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2 **Genome and community-level interaction insights on wide carbon utilizing and**
3 **element cycling function of Hydrothermarchaeota from hydrothermal sediment**

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25 Abstract

26 Hydrothermal vents release reduced compounds and small organic carbons into surrounding
27 seawaters, providing essential substrates for microbial-derived biosynthesis and bioenergy
28 transformations. Despite the wide distribution of Marine Benthic Group-E archaea (referred to as
29 Hydrothermarchaeota) in hydrothermal environments, little is known on their genome blueprints and
30 ecofunctions. Here, we studied four relatively high-completeness (> 80%) metagenome-assembled
31 genomes (MAGs) from a black smoker chimney and surrounding sulfide sediments in the
32 Mid-Atlantic Ridge of the South Atlantic Ocean (BSmoChi-MAR) as well as publicly available
33 datasets. Comparative genomics suggest that Hydrothermarchaeota members have versatile carbon
34 metabolism, including assimilating proteins, lactate and acetate, degrading aromatics anaerobically,
35 oxidizing C₁ compounds (CO, formate, and formaldehyde), utilizing methyl-compounds, and
36 incorporating CO₂ by tetrahydromethanopterin-based Wood–Ljungdahl (WL) pathway and Calvin–
37 Benson–Bassham (CBB) cycle with type III Ribulose-1,5-bisphosphate carboxylase/oxygenase
38 (RubisCO). They could oxidize sulfur, arsenic, and hydrogen, and respire anaerobically via sulfate
39 reduction and denitrification based on genomic evidence. The redundancy of carbon utilizing and
40 element cycling functions, and the interactive processes of syntrophic and sequential utilization of
41 substrates from community-level metabolic prediction, enable wide accessibility of carbon and
42 energy sources to microorganisms. Hydrothermarchaeota members derived important functional
43 components from the community through lateral gene transfer, and became clade-distinctive on
44 genome content, which might serve as a niche-adaptive strategy to metabolize potential heavy metals,
45 C₁ compounds, and reduced sulfur compounds.

46
47 **Importance:** This study provides comprehensive metabolic insights on Hydrothermarchaeota from
48 comparative genomics, evolution and community-level aspects. Hydrothermarchaeota synergistically
49 participates in a wide range of carbon utilizing and element cycling processes with other microbes in
50 the community. We expand the current understanding of community interactions within hydrothermal
51 sediment environments, suggesting that microbial interactions driven by functions are essential to
52 nutrient and element cycling.

53
54 **Keywords:** Hydrothermarchaeota, Hydrothermal sediments, Metagenome-assembled genomes,
55 Comparative genomics, Carbon utilization, Element cycling, Community-level interactions, Lateral
56 gene transfer

57

58 **Background:** The hydrothermal alterations transfer and deliver reduced sulfur compounds, organic
59 compounds (e.g., C₁ compounds, petroleum compounds, organic acids, and ammonia) and heavy
60 metals to the surrounding hydrothermal sediments (1-6). Together with deposited sedimentary carbon
61 compounds, these substrates constitute hydrothermal sediments as a distinct ecological niche,
62 compared to deep-ocean cold marine sediments and hydrothermal fluids. In hydrothermal-active
63 Guaymas Basin sediments, microorganisms syntrophically degrade hydrocarbons and lipids, and
64 metabolic linkages among microbial groups were proposed, such as substrate-level interdependency
65 between fermentative members and sulfur- and nitrogen-cycling members (6). However, the
66 diversity and function of hydrothermal environment inhabiting microorganisms, especially archaea,
67 remain elusive and the community-level microbial interactions within these environment settings still
68 lack detailed characterization.

69

70 Candidatus Hydrothermarchaeota, originally found on continental slope and abyssal sediments and
71 termed Marine Benthic Group E (MBG-E) (7), has recently been proposed as a new archaea phylum
72 (8). A previous study has indicated that Hydrothermarchaeota was an abundant archaea group in the
73 deep-sea hydrothermal environment, such as Juan de Fuca Ridge flank crustal fluids (9). More
74 recently, a study combined the analysis of metagenome-assembled genomes (MAGs) and
75 single-amplified genomes (SAGs) of Hydrothermarchaeota from Juan de Fuca Ridge flank crustal
76 fluids to evaluate the evolutionary placement and functional potential of this new archaea phylum (8),
77 which suggests a potential for carboxydrotrophy, sulfate and nitrate reduction of
78 Hydrothermarchaeota (8). Additionally, another metabolic potential analysis based on
79 Hydrothermarchaeota genomes reconstruction from metagenome of Southern Mariana Trough
80 sulfide deposits also suggests their carboxydrotrophic and hydrogenotrophic lifestyle (10). However,
81 a relatively small number of available genomes have limited our understanding of the ecological
82 roles and metabolisms of this widely distributed archaeal lineages.

83

84 Here, we analyzed metagenomes from sulfur-rich hydrothermal sediments at an active deep-sea (2,770
85 m depth) hydrothermal vent site (black smoker) in the southern Mid-Atlantic Ridge of the South
86 Atlantic Ocean. (Total S = ~100-450 mg/g, detailed sample information refers to [Supplementary
87 Information](#)). We obtained two metagenomic libraries from the layer (TVG10) and surrounding
88 sediments (TVG13) of an active black smoker chimney in the Mid-Atlantic Ridge (BSmoChi-MAR)
89 of South Atlantic Ocean (38.1 gigabases for TVG10 and 30.3 gigabases for TVG13). *De novo*
90 metagenome assembling and binning resulted in 140 MAGs (> 50% genome completeness) from 24
91 microbial groups ([Table S2](#)), including 5 archaeal MAGs and 135 bacterial MAGs. The metabolic
92 prediction from all resolved MAGs reveals the functional redundancy and syntrophic
93 substrate-utilizing interactions among microorganisms. As implicated from the four relatively
94 high-completeness (> 80%) Hydrothermarchaeota genomes from this study, results of a previous
95 publication (9) and publicly available datasets, we are developing a metabolic scheme of this widely
96 distributed sedimentary archaeal lineage. Evolutionary analysis suggests the important role of lateral
97 gene transfer in the niche-adaptation of Hydrothermarchaeota to surrounding environments. This
98 study provides an advanced insight into the genomics, community-level interactions, and evolution

99 of Hydrothermarchaeota.

100

101

102 **Results and discussion**

103 **Hydrothermarchaeota as a novel archaeal phylum**

104 Reconstructed archaeal MAGs and scaffolds containing phylogenetically informative genes, at least
105 3 ribosomal proteins (RPs) or 16S rRNA gene fragments, are summarized in [Table 1](#) and [Table S3](#).

106 Both 16S rRNA and RP phylogenies place Hydrothermarchaeota as a distinct lineage parallel to
107 other Euryarchaeotal clades, including Thermococci, Methanomicrobia, and Hadesarchaea ([Fig. 1](#)
108 [and Fig. S1](#)). Within this lineage, the 16S rRNA gene sequences show median sequence identities of
109 80.8-83.9 %, which supports phylum-level diversity ([Fig. 1](#) and [Table S4](#)). The phylum designation
110 Hydrothermarchaeota was proposed since all current genomes were obtained from hydrothermal
111 sediments or fluids (7-9). However, 16S rRNA gene sequence data show that Hydrothermarchaeota
112 also occur widely in estuarine and marine sediments, wetland and hot spring sediments ([Fig. 1](#)).

113

114 **Mixotrophic lifestyle and versatile substrate utilization**

115 We picked four representative Hydrothermarchaeota MAGs of relatively high completeness values (>
116 80%) from the major three clades for metabolic prediction analysis ([Table 1](#), [Fig. 2](#), [Fig. S3](#) and
117 [Tables S5, S6, S7](#)). Similar with the previous study (8), almost all Hydrothermarchaeota MAGs
118 contain the THMPT (tetrahydromethanopterin) based Wood-Ljungdahl pathway (THMPT-WL
119 pathway), and some components of THF (tetrahydrofolate) based Wood-Ljungdahl pathway
120 (THF-WL pathway) ([Fig. 2](#)). Since none of them contains the complete genes for THF-WL pathway,
121 it might be that this pathway is not active in Hydrothermarchaeota ([Fig. 2](#)). THMPT-WL pathway in
122 Hydrothermarchaeota could function in both directions, either reductively incorporating CO₂ into
123 acetyl-CoA synthesis or oxidatively converting products from central carbon metabolism (peptide
124 and sugar carbohydrate degradation) into energy producing pathways. If the former direction is
125 active, Hydrothermarchaeota probably lives a mixotrophic lifestyle on using both inorganic and
126 organic carbon sources. Hydrothermarchaeota does not have the methyl coenzyme M reductase
127 (MCR) for methane metabolism, but JdFR-18 could incorporate a variety of methyl-containing
128 compounds into WL pathway, including mono-/di-/trimethylamine and methanol, which is frequently
129 discovered in members of Methanosarcinales, Methanomassiliicoccales, Methanofastidiosa,
130 Bathyarchaeota and Verstraetearchaeota (11). Particularly, JdFR-18 (Clade 1) contains HdrD (3
131 copies) and GlcD (4 copies, FAD-containing dehydrogenase, similar to D-lactate dehydrogenase)
132 with one pair of them collocated, which is responsible for heterodisulfide reduction linked to lactate
133 utilization. This gene arrangement and function is also present in *Archaeoglobus fulgidis*,
134 Bathyarchaeota, and Verstraetearchaeota (11-13).

135

136 Hydrothermarchaeota genomes probably encode full TCA cycle, but not beta-oxidation pathway
137 (only acquiring acetyl-CoA C-acetyltransferase coding genes, [Fig. 2](#)). Benzoyl-CoA reductase
138 subunits (BcrBC) encoding genes are present in HyVt-292 and JdFR-18, indicating the presence of
139 ATP-dependent benzoyl-CoA degradation. Benzoyl-CoA is the central intermediate in anaerobic
140 degrading pathways of many aromatics, including benzene, phenol, 4-OH-benzoate, cresols,

141 phenylacetate, ethylbenzene and etc. (14). Three out of four Hydrothermarchaeota MAGs contain
142 vanillate/4-hydroxybenzoate decarboxylase subunit C (BsdC) and flavin prenyltransferase (UbiX),
143 further supporting that phenol degradation is possible for them. The existence of both ADP-forming
144 acetyl-CoA synthetase (Acd, EC:6.2.1.13) and acetyl-CoA synthetase (Acs, EC:6.2.1.1) suggests the
145 feasibility of both acetate fermentation and acetogenesis. Further fermentation from acetaldehyde (by
146 Aor) to ethanol (by alcohol dehydrogenase, AdhP/AdhE) has also been discovered in some
147 Hydrothermarchaeota MAGs (Fig. 2).

148

149 **C₁ oxidation and other element cycling capacities**

150 Hydrothermarchaeota could anaerobically oxidize CO for ferredoxin generation, with the existence
151 of carbon monoxide dehydrogenase catalytic subunit (CooS) (Clade 3) (8, 15). NAD⁺-dependent
152 formate dehydrogenase operon of fdsABG exists in both JdFR-18 and HyVt-292, indicating
153 Hydrothermarchaeota could use formate as bioenergy source for electron-transferring
154 phosphorylation (16). The fused 3-hexulose-6-phosphate synthase/6-phospho-3-hexuloisomerase
155 (Hps-Phi) and bifunctional enzyme Fae-Hps are responsible for formaldehyde fixation in
156 ribulose-monophosphate cycle (part of PPP pathway) and generation of methylene-H₄MPT
157 (THMPT-WL pathway) (EC:4.2.1.147, 4.1.2.43) (3), which are responsible for further biosynthesis
158 of generating ribose and acetyl-CoA, respectively. C₁ compounds of various redox states are
159 common (CO, formate) or potentially available (formaldehyde) through geochemical reactions in
160 hydrothermal environments (1-4). Additionally, CO could also be generated by some anaerobes (4).
161 Combined with CO₂ fixation ability as described above (CBB cycle and WL pathway), the
162 mixotrophic lifestyle possibly makes Hydrothermarchaeota as one of the successful archaeal lineages
163 within the global benthic environmental settings (17).

164

165 Additionally, the process of sulfide oxidation to sulfate might be possible in Hydrothermarchaeota
166 because the encoded dissimilatory sulfite reductase (DsrAB) could also convey sulfide oxidation (8,
167 18). The existence of key genes in Sox pathway in SZUA-236 (TVG13) suggests that they could also
168 oxidize thiosulfate for energy yield (Fig. 2). The potential denitrification and sulfate reduction are
169 enable Hydrothermarchaeota to scavenge diverse organic matters by anaerobic respiration.

170 Presumably, Hydrothermarchaeota could couple nitrate reduction with reduced sulfur compound (S⁰,
171 S²⁻ and S₂O₃²⁻) oxidation as the energy generating process (19). As heavy metals are commonly
172 enriched in the hydrothermal environments (20), Hydrothermarchaeota also acquires genomic
173 components for detoxicating As (V) [arsenate reductase (ArsC) and arsenite/tail-anchored
174 protein-transporting ATPase (ArsA)] and Hg (II) [mercuric reductase (MerA)]. Meanwhile, they
175 could also oxidize As (III) [cytomembrane-bound arsenite oxidase subunits (AioB)] (Fig. S2) and
176 presumably couple the reduction of As (V) with the oxidation of reduced sulfur compounds,
177 suggesting that the As cycling could be one of their energy metabolisms.

178

179 **Co-existence of nucleotide salvage pathway and CBB cycle**

180 Almost all members from Hydrothermarchaeota encode Embden–Meyerhof–Parnas pathway (EMP
181 pathway) in both glycolysis and gluconeogenesis directions [almost all contain
182 fructose-1,6-bisphosphatase (FBP) and phosphoenolpyruvate synthase (PEP synthase)/pyruvate

183 phosphate dikinase (PPDK)] (Fig. 2). Within glycolysis direction, the conversion of PEP to pyruvate
184 (catalyzed by pyruvate kinase) is lacking in all genomes, however, reverse reactions of PEP
185 synthase/PPDK are reported in some thermophilic archaea, including, *Thermococcus* (Euryarchaeota)
186 and *Thermoproteus* (Crenarchaeota) (21). All Hydrothermarchaeota clades contain archaeal style
187 pentose phosphate pathway (PPP pathway), while, besides that, SZUA-236 (TVG13) contains an
188 incomplete oxidative phase PPP pathway and a non-oxidative phase PPP pathway. The PPP pathway
189 together with phosphoribosyl pyrophosphate (PRPP) synthesis pathway are anabolic for biosynthesis
190 of a variety of amino acids, nucleotides and other secondary metabolites, using substrates from
191 glycolysis (22). They probably fix CO₂ by type III-RubisCO in the Calvin–Benson–Bassham (CBB)
192 cycle based on genomic prediction (Fig. 2). The lacking of phosphoribulokinase (Prk) of CBB cycle
193 is frequently seen in archaeal genomes (23); meanwhile, some reports based on metabolic
194 experiments indicate the presence of autotrophic activity of crenarchaeotal CBB cycles despite
195 lacking Prk, suggesting potential existence of its function in Hydrothermarchaeota (24). The
196 existence of nucleotide salvage pathway and CBB cycle suggests that Hydrothermarchaeota could
197 recover the RNA/DNA degradation products (adenosine monophosphate, AMP) into glycolysis or
198 cycle them back into PPP pathway for biosynthesis (Fig. 2) (25). Beside the RNA/DNA degradation,
199 AMP could also be originated from activities of i) AMP-forming adenylylsulfate reductase during
200 sulfate reduction (Clade 1, 2), ii) PRPP synthesis process (all clades), iii) ADP-dependent
201 (AMP-forming) phosphofructokinase/glucokinase (Clade 3) during glycolysis (26-28). The genomic
202 components of type III-RubisCO and nucleotide salvage function are currently found in other
203 euryarchaeotal groups, including, Archaeoglobi, Halobacteria, Thermococci, Hadesarchaea, and
204 euryarchaeotal methanogens (1). Unconventional participation of type III-RubisCO in nucleotide
205 salvage function suggests the primary function of type III-RubisCO in early ages of archaea
206 evolution (1, 25).

207

208 **Limited carbohydrate assimilation while being protein/peptide degraders**

209 No potential sugar and carbohydrate transporters have been discovered among the major three clades
210 of Hydrothermarchaeota (Fig. 2) and they encode limited functions of carbohydrate assimilation and
211 transformation, only including galactose degradation and glycogen conversion. The annotation of
212 CAZys also suggests they have limited capacity in carbohydrate utilization, among which serine-type
213 endopeptidase S08A is the dominant extracellular peptidase from both metagenome and
214 metatranscriptome of MG-I, -II and -III archaea of deep-sea hydrothermal plume (29); S49C is the
215 archaeal signal peptide peptidase for destructing cleaved signal peptides; C26 is the gamma-glutamyl
216 hydrolase and probably acquires the glutamine amidotransferase activity (Tables S5, S6, S7).
217 Meanwhile, genomic predictions indicate that Hydrothermarchaeota (from Clade 1 and 3) have
218 various peptide/amino acid transporters, and all the major three clades acquire six groups of
219 aminotransferases for transferring amino residues (Tables S5, S6, S7), and pyruvate ferredoxin
220 oxidoreductase (Por), indolepyruvate ferredoxin oxidoreductase (Ior), 2-oxoglutarate/2-oxoacid
221 ferredoxin oxidoreductase (Kor) and pyruvate dehydrogenase, dihydrolipoamide dehydrogenase for
222 assimilating 2-oxo acids (pyruvate) to succinyl-CoA (acetyl-CoA) and replenishing the energy pool
223 of reducing equivalents. The existence of encoded proteins of various peptide/amino acid
224 transporters and endopeptidases/aminotransferases suggests that Hydrothermarchaeota use detrital

225 peptides/proteins as one of the main carbon and energy sources.

226

227 **Function redundancy and community level interactions**

228 We have analyzed the metabolic capacities of all reconstructed MAGs (Fig. 3 and Tables S2, S8) to
229 investigate microbial community interactions. Acidobacteria, Bacteroidetes, and Gemmatimonadetes
230 acquire the most abundant genes encoding for extracellular peptidases; they are presumably the
231 major players in utilizing detrital proteins from marine sediments. Other microbial groups could form
232 syntrophic interactions with them for assimilating extracellular peptides/proteins using the
233 extracellular peptidases secreted by them. Furthermore, Ignavibacteriae, Planctomycetes, and
234 Spirochaetes acquire the most abundant genes encoding for glycoside hydrolases, suggesting that
235 they are the major players in carbohydrate/sugar utilization. Besides, a variety of microbial groups
236 are predicted to acquire degrading/utilizing ability on methane, fatty acids, aromatics, methanol, and
237 mono-/di-/trimethylamine. The fermentation products probably include acetate, hydrogen, lactate,
238 and ethanol. The electron pools generated through the fermentation steps are delivered to terminal
239 electron acceptors or CO₂ for either respiration or C fixation. Moreover, the fermentation products
240 from the first fermentation process could also be re-utilized by the community members as energy
241 and carbon sources. The interaction among microorganisms of syntrophic and sequential (step by
242 step) utilization of substrates enables the community to gain more energy from a wide range of
243 substrates.

244 The major eight microbial groups (with at least one MAG from this group acquiring genome
245 coverage > 15×, including Acidobacteria, Alphaproteobacteria, Bacteroidetes, Candidate Phyla
246 Radiation, Deltaproteobacteria, Gammaproteobacteria, Hydrothermarchaeota, Nitrospirae) are
247 predicted to acquire multiple functions on sulfur cycling, including sulfide oxidation, sulfur
248 oxidation, thiosulfate oxidation, and sulfate reduction, thiosulfate disproportionation. The oxidized
249 sulfur compounds (SO₄²⁻, SO₃²⁻ and S₂O₃²⁻), as well as nitrate/nitrite and molecular oxygen [except
250 for Candidate Phyla Radiation (CPR) and Hydrothermarchaeota], could serve as the terminal
251 electron acceptors for respiration on organic or inorganic energy sources (Table S8). This suggests
252 that microorganisms in the chimney layers and surrounding sediments of BSmoChi-MAR acquire
253 various strategies adapting to microaerobic to anoxic environment settings. Besides of
254 Hydrothermarchaeota, several other microbial groups are also predicted to oxidize multiple C₁
255 compounds and acquire C fixation capacity in their genome contents; in addition, some of these
256 microbial groups are probably capable for carbohydrate and peptide/protein degradation and acquire
257 sulfur cycling and denitrification abilities, such as Alpha-/Delta-/Gammaproteobacteria and
258 Nitrospirae (Fig. 3 and Table S8). It is suggested that the redundancy of carbon utilizing and element
259 cycling functions of microorganisms and the interactive processes of syntrophic and sequential (step
260 by step) utilization of substrates among microorganisms enable a wide range of substrates and energy
261 sources to be accessible to the community.

262

263 **Comparative genomics**

264 We chose representative genomes from euryarchaeotal groups and Hydrothermarchaeota to compare
265 the metabolic capacities among them. Peptide degradation capacities are shared among most
266 Hydrothermarchaeota and euryarchaeotal groups, while, the other carbohydrate degrading/utilizing

267 capacities on starch/glycogen, aromatics, fatty acids, methanol, and mono-/di-/trimethylamines are
268 patchily distributed (Fig. 4, Figs. S3, S4 and Table S9). Hydrothermarchaeota acquires considerably
269 complete functions in the cycling of N and S and could oxidize three important C₁ compounds,
270 comparing to the euryarchaeotal groups. When it comes to within phylum level, we found the
271 distinction of metabolic traits among three major clades within Hydrothermarchaeota (Fig. 4). Clade
272 1 MAG (from subsurface fluids from SubFlu-JdFR) specifically acquires utilizing ability on
273 methanol, methanethiol, and mono-/di-/trimethylamines, which is not shared with other clades,
274 probably indicating potential supply of methyl-compounds in the surrounding environments. Clade 3
275 MAGs (SZUA-158 from TVG10, the chimney layer sample, of BSmoChi-MAR and HyVt-292 from
276 sulfide deposits of Southern Mariana Trough) acquire sulfide oxidation ability (DsrAB) as the major
277 sulfur cycling function, probably being attributed to the high supply of sulfide in the surrounding
278 environments. Presumably, Clade 3 could also depend more on sulfide oxidation for energy and
279 acquire less sugar carbohydrate degrading enzymes (Fig. 2). It provides a clue that each clade could
280 acquire metabolic traits related to niche adaptation.

281

282 **Clade-distinctive lateral gene transfers**

283 We mapped the minimum parsimony-based prediction of gene gain and loss events of inferred gene
284 ortholog groups (OGs) to the RP-based phylogenomic tree (Fig. 5 and Fig. S5). The
285 phylogenomically close-related seven euryarchaeotal classes or orders were included, acquiring both
286 methanogens and non-methanogens. The key gene gain events at node 28, 26 and 24 (occupying
287 24.9%, 6.7% and 29.1% of the ancestral genomes) indicate that the important traits of extant
288 Hydrothermarchaeota are derived from lateral gene transfers (LGTs); they include the C₁ oxidation
289 on formaldehyde and CO, the key component of Wood–Ljungdahl pathway for CO₂ fixation and
290 acetyl-CoA synthesis, nitrogen and sulfur cycling, aromatic degradation and Hg and As reduction.
291 The gene gain events at node 27 (occupying 27.9% of the genome) probably provide JdFR-18
292 abilities on utilizing tri-/mi-/monomethylamines, acetogenesis and other functions on nitrogen and
293 sulfur cycling (Table S10). The lost OGs at these nodes mainly acquire functions related to amino
294 acid transport and metabolism, energy production and conversion, and transcription and translation
295 related metabolisms (Table S10 and Fig S6). As we have indicated above, it might be the adaptive
296 strategy of Hydrothermarchaeota to derive functional components from the lateral gene interactions
297 among community members in hydrothermal environments, which are characterized with plenty of
298 heavy metals, C₁ compounds, and reduced sulfur compounds (1-6, 19, 20, 30). The distinctive
299 metabolism of each clade (Figs 4, 5 and Tables S11, S12) on C, H, N, and S could also be due to
300 LGT events in the adapting process within corresponding eco-niches. The OG component pattern
301 tells that although Hydrothermarchaeota could not produce methane, they are close to the anaerobic
302 wastewater treatment inhabiting methanogenic phylum Methanofastidiosa (Fig. S7), which is also
303 consistent to the RP-based phylogenomic tree. Nevertheless, the derived functions through LGT
304 probably make Hydrothermarchaeota distinctive and become the hydrothermal environment-adaptive
305 archaeal lineage.

306

307 **Conclusions**

308 Hydrothermarchaeota is the widespread archaeal lineage among the archaeal members in the

309 hydrothermal sediment environments. Within the microbial community, Hydrothermarchaeota
310 synergistically participates in a wide range of carbon utilizing and element cycling processes with
311 other microbes. This study suggests that microbial interactions are essential to nutrient and element
312 cycling, and extends the current understanding of community interactions within hydrothermal
313 sediment environments (6, 31). Our findings call for further genomic studies of
314 Hydrothermarchaeota from other environments, including estuarine, wetland and spring sediments,
315 and genomic, transcriptomic and enzymatic studies by cultivation-based experiments to study their
316 metabolic capacities and activities.

317

318 **Materials and Methods**

319 **Sample information and metagenome sequencing.** Marine hydrothermal sediment samples were
320 retrieved from an active deep-sea hydrothermal vent site (black smoker) of 2,770 m depth in the
321 Mid-Atlantic Ridge of South Atlantic Ocean, during the cruise of DY125-26 by R/V Dayang Yihao
322 (Ocean No. 1) at August 2012 (32). TVG10 was sampled from the layer from a black smoker
323 chimney, and TVG13 was a sulfide sediment sample collected near the black smoker chimney.
324 Samples were stored in -80°C for subsequent metagenome sequencing, and physicochemical
325 characterizations were conducted soon after collection, which included total C, H, S, C/N ratio and
326 pH (32) (Experimental details and results refer to the previous work).

327

328 **Metagenome processing and genome-resolved binning.** In order to get high quality archaeal
329 metagenome-assembled genomes (MAGs), a custom processing method with two rounds of
330 assembling and binning was adopted. The metagenomes were sequenced by Illumina HiSeq 2000
331 platform, two separated libraries for each sample were obtained and combined into one in the
332 downstream analysis. Raw reads were firstly dereplicated and processed by Sickle
333 (<https://github.com/najoshi/sickle>) for trimming reads of low quality with default settings. Clean
334 reads for each sample were subjected to *de novo* metagenome assembly by IDBA-UD v1.1.1 with
335 '--mink 52 --maxk 92 --step 8' settings (33). The initially resulted assemblies were deposited to
336 DOE-JGI IMG (The Integrated Microbial Genomes system of US Department of Energy-Joint
337 Genome Institute) database and annotated by the DOE-JGI Microbial Genome Annotation Pipeline
338 (MGAP v.4) (34).

339

340 Assemblies were subjected to a MetaBAT v0.32.4 based binning with 12 combinations of parameters
341 (35), subsequently, Das-Tool v1.0 was applied to screen MetaBAT bins, resulting with high quality
342 and completeness bins (36). CheckM v1.0.7 was used to assess the bin quality and phylogeny (37).
343 All above resulted archaeal MAGs were combined with i) all available archaeal genomes from
344 GenBank database (Aug 2, 2017 updated), ii) archaeal clones, fosmids and cosmids sequences from
345 NCBI Nucleotide database (Aug 2, 2017 updated), iii) initial assembled scaffolds with one or more
346 ORFs annotated as archaeal origin by IMG database (Only assemblies obtained in this study), as the
347 reference for reads mapping. BBmap was used to get potential archaeal reads from raw reads with
348 'vslow minid = 0.6' option (38). The second round of assembling by archaeal reads was the same as
349 the above method, and potential 'archaea related scaffolds' were also subjected to DOE-JGI IMG

350 database to get annotated as described above. The same ‘MetaBAT+Das-Tool’ method was used to
351 get the second round of MAGs, and only archaeal MAGs with high quality were used for
352 downstream analysis. Outlier scaffolds with abnormal coverage, tetranucleotide signals and GC
353 pattern within potential high contamination MAGs (checked by CheckM) and erroneous SSU
354 sequences within MAGs were screened out and decontaminated by RefineM v0.0.20 with the default
355 settings (39). Average genome coverages were calculated by remapping raw reads to MAGs using
356 Bowtie2 v2.2.8 (40). The bacterial MAGs were obtained using the similar binning and
357 decontamination processes, but with only one-round binning. Further refinement was also conducted
358 by manual inspection based on VizBin for selective MAGs (41).

359
360 SRA information was obtained by searching string “(((hydrothermal) AND metagenomic[Source])
361 AND WGS[Strategy])) NOT 16S[Title] NOT 454 GS[Text Word] AND (metagenome[Organism] OR
362 hydrothermal vent metagenome[Organism] OR marine sediment metagenome[Organism] OR marine
363 metagenome[Organism] OR subsurface metagenome[Organism])” (Dec 26, 2017 updated) for
364 hydrothermal vent sediment studies and “(((spring sediment) AND metagenomic [Source]) AND
365 WGS[Strategy])) NOT 16S[Title] NOT 454 GS[Text Word]” (Jan 24, 2018 updated) for freshwater
366 spring sediment studies deposited in NCBI-SRA. Searching results were manually inspected to
367 confirm (Table S1). The linked DOE-JGI IMG deposits to these SRA deposits were found and the
368 assemblies are used. MAGs originated from hydrothermal vent sediments (21 studies) and freshwater
369 spring sediments (22 studies) were reconstructed from these public NCBI-SRA deposits and the
370 linked DOE-JGI IMG deposits (Only one study has the IMG record but no SRA record. This study
371 was also manually inspected to meet the searching criterion). SRA runs within one ‘Experiment’ and
372 studies for one ‘Biosample’ are subjected to integrated assembling. Assembling was conducted by
373 MEGAHIT v1.1.2 (42) with kmer iterations of k35-k75, k45-k95, k65-k145, k145k-k295 for 85bp,
374 100bp, 150bp, and 300bp reads and the kmer step of 10; the pre-processing was the same as
375 described above. Studies which have DOE-JGI IMG deposits were simply used with their assembled
376 metagenomes and QC-passed reads. The downstream binning methods were the same as described
377 above but with one-round binning. Further refinement was also conducted by manual inspection
378 based on VizBin for selective MAGs (41).

379

380 **Archaeal MAGs annotation.** KO annotation was made by GhostKOALA v2.0, KAAS v2.1 and
381 eggNOG-mapper v4.5.1 (Use its first KO hit and COG hit, COG were translated to KO by
382 'ko2cog.xl' provided by KEGG database) (43-45). Annotation by NCBI nr database (Mar 6, 2017
383 updated) was done by extracting the first meaningful hit (meaningful information rather than
384 'hypothetical proteins'). Peptidases were called by MEROPS (Use its 'pepunit' database for less
385 false positive hits) via DIAMOND BLASTP v0.9.10.111 with '-k 1 -e 1e-10 --subject-cover 80 --id
386 50' settings (46, 47). Carbohydrate-active enzyme (CAZy) annotation was carried out by dbCAN
387 (version 20170913) and interpreted by CAZy database (self-parsed online information) (48, 49).
388 InterProScan 5.26-65.0 (client version) was applied to classify protein functions with annotations
389 including, CDD, PfamA, SMART, TIGRFAM, Phobius, and SuperFamily(50). Phobius,
390 PRED-SIGNAL and PSORTb v3.0.2 (Archaea) were applied to predict the location of peptidases, as
391 'Membrane/Intracellular' or 'Extracellular' (Only congruent results of 'Extracellular' location in all 3
392 methods were adopted, while, others with incongruent results were assigned as
393 'Membrane/Intracellular') (51-53).

394
395 **Major allele frequency analysis.** The anvi'o v4.0 was used to identify and profile single-nucleotide
396 variants (SNVs) of Hydrothermarchaeota MAGs based on mapping the reads from corresponding
397 metagenomes. The characterizing strategies for identifying SNVs are operated according to the
398 instruction (<http://merenlab.org/2015/07/20/analyzing-variability/>). The major allele frequency value
399 was the percentage of metagenomic reads mapping to a certain site with the majority SNV.

400
401 **Comparative genomic analysis.** The Markov Cluster (MCL) Algorithm implemented in anvi'o v4.0
402 was applied for protein clustering (54). The eggNOG-mapper v4.5.1 was used to annotate MAGs
403 with default settings (44, 45). COG functional categories and orthologous groups parsed from
404 eggNOG mapping results were used to reconstruct the inner tree. The existence of specific functions
405 or pathways was assigned according to the existence of marker genes (Use the annotation results
406 from the above section). Average nucleotide identity (ANI) values among Hydrothermarchaeota
407 MAGs were calculated by OrthoANI with default settings (55).

408

409 **Phylogenetic reconstruction.** Searching for sequences in SILVA SSU128 for long Marine Benthic
410 Group E (Hydrothermarchaeota) sequences with good quality (pintail quality > 75%, sequence
411 length > 1000 nt and sequence quality > 75%) resulted in 549 sequences (assigned as
412 Hydrothermarchaeota backbone tree, “HydroBTree”) (56). The obtained alignment was subjected to
413 clustering by mothur (57). 36 OTU representative sequences at 90% similarity cutoff were obtained.
414 Representative sequences in SSURef_NR99_128_SILVA database and archaeal 16S rRNA gene
415 sequences retrieved from metagenomic scaffolds (curated by IMG database) and MAGs were
416 combined (only sequence length > 300bp being considered), and subsequently, subjected to aligning
417 by SINA v1.2.11 (58). The updated 16S rRNA genes from Pacearchaeota and Asgard superphylum
418 genomes (deposited in NCBI Genome database) were also included in the tree construction. The
419 SINA alignment with *Escherichia coli* K12 as the outgroup was filtered by both ssuref:archaea
420 (LTPs128_SSU) and 50% consensus filters, and subsequently used for tree construction by
421 RAxML-HPC v.8 on XSEDE implemented in CIPRES, with settings as GTRCAT and 1000
422 bootstrap iterations (59, 60).

423
424 The 16S rRNA gene sequences (> 300bp) which were BLASTed out from the Hydrothermarchaeota
425 MAGs constructed from NCBI SRAs, the previous publication and this study were aligned by SINA
426 v1.2.11 (58) and inserted into the “HydroBBTree” by “ARB_PARSIMONY quick-add species”
427 method in ARB (61) (Some MAGs have no 16S rRNA gene sequences, which is normal, due to the
428 low MAG completeness). The topology of this 16S rRNA gene tree remains unchanged compared to
429 that of “HydroBBTree” and the division of clades also remains unchanged.

430
431 The masked alignment of 12 ribosomal proteins (processed by CheckM, including, L2, L3, L4, L5,
432 L14, L16, L18, L22 and S3, S8, S17, S19 ribosomal proteins) were concatenated and then subjected
433 to the tree model selection by ProtTest 3 (37, 62). Representative archaeal genomes and reported
434 Hydrothermarchaeota MAGs were included in the tree together with MAGs and scaffolds from this
435 study (63). A pre-selection was imposed on the concatenated alignment to filter those sequences with
436 less than 3 ribosomal proteins and less than 25% alignment columns; columns with more than 50%
437 gaps were trimmed. The RAxML-HPC v.8 on XSEDE implemented in CIPRES was applied to make
438 the phylogenetic tree with the best model as PROTGAMMAILG and 1000 bootstrap iterations (59,
439 60). *Escherichia coli* K12 genome was adopted as the outgroup (64).

440

441 **Evolutionary analysis.** The genomes from phylogenetically close-related archaeal orders/classes
442 were acquired from NCBI Genome database, including methanogenic Methanobacteriales,
443 Methanococcales, Methanofastidiosa and Methanopyri, and non-methanogenic Theionarchaea,
444 Hadesarchaea, and Thermococcales. One Crenarchaeota (*Acidilobus saccharovorans* str. 345-15)
445 genome was used as the outgroup. The genome picking criterion is that they are over 80%
446 completeness and less than 10% genome contamination, with only exceptions of two Theionarchaea
447 genomes (the only two available genomes within the class) and one Hadesarchaea genome (77.6%
448 completeness; one out of two genomes within the class); and genomes are from different families or
449 genera if possible. The phylogenomic tree of acquired 50 genomes were constructed with the
450 concatenated masked alignment of 12 ribosomal proteins by the same method as described above,
451 but using IQ-TREE v1.6.3 (with better performance) (65) with the settings as “-m MFP -mset
452 LG,WAG -mrate E,I,G,I+G -mfreq FU -bb 1000”.

453
454 The ortholog groups (OGs) of protein-encoding genes shared by 50 genomes were parsed out by
455 OrthoFinder v2.2.6 (66) with orphan genes (only existing in one genome) not included in OGs. The
456 BadiRate was used to estimate OG turnover rate using the BDI-FR-CSP model (Turnover
457 rates-Branch model-Estimating procedure, stringent on estimating turnover rates) (67) with the above
458 phylogenomic tree as the input tree file. The output gene turnover results were parsed to OG turnover
459 results by a custom Perl. The OGs were annotated by eggNOG-mapper v4.5.1; each was assigned
460 with the majority annotation result. The key OG turnover events on Hydrothermarchaeota nodes
461 were parsed; the related genes with function and pathway annotations were summarized.

462
463 **Metabolic capacity prediction and comparison.** Genomes of Euryarchaeota and
464 Hydrothermarchaeota were acquired from NCBI Genome database, and every five representative
465 genomes (picked from different families if possible) from each archaeal group were used (9). Only
466 genomes with completeness over 70% were used. If one archaeal group has limited available
467 genomes (less than five), all the genomes were used, regardless of the completeness. Metabolic
468 marker genes were retrieved from a custom metabolic gene database and metabolic pathways
469 annotated in KEGG database (68, 69). The Pfam, TIGRfam and custom metabolic gene database
470 were used to scan against genomes with suggested cutoff settings; GhostKOALA v2.0, KAAS v2.1,
471 and eggNOG-mapper v4.5.1 were applied to assign KOs to genomes based on default settings
472 (43-45). For each metabolic marker gene, we label their presence/absence in archaeal groups as solid
473 black dots (present in all), solid grey dots (present in some) and blank dots (present in none). For
474 each metabolic function, if one marker gene appears, we assign the presence of this function. Due to
475 the limited genomes and low genome completeness (less than 70%) for Hadesarchaea,
476 Theionarchaea, Syntrophoarchaeum, and MSBL-1, if one metabolic marker gene/metabolic function
477 appears in any genomes within an individual archaeal group, a solid black dot is used.

478
479 For the community metabolic analysis on the MAGs from both the metagenomes, the similar
480 metabolic capacity prediction method was used as described above. The peptidases and
481 carbohydrate-active enzymes were calculated by counting the MAG completeness and taking
482 average values of all MAGs within individual microbial groups (0 digits after the decimal point). The

483 presence of specific pathway/function within each microbial group was assigned when this
484 pathway/function was present in any MAGs within this microbial group. The Fe uptake metabolism
485 was predicted by the corresponding database (70), using DIAMOND BLASTP v0.9.10.111 with the
486 settings of '-e 1e-20 --query-cover 80 --id 65' (47).

487

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491

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498

499 **Availability of data**

500 Initial assemblies: IMG: 3300003886 for TVG10 and IMG: 3300003885 for TVG13. Second round
501 assemblies: IMG: 3300020233 for TVG10 and IMG: 3300020236 for TVG13. The MAGs that were
502 resolved from this study are deposited under NCBI BioProject PRJNA385762 and PRJNA480137.
503 The detailed genomic parameters of these assembled genomes are summarized in [Supplementary](#)
504 [Information](#).

505 **Author's contributions**

506 Z.Z. and M. L. conceived and designed this study. Z.-H. L. and W.X. contributed to sample
507 collection and physicochemical parameter measurement. Z.Z. processed the sequencing data,
508 reconstructed metagenome-resolved genomes and performed the downstream bioinformatic analyses.
509 Y.L., P.J., Z.Z. and M. L. contributed to the bioinformatic infrastructure construction. All the authors
510 were involved in the manuscript writing and approved the final edition of the manuscript.

511

512 **Ethics approval and consent to participate**

513 Not applicable.

514

515 **Consent for publication**

516 Not applicable.

517

518 **Competing interests**

519 The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

520

521 **Tables**

522 **Table 1. Overview of genomic statistics of archaeal MAGs constructed from this study, the**
 523 **reference, and NCBI-SRA deposits.**

524

MAGs	Hydrotherm. SZUA-158 (TVG10)	Hydrotherm. SZUA-236 (TVG13)	Hydrotherm. SZUA-237 (TVG13)	Hydrotherm. JdFR-16	Hydrotherm. JdFR-17	Hydrotherm. JdFR-18	Hydrotherm HyVt-292
Copies of individual markers							
0	9	21	49	99	87	2	30
1	139	128	136	25	59	145	141
2	1	0	3	25	29	2	17
3	0	0	0	0	12	0	0
4	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
5+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Completeness (%)	92.53	84.97	65.82	31.93	53.87	98.13	80.43
Contamination (%)	0.93	0.00	1.76	13.55	25.15	1.87	9.06
Strain heterogeneity (%)	0.00	0.00	33.33	84.00	71.83	0.00	35.29
Bin size (bp)	1749358	1270198	1228833	1353114	2178134	2062134	1426722
N50 (bp)	9590	6219	3825	6267	7687	149032	5600
Mean scaffold length (bp)	7706.42	5747.50	3510.95	5614.58	6331.78	93733.36	4988.54
GC (%)	38.99	47.58	45.76	49.68	49.64	39.14	40.02
GC standard deviation (%)	1.91	1.99	2.89	3.92	4.50	1.54	1.98
Coding density (%)	84.96	91.48	84.96	91.98	91.94	92.12	89.88

525

526 “Hydrotherm.” stands for Hydrothermarchaeota. HyVt-292 was reconstructed from a metagenome of
 527 deep-sea massive sulfide deposits from Southern Mariana Trough (DRR093004), which is
 528 hydrothermally inactive. JdFR MAGs were reconstructed from Juan de Fuca Ridge flank subsurface
 529 fluids.

530 **Figure Captions**

531 **Figure 1. Phylogenetic tree of 16S rRNA gene from TVG metagenomes.** **a**, The RAxML
532 maximum likelihood tree was constructed by including metagenome 16S gene sequences (from both
533 binned and unbinned scaffolds). Sequences from this study are highlighted; the highlighted number
534 in bracket stands for sequences from this study. Bootstrap values over 75% were labeled. This tree
535 was rooted by an *Escherichia coli* K12 16S rRNA gene. **b**, Detailed Hydrothermarchaeota 16S rRNA
536 gene tree. Four clades were established based on 90% similarity cutoff 16S rRNA gene
537 representative sequences of Hydrothermarchaeota. Sequences from this study are highlighted. **c**,
538 Schematic figure depicting two sampling locations and with-in group evolutionary distances of 16S
539 rRNA gene sequences from two samples (calculated by Jukes-Cantor model and pairwise
540 comparison based on global alignment). “NA” means only one sequence within a group, not
541 applicable to calculate the with-in group evolutionary distance. **d**, The major allele frequency
542 diagram representing the diverse level of potential Hydrothermarchaeota in corresponding
543 environments where the Hydrothermarchaeota MAGs were found. Higher frequency indicates a
544 majority allele is dominant over the minor ones. Higher mean major allele frequency on the genome
545 level indicates a less diverse Hydrothermarchaeota population in the environment.

546
547 **Figure 2. Metabolic pathways of Hydrothermarchaeota.** **a**, Schematic figure showing
548 metabolisms of four high completeness Hydrothermarchaeota MAGs. **b**, RP tree showing the
549 phylogeny of all currently available Hydrothermarchaeota MAGs. **c**, Heatmap and barchart depicting
550 the distribution of extracellular/intracellular peptidases and carbohydrate-active enzymes (CAZys) in
551 Hydrothermarchaeota MAGs. The barchart shows the summary information of glycoside hydrolases
552 (GH) family within each functional category.

553
554 **Figure 3. Metabolic prediction figure for the community of MAGs from TVG metagenomes.**
555 The peptidases and carbohydrate degrading enzymes were calculated by counting the MAG
556 completeness and taking average values of all MAGs within individual microbial groups (0 digits
557 after the decimal point). The presence of specific pathway/function within each microbial group was
558 assigned when this pathway/function was present in any MAGs within this microbial group. The Fe
559 uptake metabolism was predicted by the corresponding database. For the metabolic prediction of N,
560 S cycling, C₁ oxidation, and C fixation, only the major microbial groups (with at least one MAG
561 from this group acquiring genome coverage > 15×) are represented.

562
563 **Figure 4. Metabolic capacity comparison between Hydrothermarchaeota and Euryarchaeota.**
564 Metabolic marker genes from Pfam, TIGRFam and KEGG databases are used to search for up to five
565 genomes within one archaeal group. Solid black dots, solid grey dots, and blank dots stand for all
566 present, partially present, and no present in all genomes. If one marker gene appears, it is assumed
567 that the corresponding metabolic function exists. Due to the limited genomes and low genome
568 completeness, for Hadesarchaea, Hydrothermarchaeota, Theionarchaea, Syntrophoarchaeum, and
569 MSBL-1, if genes appear in one genome, solid black dots are used. Detailed summary information
570 refers to Supplementary Information. The metabolic capacity of five Hydrothermarchaeota MAGs
571 was also depicted. The RP phylogenetic tree was constructed by picking one random genome from
572 each group and bootstrap values over 75% were depicted as black dots on the node.

573

574 **Figure 5. The estimation of ortholog group (OG) turnover events for Hydrothermarchaeota**
575 **and related euryarchaeotal orders and classes.** The OG numbers and inferred OG gain and loss
576 numbers were labeled accordingly on the tree nodes and tips. The COG category information of the
577 gained or lost OGs for Hydrothermarchaeota clade was parsed and depicted. The important genes
578 that were involved with the OG gain events for Hydrothermarchaeota clade were also labeled to the
579 corresponding nodes.

580

581

582

583 References

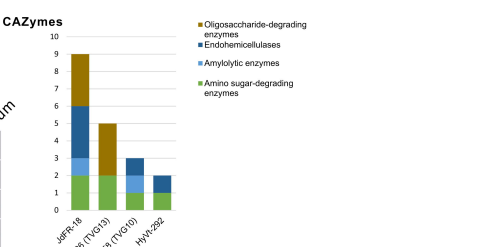
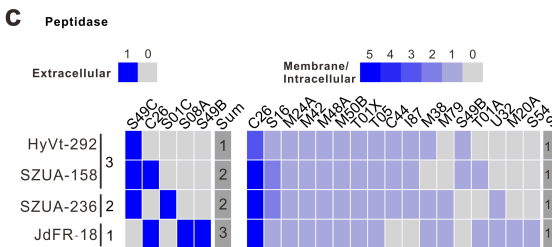
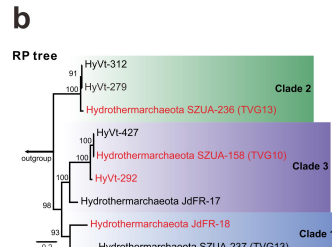
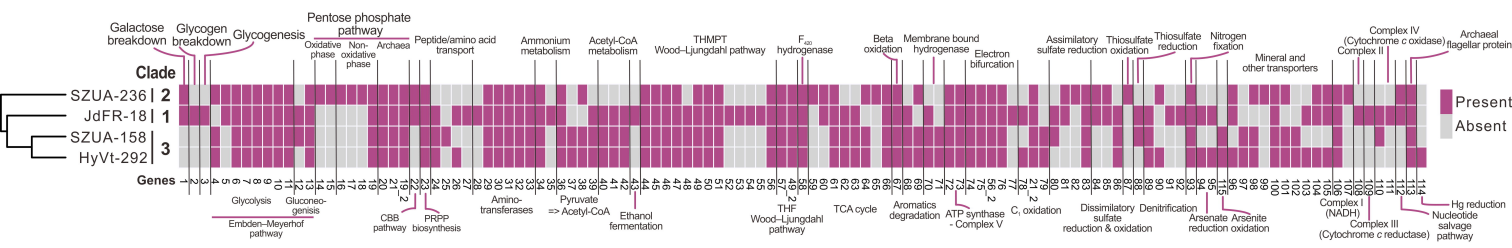
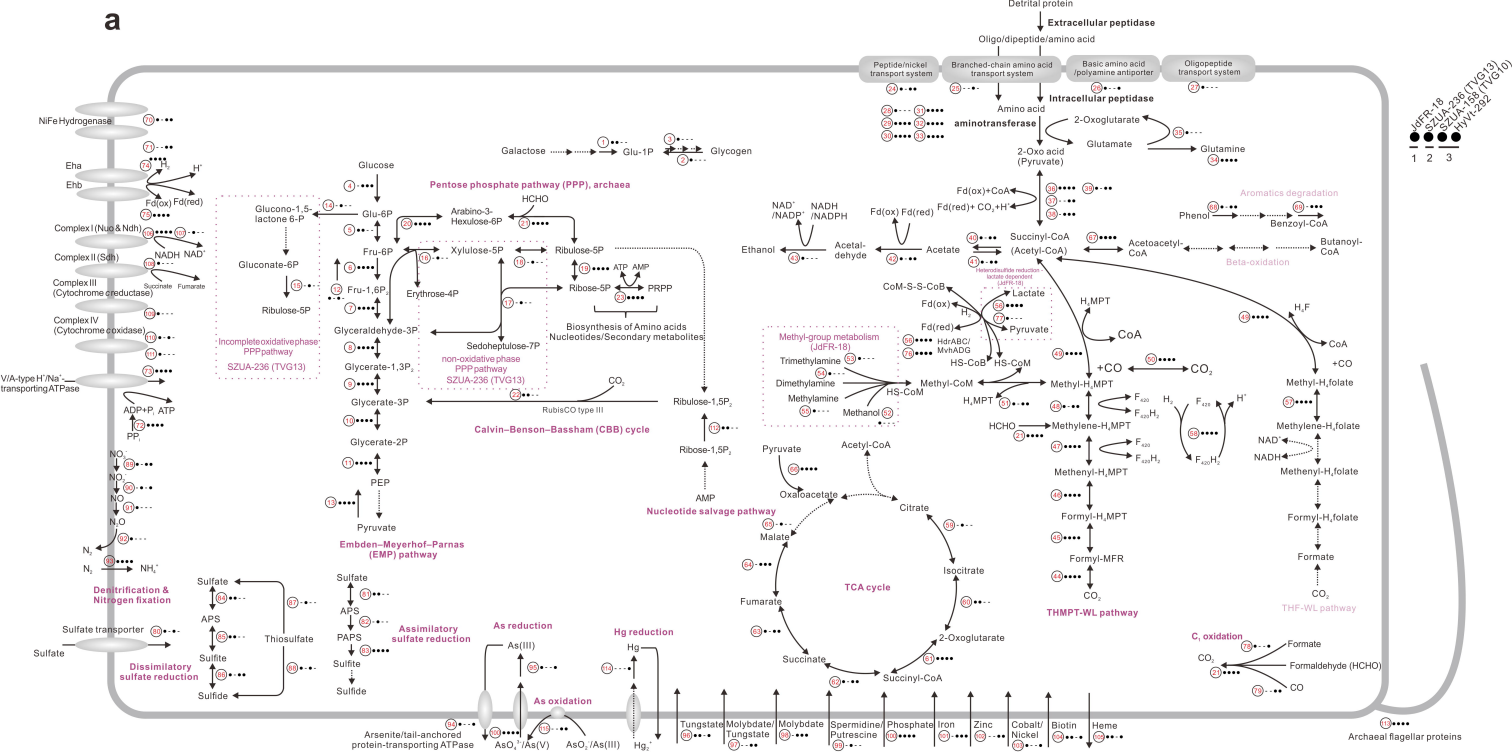
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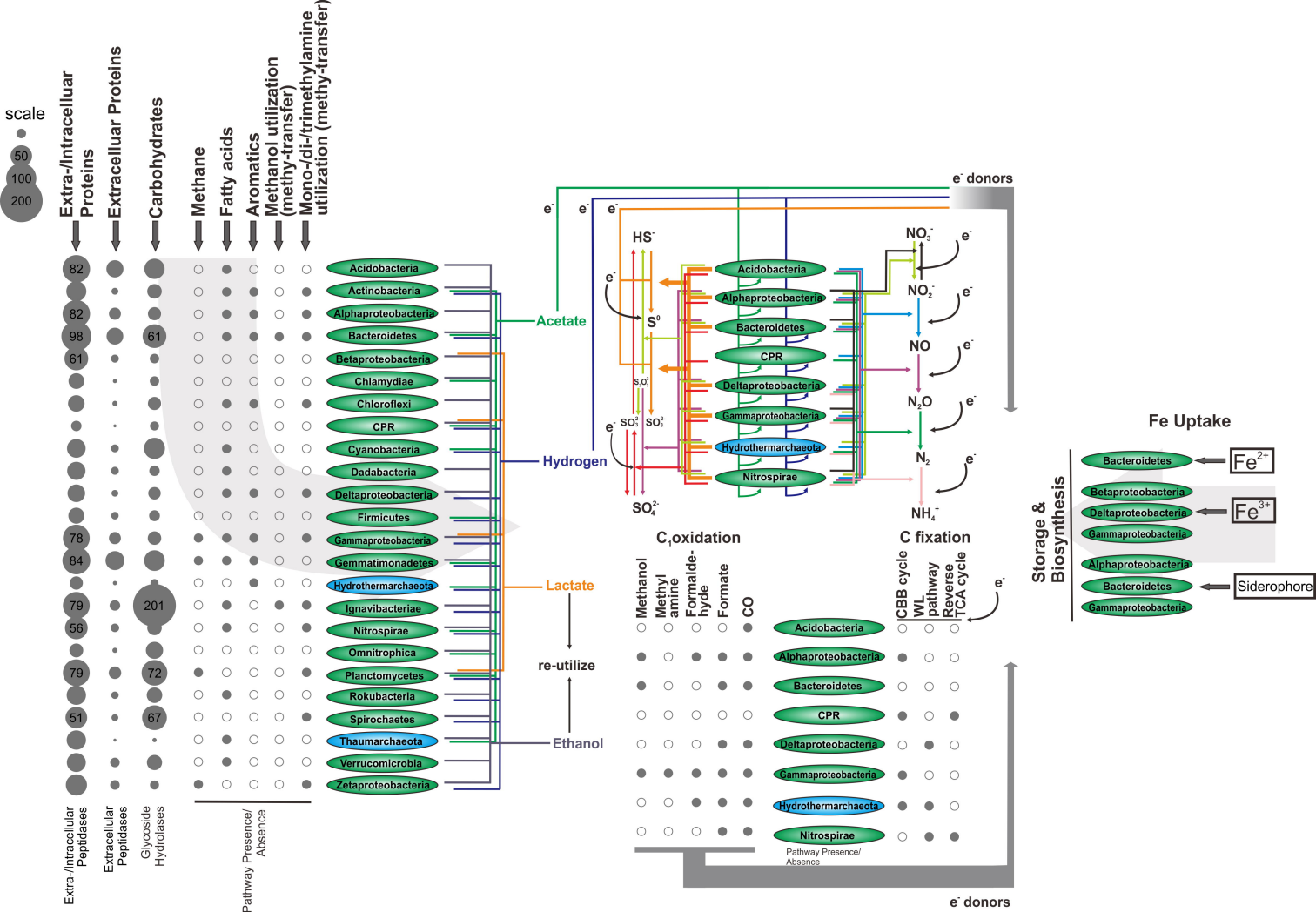
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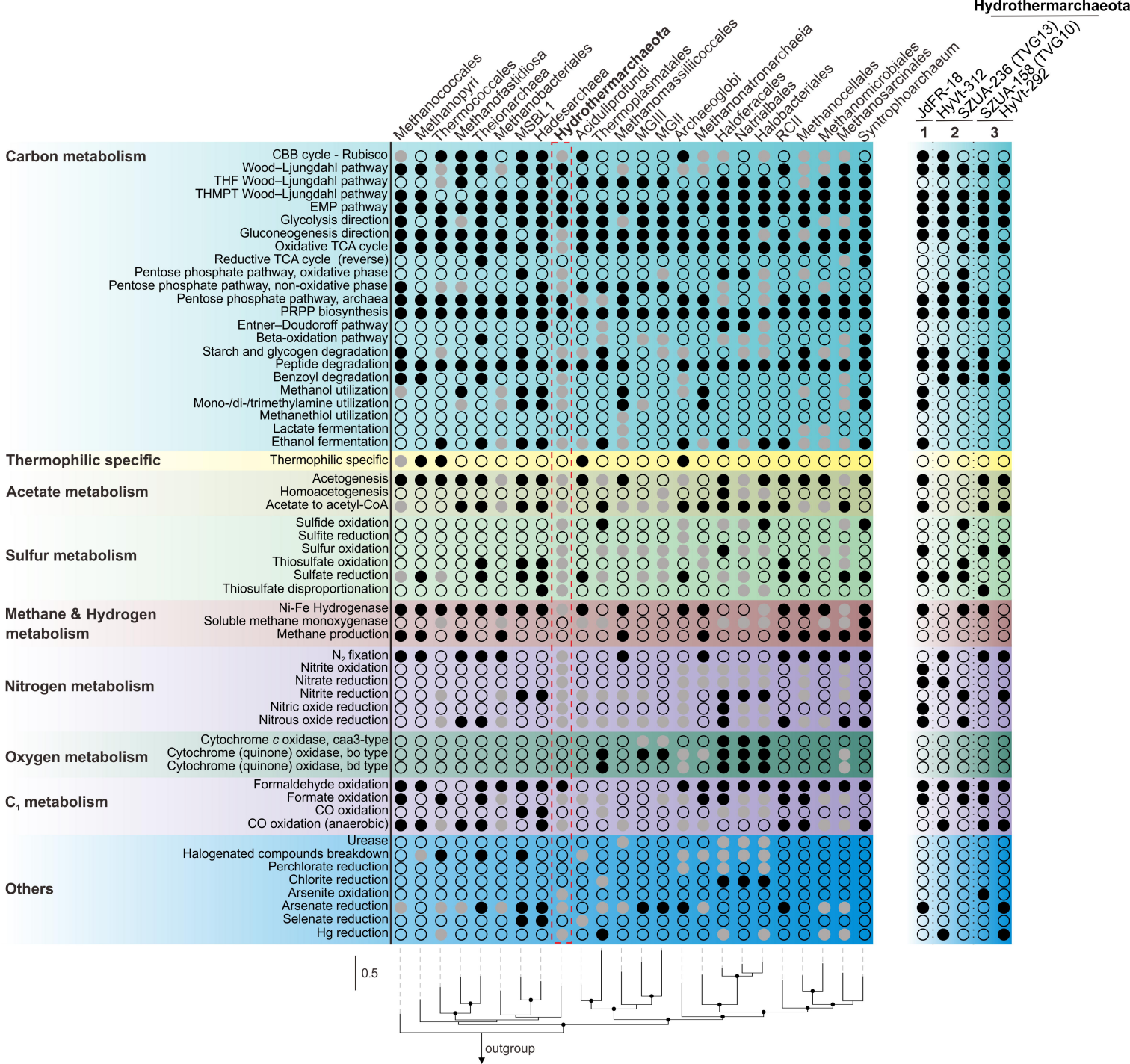
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675 would greatly improve virtually any sequencing process, but optimal alignment is prohibitively expensive for
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hps-phi: C oxidation (Formaldehyde oxidation)
cdhABCDE: Wood-Ljungdahl pathway (acetyl-CoA decarboxylase/synthase complex)
nirB: Denitrification (nitrite reductase)
dsrB: Dissimilatory sulfide oxidation
cysH: Assimilatory sulfate reduction
arsA: Arsenate reduction (arsenite transporter)

bcrB: Aromatics degradation (benzoyl-CoA reductase)
nifH: Nitrogen fixation
merA: Hg reduction

cooS: C oxidation (anaerobic CO oxidation)
nifDK: Nitrogen fixation
narI: Denitrification (nitrate reductase)
dsrA: Dissimilatory sulfide oxidation
cysH: Assimilatory sulfate reduction
arsA: Arsenate reduction (arsenite transporter)

accABC: Acetogenesis
mttC: Trimethylamine utilization
mtbC: Dimethylamine utilization
mtmB: Methylamine utilization
narI: Denitrification
TC_SULP: Sulfate transporter
sat: Dissimilatory sulfate reduction/oxidation
dsrA: Dissimilatory sulfide oxidation

Gain →

Gene numbers Orphans

