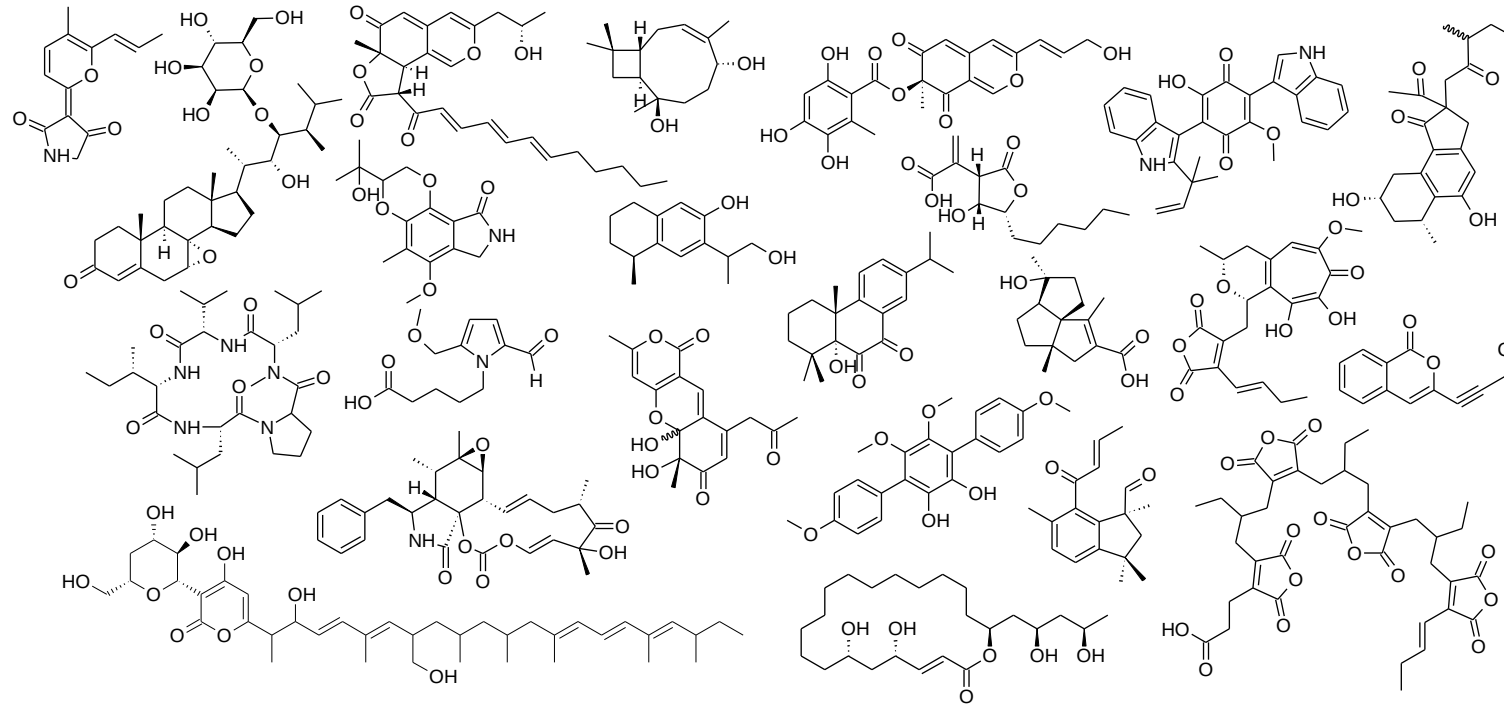


Current Natural Product Approaches in Drug Discovery



Frank Surup et al.

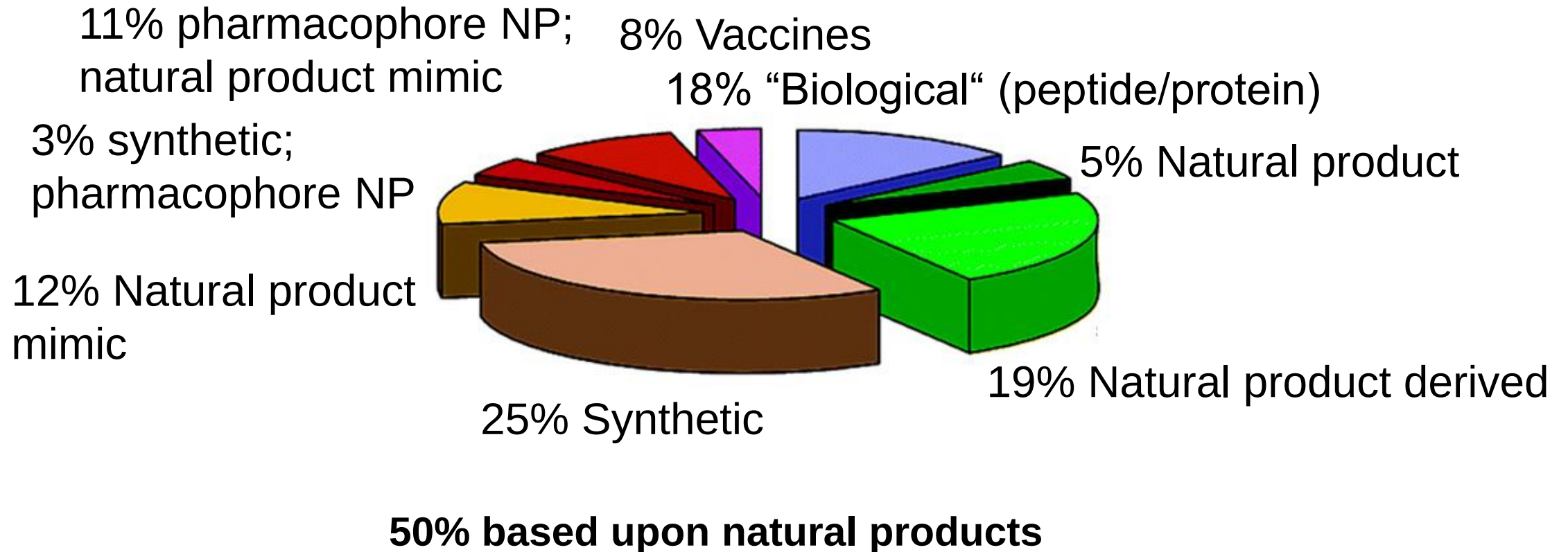
Helmholtz Center for Infection Research, German Center for Infection Research

19th of April, 2024; Cape Town

frank.surup@helmholtz-hzi.de

Natural products in drug development

1981-2019: 1881 new drugs approved



Newman DJ, Cragg GM. Natural Products as Sources of New Drugs over the Nearly Four Decades from 01/1981 to 09/2019. *J. Nat. Prod.* **2020**, 83, 770–803.

Identification of new lead structures



Fieldwork



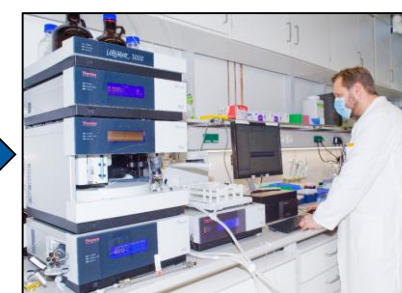
Strain isolation



Fermentation



Extraction



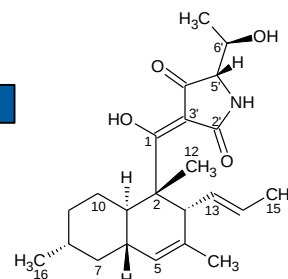
Activity screening



Large scale fermentation



Isolation of Natural products



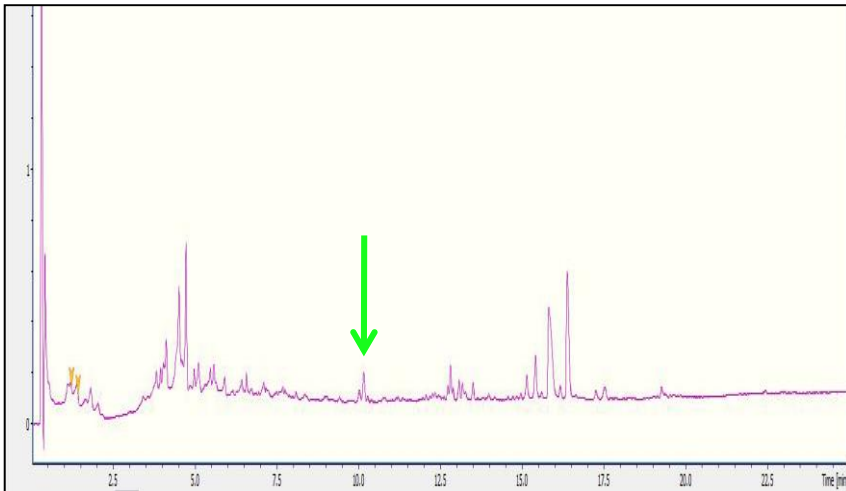
Structure Elucidation

Total synthesis
Activity testing
Optimization

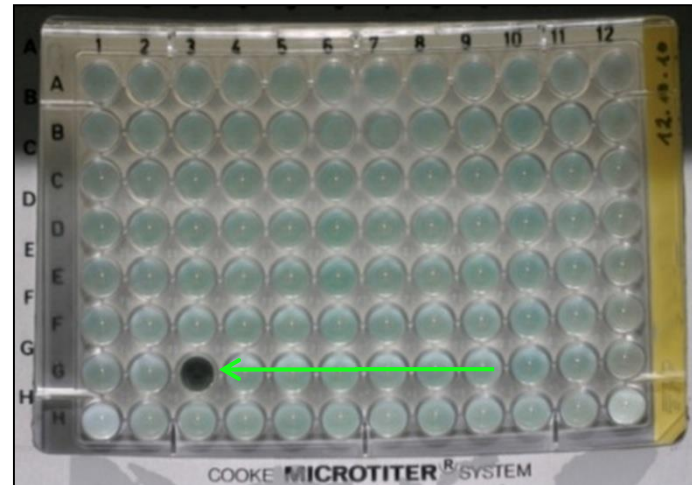
Disciformycins from *Pyxidicoccus fallax*

- Rescreening of myxobacterial strain collection (8500 strains)
- *P. fallax* AndGT8: Activity against Gram positive bacteria

Chemical Screening (HPLC-MS):
retention time, UV, MS



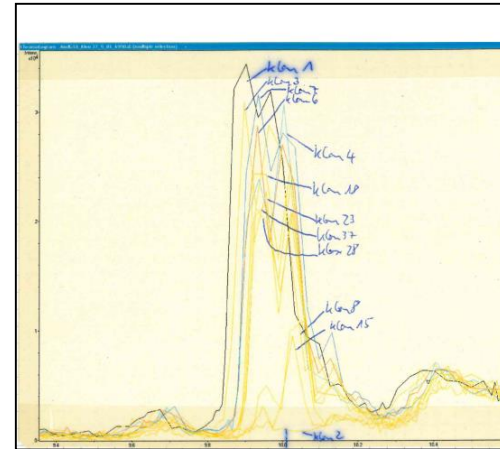
Biological screening:
Inhibition pattern of test strains



- Identification of a „hit“

Disciformycins – Workflow structure elucidation

- Fermentation in 10L scale
- Bioassay-guided fractionation by preparative HPLC
- HRESIMS: → molecular formula: $C_{27}H_{40}O_{10}$
→ number of unsaturations: 7
- Dereplication → unknown metabolite
- Media optimization
- Selection of single cells
- Fermentation in 70L scale



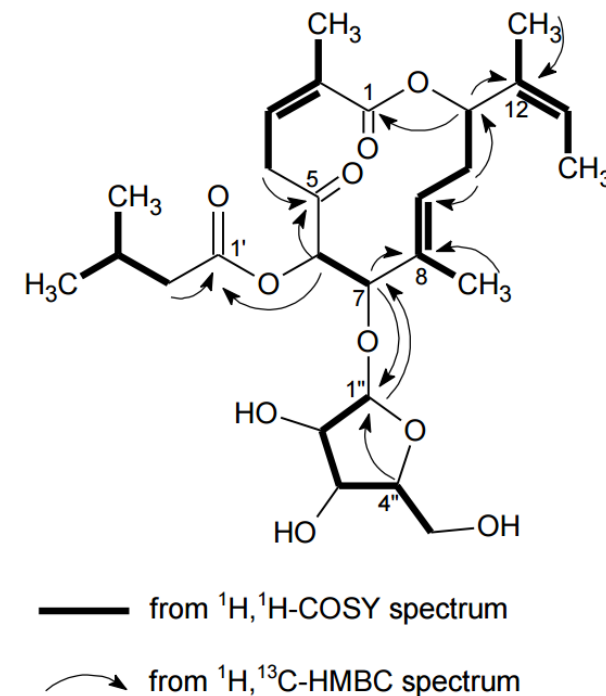
Surup F, Viehrig K, Mohr KI, Herrmann J, Jansen R, Müller R,
Angew. Chem. Int. Ed. **2014**, 53, 13588–13591.

Disciformycins – Workflow structure elucidation

- Structure elucidation is like putting together a puzzle
- HRESIMS: → Molecular formula: $C_{27}H_{40}O_{10}$
→ number of unsaturations: 7
- NMR:

I Determining the connectivity

- a) 1H , ^{13}C : functional groups
- b) HSQC: connectivity H - C
- c) COSY: build chains of carbons
- d) HMBC: connect chains & quaternary C



Surup F, Viehrig K, Mohr KI, Herrmann J, Jansen R, Müller R,
Angew. Chem. Int. Ed. **2014**, 53, 13588–13591.

Disciformycins – Workflow structure elucidation

II Relative configuration

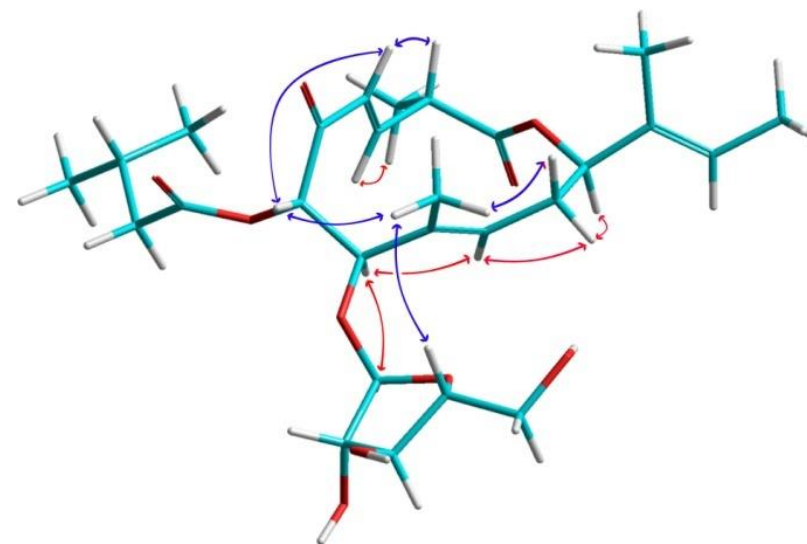
J-based configurational analysis:
ROESY correlations, coupling constants

Identification of the sugar moiety
by chemical shift analysis

III Absolute configuration:

Degradation reaction to release the
sugar

GCMC comparison with
authentic standards

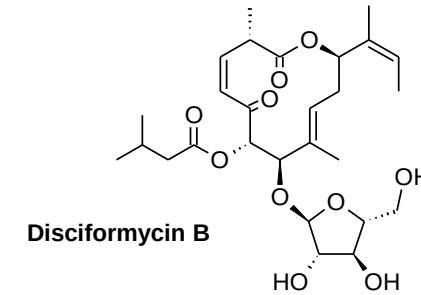


MM+ model of disciformycin B

Surup F, Viehrig K, Mohr KI, Herrmann J, Jansen R, Müller R,
Angew. Chem. Int. Ed. **2014**, 53, 13588–13591.

Disciformycins – Antibacterial activity

	DscA	DscB	VAN
<i>Bacillus subtilis</i> DSM-10	4.2	0.83	0.25
<i>Paenibacillus polymyxa</i> DSM-36	16.6	16.6	n.d.
<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> DSM-346	16.6	3.3	0.5
<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> Newman	8.0	1.2	0.5
<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> DSM-11822 (MRSA)	4.0	0.6	1.0
<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> N315 (MRSA)	8.0	1.2	1.0
<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> Mu50 (MRSA/VISA)	2.0	0.6	16.0
<i>Staphylococcus carnosus</i> DSM-20501	7.8	2.4	0.25
<i>Mycobacterium</i> sp. DSM-43270	> 64	> 64	1.7
<i>Mycobacterium diernhoferi</i> DSM-43524	33.3	33.3	3.3
<i>Micrococcus luteus</i> DSM-20030	67	> 64	0.13
<i>Nocardioides simplex</i> DSM-20130	33.3	16.6	0.42



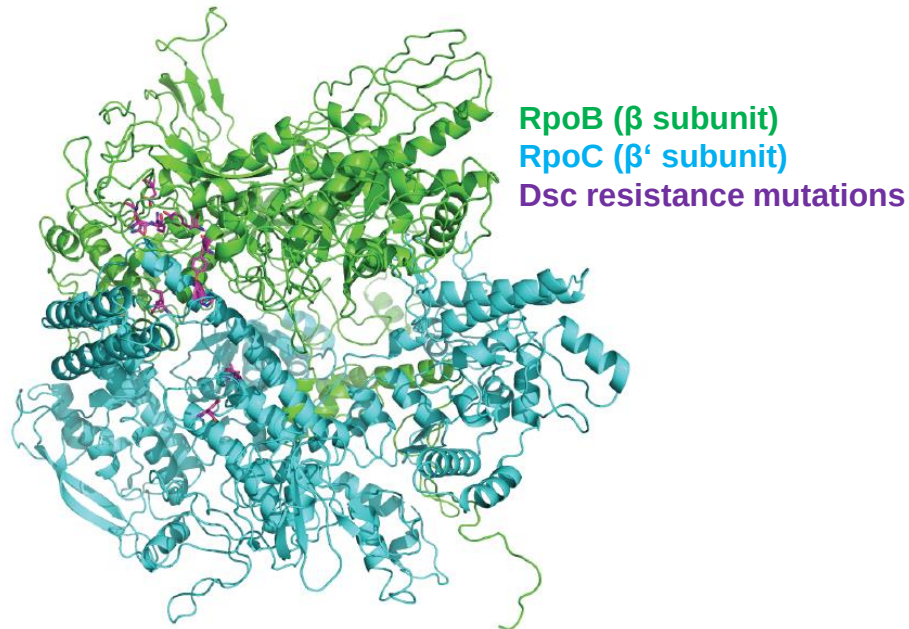
- No cross-resistance with methicillin, vancomycin (erythromycin, quinolones)
- No activity against GN, Yeast/Fungi, Mammalian cell lines

Surup F, Steinmetz H, Mohr K, Viehrig K, Müller R, Nett M, Schiefendecker S, Dahse HM, Wolling M, Kirschning A, Novel macrolide antibiotics, **WO 2016/005049 A1**.

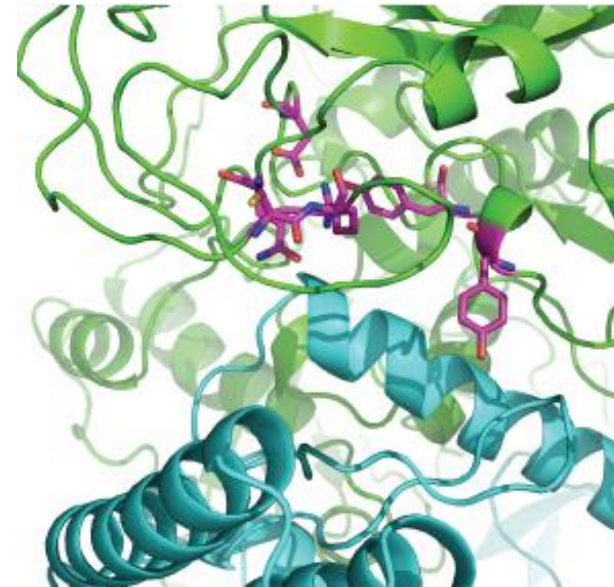
Disciformycins - Binding site on RNAP

***S. aureus* N315 RNAP (homology model)**

template: *E. coli* RNAP (PDB id 4IGC)



Dsc binding pocket (docking)

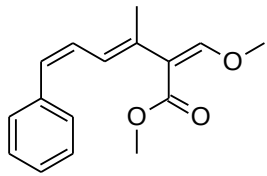


higher calculated average binding energies
for resistant mutants compared to WT
(-7.3 kcal/mol vs. -8.6 kcal/mol)

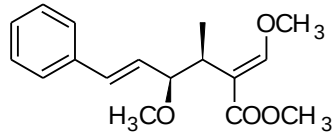
- no cross-resistance with RNAP inhibitors
- Increase of production rate needed

Basidiomycota

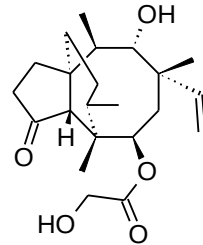
- about 35,000 fruiting body-forming species
- > 95% of species unknown
- relatively few are studied for their secondary metabolites (SM)



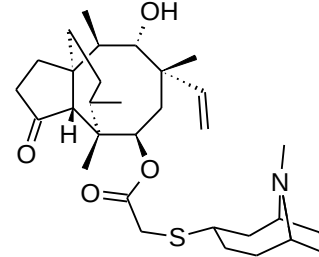
Strobilurin A



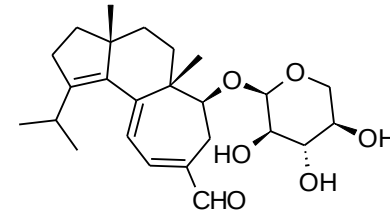
Oudemansin A



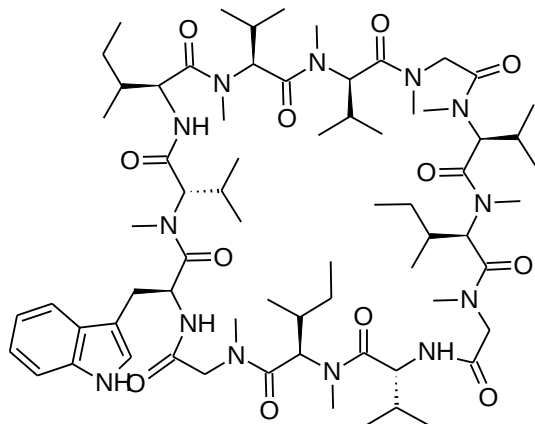
Pleuromutilin



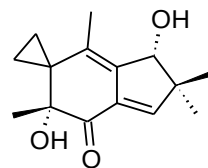
Retapamulin



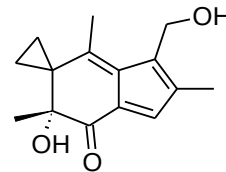
Erinacine A



Omphalotin A



Illudin M



Irofulven



Hericium erinaceus



Omphalotus illudens



Clitopilus passeckerianus

Rhodotus palmatus

- even German forests harbour basidiomycetes untapped for secondary metabolites
 - pioneer fungus on rotting hardwoods (elm)
 - circumboreal distribution, endangered
 - antimicrobial activity
- Chemical Screening approach
- 12 novel secondary metabolites



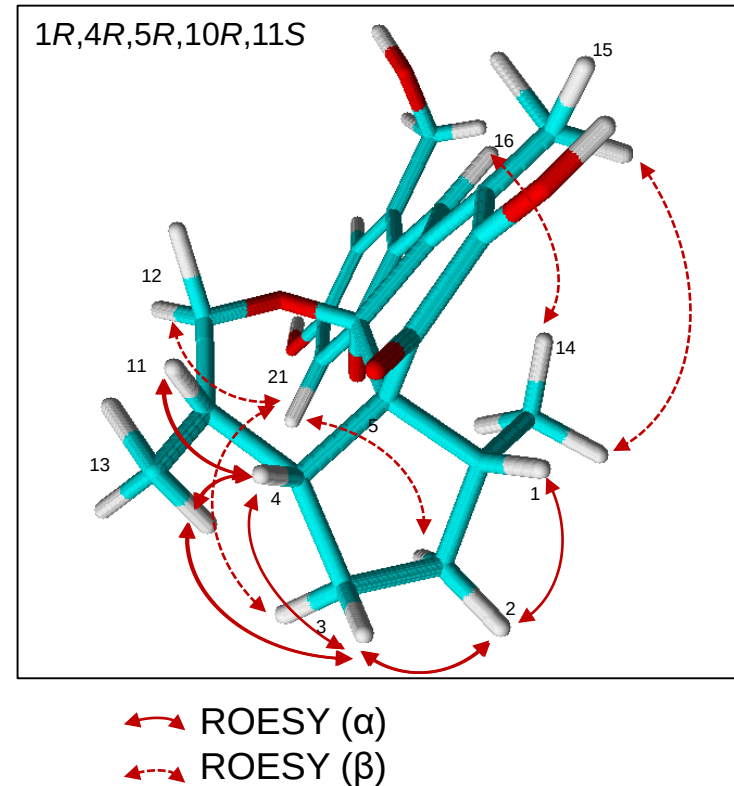
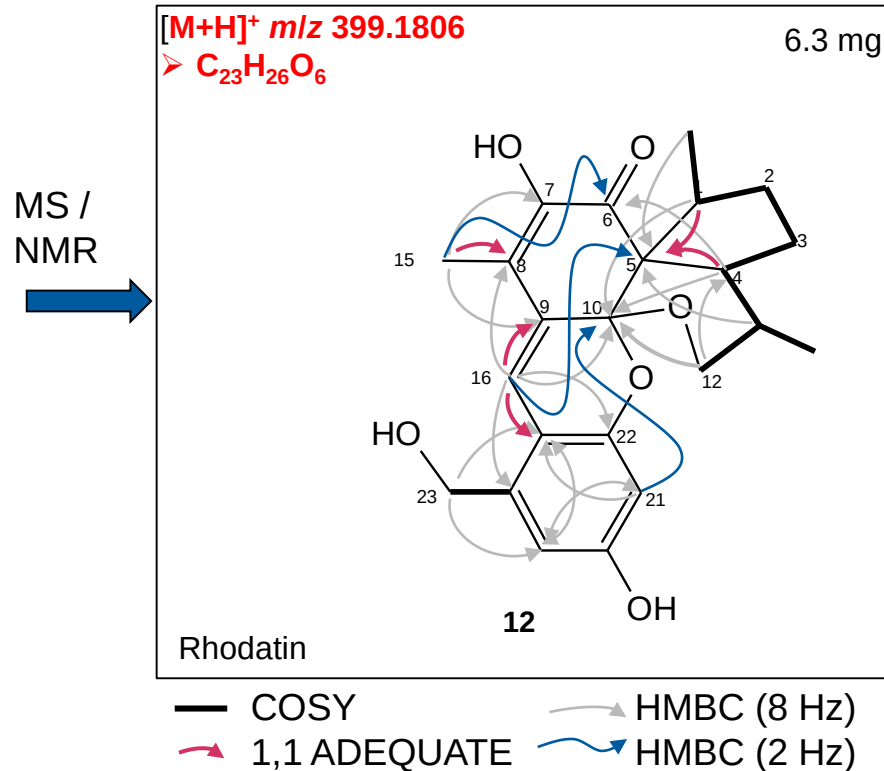
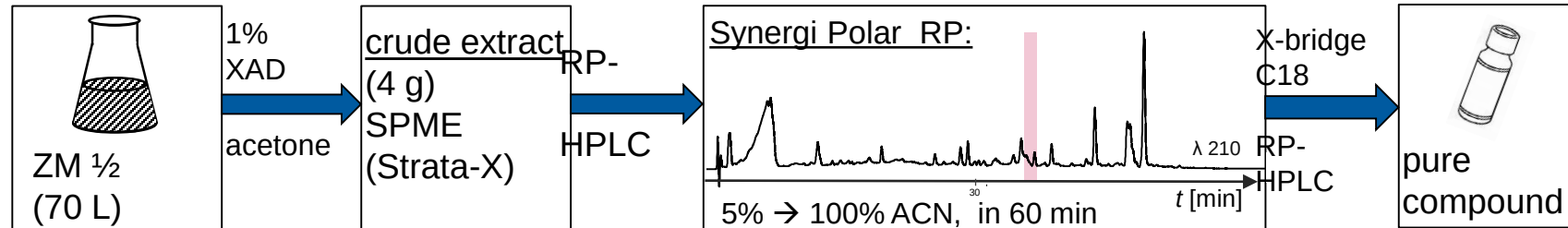
R. palmatus



Elm forest

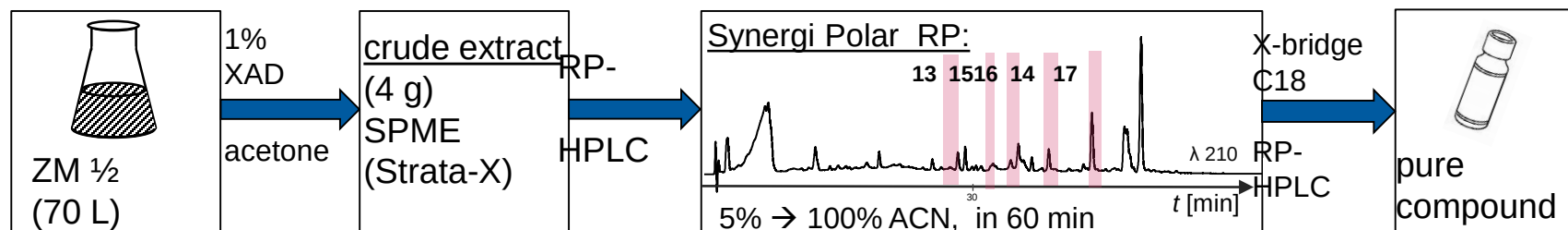
Sandargo B, Michehl M, Praditya D, Steinmann E, Stadler M, **Surup F.** *Org. Lett.* **2019**, 21, 3286–3289; Sandargo B, Michehl M, Stadler M, **Surup F.** *J. Nat. Prod.* **2020**, 83, 720–724.

Rhodatin & Rhodocoranes – SM from a neglected fungus

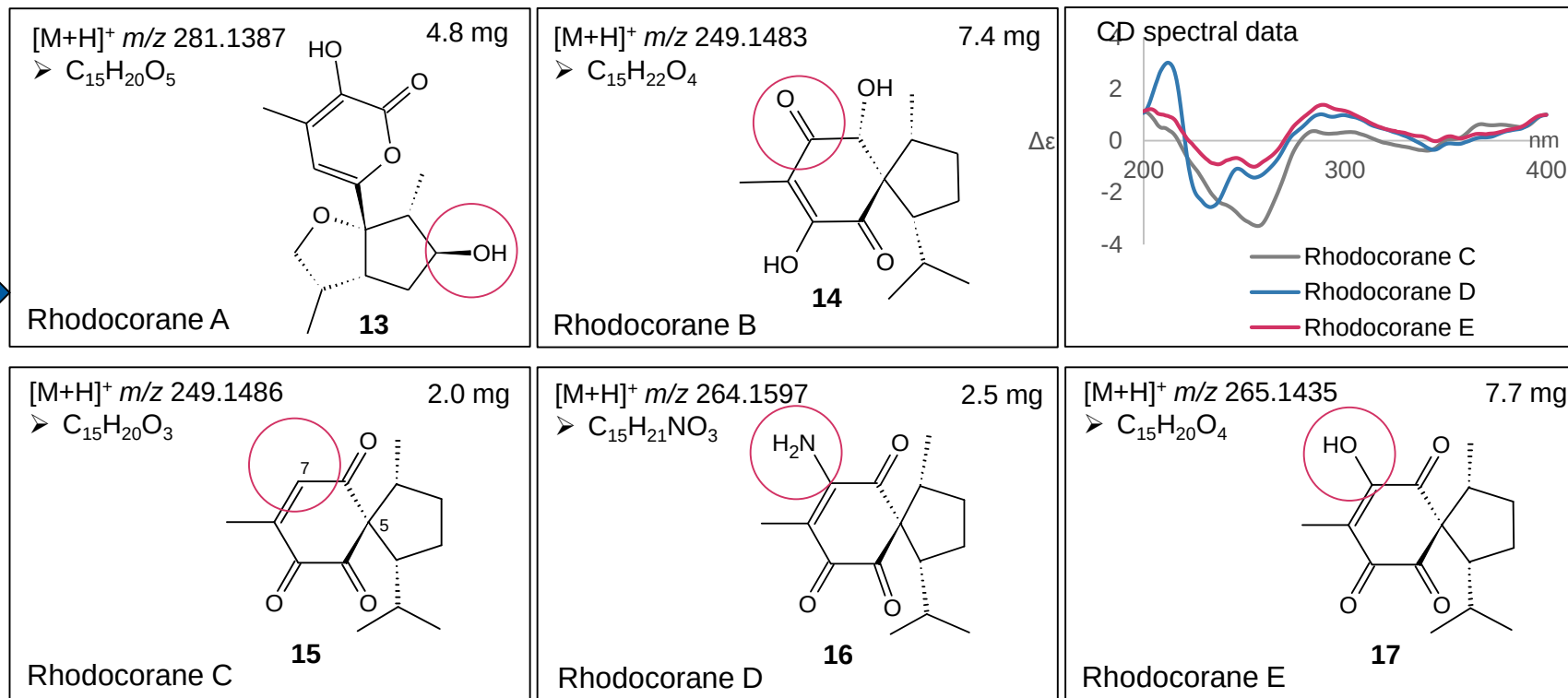


- 1) Dereplication
- 2) Constitution
- 3) Relative configuration
- 4) Absolute configuration

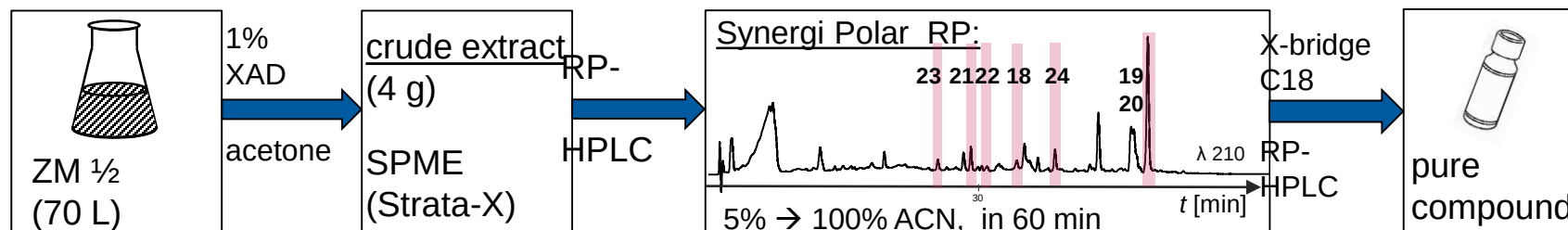
Rhodatin & Rhodocoranes – SM from a neglected fungus



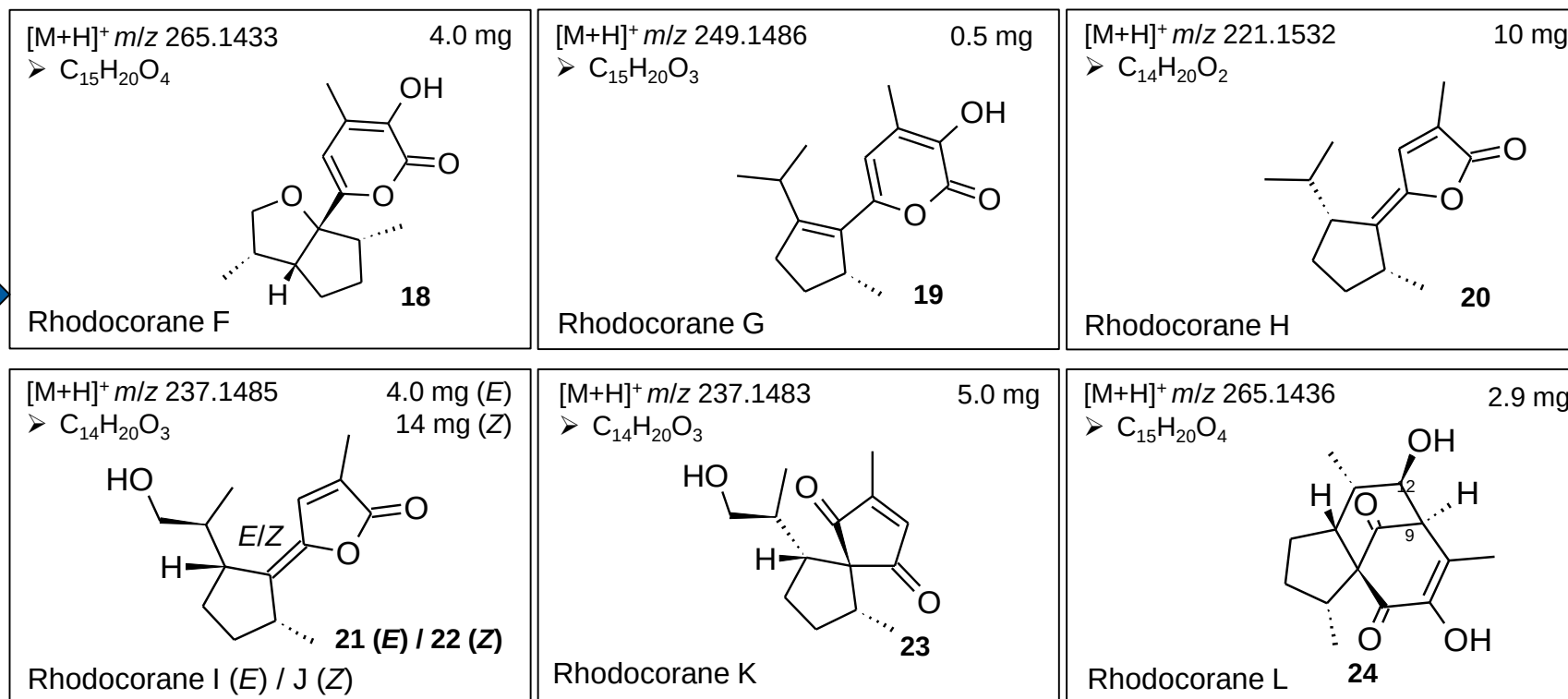
MS /
NMR



Rhodatin & Rhodocoranes – SM from a neglected fungus

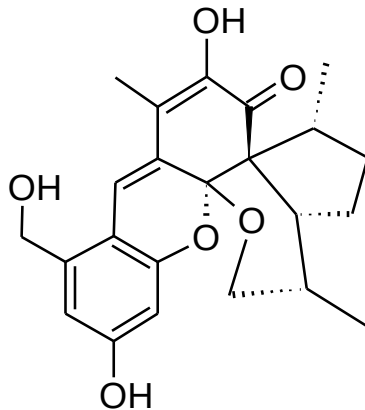


MS /
NMR

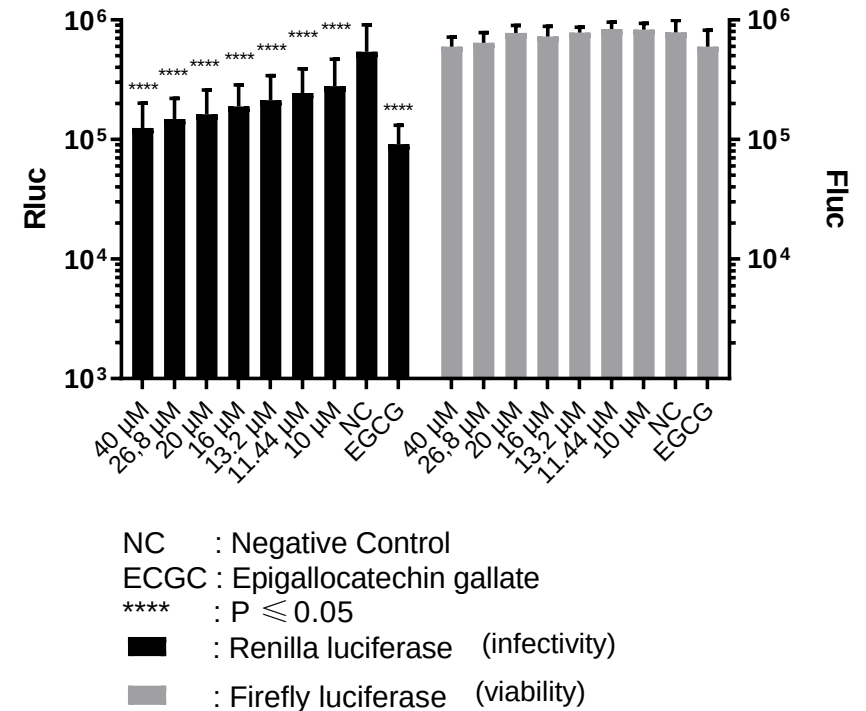


Rhodatin & Rhodocoranes – SM from a neglected fungus

- Chemical Screening approach
- 12 novel secondary metabolites
- antiviral (HCV) activity of rhodatin



rhodatin



Sandargo B, Michehl M, Praditya D, Steinmann E, Stadler M, **Surup F.** *Org. Lett.* **2019**, 21, 3286–3289;
Sandargo B, Michehl M, Stadler M, **Surup F.** *J. Nat. Prod.* **2020**, 83, 720–724.

Impressions from field work in Thailand

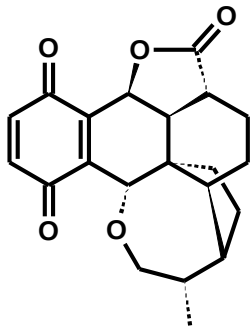


Post IMC10 Foray, Mushroom Research Centre, Chiang Mai Prov., Thailand (2014)

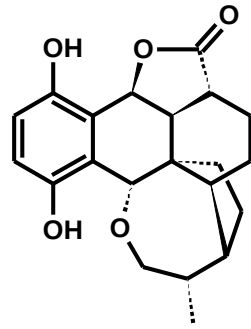
HOHENBUEHELIA – Nematode trapping fungi

Basidiomycete from Northern Thailand, identified as *Hohenbuehelia grisea*

- ◆ Parasitic and/or parasitoid
- ◆ Nematode-trapping with adhesive knobs, nematotoxins
- ◆ strong antibiotic activities in the culture



Pleurotin



Dihydropleurotin

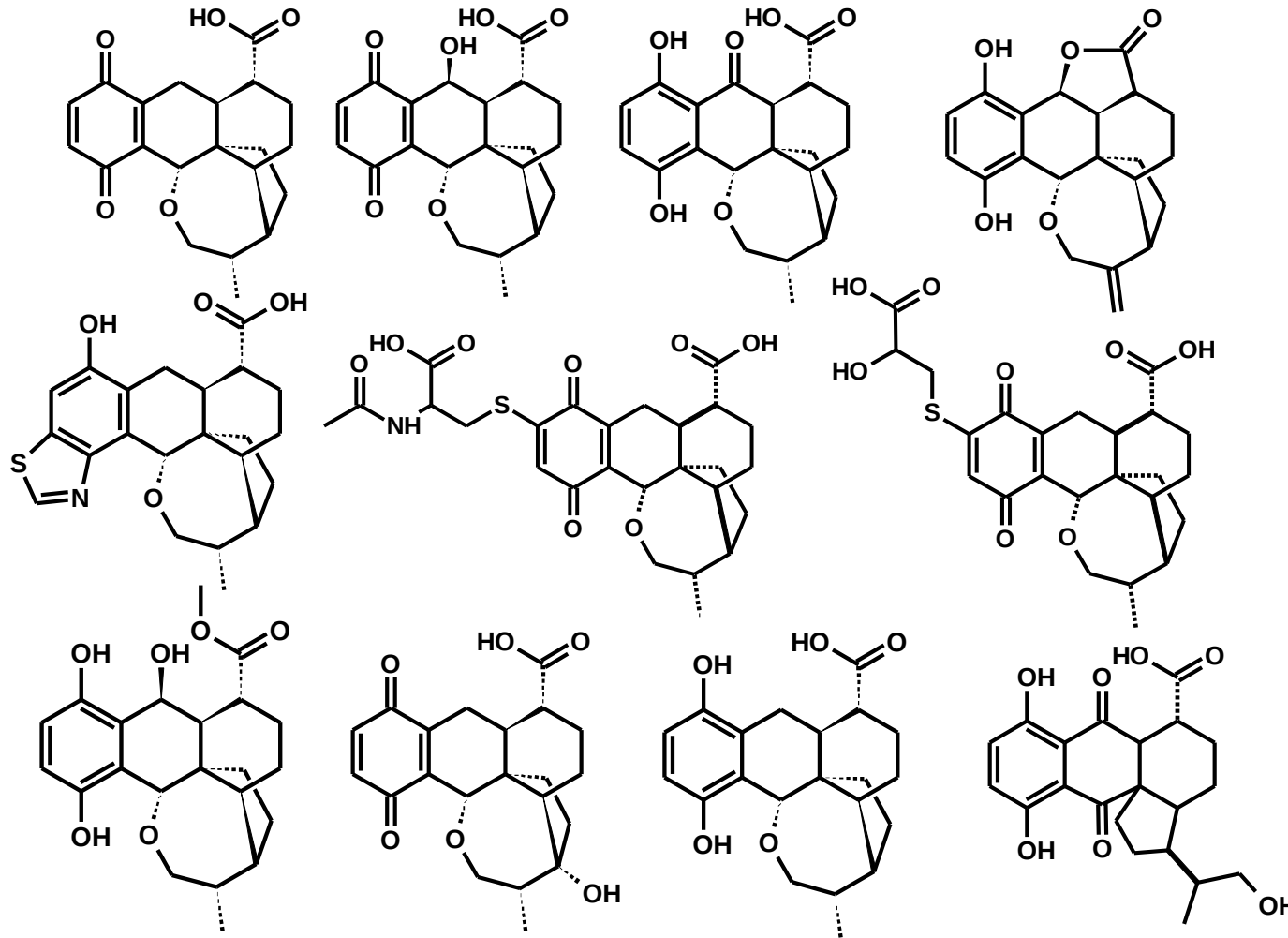


(Photo: credit to Benjarong Thongbai)



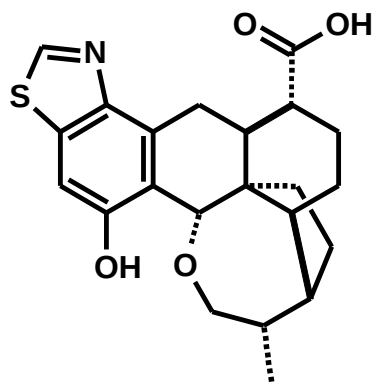
New pleurotin derivatives

Scale up and exhaustive studies of its bioactive metabolites

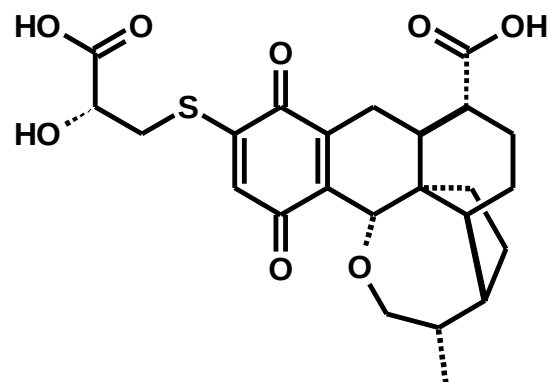


Some compounds known from PhD theses:
Schelling 1969
Vogt 1982
Erb 1986
Capaul 1992
Kaufmann 1996

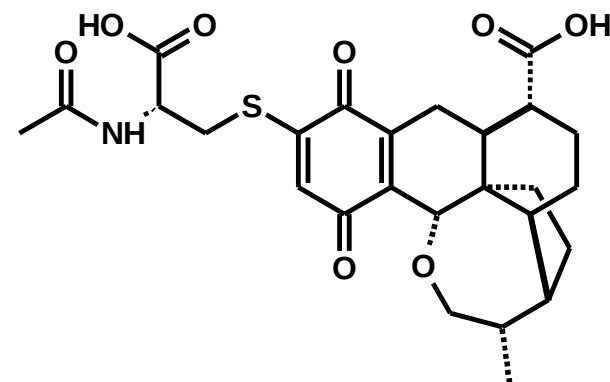
New cystein-derived pleurotin derivatives



pleurothiazole



thiopleurotinic acid A



thiopleurotinic acid B

Candida tenuis 100
P. anomala
Rhodot. glutinis 33.3
B. subtilis 100

66.7

No bioactivity



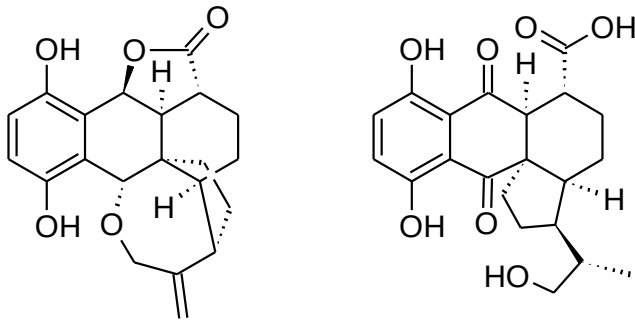
**Glutathione detoxification
in filamentous fungi**

C. Tenuis 100
P. anomala 66.7
Rhodot. 33.3

Sandargo B, Thongbai B, Stadler M, Surup F, *J. Nat. Prod.* **2018**, 81, 286–291.

New pleurotin derivatives

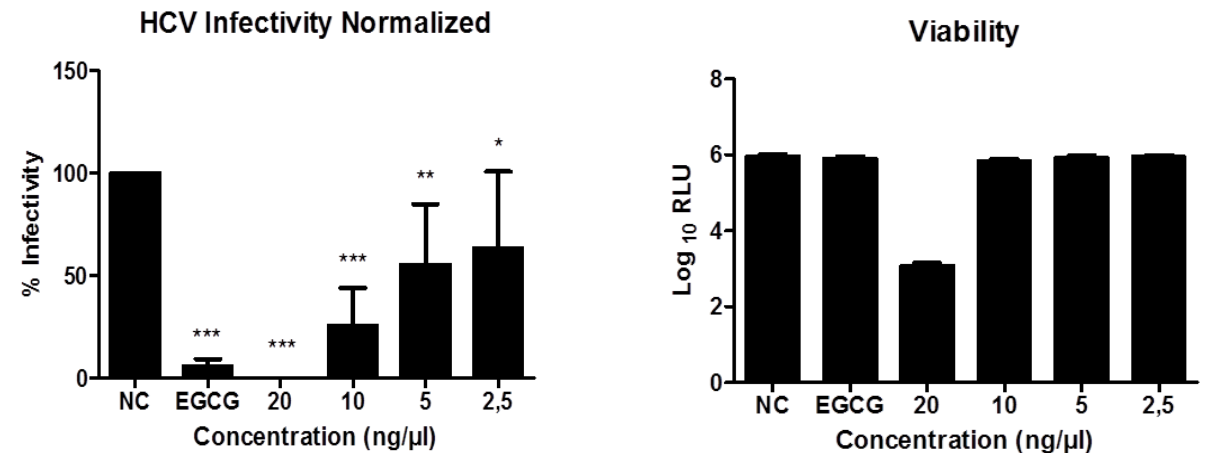
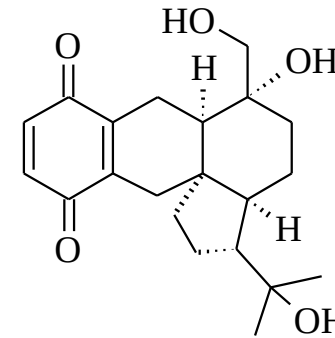
- Antimicrobial Pleurotin Derivatives



- Cytotoxicity: IC₅₀ 6-7.5 µg/mL (KB3.1 & L929)

- Minimum Inhibitory concentrations:
Gram-positiv bacteria: 33-66 µg/mL
yeasts: 12-50 µg/mL

- Antiviral (HCV) activity of 4-Hydroxypseudoerythronolide



Sandargo B, Thongbai B, Praditya D, Steinmann E, Stadler M, **Surup F.** *Molecules* **2018**, 23, 2697.

Ascomycota – Simplicilones A and B from the endophytic fungus *Simplicillium subtropicum*

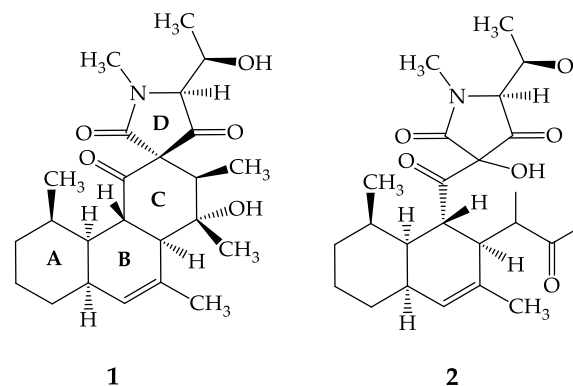
Bark of *Allanblackia floribunda* is used in traditional African medicine for treatment of upper respiratory tract infections, dysentery, diarrhoea, and toothache



D. staudtii



After 10 days of growth



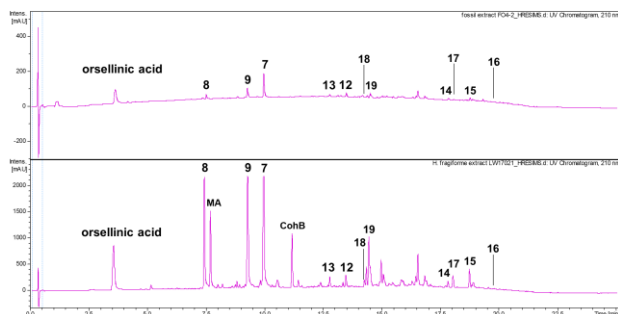
Endophyte: endosymbiont, that lives within a plant for at least part of its life cycle without causing apparent disease

- Cytotoxic activities against KB3.1 cells

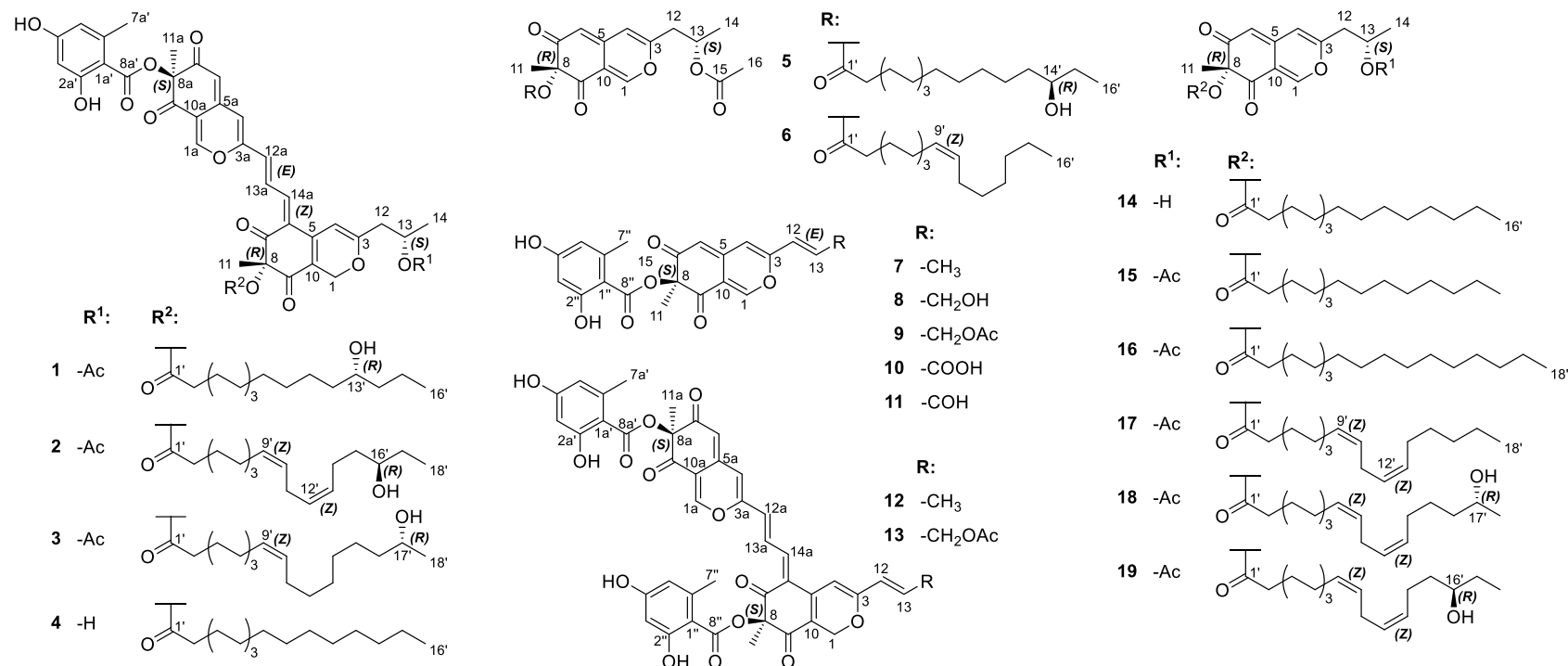
Anoumedem EGM, Mountessou BYG, Kouam SF, Narmani A, **Surup F**, *Antibiotics* **2020**, 9, 753.

Ascomycota – Bisazaphilones from *Hypoxylon fragiforme*

- Wood samples from the medieval period (738 - 1411 AD)



Comparison of HPLC-UV/VIS chromatograms (at 330nm) of the fossil sample (upper part) and fresh stromatal material (lower part).

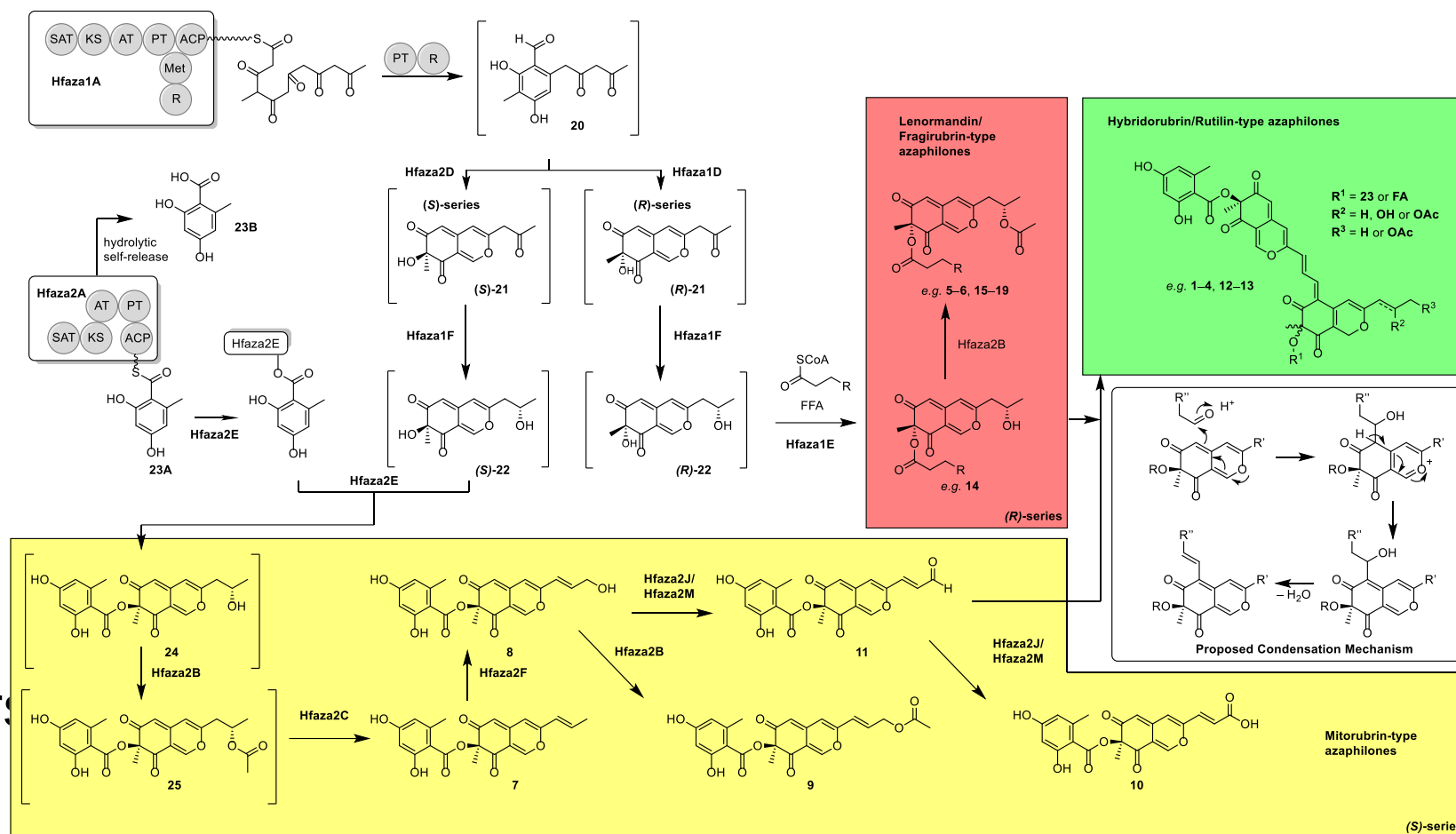


Surup F, Narmani A, Wendt L, Pfütze S, Kretz R, Becker K, Menbrivès C, Giosa A, Elliott M, Petit C, Rohde M, Stadler M. *Fungal Div.* **2018**, 92, 345–356; Becker K, Pfütze S, Kuhnert E, Cox R, Stadler M, Surup F. *Chem. Eur. J.* **2021**, 27(4):1438-1450.

- New bisazaphilones

- Inhibition of the biofilm formation of *S. aureus*, no antibacterial effects (MIC >66.7 μg/mL) nor cytotoxic activity (IC₅₀ > 10 μM)

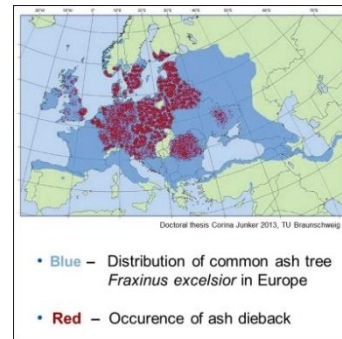
- Biosynthesis proposal
- Interaction of up to 3 biosynthetic gene clusters



Becker K, Pfütze S, Kuhnert E, Cox R, Stadler M, **Surup F**. *Chem. Eur. J.* **2021**, 27(4):1438-1450. Becker K, Kuhnert E, Cox R, **Surup F**, *Eur. J. Org. Chem.* **2021**, 36, 5094–5103

Ash dieback

- *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* causative agent of European Ash Dieback disease
- Detected in 1995, fast distribution



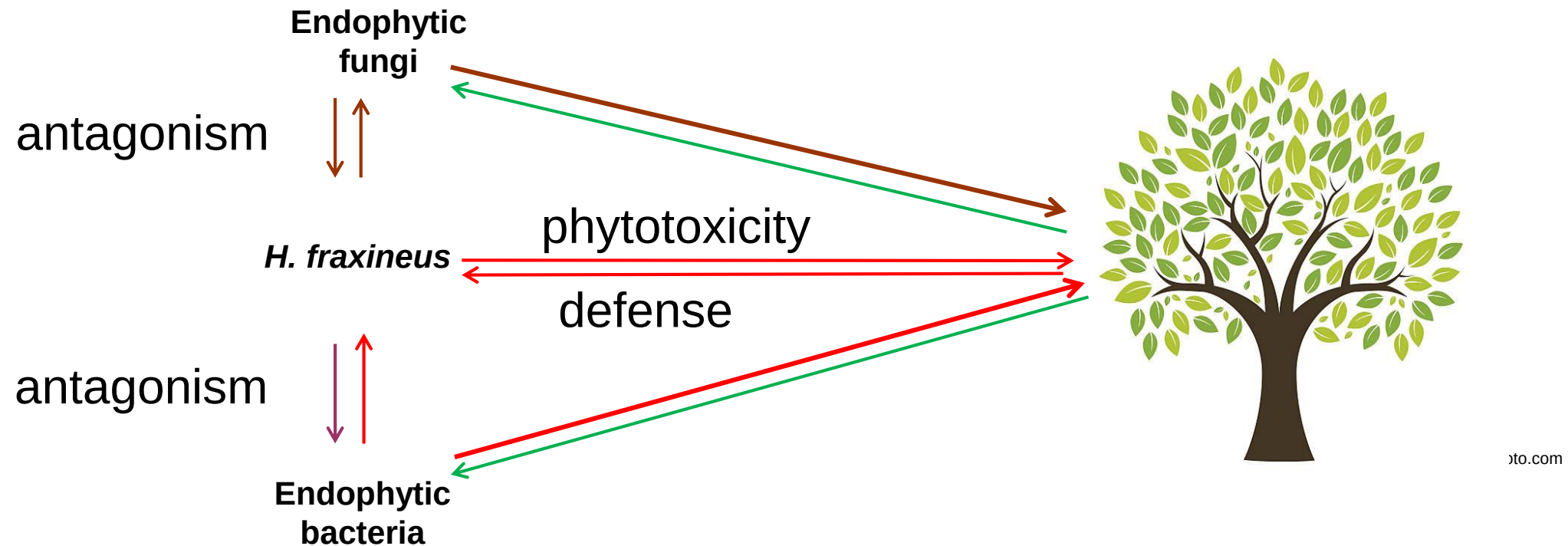
An introduced pathogen disturbs the balances!



- *H. fraxineus*: introduced from Asia

Ash dieback

- Microbiome and host interact metabolically with secondary metabolites



Surup F, Halecker S, Nimtz M, Rodrigo S, Schulz B, Steinert M, Stadler M.
Steroids **2018**, 135, 92–97.

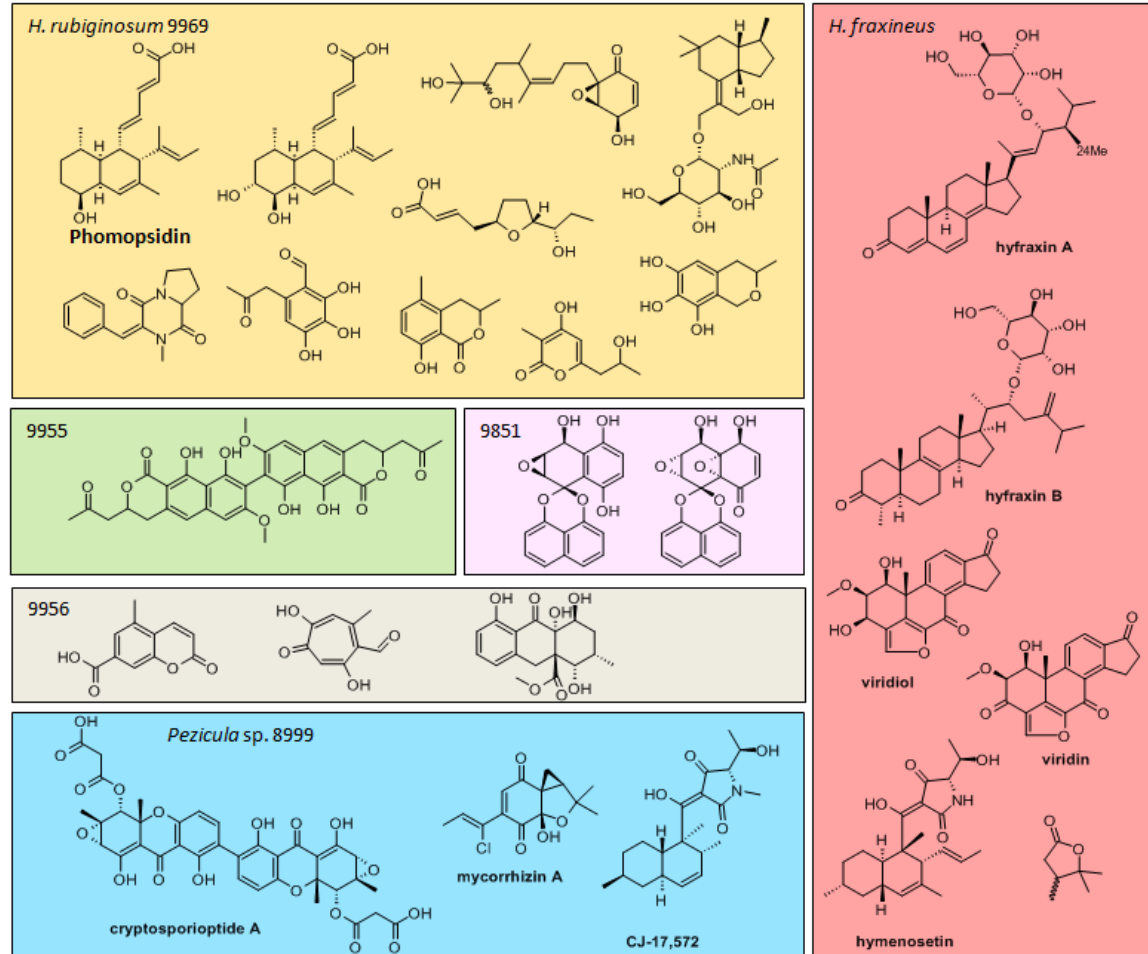
Metabolomics - Metabolites from endophytes

- Dual culture experiments

H. fraxineus



Leptosphaeria sp.



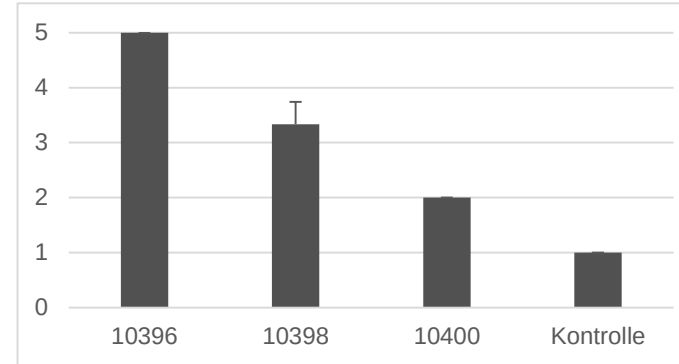
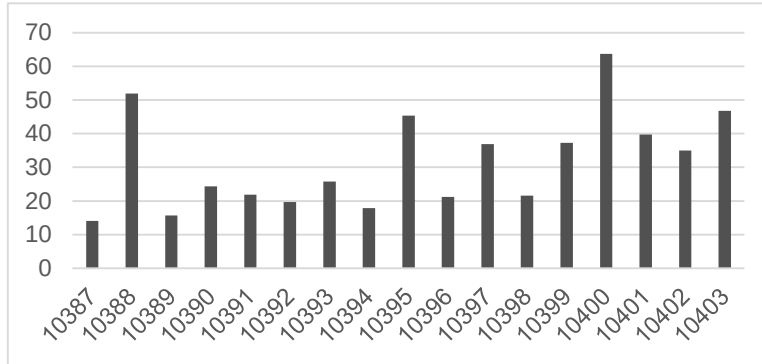
- Aim: Development of endophytes as plant protection agents

Halecker S, Wennrich J-P, Rodrigo S, Andrée N, Rabsch L, Baschien C, Steinert M, Stadler M, **Surup F**, Schulz B. *Fungal Ecol.* **2020**, 45, 100918.

Secondary metabolites of *Penicillium manginii* 10400

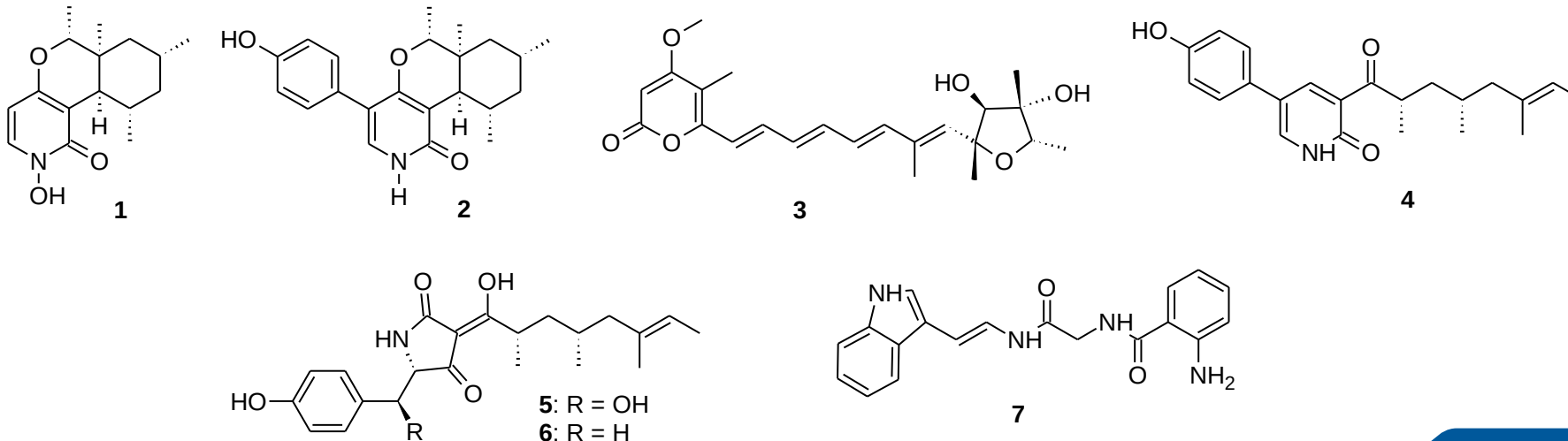
- Protective effect of *P. manginii* against *H. fraxineus* in planta

Inhibit.
H.f.
dual culture

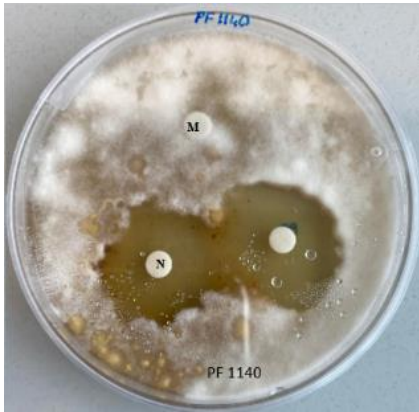


Disease symptoms of
ash seedlings
inoculated with *H.*
fraxineus and
endophytes
(1 = no disease
symptoms to 5 = dead)

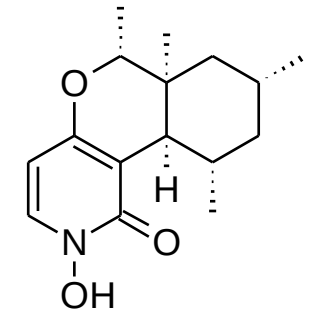
- Bioactivity-guided fractionation led to PF1140 (**1**)
- Metabolites **2** - **7** were isolated and elucidated (NMR & MS data)



PF1140 - key metabolite of *Penicillium manginii* 10400



- Isolated from marine *Penicillium* sp.
- Strong antifungal activity against *H. fraxineus* (> positive nystatin!)



PF1140



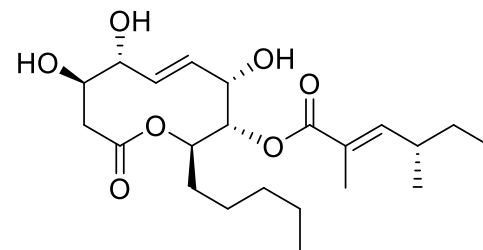
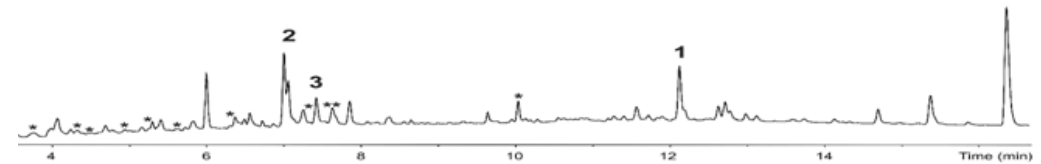
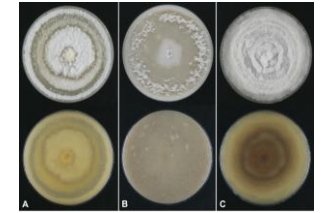
- PF1140 showed phytotoxic activity in leaf puncture assay
- Might explain the phytoxic activity of 10400 against ash seedlings in later experiments

de Silva et al., *J. Nat. Prod.* **2009**, 72, 477-479

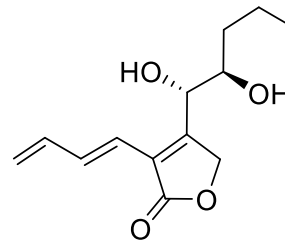
Fujita et al., *J. Antibiot.* **2005**, 58, 425-427.

III Metabolomics – Tool for screening

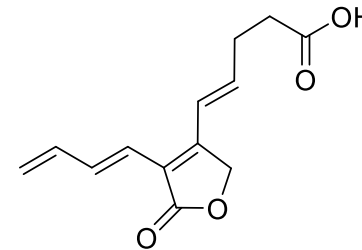
- Metabolites from *Diaporthe caliensis* sp. nov.
- Endophyt of the medical plant *Otoba gracilipes*
- HPLC analysis of the crude extract
- Isolation & structure elucidation of bioactive metabolites



Phomol



Caliensolid A

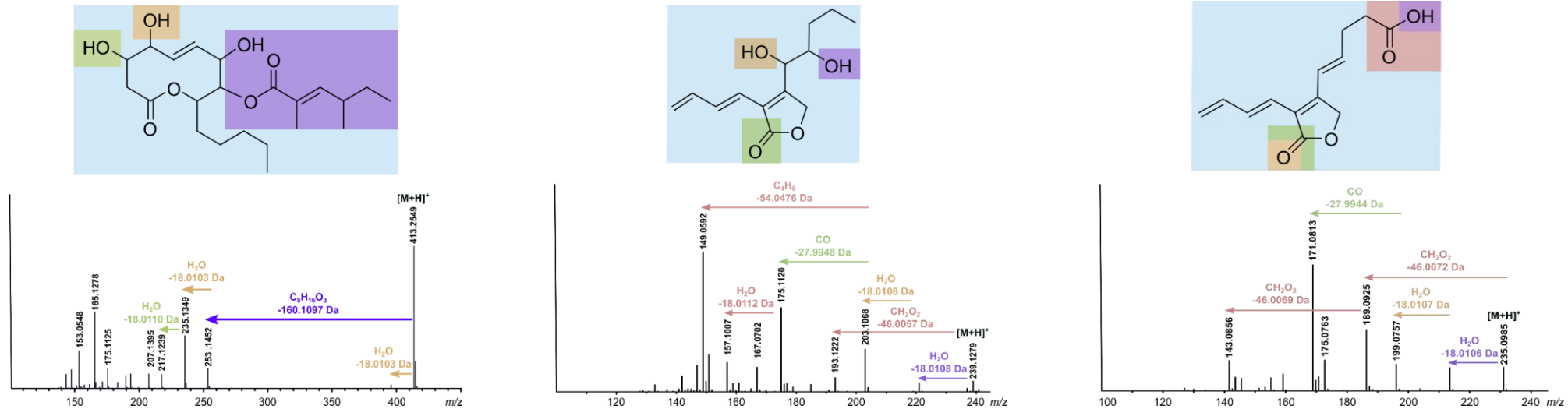


Caliensolid B

Charria-Girón E, Marin-Felix Y, Beutling U, Franke R, Brönstrup M, Vasco-Palacios AM, Caicedo NH, **Surup F**. Metabolomics insights into the polyketide-lactones produced by *Diaporthe caliensis* sp. nov., an endophyte of the medicinal plant *Otoba gracilipes*. *Microbiology Spectrum* **2023**, e02743-23.

Fragmentation patterns

MS2 spectra can be explained by the structures



Structures of phomol, caliensolide A and B with highlighted observed fragments and its corresponding representative MS/MS spectrum. Unassigned neutral losses are shown in red.

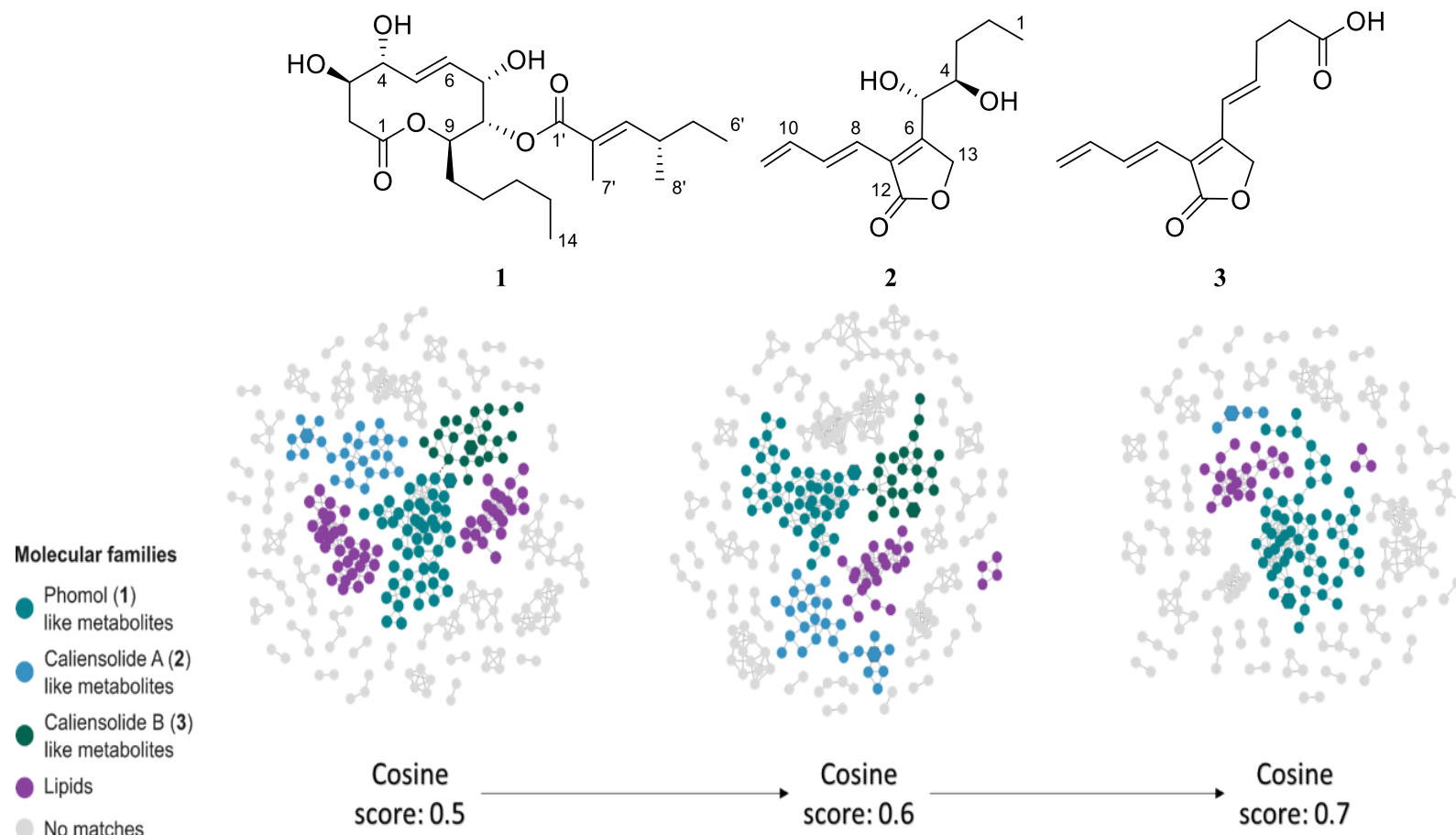
→ Structural proposal from MS2 and MS3 spectra (sometimes) possible

Feature-based molecular networking

Visualize and annotate the chemical space in non-targeted mass spectrometry data

Global Natural
Products Social
Molecular Networking
(GNPS) infrastructure

Wrong associations
with standard
parameters!



Nothias L-F, ..., Dorrestein PC. Feature-based molecular networking in the GNPS analysis environment
Nat Methods 2020,17, 905-908.

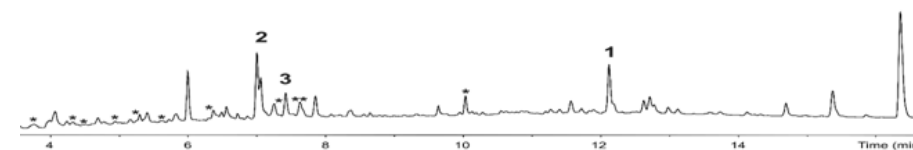
Untargeted Metabolomics Analysis - Dereplication with MS/MS data

Compound	<i>m/z</i>	rt	Formula	Annotation*	Database
Trichocladinol C	229.1074 [M+H] ⁺	3.75	C ₁₁ H ₁₆ O ₅	Level 2	NP Atlas (Genus: <i>Diaporthe</i>)
Udagawanone B	177.0547 [M-H ₂ O+H] ⁺	4.33	C ₁₀ H ₁₀ O ₄	Level 2	NP Atlas (Genus: <i>Diaporthe</i>)
Multiforisin A	207.0651 [M-H ₂ O+H] ⁺	4.51	C ₁₁ H ₁₂ O ₅	Level 2	NP Atlas (Genus: <i>Diaporthe</i>)
Gulypyrone A	213.1125 [M+H] ⁺	4.94	C ₁₁ H ₁₆ O ₄	Level 2	NP Atlas (Genus: <i>Diaporthe</i>)
Udagawanone A	211.0968 [M+H] ⁺	5.25	C ₁₁ H ₁₄ O ₄	Level 2	NP Atlas (Genus: <i>Diaporthe</i>)
Multiforisin A	225.0688 [M+H] ⁺	5.63	C ₁₁ H ₁₂ O ₅	Level 2	NP Atlas (Genus: <i>Diaporthe</i>)
Pyrenocine L	267.1226 [M-H ₂ O+H] ⁺	6.35	C ₁₄ H ₂₀ O ₆	Level 2	NP Atlas (Genus: <i>Phomopsis</i>)
Caliensolide A (2)	239.1280 [M+H] ⁺	7.06	C ₁₃ H ₁₈ O ₄	Level 0	Present study
Diaportheone B	203.0702 [M-H ₂ O+H] ⁺	7.34	C ₁₂ H ₁₂ O ₄	Level 2	NP Atlas (Genus: <i>Diaporthe</i>)
Caliensolide B (3)	235.0970 [M+H] ⁺	7.44	C ₁₃ H ₁₄ O ₄	Level 0	Present study
Kobifuranone B	195.1023 [M+H] ⁺	7.64	C ₁₁ H ₁₄ O ₃	Level 2	NP Atlas (Genus: <i>Diaporthe</i>)
Chaetolactone	253.1442 [M+H] ⁺	7.67	C ₁₄ H ₂₀ O ₄	Level 2	NP Atlas (Genus: <i>Diaporthe</i>)
Phomol	395.2435 [M-H ₂ O+H] ⁺	10.04	C ₂₂ H ₃₆ O ₇	Level 1	NP Atlas (Genus: <i>Phomopsis</i>)
(3R,4R,7S,8S,9R)- phomol (1)	413.2538 [M+H] ⁺	12.13	C ₂₂ H ₃₆ O ₇	Level 0	Present study

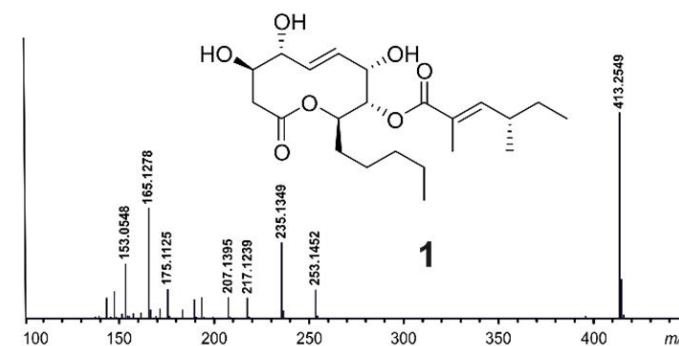
→ Fast overview of (secondary) metabolome

Global Natural Product Social Molecular Networking (GNPS)

HPLC chromatogram of crude extract



Straight-forward identification of phomol on MS2 data



New biotechnology platform at HZI (operative since 2021)

Upstream Processing Equipment



Shake flask cultivations

- RAMOS (50 mL; 200 mL)
- Transfer from shake flask to bioreactor
- Media development



Multi-fermenter

- DASGIP (1.5 L)
- Process development in laboratory scale



Stainless steel bioreactors

- Six vessels (10 L)
- Process implementation
- Optimization for technical scale



Pilot scale bioreactors

- 4 x 150 L; 2 x 350 L
- Material supply for e.g. preclinical studies
- Process transfer to CRO's

Downstream Processing Equipment



Biomass separation

- Tube centrifuge
- Filtration



Extraction

- Fluidized bed
- Liquid-liquid



Concentration

- Rotary evaporator
- High vacuum



Product separation

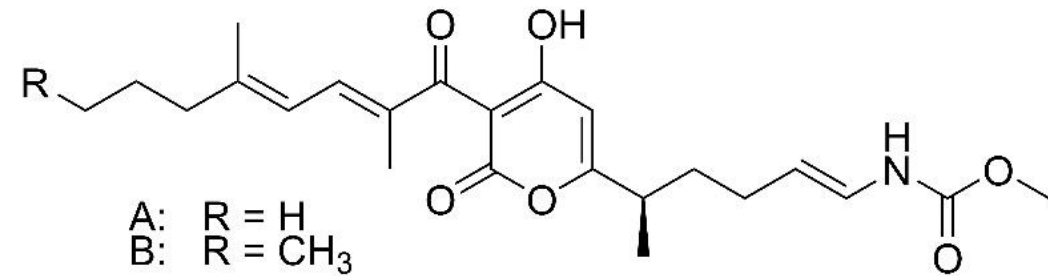
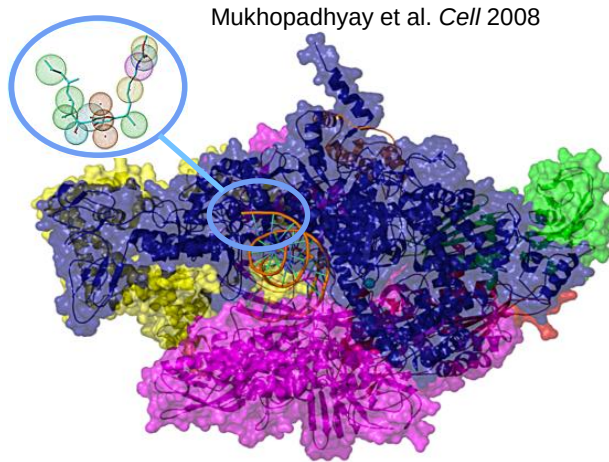
- MPLC
- Preparative HPLC

Only facility in European academia that can handle 100 g scale amounts of natural products

Heterologous Expression of Myxopyronin A

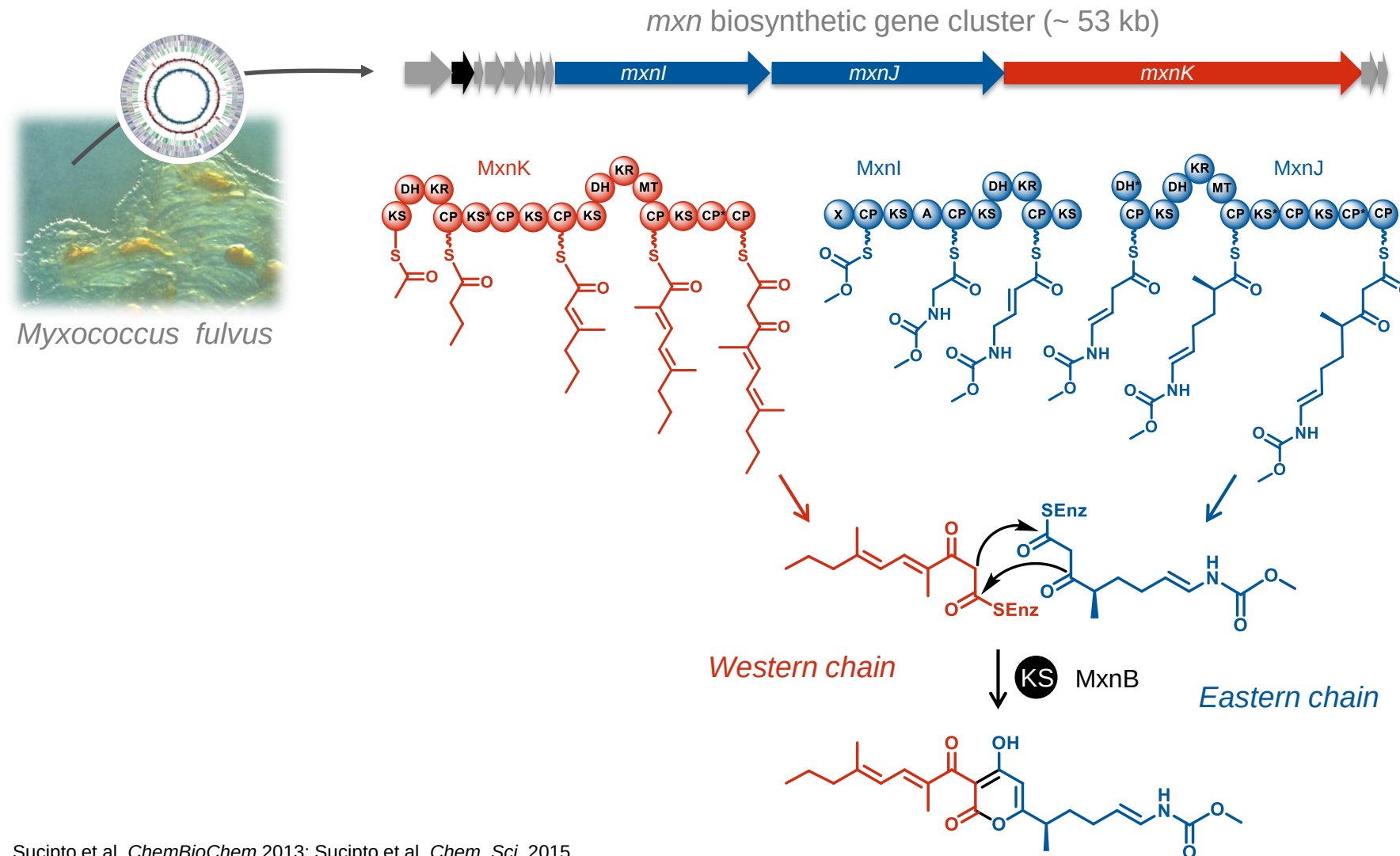
- Antibacterial compound published in 1983
- Original producer: *Myxococcus fulvus* Mx f50
- Product titer: 5 mg L⁻¹
- α -pyrone antibiotic with activity against *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*
- Model compound for heterologous expression of polyketides

Target: RNA polym. switch region



Irschik H, Gerth K, Höfle G, Kohl W, Reichenbach H. The myxopyronins, new inhibitors of bacterial RNA synthesis from *Myxococcus fulvus* (Myxobacterales). *J Antibiot.* **1983**, 36, 1651-1658.

Myxopyronin biosynthesis

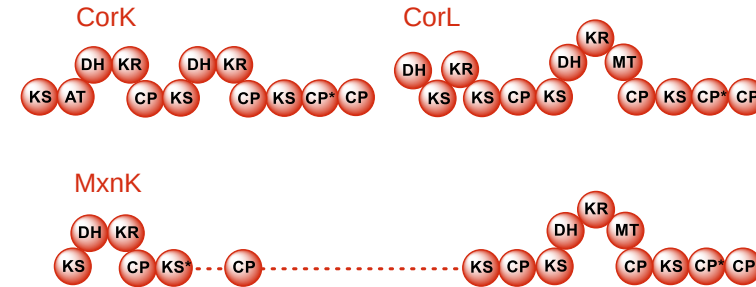
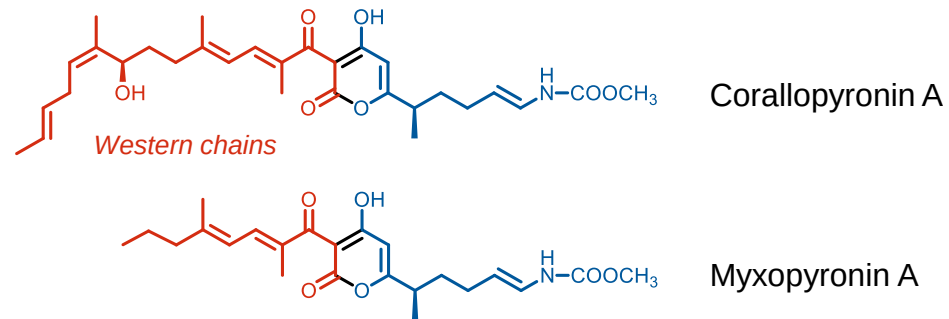


Sucipto et al. *ChemBioChem* 2013; Sucipto et al. *Chem. Sci.* 2015

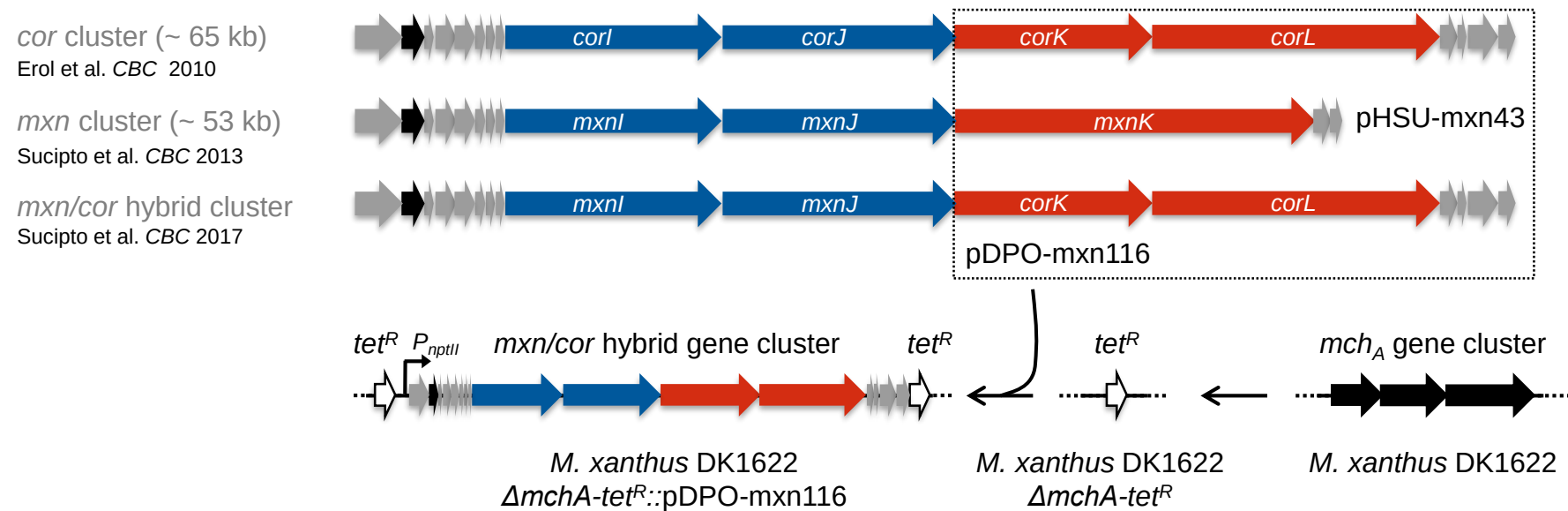
Heterologous coralopyronin production platform



Domen Pogorevc



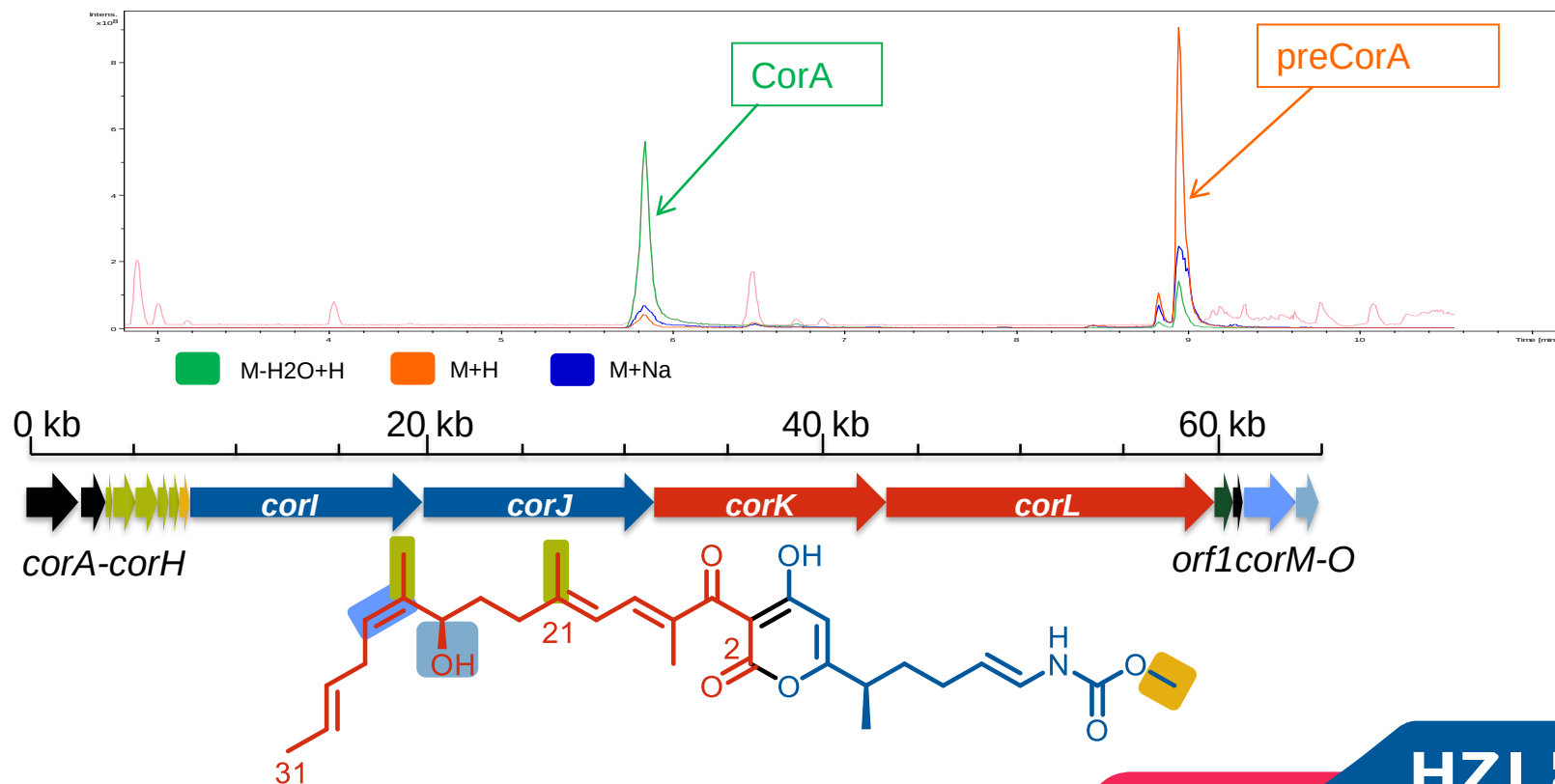
Exchange of western chain biosynthetic genes



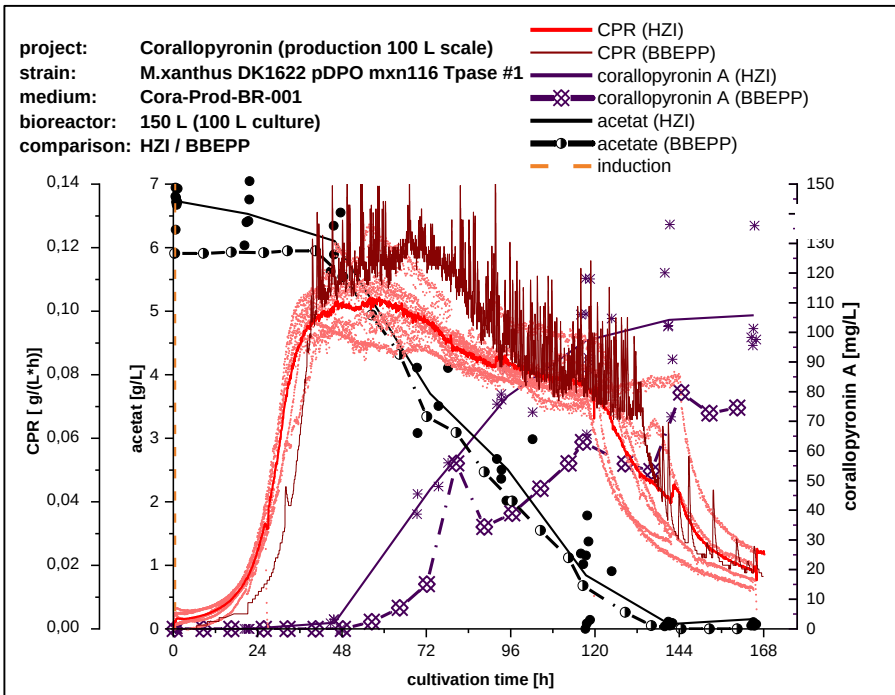
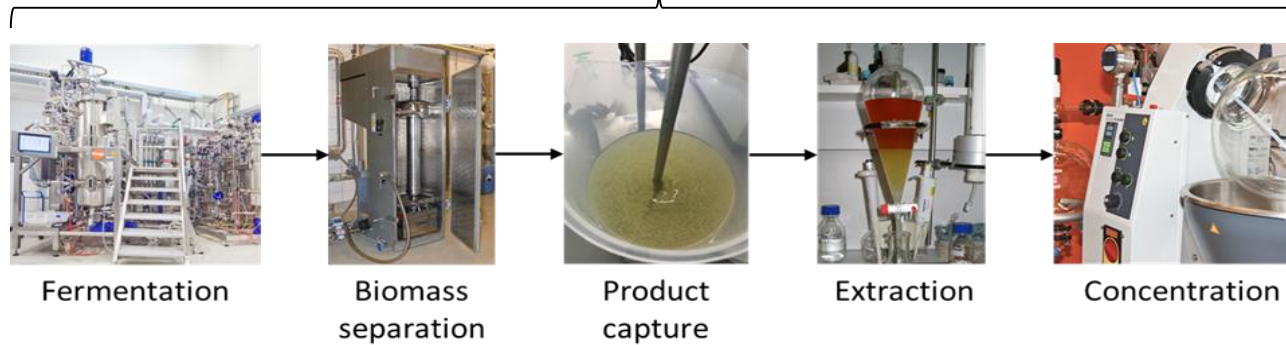
Myxopyronin and Coralopyronin yields

MxnA [mg/L]		D (acies plate)			Average
		I	II	III	
CTT	6d	3.8	3.9	3.7	3.8
CTT	8d	3.6	3.2	3.4	3.4
Mxn	6d	2.9	3.1	3.0	3.0
Mxn	8d	2.7	2.9	2.6	2.8
M7s/6	6d	169.4	149.3	147.9	155.5
M7s/6	8d	152.3	140.6	/	146.4

CorA [mg/L]		B (pDPO-mxn116 #3)			Average
		I	II	III	
CTT	6d	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.5
CTT	8d	1.3	1.8	1.8	1.6
Cor	6d	1.0	1.0	0.9	1.0
Cor	8d	1.0	1.0	0.8	1.0
M7s/6	6d	38.8	40.1	32.6	37.2
M7s/6	8d	41.6	37.7	41.9	40.4



Transfer of CorA production process



Process Transfer in 2021

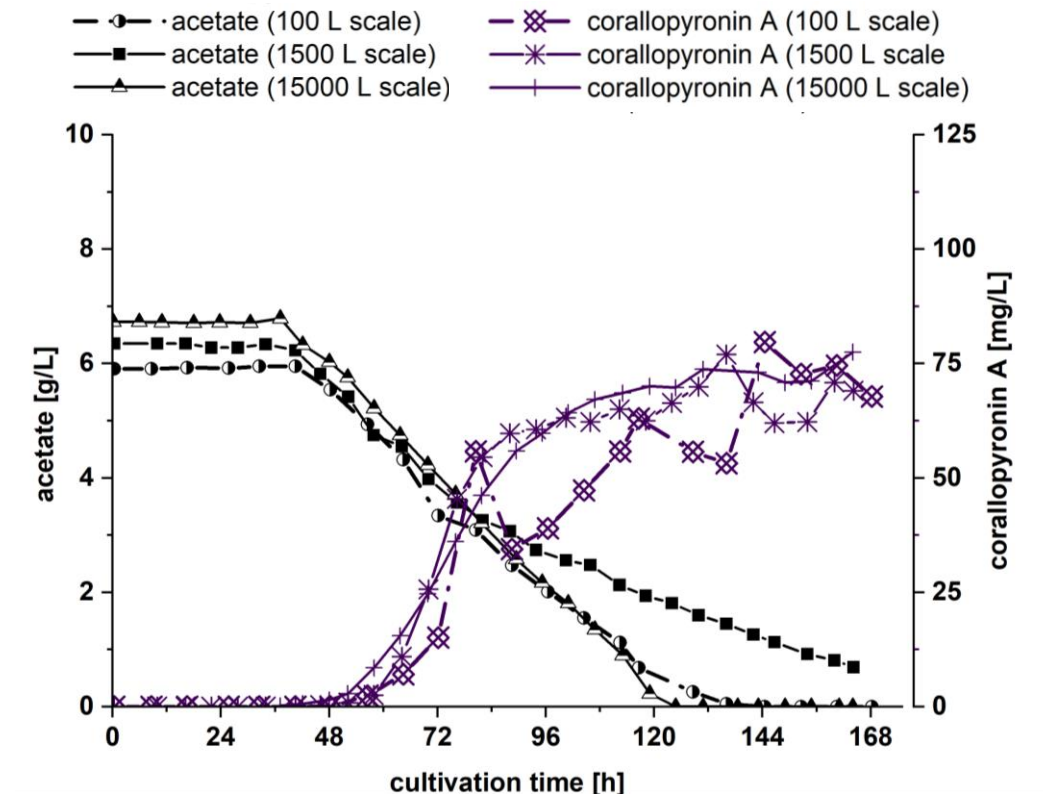
- Preparation of SOP's for production and purification
- USP & DSP successfully established
- Produced material sent from Belgium to HZI for final purification

Scale up in Belgium (BBEPP Ghent)

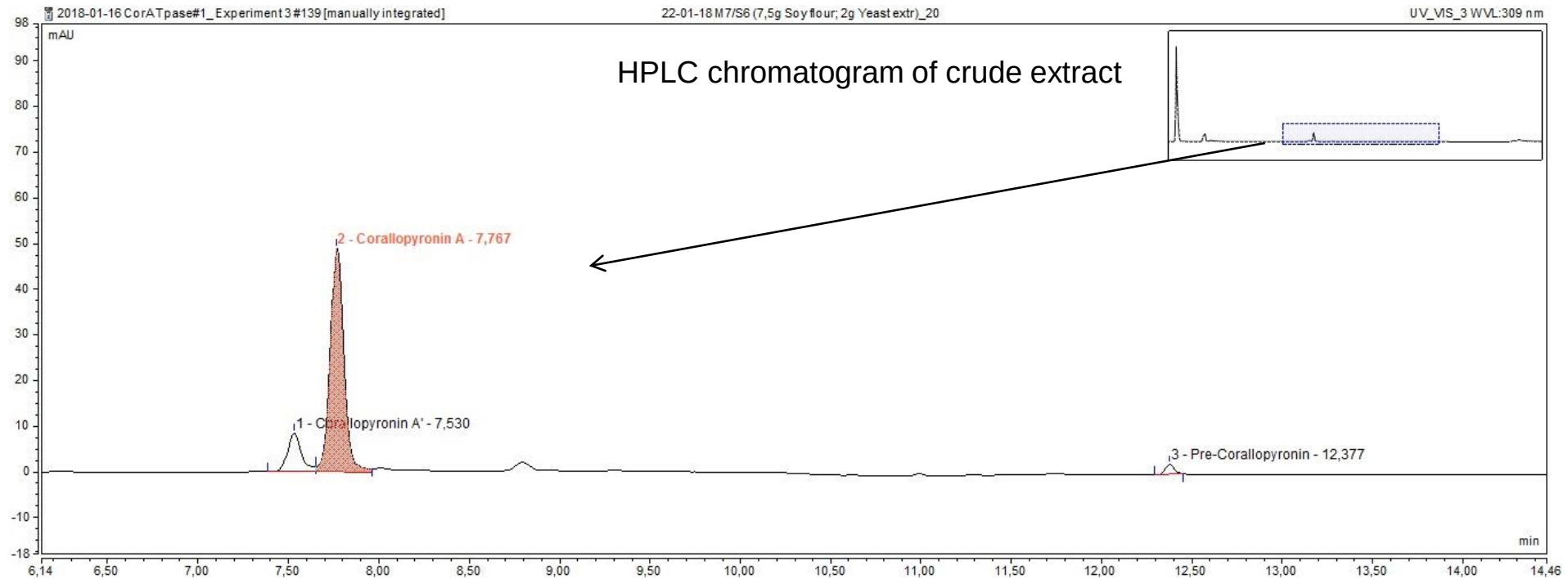


Scale up: USP

- Up to now 5 successful runs in 15 m³ scale
- Titters equivalent to that observed at HZI
- Process reproducible
- **Successful scale up to industrial scale**



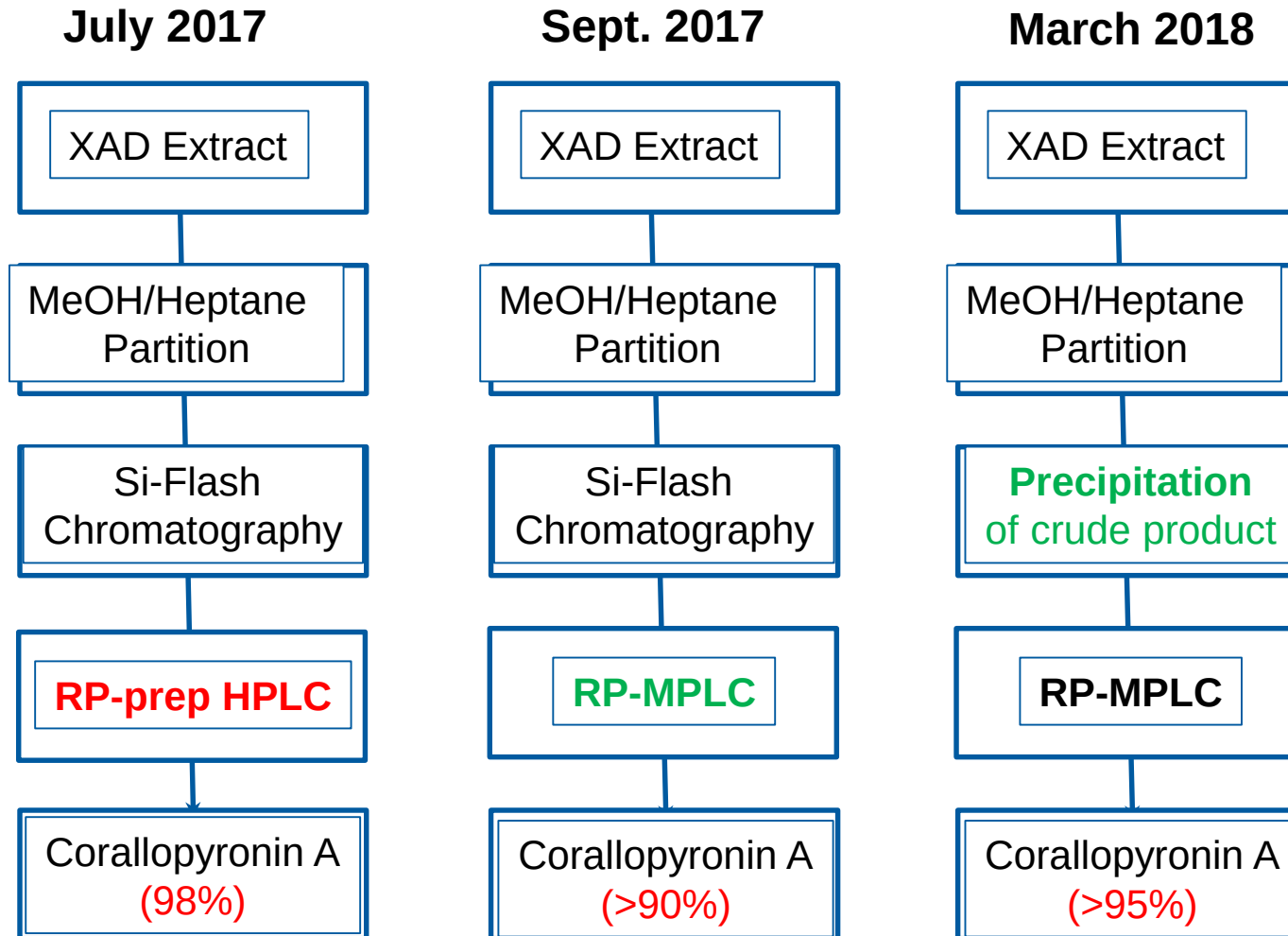
Production of Cor A in 250 L pilot scale – Metabolite profiles in the supernatant crude extract



Almost no other derivatives except for Cor A' and Pre Cor A in the crude extract

=> DSP facilitated substantially as compared to wild type strain

CorA Downstream Processing (time course)



Summary: HZI CorA production by BBEPP

7-days repeated dose of dogs

Group (n=4)	Sex	Dose level (mg/kg/day)	CorA need (g)	Treatment start
1	2 m, 2 f	vehicle	-	05.09.2022
2	2 m, 2 f	150	35	05.09.2022
3	2 m, 2 f	450	106	05.09.2022
4	2 m, 2 f	750	214	07.12.2022

Isolated at HZI and delivered to Bonn in 2022

- 22.02.2022 44.04 g
- 27.06.2022 59.40 g
- 15.08.2022 127.99 g
- 25.11.2022 232.00 g



Contract with German CRO for GMP production (including downstream processing!) signed in September 2023!

Summary – Challenging variety of natural products

- **Bioactivity-guided fractionation:**
→ disciformycins: RNA polymerase inhibitors from bacterium *Pyxidicoccus fallax*
- **Screening for novel compounds**
of *Rhodotus palmatus*, *Hohenbuehelia grisea*, *Hypoxylon fragiforme*, etc.
- **Metabolomics:** MS/MS data as additional information for dereplication
- **Corallopyronin:** Development of an old antibiotic metabolite

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Michael Steinert (TU BS)
All Coauthors
Corallo team**



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