

1 **Purification and characterization of the acetone carboxylase of *Cupriavidus***
2 ***metallidurans* strain CH34**

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14 Running title : Acetone carboxylase of *Cupriavidus metallidurans*

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16 **Key terms:**

17 Acetone carboxylase, acetone metabolism, *Cupriavidus metallidurans* CH34

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35 **1. Abstract**

36 The acetone carboxylase (Acx) is a key enzyme involved in the biodegradation of acetone by
37 bacteria. Excepted for the *Helicobacteriaceae* family, genome analyses revealed that bacterial
38 that possess Acx are associated to the soil such as *Cupriavidus metallidurans* strain CH34.
39 Acx of CH34 forms a heterohexameric complex $\alpha_2\beta_2\gamma_2$ and can only carboxylate acetone and
40 2-butanone in the ATP dependent pathway to acetoacetate and 3-keto-2-methylbutyrate,
41 respectively.

42

43 Acetone is a toxic compound found in air, water and soil, both naturally , as a
44 pollutant (6, 18) and also produced by mammals and bacteria (9, 12, 13, 25). Acetone can be
45 also degraded by various bacteria using a CO₂-dependent pathway including acetone
46 carboxylase as key enzyme, a property of increasing interest for bioremediation purposes (1-
47 3, 7-8, 10-11, 17, 19-23). Acetone carboxylase is a member of a protein family that also
48 contains acetophenone carboxylase and ATP-dependent hydantoinases/oxoprolinases. While
49 the members of this family share several similar characteristics, they differ with respect to the
50 substrates, the products of ATP hydrolysis and structural properties (19).

51

52 As shown in figure 1, genome analyses revealed a lot of bacterial species that possess the
53 acetone carboxylase and thus which are potentially able to detoxify acetone. Most of these
54 bacteria were found in soil such as *Cupriavidus metallidurans* or in contact with soil (*e.g.* by
55 plant symbiosis), and belong to Proteobacteria and especially β -Proteobacteria. In the α -
56 Proteobacteria class, the Rhizobiales and the Rhodobacterales orders were found to contain
57 Acx. In the δ -Proteobacteria class, only one species (*Geobacter uraniireducens* Rf4), up to
58 now, was discovered to contain an Acx, with around 30 % aa sequence identity with the
59 CH34 Acx depending on the subunit. The only pathogenic species that possess the enzyme
60 are those belonging to the *Helicobacteriaceae* family (γ -Proteobacteria), which are found in
61 the mammalian stomach.

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63 In general, similar gene organization for the Acx operon was found, with three genes *acx* A,
64 B and C encoding the three acetone carboxylase subunits (β , α and γ subunits, respectively)
65 and one regulator *acxR*, which was identified as a σ^{54} or σ^{70} specific transcriptional regulator
66 and can be divergently transcribed (21). The only known paralogous enzyme with similar
67 biochemical function is acetophenone carboxylase from *Aromatoleum aromaticum*. This

68 enzyme consist of a heterooctamer of four subunits, whose the corresponding genes
69 *apcABCDE* are clustered as an operon. Acetone carboxylase does not contain a paralogue of
70 ApcE.

71 **Acetone carboxylase induction in *Cupriavidus metallidurans***

72 A recent study focused on acetone metabolism in *C. metallidurans* CH34, a
73 Betaproteobacterium found in industrial biotopes highly contaminated in metals (15), showed
74 an overexpression of the acetone carboxylase when grown in spaceflight conditions (14),. As
75 observed in *Rhodobacter capsulatus* and *Xanthobacter autotrophicus*, *C. metallidurans* Acx
76 subunits were induced at a high level (19.28 ± 4.54 % of the total proteins) when acetone was
77 present in the culture (Fig. 2) (21-22). An *acxR*⁻ knock-out mutant was constructed in this
78 study. This mutant, in which no acetone carboxylase was produced (Fig. 2), was unable to
79 growth at the expense of acetone or isopropanol. A large expression of this enzyme could
80 compensate a low turnover number for catalysis allowing a reasonable rate of acetone
81 carboxylation to support growth with a relatively low doubling time (4 to 20 hours for *X.*
82 *autotrophicus* , *R. capsulatus* and *C. metallidurans* CH34) (21).

83

84 **Acetone carboxylase purification and characterization**

85 The partial characterization of acetone carboxylase were conducted in *X autotrophicus* strain
86 Py2, *Rhodococcus rhodochrous* strain B276, *R. capsulatus* strain B10, in *Alicyclophilus*
87 *denitrificans* strain K601, two species of *Paracoccus* and very recently in *A. aromaticum* and
88 showed high structural similarities (1, 7-8, 17, 19-22).

89 In this study, the Acx of CH34 was purified according to a two-step procedure consisting of
90 anion DEAE-Sepharose chromatography followed by Sephacryl S300 molecular filtration
91 (24, 25). The native molecular weight of the acetone carboxylase complex was determined by
92 gel filtration and was estimated to be 388 +/- 15kDa, corresponding to an $\alpha_2\beta_2\gamma_2$ configuration

93 (86, 76 and 19 kDa for the α , β and γ subunits), as described previously in other bacteria (7, 8,
94 19-21). The absorption spectrum of acetone carboxylase between 250 and 350 nm exhibited a
95 maximal peak at 287.2 nm, which is close to the value obtained in *X. autotrophicus* (281 nm)
96 (20).

97 ***Enzymatic activity***

98 Depending on the species, the properties of Acx differ with regard to the substrates and
99 cofactors required to support the carboxylation reaction (1, 7, 19-22).

100 The *C. metallidurans* enzyme showed a poor stability and a maximum activity in a pH range
101 of 6.5 - 8.0.

102 Of all the tested high-energy compounds (ATP, ITP, UTP or GTP), only Mg-ATP supported
103 acetone carboxylation in CH34 resulting in acetoacetate formation (Fig. 3). Similar results
104 were obtained in *X. autotrophicus*, *A. aromaticum* and *R. capsulatus*, while in *R.*
105 *rhodochrous*, no activity was observed with ATP (7, 19, 21). As observed in these bacteria,
106 acetone carboxylase reaction in CH34 showed that ATP is hydrolyzed into AMP and 2
107 inorganic phosphates.

108

109 NH_4^+ ions have also been shown to increase acetone carboxylase activity (21). Yet
110 tests performed in the presence of NH_4Cl (100 mM) showed no significant increase in
111 acetoacetate production by Acx of CH34. In contrast, as observed in *X. autotrophicus*,
112 potassium (40 mM) and CO_2 source (KHCO_3) stimulated the CH34 acetone carboxylase
113 activity.

114 The specific activities obtained with the purified enzyme of CH34 were 0.4 to 0.6U/mg
115 compared to 0.08-0.240 U/mg for the other Acx. Nevertheless, the comparison in terms of
116 activity has to be taken cautiously due to the differences observed with the stability of the
117 purified enzymes.

118 Among all the tested substrates, only acetone and 2-butanol were identified as
119 substrates of the *C. metallidurans* Acx (Fig. 3). Interestingly, we showed that *C.*
120 *metallidurans* CH34 was also able to growth in presence of 2-butanone as sole carbon source.
121 Studies in *X. autotrophicus* and *A. aromaticum* also revealed that 2-butanone was the only
122 alternative substrate of acetone carboxylase (19, 20). In *R. rhodochrous*, acetone carboxylase
123 was found to utilize a wider range of substrates, including 2-butanone, which was consumed
124 at rate to identical acetone, and also 2-pentanone, 3-pentanone and 2-hexanone, which were
125 degraded at 70, 40 and 42 % the rate of acetone, respectively (7). NMR analyses revealed
126 that carboxylation of 2-butanone by Acx of CH34 produces 3-keto-2-methylbutyrate (Fig. 4).
127 Recently, Schühle and Heider suggested that Acx of *A. aromaticum* carboxylates only methyl
128 groups adjacent to carbonyl and proposed that butanone was transformed to 3-oxopentanoic
129 acid. Nevertheless, no experimental characterization of the carboxylated product was realized
130 from butanone by Acx of *A. aromaticum* (19).
131 We propose for *C. metallidurans*, that 3-keto-2-methylbutyrate obtained by carboxylation of
132 butanone was then activated to coenzyme A (CoA) thioester and thiotically cleaved to
133 Propionyl-CoA and Acetyl-CoA as observed in the leucine catabolism pathway.
134 In conclusion, *C.metallidurans* CH34 is able to degrade acetone and, besides acetone, only 2-
135 butanone using an ATP dependent pathway including the Acx enzyme. The corresponding
136 *acx* genes are located on the second chromosome or chromid

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138 **Figures**

139

140 **Figure 1.** Synteny of the acetone carboxylase operon. Amino acid sequence comparisons
141 were performed using the NCBI Blast2 tool on the Expasy Proteomic Server and the complete
142 database Swissprot/TrEMBL without any restriction. Underlined bacteria names represent

143 those in which enzyme was already formally identified in the literature. **(A)** Kingdom of
144 Bacteria; **(B)** Phylum of Proteobacteria; **(C)** Class of ϵ -Proteobacteria.

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146 **Figure 2.** Acetone carboxylase expression. SDS-PAGE of protein extracts (10 μ g) from
147 CH34 grown in the presence of (1) 9 mM gluconate, (2) 25 mM acetone, (3) 25 mM
148 isopropanol and (4) 25 mM *n*-propanol. (5) Protein extract (10 μ g) from *AcxR*⁻ mutant
149 cultivated in presence of acetone 25mM. (6) Purified acetone carboxylase (5 μ g).

150

151 **Figure 3.** Comparison of the acetone and acetophenone carboxylases from various species.

152 ¹ (19) ² (20, 21) ³ (21) ⁴ (7) ⁵ (11).

153 a : The products of the enzymatic reaction were not identified in *X. autotrophicus* and *R.*
154 *capsulatus*. For *A. aromaticum*, the nature of the product was suggested by the authors but not
155 experimentally identified.

156 b : The product of the enzymatic reaction was not identified.

157 ND : Not Determined.

158

159 **Figure 4.** Determination by NMR analyses of acetone carboxylase reaction products with 2-
160 butanone as substrate. (A, B) Enzymatic reactions realized without substrates; (C, D, E, F)
161 Enzymatic reactions realized with 8 mM, 12 mM, 16 mM and 24 mM ATP respectively; (G)
162 Enzymatic reaction realized with 16 mM ATP in presence of 2 concentrated Aex.

163

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246 **Figure 1**

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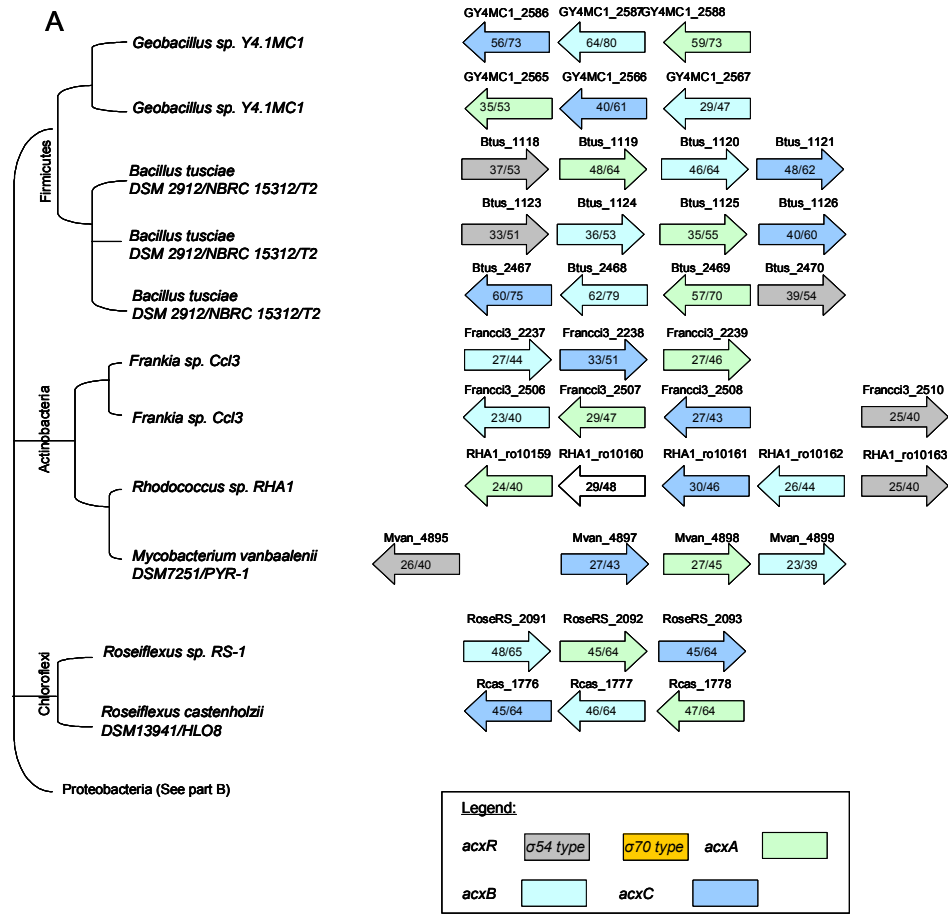
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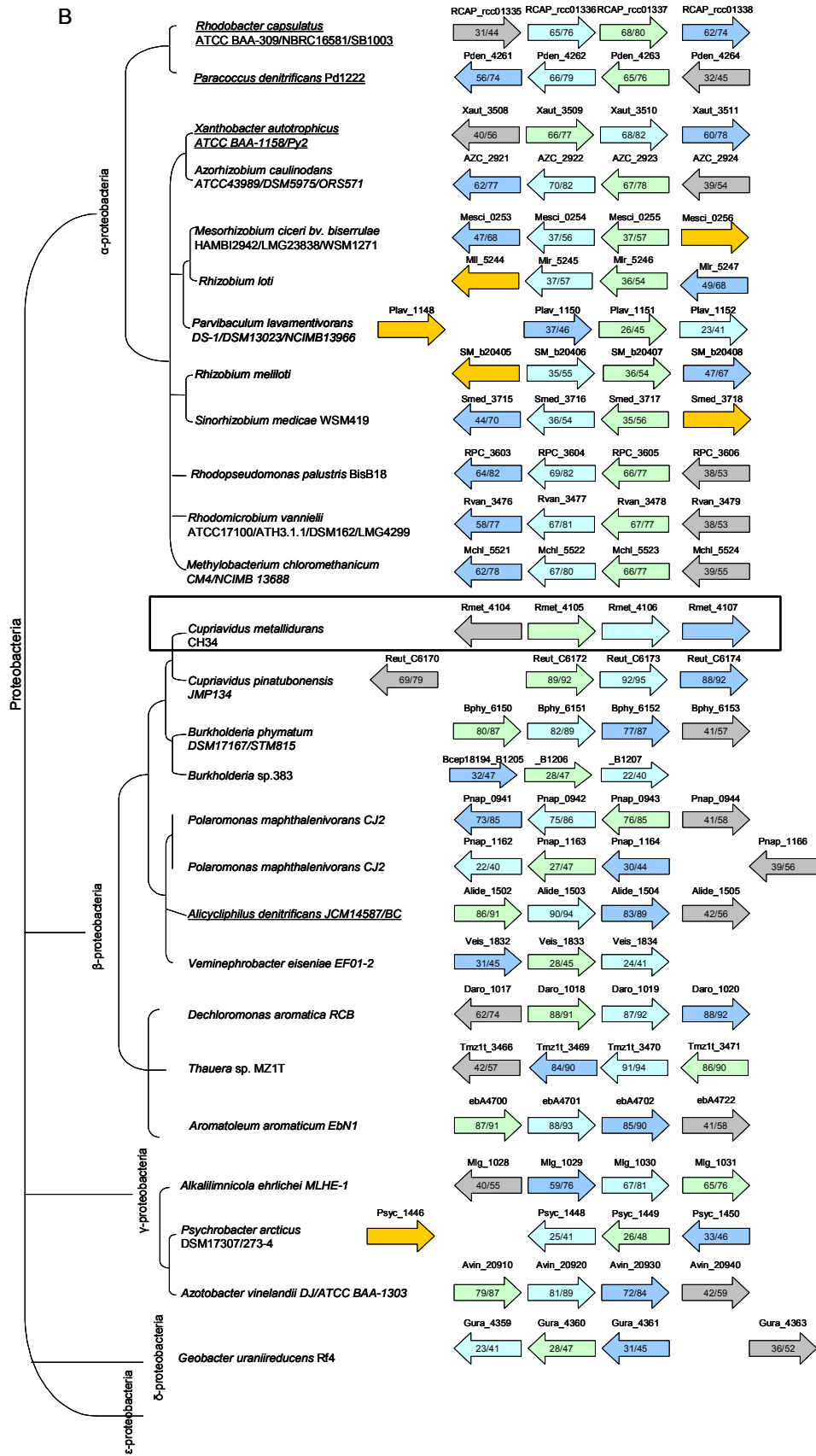
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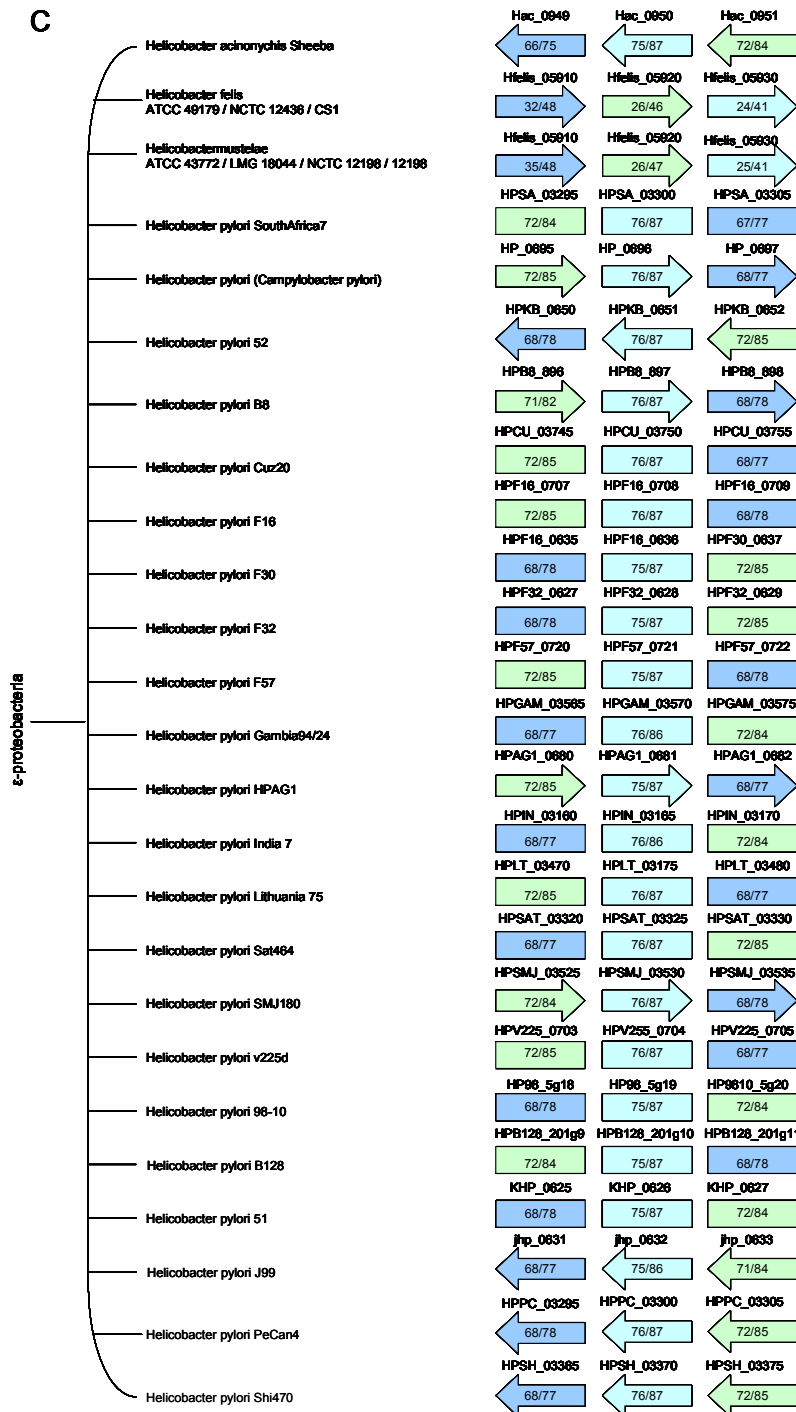
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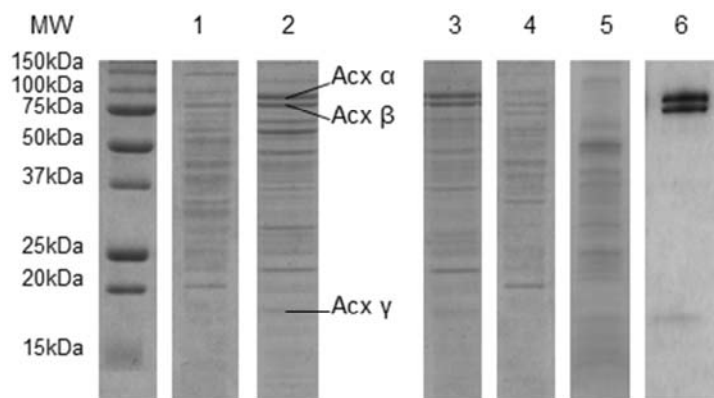
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378 **Figure 2**
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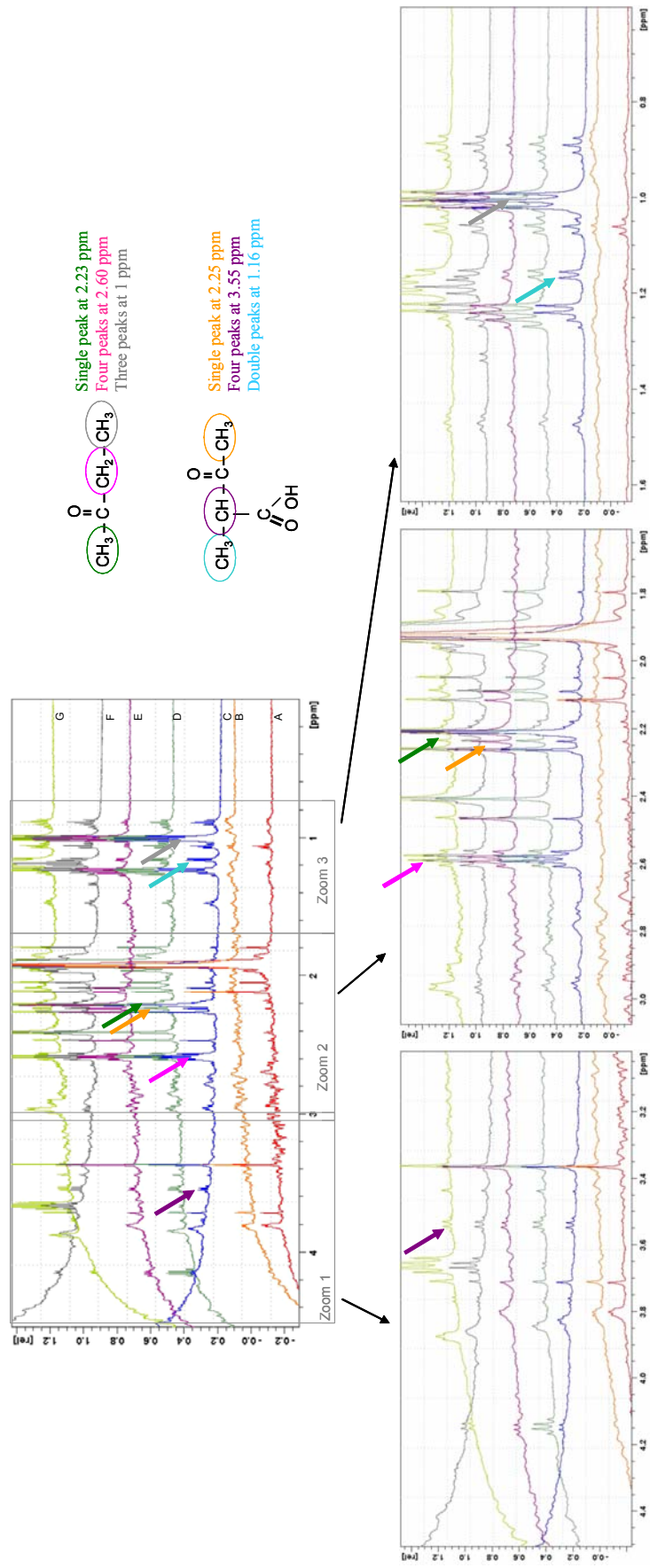
Figure 3

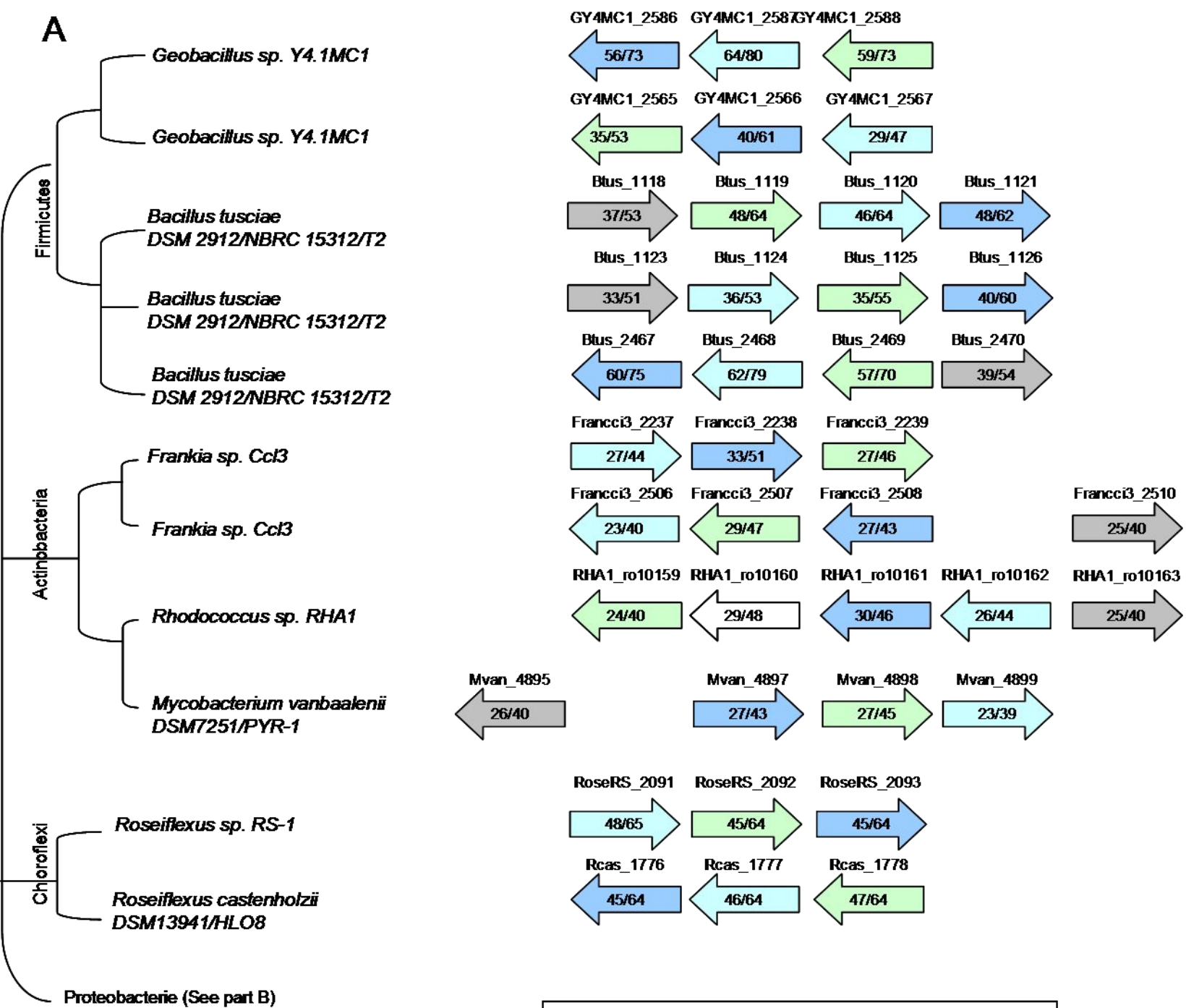
	Acetone carboxylase			Acetophenone carboxylase
	<i>A. aromaticum</i> ¹ <i>X. autotrophicus</i> ² <i>R. capsulatus</i> ³	<i>C. metallidurans</i> CH34	<i>R. rhodochrous</i> ⁴	<i>A. aromaticum</i> ⁵
Subunit composition.	$\alpha_2\beta_2\gamma_2$ (85/75/20 kDa in <i>A. aromaticum</i>) (85/78/20 kDa in <i>X. autotrophicus</i>) (85/78/20 kDa in <i>R. capsulatus</i>)	$\alpha_2\beta_2\gamma_2$ (88/78/19 kDa)	$\alpha_2\beta_2\gamma_2$ (85/74/16 kDa)	$(\alpha\beta\gamma)_2 + \epsilon_2$ (85/75/70/15 + 34 kDa)
Cofactors.	ATP: ++++ GTP: - ITP: - UTP: - CTP: - XTP: ND	ATP: ++++ GTP: - ITP: - UTP: - CTP: ND XTP: ND	ATP: - GTP: ++++ ITP: - UTP: +++ CTP: ++ XTP: +	ATP: ++++ GTP: - ITP: - UTP: - CTP: - XTP: ND
Substrates:	acetone \rightarrow acetoacetate 2-butanone \rightarrow 2-ketovalerate ^a	acetone \rightarrow acetoacetate 2-butanone \rightarrow 3-keto-2-methylbutyrate	acetone \rightarrow acetoacetate 2-butanone ^b 2-pentanone ^b 3-pentanone ^b 2-hexanone ^b	acetophenone \rightarrow benzoylacetate propiophenone ^b 4-acetylpyridine ^b
No-substrates:	2-pentanone 3-pentanone 2-hexanone Chloroacetone	2-pentanone 3-pentanone 2-hexanone <i>n</i> -propanol isopropanol acetaldehyde dimethylsulfoxide		<i>m</i> , <i>n</i> , <i>q</i> substituted acetophenone derivatives aliphatic ketones

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Figure 4

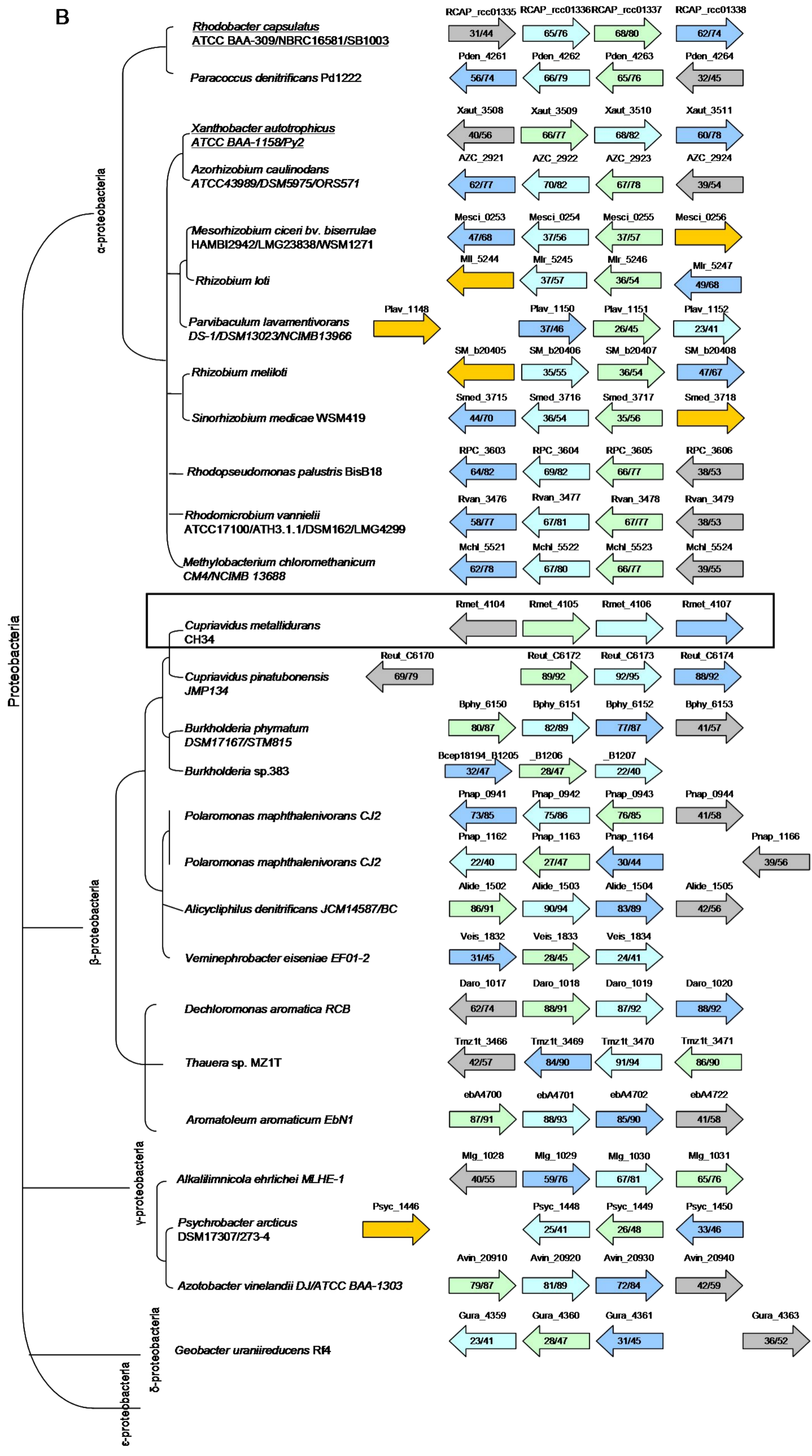


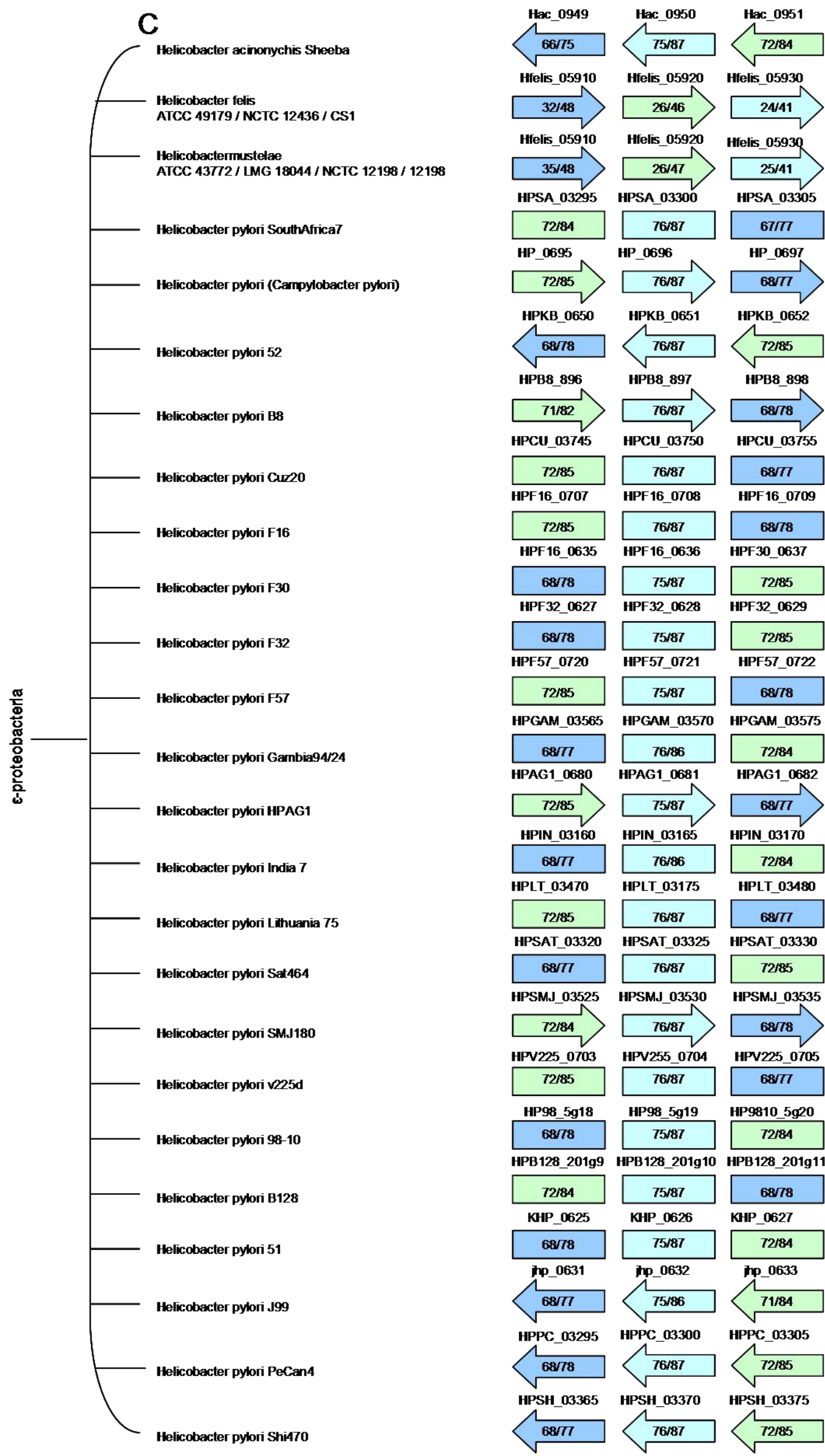


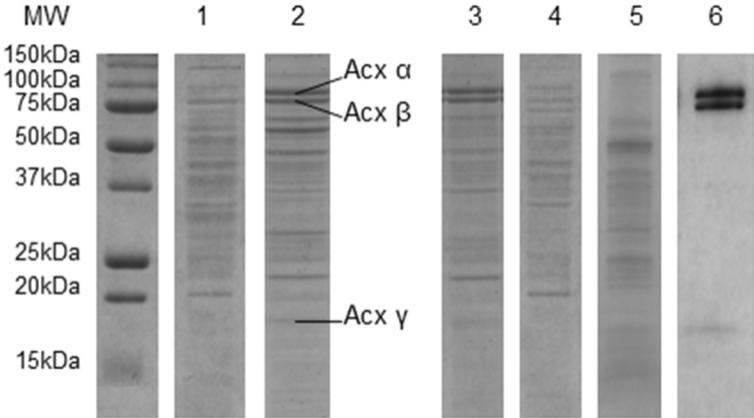
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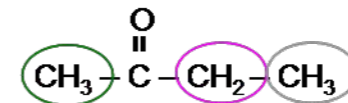
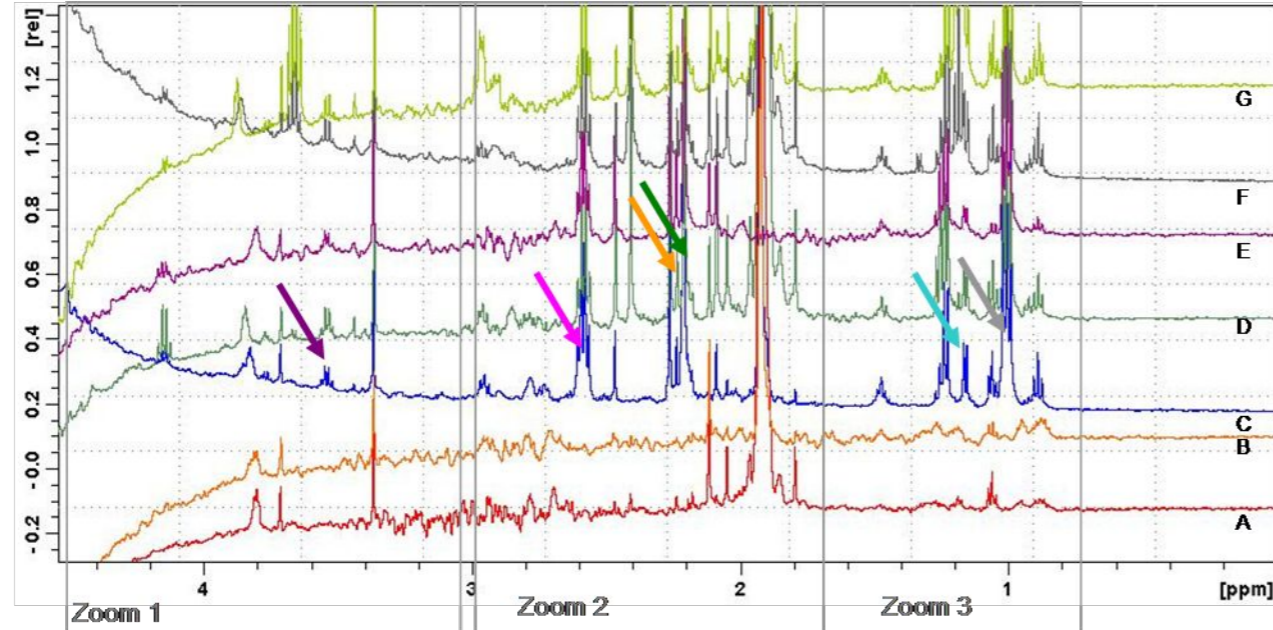




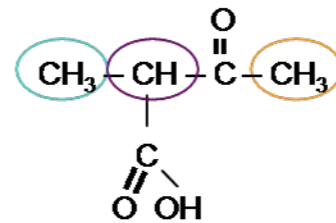
Acetone carboxylase

Acetophenone carboxylase

	<i>A. aromaticum</i> ¹ <i>X. autotrophicus</i> ² <i>R. capsulatus</i> ³	<i>C. metallidurans</i> CH34	<i>R. rhodochrous</i> ⁴	<i>A. aromaticum</i> ⁵
Subunit composition:	$\alpha_2\beta_2\gamma_2$ (85/75/20 kDa in <i>A. aromaticum</i>) (85/78/20 kDa in <i>X. autotrophicus</i>) (85/78/20 kDa in <i>R. capsulatus</i>)	$\alpha_2\beta_2\gamma_2$ (86/76/19 kDa)	$\alpha_2\beta_2\gamma_2$ (85/74/16 kDa)	$(\alpha\beta\beta'\gamma)_2 + \epsilon_2$ (85/75/70/15 + 34 kDa)
Cofactors: ATP	++++	++++	-	++++
GTP	-	-	++++	-
ITP	-	-	++++	-
UTP	-	-	+++	-
CTP	-	ND	++	-
XTP	ND	ND	+	ND
Substrates:	acetone → acetoacetate 2-butanone → 2-ketovalerate ^a	acetone → acetoacetate 2-butanone → 3-keto-2-methylbutyrate	acetone → acetoacetate 2-butanone ^b 2-pentanone ^b 3-pentanone ^b 2-hexanone ^b	acetophenone → benzoylacetate propiophenone ^b 4-acetyl pyridine ^b
No-substrates:	2-pentanone 3-pentanone 2-hexanone Chloroacetone	2-pentanone 3-pentanone 2-hexanone <i>n</i> -propanol isopropanol acetaldehyde dimethylsulfoxide		ring substituted acetophenone derivatives aliphatic ketones



Single peak at 2.23 ppm
 Four peaks at 2.60 ppm
 Three peaks at 1 ppm



Single peak at 2.25 ppm
 Four peaks at 3.55 ppm
 Double peaks at 1.16 ppm

