

This is the final draft of the contribution published as:

Deicke, M., Mohr, J.F., Roy, S., **Herzprung, P.**, Bellenger, P., Wichard, T. (2019):
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the rhizosphere of actinorhizal plants
Metallomics **11** , 810 - 821

The publisher's version is available at:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1039/C8MT00344K>

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Metallophore profiling of nitrogen-fixing *Frankia* spp. to understand metal management in the rhizosphere of actinorhizal plants

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Key words: Alder, chelators, mass spectrometry, ligandosphere, metallophore, metal management, siderophore, rhizosphere

Abstract

Frankia spp. are widespread nitrogen-fixing soil bacteria, which often live in symbiosis with a broad spectrum of hosts. Metal homeostasis plays a crucial role in the success of the symbiosis regarding the acquisition of essential trace metals and detoxification of potentially toxic elements. We have hypothesised that *Frankia* releases many organic ligands with a broad spectrum of affinity for essential and toxic metals. We coined the term ‘ligandosphere’ to describe the entirety of excreted metal complexing agents. Using metal isotope-coded profiling (MICP); metallophores of physiological important and toxic trace metals were identified by the addition of stable metal isotope pairs such as $^{54}\text{Fe}/^{58}\text{Fe}$, $^{63}\text{Cu}/^{65}\text{Cu}$, $^{64}\text{Zn}/^{66}\text{Zn}$ or $^{95}\text{Mo}/^{98}\text{Mo}$. Liquid chromatography coupled to a mass spectrometer revealed strong variations of the metallophore profile in between the 14 test-strains. In total, about 82 organic ligands were identified binding to one of the tested metals. The predicted sum formula of the major Fe binding ligands and MS/MS experiments suggested that several metallophore candidates have a similar molecular backbone. Growth experiments with a hyper-producer of metallophores revealed a positive relationship between metallophore production and the concentration of Cu in the growth medium. The present study provides the first comprehensive overview of the complexity of *Frankia*’s ligandosphere. It opens a path to deeper understanding of mechanisms that regulate metal homeostasis in frankiae. Deciphering these mechanisms is important since the fitness of actinorhizal plants and their potential in ecological restoration relies heavily on their symbiosis with frankiae.

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Significance to Metallomics

Metal homeostasis plays a significant role in bacteria-plant interactions in the rhizosphere. Bacteria can acquire trace metals through metallophores for metal-dependent processes like nitrogen fixation and can contribute to alleviating metal stress. To understand how bacterial metallophores contribute to metal management in a rhizosphere, it is necessary to determine the entirety of metal complexing ligands. In this study, we have explored the metallophore production by *Frankia* (Actinobacteria), a nitrogen-fixing soil bacterium, using metal isotope-coded profiling. Our study has strong implications for the understanding of the role of bacteria for the plant in trace metal acquisition and detoxification.

Introduction

Metal ions are essential for many enzymes, but an excess of metals can be toxic and reduce growth and development of a broad range of organisms. In bacteria, metal limitation activates pathways that are involved in the import and mobilisation of metals via metallophores, whereas an excess of metals induces efflux and storage¹. Microorganisms in the rhizosphere, a micro-ecological zone in direct proximity of plant roots, provide many benefices to plants, such as defence against pathogens², increased macronutrient availability (e.g., N, P) as well as micronutrients (e.g., Fe, Cu, Zn, Mo) uptake³. For example, bacteria recruit directly iron for the metal-dependent enzymes, but they also assist in plant iron uptake⁴. Considering the bacteria mediated iron uptake in corn⁴, the hypothesis iron-for-carbon⁵ could be a widespread bacteria-plant interaction. Such interactions would likely strongly rely on bacterial metallophore production, which might influence trace metal bioavailability in the rhizosphere. Nitrogen-fixers like the ubiquitous soil bacteria, *Frankia* spp. (Actinobacteria), are of particular interest, as they form complex symbiotic interactions with a broad range of higher plants such as alder or willow thorn, often along with ectomycorrhizal or arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi^{6, 7}. After root infection, *Frankia* has access to a carbon source from the host and supplies nitrogen to the symbionts in return. Therefore, *Frankia* needs to acquire Mo and Fe for the nitrogenase reducing atmospheric N₂ to NH₃^{8-10,11}. Nitrogen-fixing soil bacteria such as *Azotobacter vinelandii* utilise metallophores to increase the bioavailability of nitrogenase metal cofactors (i.e., Fe, Mo, V)¹², which are often bound by dissolved organic matter in the rhizosphere¹³⁻¹⁵ and reduce the toxicity of unwanted metals (i.e., W)¹⁶. As many bacterial organic ligands, for example, the catecholate-type organic ligand protochelin can complex various metal cations (e.g., Fe³⁺, Cu²⁺, Zn²⁺) or oxo-anions (e.g., molybdate, vanadate, tungstate), the use of metallophores for metal management could be a common strategy in bacteria¹⁷. Indeed, metallophores acquire many essential biometals by shaping the speciation of metals in the rhizosphere habitat to the benefice of their co-habiting bacteria and other organisms^{18, 19}. Here, we use the term ‘ligandosphere’ to highlight the environment- and species-dependent bouquet of metallophores released by organisms of a specific habitat.

Although hundreds of siderophores were identified in the last decades²⁰, little is known about metallophore-based recruitment strategies for other metals. In *Frankia*, as in many other model bacteria, studies of metal-binding ligands were often limited to siderophore detection under Fe limited growth conditions using colourimetric approaches or investigations on heavy metal

tolerance, directly linked to their effect on bacterial physiology^{21, 22}. More specific colourimetric procedures have shown evidence for catecholate, and hydroxamate siderophores in various *Frankia* isolates²³⁻²⁵. Boyer et al. (1999) found two potential siderophores, Frankobactin (782 *m/z*) and Frankobactin A (800 *m/z*)^{26, 27} isolated from *Frankia* sp. strain 52065. NMR could identify only substructures, the phenyl-oxazoline ring, some amino acids and the hydroxamate units of the siderophores²⁸. Genome mining of three isolates, ACN14a, CcI3 and EAN1pec, revealed non-ribosomal peptide synthases (NRPS) that govern complex reactions in *Frankia* including the assembly of phenols/catechol, oxazoline/thiazolines and hydroxamates²⁹. The NRPS domain suggested the sequence of 2,3-dihydroxybenzoate or salicylate followed by serine or cysteine and a varying number of other amino acids, such as ornithine and threonine. Also, all three *Frankia* genomes contain homologous NRPS-independent biosynthetic loci typical for an aerobactin-like metallophore²⁹. These results highlighted the potential diversity of metallophores produced by *Frankia* spp.

We, therefore, raise the hypothesis that *Frankia* can release a strain-specific bouquet of organic ligands, which facilitates the complexations of cations and oxo-anions for both recruitment and detoxification of metals. Multiple metallophores might harbour similar structures, but their affinities to, e.g. iron can vary. Such a 'ligandosphere' could evolve an advantage to recruit iron, for example, in a changing environment from different resources. In this context, Hider and Kong (2010) have already suggested distinguishing those ligands for solely iron complexation and recruitment (primary siderophores) from those who are dedicated to non-classic function (secondary siderophores) such as detoxification or just keeping metals in solution as a complex²⁰. Metallophore-mediated tolerance mechanisms for potentially toxic heavy metals are essential for bioremediation of contaminated sites³⁰⁻³². The toxicity of metals mainly depends on their concentration, speciation and bioavailability^{33, 34}. Zinc and copper, for example, are necessary for the function of various enzymes such as polymerase or cytochrome oxidase^{35, 36}, but also have a strong toxic effect on microorganisms. Cu²⁺ ions can replace other metal ions in complexes and can generate reactive oxygen species (ROS) by autoxidation or Fenton-like reactions that cause oxidative stress and subsequent cell damage³⁷. To avoid cell damage through critical metal concentrations, *Frankia* might feature different resistance mechanisms; immobilisation on the cell surface, efficient metal-specific efflux systems and complexation by metallophores^{22, 38}. In this context, several *Frankia* strains are resistant against high Zn concentrations³⁹, but zinc

ligands (zincophores) and the Zn management are unknown in the genus *Frankia*. Anyway, it is well known, that *Frankia* utilise all of the essential trace elements (Ni, Co, Cu, Se, Mo, B, Zn, Fe, and Mn) and have a comparatively high percentage of metalloproteins, particularly in the more metal resistant strains. *Frankia* has achieved similar levels of metal and metalloid resistance as bacteria from highly metal-contaminated sites. More importantly, from a bioremediation perspective, Furnholm and Tisa (2014) have outlined the importance to understand mechanisms allowing the endosymbiont to survive and infect actinorhizal plants in metal contaminated soils²⁰. For that reason the present study aims to determine the ‘ligandosphere’ in pure cultures of *Frankia* strains for the complexation of selected metals such as Fe, Zn, Mo and Cu by using metal isotope-coded profiling (MICP) supported by DeltaMS to identify the respective isotopologues^{40, 41} of unknown organic ligands in different growth media. *Frankia* serves thereby as an ecologically important species for the rhizosphere microbiome and potential new model system for interactions across the prokaryote-eukaryote boundary in soil similar to the well investigated aquatic systems⁴². Overall, our elaborative screening sheds light on the dynamics of the metallophore profile in the genus *Frankia* under standardised conditions and provides information on how plants and associated fungi might involve microorganisms in their metal homeostasis.

Experimental

Reagents and materials

All used ingredients of the bacterial growth media were purchased by Sigma Aldrich (Taufkirchen, Germany) and VWR (Darmstadt, Germany). A Micro-Pure water purification system (Thermo Scientific, Schwerte, Germany) provided the ultra-pure water (0.055 µS) for the preparation of aqueous solutions. UHPLC-grade methanol, acetonitrile, water, ammonium acetate and formic acid were purchased from VWR (Darmstadt, Germany). Cell tissue flasks and plastic tubes were from Sarstedt (Nümbrecht, Germany).

Bacteria strains, culture media, growth conditions and protein quantification

All *Frankia* strains were provided by the Centre d’Étude de la Forêt culture collection (CEF), Université Laval (Québec, Canada) except isolate DSM 44251 which was obtained from the DSMZ (German Collection of Microorganisms and Cell Cultures, Göttingen, Germany). Two

growth media, BAP medium and the newly designed MI medium (metallophore inducing medium), were used. The BAP medium was prepared as described in Bélanger et al. (2011)⁴³. The MI medium was inspired by Murry et al. (1984)⁴⁴ and composed of (in g L⁻¹) KH₂PO₄, 0.953; K₂HPO₄, 0.592; NH₄Cl, 0.268; sodium propionate, 0.480; MgSO₄·7H₂O, 0.030; CaCl₂·2H₂O, 0.010; trace metals (in g L⁻¹): H₃BO₃, 0.00286; MnCl₂·2H₂O, 0.00181; ZnSO₄·7H₂O, 0.00022; CuSO₄·5H₂O, 0.00008; Biotin, 400 µg L⁻¹. Both media were supplemented with FeCl₃ 5.0 × 10⁻⁷ mol L⁻¹, EDTA 5.0 × 10⁻⁶ mol L⁻¹ and Na₂MoO₄·2H₂O 10⁻⁷ mol L⁻¹. The final pH was adjusted to 6.8. Each culture was inoculated with a final protein concentration of 10 µg mL⁻¹ and cultivated in 650 mL uncoated polycarbonate cell culture flask containing 200 mL culture medium. Flasks were incubated in static conditions at 30°C. After 25 days, 100 mL medium of each culture has been taken for analysis. The protein content of all cultures was determined by homogenization, cell disruption and subsequent Roti®-Quant Protein Assay (based on the Coomassie Bradford assay)⁴³.

Analytical process

Cultures were centrifuged at 3440 ×g for 10 min at 4°C. The supernatants (100 mL, 1.5 mL min⁻¹) were loaded on standard HLB-cartridges (200 mg sorbents, Oasis™ Waters, Milford, UK) preconditioned with 6 mL MeOH and afterwards equilibrated with 8 mL water¹⁶. Upon loading, the cartridges were eluted with 6 mL of 100% MeOH. An aliquot of each extract was used for the universal Chrome Azurol S assay (CAS) to identify present Fe binding agents⁴⁵. The remaining extract was evaporated entirely under a nitrogen stream, and the sample residue was re-suspended in 100 µL MeOH. For the subsequent Metallophore Isotope Coded Profiling (MICP) all extracts were split into four equal aliquots. Each aliquot was spiked with 4 µL of a 10⁻² mol L⁻¹ stable isotopes solution (ratio 1:1 of each pair: ⁵⁴Fe/⁵⁸Fe, ⁶³Cu/⁶⁵Cu, ⁶⁴Zn/⁶⁶Zn or ⁹⁵Mo/⁹⁸Mo) (Euroisotop, Saint-Aubin Cedex, France) and measured by UHPLC-HRMS. The subsequent identification of metal-binding complexes followed the workflow of MICP⁴⁰ coupled to a DeltaMS⁴¹ automatic peak detection tool. All listed total formulas were calculated using the inbuilt Thermo Xcalibur Qual Browser software tool with a mass tolerance of less than 2 ppm considering the following elements ¹H, ¹²C, ¹⁶O, ¹⁴N, ³²S, ¹³C, ²³Na, ⁵⁴Fe, ⁵⁶Fe, ⁵⁸Fe, ⁶³Cu, ⁶⁵Cu, ⁶⁴Zn, ⁶⁶Zn, ⁹⁵Mo, ⁹⁸Mo. Confirmation and exclusion of formulas are exemplarily shown in Table S1 (using the example *m/z* = 782.3679). Formulas with non-integer double binding equivalents (DBE) could be easily excluded. Only components with -10 ≤ DBE - O ≤ +10 were considered reliable⁴⁶. Formulas can

be excluded if the O/N ratio was rather low, the number of DBE was low (cannot be a peptide), or the number of S was high about N and O. Naturally formulas with minimum mass error were most plausible. As a limitation, some formulas could not be completely excluded (for example $C_{41}H_{56}O_{10}N_3S_1$). However, fragmentation experiments helped to confirm or to reject calculated formulas.

UHPLC-ESI-HRMS measurements

Ultra-high-performance liquid chromatography (UHPLC) coupled with high-resolution mass spectrometry (HRMS) was carried out using a Thermo (Bremen, Germany) UltiMate HPG-3400 RS binary pump, WPS-3000 autosampler which was set to 10°C and which was equipped with a 25 µL injection syringe and a 100 µL sample loop. The Kinetex® C-18 RP (50 × 2.1 mm; 1.7 µm) column from Phenomenex (Aschaffenburg, Germany) was kept at 25°C using a TCC-3200 column compartment. Eluent A consisted of water, with 2% (v/v) acetonitrile and Eluent B was 90% acetonitrile (v/v). Both eluents were containing 1 mmol L⁻¹ ammonium acetate⁴⁷. The chromatography was performed with a linear gradient (Table S2) and a constant flow rate of 0.4 mL min⁻¹.

Mass spectra were recorded with a Thermo QExactive plus Orbitrap mass spectrometer with electrospray ionisation (ESI) source. Ionisation mode alternated between positive and negative within 1 s and the mass window was set to 130-2000 *m/z*. The appending full scan settings were as follows: resolution: 70,000; AGC target: 5.0×10^6 ; maximum IT: 200 ms. Following general settings were used: sheath gas flow rate: 40; aux gas flow rate: 15; sweep gas flow rate: 0; discharge current: 8.0 A; capillary temperature: 350°C; S-lens RF level: 33; vaporizer temperature: 360°C; acquisition time frame: 0.2 - 9.5 min. All MS/MS measurements were performed in a simultaneously mass detection arrangement with the following instrument parameters: mass window 50-900 *m/z*, resolution: 280,000; AGC target: 3.0×10^6 ; maximum IT: 200 ms; collision energy: 25 eV. The general settings were adjusted like in full scan mode and the scan period for each target mass was set two minutes around their belonging peak.

Copper tolerance and time-lapse experiments with *Frankia* sp. CH37

The Cu tolerance of *Frankia* strain CH37 was investigated in the presence of three different Cu concentrations: 3.2×10^{-7} , 1.0×10^{-6} and 1.0×10^{-5} mol L⁻¹ (CuCl₂). All treatments were inoculated in cell flasks containing 200 mL MI medium with a final protein concentration of 10 µg mL⁻¹.

The cultures were monitored over a period of 53 days. Aliquots of 10 mL were taken at each sampling point, centrifuged and the protein amounts were quantified. The remaining supernatant (9.5 mL) was extracted with small HLB-cartridges (30 mg sorbents, Oasis™ Waters, Milford, UK). All cartridges were preconditioned with 1 mL of MeOH and equilibrated with 1 mL water. After loading the cartridge, the solid phase was washed with 1 mL of water. Compounds were then eluted with 1 mL MeOH. Afterwards, the extracts were dried under a nitrogen stream, resolved in 100 µL MeOH and measured with the UHPLC-HRMS-Orbitrap system.

Results and discussion

The metallophore profiles of 14 *Frankia* strains isolated from various host plants were very variable (Table 1). Interestingly, culturing *Frankia* on propionate as a single carbon source (MI medium) and a reduced vitamin-mix triggered the metallophore production compared to the traditional applied growth medium (BAP medium). Elevated amounts of siderophores were determined in the growth medium of the strain CH37, whereas the extracts of the known siderophore producer strains, predicted based on genome analysis, ACN14a, Ea1-12, and CcI3²⁹ reacted only moderately with the CAS assay. Surprisingly, the CAS assay indicated that only half of the tested strains were able to release Fe binding organic ligands. As micronutrients such as Fe, Zn and Mo are essential for the nitrogen fixer, we applied the metal isotope-coded profiling (MCIP) to trace lower amounts of metallophores (Table 1) assuming false negative results by the CAS assay due to a leak of sensitivity.

Metal isotope-coded profiling (MCIP)

Metallophore candidates were determined upon addition of the isotope pairs ⁵⁴Fe/⁵⁸Fe, ⁶³Cu/⁶⁵Cu, ⁶⁴Zn/⁶⁶Zn or ⁹⁵Mo/⁹⁸Mo (Fig. 1). In case of iron (⁵⁴Fe/⁵⁸Fe), regular features were considered as potential metallophores, if two isotopologues of the mass spectrum showed the correct distance of 3.9937 with an intensity ratio of 1:1 (deviation tolerance of 20%). Also, only those features were selected with a signal to noise ratio of 10:1. The survey revealed that all strains were releasing siderophores except two isolates (ACN10a and ACN12a). Non-detection of ligands in both strains might also be related to low complex stability or short residence time during growth or other recruitment strategies for Fe. These strains might also recruit iron by acquiring of not own metallophores as recently demonstrated for the genus *Pseudomonas*⁴⁸. Importantly, the

bouquet of the siderophores was strain specific and changed with the growth medium slightly, but the ligands might be structurally related as many iron complexes eluted in a narrow window between 2.2 - 3.0 min, which indicated a similar polarity of the separated molecules (Fig. 2A). Overall, 35 potential siderophores were identified (Table S3), but 17 out of them have been produced by a single strain initially isolated from *Hippophae rhamnoides* (sea buckthorn). Due to its tolerance against strongly eroded, nutrient poor and sometimes salty soils, the plant is growing on in coastal sand dunes⁴⁹ but also used for land reclamation.

Several criteria were defined for the reliable identification of new metallophores: first, Na- and K-adducts of the metallophore, which shows the same isotopic signature as the initially identified complex, point out the correct determination (Fig. 1B). Secondly, upon additional spiking of the pair of isotopes, the ratio between the metal complex and the free ligands should have changed significantly to the favour of the metal complex (Fig. S1). Finally, the HRMS measurements reveal the sum formula with plausible DBEs (Table S1).

Following the defined criteria, the masses of the free ligand of the respective complex were calculated and identified in the extracted ion chromatograms of an untreated sample. For example, the signal of the ligands disappeared after adding the respected metal such as Fe and conversely signals of the complexes increased (Fig. S1). In addition to the 35 Fe-complexes, almost all strains released ligands complexing Cu (in total 28) with a molecular mass ranging from 359 to 949 amu (Table S4). All determined Cu-ligands seem to bind cupric ions preferentially compared to Fe. Moreover, a small number of stable zinc complexes were detected in 5 out of 16 *Frankia* strains. However, the signal intensity was mostly weak except 694.1636 *m/z* and 841.3671 *m/z* for the ⁶⁶Zn isotopologues (Fig. 2B, Table S5). Surprisingly, no Mo-complex were found under the chosen laboratory conditions indicating that *Frankia* recruits added molybdate through a low-affinity transport system or it facilitates other sources of molybdophores. The latter case is more likely as it was shown that Mo is mainly bound to organic matter¹⁴. Interestingly, all detected metallophores seem to be metal-specific as just the ligand **13** (796.3834 *m/z*) bound two metals (Fe and Cu) under the applied conditions.

Determination of the sum formula

The high-resolution mass spectra were used to estimate the sum formula. Hereby, the main metallophores were selected by their signal intensity (intensity $\geq 1.24 \times 10^6$). The calculated mass

of the molecule ion deviated less than 2 ppm from the measured mass (Tables 2, 3). In a further step, the given sum formulas were verified by calculating the number of carbon atoms from the signal intensity of the ^{13}C peak and by the composition of the DBE (double bond equivalent)⁴⁶. No sulphur was identified in the identified metallophores.

The proposed sum formulas of siderophore candidates **1-8** showed a very similar composition (Table 2). All candidates have the same number of nitrogen atoms, and all other elements occur in a very narrow range. Hereby, the molecular masses and sum formula of **2** and **3** fit very well with the already published masses of Frankobactin and Frankobactin A, respectively. **2** and **3** vary precisely in the mass of water as previously described by Boyer et al.²⁶. Overall **1** (817.2701 m/z), **2** (835.2785 m/z), and **3** (853.2891 m/z) differ just by 18.0105 amu in a consecutive series (Table 2). The same loss of water was observed between **4** (831.2848 m/z) and **5** (849.2961 m/z). Only **8** (915.3424 m/z) and **9** (958.3239 m/z) have a distinctively higher molecular mass and accordingly more carbon, oxygen and nitrogen atoms (Table 2).

1 and **4**, as well as **5** and **6**, differ just by a potential CH_2 -group whereas **2** and **4** differ by a potential CO group. In summary, we argue that those siderophores are derived from the same biosynthetic pathway, and most likely, they are derivatives from Frankobactin. It seems phonemically similar to the recently identified family of derivatives of protochelin - the key metallophore in *A. vinelandii*⁵⁰. Interestingly, the most abundantly formed Cu-complexes, **10 - 15**, have different masses over a broader range of polarity suggesting unique structural features (Table 3, Fig. 2B).

Ligand classification

We have identified two different isotopic signatures of iron isotopologues (Fig. 3). The most common iron isotopic signature has three significant isotopologues due to the complexation of ^{54}Fe , ^{58}Fe (both after spiking) and ^{56}Fe , which was recruited from Fe-EDTA in the growth medium. The differences were thus 1.9998 m/z between each isotopologue. The second observed isotopic signature did not contain the isotopologue of ^{56}Fe . Therefore, we argue that *Frankia* released at least two different types of organic ligands. Type I ligands possess a higher Fe affinity or were produced in higher amounts than the type II siderophores. Therefore, type I ligands are able to recruit ^{56}Fe from Fe-EDTA as expected from primary siderophores (Hider and Kong 2010). In addition, they have rapidly bound ^{54}Fe and ^{58}Fe upon their administration (Fig. 3A, C)²⁰. The isotopic signature of the molecule ion shows thus three isotopologues. However, no

ferric complexes of type II ligands were found in untreated extracts until ^{54}Fe and ^{58}Fe were added (Fig. 3B,D). It is conceivable that type II ligands belong to the class of secondary siderophores which might chelate other trace metals, or be used by the microorganisms for other functions^{20, 51, 52}.

Determination of Frankobactin

Frankobactin is the only named siderophore released in *Frankia* so far²⁶. The proposed sum formulas of the siderophore candidates **1-8** show a very similar elementary composition. Interestingly, the molecular masses of compound **2** and **3** (782 and 800 m/z , Tables 2, S1) fit very well with the published masses of Frankobactin, and Frankobactin A produced by the *Frankia* strains 52065 and CeSI5, respectively. Compounds, **2** and **3**, also differ by a loss of water as previously observed for Frankobactin due to the ring opening of oxazoline²⁶. In our study, a Frankobactin-like siderophore was found in strain CH37 which is phylogenetically related to the isolate CeSI5⁵³. The data also support the previous genome mining-based approach²⁹, which suggested three NRPS-based biosyntheses of siderophores ranging from 610 to 900 amu including unknown substructures. Our study paves the way for selecting the ideal strain for purification of Frankobactin and related ligands for structure elucidation and eco-physiological testing.

MS/MS experiments for further structure elucidation

To gain insights into the molecular structure of the metallophores, MS/MS experiments of the main candidates of Fe and Cu metallophores were performed. The spectra of **1-5** show a similar fragmentation pattern, which is different to those of **6-9**. Starting from the C-terminal end, the MS/MS data for **1-5** revealed a neutral loss of formyl-hydroxyl-ornithine (176.0785 m/z) followed by a neutral loss of ornithine (114.0793 m/z) and a acetyl-hydroxyl-ornithine (172.0846 m/z), as also found in many other metallophores (Table 4, Fig. 4A)^{20, 29, 54}. The resulting fragments for **1** were 177.0867 m/z , 291.1657 m/z and 435.2561 m/z (including a potential loss of CO). Also, a neutral loss of threonine (101.0475) directly linked to the acetyl-hydroxyl-ornithine was identified (Fig. 4A). In **6**, the formyl-acetyl-ornithine seems to be replaced for hydroxyl-acetyl-ornithine (190.0950 m/z).

The phenyl-oxazoline ring and its opening were confirmed by the characteristic salicylate fragments and identified for **1-5** (Fig. 4B)⁵⁵⁻⁵⁷. It is noteworthy that fragments of the phenyl-

oxazoline group were not occurring if default settings for MS/MS experiments were used. The direct molecular link between the amino acid chain and the phenyl-oxazoline ring are still unclear and might be the reason for the differences observed between **1**, **2** and **4**, aside from the mass difference of water in **3** and **5**. In general, the MS/MS spectra have often shown neutral losses of water, CO and NH₃, which are characteristic for peptide fragmentation. Overall, the fragmentation pattern supports the assumption that **1-5** share the same molecular backbone (Table 4).

Cu- and Fe-complexes formed during bacterial growth in the presence of high levels of Cu

MICP allowed us identifying complexes for a targeted analysis during a time-lapse experiment of bacterial growth estimated by protein content. *Frankia* sp. strain CH37 was thus selected for its relatively high metallophore production of ⁵⁶Fe-siderophores. At 1.0×10^{-6} mol L⁻¹ Cu, the growth curve phenocopied growth under the standard Cu concentration (3.2×10^{-7} mol L⁻¹). After a short lag phase, the bacterial population grew exponentially with an abruptly ceases around day 15, followed by a typical decline phase. Some studies observed a more extended lag period, but the growth curve, in general, was similar to previously reported ones²⁶ (Fig. 5A). In the presence of elevated amounts of Cu (1.0×10^{-5} mol L⁻¹), bacteria did not grow in all biological replicates suggesting that the detoxification not work under this conditions. However, moderately high Cu concentrations of 1×10^{-6} mol L⁻¹ allowed bacterial growth. The amount of siderophore **4** increased along the exponential bacterial growth until day 15 (Fig. 5B). The siderophore seemed to be taken up or catabolised by the bacteria since its concentration decreased from day 15 and was no longer produced (or at a lower rate than the uptake) during the decline phase. A similar metallophore profile was observed in time-lapse experiments with *A. vinelandii* under nitrogen-depleted conditions. Here, few cells produced a significant amount of protochelin during the lag phase to increase the iron-bioavailability before exponential growth⁴⁷.

In contrast to the ferric complex, the measured amount of the Cu-complex **13** did not follow the time lapse of bacterial growth. For both tested Cu concentrations in the medium, the level of the Cu-complex increased steadily until day 32 to an equilibrium concentration (Fig. 5C). Also, the overall amount of Cu-complexes accelerated with the higher concentration of Cu in the growth medium as also observed for Fe. The results correspond very well with earlier studies on *A. vinelandii*, which releases a higher amount of organic ligands in the presence of elevated concentrations of toxic metals like tungstate¹⁶. Due to this fact, the increase of copper binding

ligands in *Frankia* might be the reason why growth is not influenced in the presence of elevated amounts of Cu. In this context, studies have recently identified several siderophore-producing microbial taxa in response to heavy metal contamination⁵⁸.

We thus suggest that Cu-complexation can contribute to the heavy metal resistance in *Frankia* besides other detoxification mechanisms. The number of metals present might regulate metallophore production as part of the homoeostasis, and directly influence the metallophore bouquet in the ligandosphere of these bacteria. Indeed, biosynthesis pathways of metallophores are often induced in the presence of potentially toxic metals such as in *Pseudomonas*⁵⁹. Large amounts of metallophores provide bacteria with extracellular protection by complexing metals³⁴,⁶⁰ which ultimately reduces metal uptake by preventing metal diffusion into bacteria via porins⁶¹. Future short-term uptake experiments have to verify if the identified metallophores can control the uptake of Fe, Cu and other metals such as Zn.

Conclusion

Frankia requires a constant supply of essential metals like iron to assemble the iron- and molybdenum-dependent nitrogenase. The survey of a biodiverse panel of *Frankia* strains showed plastic, strain-specific, and dynamic metallophore profiles determined by MICP and DeltaMS. Overall, Frankiae is capable of producing a wide variety of chelators that could potentially contribute to the natural ligand pool in the rhizosphere. Depending on the strain and growth media, as many as to 17 metallophores were detected in the culture supernatant. While strain CH37 was found to be a metallophore hyper-producer, other strains released only a few metallophores or even no metallophore to the growth medium. The profiles we observed also differed sharply in their composition depending on the growth medium (carbon source), indicating that very dynamic changes occur in the *Frankia* 'ligandosphere'. Frankiae seems to provide specific pools of metallophores that preferentially complex Fe, Zn, or Cu. Surprisingly, no Mo-binding ligand was identified, although, like Fe, it is an essential element for the Mo-dependent nitrogenase.

It is thus tempting to hypothesise that the mutualistic interactions between frankiae, ectomycorrhizal fungi and alder within its rhizosphere are based on both a nitrogen-for-molybdenum and iron-for-carbon dependencies under diazotrophic conditions. Frankiae will

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3 394 deliver ammonium and recruits iron if the other organisms recruit Mo and deliver carbon. In any
4 395 case, further experiments would need to be conducted under strict diazotrophic conditions and
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6 396 more challenging molybdenum sources (Mo complexed to organic matter and Mo-oxides
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8 397 complexes) to elucidate whether or not, and under which circumstances, frankiae or associated
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10 398 fungi produce molybdophores
11 399 Recorded MS/MS data suggest the existence of a similar molecular scaffolding of the main
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13 400 siderophore candidates, one that contains substructures such as ornithine and the already-known
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15 401 open and closed forms of the phenyl-oxazoline ring. Our study also revealed that the production
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17 402 of ligands for Fe and potentially toxic metals such as Cu are regulated quite differently. Based on
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19 403 these results, we suggest a ligand-mediated Cu resistance mechanism (as previously shown for
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21 404 other organism and metals) coexists with other resistance mechanisms such as efflux systems and
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23 405 detoxification processes that occur at the cell surface.
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25 406 Our results highlight that *Frankia* possesses a variety of metallophores that are produced
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27 407 dynamically, and adaptively to manage metal stress, ultimately leading to the acquisition, and/or
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29 408 detoxification. In the rhizosphere, where *Frankia* and its host plants are exposed to multiple
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31 409 metal stresses, metallophore-based management of metals would likely contribute to the fitness
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33 410 of both symbionts, as well as provide essential elements to maintain the performance of their
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35 411 nitrogen-fixing symbiosis. Our survey paves the way for targeted investigations into
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37 412 metallophore-mediated elemental acquisition and detoxification in *Frankia* and its host plants in
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39 413 both natural, and anthropised environments.
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3 415 **Conflicts of interest**

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5 416 There is nothing to declare.

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9 418 **Acknowledgements**

10
11 419 Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft funded this project through the Collaborative Research Centre
12
13 420 CRC1127 (ChemBioSys) to MD, JFM and TW and by the Hans-Böckler-Stiftung to MD. Early
14
15 421 stages of the project were supported by the Fonds der Chemischen Industrie (FCI) and the
16
17 422 German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) to TW and MD. We thank Georg Pohnert
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20 423 (University Jena) for his great support throughout this project.
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Tables

Table 1: CAS assay and MICP based determination of metallophore production in 14 *Frankia* strains during stationary growth. The preliminary screening revealed the effect of the tested growth media (using BAP or MIM) on the siderophore production. Using the CAS assay, the relative amount of siderophores is indicated by (+++) strong, (++) moderate and (+) weak and compared with Fe-isotope coded profiling (Fe-icp) as well as Cu-icp and Zn-icp. No molybdophore was identified.

Strain	Host	CAS assay (BAP)	CAS assay (MIM)	Fe- icp (MIM)	Cu- icp (MIM)	Zn- icp (MIM)
ACN10a	<i>Alnus crispa</i>				1	
ACN12a	<i>Alnus crispa</i>				1	2
ACN14a	<i>Alnus crispa</i>		+	5	6	1
CcI3 (Univ. Laval)	<i>Casuarina cunninghamiana</i>			1	4	
CcI3 (Lab. Boyer)	<i>Casuarina cunninghamiana</i>	+	+	5	3	1
CH37	<i>Hippophae rhamnoides</i>	+	+++	19	28	1
CPI1	<i>Comptonia peregrina</i>				1	
Cg70.4	<i>Casuarina glauca</i>			1	2	
Cg70.9	<i>Casuarina glauca</i>			1	1	
Cj1-82	<i>Casuarina junghuniana</i>			4	1	
Ea1-12	<i>Elaeagnus angustifolia</i>	+	++	5	1	
DC12	<i>Datisca cannabina</i>			2		
BCU 110501	<i>Discaria trinevis</i>		+++	8	1	1
DSMZ 44251	<i>Alnus rubra</i>			3	1	

Table 2: Calculated total formulas of the ^{56}Fe -complexes and their ligands extracted from the supernatant of *Frankia* strain CH37. High-resolution masses were determined after adding ^{56}Fe to the solid phase extracts.

Compound number	$^{56}\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}$ -Complex $[m/z]^*$	Ligand $[m/z]$	Proposed total formula $[\text{M}-2\text{H} + ^{56}\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}]^+$	Proposed total formula $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$
1	817.2701	764.3572	$[\text{C}_{33}\text{H}_{47}\text{O}_{12}\text{N}_9^{56}\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}]^+$	$[\text{C}_{33}\text{H}_{50}\text{O}_{12}\text{N}_9]^+$
2	835.2785	782.3679	$[\text{C}_{33}\text{H}_{49}\text{O}_{13}\text{N}_9^{56}\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}]^+$	$[\text{C}_{33}\text{H}_{52}\text{O}_{13}\text{N}_9]^+$
3	853.2891	800.3783	$[\text{C}_{33}\text{H}_{51}\text{O}_{14}\text{N}_9^{56}\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}]^+$	$[\text{C}_{33}\text{H}_{54}\text{O}_{13}\text{N}_9]^+$
4	831.2848	778.3729	$[\text{C}_{34}\text{H}_{49}\text{O}_{12}\text{N}_9^{56}\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}]^+$	$[\text{C}_{34}\text{H}_{52}\text{O}_{12}\text{N}_9]^+$
5	849.2961	796.3835	$[\text{C}_{34}\text{H}_{51}\text{O}_{13}\text{N}_9^{56}\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}]^+$	$[\text{C}_{34}\text{H}_{54}\text{O}_{13}\text{N}_9]^+$
6	863.3119	810.3997	$[\text{C}_{35}\text{H}_{53}\text{O}_{13}\text{N}_9^{56}\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}]^+$	$[\text{C}_{35}\text{H}_{56}\text{O}_{13}\text{N}_9]^+$
7	803.2897	750.3784	$[\text{C}_{33}\text{H}_{49}\text{O}_{11}\text{N}_9^{56}\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}]^+$	$[\text{C}_{33}\text{H}_{52}\text{O}_{11}\text{N}_9]^+$
8	915.3424	862.4301	$[\text{C}_{39}\text{H}_{57}\text{O}_{13}\text{N}_9^{56}\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}]^+$	$[\text{C}_{39}\text{H}_{60}\text{O}_{13}\text{N}_9]^+$
9	958.3239	905.4109	$[\text{C}_{38}\text{H}_{54}\text{O}_{14}\text{N}_{12}^{56}\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}]^+$	$[\text{C}_{38}\text{H}_{57}\text{O}_{14}\text{N}_{12}]^+$

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3 441 **Table 3:** Calculated total formulas of the ⁶³Cu complexes and their ligands extracted from the
4 442 supernatant of *Frankia* strain CH37.

Compound number	⁶³ Cu ^{II} - Complex [<i>m/z</i>]	Ligand [<i>m/z</i>]	Proposed total formula [<i>M-H</i> + ⁶³ Cu ^{II}] ⁺	Proposed total formula [<i>M+H</i>] ⁺
10	619.1816	558.2680	[C ₂₆ H ₃₄ O ₇ N ₇ ⁶³ Cu ^{II}] ⁺	Not found
11	681.2169	620.3033	[C ₂₈ H ₄₀ O ₉ N ₇ ⁶³ Cu ^{II}] ⁺	[C ₂₈ H ₄₂ O ₉ N ₇] ⁺
12	605.1619	544.2483	[C ₂₄ H ₃₆ O ₁₁ N ₃ ⁶³ Cu ^{II}] ⁺	[C ₂₄ H ₃₈ O ₁₁ N ₃] ⁺
13	857.2962	796.3834*	[C ₃₄ H ₅₂ O ₁₃ N ₉ ⁶³ Cu ^{II}] ⁺	[C ₃₄ H ₅₄ O ₁₃ N ₉] ⁺
14	551.1046	489.1832	[C ₁₉ H ₂₈ O ₁₁ N ₄ ⁶³ Cu ^{II}] ⁺	[C ₁₉ H ₂₉ O ₁₁ N ₄] ⁺
15	560.1687	499.2552	[C ₂₆ H ₃₃ O ₆ N ₄ ⁶³ Cu ^{II}] ⁺	[C ₂₆ H ₃₅ O ₆ N ₄] ⁺

17 443 Note: *This ligand formed stable complexes with both Fe and Cu in the growth medium under
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19 444 the selected conditions.
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446 **Table 4:** Fragmentation series for five siderophore candidates

Fragmentation series	Siderophore candidates				
	1	2	3	4	5
Molecular ion	764.3566	782.3664	800.3543	778.3712	796.3808
1	588.2780	606.2879	624.2745	602.2935	620.3019
2	474.1986	492.2086	510.1960	488.2144	506.2231
3	302.1137	320.1237	338.1147	316.1288	334.1388
4		219.0765			

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5 450 Fig. 1: (A) Workflow and analytical process of the screening for metallophores in the genus
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7 451 *Frankia*. (B) Representatives mass spectrum of a siderophore obtained by ESI-Orbitrap-HRMS.
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9 452 Besides the molecular ions (m/z 861 and m/z 865), the doubly charged and sodium adduct of the
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11 453 Fe-complex are shown.
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13 454 Fig. 2: Plot of m/z values of all detected metallophores over retention time. (A) Fe-complexes
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15 455 determined in *Frankia* spp. grown in BAP or MI medium. (B) Cu- and Zn complexes determined
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17 456 in *Frankia* spp. grown in MI medium.
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19 457 Fig. 3: Characteristic isotopic signature of the ferric complexes for organic ligands of (A, C) type
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21 458 I and (B,D) type II. (A) Type I ligands recruit iron from Fe-EDTA. (B) Type II ligands do not
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23 459 complex iron under standard growth conditions in the presence of Fe-EDTA. Upon addition of
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25 460 ^{54}Fe and ^{58}Fe to the extracts, both (C) type I and (D) type II ligands form iron complexes showing
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27 461 the isotopologues in the ratio 1:1.
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29 462 Fig. 4: The electrospray MS/MS mass spectrum (positive mode) for ligand **2** (782 m/z). (A) A
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31 463 typical fragmentation series of the backbone is shown at the collision energy 25 eV. (B) The
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33 464 experiment at the collision energy 20 eV of m/z 782 reveals the characteristic fragmentation of
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35 465 the phenyl-oxazoline-ring.
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37 466 Fig. 5: Time lapse of the growth of *Frankia* sp. strain CH37 in MI medium. (A) Growth curves
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39 467 are based on total protein content and observed under standard conditions at low, high and toxic
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41 468 Cu concentrations. (B) The relative amounts of the Fe-complex **4** (831 m/z) and (C) Cu-complex
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43 469 **13** (681 m/z) are shown.
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**To the Editor of
*Metallomics***

Significance to Metallomics

Jena, 29. November 2018

Dear Editor,

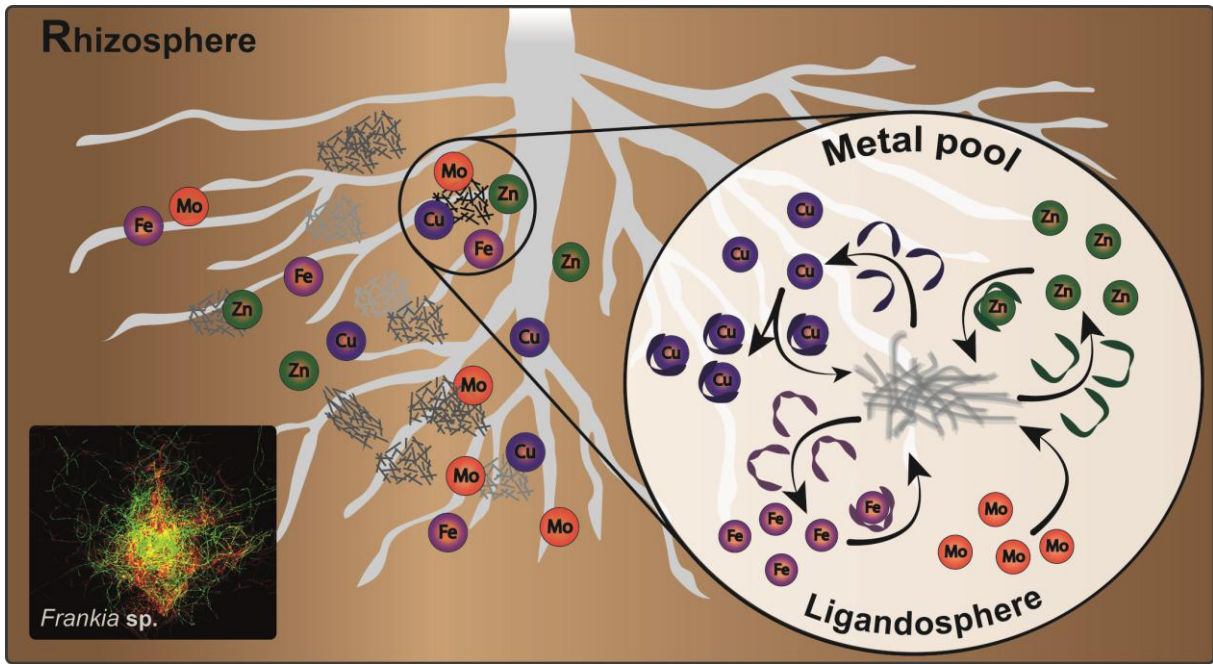
We trust that our manuscript fits very well to the scope of *Metallomics* and will meet the interest of the readership.

Metal homeostasis plays a significant role in bacteria-plant interactions in the rhizosphere. Bacteria can acquire trace metals through metallophores for metal-dependent processes like nitrogen fixation and can contribute to alleviating metal stress. To understand how bacterial metallophores contribute to metal management in a rhizosphere, it is necessary to determine the entirety of metal complexing ligands. In this study, we have explored the metallophore production by *Frankia* (Actinobacteria), a nitrogen-fixing soil bacterium, using metal isotope-coded profiling. Our study has strong implications for the understanding in the role of bacteria for the plant in trace metal acquisition and detoxification.

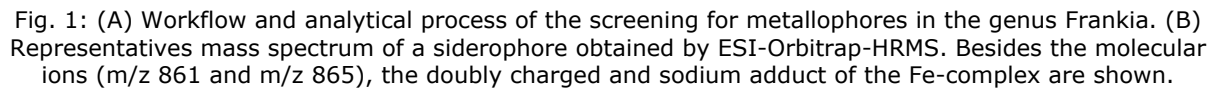
With best regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T. Wichard'.

Table of Contents Entry



Metal isotope-coded profiling of organic ligands in *Frankia* revealed a high variability of metallophores for trace element acquisition and detoxification.



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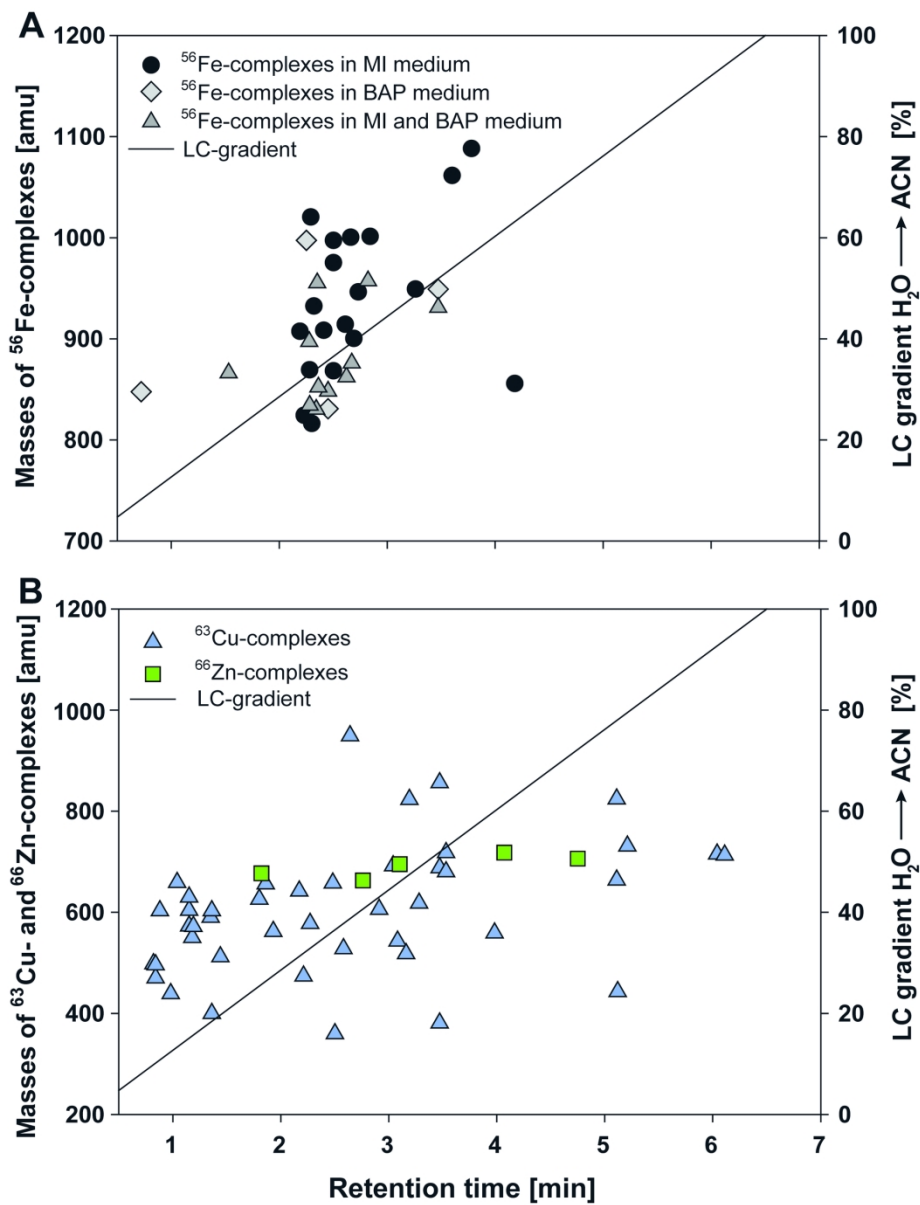


Fig. 2: Plot of m/z values of all detected metallophores over retention time. (A) Fe-complexes determined in Frankia spp. grown in BAP or MI medium. (B) Cu- and Zn complexes determined in Frankia spp. grown in MI medium.

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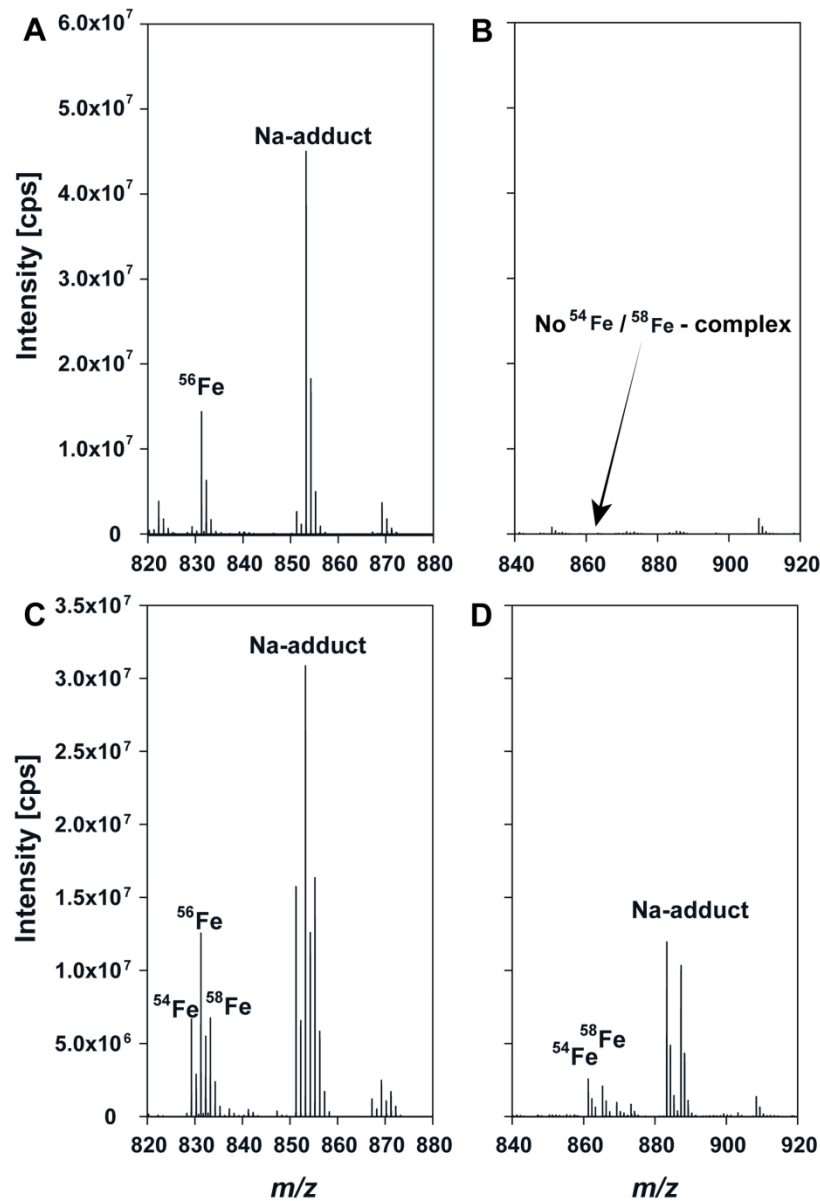


Fig. 3: Characteristic isotopic signature of the ferric complexes for organic ligands of (A, C) type I and (B,D) type II. (A) Type I ligands recruit iron from Fe-EDTA. (B) Type II ligands do not complex iron under standard growth conditions in the presence of Fe-EDTA. Upon addition of ^{54}Fe and ^{58}Fe to the extracts, both (C) type I and (D) type II ligands form iron complexes showing the isotopologues in the ratio 1:1.

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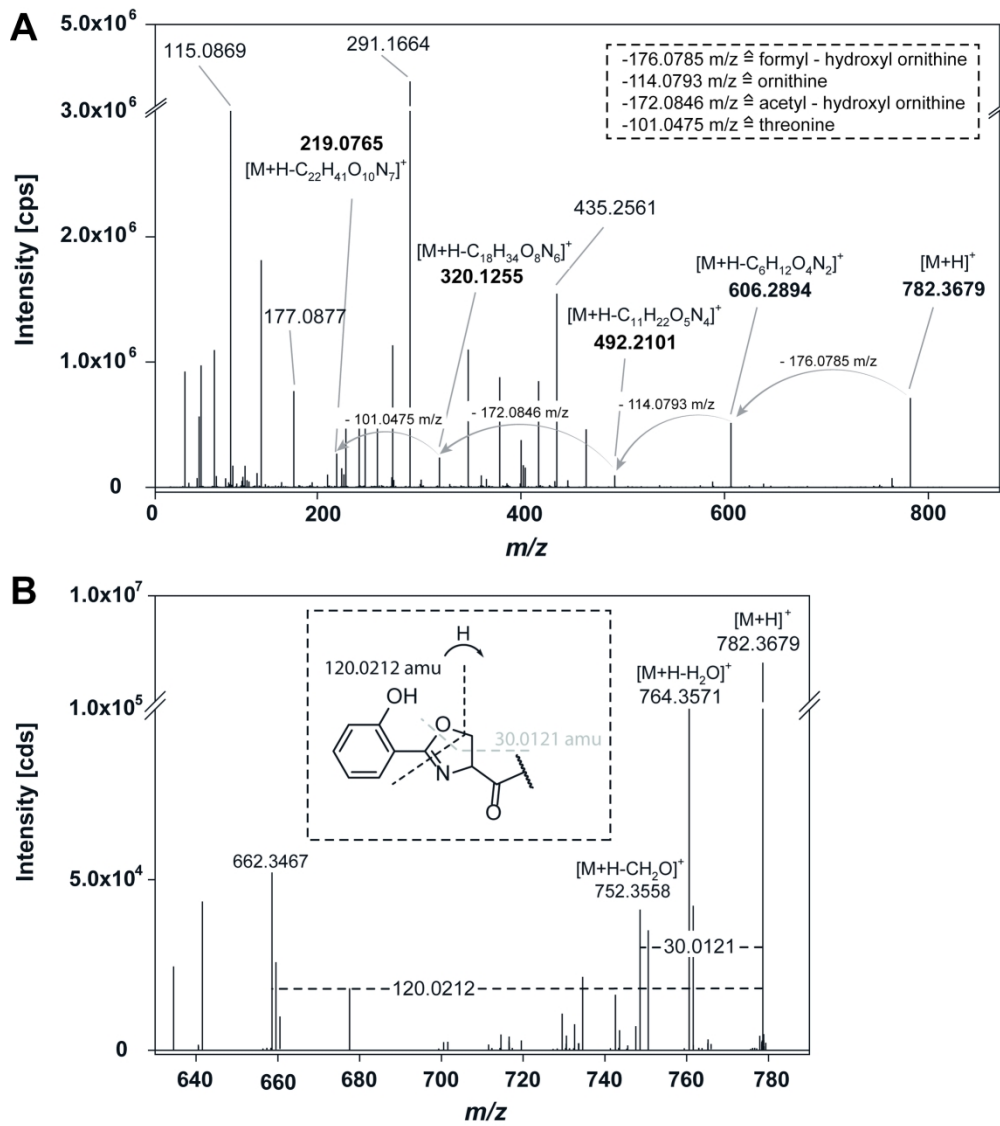


Fig. 4: The electrospray MS/MS mass spectrum (positive mode) for ligand 2 (782 m/z). (A) A typical fragmentation series of the backbone is shown at the collision energy 25 eV. (B) The experiment at the collision energy 20 eV of m/z 782 reveals the characteristic fragmentation of the phenyl-oxazoline-ring.

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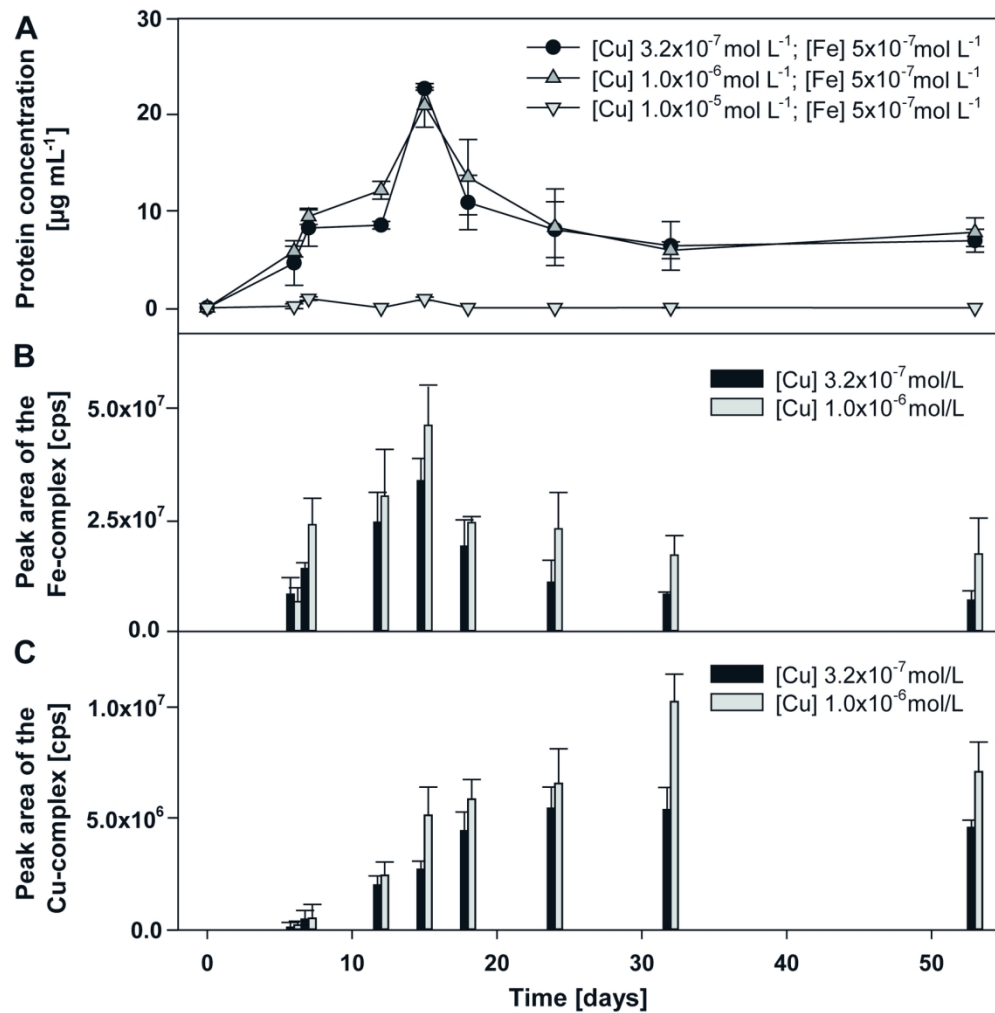


Fig. 5: Time lapse of the growth of *Frankia* sp. strain CH37 in MI medium. (A) Growth curves are based on total protein content and observed under standard conditions at low, high and toxic Cu concentrations. (B) The relative amounts of the Fe-complex 4 (831 m/z) and (C) Cu-complex 13 (681 m/z) are shown.

153x155mm (300 x 300 DPI)

Supplementary Information for

Metallophore profiling of the nitrogen-fixing genus *Frankia* spp. (Actinobacteria)

towards the understanding of metal acquisition and detoxification in the rhizosphere

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Figures S1: Change of the isotopic signature of the metallophores upon addition of (A) ^{56}Fe , (B) ^{63}Cu or (C) ^{66}Zn . The comparison of the mass spectra shows the decrease in the intensity of free ligand and an increase in the intensity of the respective complex upon addition of the metal. Arrows indicate the change in intensity of the molecular ion peak of the free ligand (down) and a metal complex (up) upon addition of the metal.

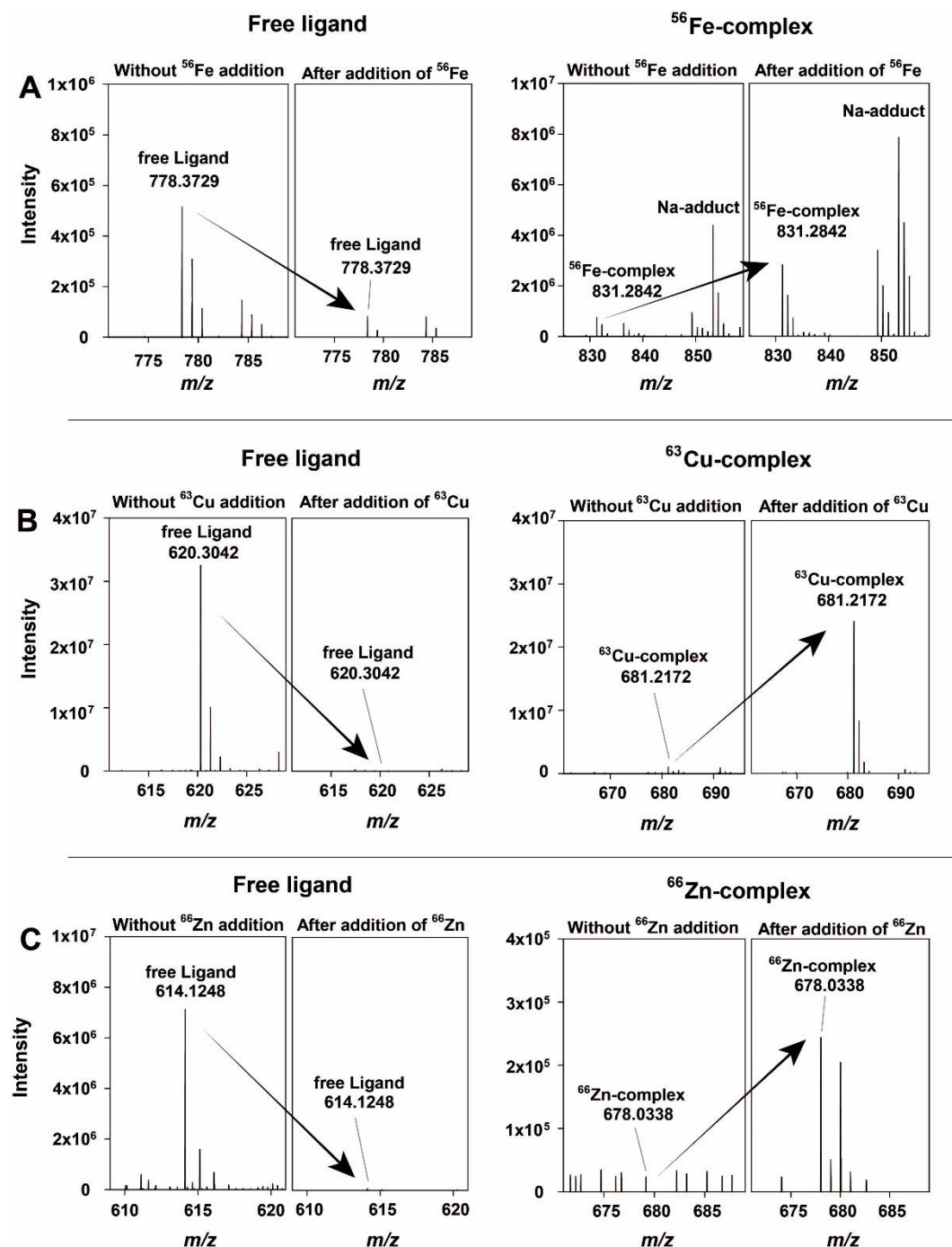


Table S1: Exclusion criteria used for formula assignment; example $m/z = 782.3679$

[M+H] ⁺ ligand without metal; m/z : 782.3679										
H	C	O	N	S	DBE	DBE - O	O/N	Calc. Mass	Δm (ppm)	Comment
52	33	13	9	0	13	0	1.44	782.367912	0.0153	confirmed by fragmentation
62	48	1	0	4	18.5	17.5		782.3678	-0.1278	non-integer DBE
56	41	10	3	1	16	6	3.33	782.368094	0.248	possible
60	26	10	11	3	3	-7	0.91	782.368128	0.2914	low DBE number
62	25	4	14	5	2.5	-1.5	0.29	782.367652	-0.317	non-integer DBE
58	40	4	6	3	15.5	11.5	0.67	782.367618	-0.3604	non-integer DBE
58	33	2	12	4	11.5	9.5	0.17	782.368303	0.5151	non-integer DBE
64	34	7	5	4	6	-1	1.4	782.36831	0.524	too much S
60	33	12	5	2	7	-5	2.4	782.367443	-0.5841	possible
54	32	7	12	2	12.5	5.5	0.58	782.367436	-0.5931	non-integer DBE
56	25	15	11	1	4	-11	1.36	782.367261	-0.8168	DBE – O < -10
52	26	11	15	1	9	-2	0.73	782.368597	0.8909	possible
66	40	3	2	5	9.5	6.5	1.5	782.367149	-0.9599	non-integer DBE
56	34	8	9	2	12	4	0.89	782.368779	1.1235	possible
62	35	13	2	2	6.5	-6.5	6.5	782.368786	1.1325	non-integer DBE
68	33	11	1	4	1	-10	11	782.366974	-1.1836	low DBE number
62	32	6	8	4	6.5	0.5	0.75	782.366967	-1.1925	non-integer DBE
56	31	1	15	4	12	11	0.07	782.36696	-1.2015	DBE – O > +10
58	47	6	0	2	19.5	13.5		782.366933	-1.236	non-integer DBE
58	24	9	14	3	3.5	-5.5	0.64	782.366785	-1.4252	non-integer DBE
54	39	9	6	1	16.5	7.5	1.5	782.366751	-1.4686	non-integer DBE
50	31	12	12	0	13.5	1.5	1	782.366569	-1.7012	non-integer DBE
48	34	9	13	0	18	9	0.69	782.369248	1.723	possible
54	35	14	6	0	12.5	-1.5	2.33	782.369255	1.7319	non-integer DBE
60	46	0	3	4	19	19	0*	782.366457	-1.8444	DBE – O > +10
62	39	8	2	3	10.5	2.5	4	782.366282	-2.0681 [#]	non-integer DBE
56	38	3	9	3	16	13	0.33	782.366275	-2.077 [#]	DBE – O > +10
58	31	11	8	2	7.5	-3.5	1.38	782.3661	-2.3007 [#]	non-integer DBE
52	30	6	15	2	13	7	0.4*	782.366093	-2.3097 [#]	too low O/N
54	46	11	0	0	20.5	9.5		782.366066	-2.3442 [#]	non-integer DBE
54	23	14	14	1	4.5	-9.5	1	782.365918	-2.5333 [#]	non-integer DBE
64	38	2	5	5	10	8	0.4*	782.365806	-2.6765 [#]	too low O/N

*O/N ratio was too low

Δm , mass error (ppm) = [(m/z (experimental mass) – calc mass)/calc mass] × 1,000,000

[#] | Δm | > 2 ppm

Table S2: Gradient for the metallophore separation using the UHPLC-HRMS system. Eluent A: 1 mmol L⁻¹ ammonium acetate in water and 2% (v/v) acetonitrile, eluent B: 1 mmol L⁻¹ ammonium acetate in acetonitrile and 10% (v/v) water.

Time [min]	Eluent A [%]	Eluent B [%]
0	100	0
0.20	100	0
8.00	0	100
9.00	0	100
9.10	100	0
10.0	100	0

Table S3: Fe-complexes were determined in the growth medium (MIM or BAP) of various *Frankia* strains using metal isotope-coded profiling. The masses of the uncharged ⁵⁶Fe-complex are listed. The positive (+) or negative (-) ionisation mode for determination of the metallophores is stated (¹: MS-adducts in positive mode; ²: MS - adducts in the negative mode were also found).

Mass of ⁵⁶ Fe complex [amu]	Strains	Retention time [min]	MS - polarity mode	Medium
816.2621 ¹	CH37	2.3	+/-	MIM
802.2817 ¹	CH37, Ea1-12	2.23	+	MIM
830.2758 ^{1,2}	CH37, Cj1-82, BCU 110501, Arl3	2.34	+/-	MIM/BAP
830.8643 ¹	Ea1-12	2.45	+	BAP
834.2706 ¹	CH37	2.28	+/-	MIM
847.6644	CH37	0.72	-	BAP
848.2881 ^{1,2}	CH37, Ea1-12	2.49	+/-	MIM/BAP
852.2811 ¹	CH37	2.36	+/-	MIM/BAP
855.7049	Cj1-82	4.18	-	MIM
862.3039 ¹	CH37, Cj1-82, Ea1-12, DC12, BCU 110501	2.62	+/-	MIM/BAP
866.3005	CH37	1.53	-	MIM/BAP
868.2896 ¹	BCU 110501	2.5	+	MIM
869.2844	CH37	2.28	+	MIM
876.0527	CcI3 (Lab. Boyer)	2.67	+	MIM/BAP
889.3217	BCU 110510	2.17	+	MIM
897.3525 ¹	ACN14a, Cg70.4, Cg70.9, Cj1-82, CcI3 (Lab. Boyer), BCU 110501, Arl3	2.276	+/-	MIM/BAP
900.3190 ¹	CH37	2.69	+	MIM
907.3339	BCU 110501	2.19	-	MIM
908.3227	CH37	2.41	+	MIM
914.3357 ^{1,2}	CH37	2.61	+/-	MIM
931.1315 ¹	BCU 110501	3.47	+	MIM/ BAP
932.3462 ¹	CH37	2.32	+/-	MIM
946.3645 ¹	CH37	2.73	+	MIM
949.1409 ¹	BCU 110501	3.47	+	BAP
949.1431 ¹	CcI3 (Lab. Boyer)	3.26	+	MIM
955.3100	CcI3 (Lab. Boyer)	2.35	+	MIM/BAP
957.3159 ^{1,2}	CH37, ACN14a, Ea1-12, CcI3 (Lab. Boyer), CcI3 (Univ. Laval)	2.82	+/-	MIM/BAP
975.3268	ACN14a	2.5	-	MIM
997.3093	ACN14a	2.5	-	MIM
997.3495 ¹	Arl3	2.25	+	BAP
1000.3334	CH37	2.66	-	MIM
1001.2795	ACN14a	2.84	+	MIM
1020.3536	CH37	2.29	-	MIM
1061.4418	CH37	3.6	+	MIM
1088.2085	BCU 110501	3.78	+	MIM

Table S4: Cu-complexes were determined in the growth medium (MIM) of various *Frankia* strains using metal isotope-coded profiling. The positive (+) or negative (-) ionisation mode for determination of the metallophores is stated.

Mass of $^{63}\text{Cu}^{\text{II}}$ - complex [amu]	Strains	Retention time [min]	MS - polarity mode
359.9941	CH37	2.5	+
381.0737	CH37	3.47	+
400.0545	CH37, ACN14a	1.36	+
439.0904	CH37	0.98	+
443.0677	CH37	5.12	+
470.1214	CH37	0.84	+
474.0236	ACN14a	2.21	+/-
496.1117	CH37	0.84	+
498.1278	CcI3 (Univ. Laval)	0.82	+
512.1459	CcI3 (Lab. Boyer)	1.44	+
518.0977	CH37	3.16	+
528.1746	CH37	2.58	+
543.0931	CH37	3.08	+
550.0962	ACN10a, ACN12a, ACN14a, CcI3 (Lab. Boyer), CH37, Cg70.4	1.18	+
559.1607	CH37	3.98	+/-
562.1913	CcI3 (Univ. Laval), CcI3 (Lab. Boyer)	1.93	+/-
572.0781	DSMZ 44251	1.19	+
573.1224	CH37	1.15	+
578.0930	ACN14a	2.27	+/-
590.0657	CJ1-82, CcI3 (Lab. Boyer)	1.35	+
603.1154	CH37	1.36	+
603.1710	CcI3 (Lab. Boyer)	0.88	+
604.1539	CH37	1.15	+/-
606.1226	CH37	2.91	+
618.1736	CH37, DC12	3.28	+/-
626.1258	Cg70.9, CcI3 (Univ. Laval)	1.8	+
630.1442	CH37	1.15	+
642.0742	CH37	2.17	+/-
656.1363	Ea1-12	1.86	+
658.0673	CH37	2.48	+
659.0783	CcI3 (Univ. Laval)	1.04	+
663.9572	CH37	5.11	+/-
680.20891	CH37	3.53	+
688.1754	CH37	3.47	+/-
692.1723	ACN14a	3.04	+/-
713.1699	Cg70.4	6.11	+
715.1819	CcI3 (Univ. Laval), CH37, BCU 110501	6.04	+
718.1645	CH37	3.53	+
731.1791	CPI1	5.21	+/-
823.2669	CH37	3.19	+
824.2145	CH37	5.11	+/-
856.2882	CH37	3.47	+
949.3090	ACN14a	2.64	+/-

Table S5: Zn-complexes were determined in the growth medium (MIM) of various *Frankia* strains using metal isotope-coded profiling. The positive (+) or negative (-) ionisation mode for determination of the metallophores is stated.

Mass of ⁶⁶ Zn ²⁺ - complex [amu]	Strains	Retention time [min]	MS - Polarity
663.146	CcI3 (Lab. Boyer)	2.76	+
677.0263	BCU 110501	1.82	+
695.1709	ACN14a	3.1	+/-
706.3383	ACN12a	4.75	+
718.1749	ACN12a, CcI3 (Lab. Boyer), CH37	4.07	+/-

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