

1 **Identification of proteins and genes expressed by *Methylophaga thiooxydans* during**
2 **growth on dimethylsulfide and their presence in other members of the genus**

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20 **Abstract**

21 Dimethylsulfide is a volatile organic sulfur compound that provides the largest input of biogenic
22 sulfur from the oceans to the atmosphere, and thence back to land, constituting an important
23 link in the global sulfur cycle. Microorganisms degrading DMS affect fluxes of DMS in the
24 environment, but the underlying metabolic pathways are still poorly understood. *Methylophaga*
25 *thiooxydans* is a marine methylotrophic bacterium capable of growth on DMS as sole source of
26 carbon and energy. Using proteomics and transcriptomics we identified genes expressed during
27 growth on dimethylsulfide and methanol to refine our knowledge of the metabolic pathways
28 that are involved in DMS and methanol degradation in this strain. Amongst the most highly
29 expressed genes on DMS were the two methanethiol oxidases driving the oxidation of this
30 reactive and toxic intermediate of DMS metabolism. Growth on DMS also increased expression
31 of the enzymes of the tetrahydrofolate linked pathway of formaldehyde oxidation, in addition
32 to the tetrahydromethanopterin linked pathway. Key enzymes of the inorganic sulfur oxidation
33 pathway included flavocytochrome *c* sulfide dehydrogenase, sulfide quinone oxidoreductase,
34 and persulfide dioxygenases. A *sulP* permease was also expressed during growth on DMS.
35 Proteomics and transcriptomics also identified a number of highly expressed proteins and gene
36 products whose function is currently not understood. As the identity of some enzymes of
37 organic and inorganic sulfur metabolism previously detected in *Methylophaga* has not been
38 characterised at the genetic level yet, highly expressed uncharacterised genes provide new
39 targets for further biochemical and genetic analysis. A pan-genome analysis of six available
40 *Methylophaga* genomes showed that only two of the six investigated strains, *M. thiooxydans*
41 and *M. sulfidovorans* have the gene encoding methanethiol oxidase, suggesting that growth on
42 methylated sulfur compounds of *M. aminisulfidivorans* is likely to involve different enzymes
43 and metabolic intermediates. Hence, the pathways of DMS-utilization and subsequent C₁ and
44 sulfur oxidation are not conserved across *Methylophaga* isolates that degrade methylated sulfur
45 compounds.

46 **Introduction**

47 Dimethylsulfide is a volatile methylated sulfur compound that has been associated with the
48 'smell of the sea' (Stiefel, 1996) and which plays a crucial role in the global sulfur cycle
49 (Lomans et al., 2002). The observation of significant concentrations of DMS in the marine
50 boundary layer (Lovelock et al., 1972) led to the realisation that marine emissions of DMS are
51 driving transfer of sulfur between the marine and terrestrial environment via the atmosphere. In
52 addition, its atmospheric breakdown products (mainly sulfate, sulfur dioxide and
53 methanesulfonic acid) are important precursors for secondary organic aerosols. These play a
54 role in climate feedbacks by reflecting solar radiation from the sun back to space and serving
55 as cloud condensation nuclei (CCN), which support the formation of clouds that reflect further
56 sunlight and thus may contribute to climate regulation (Charlson et al., 1987; Simó,
57 2001; Carslaw et al., 2010; Lana et al., 2011).

58 The marine environment represents the largest source of DMS to the atmosphere (Watts, 2000)
59 and the amount of DMS available for sea-to-air transfer depends on a number of microbial
60 pathways that lead to production of DMS and its degradation in the surface ocean (Schäfer et
61 al., 2010; Curson et al., 2011; Lidbury et al., 2016a; Curson et al., 2018). Bacterial degradation
62 of DMS is a major sink for DMS (Kiene and Bates, 1990) and a number of methylotrophic
63 marine bacteria that are able to grow using DMS as a sole source of carbon and energy have
64 been described previously, some of these belong to the genus *Methylophaga* (Janvier and
65 Grimont, 1995). *Methylophaga* species able to grow on methylated sulfur compounds include
66 the restricted facultative species *M. sulfidovorans* (De Zwart et al., 1997), *M.*
67 *aminisulfidivorans* (Kim et al., 2007) and *M. thiooxydans* (Boden et al., 2010). It was shown
68 that the latter produces tetrathionate as end-product of its sulfur metabolism (Boden et al.,
69 2010). In addition to DMS, *M. thiooxydans* can grow on the one-carbon compounds methanol,
70 dimethylamine (DMA), trimethylamine (TMA), as well as on fructose as sole carbon source
71 (Boden et al., 2010). Boden et al. (2010) characterized the DMS-degradation pathway in *M.*
72 *thiooxydans* based on enzyme assays and analysis of sulfur intermediates and end products and
73 compared it to *M. thiooxydans* grown on methanol. Methanol dehydrogenase activity was
74 detected in biomass grown on methanol and DMS; however, no enzyme activities were
75 detected for degradation of DMS and methanethiol, an intermediate of DMS degradation,
76 during growth on methanol (Boden et al., 2010). Furthermore, during growth on DMS, DMS
77 monooxygenase (De Bont et al., 1981; Boden et al., 2010) activity was not detected, and the
78 presence of a methyltransferase (Visscher and Taylor, 1993), which could be responsible for
79 the initial step of DMS degradation, was suggested (Boden et al., 2010) although this 'DMS-
80 methyltransferase' was not identified.

81

82 The aim of this study was to further characterise the metabolic pathways contributing to DMS
83 degradation in *Methylophaga thiooxydans*. Proteomics and transcriptomics analyses were
84 carried out with *Methylophaga thiooxydans* DMS010 in order to identify enzymes involved in
85 DMS degradation in this model organism and potentially identify candidates of thus-far
86 unidentified enzymes for further characterisation.

87

88 **Materials and Methods**

89

90 **Cultivation of *Methylophaga thiooxydans***

91 *Methylophaga thiooxydans* DMS010 was grown at 25°C in triplicate cultures using sterile
92 marine ammonium mineral salts (MAMS) medium (Thompson et al., 1995), supplemented
93 either with 1 mM methanol or 1 mM DMS as a sole carbon source and a 10% (v/v) inoculum.
94 The cultures were monitored twice daily by measurement of optical density at 560 nm (OD560)
95 in an Ultrospec™ 3100 pro spectrophotometer (Amersham Biosciences Corp., New Jersey,
96 USA). Quantitative determination of DMS was as described previously (Lidbury et al., 2016a).
97 Cells were harvested at an OD560 of approximately 0.4 (exponential growth phase) by
98 centrifugation at 13,000 × g for 30 minutes at 4°C. The supernatant was discarded, and cells
99 were washed and resuspended in PIPES buffer (1,4-piperazinediethanesulfonic acid, pH 7.8) or
100 TRIzol® reagent (Life Technologies Corporation, Carlsbad, USA) for proteomics or
101 transcriptomics, respectively. Cells were then snap-frozen in liquid nitrogen and stored at -80°C
102 until further processing.

103

104 **Proteomics**

105 *Protein extraction and quantification*

106 For proteomics, proteins were extracted from triplicate *Methylophaga thiooxydans* DMS010
107 cell culture pellets resuspended in PIPES buffer. The homogeneous cell suspension was
108 centrifuged at 9855 x g for 20 minutes at 4°C. The supernatant was discarded and the pellet was
109 resuspended in 1 mL of an ice-cooled PIPES buffer with addition of 160 µg mL⁻¹ benzamidine
110 and 1 µg DNase was added. The PIPES buffer with 160 µg mL⁻¹ benzamidine was prepared
111 by mixing 0.39 g of benzamidine hydrochloride hydrate (98%) (Sigma-Aldrich) with 5 mL
112 water. 0.2 mL of this solution was then mixed with 100 mL PIPES buffer and cooled on ice.
113 Another 2 mL of this PIPES buffer (160µg ml⁻¹ benzamidine) was added and the cells were
114 broken by three passages through a French pressure cell (American Instrument Corporation,
115 Hartland, USA) at 1000 psi. Cell debris were removed by centrifugation at 9855 x g for 20
116 minutes at 4°C. The supernatant was centrifuged again at 106,934 x g for 45 minutes at 4°C.
117 After centrifugation the supernatant was transferred into 4.5 mL tubes (soluble protein fraction).

118 The pellet was resuspended in 4.5 mL PIPES buffer (pH 7.8) and centrifuged again at 106,934
119 x g for 45 minutes at 4°C. Pellet resuspension and centrifugation was repeated, the supernatant
120 was discarded and the pellet was resuspended in 500 µL PIPES buffer (without benzamidine).
121 Protein concentrations were determined using the Bradford protein assay (Bradford, 1976) and
122 samples of the protein preparations were checked via sodium dodecyl sulfate polyacrylamide
123 gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE) using a precast Mini-PROTEAN® gel (Bio-Rad Laboratories
124 Inc.) and a Mini-PROTEAN® Tetra cell (Bio-Rad Laboratories Inc.). About 15 µg of protein
125 was loaded onto the gel per sample and 20 µL of Precision Plus Protein™ Standard (Dual
126 Color, Bio-Rad Laboratories Inc.). The gel was run at 200V for about 35 to 40 minutes. Gels
127 were stained overnight with InstantBlue™ protein stain (Sigma-Aldrich). SDS-PAGE analysis
128 of soluble and membrane protein fractions showed reproducible protein profiles of replicates
129 within each fraction type and carbon source but revealed different profiles of soluble and
130 membrane fraction between carbon sources (Supplementary Figure S1).

131

132 *Protein identification and data analysis*

133 The soluble protein fractions of *Methylophaga thiooxydans* DMS010 grown either on DMS or
134 methanol (triplicates) were submitted for proteomic analysis to the Proteomics facility of the
135 School of Life Sciences at the University of Warwick. The samples were subjected to a tryptic
136 digest (Lidbury et al., 2016b) followed by high-resolution mass spectrometry analysis using the
137 Orbitrap Fusion Tribrid mass spectrometer (Thermo Fisher, Bremen, Germany). Peptide
138 sequences obtained from MS/MS spectra were searched against *Methylophaga thiooxydans*
139 DMS010 peptide sequences (database) using Mascot (Matrix Science Inc., Boston, USA) in
140 order to identify proteins. Visualization and validation of the peptides was done with Scaffold
141 (Proteome Software, Inc., Portland, USA). Identified peptides and proteins were searched and
142 placed into a pathway map using KEGG, Swiss-Prot, ExpASY and UniProt. The mass
143 spectrometry proteomics data have been deposited to the ProteomeXchange Consortium via the
144 PRIDE partner repository with the dataset identifier PXD011992 and 10.6019/PXD011992
145 (<http://www.proteomexchange.org>).

146

147 **Transcriptomics**

148 *RNA extraction and quantification*

149 RNA was extracted from *Methylophaga thiooxydans* cell pellets resuspended in TRIzol®
150 reagent following the manufacturer's instructions. Quantification of RNA was performed using
151 the ND-1000 spectrophotometer (NanoDrop Technologies Inc.). In addition, the concentration
152 and purity of the RNA was also determined on a Bioanalyzer (Agilent 2100 Bioanalyzer,

153 Agilent Technologies, Inc., USA) using an mRNA Nano chip (Agilent, Supplementary Figure
154 S5).

155

156 *rRNA depletion*

157 Depletion of rRNA was carried out using the Ribo-Zero™ Magnetic kit for bacteria
158 (Epicentre, Madison, USA) following the manufacturer's instructions. Enrichment of mRNA
159 was checked on the Agilent 2100 Bioanalyzer using an mRNA Nano chip (Agilent).

160

161 *Library preparation and RNA sequencing*

162 Following rRNA depletion, samples were submitted to the Genomics facility of the School of
163 Life Sciences at the University of Warwick for library preparation and RNA-sequencing
164 (Illumina Hi-Seq 4000). The Genomics facility at the University of Warwick provided raw fastq
165 reads.

166

167 *RNA sequencing data analysis*

168 RNA sequencing reads were analysed using Rockhopper (McClure et al., 2013). The reference-
169 based transcriptome analysis was carried out by aligning the reads to a *Methylophaga*
170 *thiooxydans* DMS010 reference genome which was constructed on the Rapid Annotation Server
171 (RAST) using scaffolds available from the National Center for Biotechnology Information
172 (NCBI) (ASM15635v1). Then data was normalized in Rockhopper in order to allow for data
173 comparison between DMS-grown and methanol-grown *Methylophaga thiooxydans* DMS010
174 cultures. Afterwards, transcripts were assembled, transcript boundaries were identified and
175 transcript abundance was quantified. Finally, a test for differential gene expression was carried
176 out in Rockhopper. Rockhopper analyses the data by aligning the reads to the *Methylophaga*
177 *thiooxydans* DMS010 genome. Normalisation between the triplicate experiments and different
178 conditions (DMS/methanol) is done by upper quartile normalization. The transcripts are
179 assembled and transcript boundaries are identified. Quantification of transcript abundance is
180 done in RPKM (reads per kilobase per million mapped reads). RPKM is a common measure
181 for counting gene expression and sums the number of reads for a gene and divides by the gene's
182 length and the total number of reads (McClure et al., 2013). Rockhopper reports the expression
183 level, calculated from the triplicates, using RPKM. However, instead of dividing by the total
184 number of reads, Rockhopper divides by the upper quartile of gene expression which has been
185 suggested as a more robust normalization method (McClure et al., 2013). RNAseq data have
186 been deposited in the NCBI Short Read Archive under accession number PRJNA509071.

187

188 A comparison between proteomics and transcriptomics was done by mapping the expression
189 data of both approaches onto the *M. thiooxydans* genome using the CGView comparison tool
190 using an in-house pipeline by Paul Stothard (Grant et al., 2012).

191

192 **Pan-genome analysis**

193 *Genome data acquisition*

194 Six *Methylophaga* genomes (*M. thiooxydans* DMS0101, *M. sulfidovorans* DSM11578, *M.*
195 *aminisulfidovorans*, *M. lonarensis*, *M. nitratreducenticrescens* strain JAM1, *M. frappieri*
196 strain JAM7) available through the Integrated Microbial Genomes (IMG) database
197 (<https://img.jgi.doe.gov/>) were used for comparative genome analysis (Markowitz et al., 2013).
198 Accession numbers and additional genome characteristics are listed in Supplementary Table
199 S1.

200

201 Pan-genome analysis including average amino acid identity (AAI) analysis, pan-genome tree
202 construction and determination of core, dispensable genes and singletons (unique genes) was
203 carried out using the Efficient Database framework for comparative Genome Analyses using
204 BLAST score Ratios (EDGAR) platform (Blom et al., 2016).

205

206 In order to compare the genetic potential for dimethylsulfide degradation and sulfur oxidation
207 within the available *Methylophaga* genomes, known protein sequences involved in
208 dimethylsulfide degradation and sulfur oxidation pathways were used as query sequences
209 through the BLAST (blastp) program (Altschul et al., 1990) available within the Rapid
210 Annotation using Subsystem Technology (RAST) server (Aziz et al., 2008). The list of protein
211 queries used is given in Supplementary Table S2.

212

213

214 **Results**

215

216 **Known genes in *Methylophaga thiooxydans* genome with potential roles in methanol and** 217 **DMS based methylotrophy and sulfur oxidation**

218 A summary of the genetic potential of *Methylophaga thiooxydans* with particular relevance to
219 methanol and DMS metabolism is given below.

220

221 Methanol oxidation:

222 The draft genome sequence of *M. thiooxydans* contains four genes encoding methanol
223 dehydrogenases (MDH) including a Calcium-dependent methanol dehydrogenase (MxaFI,
224 locus tag MDMS009_1502 encoding the alpha subunit, and MDMS009_1410, beta subunit)
225 and three XoxF-type methanol dehydrogenases (MDMS009_1767, _2058 and _2642) which
226 are homologs of the MDH enzymes shown to require rare earth elements as co-factors (Kjeltens
227 et al. 2014). Genes *pqqBCDE* (encoded by MDMS009_2015, MDMS009_1956,
228 MDMS009_1782, MDMS009_1752, respectively) involved in the synthesis of
229 pyrroloquinoline quinone, the co-factor of MDH, are co-located in a four gene cluster in the
230 vicinity of two of the XoxF encoding genes (MDMS009_1767 and MDMS009_2058).

231

232 Formaldehyde metabolism:

233 Formaldehyde generated through primary metabolism of C₁ substrates such as methanol, DMS
234 and methanethiol can be conjugated to tetrahydromethanopterin (H₄MPT) by formaldehyde
235 activating enzyme (Fae) for which two coding sequences are found (MDMS009_73 and
236 MDMS009_595). There is a complete H₄MPT pathway for formaldehyde oxidation,
237 comprising methylene-H₄MPT dehydrogenase (*mtdB*, MDMS009_1418), methenyl-H₄MPT-
238 cyclohydrolase (*mch*, MDMS009_650), formylmethanofuran-H₄MPT-N-formyltransferase
239 (*fhcD*, MDMS009_1442) and formyltransferase/hydrolase complex (*fhcA/fhcB/fhcC*,
240 MDMS009_1429/ MDMS009_1334/ MDMS009_1520), which releases formate. Similarly,
241 formate can be produced from C₁ groups fed into a tetrahydrofolate (H₄F) linked C₁-oxidation
242 pathway comprising methylene-H₄F reductase (*metF*, MDMS009_515), a bifunctional
243 methylene-H₄F-dehydrogenase/cyclohydrolase (*fold*, MDMS009_2980) which leads to
244 production of formyl-H₄F which can then be degraded to formate either by formyl-H₄F-
245 deformylase (*purU*, MDMS009_888) or the formate-H₄F ligase (*fhs*, MDMS009_1028) which
246 couples the oxidation of formyl-H₄F to the production of ATP. The latter can also feed formate
247 into the H₄F pathway to reduce formate for assimilatory purposes.

248

249 Finally, subunits of a formate dehydrogenase which can oxidise formate to CO₂ are encoded by
250 MDMS009_2131, MDMS009_2239, MDMS009_2257 and MDMS009_1738.

251

252 *M. thiooxydans* has a ribulose monophosphate cycle (Entner–Doudoroff variant) for
253 assimilation of formaldehyde including the enzymes 3-hexulose-6-phosphate synthase (*hxlA*,
254 MDMS009_509), 6-phospho-3-hexuloisomerase (*hxlB*, MDMS009_475), fructose-
255 bisphosphate aldolase (*fba*, MDMS009_1331), fructose-bisphosphatase (*fbp_1*,
256 MDMS009_1532) and a transketolase (*tkt*, MDMS009_866).

257

258 Methanethiol and sulfide oxidation

259 *Methylophaga* has two genes encoding methanethiol oxidase (MDMS009_211 and
260 MDMS009_768) contained in two distinct genomic regions which also encode a number of
261 other genes involved in sulfur metabolism referred to hereafter as mto-cluster 1 and 2,
262 respectively (Supplementary Figure S2). The gene order in both clusters is identical, with the
263 major differences being that the mto-cluster1 contains two additional genes at the end.
264 Functions encoded in both clusters include (i) the methanethiol oxidase, (ii) a fusion of SCO1
265 with MauG-type cytochrome *c* peroxidase, (iii) a SCO1/SenC/PrrC domain protein predicted
266 to be involved in cytochrome maturation (identified by conserved domain search as a TlpA-
267 like_family putative metallochaperone), (iv) homologs of persulfide dioxygenase (PDO)
268 annotated as hydroxyacylglutathione hydrolases, (v) FAD-dependent pyridine nucleotide-
269 disulfide oxidoreductases (Sulfide quinone reductase B, SqrB), and (vi) a *sulP* gene encoding
270 a sulfate/sulfite permease. In addition, mto-cluster 1 contains an adenylylsulfate kinase and a
271 gene annotated as a ‘methylated-DNA-protein-cysteine methyltransferase’ in the same
272 orientation, however to which extent the genes in the mto-clusters are co-regulated from one or
273 more promoters is unclear.

274 In mto-cluster 2, the predicted methanethiol oxidase encoded by MDMS009_768 (465 amino
275 acids [aa]) has a predicted signal peptide, but the mto-cluster 1 ortholog MDMS009_211 (427
276 aa) does not, prompting the question whether the former is periplasmic and the latter
277 cytoplasmic. The region upstream of the CDS of MDMS009_211 has two alternative start
278 codons, one of which would extend the encoded enzyme by 40 amino acids and result in a pre-
279 MTO with a predicted signal peptide (SignalP 5.0 likelihood 98.2%, compared to 0.2% with
280 previous start site, Supplementary Figure S3) as well as a more A/G rich ribosome binding site.
281 In addition, for both mto-clusters the downstream *sco1/mauG* genes encoding proteins thought
282 to be involved in MTO maturation are predicted to have a signal peptide. Together, these
283 observations suggest that both MTO are periplasmic and are initially pre-proteins that are
284 exported by the Sec pathway, where they are subsequently processed by the SCO1/MauG
285 fusion proteins. The genes MDMS009_140 and MDMS009_894, immediately downstream of
286 the SCO1/MauG genes, encoding SCO1/SenC/PrrC domain proteins are also expected to be
287 periplasmic if an alternative start site of MDMS009_894 is taken into account (Supplementary
288 Figure S4), which would result in products of similar length for these two proteins (168 and
289 164 aa, respectively), both with strong likelihood of containing a signal peptide (>98%
290 likelihood).

291

292 Sulfide produced from MT oxidation can be oxidised by a flavocytochrome *c* sulfide
293 dehydrogenase (*fccB*, MDMS009_2035; *fccA* MDMS009_753); genes encoding sulfide-
294 quinone oxidoreductases include an *sqrA* MDMS009_1966 (based on homology to *Aquifex*
295 *aeolicus sqrA*) as well as two *sqrB* (MDMS009_274, MDMS009_886). The location of these
296 SQRs may be cytoplasmic or periplasmic, the confidence values for predicted signal peptide
297 sequences are variable, 12% for MDMS009_274, 27% for MDMS009_1966, 55% for
298 MDMS009_886. Candidate genes encoding persulfide dioxygenases include MDMS009_284
299 and MDMS009_765, both without signal peptides, suggesting these to be located in the
300 cytoplasm. Permeases for sulfate or sulfite compounds are encoded by MDMS009_261 and
301 MDMS009_921.

302

303 The genome of *M. thiooxydans* encodes some functions of the thiosulfate oxidation pathway
304 including *soxCDHYZ*, as well as two genes encoding soxYZ fusions (MDMS009_1377 and
305 1373) but genes encoding SoxAB are missing suggesting this pathway cannot be used for
306 oxidation of thiosulfate. Previous work suggested oxidation of thiosulfate to tetrathionate to
307 occur, but the genome does not contain genes encoding any of the previously characterised
308 thiosulfate to tetrathionate oxidising enzymes, including an *Allochromatium vinosum* type
309 TsdA thiosulfate dehydrogenase (Denkman et al., 2012), a *Shewanella oneidensis* type
310 octaheme tetrathionate reductase of (Atkinson et al., 2007) or a homolog of DoxDA as shown
311 in *Acidianus* or *Acidithiobacillus* species (Wang et al., 2016).

312

313

314 **The differential proteome of *Methylophaga thiooxydans* DMS010 from DMS and** 315 **methanol grown cultures**

316 Soluble and membrane protein fractions of *Methylophaga thiooxydans* DMS010 prepared for
317 the proteomics analysis had concentrations ranging from 0.22 mg ml⁻¹ to >1 mg ml⁻¹
318 (Supplementary Table S3). All six soluble protein fractions were submitted for proteomic
319 analysis. Identified peptides and proteins (minimum of 99% protein identity) were searched and
320 placed into a pathway map using KEGG, Swiss-Prot, ExPASy and UniProt. A proposed
321 pathway map of *Methylophaga thiooxydans* DMS010 grown with DMS is presented in Figure
322 1. A list of the corresponding proteins, genes, locus tag, and ratios of expression levels of the
323 proteins expressed during growth on DMS or methanol can be found in Supplementary Table
324 S4. Additional hypothetical proteins can be found in Supplementary Table S5.

325 Overall, up to 662 proteins (aggregate across triplicate samples) were identified in
326 *Methylophaga thiooxydans* DMS010 when grown on methanol, from which up to 80 proteins

327 were up-regulated (at least 2-fold) compared to *Methylophaga thiooxydans* DMS010 growing
328 on DMS as a carbon source. Up to 813 proteins were identified in *Methylophaga thiooxydans*
329 DMS010 grown on DMS, of which up to 177 were up-regulated compared to growth on
330 methanol. Proteins highly up-regulated in *Methylophaga thiooxydans* DMS010 growing in the
331 presence of DMS were the methanethiol oxidases, of which *M. thiooxydans* encodes two (on
332 average 7-fold and 18.67-fold, respectively, higher compared to methanol grown *M.*
333 *thiooxydans* DMS010; Supplementary Table S4) in line with previous reports of methanethiol
334 being a metabolic intermediate of its DMS metabolism (Schäfer, 2007; Boden et al., 2010).

335 Degradation of methanethiol via methanethiol oxidase (Mto – Figure 1) results in formation of
336 formaldehyde, hydrogen sulfide (H₂S) and hydrogen peroxide (H₂O₂). H₂O₂ is toxic (Clifford
337 and Repine, 1982; Thomas et al., 1994) and the catalase that decomposes it into water and
338 oxygen was 14.67-fold up-regulated during growth on DMS (Figure 1). Similarly,
339 peroxiredoxin was also up-regulated (3.75-fold) during growth on DMS, likely contributing to
340 degradation of hydrogen peroxide or organic peroxides produced by H₂O₂ stress in the cell
341 (Rhee, 2016).

342 The formaldehyde produced by methanethiol oxidase can either be degraded to CO₂ via formate
343 or be assimilated into biomass via the RuMP cycle. Several enzymes of the RuMP cycle were
344 detected, such as 3-hexulose-6-phosphate synthase (MDMS009_509), 6-phospho-3-
345 hexuloisomerase (MDMS009_475), transketolase (MDMS009_866), fructose-bisphosphate
346 aldolase (MDMS009_1331) and fructose-bisphosphatase (MDMS009_1532). Formaldehyde
347 degradation to formate and CO₂ appeared to occur via both the tetrahydromethanopterin-linked
348 pathway and the tetrahydrofolate-linked pathway (Supplementary Table S4). The expression of
349 most enzymes of these pathways showed only minor variation in expression levels between
350 growth on methanol and DMS, although methylenetetrahydrofolate dehydrogenase (MtdA) was
351 5.30-fold up-regulated on DMS potentially indicating that one of the methyl groups of DMS
352 may be oxidised via this pathway after its transfer onto tetrahydrofolate (H₄F) (Figure 1). In
353 addition, the formate—tetrahydrofolate ligase (2.20-fold up-regulated) and the
354 formyltetrahydrofolate deformylase of the tetrahydrofolate pathway were detected (Figure 1
355 and Supplementary Table S4). The expression of formate dehydrogenase was also shown (2.17-
356 fold upregulated), which degrades the end-product of the tetrahydromethanopterin and
357 tetrahydrofolate pathways, formate, to CO₂ (Figure 1). In addition, enzymes related to the
358 glycolysis pathway such as the Glucose 6-phosphate isomerase (1.66-fold) that catalyses the
359 conversion of D-glucose 6-phosphate to D-fructose 6-phosphate, the Phosphopyruvate
360 hydratase (3.44-fold) or enzymes involved in the conversion of Glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate to
361 Pyruvate were found upregulated. The enzymes dihydrolipoamide dehydrogenase (7.67-fold)

362 and dihydrolipoamide S-acetyltransferase (7.50-fold, E2 component of the pyruvate
363 dehydrogenase) were also highly upregulated. Furthermore, proteins involved in the
364 metabolism of amino and nucleotide sugars, and lipopolysaccharide biosynthesis were also
365 detected. The oxidation of the sulfur of DMS is of major importance as an intermediate in the
366 sulfur cycle. The initial step of DMS degradation and the subsequent oxidation of the sulfur are
367 summarized in Figures 1 and 2. An enzyme of sulfide oxidation detected in the proteome of
368 DMS-grown cells included sulfide dehydrogenase (MDMS009_2035; encoding FccB), which
369 was upregulated 1.67-fold.

370

371 **The differential transcriptome of *Methylophaga thiooxydans* DMS010 from DMS and** 372 **methanol grown cultures**

373 RNA extraction and rRNA depletion led to successful mRNA enrichment. Results of the RNA
374 analysis using the Bioanalyzer can be found in Supplementary Figure S5. Concentrations of
375 mRNA preparations from *M. thiooxydans* grown on methanol ranged from 14.5 to 26.98 pg/ μ L
376 and for *M. thiooxydans* grown on DMS from 85.7 to 172.0 pg/ μ L. These mRNA preparations
377 were used for sequencing library preparation and high-throughput sequencing of cDNA (from
378 mRNA). Overall, between 82 and 89% of the transcriptomic reads of the triplicate DMS and
379 methanol treatments were successfully aligned to the *Methylophaga thiooxydans* DMS010
380 genome. Between 23 and 27% aligned to unannotated regions. 1228 5'UTRs and 1309 3'UTRs
381 (untranslated regions) were detected and 176,974 RNAs were predicted. From these RNA
382 transcripts an overall 3,078 RNAs coding for proteins were predicted. Of those protein-coding
383 transcripts, 280 were highly up-regulated (2.5-fold to 469-fold) and another 1,340 protein-
384 coding transcripts were up-regulated at least 2-fold during growth on DMS compared to
385 methanol. When *Methylophaga thiooxydans* was grown on methanol, 230 protein-coding
386 transcripts were highly up-regulated (2.5-fold to 52-fold). Transcripts coding for 936
387 hypothetical proteins were detected, of which 133 were highly up-regulated (at least 2.5-fold)
388 during growth on DMS. In total, 115 operons were detected by Rockhopper during the
389 transcriptome analysis. Supplementary Table S6 summarizes the main results of the
390 transcriptomic experiment by indicating the protein-encoding genes with locus tags and their
391 expression level in *Methylophaga thiooxydans* when grown either with methanol or DMS.
392 Highly up-regulated transcripts in the DMS treatment compared to methanol treatment were
393 those of the genes encoding for methanethiol oxidase (MDMS009_211, MDMS009_768) and
394 catalase/oxidase (MDMS009_1525, MDMS009_2469), dihydrolipoamide dehydrogenase
395 (MDMS009_809, a component of the pyruvate, α -ketoglutarate, and branched-chain amino
396 acid-dehydrogenase complexes and the glycine cleavage system), several hypothetical proteins,

397 proteins involved in coenzyme PQQ synthesis (*pqqE*, *pqqD* and *pqqB*), a membrane-bound
398 protein (MDMS009_906) potentially involved in long chain fatty acid transport (porin), a fatty
399 acid desaturase (MDMS009_226) and several others (Supplementary Table S6). Highly up-
400 regulated transcripts in the methanol treatment compared to the DMS treatment included
401 proteins involved in siderophore (high-affinity iron-chelating compounds) biosynthesis and
402 methanol dehydrogenase proteins (Supplementary Table S6).

403 **Comparison of proteomics and transcriptomics data**

404 A comparison of proteomics and transcriptomics data based on mapping the expression data of
405 both approaches onto the *M. thiooxydans* genome using the CGView comparison tool in-house
406 pipeline (Grant et al., 2012) is shown in Supplementary Figure S6. Overall, there was good
407 agreement between the two approaches, whereby the transcriptome data showed additional
408 detail, which is not surprising due to high-throughput sequencing providing more in-depth
409 analysis and higher coverage (Hegde et al., 2003; Trapp et al., 2017) and the omission of the
410 membrane fraction for proteomics analysis, for instance. The analysis against the genome
411 assembly identified the activation of specific regions of the genome strongly supporting
412 coordinate gene expression depending on the growth substrate (Supplementary Figure S6).

413

414

415 **Comparative genome analysis of *Methylophaga* isolates**

416 A comparative genome analysis was carried out to assess to what extent genes of DMS
417 metabolism detected in *M. thiooxydans* are conserved in other members of the genus
418 *Methylophaga*, which differ in their reported abilities to degrade methylated sulfur compounds.
419 At the time of the analysis, genomes for six *Methylophaga* genomes obtained from different
420 environments were chosen (Supplementary Table S7), including three for which growth on
421 DMS has been reported previously (*M. thiooxydans*, *M. sulfidovorans*, *M. aminisulfidivorans*),
422 one which was shown not to grow on DMS (*M. lonarensis*) and two for which DMS degradation
423 has not been tested (*M. frappieri* and *M. nitratireducenticrescens* strain JAM1). Genome sizes
424 range from ~2.64 Mb to ~3.26 Mb with GC contents between 40% to 50% (Supplementary
425 Table S1). Analysis of sequence annotations revealed that on average 91% of the genomes
426 consist of coding sequences. Pan-genome analysis, carried out using EDGAR (Blom et al.,
427 2016), identified metabolic genes present in all *Methylophaga* species (core genes), in two or
428 more *Methylophaga* species (accessory or dispensable genes), and ‘unique’ *Methylophaga*
429 species (singleton genes). A pan-genome tree was constructed (Figure 3A) based on the pan-

430 genome dataset and neighbor-joining method (Saitou and Nei, 1987). The *Methylophaga*
431 species exhibiting the least amount of evolutionary change from a common ancestor are *M.*
432 *aminisulfidivorans* and *M. sulfidovorans* (Figure 3A), these two species also have a higher
433 average amino acid identity score compared to the other four *Methylophaga* species
434 (Supplementary Figure S7). Overall, pan-genome analysis of the six strains identified a total of
435 11,316 genes, consisting of 1,397 core genes, 6105 dispensable genes and 323, 651, 396, 323,
436 513 and 211 singletons for *M. thiooxydans*, *M. frappieri* strain JAM7, *M. aminisulfidivorans*,
437 *M. lonarensis*, *M. nitratireducenticrescens* and *M. sulfidovorans*, respectively (Figure 3B). On
438 average 56.1% of singletons were identified as having hypothetical functions (Figure 3C). The
439 number of singletons did not correlate with the size of the genome, which contrasts with the
440 correlation of the number of genes and the size of the genome.

441
442 Investigation of DMS utilization pathways and subsequent C1 oxidation pathways in six
443 *Methylophaga* species revealed the presence of the gene encoding for the methanethiol oxidase
444 involved in degradation of the metabolic intermediate MT in the genomes of *M. thiooxydans*
445 and *M. sulfidovorans* while this gene was not detected in *M. frappieri* strain JAM7, *M.*
446 *aminisulfidivorans*, *M. lonarensis* and *M. nitratireducenticrescens* (Supplementary Table S8).
447 None of these *Methylophaga* species contain other known genes of DMS metabolism, including
448 homologues of the DMS monooxygenase (*dmoA*) (Boden et al., 2011a) or the DMS
449 dehydrogenase (McDevitt et al., 2002).

450
451 Regarding methanol metabolism, all six *Methylophaga* genomes have genes encoding the
452 lanthanide-dependent methanol dehydrogenase XoxF (Hibi et al., 2011; Nakagawa et al.,
453 2012; Pol et al., 2014) of the clade XoxF5 (Keltjens et al., 2014) and the *mxoF* gene, encoding
454 the alpha subunit of the Calcium-dependent methanol dehydrogenase (Williams et al., 2005),
455 which are responsible for the oxidation of methanol to formaldehyde (Harms et al.,
456 1996; Chistoserdova and Lidstrom, 1997) (Figure 4). The lanthanide-dependent methanol
457 dehydrogenase is thought to be more widespread in bacterial genomes (Lv et al., 2018).

458
459 All six *Methylophaga* species have genes encoding enzymes of the tetrahydrofolate (H₄F)
460 linked pathway (Figure 4). Genes encoding 5,10-methylenetetrahydrofolate reductase (*metF*)
461 and the bifunctional enzyme 5,10-methylene-tetrahydrofolate dehydrogenase/cyclohydrolase
462 (*folD*), were detected in all the *Methylophaga* genomes (Figure 4). The formate-
463 tetrahydrofolate ligase, encoded by the gene *fhs* (Figure 4), can have a role in catabolic and

464 anabolic metabolism, either allowing for ATP synthesis during oxidation of formyl-H₄F (CHO-
465 H₄F) to formate or providing C₁ units for assimilatory metabolism through energy dependent
466 conversion of formate to formyl tetrahydrofolate; alternatively the oxidation of formyl-H₄F to
467 formate can also be facilitated by PurU, the formyl-H₄F deformylase encoded by the *purU* gene
468 (Marx et al 2003, Studer et al. 2003, Chen, 2012).

469

470 Similarly, genes encoding the formaldehyde activating enzyme (*fae*) and further enzymes of
471 the tetrahydromethanopterin (H₄MPT)-linked pathway of formaldehyde oxidation are also
472 present in all *Methylophaga* genomes. The formate dehydrogenase (FDH, encoded by gene *fdh*)
473 mediates the last step of the H₄MPT and H₄F-linked C₁ oxidation pathways, the oxidation of
474 formate to CO₂. The genes encoding FDH are present in all *Methylophaga* genomes. Reduction
475 of formaldehyde can also be mediated by the glutathione-dependent formaldehyde-activating
476 enzyme, encoded by the gene *gfa* (Goenrich et al., 2002), which was detected in all six
477 *Methylophaga* species, however, the gene encoding for the glutathione-dependent
478 formaldehyde dehydrogenase (*adhI*) was only detected in *M. aminisulfidivorans* and *M.*
479 *lonarensis* and the gene encoding the S-formyl-GSH hydrolase (*fghA*) was not detected in any
480 of these *Methylophaga* species (Figure 4).

481

482 Thus, as expected, comparative genome analysis shows that all six *Methylophaga* species are
483 capable of generating energy from methanol using either lanthanide-dependent or the calcium-
484 dependent methanol dehydrogenases and have pathways of H₄F and H₄MPT-linked
485 formaldehyde oxidation. Regarding sulfur metabolism, two *Methylophaga* isolates *M.*
486 *thiooxydans* and *M. sulfidovorans* may have a common DMS oxidation pathway involving an
487 as-yet unidentified primary enzyme of DMS metabolism suggested to be a DMS
488 methyltransferase (Boden et al., 2010) and methanethiol oxidase, with subsequent
489 formaldehyde oxidation via the H₄F-dependent pathway and/or the H₄MPT-dependent
490 pathways. *Methylophaga aminisulfidivorans*, which was reported to grow on DMS and DMSO
491 (Kim et al., 2007), does not have a methanethiol oxidase (*mtoX*). This strain must either possess
492 an as-yet unidentified pathway for the degradation of DMS (and DMSO) or use an alternative
493 methanethiol oxidase. For the oxidation of potentially DMS or DMSO-derived sulfur (sulfide)
494 *Methylophaga aminisulfidivorans* has a sulfide dehydrogenase (*fccAB*) (Figure 4). Regarding
495 inorganic sulfur metabolism, homologs of genes encoding enzymes of sulfide oxidation were
496 found in all strains, but neither SQR nor sulfide dehydrogenases are present in all strains (Figure
497 4). All strains have genes for assimilation of sulfate to sulfite, and, with the exception of *M.*

498 *frappieri* all strains had a sulfite reductase. None of the strains contain a complete *sox* system,
499 but some components encoded by the genes *soxCDYZH* were present in most genomes.

500

501

502 **Discussion**

503 Overall, comparative proteomic and transcriptomic experiments of *Methylophaga thiooxydans*
504 grown on either DMS or methanol identified the major pathways involved in *Methylophaga*
505 *thiooxydans* during growth on DMS and methanol.

506 The comparative proteomics experiment of *Methylophaga thiooxydans* grown either on DMS
507 or methanol showed a great coverage of proteins across several relevant metabolic pathways,
508 including the primary enzymes involved in methanol degradation, methanethiol degradation,
509 functions involved in formaldehyde degradation and assimilation (such as the KEGG category
510 one-carbon pool by folate, the RuMP cycle, KEGG category methane metabolism) as well as
511 relevant enzymes from central carbon metabolism. Similarly, the transcriptomics analysis
512 identified transcripts of relevant genes, but additional genes activated in either growth condition
513 were also identified.

514

515 **Pathways induced during growth on DMS**

516 Both methanethiol oxidases present in the genome of *M. thiooxydans* were highly upregulated
517 during growth on DMS as shown by both proteomics and transcriptomics. The downstream
518 genes encoding a fusion of the SCO1/MauG domains present as single genes in
519 *Hyphomicrobium* sp VS, which are suggested to be important in maturation of the protein, were
520 also both induced during growth on DMS. In line with MT degradation producing H₂O₂,
521 induction of catalase and peroxiredoxin reflected important responses to oxidative stress (Rhee,
522 2016). Membrane lipids are likely also damaged by H₂O₂ which may explain the upregulation
523 of genes that might contribute to maintenance of membrane lipid homeostasis including for
524 instance a fatty acid desaturase (MDMS009_226) which may potentially receive reducing
525 power from the product of MDMS009_61, an NAD(P)H flavin reductase that was highly
526 upregulated during growth on DMS (Supplementary Table S6).

527 What is missing, as far as primary DMS metabolism is concerned, is the presumed DMS
528 methyltransferase which was suggested to be responsible for the first step of DMS degradation
529 in *M. thiooxydans* (Boden et al., 2010). A candidate gene for this putative ‘DMS-
530 methyltransferase’ had not been identified so far and none was detected here as being induced

531 on DMS by proteomics or transcriptomics. There is a methyltransferase in mto-cluster 1,
532 annotated as a ‘methylated DNA-protein cysteine S-methyltransferase’. Although its
533 transcription can be seen in the RNAseq data, the expression levels are similar during growth
534 on methanol and DMS and the protein is not detected in the proteomics data. It most likely
535 plays a role in DNA repair.

536 Proteomics data indicated that the enzymes of the H₄F-linked oxidation pathway were
537 upregulated. Thus a methyl group transfer from DMS to H₄F with its subsequent H₄F-linked
538 oxidation to CO₂ is a possibility, similar to the oxidation of the methyl group from methyl
539 chloride in a H₄F-linked degradation pathway first described in *Methylobacterium extorquens*
540 CM4 (Vannelli et al., 1999). Cleaving off one methyl group from DMS could result in
541 methanethiol as a reaction product, consistent with observed MT oxidation by the presence and
542 expression of MTO (Schäfer, 2007; Boden et al., 2010). The expression of the H₄F pathway on
543 DMS and methanol suggests that it does not solely serve as a catabolic route though. An
544 alternative, unrecognised route of primary DMS metabolism may exist, such as a hydrolase or
545 monooxygenase. This issue warrants further work, potentially using ¹³C labelling and
546 metabolomic analysis. Formaldehyde is also channelled into the tetrahydromethanopterin-
547 linked pathway of formaldehyde degradation by formaldehyde activating enzyme and degraded
548 to CO₂.

549 Proteomics and transcriptomics data support that formaldehyde produced by MTO is
550 assimilated into biomass via the RuMP cycle. Relevant enzymes were detected by both the
551 proteomics and transcriptomics analyses. However, Boden et al. (2010) previously detected
552 activity of the 2-keto-3-deoxy-6-phosphogluconate (KDPG) aldolase (locus MDMS009_149)
553 but none of fructose-1,6-bisphosphate aldolase. Previous analysis of the draft genome sequence
554 of *Methylophaga thiooxydans* suggested that a fructose-1,6-bisphosphate aldolase was absent
555 (Boden et al., 2011b), but a reanalysis showed that the protein-encoding gene for the fructose-
556 1,6-bisphosphate aldolase was present in the *Methylophaga thiooxydans* genome
557 (MDMS009_1331). Proteomics and transcriptomics analysis showed that fructose-1,6-
558 bisphosphate aldolase was expressed, suggesting that enzyme activities of the RuMP cycle need
559 to be reassessed in *Methylophaga thiooxydans*.

560

561 ***Sulfide oxidation***

562 Previous work suggested that sulfide dehydrogenase and sulfide oxygenase activities were
563 present. A sulfide dehydrogenase (flavocytochrome *c* sulfide dehydrogenase) was induced

564 during growth on DMS, which produces elemental sulfur. Transcriptomics demonstrated that a
565 second sulfide-degrading enzyme, the sulfide:quinone reductase (SQR) was also highly
566 expressed in cells grown on DMS (locus MDMS009_1966) but not on methanol, which would
567 produce polysulfide, which could then react through an unknown enzyme or chemically with
568 sulfite to yield thiosulfate ($S_2O_3^{2-}$, Figure 2) as previously found in *Thiobacillus thioparus* and
569 *Acidithiobacillus thiooxidans* (Suzuki and Silver, 1966) and suggested for *Methylophaga*
570 *thiooxydans* (Boden et al., 2010). The sulfite for this reaction was suggested to be the product
571 of the sulfide oxygenase whose activity was previously measured in *Methylophaga*
572 *thiooxydans*, with the most likely candidates for this reaction being the induced persulfide
573 oxygenases encoded in the vicinity of MTO genes. Several enzymes/genes could therefore be
574 demonstrated which are in agreement with the previous work on the sulfur oxidation pathway
575 in *Methylophaga* (Boden et al., 2010). The final step of this pathway, the oxidation of
576 thiosulfate to tetrathionate has previously been shown to be carried out in *Allochroatium*
577 *vinosum* by the TsdA thiosulfate dehydrogenase (Denkmann et al., 2012), in *Shewanella*
578 *oneidensis* by the octaheme tetrathionate reductase (Atkinson et al., 2007) or DoxDA *Acidianus*
579 or *Acidithiobacillus* (Wang et al., 2016), but *M. thiooxydans* does not have homologs of these
580 enzymes. A recent study by Pyne and colleagues (Pyne et al., 2018) demonstrated that XoxF
581 PQQ-dependent dehydrogenases in *Advenella kashmirensis* were capable of oxidising
582 thiosulfate to tetrathionate. Given the expression of several XoxF enzymes in *Methylophaga*
583 *thiooxydans* both during growth on DMS and methanol, it is possible that the XoxF enzymes
584 may be responsible for the this step of the sulfur oxidation pathway, but this requires
585 experimental confirmation of this activity for any of these enzymes which were previously
586 assumed to have a role in methanol degradation. The expression of some Sox proteins at higher
587 abundance during growth on DMS suggests that these may play a role in oxidation of inorganic
588 sulfur intermediates. Genes encoding SoxA and SoxB were missing, in agreement with the
589 observation that thiosulfate is not oxidised to sulfate in *M. thiooxydans*.

590

591 ***Differences in gene expression during growth on methanol***

592 Highly overexpressed genes in *Methylophaga thiooxydans* grown on methanol were those for
593 the Calcium-dependent methanol dehydrogenase and for proteins involved in anthrachelin
594 biosynthesis. Upregulation of the methanol dehydrogenase subunits and the PQQ biosynthesis
595 genes that were induced would be expected. Anthrachelin is a siderophore involved in iron
596 acquisition (Neilands, 1995; Garner et al., 2004). The methanol dehydrogenase is a PQQ-
597 dependent methanol dehydrogenase, and the pyrrolo quinoline quinone (PQQ) accepts the

598 electrons produced during methanol oxidation and passes them to cytochrome *c*, which is an
599 iron containing haemprotein, which might explain why protein-encoding genes involved in the
600 biosynthesis of the iron acquiring siderophore anthrachelin are up-regulated during growth on
601 methanol.

602

603 ***Hypothetical genes***

604 A number of previously unannotated and/or not even predicted genes (Supplementary Table
605 S9) were identified as being expressed. A total of 936 protein-coding transcripts were detected
606 for which no function could be predicted, which accounts for about 30% of all detected protein-
607 coding transcripts. About 20 to 40% of hypothetical proteins are normal in a sequenced genome
608 (Galperin, 2001). For some genes annotated as hypothetical proteins their expression during
609 growth on DMS or methanol associates them with as-yet uncharacterised roles during growth
610 on specific carbon sources and so a first potential association with a metabolic process has been
611 achieved. Further work on these genes will be critical to better understand the specific roles
612 these genes play for growth on DMS or methanol by *Methylophaga*. It reemphasises the need
613 to establish a genetic system for studying gene function in *Methylophaga thiooxydans*. Some
614 transcripts were identified as previously unannotated genes. None of these had a predicted
615 function (Supplementary Table S9), but some were highly expressed.

616

617 Based on molecular genetics a strong correlation between mRNA expression levels and protein
618 abundance would be assumed (Zhang et al., 2010). However, several studies have failed to
619 demonstrate a high correlation between protein and mRNA abundances (Greenbaum et al.,
620 2002; Nie et al., 2007; Taniguchi et al., 2010; Vogel and Marcotte, 2012). This contradiction
621 underlines the benefit of using proteomics and transcriptomics in combination as application of
622 just one of these approaches is likely to be less representative of the biological system under
623 investigation (Park et al., 2005; Zhang et al., 2010). How well proteomics and transcriptomics
624 results matched one another is shown in Supplementary Figure S6, which included all
625 transcriptomic and proteomic expression levels. In this study, some proteins were found in
626 higher abundance in *Methylophaga thiooxydans* grown on DMS and their corresponding
627 protein encoding genes were often also up-regulated in the transcriptomic experiment
628 (Supplementary Figure S6), e.g. the methanethiol oxidase (MtoX). However, that was only the
629 case for a few proteins. There were also cases where results from proteomic and transcriptomics

630 were somewhat contradictory, e.g. the observation of higher protein levels of a sulfate permease
631 on DMS and higher transcript levels of the same protein on methanol.

632

633 **Conclusions**

634 A combined approach of proteomics and transcriptomics analysis has provided more detailed
635 information on pathways involved in DMS and methanol degradation in *M. thiooxydans*,
636 confirming some previous observations made by enzyme assays, and in some cases identifying
637 the genes and proteins responsible for specific activities. At the same time, the data also identify
638 gaps of understanding and identify specific issues that require further investigation, such as the
639 primary mechanism of DMS degradation and the potential role in thiosulfate oxidation of the
640 lanthanide-dependent XoxF methanol dehydrogenases during growth on DMS. Pangenomic
641 analysis showed, as expected for a genus of methylotrophic bacteria, that relevant central
642 pathways such as H₄F and H₄MPT-linked formaldehyde and methanol degradation are part of
643 the core genome, but only two of the six investigated *Methylophaga* genomes (*M. thiooxydans*
644 and *M. sulfidovorans*) indicated metabolic potential to utilize methanethiol, the intermediate of
645 DMS degradation, based on the previously identified methanethiol oxidase. This is surprising
646 given the reported ability of *M. aminisulfidivorans* to grow on DMSO and DMS, as well as the
647 close relatedness between *M. sulfidovorans* and *M. aminisulfidivorans* based on the relatively
648 smallest evolutionary change. Overall, these results demonstrate that our understanding of the
649 underlying traits for utilisation of methylated sulfur compounds in members of this genus are
650 still inadequate and that more work is required to characterise these metabolic functions using
651 a range of genetics, biochemistry and metabolomics approaches.

652

653 **Conflict of Interest**

654 The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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667

668

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890 **Figures**

891

892 **Figure 1 Proposed pathways and reactions in *Methylophaga thiooxydans* DMS010 grown**
893 **on DMS.** Metabolic map showing selected pathways of *Methylophaga thiooxydans* DMS010.
894 Metabolic pathways, both predicted from genome and proteomic analysis are presented in a
895 simplified bacterial cell. Proteins detected in the proteomic analysis are indicated in light green
896 and those not detected are indicated in white. Main metabolites are shown in square boxes and
897 enzymes are shown in oval boxes. Some KEGG categories are indicated by color; green, one
898 carbon pool by folate; blue, pentose phosphate path-ways (parts); orange, glycolysis;
899 beige/brown, amino sugar and nucleotide sugar metabolism; purple, lipopolysaccharide
900 biosynthesis; red, methane metabolism and yellow, sulfur metabolism. A solid arrow stands for
901 an enzymatic reaction and a dashed arrow stands for multistep pathway. Abbreviations are
902 explained in more detail in Supplementary Table S4; X? – uncharacterized DMS
903 methyltransferase.

904

905 **Figure 2 Simplified schematic overview of the proposed DMS degradation and subsequent**
906 **route of sulfur oxidation in *Methylophaga thiooxydans* DMS010.** Boden et al. (2010)
907 suggested that DMS is initially degraded by a suggested cobalamin-dependent and as yet
908 unidentified methyltransferase in the cytoplasm. Methanethiol (MT) would need to transfer to
909 the periplasm where the methanethiol oxidase (Mto) degrades MT further as described in the
910 text. The suggested steps of the sulfur oxidation pathway according to enzyme essays,
911 proteomics and transcriptomics analyses are indicated. Abbreviations: MT, methanethiol; X?,
912 unidentified putative methyltransferase; H₄F, tetrahydrofolate; CM, cytoplasmic membrane;
913 OM, outer membrane; Mto; methanethiol oxidase; SuDH, sulfide dehydrogenase
914 (flavocytochrome); SQR_p, periplasmatic sulfide:quinone reductase; SQR_c, cytoplasmatic
915 sulfide:quinone reductase; Q, quinone, QH₂, quinol; SulP, sulfate permease; TauE, sulfite
916 exporter; PDO, persulfide dioxygenase; TSDH, thiosulfate dehydrogenase; C₅₅₀, cytochrome
917 550 (located in the cytoplasmic membrane).

918

919 **Figure 3 Pan-genome analysis of *Methylophaga* species.** (A) Pan-genome tree consisting of
920 six *Methylophaga* species was constructed using the neighbour-joining method within the
921 EDGAR platform. (B) Number of core, dispensable, and specific genes (singletons) of each
922 *Methylophaga* species. (C) Proportion of hypothetical and uncharacterized proteins in the
923 core, dispensable and singleton genome of six *Methylophaga* species.

924

925 **Figure 4 Metabolic pathways involved in DMS degradation/transformation, one-carbon**
926 **and sulfur oxidation annotated with presence/absence of specific genes in the genomes of**
927 ***Methylophaga***. The analysis was based on a six-way comparison among *M. thiooxydans* (T),
928 *M. frappieri* (F), *M. aminisulfidivorans* (A), *M. lonarensis* (L), *M. nitratreducenticrescens* (N)
929 and *M. sulfidovorans* (S). The shadings behind the letters indicate presence in core (light red)
930 or dispensable (light blue) genome. The color-coded boxes next to the genes indicate the
931 presence (green) or absence (orange) of a gene in each genome.

932

933

934 **Supplementary Figure S1 SDS-PAGE of protein fractions of *Methylophaga thiooxydans***
935 **DMS010 grown on methanol or DMS.** (A) Soluble protein fraction; lanes 1-3 *M. thiooxydans*
936 DMS010 grown on methanol; lanes 4-6 *M. thiooxydans* DMS010 grown on DMS, S – Precision
937 Plus Protein Standard (Bio-Rad Laboratories Inc.) (B) Membrane protein fraction; lanes 1-3 *M.*
938 *thiooxydans* DMS010 grown on methanol; lanes 4-6 *M. thiooxydans* DMS010 grown on DMS,
939 S – Precision Plus Protein Standard (Bio-Rad Laboratories Inc.)

940

941 **Supplementary Figure S2 Schematic of the two gene clusters encoding methanethiol**
942 **oxidases in *Methylophaga thiooxydans*.** The locus tags (MDMS009_XXX) are indicated
943 inside the arrows signifying the coding sequences, the annotation is indicated above the CDS
944 as mtoX, methanethiol oxidase; sco1/mauG, SCO1/cytochrome c peroxidase MauG domain
945 containing protein; tlpA, TlpA_like_family putative metallochaperone (conserved domain
946 cd02966); pdo, putative persulfide dioxygenase; sqrB, sulfide quinone oxidoreductase; sulP,
947 sulfate/sulfite_transporter; cysC, adenylylsulfate kinase; locus tag MDMS009_97 is annotated
948 as a ‘methylated-DNA--protein-cysteine methyltransferase’; rpoD, previously unannotated
949 sigma70 factor. Shading indicates a that the CDS has a predicted signal peptide with a
950 probability >50%, sqrB encoded by MDMS009_274 has a signal P likelihood of 12% (SignalP
951 5.0, (Armenteros et al., 2019); signal peptide predictions for MDS009_211 and
952 MDMS009_894 are based on alternative start sites as discussed in the main text. Scale bar
953 indicates 1 kb.

954

955 **Supplementary Figure S3 Graphical summary of signal peptide predictions for the**
956 **methanethiol oxidase encoded by MDMS009_211 contained on scaffold 1104571000268**
957 **(extended to positions 256503:257906).** (A) Predicted amino acid sequence of the gene
958 extended to the alternative upstream start codon. The underlined sequence indicates additional
959 residues at N-terminal end, the blue highlighted sequence is in agreement with an
960 experimentally determined N-terminal sequence obtained from a polypeptide expressed during

961 growth of *M. thiooxydans* on DMS (Schäfer, 2007). The SignalP 5.0 prediction graphical
962 summary and likelihood for signal peptide for the extended MDMS009_211 protein (B) and
963 the gene with the original start codon (C).

964

965 **Supplementary Figure S4 Graphical summary of signal peptide predictions for a**
966 **Sco1/SenC/PrrC domain protein predicted to be involved in cytochrome maturation**
967 **encoded by MDMS009_894 contained on scaffold 1104571000277 (extended to positions**
968 **41243:41737).** (A) Predicted amino acid sequence of the gene extended to an alternative
969 upstream start codon. The underlined sequence indicates additional residues at N-terminal end.
970 The SignalP 5.0 prediction graphical summary and likelihood for signal peptide for the
971 extended MDMS009_894 protein (B) and the gene with the original start codon (C).

972

973 **Supplementary Figure S5 Electrophoresis and electropherogram plots for evaluation of**
974 **purity and concentration of mRNA after enrichment from total RNA from *Methylophaga***
975 ***thiooxydans*.** RNA extraction and rRNA depletion led to successful mRNA enrichment. (a)
976 Electrophoresis plot showing one clear band for mRNA between 25 and 200 nucleotide (nt)
977 length in samples of *M. thiooxydans* grown on either methanol or DMS. (b to d)
978 Electropherogram plots showing mRNA of *M. thiooxydans* grown on methanol (replicates 1 to
979 3, respectively). (e to g) Electropherogram plots showing mRNA of *M. thiooxydans* grown on
980 DMS (replicates 1 to 3, respectively). mRNA concentrations are indicated in the plots and
981 ranged from 14.5 to 26.98 pg/ μ L in *M. thiooxydans* grown on methanol and from 85.7 to 172.0
982 pg/ μ L for *M. thiooxydans* grown on DMS.

983

984 **Supplementary Figure S6 Circular representation of the *M. thiooxydans* DMS010**
985 **chromosome including proteome and transcriptome expression data.** The first (innermost)
986 ring shows the expression (log₂ ratio) of the proteome on DMS and methanol grown *M.*
987 *thiooxydans*, followed by the transcriptome expression (log₂ ratio) data (second ring). The third
988 and sixth rings represent the COG categories according to (Tatusov et al., 2000). The fourth
989 and fifth rings represent the CDS (blue), tRNA (maroon), and rRNA (purple) on the reverse
990 and forward strand, respectively. The locations of several genes are indicated at the outside of
991 the map.

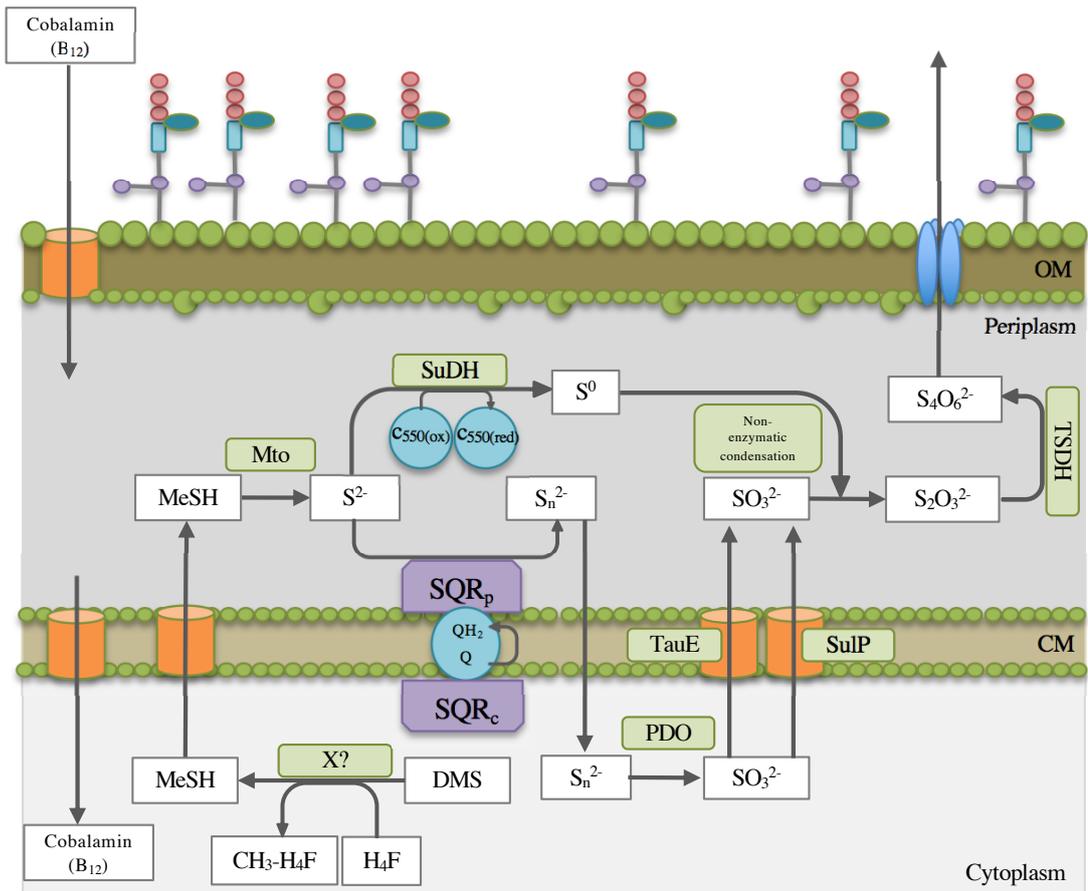
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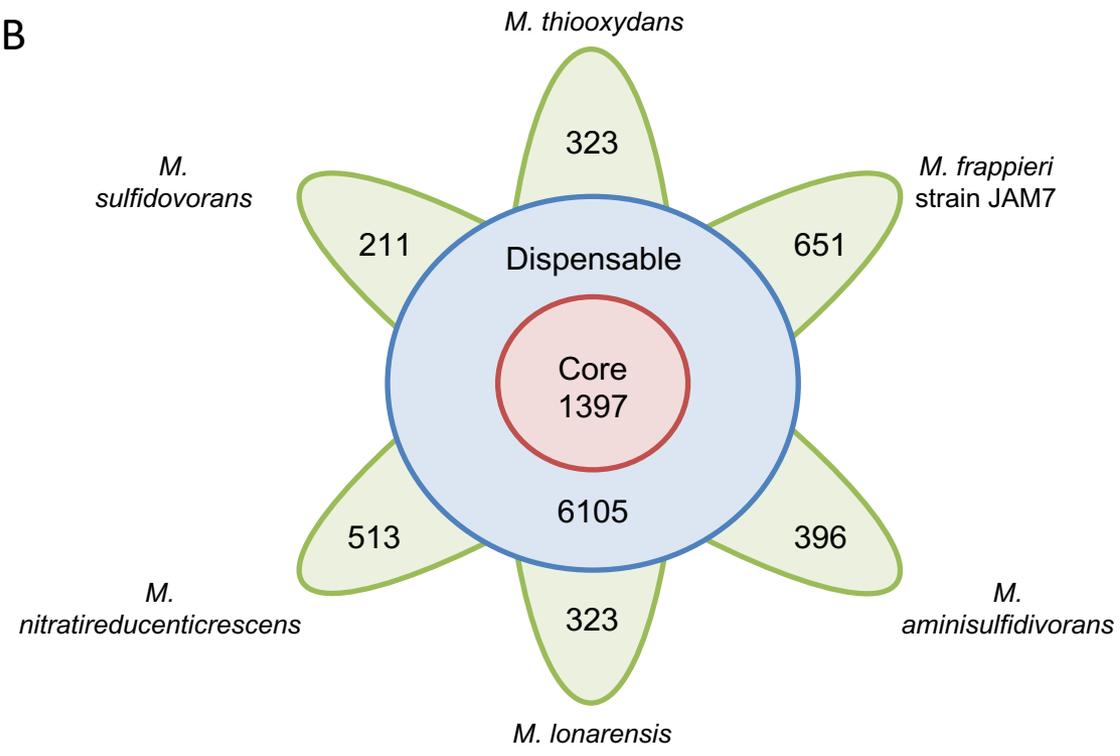
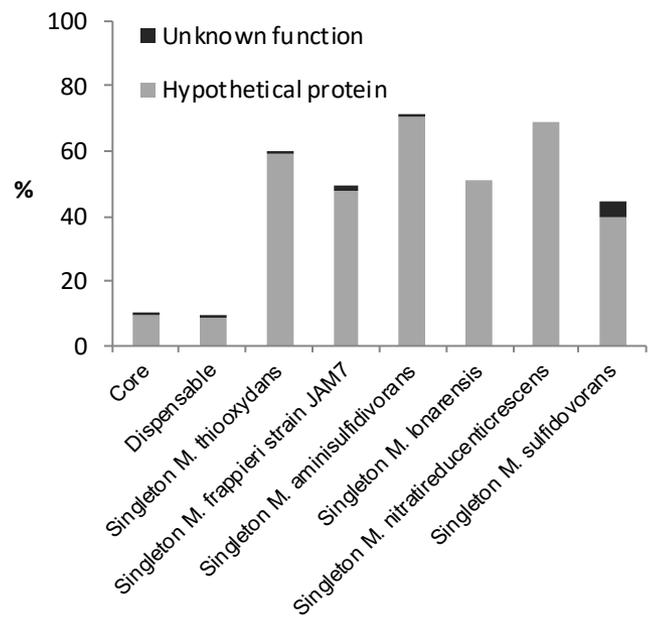
993 **Supplementary Figure S7 Average nucleotide identity (ANI) across the six different**
994 ***Methylophaga* species.**

995

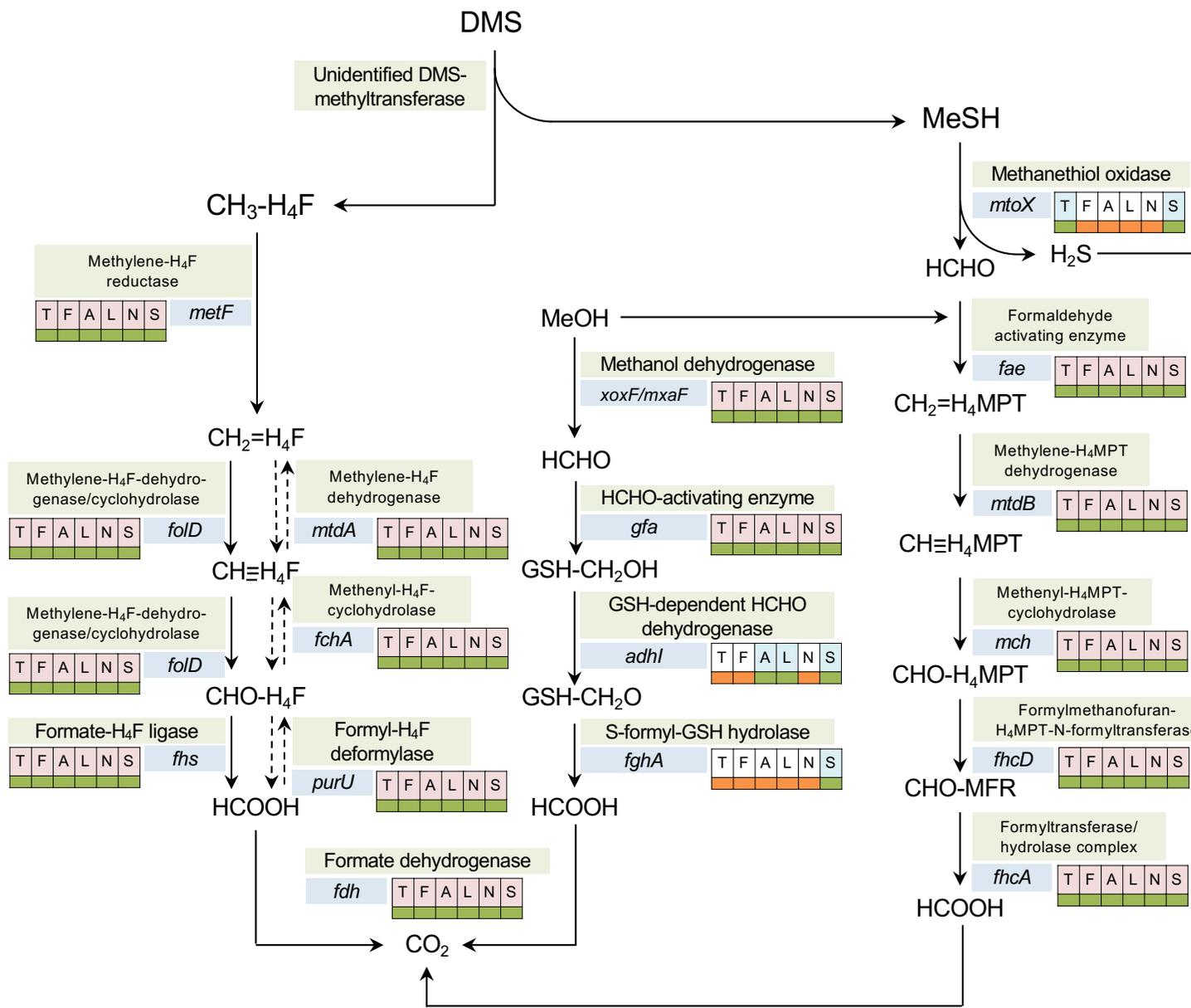
996 **Tables**

997
998 **Supplementary Table S1 Genome characteristics of the six *Methylophaga* genomes**
999
1000 **Supplementary Table S2 List of query protein sequences used for genome comparison**
1001
1002 **Supplementary Table S3 Summary of protein fractions extracted from *Methylophaga***
1003 ***thiooxydans* DMS010 grown in triplicates on either methanol or DMS.**
1004
1005 **Supplementary Table S4 Extract of proteins detected in *Methylophaga thiooxydans***
1006 **DMS010 grown on DMS corresponding to Figure 2.** Proteins with grey shading are up
1007 regulated in *Methylophaga thiooxydans* DMS010 grown on DMS compared to growth on
1008 methanol. Dark grey shadings indicate proteins up regulated more than 4-fold, light grey
1009 shadings indicate proteins up regulated between 1.3- to 4-fold. Selected proteins that were not
1010 detected in the proteome but are present in the genome of *Methylophaga thiooxydans* DMS0101
1011 are included for clarity (marked with ‘-’ in the last column Ratio DMS/Methanol).
1012
1013 **Supplementary Table S5 Hypothetical proteins detected as up-regulated in *Methylophaga***
1014 ***thiooxydans* DMS010 grown on DMS compared to growth on methanol.**
1015
1016 **Supplementary Table S6 Comparison of transcript expression (mRNA) of *Methylophaga***
1017 ***thiooxydans* DMS010 grown on methanol or DMS.** Rockhopper calculates one expression
1018 level for each treatment (DMS/methanol) and each transcript from the triplicate RNA
1019 sequencing results as explained in the text above.
1020
1021 **Supplementary Table S7 Characteristics of six *Methylophaga* species**
1022
1023 **Supplementary Table S8 Presence and absence of genes involved in DMS degradation and**
1024 **sulfur metabolism in six *Methylophaga* species**
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1026 **Supplementary Table S9 Previously unannotated and/or not predicted genes in**
1027 ***Methylophaga thiooxydans*.**

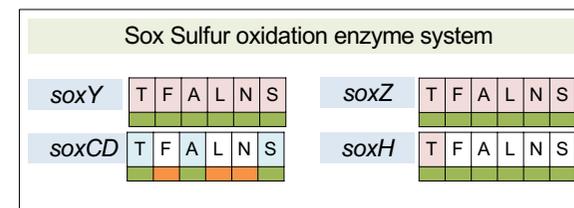
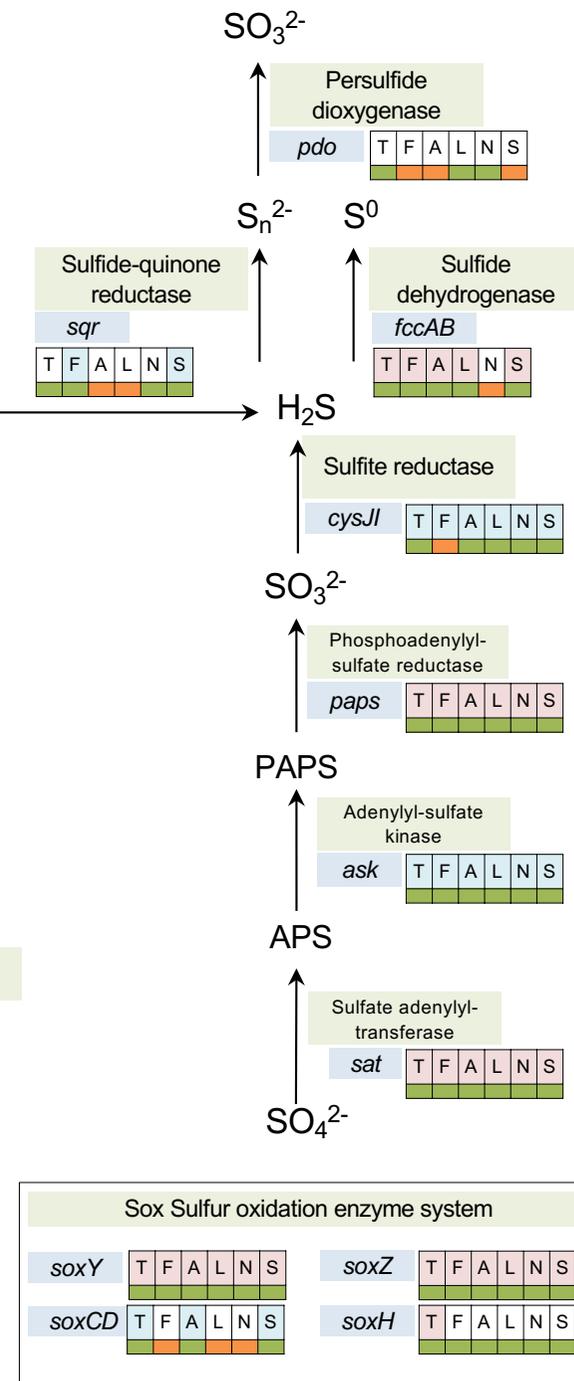


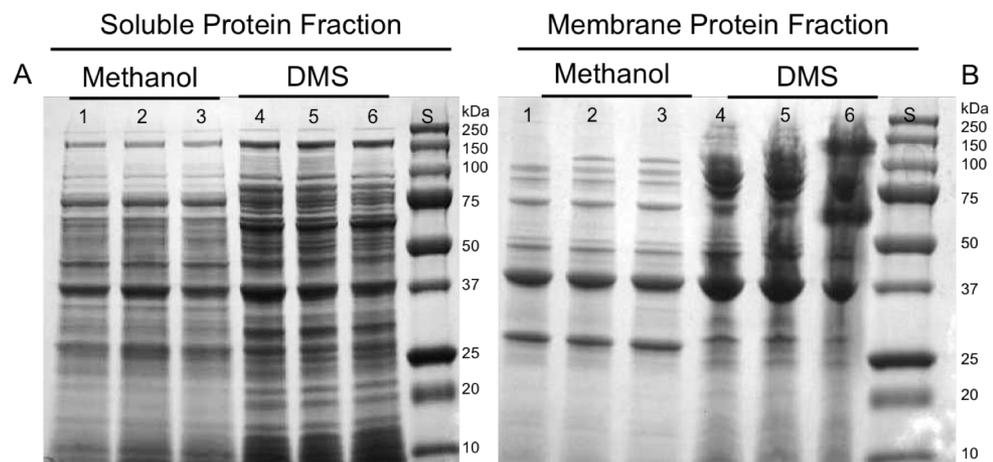
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DMS degradation and C₁ oxidation pathways

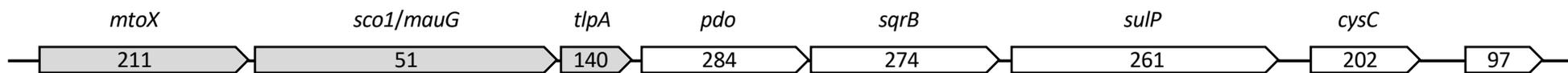


Sulfur metabolism

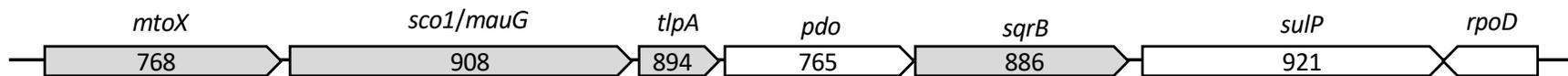




mto-cluster 1



mto-cluster 2

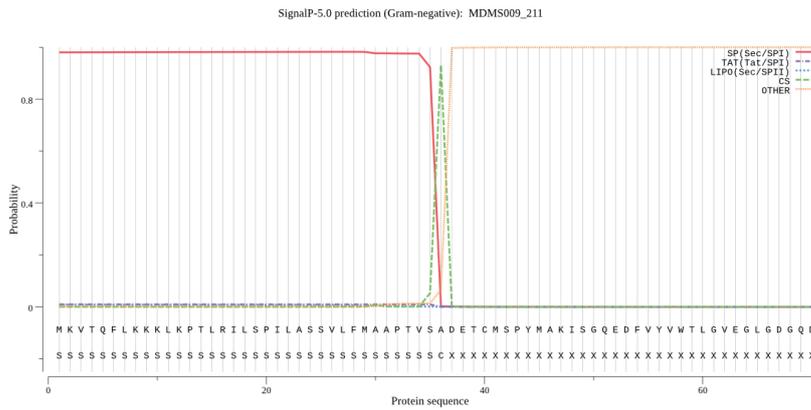


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A

>MDMS009_211 extended scf_1104571000268; 256503:257906
 MKVTQFLKKKLPKPTLRILSPILASSVLFMAAPT~~VSADET~~CMSPYMAKISGQEDFVYVWTL
 GVEGLGDGQDKLVTVSVNPEADDYGKVRHVTSVGGRNEAHHSGFTDDRKYLGAGLDTNK
 IFIFDVYSDPAKPTLVKTIIDDFVSKTGGVVGPHTPYALPGRMLWTALSNNQDHGGRTALV
 EYTNEGEYVDYWIPTDDNLQGAECTGQYADGYGYDIQVLP RRNMMLTSSFTGWSNYMMD
 FGQMLQDKEAMKRFGNTMVVWDLHTRQPKQVLDVEGAPLEIRCAWGAENNYCFTITALTA
 EIVLIEEDDKGGWKAEEVVGTVANPSDVPLPVDFSISDDSMIWWNTFMDGTTRGYDITDP
 HNPKLAHEQYIGEQINMVSSSWDNKRLYYT'TSLLANWDHKGEKDVQFMKLMHWDPE'TKTM
 EEQFHIDFYKEKLGRAHQMRFGAYS~~LYGKQAKHESDADAQLAL~~TQEK

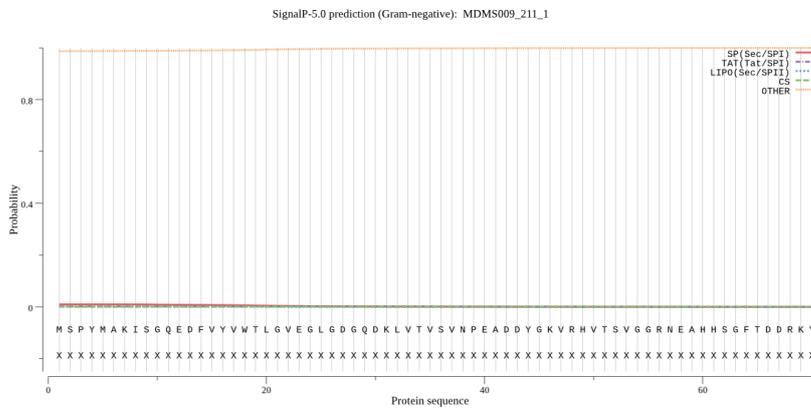
B



Signal-P 5.0 analysis of
 extended CDS of
 MDMS009_211
 encoding methanethiol
 oxidase

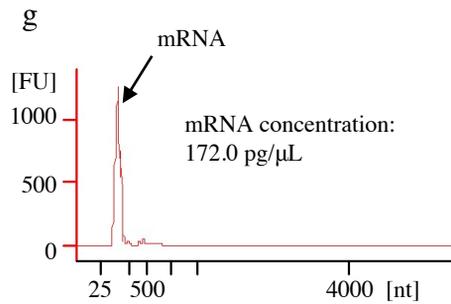
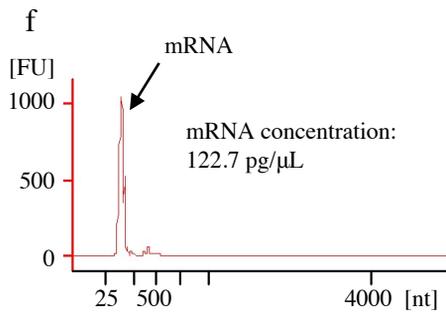
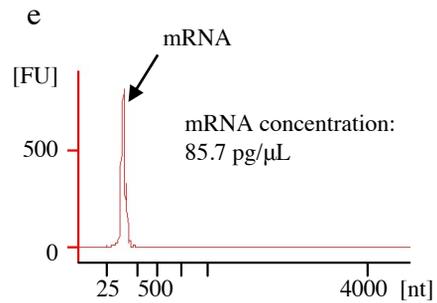
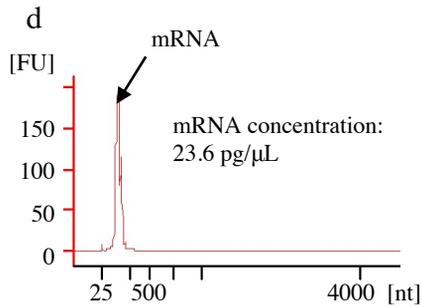
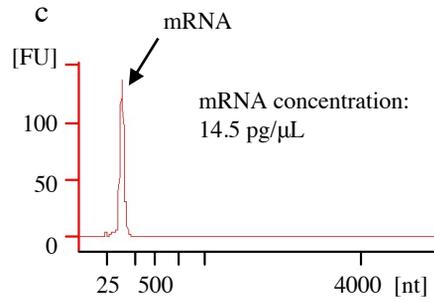
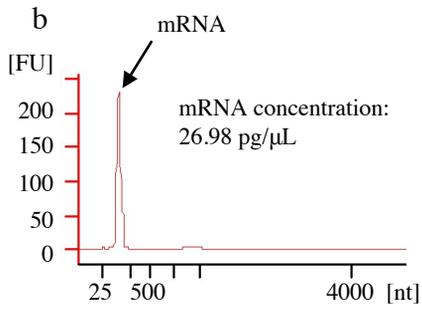
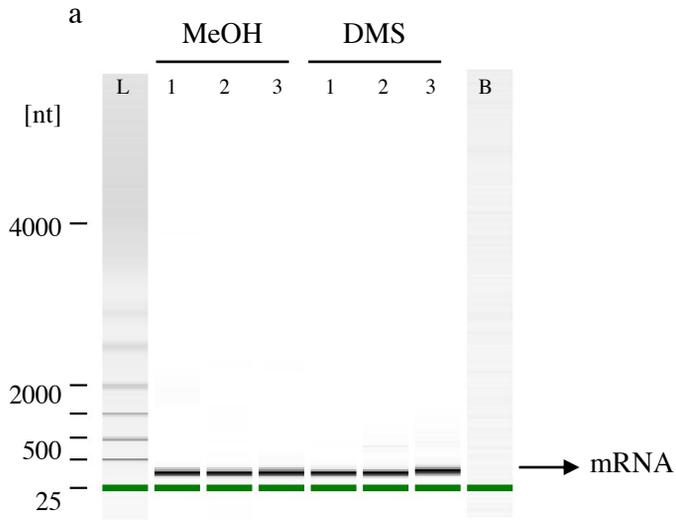
Signal peptide likelihood
 Sec/SPI: 0.9819

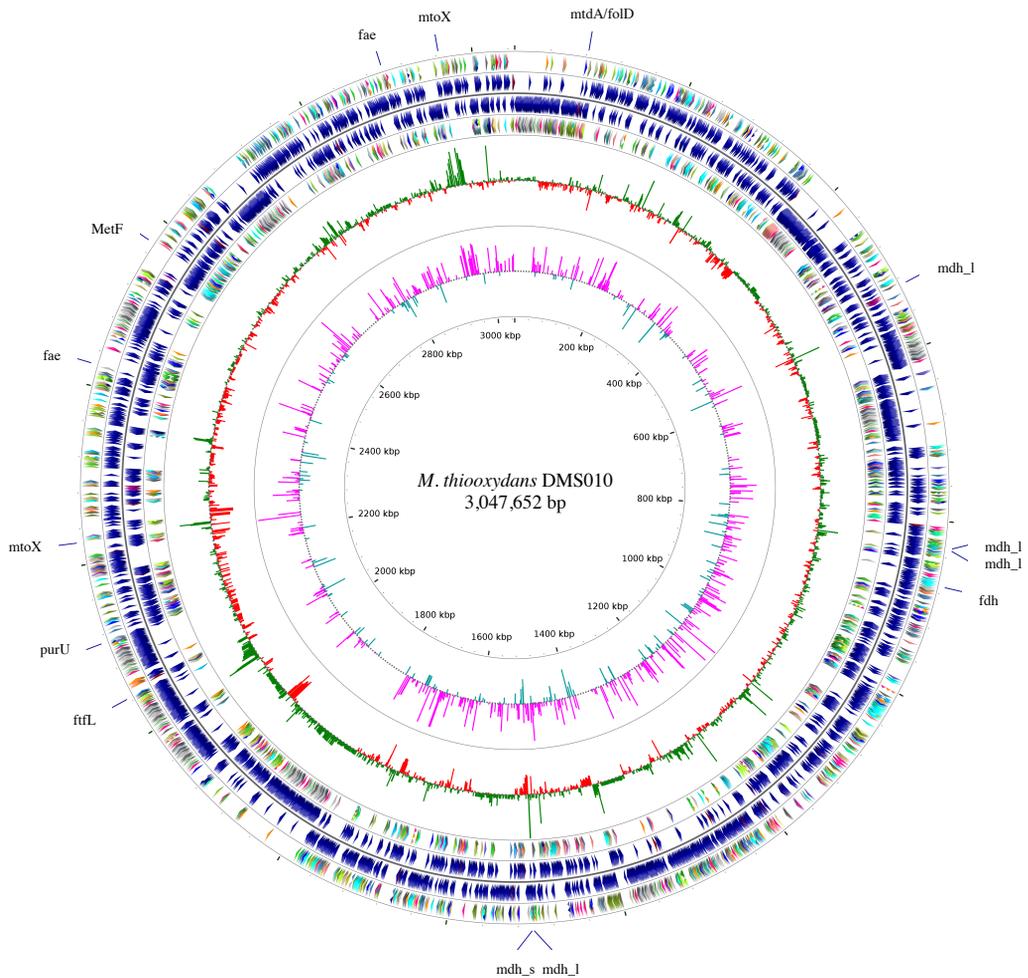
C



Signal-P 5.0 analysis of
 Original predicted CDS
 of MDMS009_211
 Encoding methanethiol
 oxidase

Signal peptide likelihood
 Sec/SPI: 0.0096





Ring Legend (from the center)

1) Proteome expression

- Upregulated on DMS
- Upregulated on methanol

2) Transcriptome expression

- Upregulated on DMS
- Upregulated on methanol

3) and 6) COG categories

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| ■ A | ■ D | ■ T | ■ Z |
| ■ B | ■ O | ■ U | ■ C |
| ■ J | ■ M | ■ V | ■ G |
| ■ K | ■ N | ■ W | ■ E |
| ■ L | ■ P | ■ Y | ■ F |
| | | | ■ S |

4) and 5) Features

- CDS
- tRNA
- rRNA

