher short read coverage was often better than lower long read coverage for recovering these genomes. We assembled mitochondrial genomes for *C. fausta and B. septemdierum* with IDBA [70] using Illumina data from two of the highest depth-of-coverage samples (*C. fausta* 31 and *B. septemdierum* 231, respectively). The complexity of the *B. septemdierum* data prevented IDBA from finishing within a week, so we first removed low coverage nuclear kmers (<10x) with Quake [78]. The *C. extenta* mitochondrial genome was assembled along with the symbiont genome using SPAdes [71], as described above. We were able to use the Nanopore-based assembly from *Bathymodiolus childressi* from New England for the mitochondrial genome.

Lastly, the complete mitochondrial genome for *S. pervernicosa* was available from [15], so we did not reassemble it here.

After assembly, we identified the mitochondrial scaffold by blasting the full set of scaffolds against a database containing the currently available set of 19 bivalve mitochondrial genomes. Then, we annotated the mitochondrial genome with MITOS [79]. For mitochondrial genomes lacking conserved genes, we repeated genome assembly and mitochondrial genome identification and annotation with a different sample to verify we obtained the full sequence. See S1 Supporting Text for a description of the species identification verification process.

Short read alignment

After producing endosymbiont genome assemblies and host mitochondrial genome assemblies for each host/endosymbiont species, we aligned short read Illumina data from each individual to a reference genome consisting of both of these genomes. Genomes assembled previously for the *C. magnifica* symbiont ([11], accession NC_008610.1) and mitochondrian ([80], accession NC_028724.1), and the *S. velum* symbiont ([13] and accession NZ_JRAA00000000.1) and mitochondrian ([81] and accession NC_017612.1) were used as references for these populations. We used the BWA mem software package [69], and we then sorted and removed duplicate reads using the samtools software package [82]. After this, we performed indel realignment for each sample separately using the "IndelRealigner" function within the Genome Analysis Toolkit (GATK) software package [83].

Genotyping and variant filtration for each host individual

We called consensus genotypes for each individual jointly using the GATK "UnifiedGenotyper" option and we ran the program with otherwise default parameters except we required that it output all sites rather than just all variable positions. We filtered variant sites using the vcftools software package [84] largely following the GATK best practices as we have done in our previous work [15]. Briefly, we required that each site have a minimum quality/depth ratio of 2, a maximum Fisher's strand value of 60, a minimum nominal genotype quality of 20 and a maximum number of reads with mapping quality zero at a putatively variant site of 5. For analyses of within host individual variation for fixation index (Fst) calculations, we also obtained a multiple pileup file using samtools and filtered sites that were not retained after applying these filters. See S1 Supporting Text for an estimate of the consensus genotyping error rate.

Within-host diversity analysis

We called within-host SNP and indel variants for endosymbionts and mitochondria using the method from [85]. Briefly, we created mpileup files from BWA bam alignment files for all individuals from each host species using SAMTools [82]. Then, we called variants and calculated pairwise diversity using the perl script from [85], which only considers sites within one standard deviation of the average genome coverage, filters SNPs around indels, and requires an alternate allele count in excess of the cumulative binomial probability of sequencing error at that site. As very closely related sister taxa have not been sampled for most of these bacterial genomes, ancestral/derived alleles could not be identified and we could not plot unfolded allele frequency spectra. Instead, folded allele frequency spectra were calculated for minor alleles and plotted in R.

No heteroplasmy was detected within the mitochondrial within-host populations (see S4 Table), suggesting that these bivalves do not experience double uniparental mitochondrial inheritance. This is important given our expectations regarding mitochondrial-symbiont co-divergence under strict vertical transmission.

2. Genome Analyses

Population genealogy inference

We produced multiple fasta sequence files for each population for the host mitochondrial genomes and for the concatenated symbiont genomes from the set of filtered consensus genotype calls. We then used the phylogenetic software package RAxML [86] using a GTR+G model and 1,000 bootstrap replicates to estimate the phylogenetic relationships among samples and to quantify uncertainty in our phylogenetic relationships. Using FigTree, we rooted the trees by their midpoints and created cladograms for topological comparisons.

Analysis of polymorphic and recombinant sites

Using the fasta files described above, we filtered sites to only retain biallelic SNPs with a minimum genotype quality of 10. Without indels, these resequenced genomes were already aligned. Then we used the aligned SNP data to calculate Waterson's theta [87], pi [88], and the proportion of pairwise sites where all 4-gametes, *i.e.,* all pairwise combinations of alleles, are represented. We then binned the 4-gamete sites by the distances between alleles, with bins at 1e1, 1e2, 1e3, 1e4, 1e5, and 1e6 bp, for model fitting (described below).

Whole genome structural alignment

We generated whole genome alignment plots by first aligning bacterial genome assemblies with MUMmer 3.23 [89], using the nucmer algorithm and default parameters. In addition to the mb-scale genomes we assembled and referenced above, we obtained mb-scale genomes for *Bathymodiolus septemdierum* str. Myojin knoll ([42], accession GCA_001547755.1), *Bathymodiolus thermophilus* str. EPR9N ([90], accession GCF_003711265.1), and *Vesicomyosicus okutanii* ([12], accession NC_009465.1) from NCBI for alignment. The nucmer output was converted into the BTAB format with the MUMmer tool show-coords and was then visualized using a custom Python script. When necessary, some scaffolds in the bacterial assemblies were split into two parts in order to convert a circular genome into a linear alignment plot.

We used the whole genome aligner progressiveMauve [91] to compare genome synteny on the 10s of Kb scale between the *S. velum* and *S. elarraichensis* symbionts. First, we reordered the contigs comprising the *S. elarraichensis* symbiont draft genome [15] by the *S. velum* symbiont assembly [13] with the reorder contig function in progressiveMauve. Then, we then aligned the *S. velum* symbiont genome pairwise against the *S. elarraichensis* symbiont's reordered contigs and the *S. pervernicosa* symbiont genome we assembled. We plotted the alignment backbone files in the R package genoPlotR [92].

Mobile element analysis

We identified mobile elements in the endosymbiont genome sequences by BLAST. First, we generated BLAST database files with the makeblastdb command from the ACLAME [93] and ICEberg [94] nucleotide and amino acid databases of transposable, viral, and conjugative elements. Next, we used blastp and blastn to compare endosymbiont amino acid sequences

and full genome sequences, respectively, to these databases (cutoff values: minimum alignment length of 50 nucleotides or 50% amino acid query coverage, 90% identity, and e-value 1e-6). Overlapping hits were consolidated into a single mobile element-containing region (SI Appendix Table S9).

Ortholog identification

We identified putative orthologous sequences among sets of bacterial genomes by a reciprocal best blast approach. To do this, we first performed pairwise blasts between each pair of genomes' coding sequences with blastn (-best_hit_overhang 0.1 -best_hit_score_edge 0.1 -evalue 1e-6), alternating each sequence as the query/subject. We parsed these results to only retain the best hits with >50% identity and >100 bp alignment lengths. Then, using a custom perl script, we compared hits between all pairs to identify genes with reciprocal best hits among all taxa each homologous gene was detected in. We used the resulting matrix of these reciprocal best hits to extract the coding sequences for each ortholog for each species from the genome fasta files for downstream analysis.

dN/dS analysis

To evaluate the impact of homologous recombination on patterns of natural selection at the molecular level over long periods of time we computed the average fixation rate among endosymbiont lineages at nonsynonymous and synonymous sites (dN/dS). This ratio of these two values is an approximate measure of the strength of purifying selection under the assumption that most nonsynonymous substitutions are deleterious. For all genes where a single ortholog was found to be shared among all symbiont lineages we began by producing codon aware alignments using MASCE [95]. Then, we compared each orthologous alignment

for pairs of symbiont lineages within each group (solemyid, vesicomyid and bathymodiolin) to estimate dN and dS using the codeml package in the PAML v4.9 framework [96]. We excluded all comparisons for which dS < 0.05 or dS > 2, as values that exceed this range are often thought to yield unreliable estimates of rates of molecular evolution due to low statistical power and saturated substitutions, respectively. We then compared the distributions of dN/dS for each symbiont group comparison using a Wilcoxon test.

Divergence dating

Taxon selection:

To construct dated phylogenies for hosts and symbionts, we downloaded related genomes from NCBI. For the host divergence analysis, all of the bivalve mitochondrial genomes available as of early 2020 and four gastropod mitochondrial genomes were downloaded to serve as ingroups and outgroups, respectively (35 total taxa: 31 bivalves and four gastropods; see S10 Table). For the symbiont divergence analysis, bacterial genomes were identified for inclusion in the analysis by BLAST [73]. While residing in a relatively constrained clade of proteobacteria, these chemosynthetic symbionts do not form a monophyletic clade, have free-living relatives, are basal to more derived groups in Gammaproteobacteria, and are currently taxonomically unclassified, so it was necessary to fish out related genomes by identifying sequence homology. To do this, we aligned the nucleotide coding sequences from each one of the seven symbiont genomes we sequenced and/or analyzed against NCBI's Prokaryotic RefSeq Genomes database with blastn (-best_hit_overhang 0.1 -best_hit_score_edge 0.1 -evalue 1e-6). Based upon the diversity of hits across symbionts and genomes, we selected the top three best hits to each gene as taxa to include in the full genome divergence analysis (59 total taxa: 58 gammaproteobacteria and one alphaproteobacterium; see S11 Table).

Multiple sequence alignment:

As bivalve mitochondrial genomes exhibit notoriously diverse structural arrangements [97], we used the whole rearrangement-aware genome aligner progressiveMauve [91] to align the molluscan mitochondrial genomes. These alignments were manually inspected and converted to fasta format in Geneious Prime (version 11.0.6+10) [98].

We identified and aligned orthologous proteins among these diverse bacterial genomes with bcgTree [99], then we back-translated the resulting amino acid alignments to nucleic acids with RevTrans [100]. As bcgTree only includes protein-coding genes, we manually extracted and aligned 16S and 23S ribosomal RNA sequences for these taxa with Mafft (using the accurate mafft-linsi setting) [101]. Although recombination clearly occurs frequently in the solemyid and mytilid symbiont populations, we decided against removing recombinant sites because doing so may exacerbate recombination-induced artifacts [102]. Finally, we concatenated these alignments with the nucleotide alignments from bgcTree/RevTrans with a custom perl script and inspected them in Geneious Prime.

Phylogenetic inference and divergence dating:

We first inferred maximum likelihood phylogenies with RAxML (version 8.2.1, with parameters: f a -m GTRGAMMA -N 1000) [86] to verify that the taxa selected were able to resolve the relationships among hosts and among symbionts and free-living bacteria. Both mitochondrial and symbiont phylogenies were well-resolved (S8 Fig.).

We inferred Bayesian phylogenies and dated node divergences for host mitochondria in Beast2 [103]. After several rounds of parameter testing to ascertain the speciation model and calibration date distribution that best fit the data (see S1 Supporting Text), we selected the Yule model of speciation, with a gamma distributed Hasegawa, Kishino, and Yano (HKY) model of substitution and a relaxed local molecular clock, and we calibrated dates to the base of the ingroup, Bivalvia. We used the fossil-based minimum appearance date for bivalves of 520 million years (first appearance estimated in Fossilworks [104] from fossil data in [105,106]). MCMC chains were run in duplicate until posterior probability convergence, around 8e8 steps for mitochondria. We also performed independent divergence date estimations in RelTime [107,108] and PATHd8 [109] to compare to the Beast2 results (see S1 Supporting Text and S12 Table).

Given the consistency in RelTime and Beast2 estimates for mitochondria (S12 Table) and the unreasonably long run times necessary (several weeks) for symbiont dated phylogenies to reach posterior convergence in Beast2, we estimated symbiont divergence times in RelTime. We used the previously estimated divergence date for Gammaproteobacteria of 1.89 billion years (based on calibration to the cyanobacterial-caused atmospheric oxygenation event [110]) with a log-normal distribution to calibrate a relaxed local clock, using a gamma-distributed Tamura-Nei model of substitution, allowing for invariant sites. All trees were plotted in FigTree.

Symbiont species descriptions

Using the genomic, phylogenetic, and divergence data we generated above, we diagnosed and described the six symbiont species sequenced in this study. These classifications will be helpful in future investigations and discussions of symbiont function and diversity. Diagnoses of

symbiont genera and descriptions of symbiont species are described in the S3 Supplemental

Text and listed in S3 Table.

3. Parameter Estimation via Approximate Bayesian Computation

Simulation Setup

To simultaneously estimate the rates of horizontal transmission, effective homologous

recombination rates, and the recombinant tract length, we used an approximate Bayesian

computation approach. Here, we define the population-scaled per-base pair recombination rate,

rho, to be equal to two times the effective population size times the per-base pair rate of gene

conversion (rho=$2*N_e$r). The recombination tract length, l, is defined as the length of the gene

conversion segment in base pairs. We used the bacterial sequential Markovian coalescent

simulation framework, FastSimBac [111], to simulate neutral coalescence across a range of

input parameters (see S2 Supporting Text for model proof). We drew the effective mutation rate

from a log-uniform distribution (3e-5,1e-2), the effective recombination rate from a log-uniform

(1e-6,1e-2) distribution and the recombinant tract length from a uniform (1,1e5) distribution.

Because the clonal frame cannot be inferred for the *Bathymodiolus* and *Solemya* symbiont

populations, presumably due to the high levels of recombination relative to other bacteria, we

did not supply the program with a fixed precomputed clonal frame for any simulations. In total

we performed 100,000 simulations and we used subsets from each simulation to obtain

summary statistics to train the variable sample size simulations.

Summary statistics

We selected a set of summary statistics that each incorporate some feature of the overall

diversity (relevant for theta), and the overall effective recombination rate per site (rho*l).

Specifically, we computed two estimators of theta, Waterson's theta [87], and pi [88], and we included the proportion of pairs of non-singleton SNPs at various genomic distances where all four possible combinations of alleles are observed in our sample. We placed the divisions between distance bins for pairwise comparisons of sites at 1e1, 1e2, 1e3, 1e4, 1e5, 1e6 base pairs.

Model fitting via random forest regression

We use the scikit-learn package to perform random forest regression to obtain estimates of each parameter for each endosymbiont population, using the 4-gamete sites identified above and a custom Python script available on Github. First, we confirmed that our summary statistics are sufficient to accurately fit our desired population parameters using out-of-bag score during model training and for each population sample size (S6 Table). Although the score is often slightly lower for smaller sample sizes, this approach performs sufficiently well and consistently across samples for our applications here. We additionally obtained confidence intervals for each parameter estimate using the forestsci package [112]. It should be noted that our simulations assume an equilibrium population. If this assumption is violated in a subset of the taxa that we examined, it might affect our parameter estimates. Nonetheless, it is unlikely that the large-scale differences in estimated parameters that we observe among groups, which are consistent with prior expectations, are entirely attributable to this potential bias.

Method validation on existing datasets

In light of the relatively high recombination rates that we estimate, it is valuable to confirm that our approach for estimating rho and theta performs as expected. We therefore applied our method to the *Bacillus cereus* dataset [113] that has been studied in similar contexts using

several related approaches [111,113,114]. In prior work with this dataset, estimates of the total

impact of recombination, rho*l/theta, have varied somewhat, from approximately 3.7 [111] to

35.9 [113] and 229 [114]. Using our method, we obtain a value intermediate to these at 17.1,

which indicates a moderate impact of recombination on genome evolution. This result suggests

that our method is reliable and does not substantially inflate recombination rate estimates.

Read-Backed Phasing to Confirm Recombination Estimates

Because we used consensus symbiont genomes during model fitting, it could be possible that

the high estimated rates of recombination in solemyid and bathymodiolin samples are an

artefact of differential haplotype coverage across the genomes of genetically diverse symbiont

chromosomes. We therefore sought to confirm our recombination rate estimates via comparing

the rate of occurrence of all four possible configurations of two proximal alleles using

read-backed phasing. Because each read-pair must ultimately derive from a single DNA

fragment, when two alleles are observed on the same read or read pair, in the absence of

errors, they must reflect an allelic combination that's observed within a single bacterial

chromosome.

We therefore analyzed in aggregate all reads that overlapped two or more consensus alleles for

each population and computed the fraction of all four possible sampling configurations. More

specifically, we computed the proportion of reads sampled from across all reads in all

individuals that contained alleles, AB, Ab, aB, and ab, for two adjacent biallelic sites with alleles

A/a and B/b. To reduce the impact of sequencing errors, we recorded a site as containing all

four possible configurations when all configurations were present at proportion greater than 0.05

in the total set of read pairs. We further limited comparisons to alleles where we could obtain at

least 100 observations of both sites on single read pairs. We excluded the populations of

vesicomyid endosymbionts from this analysis because too few polymorphic sites were present

within the distances spanned by individual read pairs to confidently infer the frequencies of 4D

sites. However, because samples from these populations contain virtually no within-host

variation, we have little reason to doubt the accuracy of the consensus genotypes resulting from

differential coverage of genetically diverse bacterial haplotypes.

Because we are sampling a much larger number of lineages than we did in analyzing the

consensus genome sequences, we would expect if anything is different that we observe higher

rates of sites where all four possible allele configurations are present. This is precisely what we

found. Specifically, we observe higher proportions of pairs of sites where all four possible allelic

combinations are represented at each distance considered and in each population in the

read-backed dataset than in the consensus chromosomes (S7 Table). Furthermore, because

we have placed conservative cutoffs on the proportions of read pairs required to consider a pair

of sites as containing all four alleles these values are likely underestimates of the true rates. Our

observed rates of four-gamete test failures is therefore consistent with our analyses of

consensus genome sequences and confirms that recombination must be common within these

endosymbiont populations.

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SLR, study conception and design, samples, Illumina data production, analysis, and writing; EP, Illumina and Nanopore data production; JS, analysis of genome structures and writing; AB, Nanopore data production; JRC, assistance with sampling; CV, Nanopore data production; RB, samples and intellectual contributions; RCD, study conception and design, Illumina and Nanopore data production, theory, analysis, and writing.

Data Accessibility

Data and genome assemblies generated in this study are available through NCBI BioProject number PRJNA562081. Code written and used in our analyses is available from https://github.com/shelbirussell/ForeverYoungGenomes_Russell-et-al.

Figure 1. Nearly-strictly vertically transmitted chemosynthetic endosymbionts exhibit genome erosion despite ongoing horizontal transmission events in their populations. A) Transmission mode spectrum from strict horizontal transmission to strict vertical transmission, with a diversity

of mixed modes, incorporating both strategies, in between. B) Genome sizes from this and previous studies [11–13,90] reveal consistent patterns of moderate genome erosion among the vesicomyid symbionts, but not the other groups with higher rates of horizontal transmission. C) Mitochondrial and symbiont whole genome genealogies are discordant for all groups, indicating that sufficient amounts of horizontal transmission occur in vertically transmitted vesicomyid populations to erode the association between these cytoplasmic genomes. Maximum likelihood cladograms are midpoint rooted, and nodes below 50% bootstrap support are collapsed. Species are color coded by their symbiont transmission mode as in A).

Figure 2. Horizontal transmission and recombination introduce novel alleles into symbiont populations. A) Model of endosymbiont genotype (pink vs. white) distributions under well-mixed high horizontal transmission rates (top) and differentiated, low horizontal transmission rates. B) Horizontally transmitted mytilid (blue) and mixed mode transmitted solemyid (green) symbionts are well mixed among hosts, whereas the nearly strictly vertically transmitted vesicomyid symbionts (yellow-green) are highly differentiated among hosts. Error bars = 95% confidence intervals from non-parametric bootstrapping. C) Intrahost population folded allele frequency spectra (AFS) are shaped by access to gene flow, which is enabled by horizontal transmission and recombination. D) Recombination rates are significantly higher in the mytilid (blue) and solemyid (green) symbiont genomes compared to the vesicomyid symbiont genomes (yellow-green). Error bars = 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 3. Consequences of access to gene flow via horizontal transmission and recombination on the distribution of symbiont genetic diversity between hosts. A) Diagram showing how beneficial alleles (pink) are linked to deleterious alleles (grey) in populations experiencing strong selection on linked sites versus free recombination, and how these processes are reflected in the underlying population genealogies and allele frequency spectra. B,D) Symbiont genealogies as labeled in C) and E), respectively. C,E) Between host allele frequency spectra (AFS) for each host/symbiont species.

Figure 4. Genome structure is shaped by horizontal transmission and recombination. A) Models of recombination-based structural mutation mechanisms. B-D) Whole genome alignments for B) sulfur-oxidizing mytilid, C) solemyid, and D) vesicomyid symbiont genome assemblies with >1 Mb scaffolds.

Figure 5. Chemosynthetic bacterial symbionts and their bivalve hosts exhibit ancient divergence times. A) Maximum likelihood phylogeny inferred from 108 orthologous protein coding genes and the 16S and 23S rRNA genes (outgroup = Alphaproteobacteria; branch labels = bootstrap support fraction) with RelTime divergence date estimates (node bars = 95% confidence intervals). Host-associated bacteria are listed as symbionts of their host species. Bacterial genome sizes are written to the right of the taxon names in the tip labels to highlight trends in genome size across clades. B) Whole mitochondrial Bayesian phylogeny for bivalves (outgroup=Gastropoda; branch labels = posterior probabilities) with divergence dates co-inferred in Beast2 (node bars = 95% highest posterior densities). In both phylogenies,

members of vesicomyid, solemyid, and bathymodiolin (both thioautotrophic and methanotrophic)

associations are colored yellow, green, and blue, respectively, as described in Figure 1.

A

host individual 1 vs host individual 2

low horizontal transmission rate   **high** horizontal transmission rate

B

Fst

symbiont population by host species

B. septemdierum, *B. childressi*, *S. velum*, *S. pervernicosa*, *C. magnifica*, *C. fausta*

D

log10(rho*)

symbiont population by host species

B. septemdierum, *B. childressi*, *S. velum*, *S. pervernicosa*, *C. magnifica*, *C. fausta*

C

counts

B. septemdierum
Lau 217

S. velum
RI 53

C. magnifica
EPR 4062-1

folded allele frequency (within host)

A

linked selection   vs   recombination and efficient selection

B

B. septemdierum symbionts

S. velum symbionts

C. magnifica symbiont

C

6.0E-4

3.0E-5

8.0E-6

D

3.0E-4

0.003

3.0E-5

E

B. childressi symbiont

S. pervernicosa symbiont

C. fausta symbiont

density

folded allele frequency (between hosts)