

1 **Genomes of Symbiodiniaceae reveal extensive sequence divergence**  
2 **but conserved functions at family and genus levels**

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17

## 18 **Abstract**

19 Dinoflagellates of the family Symbiodiniaceae (Order Suessiales) are predominantly symbiotic, and  
20 many are known for their association with corals. The genetic and functional diversity among  
21 Symbiodiniaceae is well acknowledged, but the genome-wide sequence divergence among these  
22 lineages remains little known. Here, we present *de novo* genome assemblies of five isolates from  
23 the basal genus *Symbiodinium*, encompassing distinct ecological niches. Incorporating existing data  
24 from Symbiodiniaceae and other Suessiales (15 genome datasets in total), we investigated genome  
25 features that are common or unique to these Symbiodiniaceae, to genus *Symbiodinium*, and to the  
26 individual species *S. microadriaticum* and *S. tridacnidorum*. Our whole-genome comparisons reveal  
27 extensive sequence divergence, with no sequence regions common to all 15. Based on similarity of  
28 *k*-mers from whole-genome sequences, the distances among *Symbiodinium* isolates are similar to  
29 those between isolates of distinct genera. We observed extensive structural rearrangements among  
30 symbiodiniacean genomes; those from two distinct *Symbiodinium* species share the most (853)  
31 syntenic gene blocks. Functions enriched in genes core to Symbiodiniaceae are also enriched in  
32 those core to *Symbiodinium*. Gene functions related to symbiosis and stress response exhibit similar  
33 relative abundance in all analysed genomes. Our results suggest that structural rearrangements  
34 contribute to genome sequence divergence in Symbiodiniaceae even within a same species, but the  
35 gene functions have remained largely conserved in Suessiales. This is the first comprehensive  
36 comparison of Symbiodiniaceae based on whole-genome sequence data, including comparisons at  
37 the intra-genus and intra-species levels.

## 38 **Introduction**

39 Symbiodiniaceae is a family of dinoflagellates (Order Suessiales) that diversified largely as  
40 symbiotic lineages, many of which are crucial symbionts for corals. However, the diversity of  
41 Symbiodiniaceae extends beyond symbionts of diverse coral reef organisms, to other putative  
42 parasitic, opportunistic and free-living forms<sup>1-4</sup>. Genetic divergence among Symbiodiniaceae is  
43 known to be extensive, in some cases comparable to that among members of distinct dinoflagellate  
44 orders<sup>5</sup>, prompting the recent systematic revision as the family Symbiodiniaceae, with seven  
45 delineated genera<sup>6</sup>.

46 Conventionally, genetic divergence among Symbiodiniaceae has been estimated based on sequence-  
47 similarity comparison of a few conserved marker genes. An earlier comparative study using  
48 predicted genes from available transcriptome and genome data revealed that functions pertinent to  
49 symbiosis are common to all Symbiodiniaceae, but the differences in gene-family number among  
50 the major lineages are possibly associated with adaptation to more-specialised ecological niches<sup>7</sup>. A  
51 recent investigation<sup>8</sup> revealed little similarity between the whole-genome sequences of a symbiotic  
52 and a free-living *Symbiodinium* species. However, whether this sequence divergence is an isolated  
53 case, or is associated with the distinct lifestyles, remains to be investigated using more genome-  
54 scale data. In cases such as this, intra-genus and/or intra-species comparative studies may yield  
55 novel insights into the biology of Symbiodiniaceae. For instance, a transcriptomic study of four  
56 species (with multiple isolates per species) of *Breviolum* (formerly Clade B) revealed differential  
57 gene expression that is potentially associated with their prevalence in the host<sup>9</sup>. Comparison of  
58 genome data from multiple isolates of the same genus, and/or of the same species, would allow for  
59 identification of the molecular mechanisms that underpin the diversification of Symbiodiniaceae at  
60 a finer resolution.

61 In this study, we generated *de novo* genome assemblies from five isolates of *Symbiodinium* (the  
62 basal genus of Symbiodiniaceae), encompassing distinct ecological niches (free-living, symbiotic

63 and opportunistic), including two distinct isolates of *Symbiodinium microadriaticum*. Comparing  
64 these genomes against those available from other *Symbiodinium*, other Symbiodiniaceae and the  
65 outgroup species *Polarella glacialis* (15 datasets in total), we investigated genome features that are  
66 common or unique to the distinct lineages within a single species, within a single genus, and within  
67 Family Symbiodiniaceae. This is the most comprehensive comparative analysis to date of  
68 Symbiodiniaceae based on whole-genome sequence data.

## 69 **Results**

### 70 **Genome sequences of Symbiodiniaceae**

71 We generated draft genome assemblies *de novo* for *Symbiodinium microadriaticum* CassKB8,  
72 *Symbiodinium microadriaticum* 04-503SCI.03, *Symbiodinium necroappetens* CCMP2469,  
73 *Symbiodinium linucheae* CCMP2456 and *Symbiodinium pilosum* CCMP2461. These five  
74 assemblies, generated using only short-read sequence data, are of similar quality to previously  
75 published genomes of Symbiodiniaceae (Table 1 and Supplementary Table 1). The number of  
76 assembled scaffolds ranges from 37,772 for *S. linucheae* to 104,583 for *S. necroappetens*; the  
77 corresponding N50 scaffold lengths are 58,075 and 14,528 bp, respectively. The fraction of the  
78 genome recovered in the assemblies ranged from 54.64% (*S. pilosum*) to 76.26% (*S. necroappetens*)  
79 of the corresponding genome size estimated based on *k*-mers (Supplementary Table 2). The overall  
80 G+C content of all analysed *Symbiodinium* genomes is ~50% (Supplementary Figure 1), with the  
81 lowest (48.21%) in *S. pilosum* CCMP2461 and the highest (51.91%) in *S. microadriaticum*  
82 CassKB8.

83 For a comprehensive comparison, we included in our analysis all available genome data from  
84 Symbiodiniaceae and the outgroup species of *Polarella glacialis* (Supplementary Table 1). These  
85 data comprise nine *Symbiodinium* isolates (three of the species *S. microadriaticum* and two of *S.*  
86 *tridacnidorum*), *Breviolum minutum*, two *Cladocopium* isolates, *Fugacium kawagutii*, and two  
87 *Polarella glacialis* isolates<sup>8,10-14</sup> (*i.e.* a total of 15 datasets of Suesiales, of which 13 are of

88 Symbiodiniaceae); we used the revised genome assemblies from Chen *et al.*<sup>15</sup> where applicable. Of  
89 the 15 genome assemblies, four were generated using both short- and long-read data (those of *S.*  
90 *natans* CCMP2548, *S. tridacnidorum* CCMP2592 and the two *P. glacialis* isolates)<sup>8,14</sup>; all others  
91 were generated largely using short-read data.

## 92 **Isolates of Symbiodiniaceae and *Symbiodinium* exhibit extensive genome divergence**

93 We assessed genome-sequence similarity based on pairwise whole-genome sequence alignment  
94 (WGA). In each pairwise comparison, we assessed the overall percentage of the query genome  
95 sequence that aligned to the reference ( $Q$ ), and the average percent identity of the reciprocal best  
96 one-to-one aligned sequences ( $I$ ); see Methods for detail. Our results revealed extensive sequence  
97 divergence among the compared genomes at the order (Suessiales), family (Symbiodiniaceae) and  
98 genus (*Symbiodinium*) levels (Fig. 1A). As expected, the genome-pairs that exhibit the highest  
99 sequence similarity are isolates from the same species, *e.g.* between *S. microadriaticum* CassKB8  
100 and 04-503SCI.03 ( $Q = 87.44\%$ ,  $I = 99.72\%$ ; CassKB8 as query), and between the two *P. glacialis*  
101 isolates ( $Q = 97.10\%$ ,  $I = 98.59\%$ ; CCMP1383 as query). In contrast, genome sequences of the two  
102 *S. tridacnidorum* isolates appear more divergent ( $Q = 30.07\%$ ,  $I = 87.18\%$ ; CCMP2592 as query).  
103 Remarkably, some genomes within *Symbiodinium* are as divergent as those of distinct genera: for  
104 instance,  $Q = 1.10\%$  and  $I = 91.88\%$  for *S. pilosum* compared against *S. natans* as reference, and  $Q$   
105  $= 1.03\%$  and  $I = 92.15\%$  for *S. tridacnidorum* CCMP2592 against *Cladocopium* sp. C92. The  
106 genome sequences of *S. microadriaticum* CCMP2467 share the most genome regions with all  
107 analysed isolates (Fig. 1A). When compared against these sequences as reference, we did not  
108 recover any genome regions that are conserved (alignment length  $\geq 24$  bp, with  $>70\%$  identity) in all  
109 analysed isolates (Fig. 1B). At most, six isolates have genome regions aligned against the reference,  
110 all of which belong to the same genus: *S. microadriaticum* CassKB8, *S. microadriaticum* 04-  
111 503SCI.03, *S. linucheae*, *S. tridacnidorum* CCMP2592, *S. natans* and *S. pilosum*. However, the  
112 total length of the region common in these genomes is only 89 bp (Fig. 1B).

113 For each possible genome-pair, we also assessed the extent of shared  $k$ -mers (short, sub-sequences  
114 of defined length  $k$ ) between them (optimised  $k = 21$ ; see Methods) from which a pairwise distance  
115 ( $d$ ) was derived (Supplementary Table 3). These distances were used to infer the phylogenetic  
116 relationship of these genomes as a neighbour-joining (NJ) tree (Fig. 1C) and as a similarity network  
117 (Supplementary Figure 2). As shown in Fig. 1C, the most distant genome-pair (*i.e.* the pair with the  
118 highest  $d$ ) is *S. tridacnidorum* CCMP2592 and *B. minutum* ( $d = 7.56$ ). *Symbiodinium* isolates are  
119 about as distant from the other Symbiodiniaceae ( $\bar{d} = 7.24$ ) as they are from the outgroup *P.*  
120 *glacialis* ( $\bar{d} = 7.23$ ). This is surprising, in particular because *P. glacialis* isolates have shorter  
121 distances with the other Symbiodiniaceae ( $\bar{d} = 6.84$ ) and *Symbiodinium* is considered to be more  
122 ancestral than all other genera in Symbiodiniaceae<sup>6</sup>. However, this observation may be biased by  
123 the greater representation of *Symbiodinium* isolates compared to any other genera of  
124 Symbiodiniaceae. The largest distance among genome-pairs within *Symbiodinium* is between two  
125 free-living species, *S. natans* and *S. pilosum* ( $d = 5.64$ ). These two isolates are also the most  
126 divergent from all others in the genus ( $d > 4.50$  between either of them and any other  
127 *Symbiodinium*; Supplementary Table 3). The distance between *S. natans* and *S. pilosum* is similar to  
128 that observed between *F. kawagutii* and *C. goreau* ( $d = 5.74$ ), members of distinct genera. Similar  
129 to our WGA results, the shortest distances are between isolates of the same species, *e.g.*  $d = 0.77$   
130 between *P. glacialis* CCMP1383 and CCMP2088, and  $\bar{d} = 0.86$  among *S. microadriaticum* isolates.  
131 However, the distance between the two *S. tridacnidorum* isolates (CCMP2592 and Sh18;  $d = 2.87$ )  
132 is larger than that between *S. necroappetens* and *S. linucheae* ( $d = 2.66$ ). The divergence among  
133 *Symbiodinium* isolates is further supported by the mapping rate of paired reads (Supplementary  
134 Figure 3).

135 We used the same gene-prediction workflow, customised for dinoflagellates, for the five  
136 *Symbiodinium* genome studies generated in this study as for the other ten assemblies included in our  
137 analyses<sup>14,15</sup> (Table 1). The number of predicted genes in these genomes ranged between 23,437 (in  
138 *S. pilosum* CCMP2461) and 42,652 (in *S. microadriaticum* CassKB8), which is similar to the

139 number of genes (between 25,808 and 45,474) predicted in the other Symbiodiniaceae genomes  
140 (Supplementary Table 4). To further assess genome divergence, we identified conserved synteny  
141 based on collinear syntenic gene blocks (see Methods). Fig. 1D illustrates the gene blocks shared  
142 between any possible genome-pairs; those blocks shared by more than two genomes are not shown.  
143 *S. microadriaticum* CCMP2467 and *S. tridacnidorum* CCMP2592 share the most gene blocks (853  
144 implicating 8589 genes). Although the two *P. glacialis* genomes share 346 gene blocks (2524  
145 genes), no blocks were recovered between the genome of either *P. glacialis* isolate and any of *S.*  
146 *microadriaticum* CassKB8, *S. microadriaticum* 04-503SCI.03, *S. necroappetens*, *C. goreau*,  
147 *Cladocopium* sp. C92 or *F. kawagutii*. The collinear gene blocks shared by *P. glacialis* CCMP1383  
148 and *S. microadriaticum* CCMP2467 (3 blocks, 19 genes) represent the most abundant between any  
149 *P. glacialis* and any Symbiodiniaceae isolate. Genomes of *S. tridacnidorum* CCMP2592 and *S.*  
150 *natans* more gene blocks (749, with 7290 genes) than any other pair of genomes within  
151 Symbiodiniaceae. Although we cannot dismiss the impact of contiguity and completeness of the  
152 genome assemblies (Supplementary Table 1, Supplementary Figure 4) on our observations here  
153 (and results from the WGA and *k*-mer analyses above), these results provide the first  
154 comprehensive overview of genome divergence at the resolution of species, genus and family  
155 levels.

## 156 **Remnants of transposable elements were lost in more-recently diverged lineages of** 157 **Symbiodiniaceae**

158 Fig. 2A shows the composition of repeats for each of the 15 genomes. The repeat composition of *P.*  
159 *glacialis* is distinct from that of Symbiodiniaceae genomes, largely due to the known prevalence of  
160 simple repeats<sup>8,14</sup>. Long interspersed nuclear elements (LINEs) in Symbiodiniaceae and in *P.*  
161 *glacialis* are highly diverged, with Kimura distance centred between 15 and 40; these elements  
162 likely represent remnants of LINEs from an ancient burst pre-dating the diversification of  
163 Suessiales<sup>8,11,14</sup>. Interestingly, the proportion of these elements is substantially larger in the  
164 genomes of *Symbiodinium* (the basal lineage) and *P. glacialis* (the outgroup) than in those of other

165 Symbiodiniaceae (Fig. 2B). For instance, LINES comprise between 74.10 Mbp (*S. tridacnidorum*  
166 Sh18) and 96.9 Mbp (*S. linucheae*) in each of the *Symbiodinium* genomes, except for those in *S.*  
167 *pilosum* that cover almost twice as much (171.31 Mbp). In comparison, LINES cover on average  
168 7.49 Mbp in the genomes of other Symbiodiniaceae (Supplementary Figure 5**Error! Reference**  
169 **source not found.**). This result suggests that the remnants of LINES were lost in the more-recently  
170 diverged lineages of Symbiodiniaceae.

171 The genome of the free-living *S. pilosum* presents an outlier among the *Symbiodinium* genomes. In  
172 addition to the nearly two-fold increased abundance of LINES, the estimated genome size for *S.*  
173 *pilosum* (1.99 Gbp) is also nearly two-fold larger than the estimate for any other *Symbiodinium*  
174 genome (Supplementary Table 2). This suggests whole-genome duplication or potentially a more-  
175 dominant diploid stage, but we found no evidence to support either scenario (Supplementary Figure  
176 6). The prevalence of repetitive regions in *S. pilosum*, however, would explain in part why the total  
177 assembled bases of the genome constitute only 54.64% of the estimated genome size  
178 (Supplementary Table 1).

### 179 **Diversity of gene features within Suessiales**

180 Differences among predicted genes of Symbiodiniaceae have been attributed to phylogenetic  
181 relationship and to the implementation of distinct gene prediction approaches<sup>15</sup>. Our Principal  
182 Component Analysis (PCA), based on metrics of consistently predicted genes (Supplementary  
183 Table 4), revealed substantial variation within the genus *Symbiodinium* (Fig. 3). We noticed that the  
184 observed variation can be associated with three main factors: (1) phylogenetic relationship, (2) the  
185 type of sequence data used for genome assembly and the consequent assembly quality, and (3)  
186 lifestyle of the isolates. The variation resulting from the phylogenetic relationship among the  
187 genomes is illustrated by the separation of the distinct genera along PC2 (explaining 24.82% of the  
188 variance). The metrics contributing the most to PC2 are associated with proportion of splice donors  
189 and acceptors (Supplementary Figure 7). The type of sequence data used for genome assembly and



190 assembly quality are reflected along PC1 (explaining 42.79% of the variance). For instance, taxa for  
191 which hybrid assemblies were made (those incorporating both short-read and long-read sequence  
192 data), *i.e.* the free-living *S. natans* and *P. glacialis*, and the symbiotic *S. tridacnidorum* CCMP2592,  
193 are distributed between  $-4.5$  and  $0.1$  along PC1. The distribution of the symbiotic *Symbiodinium* is  
194 limited (between  $0.5$  and  $1.5$  of PC1), with the exception of the two *S. tridacnidorum* isolates, for  
195 which the genome assemblies are of distinct quality (*i.e.* the high-quality hybrid assembly of  
196 CCMP2592 compared to the draft assembly of Sh18 that is fragmented and incomplete;  
197 Supplementary Table 1 and Supplementary Figure 4). In addition, the opportunistic *S.*  
198 *necroappetens* and free-living *S. pilosum* are distributed at  $>2$  along PC1. These observations  
199 suggest that the distinct lifestyles may contribute to differences in gene architecture.

200 The predicted coding sequences (CDS) among *Symbiodinium* taxa exhibit biases in nucleotide  
201 composition of codon positions (Supplementary Figure 8) and in codon usage (Supplementary  
202 Figure 9). The G+C content among CDS (Supplementary Table 4) and among third codon positions  
203 (Supplementary Figure 8) varies slightly, but is generally higher relative to the overall G+C content  
204 (Supplementary Figure 1, Supplementary Table 1). This is consistent with the results previously  
205 reported for genomes and transcriptomes of Symbiodiniaceae<sup>7,16</sup>. Of all *Symbiodinium* isolates, *S.*  
206 *microadriaticum* CassKB8 and 04-503SCI.03 have the most CDS with a strong codon preference;  
207 *S. microadriaticum* CCMP2467 has the least (Supplementary Figure 9). These observations  
208 highlight the genetic variation within a single genus, and within a single species.

### 209 **Gene families of Symbiodiniaceae**

210 Using all 555,682 predicted protein sequences from the 15 genomes, we inferred 42,539  
211 homologous sets (of size  $\geq 2$ ; see Methods); here we refer to these sets as gene families. Of the  
212 42,539 families, 18,453 (43.38%) contain genes specific to Symbiodiniaceae (Fig. 4). Interestingly,  
213 more (8828) gene families are specific to sequenced isolates of *Symbiodinium* than to sequenced  
214 isolates of the other Symbiodiniaceae combined (2043 specific to *Breviolum*, *Cladocopium* and

215 *Fugacium* isolates). Although the simplest explanation is that substantially more gene families have  
216 been gained (or preserved) in *Symbiodinium* than in the other three genera, we cannot dismiss  
217 potential biases caused by our more-comprehensive taxon sampling for this genus. In contrast, a  
218 previous study reported substantially more gene families specific to the clade encompassing  
219 *Breviolum*, *Cladocopium* and *Fugacium* (26,474) than specific to *Symbiodinium* (3577)<sup>7</sup>. It is  
220 difficult to compare these two results because the previous study used predominantly transcriptomic  
221 data (which are fragmented and include transcript isoforms), proteins predicted with distinct and  
222 inconsistent methods, and a different approach to delineate gene families.

223 Of all families, 2500 (5.88%) contain genes from all 15 Suessiales isolates; 4677 (10.9%) represent  
224 14 or more isolates. We consider these 4677 as the core gene families to Suessiales. Only 406 gene  
225 families are exclusive and common to all 13 Symbiodiniaceae isolates; 914 represent 12 or more  
226 isolates. Similarly, 193 are exclusive and common to all nine *Symbiodinium* isolates; 539 represent  
227 eight or more isolates. We define these 914 and 539 families as the core gene families for  
228 Symbiodiniaceae and for *Symbiodinium*, respectively.

229 Despite the variable quality and completeness of the genome assemblies analysed here  
230 (Supplementary Table 1, Supplementary Figure 4), we consider these results more reliable than  
231 those based largely on transcriptome data<sup>7</sup>, in which transcript isoforms, in addition to quality and  
232 completeness of the datasets, can result in overestimation of gene numbers and introduce noise and  
233 bias to the data. The smaller number of gene families shared among Symbiodiniaceae found here  
234 (*i.e.* 18,453 compared to 76,087 in the earlier study<sup>7</sup>) likely reflects our more-conservative approach  
235 based on whole-genome sequenced data. Nonetheless, our observations support the notion that  
236 evolution of gene families has contributed to the diversification of Symbiodiniaceae<sup>7</sup>.

### 237 **Core genes of Symbiodiniaceae and of *Symbiodinium* encode similar functions**

238 To identify gene functions characteristic of Symbiodiniaceae and *Symbiodinium*, we carried out  
239 enrichment analyses based on Gene Ontology (GO)<sup>17</sup> of the annotated gene functions in the

240 corresponding core families. Among the core genes of Symbiodiniaceae, the most significantly  
241 overrepresented GO terms relate to retrotransposition, components of the membrane (including  
242 ABC transporters), cellulose binding, and reduction and oxidation reactions of the electron transport  
243 chain (Supplementary Table 5). Retrotransposition has been shown to contribute to gene-family  
244 expansion and changes in the gene structure of Symbiodiniaceae<sup>8,18</sup>. The enrichment of this  
245 function in Symbiodiniaceae may be due to a common origin of genes that encode remnant protein  
246 domains from past retrotransposition events (*e.g.* genes encoding reverse transcriptase, as  
247 previously reported<sup>8</sup>). Proteins integrated in the cell membrane are relevant to symbiosis<sup>19,20</sup>. For  
248 instance, ABC transporters may play a major role in the exchange of nutrients between host and  
249 symbiotic Symbiodiniaceae<sup>21</sup>. The enrichment of cellulose-binding function may be related to the  
250 changes in the cell wall during the transition between the mastigote and coccoid stages common in  
251 symbiotic Symbiodiniaceae<sup>22</sup>. The overrepresentation of electron transport chain functions may be  
252 associated with the acclimation of Symbiodiniaceae to different light conditions and/or to  
253 adjustments of the thylakoid membrane composition to prevent photoinhibition under stress<sup>23,24</sup>.

254 Similarly, among core genes of *Symbiodinium*, the most significantly enriched functions are related  
255 to retrotransposition (Supplementary Table 6). This is likely a reflection of the higher content of  
256 LINEs in *Symbiodinium* genomes (and perhaps also of LTRs in *S. tridacnidorum* CCMP2592 and *S.*  
257 *natans* CCMP2548) compared to the other Symbiodiniaceae isolates (Fig. 2 and Supplementary  
258 Figure 5). Nevertheless, the presence of retrotransposition among the functions overrepresented in  
259 the cores of both Symbiodiniaceae and *Symbiodinium* supports the notion of substantial divergence,  
260 potentially result of pseudogenisation or neofunctionalisation, accumulated between gene homologs  
261 that prevents the clustering of these homologs within the same gene family<sup>7,8</sup>.

## 262 **Functions related to symbiosis and stress response are conserved in Suessiales**

263 We further examined the functions annotated for the predicted genes of all 15 Suessiales isolates  
264 based on the annotated GO terms and protein domains. A recent study, focusing on the

265 transcriptomic changes in *Cladocopium* sp. following establishment of symbiosis with coral  
266 larvae<sup>21</sup>, compiled a list of symbiosis-related gene functions in Symbiodiniaceae. We searched for  
267 these functions, and found that they are conserved in Symbiodiniaceae regardless of the lifestyle  
268 (e.g. the free-living *S. natans*, *S. pilosum* and *F. kawagutii*, or the opportunistic *S. necroappetens*),  
269 and even in the outgroup *P. glacialis* (Fig. 5). This result supports the notion that genomes of  
270 dinoflagellates encode gene functions conducive to adaptation to a symbiotic lifestyle<sup>10</sup>. However,  
271 we observed a trend of reduced abundance of these functions in genes of *B. minutum*, *C. goreau*  
272 and *Cladocopium* sp. C92, with the exception of genes encoding ankyrin and tetratricopeptide  
273 repeat domains. Although multiple Pfam domains of ankyrin or tetratricopeptide repeats exist, all  
274 isolates exhibit consistently higher abundance for specific types (PF12796 and PF13424,  
275 respectively). Interestingly, despite the presence of ABC transporters in the enriched functions of  
276 the core genes of Symbiodiniaceae (Supplementary Table 5), they appear to occur in low  
277 abundance.

278 The abundance of functions associated with response to distinct types of stress, cell division, DNA  
279 damage repair, photobiology and motility also appear to be conserved across Suessiales (Fig. 6).  
280 The abundance of genes annotated with DNA repair functions is consistent with the previously  
281 reported overrepresentation of these functions in genomes and transcriptomes of Suessiales<sup>7</sup> and the  
282 presence of gene orthologs involved in a wide range of DNA damage responses in dinoflagellates<sup>25</sup>.  
283 Likewise, the relatively high abundance of functions related to DNA recombination may represent  
284 further support for the potential of sexual reproduction in these dinoflagellates<sup>11,26</sup>, and for the  
285 contribution of sexual recombination to genetic diversity of Symbiodiniaceae<sup>27-31</sup>. Moreover, the  
286 higher abundance of a cold-shock DNA-binding domain and bacteriorhodopsin in *P. glacialis*  
287 compared to the Symbiodiniaceae isolates highlights the adaptation of this species to extreme cold  
288 and low-light environments, and is consistent with the highly duplicated genes encoding these  
289 functions in *P. glacialis* genomes<sup>14</sup>.

## 290 **Discussion**

291 Our results suggest that whereas gene functions appear to be largely conserved across isolates from  
292 the same order (Suessiales), family (Symbiodiniaceae) and genus (*Symbiodinium*), there is  
293 substantial genome-sequence divergence among these isolates. However, what drives this  
294 divergence remains an open question. Although sexual recombination probably contributes to the  
295 extensive genetic diversity in Symbiodiniaceae<sup>27-31</sup>, its limitation to homologous regions renders its  
296 contribution as the sole driver of divergence unlikely. The evolutionary transition from a free-living  
297 to a symbiotic lifestyle can contribute to the loss of conserved synteny as consequence of large- and  
298 small-scale structural rearrangements<sup>16,32,33</sup>. The enhanced activity of mobile elements in the early  
299 stages of this transition can further disrupt synteny, impact gene structure and accelerate mutation  
300 rate<sup>34,35</sup>. However *S. natans* and *S. pilosum*, for which the free-living lifestyle has been postulated to  
301 be ancestral<sup>8</sup>, are still quite divergent from each other (Fig. 1). Ancient events, such as geological  
302 changes or emergence of hosts, are thought to influence diversification of Symbiodiniaceae<sup>6,36,37</sup>  
303 and may help explain the divergence of the extant lineages. For example, in a hypothetical scenario,  
304 drastic changes in environmental conditions could have split the ancestral Symbiodiniaceae  
305 population into multiple sub-populations with very small population sizes. This would have enabled  
306 rapid divergence among the sub-populations that, in turn, could have evolved and diversified  
307 independently into the extant taxa.

308 Although genome data generally provide a comprehensive view of gene functions, we cannot  
309 dismiss artefacts that may have been introduced by the type of sequence data used to generate the  
310 genome assemblies analysed here. Genes encoding functions critical to dinoflagellates often occur  
311 in multiple copies, and those of Symbiodiniaceae are no exceptions<sup>8,10,14</sup>. Incorporation of long-read  
312 sequence data in the genome assembly is important to resolve repetitive elements (including genes  
313 occurring in multiple copies) and allow for more-accurate analysis of abundance or enrichment of  
314 gene functions. On the other hand, accurate inference of gene families can be challenging especially

315 for gene homologs with an intricate evolutionary history. Moreover, a good taxa representation can  
316 aid the inference of homology<sup>38,39</sup>. Data that better resolve multi-copy genes (*e.g.* through the  
317 incorporation of long-read sequences in the assembly process<sup>8</sup>) will allow better understanding of  
318 gene loss and innovation along the genome evolution of Symbiodiniaceae.

319 This work reports the first whole-genome comparison at multiple taxonomic levels within  
320 dinoflagellates: within Order Suessiales, within Family Symbiodiniaceae, within Genus  
321 *Symbiodinium*, and separately for the species *S. microadriaticum* and *S. tridacnidorum*. We show  
322 that whereas genome sequences can diverge substantially among Symbiodiniaceae, gene functions  
323 nonetheless remain largely conserved even across Suessiales. Our understanding of the evolution of  
324 this remarkably divergent family would benefit from more-narrowly scoped studies at the intra-  
325 generic and intra-specific levels. Even so, our work demonstrates the value of comprehensive  
326 surveys to unveil macro-evolutionary processes that led to the diversification of Symbiodiniaceae.

## 327 **Methods**

### 328 *Symbiodinium* cultures

329 Single-cell monoclonal cultures of *S. microadriaticum* CassKB8 and *S. microadriaticum* 04-  
330 503SCI.03 were acquired from Mary Alice Coffroth (Buffalo University, New York, USA), and  
331 those of *S. necroappetens* CCMP2469, *S. linucheae* CCMP2456 and *S. pilosum* CCMP2461 were  
332 purchased from the National Center for Marine Algae and Microbiota at the Bigelow Laboratory for  
333 Ocean Sciences, Maine, USA (Table 1). The cultures were maintained in multiple 100-mL batches  
334 (in 250-mL Erlenmeyer flasks) in f/2 (without silica) medium (0.2 mm filter-sterilized) under a  
335 14:10 h light-dark cycle (90  $\mu\text{E}/\text{m}^2/\text{s}$ ) at 25 °C. The medium was supplemented with antibiotics  
336 (ampicillin [10 mg/mL], kanamycin [5 mg/mL] and streptomycin [10 mg/mL]) to reduce bacterial  
337 growth.

### 338 **Nucleic acid extraction**

339 Genomic DNA was extracted following the 2×CTAB protocol with modifications. *Symbiodinium*  
340 cells were first harvested during exponential growth phase (before reaching 106 cells/mL) by  
341 centrifugation (3000 g, 15 min, room temperature (RT)). Upon removal of residual medium, the  
342 cells were snap-frozen in liquid nitrogen prior to DNA extraction, or stored at -80 °C. For DNA  
343 extraction, the cells were suspended in a lysis extraction buffer (400 µL; 100 mM Tris-Cl pH 8, 20  
344 mM EDTA pH 8, 1.4 M NaCl), before silica beads were added. In a freeze-thaw cycle, the mixture  
345 was vortexed at high speed (2 min), and immediately snap-frozen in liquid nitrogen; the cycle was  
346 repeated 5 times. The final volume of the mixture was made up to 2% w/v CTAB (from 10% w/v  
347 CTAB stock; kept at 37 °C). The mixture was treated with RNase A (Invitrogen; final  
348 concentration 20 µg/mL) at 37 °C (30 min), and Proteinase K (final concentration 120 µg/mL) at 65  
349 °C (2 h). The lysate was then subjected to standard extractions using equal volumes of  
350 phenol:chloroform:isoamyl alcohol (25:24:1 v/v; centrifugation at 14,000 g, 5 min, RT), and  
351 chloroform:isoamyl alcohol (24:1 v/w; centrifugation at 14,000 g, 5 min, RT). DNA was  
352 precipitated using pre-chilled isopropanol (gentle inversions of the tube, centrifugation at 18,000 g,  
353 15 min, 4 °C). The resulting pellet was washed with pre-chilled ethanol (70% v/v), before stored in  
354 Tris-HCl (100 mM, pH 8) buffer. DNA concentration was determined with NanoDrop (Thermo  
355 Scientific), and DNA with A230:260:280 ≈ 1.0:2.0:1.0 was considered appropriate for sequencing.  
356 Total RNA was isolated using the RNeasy Plant Mini Kit (Qiagen) following directions of the  
357 manufacturer. RNA quality and concentration were determined using Agilent 2100 BioAnalyzer.

### 358 **Genome sequence data generation and *de novo* genome assembly**

359 All genome sequence data generated for the five *Symbiodinium* isolates are detailed in  
360 Supplementary Table 7. Short-read sequence data (2 × 150 bp reads, insert length 350 bp) were  
361 generated using paired-end libraries on the Illumina HiSeq 2500 and 4000 platforms at the  
362 Australian Genome Research Facility (Melbourne) and the Translational Research Institute  
363 Australia (Brisbane). For all samples, except for *S. pilosum* CCMP2461, an additional paired-end

364 library (insert length 250 bp) was designed such that the read-pairs of  $2 \times 150$  bp would overlap.  
365 Quality assessment of the raw paired-end data was done with FastQC v0.11.5, and subsequent  
366 processing with Trimmomatic v0.36<sup>40</sup>. To ensure high-quality read data for downstream analyses,  
367 the paired-end mode of Trimmomatic was run with the settings:  
368 ILLUMINACLIP:[AdapterFile]:2:30:10 LEADING:30 TRAILING:30 SLIDINGWINDOW:4:25  
369 MINLEN:100 AVGQUAL:30; CROP and HEADCROP were run (prior to LEADING and  
370 TRAILING) when required to remove read ends with nucleotide biases. Genome size and sequence  
371 read coverage were estimated from the trimmed read pairs based on *k*-mer frequency analysis  
372 (Supplementary Table 2) as counted with Jellyfish v2.2.6; proportion of the single-copy regions of  
373 the genome and heterozygosity were computed with GenomeScope v1.0<sup>41</sup>. *De novo* genome  
374 assembly was performed for all isolates with CLC Genomics Workbench v7.5.1  
375 ([qiagenbioinformatics.com](http://qiagenbioinformatics.com)) at default parameters, and using the filtered read pairs and single-end  
376 reads. The genome assemblies of *S. microadriaticum* 04-503SCI.03, *S. microadriaticum* CassKB8,  
377 *S. linucheae* CCMP2456 and *S. pilosum* CCMP2461 were further scaffolded with transcriptome  
378 data (see below) using L\_RNA\_scaffolder<sup>42</sup>. Short sequences (<1000 kbp) were removed from the  
379 assemblies.

### 380 **Removal of putative microbial contaminants**

381 To identify putative sequences from bacteria, archaea and viruses in the genome scaffolds, we  
382 followed the approach of Chen *et al.*<sup>15</sup>. In brief, we first searched the scaffolds (BLASTn) against a  
383 database of bacterial, archaeal and viral genomes from RefSeq (release 88), and identified those  
384 with significant hits ( $E \leq 10^{-20}$  and bit score  $\geq 1000$ ). We then examined the sequence cover of  
385 these regions in each scaffold, and identified the percentage (in length) contributed by these regions  
386 relative to the scaffold length. We assessed the added length of implicated genome scaffolds across  
387 different thresholds of percentage sequence cover in the alignment, and the corresponding gene  
388 models in these scaffolds as predicted from available transcripts (see below) using PASA v2.3.3<sup>43</sup>,  
389 with a modified script ([github.com/chancx/dinoflag-alt-splice](https://github.com/chancx/dinoflag-alt-splice)) that recognises an additional donor



390 splice site (GA), and TransDecoder v5.2.0<sup>43</sup>. Any scaffolds with significant bacterial, archaeal or  
391 viral hits covering  $\geq 5\%$  of its length was considered as a putative contaminant and removed from  
392 the assembly (Supplementary Figure 10). Additionally, the length of the remaining scaffolds was  
393 plotted against their G+C content; scaffolds ( $>100$  kbp) with irregular G+C content (in this case,  
394  $G+C \leq 45\%$  or  $\geq 60\%$ ) were considered as putative contaminant sequences and removed  
395 (Supplementary Figure 11).

### 396 **Generation and assembly of transcriptome data**

397 We generated transcriptome sequence data for the *Symbiodinium* isolates, except for *S.*  
398 *necroappetens* CCMP2469 for which the extraction of total RNAs failed (Supplementary Table 8).  
399 Short-read sequence data ( $2 \times 150$  bp reads) were generated using paired-end libraries on the  
400 Illumina NovaSeq 6000 platform at the Australian Genome Research Facility (Melbourne). Quality  
401 assessment of the raw paired-end data was done with FastQC v0.11.4, and subsequent processing  
402 with Trimmomatic v0.35<sup>40</sup>. To ensure high-quality read data for downstream analyses, the paired-  
403 end mode of Trimmomatic was run with the settings: HEADCROP:10  
404 ILLUMINACLIP:[AdapterFile]:2:30:10 CROP:125 SLIDINGWINDOW:4:13 MINLEN:50. The  
405 surviving read pairs were further trimmed with QUADTrim v2.0.2  
406 ([bitbucket.org/arobinson/quadtrim](http://bitbucket.org/arobinson/quadtrim)) with the flags *-m2* and *-g* to remove homopolymeric guanine  
407 repeats at the end of the reads (a systematic error of Illumina NovaSeq 6000).

408 Transcriptome assembly was performed with Trinity v2.1.1<sup>44</sup> in two modes: *de novo* and genome-  
409 guided. *De novo* transcriptome assembly was done using default parameters and the trimmed read  
410 pairs. For genome-guided assembly, high-quality read pairs were aligned to their corresponding *de*  
411 *novo* genome assembly (prior to scaffolding) using Bowtie 2 v2.2.7<sup>45</sup>. Transcriptomes were then  
412 assembled with Trinity in the genome-guided mode using the alignment information, and setting the  
413 maximum intron size to 100,000 bp. Both *de novo* and genome-guided transcriptome assemblies

414 from each of the four samples were used for scaffolding (see above) and gene prediction (see  
415 below) in their corresponding genome.

## 416 **Gene prediction and function annotation**

417 We adopted the same comprehensive *ab initio* gene prediction approach reported in Chen *et al.*<sup>15</sup>,  
418 using available genes and transcriptomes of Symbiodiniaceae as supporting evidence. A *de novo*  
419 repeat library was first derived for the genome assembly using RepeatModeler v1.0.11  
420 ([repeatmasker.org/RepeatModeler](http://repeatmasker.org/RepeatModeler)). All repeats (including known repeats in RepeatMasker database  
421 release 20180625) were masked using RepeatMasker v4.0.7 ([repeatmasker.org](http://repeatmasker.org)).

422 As direct transcript evidence, we used the *de novo* and genome-guided transcriptome assemblies  
423 from Illumina short-read sequence data (see above). For *S. necroappetens* CCMP2469, we used  
424 transcriptome data of the other four *Symbiodinium* isolates for gene prediction, as well as other  
425 available transcriptome datasets of *Symbiodinium*: *S. microadriaticum* CassKB8<sup>46</sup>, *S.*  
426 *microadriaticum* CCMP2467<sup>10</sup>, *S. tridacnidorum* Sh18<sup>12</sup>, and *S. tridacnidorum* CCMP2592 and *S.*  
427 *natans* CCMP2548<sup>8</sup>. We also combined the *S. microadriaticum* CassKB8 transcriptome data  
428 generated here with those from a previous study<sup>46</sup>. We concatenated all the transcript datasets per  
429 sample, and vector sequences were discarded using SeqClean ([sourceforge.net/projects/seqclean](http://sourceforge.net/projects/seqclean))  
430 based on shared similarity to sequences in the UniVec database build 10.0. We used PASA v2.3.3<sup>43</sup>,  
431 customised to recognise dinoflagellates alternative splice donor sites ([github.com/chancx/dinoflag-](https://github.com/chancx/dinoflag-alt-splice)  
432 [alt-splice](https://github.com/chancx/dinoflag-alt-splice)), and TransDecoder v5.2.0<sup>43</sup> to predict CDS. These CDS were searched (BLASTp,  $E \leq$   
433  $10^{-20}$ ) against a protein database that consists of RefSeq proteins (release 88) and a collection of  
434 available and predicted proteins (using TransDecoder v5.2.0<sup>43</sup>) of Symbiodiniaceae (total of  
435 111,591,828 sequences; Supplementary Table 9). We used the  
436 *analyze\_blastPlus\_topHit\_coverage.pl* script from Trinity v2.6.6<sup>44</sup> to retrieve only those CDS  
437 having an alignment >70% to a protein (*i.e.* nearly full-length) in the database for subsequent  
438 analyses.

439 The near full-length gene models were checked for transposable elements (TEs) using HHblits  
440 v2.0.16 (probability = 80% and  $E$ -value =  $10^{-5}$ ), searching against the JAMg transposon database  
441 ([sourceforge.net/projects/jamg/files/databases](https://sourceforge.net/projects/jamg/files/databases)), and TransposonPSI ([transposonpsi.sourceforge.net](https://transposonpsi.sourceforge.net)).  
442 Gene models containing TEs were removed from the gene set, and redundancy reduction was  
443 conducted using cd-hit v4.6<sup>47,48</sup> (ID = 75%). The remaining gene models were processed using the  
444 *prepare\_golden\_genes\_for\_predictors.pl* script from the JAMg pipeline (altered to recognise GA  
445 donor splice sites; [jamg.sourceforge.net](https://jamg.sourceforge.net)). This script produces a set of “golden genes” that were  
446 used as training set for the *ab initio* gene-prediction tools AUGUSTUS v3.3.1<sup>49</sup> (customised to  
447 recognise the non-canonical splice sites of dinoflagellates; [github.com/chancx/dinoflag-alt-splice](https://github.com/chancx/dinoflag-alt-splice))  
448 and SNAP v2006-07-28<sup>50</sup>. Independently, the soft-masked genome sequences were used for gene  
449 prediction using GeneMark-ES v4.32<sup>51</sup>. Swiss-Prot proteins (downloaded on 27 June 2018) and the  
450 predicted proteins of Symbiodiniaceae (Supplementary Table 9) were used as supporting evidence  
451 for gene prediction using MAKER v2.31.10<sup>52</sup> protein2genome; the custom repeat library was used  
452 by RepeatMasker as part of MAKER prediction. A primary set of predicted genes was produced  
453 using EvidenceModeler v1.1.1<sup>53</sup>, modified to recognise GA donor splice sites. This package  
454 combined the gene predictions from PASA, SNAP, AUGUSTUS, GeneMark-ES and MAKER  
455 protein2genome into a single set of evidence-based predictions. The weightings used for the  
456 package were: PASA 10, Maker protein 8, AUGUSTUS 6, SNAP 2 and GeneMark-ES 2. Only  
457 gene models with transcript evidence (*i.e.* predicted by PASA) or supported by at least two *ab initio*  
458 prediction programs were kept. We assessed completeness by querying the predicted protein  
459 sequences in a BLASTp similarity search ( $E \leq 10^{-5}$ ,  $\geq 50\%$  query/target sequence cover) against  
460 the 458 core eukaryotic genes from CEGMA<sup>54</sup>. Transcript data support for the predicted genes was  
461 determined by BLASTn ( $E \leq 10^{-5}$ ), querying the transcript sequences against the predicted CDS  
462 from each genome. Genes for which the transcripts aligned to their CDS with at least 50% of  
463 sequence cover and 90% identity were considered as supported by transcript data.

464 Functional annotation of the predicted genes was conducted based on sequence similarity searches  
465 against known proteins following the same approach as Liu *et al.*<sup>11</sup>, in which the predicted protein  
466 sequences were first searched (BLASTp,  $E \leq 10^{-5}$ , minimum query or target cover of 50%) against  
467 the manually curated Swiss-Prot database, and those with no Swiss-Prot hits were subsequently  
468 searched against TrEMBL (both databases from UniProt, downloaded on 27 June 2018). The best  
469 UniProt hit with associated GO terms ([geneontology.org](http://geneontology.org)) was used to annotate the query protein  
470 with those GO terms using the UniProt-GOA mapping (downloaded on 03 June 2019). Pfam  
471 domains<sup>55</sup> were searched in the predicted proteins of all samples using PfamScan<sup>56</sup> ( $E \leq 0.001$ ) and  
472 the Pfam-A database (release 30 August 2018)<sup>55</sup>.

### 473 **Comparison of genome sequences and analysis of conserved synteny**

474 We compared the genome data of 15 isolates in Order Suessiales (Supplementary Table 1): the five  
475 for which we generated genome assemblies in this study (*S. microadriaticum* CassKB8, *S.*  
476 *microadriaticum* 04-503SCI.3, *S. necroappetens* CCMP2469, *S. linucheae* CCMP2456 and *S.*  
477 *pilosum* CCMP2461), three generated by Shoguchi and collaborators (*B. minutum*, *S. tridacnidorum*  
478 Sh18 and *Cladocopium* sp. C92)<sup>12,13</sup>, two from González-Pech *et al.* (*S. tridacnidorum* CCMP2592  
479 and *S. natans* CCMP2548)<sup>8</sup>, two from Liu *et al.* (*C. goreau* and *F. kawagutii*)<sup>11</sup>, two from Stephens  
480 *et al.* (*P. glacialis* CCMP1383 and CCMP2088)<sup>14</sup>, and one from Aranda *et al.* (*S. microadriaticum*  
481 CCMP2467)<sup>10</sup>. Genes were consistently predicted from all genomes using the same workflow<sup>8,14,15</sup>.

482 Whole-genome sequence alignment was carried out for all possible genome pairs (225  
483 combinations counting each genome as both reference and query) with nucmer v4.0.0<sup>57</sup>, using  
484 anchor matches that are unique in the sequences from both reference and query sequences (`--mum`).  
485 Here, the similarity between two genomes was assessed based on the proportion of the total bases in  
486 the genome sequences of the query that aligned to the reference genome sequences ( $Q$ ) and the  
487 average percent identity of one-to-one alignments (*i.e.* the reciprocal best one-to-one aligned  
488 sequences for the implicated region between the query and the reference;  $I$ ). For example, if two

489 genomes are identical, both  $Q$  and  $I$  would have a value of 100%. Filtered read pairs (see above,  
490 Supplementary Table 7) from all isolates were aligned to each other's (and against their own)  
491 assembled genome scaffolds using BWA v0.7.13<sup>58</sup>; mapping rates relative to base quality scores  
492 were calculated with SAMStat v1.5.1<sup>59</sup>. For each possible genome-pair, we further assessed  
493 sequence similarity of the repeat-masked genome assemblies based on the similarity between their  
494  $k$ -mers profiles. To determine the appropriate  $k$ -mer size to use, we extracted and counted  $k$ -mers  
495 using Jellyfish v2.2.6<sup>60</sup> at multiple  $k$  values (between 11 and 101, step size = 2);  $k = 21$  was found  
496 to capture an adequate level of uniqueness among these genomes as inferred based on the  
497 proportion of distinct and unique  $k$ -mers<sup>61</sup> (Supplementary Figure 12). We then computed pairwise  
498  $D_2^S$  distances ( $d$ ) for the 15 isolates following Bernard *et al.*<sup>62</sup>. The calculated distances were used  
499 to build a NJ tree with Neighbor (PHYLIP v3.697)<sup>63</sup> at default settings. For deriving an alignment-  
500 free similarity network, pairwise similarity was calculated as  $10 - d^{64}$ .

501 To assess conserved synteny, we identified collinear syntenic gene blocks common to each genome  
502 pair based on the predicted genes and their associated genomic positions. Following Liu *et al.*<sup>11</sup>, we  
503 define a syntenic gene block as a region conserved in two genomes in which five or more genes are  
504 coded in the same order and orientation. First, we concatenated the sequences of all predicted  
505 proteins to conduct all-*versus*-all BLASTp ( $E \leq 10^{-5}$ ) searching for similar proteins between each  
506 genome pair. The hit pairs were then filtered to include only those where the alignment covered at  
507 least half of either the query or the matched protein sequence. Next, we ran MCSanX<sup>65</sup> in inter-  
508 specific mode ( $-b 2$ ) to identify blocks of at least five genes shared by each genome pair. We  
509 independently searched for collinear syntenic blocks within each genome (*i.e.* duplicated gene  
510 blocks). Likewise, we conducted a BLASTp ( $E \leq 10^{-5}$ ) to search for similar proteins within each  
511 genome; the hit pairs were filtered to include only those where the alignment covered at least half of  
512 either the query or the matched protein sequence. We then ran MCSanX in intra-specific mode ( $-b$   
513  $I$ ).

## 514 **Genic features, gene families and function enrichment**

515 We examined variation among the predicted genes for all Suessiales isolates with a Principal  
516 Component Analysis (PCA; Fig. 3A) using relevant metrics (Supplementary Table 4), following  
517 Chen *et al.*<sup>15</sup>. We calculated G+C content in the third position of synonymous codons and effective  
518 number of codons used ( $N_c$ ) with CodonW ([codonw.sourceforge.net](http://codonw.sourceforge.net)) for complete CDS (defined as  
519 those with both start and stop codons) of all isolates. Groups of homologous sequences from all  
520 genomes were inferred with OrthoFinder v2.3.1<sup>66</sup> and considered as gene families. A rooted species  
521 tree was inferred using 28,116 families encompassing at least 4 genes from any isolate using  
522 STAG<sup>67</sup> and STRIDE<sup>68</sup>, following the standard OrthoFinder pipeline.

523 GO enrichment of genes in families core to Symbiodiniaceae and *Symbiodinium* (defined as those  
524 common to all isolates in, and exclusive to, each group) was conducted using the topGO  
525 Bioconductor package<sup>69</sup> executed in R v3.5.1, implementing Fisher's Exact test and the  
526 'elimination' method; the GO terms associated to the genes of all isolates surveyed here were used  
527 as background to compare against. We considered a  $p \leq 0.01$  as significant.

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703 in interpreting the alignment-free phylogenetic tree and network.

## 704 **Author contributions**

705 R.A.G.P., M.A.R. and C.X.C. conceived the study; R.A.G.P., Y.C., T.G.S., S.S., A.R.M., D.B.,  
706 M.A.R. and C.X.C. designed the analyses and interpreted the results; C.X.C. maintained the  
707 dinoflagellate cultures; C.X.C. and A.R.M. extracted biological materials for sequencing; R.A.G.P.,  
708 Y.C., T.S., S.S. and R.L. conducted all computational analyses. R.A.G.P. prepared all figures and  
709 tables, and prepared the first draft of the manuscript; all authors wrote, reviewed, commented on  
710 and approved the final manuscript.

## 711 **Competing interests**

712 The authors declare no competing interests.

## 713 **Data availability**

714 The assembled genomes, predicted gene models and proteins from *S. microadriaticum* CassKB8, *S.*  
715 *microadriaticum* 04-503SCI.03, *S. necroappetens* CCMP2469, *S. linucheae* CCMP245 and *S.*  
716 *pilosum* CCMP2461 are available at [cloudstor.aarnet.edu.au/plus/s/095Tqepmq2VBztd](https://cloudstor.aarnet.edu.au/plus/s/095Tqepmq2VBztd).

717 **Tables**

718 **Table 1 *Symbiodinium* isolates for which genome data were generated and genome assembly statistics**

Details on the *Symbiodinium* isolates for which genome data were generated in this study, and their corresponding genome assembly statistics.

Isolate details/ assembly statistic	<i>S. microadriaticum</i>		<i>S. necroappetens</i>	<i>S. linucheae</i>	<i>S. pilosum</i>
	CassKB8	04-503SCI.03	CCMP2469	CCMP2456	CCMP2461
<i>ITS2</i> -subtype	A1	A1	A13	A4	A2
Lifestyle	Symbiotic	Symbiotic	Opportunistic	Symbiotic	Free-living
Host	<i>Cassiopea</i> sp. (jellyfish)	<i>Orbicella</i> <i>faveolata</i> (stony coral)	<i>Condylactis</i> <i>gigantea</i> (anemone)	<i>Plexaura</i> <i>homamalla</i> (octocoral)	<i>Zoanthus</i> <i>sociatus</i> (zoanthid)
Collection site	Hawaii (Pacific)	Florida (Atlantic)	Jamaica (Caribbean)	Bermuda (Atlantic)	Jamaica (Caribbean)
Overall G+C (%)	51.91	50.46	50.85	50.36	48.21
Number of scaffolds	67,937	57,558	104,583	37,772	48,302
Assembly length (bp)	813,744,491	775,008,844	767,953,253	694,902,460	1,089,424,773
N50 scaffold length (bp)	42,989	49,975	14,528	58,075	62,444
Max. scaffold length (Mbp)	0.38	1.08	1.34	0.46	1.34
Number of contigs	167,159	162,765	157,685	141,380	142,969
N50 contig length (bp)	10,400	11,136	11,420	11,147	17,506
Max. contig length (Mbp)	0.15	1.05	1.34	0.19	1.34
Gap (%)	1.15	1.44	0.56	1.35	0.79
Estimated genome size (bp)	1,120,150,369	1,052,668,212	1,007,022,374	914,781,885	1,993,912,458
Assembled fraction of genome (%)	72.65	73.62	76.26	75.96	54.64

719

## 720 **Figure Legends**

### 721 **Fig. 1 Genome divergence among Symbiodiniaceae**

722 **(A)** Similarity between Symbiodiniaceae (and the outgroup *P. glacialis*) based on pairwise whole-  
723 genome sequence alignments. The colour of the square depicts the average percent identity of the  
724 best reciprocal one-to-one aligned regions ( $I$ ) between each genome pair and the size of the square  
725 is proportional to the percent of the query genome that aligned to the reference ( $Q$ ), as shown in the  
726 legend. The tree topologies on the left and bottom indicate the known phylogenetic relationship<sup>6</sup>  
727 among the isolates. Isolates in *Symbiodinium* are highlighted in grey. **(B)** Total sequence length (y-  
728 axis) of genomic regions aligning to the reference genome assembly of *S. microadriaticum*  
729 CCMP2467 shared by different numbers of the datasets used in this study ( $x$ -axis). Data points  
730 represent distinct combinations of datasets, ranging from one (an individual genome dataset) to six  
731 (six datasets aligning to the same regions of the reference), and are coloured to show the genera to  
732 which they correspond; only one combination includes distinct genera (*S. tridacnidorum* Sh18 and  
733 *Cladocopium* sp. C92). **(C)** NJ tree based on 21-mers shared by genomes of Suessiales; branch  
734 lengths are proportional to the estimated distances (see Methods). The shortest and longest  
735 distances ( $d$ ) in the tree, as well as average distances ( $\bar{d}$ ) among representative clades are shown  
736 following the bottom-left colour code. ‘Clade BCF’: clade including *B. minutum*, *F. kawagutii* and  
737 the two *Cladocopium* isolates. **(D)** Number of collinear syntenic gene blocks shared by pairs of  
738 genomes of Suessiales. Gene blocks shared by more than two isolates are not shown.

### 739 **Fig. 2 Repeat composition of Suessiales genomes**

740 **(A)** Percentage of sequence regions comprising the major classes of repetitive elements, shown for  
741 each genome assembly analysed in this study. **(B)** Interspersed repeat landscape for each assembled  
742 genome. Both **(A)** and **(B)** follow the colour code shown in the bottom legend.

743 **Fig. 3 PCA of gene features in Symbiodiniaceae**

744 PCA displaying the variation of predicted genes among the analysed genomes based on gene  
745 metrics (Supplementary Table 4). Data points are coloured by genus and shaped by lifestyles  
746 according to the legends to the right. Data points enclosed in a light blue area correspond to isolates  
747 with hybrid genome assemblies. Smi: *S. microadriaticum*, Sne: *S. necroappetens*, Sli: *S. linucheae*,  
748 Str: *S. tridacnidorum*, Sna: *S. natans*, Spi: *S. pilosum*, Bmi: *B. minutum*, Cgo: *C. goreau*, Csp:  
749 *Cladocopium* sp. C92, Fka: *F. kawagutii*, Pgl: *P. glacialis*. Isolate name is shown in subscript for  
750 those species with more than one isolate.

751 **Fig. 4 Number of gene families along the phylogeny of Symbiodiniaceae**

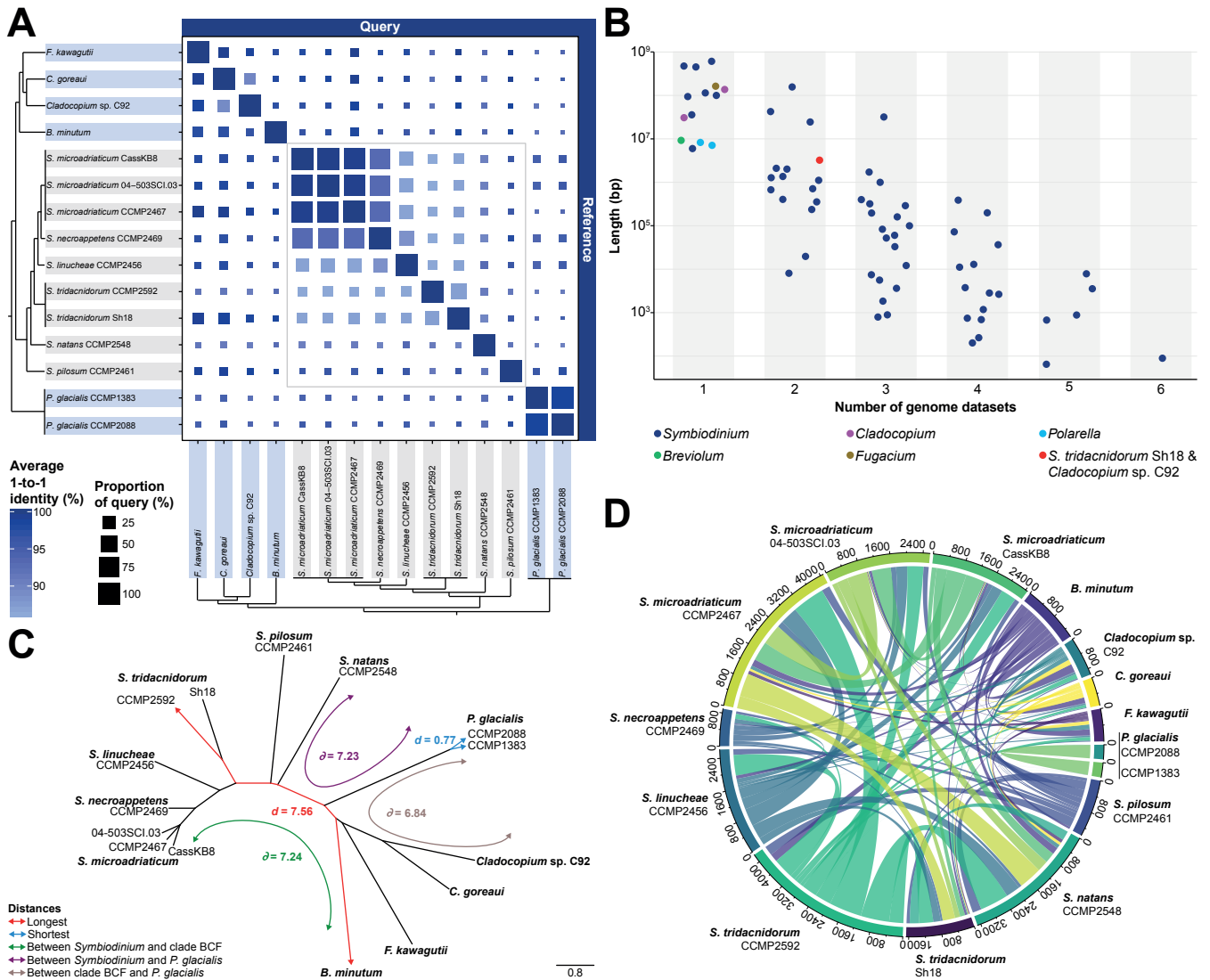
752 Species tree inferred based on 28,116 gene families containing at least 4 genes from any Suessiales  
753 isolate using STAG<sup>67</sup> and STRIDE<sup>68</sup> (part of the conventional OrthoFinder pipeline<sup>66</sup>), rooted with  
754 *P. glacialis* as outgroup. At each node, the total number of families that include genes from one or  
755 more diverging isolates is shown in dark blue, those exclusive to one or more diverging isolates in  
756 light blue. The numbers shown for each isolate (on the right) represent numbers of gene families  
757 that include genes from (dark blue) and exclusive to (light blue) that isolate. The proportion of gene  
758 trees supporting each node is shown. Branch lengths are proportional to the number of substitutions  
759 per site.

760 **Fig. 5 Relative abundance of symbiosis-related functions in genes of Suessiales**

761 Heat map showing the relative abundance ( $\alpha$ ) of GO terms (relative to the total number of genes)  
762 and protein domains (relative to the total number of identified domains) that are related to  
763 symbiosis shown for each genome. The transformed values of  $\alpha$  are shown in the form of  $3^\alpha$ .

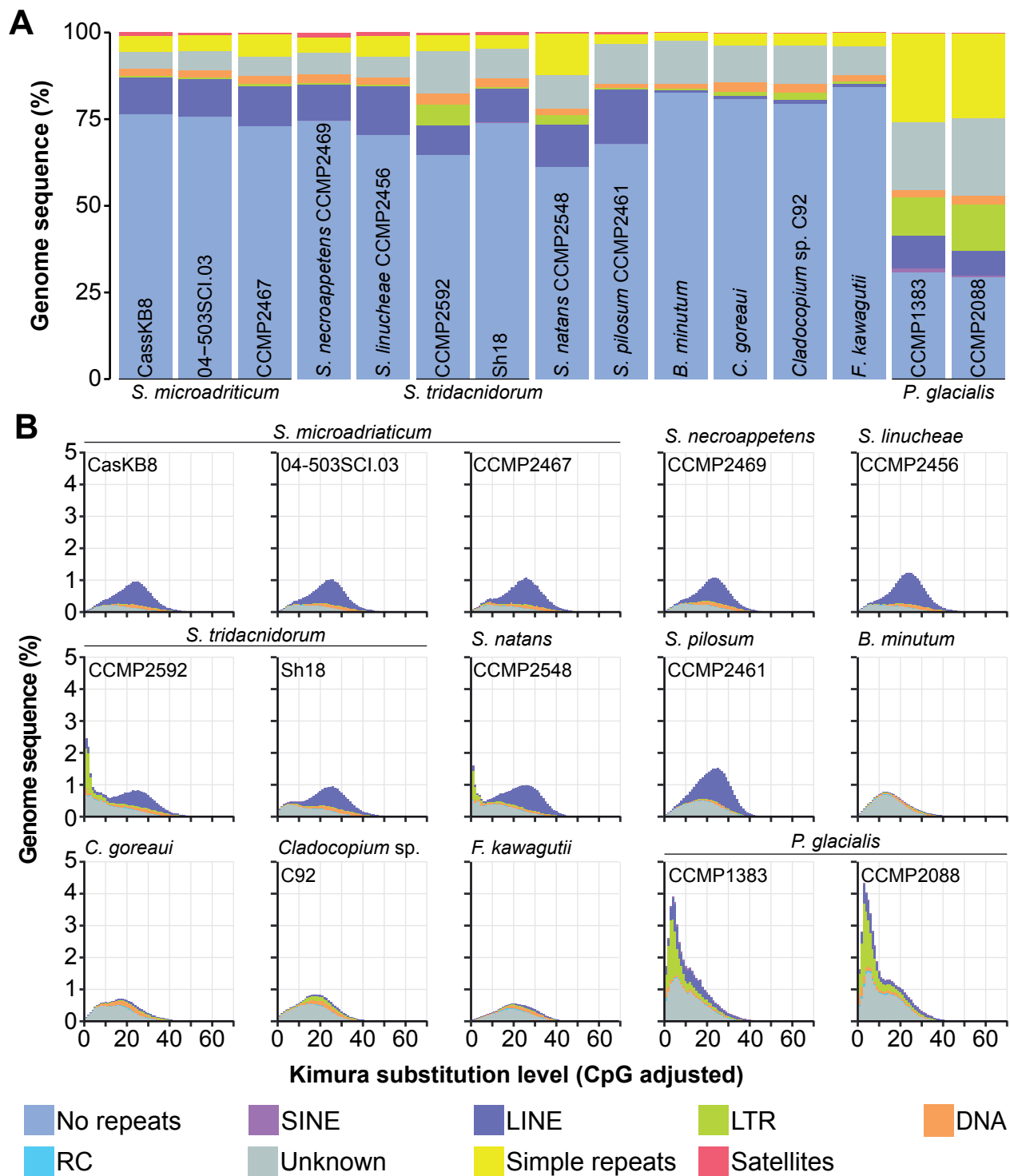
764 **Fig. 6 Relative abundance of selected functions in genes of Suessiales**

765 Heat map showing the relative abundance ( $\alpha$ ) of GO terms (relative to the total number of genes)  
766 and protein domains (relative to the total number of identified domains) that are associated with key  
767 functions shown for each genome. The transformed values of  $\alpha$  are shown in the form of  $3^\alpha$ .



**Fig. 1 Genome divergence among Symbiodiniaceae**

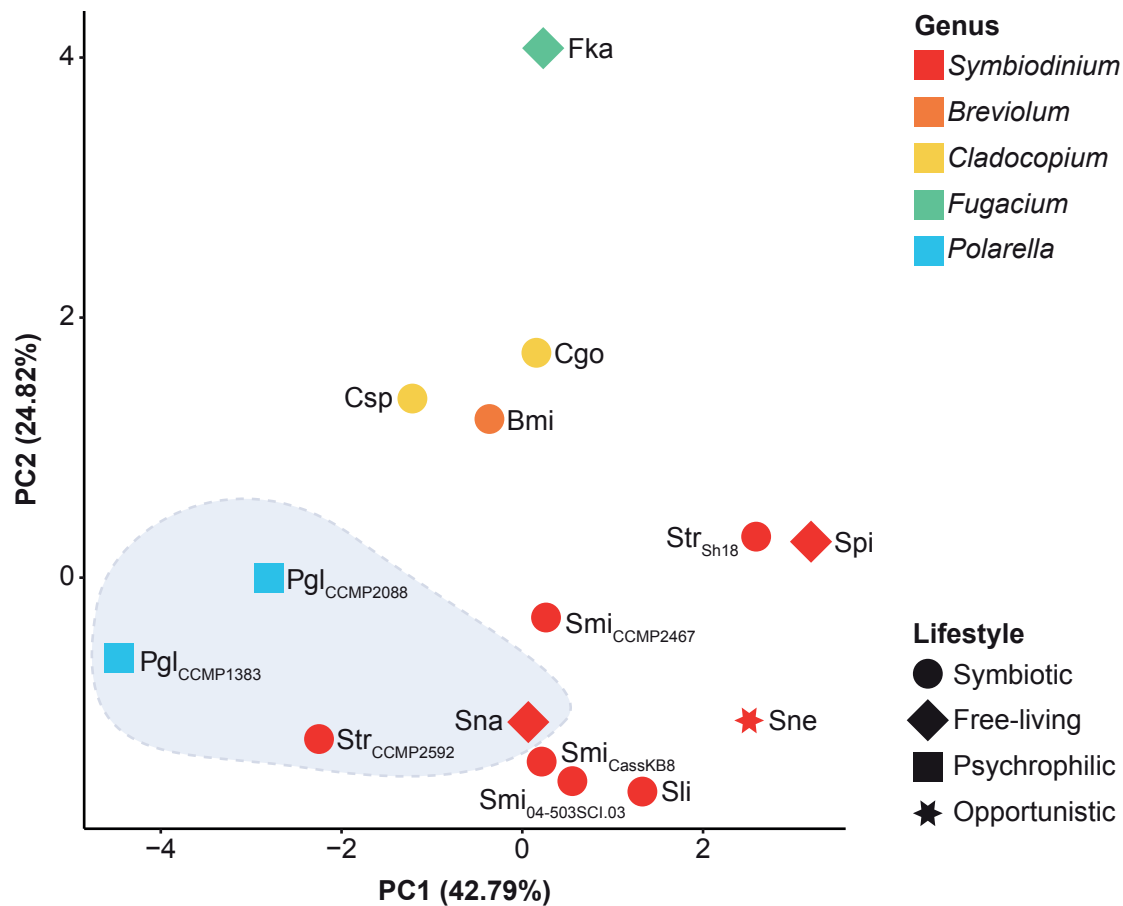
(A) Similarity between Symbiodiniaceae (and the outgroup *P. glacialis*) based on pairwise whole-genome sequence alignments. The colour of the square depicts the average percent identity of the best reciprocal one-to-one aligned regions ( $I$ ) between each genome pair and the size of the square is proportional to the percent of the query genome that aligned to the reference ( $Q$ ), as shown in the legend. The tree topologies on the left and bottom indicate the known phylogenetic relationship<sup>6</sup> among the isolates. Isolates in *Symbiodinium* are highlighted in grey. (B) Total sequence length (y-axis) of genomic regions aligning to the reference genome assembly of *S. microadriaticum* CCMP2467 shared by different numbers of the datasets used in this study (x-axis). Data points represent distinct combinations of datasets, ranging from one (an individual genome dataset) to six (six datasets aligning to the same regions of the reference), and are coloured to show the genera to which they correspond; only one combination includes distinct genera (*S. tridacnidorum* Sh18 and *Cladocopium* sp. C92). (C) NJ tree based on 21-mers shared by genomes of Suessiales; branch lengths are proportional to the estimated distances (see Methods). The shortest and longest distances ( $d$ ) in the tree, as well as average distances ( $\bar{d}$ ) among representative clades are shown following the bottom-left colour code. 'Clade BCF': clade including *B. minutum*, *F. kawagutii* and the two *Cladocopium* isolates. (D) Number of collinear syntenic gene blocks shared by pairs of genomes of Suessiales. Gene blocks shared by more than two isolates are not shown.



**Fig. 2 Repeat composition of Suessiales genomes**

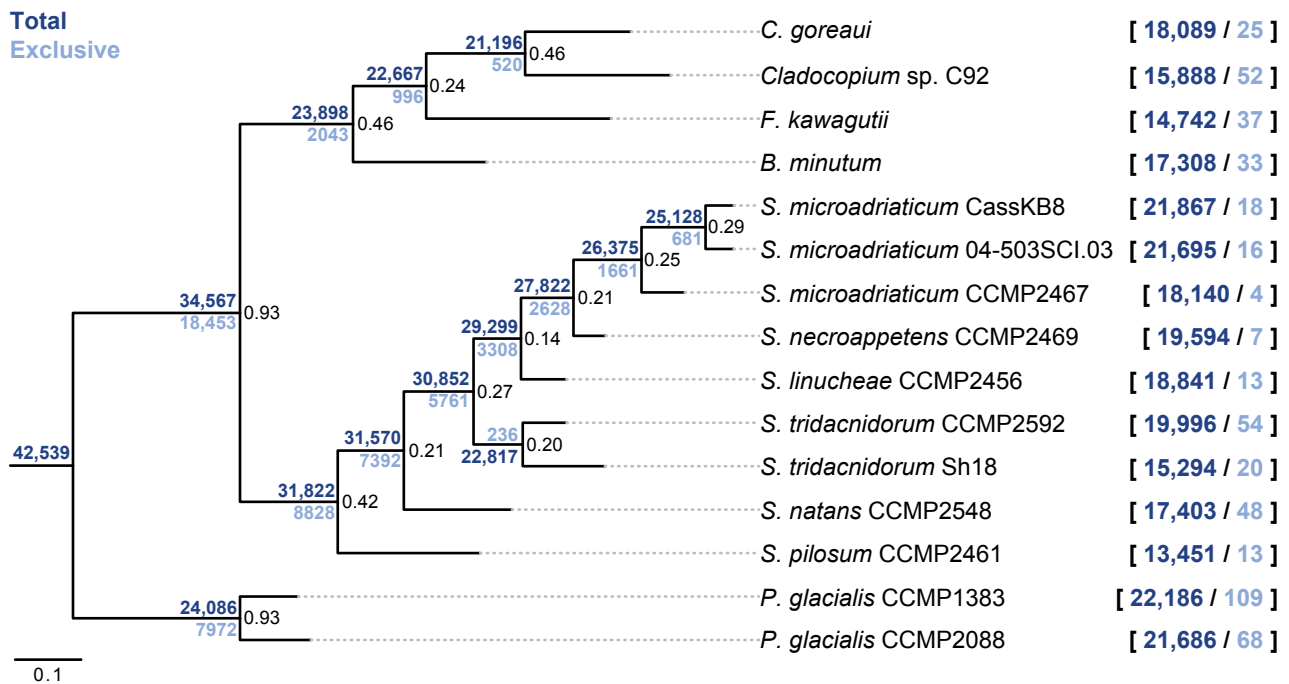
(A) Percentage of sequence regions comprising the major classes of repetitive elements, shown for each genome assembly analysed in this study. (B) Interspersed repeat landscape for each assembled genome. Both (A) and (B) follow the colour code shown in the bottom legend.





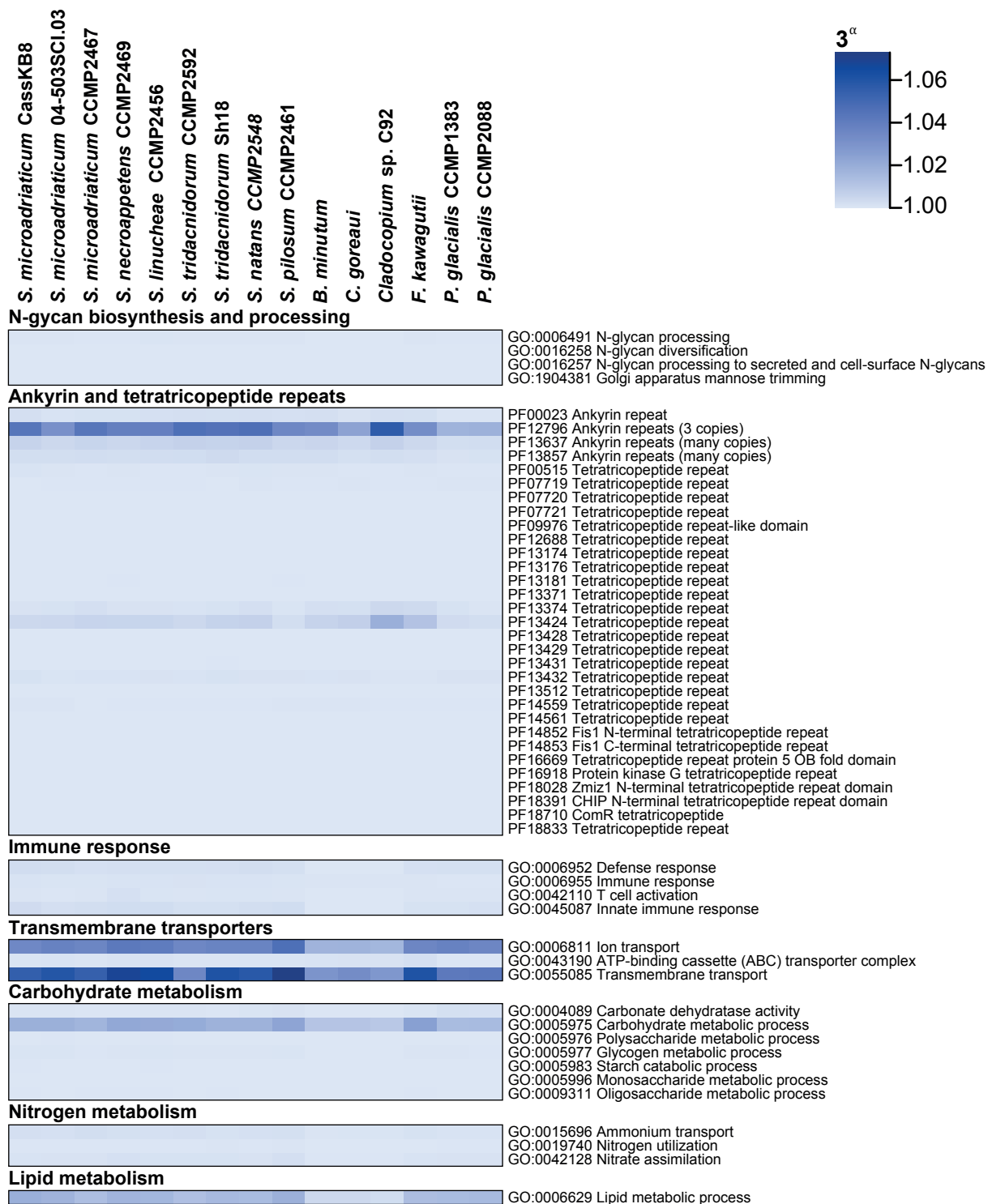
**Fig. 3 PCA of gene features in Symbiodiniaceae**

PCA displaying the variation of predicted genes among the analysed genomes based on gene metrics (Supplementary Table 4). Data points are coloured by genus and shaped by lifestyles according to the legends to the right. Data points enclosed in a light blue area correspond to isolates with hybrid genome assemblies. Smi: *S. microadriaticum*, Sne: *S. necroappetens*, Sli: *S. linucheae*, Str: *S. tridacnidorum*, Sna: *S. natans*, Spi: *S. pilosum*, Bmi: *B. minutum*, Cgo: *C. goreau*, Csp: *Cladocopium* sp. C92, Fka: *F. kawagutii*, Pgl: *P. glacialis*. Isolate name is shown in subscript for those species with more than one isolate.



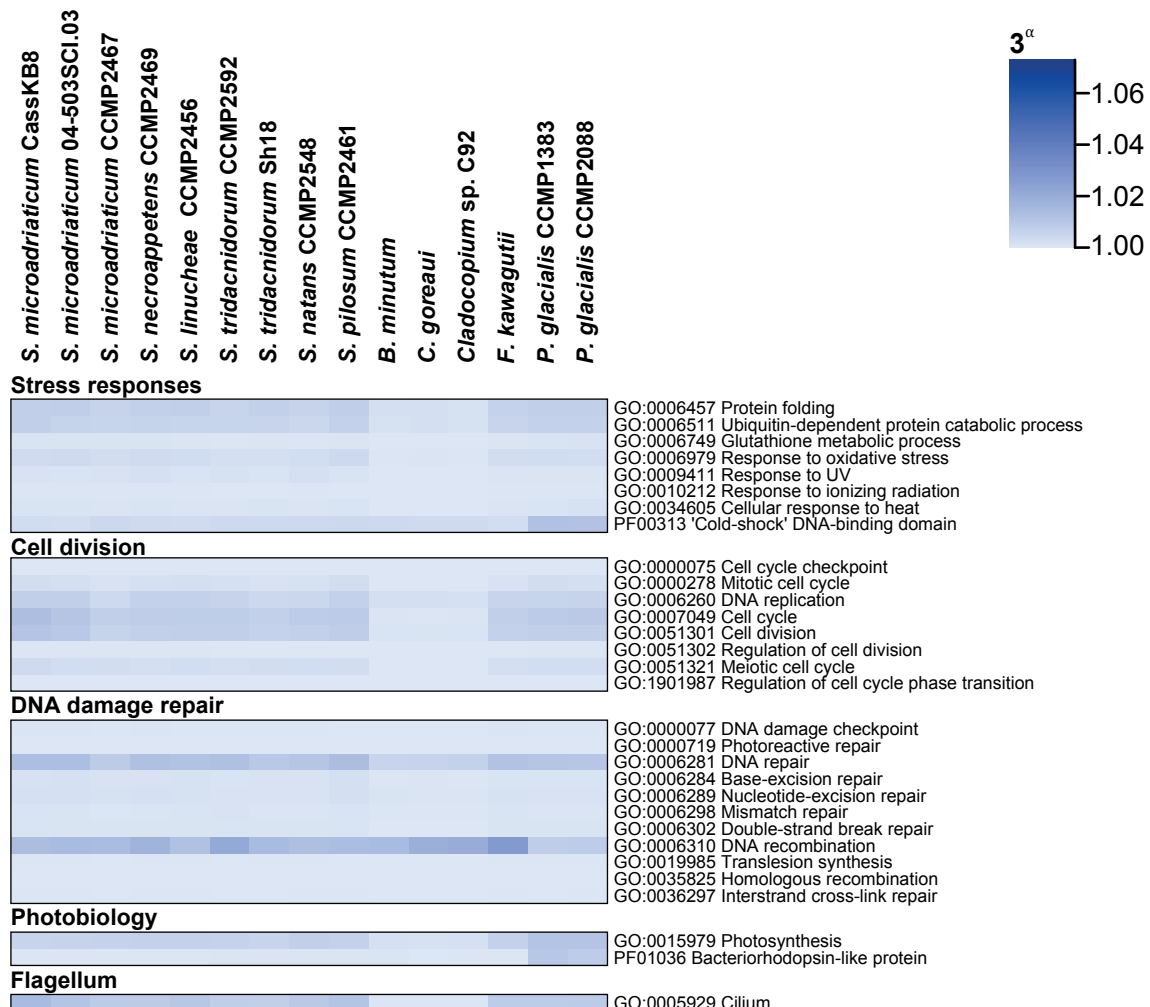
#### Fig. 4 Number of gene families along the phylogeny of Symbiodiniaceae

Species tree inferred based on 28,116 gene families containing at least 4 genes from any Suessiales isolate using STAG<sup>67</sup> and STRIDE<sup>68</sup> (part of the conventional OrthoFinder pipeline<sup>66</sup>), rooted with *P. glacialis* as outgroup. At each node, the total number of families that include genes from one or more diverging isolates is shown in dark blue, those exclusive to one or more diverging isolates in light blue. The numbers shown for each isolate (on the right) represent numbers of gene families that include genes from (dark blue) and exclusive to (light blue) that isolate. The proportion of gene trees supporting each node is shown. Branch lengths are proportional to the number of substitutions per site.



**Fig. 5 Relative abundance of symbiosis-related functions in genes of Suessiales**

Heat map showing the relative abundance ( $\alpha$ ) of GO terms (relative to the total number of genes) and protein domains (relative to the total number of identified domains) that are related to symbiosis shown for each genome. The transformed values of  $\alpha$  are shown in the form of  $3^\alpha$ .



**Fig. 6 Relative abundance of selected functions in genes of Suessiales**

Heat map showing the relative abundance ( $\alpha$ ) of GO terms (relative to the total number of genes) and protein domains (relative to the total number of identified domains) that are associated with key functions shown for each genome. The transformed values of  $\alpha$  are shown in the form of  $3^\alpha$ .