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Reclassification of *Halothiobacillus* *hydrothermalis* and *Halothiobacillus* *halophilus* to *Guyparkeria* gen. nov. in the Thioalkalibacteraceae fam. nov., with emended descriptions of the genus *Halothiobacillus* and family *Halothiobacillaceae*

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Reclassification of Halothiobacillus hydrothermalis and Halothiobacillus halophilus to
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Full Title:	Reclassification of Halothiobacillus hydrothermalis and Halothiobacillus halophilus to Guyparkeria gen. nov. in the Haloalkalibacteraceae fam. nov., with emended descriptions of the genus Halothiobacillus and family Halothiobacillaceae.
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Abstract:	The genus Halothiobacillus contains 4 species of obligate autotrophs with validly published names, of which Halothiobacillus halophilus and Halothiobacillus hydrothermalis are very distant from the type species - on the basis of the 16S rRNA gene, they have 90.7 % and 90.9 % identity to that of the type species, Halothiobacillus neapolitanus. As these values fall below the Yarza cut-off for the rank of genus, and these two species also show no clear affiliation to the closely related genus Thioalkalibacter, a polyphasic study was undertaken to determine if they represent a separate genus. Unlike Halothiobacillus spp. sensu stricto, H. halophilus and H. hydrothermalis are halophilic (rather than halotolerant) and moderately alkaliphilic (rather than neutrophilic) and additionally do not produce tetrathionate as a detectable intermediate of thiosulfate metabolism, indicating some significant metabolic differences. On the basis of these data and of functional gene examination, it is proposed that they be circumscribed as a new genus Guyparkeria gen.nov, for which the type species is Guyparkeria halophila gen. nov., comb. nov. Additionally, Thioalkalibacter and Guyparkeria gen. nov. fall distant from the Halothiobacillaceae so the Thioalkalibacteraceae fam. nov. is proposed, for which Thioalkalibacter is the type genus. Emended descriptions of Halothiobacillus, Halothiobacillus neapolitanus and the Halothiobacillaceae are provided.

1 **Reclassification of *Halothiobacillus hydrothermalis* and**
2 ***Halothiobacillus halophilus* to *Guyparkeria* gen. nov. in the**
3 ***Haloalkalibacteraceae* fam. nov., with emended descriptions of the**
4 **genus *Halothiobacillus* and family *Halothiobacillaceae*.**

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13 **Keywords:** *Halothiobacillus*, halophiles, *Guyparkeria*, *Gammaproteobacteria*, *Thiobacillus*,
14 autotroph

15

16 **Running title:** Reclassification of *Halothiobacillus* spp. to *Guyparkeria* gen. nov.

17 **Section:** New taxa – ‘*Proteobacteria*’

18

19 **Abstract**

20 The genus *Halothiobacillus* contains 4 species of obligate autotrophs with validly published
21 names, of which *Halothiobacillus halophilus* and *Halothiobacillus hydrothermalis* are very
22 distant from the type species – on the basis of the 16S rRNA gene, they have 90.7 % and
23 90.9 % identity to that of the type species, *Halothiobacillus neapolitanus*. As these values fall
24 below the Yarza cut-off for the rank of genus, and these two species also show no clear
25 affiliation to the closely related genus *Thioalkalibacter*, a polyphasic study was undertaken to
26 determine if they represent a separate genus. Unlike *Halothiobacillus* spp. *sensu stricto*, *H.*
27 *halophilus* and *H. hydrothermalis* are halophilic (rather than halotolerant) and moderately
28 alkaliphilic (rather than neutrophilic) and additionally do not produce tetrathionate as a
29 detectable intermediate of thiosulfate metabolism, indicating some significant metabolic
30 differences. On the basis of these data and of functional gene examination, it is proposed that
31 they be circumscribed as a new genus *Guyparkeria* gen.nov, for which the type species is
32 *Guyparkeria halophila* gen. nov., comb. nov. Additionally, *Thioalkalibacter* and
33 *Guyparkeria* gen. nov. fall distant from the *Halothiobacillaceae* so the *Thioalkalibacteraceae*
34 fam. nov. is proposed, for which *Thioalkalibacter* is the type genus. Emended descriptions of
35 *Halothiobacillus*, *Halothiobacillus neapolitanus* and the *Halothiobacillaceae* are provided.

36 The genus *Halothiobacillus* (Kelly and Wood, 2000 emend. Sievert *et al.* 2000[1, 2]) was
37 circumscribed originally by Kelly and Wood in their seminal taxonomic study of apparent
38 *Thiobacillus* spp., on the basis of phylogenetic positions of 3 *Thiobacillus* spp. that fell within
39 the *Gammaproteobacteria*, rather than the *Betaproteobacteria*, per *Thiobacillus sensu stricto*.
40 There are now 4 species of *Halothiobacillus* with validly published names – *Halothiobacillus*
41 *neapolitanus* (type species [1], basonym *Thiobacillus neapolitanus* [3]), *Halothiobacillus*
42 *halophilus* ([1], basonym *Thiobacillus halophilus* [4]), *Halothiobacillus hydrothermalis*
43 (Kelly & Wood, 2000, basonym *Thiobacillus hydrothermalis* [5]) and *Halothiobacillus*
44 *kellyi*[2]. All members of the genus are halophilic or halotolerant obligate
45 chemolithoautotrophs, assimilating carbon dioxide *via* the Calvin-Benson-Bassham cycle at
46 the expense of the oxidation of reduced sulfur species.

47 *H. neapolitanus* [3] was probably isolated originally by Nathansohn [6] from seawater in the
48 Bay of Naples (reviewed in [7]), but the original strain was lost, and Parker noted that his X^T
49 strain had very similar properties and so named the species as pertaining to the Bay of Naples
50 in spite of his strain being from Melbourne, Australia [3]. It is worth noting for the sake of
51 avoiding confusion that this strain was originally coded as strain X44^T [8], which was later
52 abbreviated by the same author to “*Thiobacillus X*” [9], under which name Trudinger
53 conducted his pioneering studies into the biochemistry of sulfur oxidation [10]. It was latterly
54 termed ParkerX^T, probably *via* culture collection catalogue listings [11]. It is important to
55 note that in the early 1960s, the ParkerX^T strain of *H. neapolitanus* was coded “c2” for the
56 sake of Hutchinson’s numerical taxonomic study of various sulfur-oxidising *Bacteria* [12].
57 This coding has unfortunately persisted and, at times, superseded the original designation of
58 X^T, to the stage that genome sequences in public databases still cite the strain erroneously as
59 c2^T, causing confusion with the unrelated “C” strain (= DSM 581 = NCIMB 11333) of *H.*
60 *neapolitanus* (variously “*Thiobacillus sp. C*” and “*Thiobacillus thioparus*” in the earlier

61 studies) isolated by Kelly [13], and the subject of seminal studies into energy conservation in
62 chemolithoautotrophs ([13-18). Since Wood and Kelly's study in 2000 creating the genus
63 *Halothiobacillus*, 16S rRNA (*rrs*) gene sequencing has confirmed the well-characterised
64 OSWA [19], W5 [20] and C [13] strains are indeed *bona fide* *H. neapolitanus* strains [11],
65 giving an expanded view of the physiology and properties of this species beyond the type
66 strain.

67 Phylogenetic analyses were conducted in MEGA 7.0.26 [21], with alignments made using the
68 MUSCLE algorithm [22] without use of any of the pre-sets that increase speed but may
69 reduce accuracy. DNA or amino acyl sequences were curated from the GenBank™ and
70 Integrated Microbial Genomes and Microbiome Samples (IMG/MER) databases.

71 Phylogenetic reconstruction methods were selected after interrogation of each aligned dataset
72 using the 'find best DNA/protein models' component of MEGA, which selects for the
73 model/method and rate distributions that give the lowest Bayesian information criterion (BIC)
74 and thus describe the substitution patterns of the data the best. For 16S rRNA (*rrs*) gene
75 analyses, the Tamura-Nei model [23] was used with a gamma distribution of rates across sites.

76 For amino acyl analyses based on the form IA ribulose bisphosphate carboxylase/oxygenase
77 (EC 4.1.1.39) large subunit (CbbL) from the Calvin-Benson-Bassham cycle of carbon dioxide
78 fixation and the sulfate thiol esterase (SoxB) canonically found in the Kelly-Friedrich
79 pathway of sulfur oxidation, the Le and Gascuel model [24] was used with a gamma
80 distribution of rates across sites. For all analyses, the maximum-likelihood method was used
81 for reconstruction of phylogenetic trees, with pairwise deletion of gaps at 95 % cut-off. 5,000
82 bootstrap replicates were performed and values at nodes are shown where ≥ 70 %. For 16S
83 rRNA gene analyses, neighbour-joining and minimum-evolution methods were also
84 employed, using the same parameters. In each tree, a sequence from *Allochromatium vinosum*
85 DSM 180^T from the *Chromatiales* of the *Gammaproteobacteria* as the outgroup. Gene and

86 protein percentage identities were calculated from pairwise distances determined using
87 MEGA 7.0.26, using the same model as in the phylogenetic trees but with complete deletion
88 of gaps.

89 Table 1 curates the properties of *Halothiobacillus* spp. and the closely related
90 *Thioalkalibacter halophilus* [25]. As can be seen from the 16S rRNA gene identities in Table
91 1, the degree of relatedness between taxa is very low. Whilst *H. halophilus* and *H.*
92 *hydrothermalis* are quite closely related (but are distinct taxa [26]), they fall very distant from
93 the type species, with only 90.7 and 90.9 % identity thereto – as I have noted previously [11].
94 On the basis of the ‘Yarza cut-off’ for genus and the ‘Yarza medians’ for higher taxa which I
95 designated based on the work of Yarza *et al.* [27, 28] and employed in recent studies of
96 *Thiobacillus*, *Annwoodia*, *Thiomicrospira* *etc* as well as the higher taxa of the
97 *Betaproteobacteria* [28, 29], these two species fall below the Yarza cut-off for members of
98 the same genus as *H. neapolitanus* ParkerX^T (which would be 94.50 %) and, indeed, below
99 the Yarza median for members of the same family (92.25 %), though they are clearly of the
100 same order as they fall above that Yarza median (89.20 %) . From Figure 1 it can be seen that
101 in all tree reconstructions, the overall topology is virtually identical with all branches
102 stemming from well-supported nodes. It can be seen that *Thioalkalibacter halophilus*
103 effectively bisects *Halothiobacillus* rendering it polyphyletic. These factors present a case for
104 a re-evaluation of *Halothiobacillus* spp., which I present here. It is worth noting that whilst *H.*
105 *kellyi* also falls distant from *H. neapolitanus* at 92.7 % identity, which would indicate they
106 are members of the same family but not the same genus, *H. kellyi* Milos BIII^T is found only
107 in one public culture collection (= DSM 13162^T), thus it is not possible to reclassify this
108 strain into a separate genus at this time owing to the requirements of Rule 30(3)b of the
109 *International Code of Nomenclature of Prokaryotes* (hereafter ‘the *Code*’), thus in this study,
110 I concentrate on the other two species.

111 The species *H. halophilus* and *H. hydrothermalis* are similar in size to *H. neapolitanus* but
112 are very phylogenetically distant from it. The identity of *H. halophilus* to *H. hydrothermalis*
113 is 98.7 %, and their G+C fractions are only 3.2 mol% apart (but are >8.2 mol% from the type
114 species), which implies that they belong to the same genus but probably to two separate
115 species [30], supported further by a DNA-DNA hybridisation (DDH) value of 59 % [26]
116 below the 70 % cut-off for members of the same species [31]. Strains of these two taxa differ
117 physiologically from *H. neapolitanus* and *H. kellyi* in not producing tetrathionate as an
118 intermediate of thiosulfate oxidation, being more alkalitolerant and having an obligate
119 requirement for sodium chloride to be able to grow. The production of tetrathionate is
120 canonically a diagnostic hallmark of the Kelly-Trudinger pathway of sulfur oxidation, and is
121 owing to the oxidation of thiosulfate by thiosulfate dehydrogenase (cytochrome *c*-linked (EC
122 1.8.2.2)), and strains lacking this feature have been considered as distinct taxa in previous
123 studies (*e.g. Annwoodia vs Thiobacillus* [28]) as it represents a major physiological difference,
124 and potentially a different pathway of sulfur oxidation. These two taxa also have much higher
125 terminal pH values during growth on thiosulfate than *H. neapolitanus* or *H. kellyi*, probably
126 owing to the poor tolerance of acidity that can be seen from their pH ranges of growth. They
127 are also distinct from *Thioalkalibacter halophilus* by virtue of their 16S rRNA gene identities
128 being below the Yarza cut-off for members of the same genus (see Table 1), forming white
129 colonies that become coated with elementary sulfur over time, instead of the red, sulfur-free
130 colonies of *Tab. halophilus*. They are also slightly alkalitolerant rather than alkaliphilic per
131 *Thioalkalibacter halophilus*.

132 Figure 2 shows maximum likelihood trees reconstructed from MUSCLE alignments of amino
133 acyl sequences derived from *cbbL* gene. In addition to the clade of interest, I have included
134 *Thiomicrospira (Tms)*, *Hydrogenovibrio (Hgv)* and *Thiomicrothabodus (Tmr)* sequences from
135 the *Gammaproteobacteria* per a subset of the sequences in the CbbL tree used in our recent

136 study (Supplementary Figure S1 of [29]) since I am confident of both the topology of their
137 CbbL tree and their lines of descent into genera from that study. Given all of the
138 *Halothiobacillus* and *Thioalkalibacter* CbbL sequences are from IAc (*i.e.* carboxysome-
139 associated) RuBisCO (*cf.* the complete Supplementary Figure S1 in [29]), we can assume that
140 all members of these genera use carboxysomes in the fixation of carbon dioxide. The CbbL
141 sequences from the three *Halothiobacillus* species cluster together on a well-supported
142 branch, with *H. hydrothermalis* and *H. halophilus* having 100.0 % identity between CbbL
143 amino acyl sequences (99.9% gene identity – the only difference being *H. hydrothermalis*
144 having GAC as the second codon of *cbbL*, whereas *H. halophilus* has GAT, both encoding
145 asparagine), but they both had 96.3 % identity to that from *H. neapolitanus*. Interestingly,
146 *Tab. halophilus* only had 71.6 % CbbL identity to that of *H. neapolitanus* and 73.1 % to that
147 of *H. hydrothermalis* and *H. halophilus*, instead clustering in the tree with the genus
148 *Hydrogenovibrio*, with 90.0 % amino acid sequence identity to the CbbL from *Hgv.*
149 *halophilus*, another halophile – this could potential indicate horizontal transfer or specific
150 CbbL evolutionary adaptations to their common environmental conditions. By interrogation
151 of the section of the CbbL sequences of *H. halophilus* and *H. neapolitanus* that aligned (*i.e.*
152 the same 262 aa region), using the ExPASy ProtParam tool [32], both had near identical
153 fractions of positively and negatively charged amino acids, with the *H. neapolitanus* having
154 34 negatively charged (aspartate and glutamate) residues *versus* 33 in *H. halophilus*, and both
155 having 26 positively charged (arginine and lysine) residues, equal numbers of cysteines *etc.*
156 The former had a predicted pI for the region examined of 6.00 *versus* 5.89 for the latter – this
157 was the only obvious functional difference.

158 Figure 3 shows maximum likelihood trees reconstructed from MUSCLE alignments of amino
159 acyl sequences derived from *soxB* gene. In this tree, SoxB from *Tab. halophilus* clusters with
160 those of *Halothiobacillus* species and not with *Hydrogenovibrio* species. *H. neapolitanus* and

161 *H. hydrothermalis* sequences cluster separately, with 77.0 % identity between amino acyl
162 sequences; 69.2 % identity between SoxB from *H. neapolitanus* and *H. kellyi*, and 63.6 %
163 between *H. neapolitanus* and *Tab. halophilus*. These are very divergent sequences, and
164 similar to identities between SoxB from *Tms. pelophila* and *Tmr. chilensis* (type species of
165 former and closet relative to type species of latter genus for which SoxB sequence available),
166 viz. 71.9 %, or between *Tms. pelophila* and *Hgv. marinus* (type species), viz. 76.7 %. These
167 data would indicate that the relationships between SoxB and CbbL amino acid sequences of
168 *H. neapolitanus*, *Tab. halophilus* and the *H. hydrothermalis*/*H. halophilus* clade are of even
169 lower percentage identities than one would find between members of different genera of the
170 same family of the *Gammaproteobacteria*, thus supporting the conclusions drawn from 16S
171 rRNA gene studies.

172 From these data, it can be seen than in terms of physiology, physical properties and
173 phylogenetics, *H. hydrothermalis* and *H. halophilus* do not belong to either of the genera
174 *Halothiobacillus* or *Thioalkalibacter*, thus I propose that they are circumscribed as a separate
175 genus. As the type species *H. neapolitanus* remains in the other genus, under Rule 39a of the
176 *Code*, that taxon must retain the name *Halothiobacillus*. For the novel genus, I propose it be
177 named for Mr Cecil David ‘Guy’ Parker (1912-1981), Australian microbiologist who
178 discovered *Halothiobacillus neapolitanus* Parker^T. Under Rule 10a of the *Code*, “*Parkeria*”,
179 “*Parkera*” etc cannot be used owing to already being in use in the *Eukarya*, thus I propose
180 *Guyparkeria* gen. nov. The type species is *Guyparkeria halophila* gen. nov., comb. nov., on
181 the basis of the species with the oldest validly published name.

182 In terms of higher taxa, the relationships of 16S rRNA gene pairwise distances to the Yarza
183 medians indicate that *Guyparkeria* gen. nov. belongs to the same family as *Thioalkalibacter*
184 but not *Halothiobacillus*, as supported by fundamental different properties as curated in Table
185 2. Thus, *Halothiobacillus* will remain in the *Halothiobacillaceae* [33], but the other two

186 genera are circumscribed as the *Thioalkalibacteraceae* fam. nov. According to
187 www.bacterio.net, the genera *Thiofaba* and *Thiovirga* also belong to the *Halothiobacillaceae*,
188 but with very low pairwise 16S rRNA gene identities of 87.70 % and 85.30 % from the type
189 strains of their type species to that of *Halothiobacillus*, implying that they may not belong in
190 the same order (Yarza median 89.20 %) or possibly not the same class (86.35 %). They also
191 fall distant from one another at 87.00 %, again implying that they are not in the same order as
192 one another. The exact positions of these genera within the ‘*Proteobacteria*’ will be the result
193 of further study of higher taxa, but it is clear that they are not part of the *Halothiobacillaceae*
194 or the *Thioalkalibacteraceae* fam. nov., so I consider them to be *incertae sedis* pending
195 further work. I also provide an emended description of *H. neapolitanus* to consolidate new
196 data and properties of the well-characterised C (= DSM 581 = NCIMB 11133 [13]), W5 (= LMD 94.73 [20]) and OSWA (= DSM 16832 = ATCC BAA-1086 [19]) strains.

198 **Description of *Thioalkalibacteraceae* fam. nov.**

199 *Thioalkalibacteraceae* (Thi.o.al.ka.li.bac.te.ra.ce'ae. N.L. masc. n. *Thioalkalibacter*, type
200 genus; -aceae suffix to denote family; N.L. fem. pl. n. *Thioalkalibacteraceae* the
201 *Thioalkalibacter* family).

202

203 This family is circumscribed on the basis of 16S rRNA gene sequences and comprises the
204 genera *Thioalkalibacter* (type genus) and *Guyparkeria*. Obligate autotrophs using thiosulfate
205 and other sulfur oxyanions, elementary sulfur and sulfide as electron donors. Fix carbon
206 dioxide *via* the Calvin-Benson-Bassham cycle and use form IAc RuBisCO and thus
207 carboxysomes. Ubiquinone-8 (UQ-8) is the dominant respiratory quinone. G+C fractions are
208 from 54 – 68 mol%.

209

210 Type genus: *Thioalkalibacter* Banciu *et al.* 2009

211

212 **Description of *Guyparkeria* gen. nov.**

213 *Guyparkeria* (Guy.par.ke'ri.a. N.L. fem. n. *Guyparkeria*, named to honour Mr Cecil David
214 'Guy' Parker (1912-1981), Australian microbiologist who made significant advances in the
215 understanding of sulfur oxidation, concrete corrosion and the taxonomy of the sulfur *Bacteria*)

216 Members of the *Gammaproteobacteria*, falling within the family *Thioalkalibacteraceae*.

217 Cells are rod shaped, 0.3 – 0.6 µm by 1.0 – 1.5 µm. They are Gram-stain-negative and occur
218 singly or in pairs or short chains and are rapidly motile by means of polar flagella. Do not
219 form endospores or exospores. All members of the genus are strict aerobes which do not
220 denitrify but some species will reduce nitrate to nitrite under oxic conditions. Some species
221 can use nitrate as a nitrogen source; all species can use ammonium. Growth is obligately
222 chemolithoautotrophic at the expense of the oxidation of thiosulfate, tetrathionate, elementary
223 sulfur, sulfide. During growth on thiosulfate, elementary sulfur is formed in the medium,
224 often floating as a pellicle, but tetrathionate, trithionate or pentathionate are not detectable in
225 the medium. Thiocyanate is not used as an energy source, nor are ammonium or ferrous iron
226 ions, carbon disulfide, dimethylsulfide or dimethyldisulfide. Sulfate is the end product of
227 sulfur oxidation, with concomitant increase in culture acidity, with an end point of pH 4.8 –
228 6.0. Alkalitolerant, with optimal growth occurring from pH 7.0 – 8.5, but growth still occurs
229 at pH 9.0 in some species. Mesophilic, with optimal growth at 30 – 40 °C, with some species
230 moderately thermotolerant, growing at 49 °C. Obligately halophilic, requiring sodium
231 chloride (NaCl) for growth, with optimal growth at 430 – 1,000 mM and maxima of 2,000 –
232 4,000 mM. Carbon dioxide is fixed using the Calvin-Benson-Bassham cycle, containing form
233 IAc RuBisCO. On thiosulfate agar, colonies are entire, smooth and < 3 mm in diameter, off-
234 white but becoming coated in white and/or yellow elementary sulfur during growth, but
235 colonies themselves do not change colour with age. pH of agar is lowered during growth,

236 sufficiently to change bromocresol purple from purple to yellow. Ubiquinone 8 (UQ-8) is the
237 dominant respiratory quinone. The G+C fraction of genomic DNA is 64.2 – 67.4 mol %. The
238 16S rRNA gene has *c.* 91 % identity to that from *Halothiobacillus neapolitanus*. Can be
239 isolated from salt lakes and deep sea hydrothermal vents.

240 The type species is *Guyparkeria halophila*

241

242 **Description of *Guyparkeria halophila* comb. nov.**

243 *Guyparkeria halophila* (ha.lo'phi.la. Gr. masc. n. *hals*, *halos* salt; N.L. fem. adj. *phila* from
244 Gr. adj. *philos* friend, someone dearly loved; N.L. fem. adj. *halophila* salt-loving).

245 Basonym: *Halothiobacillus halophilus* Kelly and Wood 2000

246 Gram-stain-negative. Short rods 0.3-0.5 × 1.0-1.2 µm. Motile by means of a single polar

247 flagellum. Colonies grown on basal salts agar supplemented with thiosulfate are 1-3 mm,

248 circular, convex, opaque and smooth, becoming yellow or white with age owing to the

249 deposition of elementary sulfur. Tetrathionate or other polythionates are not detected in

250 cultures grown on thiosulfate, but elementary sulfur is formed. pH of thiosulfate-grown

251 cultures drops to 5.5-6.0 with the cessation of growth. Obligately chemolithoautotrophic.

252 Elementary sulfur, sulfide, thiosulfate, trithionate, tetrathionate and hexathionate but not

253 thiocyanate are used as electron donors. Molecular oxygen is the only terminal electron

254 acceptor. No growth on sugars, amino acids, intermediates of Krebs' cycle, fatty acids, C₁

255 compounds or complex media. Type strain reduces nitrate to nitrite. Ammonium is used as

256 nitrogen sources. Growth occurs from 26 – 36 °C (optimum 30 – 32 °C) and up to pH 8.4

257 (optimum pH 7.0 – 7.3). Obligately halophilic with an optimum of 1.0 M (5.8 % *w/v*) NaCl

258 and a maximum of 4.0 M (23.2 % *w/v*). Endospores, exospores, cysts and capsules are not

259 produced. Dominant respiratory quinone is ubiquinone-8 (UQ-8).

260 G+C fraction of genomic DNA of the type strain is 64.2 mol% (HPLC).

261 The type strain is 204^T = DSM 6132^T = ATCC 49870^T (isolated from the waters of Lake
262 O'Grady, a hypersaline (c. 6 % w/v NaCl [34]) playa in the Shire of Koorda in the Wheatbelt
263 of Western Australia, Australia).

264

265 **Description of *Guyparkeria hydrothermalis* comb. nov.**

266 *Guyparkeria hydrothermalis* (hy.dro.ther.ma'lis. N.L. fem. adj. *hydrothermalis* hydrothermal,
267 pertaining to a hydrothermal vent).

268 Basonym: *Halothiobacillus hydrothermalis* (Durand *et al.*, 1997; Kelly and Wood, 2000)

269 Gram-stain-negative. Short rods 0.5 × 1.0 µm. Motile by means of a single polar flagellum.

270 Colonies grown on basal salts agar supplemented with thiosulfate are 1-3 mm, circular,

271 convex, opaque and smooth, becoming yellow or which with age owing to the deposition of

272 elementary sulfur. Tetrathionate or other polythionates are not detected in cultures grown on

273 thiosulfate, but elementary sulfur is formed. pH of thiosulfate-grown cultures drops to 4.8

274 with the cessation of growth. Obligately chemolithoautotrophic. Elementary sulfur, sulfide,

275 thiosulfate and tetrathionate but not thiocyanate are used as electron donors. Molecular

276 oxygen is the only terminal electron acceptor. No growth on sugars, amino acids,

277 intermediates of Krebs' cycle, fatty acids, C₁ compounds or complex media. Type strain

278 reduces nitrate to nitrite. Ammonium is used as nitrogen sources. Growth occurs from 11 –

279 45 °C (optimum 35 – 40 °C) and 6.0 – 9.0 (optimum pH 7.5 – 8.0). Obligately halophilic with

280 an optimum of 0.43 M (2.5 % w/v) NaCl and a maximum of 2.0 M (11.6 % w/v). Endospores,

281 exospores, cysts and capsules are not produced. Dominant respiratory quinone is ubiquinone-

282 8 (UQ-8).

283 G+C fraction of genomic DNA of the type strain is 67.4 mol% (HPLC).

284 The type strain is R3^T = DSM 7121^T = ATCC 51453^T, isolated from samples of hydrothermal
285 vent chimneys taken from an active vent in a rift system of the North Fiji Basin, Pacific
286 Ocean.

287

288 **Emended description of *Halothiobacillaceae* Kelly and Wood 2005**

289 *Halothiobacillaceae* (Ha.lo.thi.o.ba.cil.la.ce'ae. N.L. masc. n. *Halothiobacillus*, type genus; -
290 *aceae* suffix to denote family; N.L. fem. pl. n. *Halothiobacillaceae* the *Halothiobacillus*
291 family).

292

293 This family is circumscribed on the basis of 16S rRNA gene sequences and comprises the
294 genus *Halothiobacillus* (type genus). Obligate autotrophs using thiosulfate and other sulfur
295 oxyanions, elementary sulfur and sulfide as electron donors. Obligate aerobes using only
296 molecular oxygen as a terminal electron acceptor. Fix carbon dioxide *via* the Calvin-Benson-
297 Bassham cycle using form IAc RuBisCO and thus carboxysomes. Ubiquinone-8 (UQ-8) is
298 the dominant respiratory quinone. G+C fractions of genomic DNA are typically from 54 – 62
299 mol%.

300

301 Type genus: *Halothiobacillus* Kelly and Wood 2000

302

303 **Emended description of *Halothiobacillus* Kelly and Wood 2000 emend. Sievert *et al.***

304 **2000**

305 *Halothiobacillus* (ha.lo.thi.o.ba.cil'lus. Gr. masc. n. *hals*, *halos* salt; Gr. neut. n. *theion*
306 brimstone, sulfur (Latin transliteration *thium*), L. masc. n. *bacillus* a small rod; N.L. masc. n.
307 *Halothiobacillus* salt-loving sulfur rodlet).

308 Members of the *Gammaproteobacteria*, falling within the family *Halothiobacillaceae*. Cells
309 are rod shaped, 0.3 – 0.5 µm by 1.0 – 1.5 µm. They are Gram-stain-negative and occur singly
310 or in pairs or short chains and are motile by means of a single polar flagellum. Do not form
311 endospores, exospores, capsules or cysts. All members of the genus are strict aerobes which
312 do not denitrify. Can use ammonium, nitrate or nitrite as sole nitrogen sources. Growth is
313 obligately chemolithoautotrophic at the expense of the oxidation of thiosulfate, tetrathionate,
314 elementary sulfur, sulfide. During growth on thiosulfate, elementary sulfur is formed in the
315 medium, often floating as a pellicle, and tetrathionate is detectable in the medium in the first
316 24h in aerated cultures, but is then further oxidised, but does remain detectable in static
317 cultures. Produces carboxysomes, formation of which can be repressed by growth at elevated
318 carbon dioxide partial pressures. Thiocyanate is not used as an energy source, nor are
319 ammonium ferrous iron, carbon disulfide, dimethylsulfide or dimethyldisulfide. Sulfate is the
320 end product of sulfur oxidation, with concomitant increase in culture acidity, with an end
321 point of pH 2.8 – 3.0. Acidotolerant, with optimal growth occurring at pH 6.5 – 6.9, but
322 growth still occurs from pH 4.5 – 8.5. Mesophilic, with optimal growth at 28 – 32 °C, with
323 growth still occurring at 39 °C. Moderately halotolerant, not requiring sodium chloride (NaCl)
324 for growth and tolerating it up to 840 mM. Carbon dioxide is fixed using the Calvin-Benson-
325 Bassham cycle. On thiosulfate agar, colonies are entire, smooth, glistening and < 4 mm in
326 diameter, off-white but becoming coated in white and/or yellow elementary sulfur during
327 growth, and colonies turn pink in the centre with age. pH of agar is lowered during growth,
328 sufficiently to change bromocresol purple from purple to yellow. Ubiquinone 8 (UQ-8) is the
329 dominant respiratory quinone. The G+C fraction of genomic DNA is around 56 mol%. Can
330 be isolated from decomposing concrete, seawater, soils and freshwater.

331 Type species: *Halothiobacillus neapolitanus* Kelly and Wood 2000

332

333 **Emended description of *Halothiobacillus neapolitanus***

334 *Halothiobacillus neapolitanus* (ne.a.po.li.ta'nus, L. masc. adj. *neapolitanus*, of or pertaining
335 to *Neapolis* (Naples, city in *Regio Latium et Campania*, Roman *Italia*), Neapolitan, in this
336 case referring to the seawater of the Bay of Naples from which Alexander Nathansohn
337 probably isolated this species in 1902).

338 Gram-stain-negative. Short rods $0.3\text{-}0.5 \times 1.0\text{-}1.5 \mu\text{m}$. Type strain is very rapidly motile
339 reaching speeds of up to 0.15 mm/s, such that individual cells can be hard to see clearly in
340 wet-mounts unless poisoned with cyanide or azide, but other non-motile strains have been
341 described. Colonies grown on basal salts agar supplemented with thiosulfate are 1-2mm,
342 circular, convex and glistening, white-to-off-white and yellowing with age owing to the
343 deposition of elementary sulfur. Young colonies may have orange centres to transmitted light,
344 and older colonies become pink in the centre with age. In static cultures in basal salts liquid
345 media supplemented with thiosulfate, elementary sulfur, trithionate and tetrathionate
346 commonly accumulate, and a uniform pellicle of elementary sulfur is formed. Well-aerated
347 cultures will show a transient accumulation of trithionate and tetrathionate. Continuous-flow
348 chemostat cultures using thiosulfate as the sole electron donor do not accumulate any
349 detectable intermediates and thiosulfate is stoichiometrically converted to sulfate. pH of
350 thiosulfate-grown cultures drops to 2.8-3.3 with the cessation of growth. Packed cells
351 harvested from thiosulfate cultures are orange with absorbance maxima of whole cells at 522
352 and 551 nm, corresponding to the β and α bands of cytochrome *c*, respectively. Obligately
353 chemolithoautotrophic but cells grown in the presence of thiosulfate can assimilate carbon
354 from acetate but not glucose. Elementary sulfur, sulfide, thiosulfate, trithionate and
355 tetrathionate but not thiocyanate, dithionate or sulfite are used as electron donors. Weak
356 growth on thioacetamide. Rapid production of elementary sulfur from sulfide is seen in some
357 strains. Molecular oxygen is the only terminal electron acceptor. Has *bd-I* type ubiquinol

358 oxidase and *cbb3*-type cytochrome *c* oxidase genes, with activity of the latter shown *in vivo*
359 in at least one strain. No growth on sugars, amino acids, intermediates of Krebs' cycle, fatty
360 acids, C₁ compounds or complex media. Type strain does not reduce nitrate to nitrite but
361 slight reduction is observed in other strains. Fixes carbon dioxide using the Calvin-Benson-
362 Bassham cycle (transaldolase variant) and forms carboxysomes ('polyhedral bodies'). Has
363 form IAc RuBisCO. Ammonium, nitrate and nitrite are used as nitrogen sources, with
364 ammonium giving greater yields. Growth occurs from 8 – 39 °C (optimum 28 – 32 °C), from
365 pH 4.5 – 8.5 (optimum pH 4.5 – 8.5). Does not tolerate even brief incubation at 55 °C – death
366 occurs. Halotolerant to 0.86 M (5 % w/v) NaCl and solute-tolerant *e.g.* to 0.38 M (6 % w/v)
367 Na thiosulfate. Salt not required for growth. Endospores, exospores, cysts, capsules and
368 volutin (polyphosphate) granules are not produced. Dominant respiratory quinone is
369 ubiquinone-8 (UQ-8). Readily isolated from marine mud; canal, pond and river waters;
370 seawater; soils; sulfidic wells/springs.

371 G+C fraction of genomic DNA of the type strain is 54.7 mol% (from the genome sequence).

372 Type strain: X^T = ParkerX^T = c2^T = CIP 104769^T = DSM 15147^T = NCIMB 8539^T, isolated
373 from decomposing concrete in the outfall sewer of south east Melbourne, Australia.

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382 **Conflicts of Interest**

383 The author declares that he has no conflict of interest.

384 **Ethical Statement**

385 No experiments with humans or animals were carried out.

386

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484

485

486 **Table 1.** Comparative properties of *Halothiobacillus* and *Thioalkalibacter* species. Data refer
487 to type strains unless otherwise indicated.

488 Data are curated from Banciu [25], Boden *et al.*, [11], Kelly [13], Durand *et al.* [5], Parker [3],
489 Sievert *et al.* [2], Wood and Kelly [4], Wood and Kelly [1], Wood *et al.*, [19].

490 UQ-8, ubiquinone-8; *N.D.*, not determined/no data available; +, positive or present; -,
491 negative or absent; ±, weakly positive.

492 * From washout kinetics of thiosulfate-limited chemostat culture rather than batch culture.

493 † For *H. neapolitanus* OSWA [19] but not the type strain.

494 ‡ For *H. neapolitanus* strain C [13].

495

496 **Table 2.** Curated properties of the families *Halothiobacillaceae* and *Thioalkalibacteraceae*
497 fam. nov. Data are from Kelly and Wood [33] and the references given for Table 1. Unless
498 otherwise stated, properties relate to batch cultures on thiosulfate as the electron donor,
499 oxygen as the terminal electron acceptor and carbon dioxide as the carbon source.

500 **Figure 1.** Phylogenetic trees on the basis of the 16S rRNA (*rrs*) gene, showing the positions
501 of *Halothiobacillus halophilus* DSM 6162^T and *Halothiobacillus hydrothermalis* DSM 7121^T
502 as distinct from *Halothiobacillus* species *sensu stricto* and from *Thioalkalibacter halophilus*
503 ALCO1^T. The type species of *Halothiobacillus* is shown in bold text. Nucleotide sequences
504 were aligned using MUSCLE and trees were reconstructed using the Tamura-Nei model with
505 a gamma distribution across sites, in MEGA 7.0.26, with 5,000 bootstrap replications. Values
506 next to nodes indicate the percentage of reconstructions in which the topology was preserved
507 (values <70 % are omitted for clarity). All positions with <95 % site coverage were omitted
508 from the final analyses, which used 1,351 nt. Branch lengths are to scale and indicate the
509 number of substitutions per site – bars represent 20 substitutions per site on all trees shown.
510 The outgroup of each tree is the 16S rRNA gene from *Allochrochromatium vinosum* DSM 180^T
511 from the *Gammaproteobacteria*. Maximum likelihood tree shown had highest log-likelihood
512 after 5,000 replications (-4721.41). Neighbour joining and minimum evolution trees shown
513 had the optimal sum of branch length (0.386).

514

515 **Figure 2.** Phylogenetic trees on the basis of amino acyl sequences derived from the type IA
516 ribulose biphosphate carboxylase/oxygenase (EC 4.1.1.39) large subunit gene (*cbbL*) and the
517 sulfate thiol esterase gene (*soxB*), showing *Halothiobacillus* spp. and other halophilic sulfur-
518 oxidising *Gammaproteobacteria*, with the type species of *Halothiobacillus* in bold text.
519 Amino acid sequences were aligned using MUSCLE and trees were reconstructed using the
520 maximum likelihood method and the Le and Gascuel model with a gamma distribution across
521 sites, in MEGA 7.0.26, with 5,000 bootstrap replications. Values next to nodes indicate the
522 percentage of reconstructions in which the topology was preserved (values <70 % are omitted
523 for clarity). All positions with <95 % site coverage were omitted from the final analyses,
524 which used 168 positions for CbbL and 197 for SoxB. Branch lengths are to scale and
525 indicate the number of substitutions per site – bars representing 5 (CbbL) or 10 (SoxB)
526 substitutions per site. Outgroups of each tree are the respective derived amino acyl sequence
527 from the equivalent gene of *Allochrochromatium vinosum* DSM 180^T from the
528 *Gammaproteobacteria*. The trees shown had the highest log-likelihoods after 5,000
529 replications, namely -1,297.94 (CbbL) or -3,018.00 (SoxB).

530

Species	<i>Halothiobacillus</i>		<i>Guyparkeria</i> gen. nov.		<i>Thioalkalibacter</i>
	<i>H. neapolitanus</i>	<i>H. kellyi</i>	<i>H. halophilus</i>	<i>H. hydrothermalis</i>	<i>Tab. halophilus</i>
Origin of type strain	Concrete in early stages of corrosion from sewers of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia	Sediment from shallow-water hydrothermal vent, Bay of Palaeochori, Milos, Greece	Water from hypersaline playa Lake O'Grady, Western Australia, Australia	Fragments from chimney of deep-water hydrothermal vent, North Fiji Basin, Pacific Ocean	Pooled sediments from various hypersaline lakes, Altai, Russia
Colonial properties (on basis of growth on thiosulfate as sole electron donor):					
Colour (reflected light)	White, pink centres with age.	White	Off-white, yellowing with age	Off-white	Red
Shape	Circular	Circular	Circular	Circular	<i>N.D.</i>
Margin	Entire	Entire	Entire	Entire	<i>N.D.</i>
Elevation	Convex	Convex	Convex	Convex	<i>N.D.</i>
Lustre/texture	Glistening, but duller/powdery with age	Smooth, but duller/powdery with age	Smooth, but duller/powdery with age	Smooth	<i>N.D.</i>
Elementary sulfur	+	+	+	+	-
Dominant respiratory quinones	UQ-8	UQ-8	UQ-8	UQ-8	<i>N.D.</i>
Reduction of nitrate to:	-	<i>N.D.</i>	Nitrite	-	<i>N.D.</i>
16S rRNA (<i>rrs</i>) gene identity (%) to that of:					
<i>H. neapolitanus</i> DSM 581 ^T	100.0	92.7	90.7	90.9	92.7
<i>H. kellyi</i> DSM 13152 ^T	93.1	100.0	92.6	93.0	91.6
<i>H. halophilus</i> DSM 6132 ^T	91.3	92.6	100.0	98.7	94.2
<i>H. hydrothermalis</i> DSM 7121 ^T	91.5	93.0	98.7	100.0	94.3
<i>Tab. halophilus</i> DSM 19224 ^T	92.2	91.6	94.2	94.3	100.0
Cell properties:					
Diameter (µm)	0.3 – 0.5	0.4 – 0.6	0.3-0.5	0.4-0.6	0.8 – 1.0
Length (µm)	1.0 – 1.5	1.2 – 2.5	1.0-1.2	1.2-1.5	1.5 – 3.0
Cells form short chains	+†	-	+	-	-
Carboxysomes (polyhedral bodies)	+	<i>N.D.</i>	<i>N.D.</i>	<i>N.D.</i>	<i>N.D.</i>
G+C fraction (mol%) from lab studies or [genome sequence data]	56.0 [54.7]	62.0	64.2	67.4	54.6
Batch culture on thiosulfate as sole electron donor:					
Tetrathionate detectable	+	+	-	-	-
Elementary sulfur detectable	+	+	+	+	Transient, extracellular.
Inhibition by phenylalanine	-‡	<i>N.D.</i>	<i>N.D.</i>	±	<i>N.D.</i>
pH at end of growth	2.8 – 3.3	2.8 – 3.0	5.5 – 6.0	4.8	<i>N.D.</i>
Max. specific growth rate (μ_{max} , h ⁻¹)	0.280	0.450	0.072*	0.613	0.055
Temp. range (°C):	8-39	37-42	26-36	11-45	<i>N.D.</i>
Temp. opt. (°C):	28-32	48-49	30-32	35-40	30
pH range:	3.00 – 8.50	3.50 – 8.50	<i>N.D.</i> – 8.40	6.00-9.00	7.50 – 10.05
pH opt.:	6.50 – 6.90	6.50	7.00 – 7.30	7.50-8.50	8.00 – 9.00
Relationship with pH	Neutrophilic	Neutrophilic	Moderately alkalitolerant	Moderately alkalitolerant	Alkaliphilic
NaCl max. (mM):	<i>N.D.</i>	2,500	4,000	2,500	3,800
NaCl opt.(mM)	0-860	400-500	1,000	430	1,500
Relationship with NaCl	Halotolerant	Halotolerant	Halophilic	Halophilic	Halophilic

Electron donors (all use thiosulfate but not thiocyanate):

Trithionate	+	<i>N.D.</i>	+	<i>N.D.</i>	<i>N.D.</i>
Tetrathionate	+	+	+	+	<i>N.D.</i>
Hexathionate	<i>N.D.</i>	<i>N.D.</i>	+	<i>N.D.</i>	<i>N.D.</i>
Sulfide	+	+	+	+	+
Elementary sulfur	+	+	+	+	+

Nitrogen sources (all use ammonium):

Nitrate	+	<i>N.D.</i>	<i>N.D.</i>	+	<i>N.D.</i>
Nitrite	+	<i>N.D.</i>	<i>N.D.</i>	-	<i>N.D.</i>

	<i>Halothiobacillaceae</i>	<i>Thioalkalibacteraceae</i>
Genera	<i>Halothiobacillus</i>	<i>Thioalkalibacter</i> <i>Guyarkeria</i>
Colony colour	White	White, red
Cell diameter × length (µm)	0.3 – 0.6 × 1.0 – 2.5	0.3 – 1.0 × 1.0 – 3.0
Soluble intermediates of thiosulfate oxidation	Trithionate Tetrathionate	-
G+C fraction (mol%)	56.0 – 62.0	54.6 – 67.4
Optimal NaCl concentration (mM)	400 – 860	430 – 1,500
Salt profile	Halotolerant	Obligately halophilic
pH profile	Acidotolerant Neutrophilic	Alkalitolerant Alkaliphilic
Max. specific growth rate on thiosulfate (μ_{\max}, h⁻¹)	0.28 – 0.45	0.06 – 0.61
pH at end of growth on thiosulfate	2.8 – 3.3	4.8 – 6.0

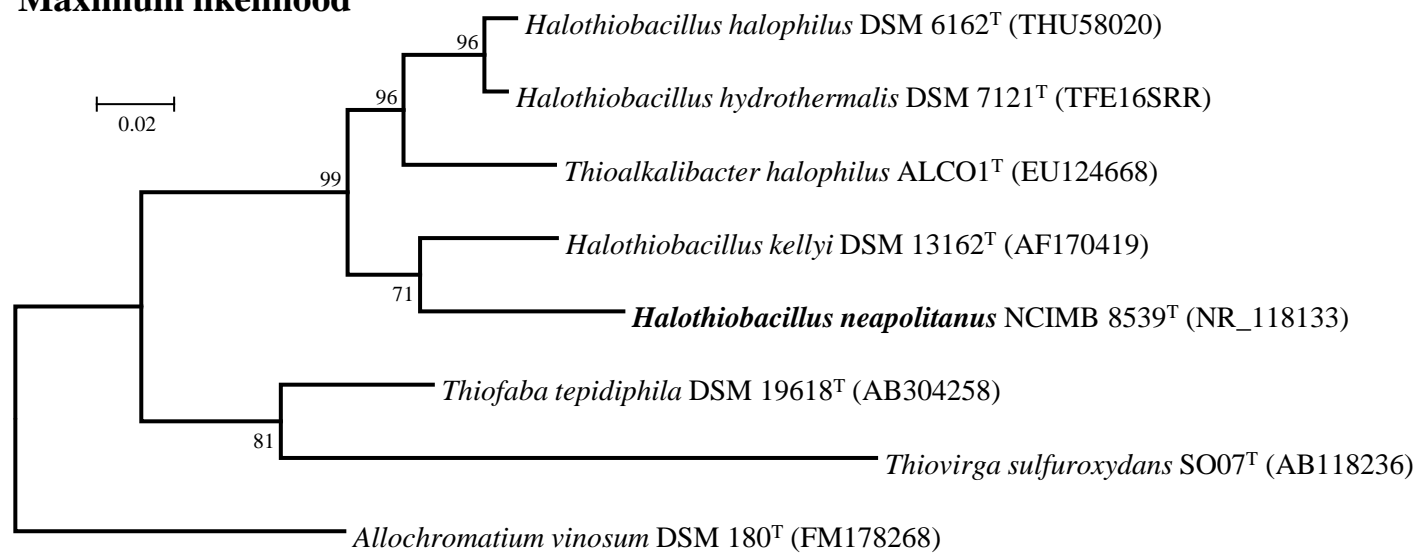
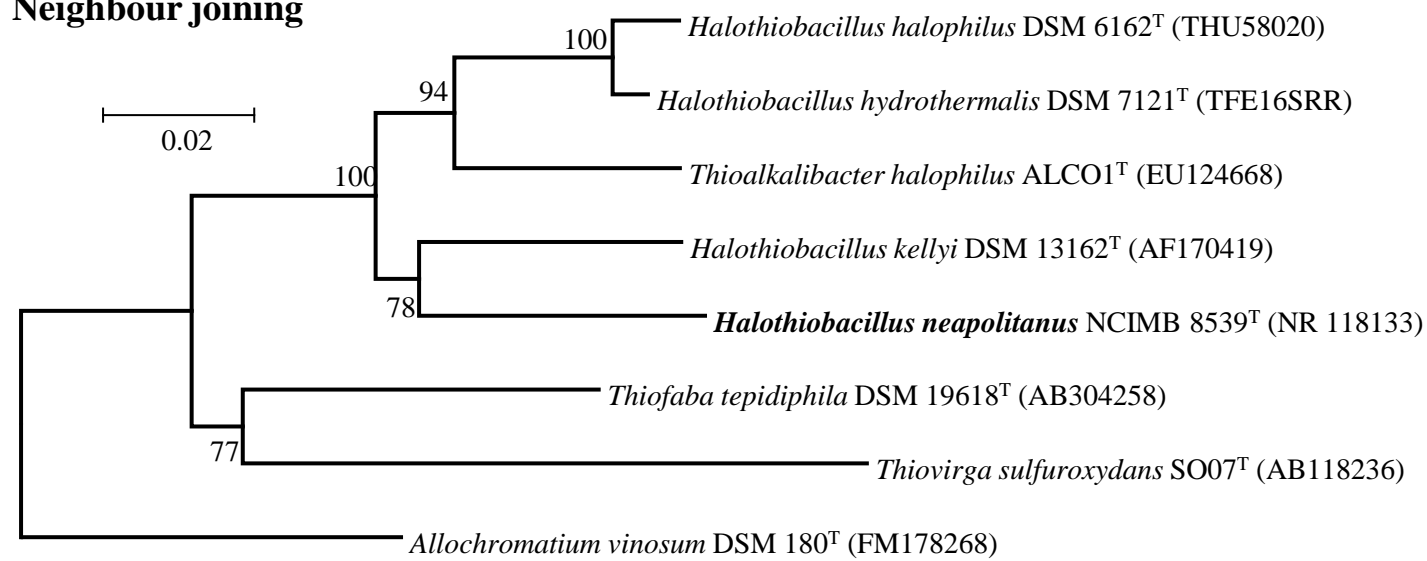
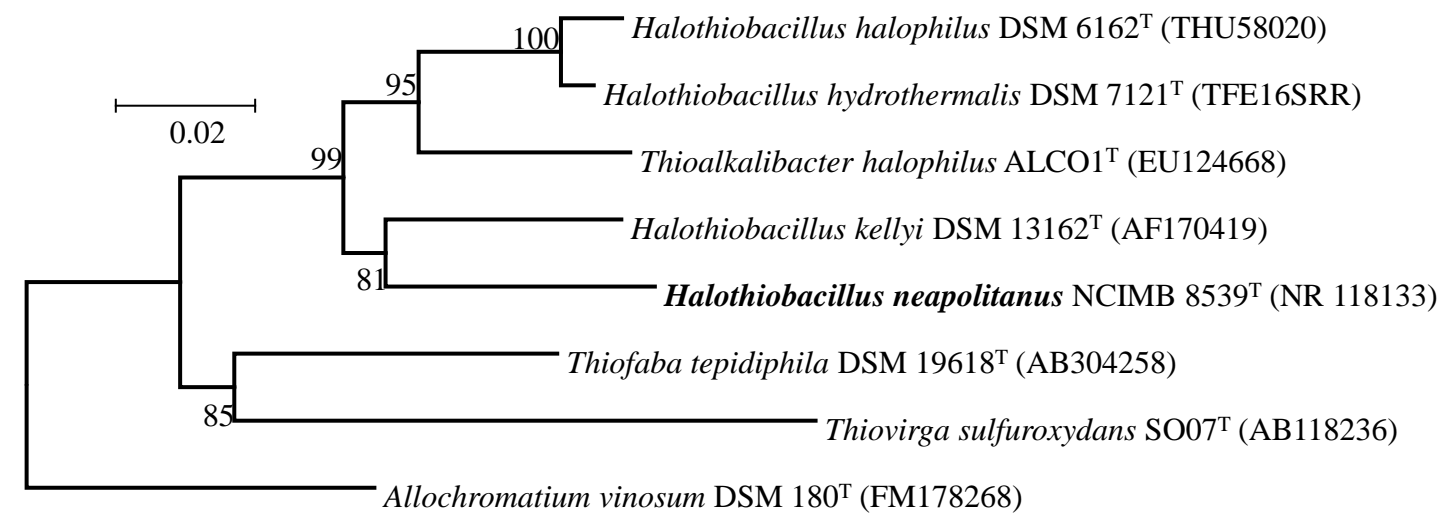
Maximum likelihood**Neighbour joining****Minimum evolution**

Figure 2

