

1 **Title:** Impact of antibiotic perturbation on intestinal viral communities in mice

2 **Running Title:** Loss of intestinal bacteriophages post antibiotics

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27 **Abstract**

28 Viruses and bacteriophages have a strong impact on intestinal barrier function and the
29 composition and functional properties of commensal bacterial communities. To improve our
30 understanding of the role of the enteric intestinal virome, we longitudinally characterized the
31 virome in fecal samples from wild-type (WT) C57BL/6J and knock-out (KO) NOD2 mice in
32 response to an antibiotic perturbation. Sequencing of viral-like-particles (VLPs) demonstrated
33 both a high diversity and high inter-individual variation of the murine gut virome composed of
34 eukaryotic viruses and bacteriophages. Antibiotics also had a significant impact on the gut
35 murine virome causing a delayed resilience independent of genotype. However, compositional
36 shifts in the virome and bacteriome were highly correlated, suggesting that the loss of specific
37 phages may contribute to a dysregulation of the bacterial community composition.
38 Bacteriophage species may be playing an important role in either upregulating or
39 downregulating the bacterial community, and restoring a healthy virome may therefore be a
40 central goal of microbiota-targeted therapies.

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53 Introduction

54 Viruses are an integral part of the gut microbial community and are mostly comprised
55 of bacteriophages [1, 2]. Previously, we demonstrated evidence of the role of NOD2 for
56 controlling resilience of the intestinal microbiota (bacteriome and mycobiome), whereby the
57 impaired recovery dynamics of the microbiota after antibiotic perturbation in NOD2-deficient
58 mice is contributing to an inflammation-prone state of the intestinal mucosa. Such alteration in
59 the capacity to restore a physiological equilibrium could be involved in the etiology of chronic
60 inflammatory diseases and other intestinal disorders [3]. In favor of this hypothesis, it has been
61 demonstrated in several human cohort studies that diversity and functional properties of the
62 intestinal microbiota of Inflammatory Bowel Disease patients displays higher temporal
63 fluctuation compared to healthy subjects, indicating a potential loss of control of the host. In
64 contrast to the bacteriome, little is known about the intestinal virome in response to a specific
65 pulse perturbation. Phages have been found to have various effects on the bacterial community,
66 by impacting bacterial diversity in a community, stimulating evolutionary change, and
67 providing selective advantages to their bacterial hosts [4]. Although it is obvious that shifts of
68 bacterial taxa by specific antibiotics will directly cause secondary changes of the intestinal
69 virome composition, it is likely that residing bacteriophages may exert an important level of
70 control on the dynamics of bacterial community recovery by negative selection. Moreover, an
71 enteric eukaryotic virus was shown to replace the beneficial function of the commensal bacteria
72 in germ-free and antibiotic treated mice [5]. Thus, viruses can also play an important role in the
73 regulation of intestinal homeostasis in response to antibiotic perturbations.

74 Viruses have also been shown to be extremely diverse, varying in their genetic material,
75 genome sizes, life cycles, transmission routes, or persistence [6-9]. Humans are colonized by
76 large populations of viruses consisting of viruses that infect eukaryotic cells (eukaryotic
77 viruses) and those that infect bacteria (bacteriophages) [7, 10]. Human feces are estimated to
78 contain at least 10^9 virus-like particles per gram [11], and although many of these viruses have

79 been identified as bacteriophages, the majority remains unidentified [1, 2, 12]. Furthermore,
80 host-genomes are also frequently composed of virus-derived genetic elements (retroviral
81 elements and prophages) [7, 10, 13]. Metagenomic analyses of human gut viruses have also
82 revealed extreme interpersonal diversity. This is in part likely due to the already considerable
83 individual variation in the bacterial strains present in the gut, for which differences in phage
84 predators are influenced [2, 14]. It is well established that phages can be highly selective for
85 different bacteria, and as such, phage sensitivity (phage typing) has been used for decades as
86 an effective means of differentiating between different bacterial strains [15, 16]. Rapid within-
87 host viral evolution may also influence the large variability among individuals. In a long-term
88 study investigating the viral community of an adult individual, Microviridae, a family of
89 bacteriophages, was demonstrated to have high substitution rates, causing the sequence
90 divergence values to be sufficient to distinguish new viral species by the conclusion of the study
91 [11]. Moreover, individual virome compositions has been suggested to be relatively stable, with
92 an estimated 80% of viral forms to be persistent throughout a 2.5 year-long study [11], with
93 similar findings also observed in studies of shorter duration [1, 2].

94 Here, we demonstrate the effect of an antibiotic perturbation on the longitudinal
95 variation of viral gut communities in C57BL/6J WT and NOD2 KO mice [3]. This community
96 is largely uncharacterized, yet critical towards understanding its impact on the microbiome and
97 health.

98

99 **Materials and Methods**

100 *Animals*

101 All animal experiments were approved by the local animal safety review board of the federal
102 ministry of Schleswig Holstein and conducted according to national and international laws and
103 policies (V 312-72241.121-33 [95-8/11]). All animals were housed in a mouse facility at the
104 Christian Albrechts University of Kiel and experiments carried out as previously described [3].

105 Briefly, a single NOD2-deficient male mouse was crossed with a C57BL/6J female to obtain
106 heterozygous offspring (F1), from which WT and NOD2 KO breeder pairs were generated (F2).
107 Male offspring of the next two generations were then used and maintained in single cages under
108 specific-pathogen free (SPF) conditions. At the onset of the study (Day 0), mice were
109 approximately 52 weeks old. We treated C57BL/6J WT and NOD2 KO mice for two weeks
110 with broad-spectrum antibiotics composed of ampicillin (1 g/L), vancomycin (500 mg/L),
111 neomycin (1 g/L), and metronidazole (1 g/L) (Sigma Aldrich) [17], which were freshly prepared
112 and administered ad libitum to the drinking water in light protected bottles. Fecal pellets were
113 collected immediately throughout the 86 days of the study and stored at -80 °C until needed.
114 Mice were monitored and weighed regularly and sacrificed at the conclusion of the study (Day
115 86). See Table S1 for more details on housing and samples.

116

117 *Virome Sample Processing*

118 Two fecal pellets per sample were resuspended in 15 mL PBS buffer containing 0.01 M sodium
119 sulfide and 10 mM EDTA for 30 min on ice. Samples were centrifuged twice at low speed
120 (ThermoScientific Heraeus Multifuge 3SR) at 4°C for 30 min to remove bacteria and
121 contaminating plant material. The resulting supernatants were sterile filtered and
122 ultracentrifuged at 22,000 x rpm (Beckman SW41 rotor) at 4°C for 2 hrs. Viral pellets were
123 then resuspended in 200 µL Tris buffer (50 mM Tris, 5 mM CaCl₂, 1.5 mM MgCl₂, pH 8.0),
124 from which 5 µL sub-samples of isolated viruses were collected for morphological
125 characterization by negative staining in 2% (w/v) aqueous uranyl acetate and visualized by
126 transmission electron microscopy (TEM) (Technai Bio TWIN) at 80 kV with a magnification
127 of 40,000-100,000. To the samples, 2 µL benzonase was added and incubated at 37°C for 2 hrs
128 to remove remaining nucleic acid contamination.

129 To extract viral DNA and RNA, 22 µL of a 0.1 volume of 2M Tris-HCl (pH 8.5)/0.2 M
130 EDTA, 10 µL of 0.5 M EDTA, and 268 µL of formamide were added to the sample and

131 incubated at RT for 30 min. Subsequently, 1 μ L of glycogen, and 1024 μ L of ethanol were
132 added, and samples were mixed gently and incubated overnight at RT. The next morning,
133 samples were centrifuged at 12,000 $\times g$ at 4°C for 20 min, washed with 70% ethanol, and
134 resuspended in 100 μ L of TE buffer and 1 μ L of mercaptoethanol, after which 10 μ L of 10%
135 SDS and 3 μ L of Proteinase K were added and incubated for 20 min at 37°C and 15 min at
136 56°C. Then, 400 μ L of DNA extraction buffer CTAB (100 mM Tris pH 8.0, 1.4 M NaCl, 20
137 mM EDTA, 2% CTAB) and 1 μ L mercaptoethanol were added and samples were incubated at
138 56°C for 15 min. To the resulting supernatant, an equal volume of chloroform:isoamylalcohol
139 (24:1) was added, and samples were centrifuged at 13,000 $\times g$ for 5 min. The supernatant was
140 collected, to which 1 μ L of glycogen, 10 μ L mercaptoethanol, and a 0.7 volume of isopropanol
141 were added and incubated overnight at -20°C. The next morning, samples were centrifuged at
142 13,000 $\times g$ at 4°C for 20 min, after which the supernatants were collected, washed with 500 μ L
143 of 70% ethanol, and stored at -80°C.

144 Following extraction of VLPs, ethanol was removed from samples and pellets were air-
145 dried and resuspended in 20 μ L of RNase free filtered water. Amplification was performed
146 using a modified Complete Whole Transcriptome Amplification Kit (WTA2) (Sigma-Aldrich)
147 as described previously [18]. PCR products were then purified using the GenElute PCR Clean-
148 Up Kit (Sigma-Aldrich). Samples were stored overnight at -20°C prior to library construction.

149

150 *Library Construction*

151 Libraries were generated as described previously [18] using the NexteraXT kit (Illumina). After
152 quantification, normalized pools of all samples were sequenced on an Illumina MiSeq using the
153 2 x 150bp sequencing kit (Illumina). This Whole Genome Shotgun project has been deposited
154 with the links to BioProject accession number PRJNA434045 in the NCBI BioProject database

155 (http://www.ebi.ac.uk/ena/data/view/PRJEB21817) with BioSample accession numbers
156 SAMN08534315 through SAMN08534344.

157

158 *Viral community composition*

159 Nextera XT adapters were removed and sequence reads were trimmed from Illumina paired-
160 end reads (2x150 bp) using Trimmomatic V.0.36 [19]. Trimmed and quality controlled reads
161 of all samples were cross assembled using SPAdes V.3.1.10 [20] to generate a reference viral
162 metagenome. Contigs were screened for contamination by using blastn against the NCBI
163 nucleotide database [21]. Contigs > 90% identity and > 50% of length were removed if no viral
164 hallmark gene could be detected within the sequence. Contigs with a minimum length of 1,000
165 bp and a minimum total read coverage of 10 were selected and analyzed using blastx against
166 the UniProt viral database including 5,571,160 viral sequences with an e-value cut off at 10^{-5}
167 [22]. Finally, the reference viral metagenome was further classified by VirSorter2 [23] and
168 contig annotation tool CAT [24]. Moreover, all contigs were submitted to Rapid Annotation
169 using Subsystem Technology (RAST) to identify additional viral hallmark genes. Moreover,
170 VirHostMatcherNet [25] and CAT [24] were used to predict virus-prokaryote interaction.
171 Contigs classified as virus by VirSorter2, CAT or RAST were used as OTUs representing the
172 mice viral community. Reads from each sample were then mapped separately against
173 representative mice viral OTUs using the computer software Bowtie2 [26] and SAM tools [27].
174 The normalized coverage of each OTU was used as a proxy for the relative abundance of each
175 virus per sample [28].

176 Viral community composition was analyzed using the computer software PRIMER V.7
177 [29-31], and abundance data was standardized and log+1 transformed. Estimation of similarity
178 between all samples was calculated by Bray-Curtis similarity and non-metric multidimensional
179 scaling analysis (MDS), and pairwise comparison of viral community composition between
180 different treatment groups and time points was analyzed using a similarity test (ANOSIM global

181 test) [31]. SIMPER analysis was used to detect the most important viral OTUs that contribute
182 to observed difference in community composition. These preselected OTUs were further
183 analysed by one-factor ANOVA followed by Turkey's honest significant differences (HDS)
184 test using the computer software (SPSS).

185

186 *Relationship between viral and bacterial community*

187 To investigate the variability in the viral community that could be explained by the bacterial
188 community composition, or vice versa, RELATE analysis [30] in the computer software
189 PRIMER V.7 [29, 31] was used. The analysis was based on the relative abundances of viral and
190 bacterial OTUs. Raw bacterial FASTQ reads were obtained from our previous study [3] from
191 EBI's ENA under the Accession Number PRJEB21817
192 (<http://www.ebi.ac.uk/ena/data/view/PRJEB21817>). Viral and bacterial community datasets
193 were standardized and $\log(x+1)$ transformed. To investigate the variability of the bacterial
194 community composition that could be explained by the viral community, we fitted the 29 most
195 abundant viral OTUs with a minimum length of 10,000 bp to the relative abundance of bacterial
196 OTUs using distance-based redundancy modeling (DISLM) with adjusted R^2 selection criteria
197 and forward selection procedure. Results were visualized with distance-based redundancy
198 analysis (dbRDA) [32, 33].

199

200 **Results**

201 *Presence of virus-like particles*

202 The presence of virus-like particles in fecal samples was observed by transmission electron
203 microscopy, which revealed morphologically distinct isolates (Fig. 1). Numerous diverse
204 bacteriophages were present (Fig. 1a-c), and were distinguished by the structure of a head, or
205 capsid, and in some cases a tail, although other phage morphologies exist beyond this structure
206 (*i.e.* without a tail). The *Myoviridae* family morphology was present, with an icosahedral (20

207 sides) head and a rigid tail (Fig. 1c). The structure of a phage lambda (λ) displaying the
208 *Siphoviridae* family morphology, which commonly infects *E. coli*, was also identified (Fig. 1a,
209 b). The protein head of the capsid is icosahedral (Fig. 1b) and elongated (Fig. 1a), containing
210 the nucleic acid. The head is joined to a tail possessing a long thin tail fiber at its end (for host
211 recognition). The tails are composed of a hollow tube, through which the nucleic acid passes
212 into the host during infection. Virus-like particles with morphological similarity to eukaryotic
213 viruses, e.g. the *Peste des Petits Ruminants* (PPR) virus or the *Murine Mammary Tumor* virus
214 (MMTV) were also observed (Fig. 1d-f).

215

216 *Reference murine fecal virome composition*

217 Sequence reads of all murine fecal viruses were assembled into 1,094,102 contigs. For our
218 reference virome, we selected 4,767 contigs that were longer than 1,000 bp and had a coverage
219 higher than 10. The reference virome had an average sequence length of 3,358 and a coverage
220 of 80. Of these contigs, 48% were assigned to known viral sequences using the Uniprot viral
221 database. To reduce the impact of false positives we focused our viral community analysis only
222 on contigs that were assigned as viral sequences based on VirSorter2, CAT and RAST
223 annotation. This subset consisted of 614 contigs composed of approximately 94% dsDNA
224 viruses, 5% ssDNA viruses, 1% RNA viruses.

225 The viral community was predominantly composed of bacteriophages, consisting
226 primarily of the order *Caudovirales* (71% of the viral contigs). Approximately 16% of the viral
227 contigs were predicted by VirSorter2 as the eukaryotic viruses *Lavidaviridae* and *NCLDV*. To
228 reduce the false positive detection of eukaryotic viruses, these contigs were compared by blastn
229 and blastx to NCBI's non-redundant protein database, most of which were found to have a high
230 sequence similarity to prokaryotes rather than eukaryotes. A few viral sequences were identified
231 in murine feces that infect eukaryotes. One ssRNA virus of the family *Retroviridae* was found
232 showing high sequence similarity on a nucleotide level to *Murine leukemia virus* (contig 3291).

233 A dsRNA virus *Hordeum vulgare alphaendornavirus* (contig 811, 1176 and 3773) of the family
234 *Endornaviridae* was found which is known to infect barley. Other potential plant associated
235 viruses that could be identified in this study were ssDNA viruses of the family *Genomoviridae*
236 with high sequence similarity to *Gemycircularvirus* (contig 4238 and contig 2208).

237

238 *Delayed resilience in viral gut community composition post antibiotic perturbation*
239 Multidimensional scaling analysis of the viral community based on viral OTU level
240 demonstrated a clear clustering based on day (Fig. 2). Samples at Day 0, prior to treatment,
241 clustered together and communities underwent significant changes shifting after 14 days of
242 antibiotic treatment (ANOSIM global test for test differences between time points: R statistics
243 = 0.443, $P = 0.001$). Differences between the genotypes could not be detected at any time point
244 (ANOSIM global test for differences between time points: R statistic = -0.03, $P = 0.753$).
245 Antibiotic treatment significantly changed the viral community composition ANOSIM Pairwise
246 Test Supplementary Information S2). 20% of the average dissimilarity between Day 0 and Day
247 14 was explained by the higher relative abundances of 4 phages infecting
248 *Gammaproteobacteria* and a reduction of two phages infecting *Bacteroides* bacteria after
249 antibiotic treatment (SIMPER analysis; Supplementary Information S3). We could confirm by
250 ANOVA that *Escherichia* phages (contigs 14, 32, 186, and 3817) increased, whereas phages
251 predicted to infect *Bacteroidetes*, such as Phage *apr34* (contig 52), and *Microvirus* (contigs
252 996) were reduced after antibiotic treatment ($n = 6$, $P < 0.01$, one-way ANOVA, Tukey's HDS).

253 The community compositional trajectory shifted towards recovery with increasing time
254 by clustering more closely with Day 0 (developing towards a community composition similar
255 to prior antibiotic treatment) (Fig. 2). However, viral community composition at Day 86 did not
256 fully recover and remained significantly different from Day 0 with an average dissimilarity of
257 86.64 (ANOSIM Pairwise Test for differences between day 0 and day 86: R statistics = 0.581,
258 $P = 0.002$). Of this dissimilarity, 20% could be explained by as few as 6 viral OTUs, of which

259 *Bacteroidetes* infecting phages *Microvirus* (contig 935) and Phage apr34 (contig 52) were
260 highly reduced after the antibiotic perturbation and could not be detected at the end of the study
261 (Day 86) (Table S4). Moreover, comparing viral diversity pre-antibiotic treatment compared to
262 post-treatment, Day 0 (pre-treatment) had a significantly higher viral diversity in both total
263 species ($n = 6$, $F = 13.525$, $P < 0.001$, one-way ANOVA, Tukey's HDS) and species richness
264 (Margalef) ($n = 6$, $F = 13.527$, $P < 0.001$, one-way ANOVA, Tukey's HDS) (Fig. 3).

265

266 *High inter-individual variation of prokaryote viral community composition*

267 Fecal bacteriophages were diverse and variable in their relative abundance between different
268 individual mice. Prior to antibiotics (Day 0) dominant phages were *Microviridae*, *CrASSphage*,
269 Phage *apr34* and other *Bacteroidetes* and *Firmicutes* infecting phages (Figure 4). Antibiotic
270 perturbation strongly affected phage composition shifting to an *Escherichia* phage dominated
271 system. Within one week of antibiotic cessation the viral community composition demonstrated
272 huge variability. No clear pattern of recovery over time or between the genotypes could be
273 observed, with high inter-individual variation of viral community composition present
274 throughout (Fig. 4). The analysis on an OTU level indicated shifts in *Gammaproteobacteria*,
275 *Firmicutes*, and *Bacteroidetes* phages. To determine whether these shifts in the phage
276 population were significant, we used VirHostMatcherNet and CAT taxonomy for bacterial host
277 prediction. All phages were grouped based on their bacterial host prediction at a higher
278 phylogenetic level (*i.e.* *Gammaproteobacteria*, *Firmicutes*, and *Bacteroidetes*) (Fig. 4). Prior to
279 the antibiotic treatment, the phage population was dominated by equal portions of *Bacteroidetes*
280 and *Firmicutes* phages. Large changes within the community composition occurred during
281 antibiotic treatment (Day 14), which was distinct from pre-treatment at Day 0 (Figures 2 and
282 4). During this time, the phage community was dominated by *Gammaproteobacteria* phages
283 (Figure 5).

284 After antibiotic perturbation, *Bacteroidetes* phages were significantly reduced from 44.8 % to
285 5.3 % at day 21 (n = 6, F = 3.475, P = 0.025, one-way ANOVA, Tukey's HDS). The relative
286 abundances of Firmicutes phages were only slightly affected by antibiotic perturbation from 40
287 % to 17.8 % at the end of antibiotic treatment (day 14), not significantly affected compared to
288 pre-antibiotic treatment. During the resilience period (post Day 14), the relative abundance of
289 *Gammaproteobacteria* phages was reduced, while *Firmicutes* phages recovered rapidly and
290 reached higher relative abundance compared to pre-antibiotic perturbation at day 21 (n = 6, F
291 = 5.78, P = 0.013, one-way ANOVA, Tukey's HDS). This was in contradiction to observed
292 shifts in the bacterial communities, which featured higher relative abundances of *Bacteroidetes*
293 bacteria compared to *Firmicutes* bacteria at Day 71 (n = 6, F = 20.4, P = 0.001, one-way
294 ANOVA, Tukey's HDS) and Day 86 (n = 6, F = 18.3, P = 0.002, one-way ANOVA, Tukey's
295 HDS). In contrast to *Firmicutes* phages, recovery of *Bacteroidetes* phages was delayed and only
296 detectable from day 71. Interestingly, *Bacteroidetes* and *Firmicutes* bacteria were differently
297 affected by antibiotic perturbation showing an almost total eradication of *Bacteroidetes* after
298 14 days of antibiotic treatment, while *Firmicutes* bacterial population still reached 7% relative
299 abundance at day 14.

300 Changes in the compositional shifts of both bacterial and viral communities were
301 correlated, where changes in the bacterial community composition (based on an OTU level)
302 occurred in a similar direction and magnitude as the compositional shifts of the viral community
303 (RELATE, Rho = 0.416, P = 0.001, 999 permutations). Time after the antibiotic perturbation
304 (resilience period) was the main factor in both groups. Using distance-based modelling
305 (DISLM) of the 29 most important phages, the relative abundance of *Escherichia* phage (contig
306 14) was found to be higher from the antibiotic perturbation and explained 25.5% of the variation
307 in the bacterial community (Fig.6). Together with four other bacteriophages, the model could
308 explain up to 49% of the bacterial variation (Fig. 6 and Table S5).

309

310 **Discussion**

311 Investigations of the gut microbiota have largely ignored the virome, and the inclusion
312 of RNA viruses in these studies has been further overlooked. To our knowledge, resilience
313 properties of the virome post an antibiotic perturbation have never been explored. Here, we
314 demonstrated that the murine gut virome is morphologically and genetically diverse, including
315 viruses infecting the host (eukaryotes, *i.e. Retroviridae, Murine leukemia virus, etc.*), viruses
316 infecting prokaryotes (bacteriophages, *i.e. Caudovirales*), and viruses infecting neither of them
317 (plant viruses, *i.e. Hordeum vulgare alphaendornavirus*).

318 The murine gut virome shares several characteristics to the human gut virome. Firstly,
319 the murine gut virome was highly variable among individuals. This high inter-individual viral
320 diversity has also been previously reported in the human gut virome [1, 34]. Furthermore,
321 similarly to the human gut virome, the murine gut virome was established to contain a large
322 diversity of primarily bacteriophages, in addition to a much lower diversity of eukaryotic
323 viruses [1, 2, 11]. Additionally, consistent with previous reports, the most abundant viral taxa
324 identified were bacteriophages of the order Caudovirales (*i.e. Cellulophaga* phage) and the
325 family Microviridae (*i.e. Parabacteroides* phage) [1, 2, 34].

326 RNA viruses associated with murine feces were also identified, and ultimately, only
327 these RNA viruses could be verified as eukaryotic viruses. Of these eukaryotic viruses, some
328 were identified as having a plant host (*i.e. Hordeum vulgare alphaendornavirus*). Plant viral
329 sequences likely reflect the omnivorous diet of these mice, and we speculate that diet plays a
330 significant role in the acquisition of the gut eukaryotic virome. Interestingly, the detection of
331 these viruses was predominantly from Day 14, which had the lowest phage diversity. We further
332 speculate that these plant viruses are always present, but could not be detected as a result of the
333 greater phage community. Most studies to date have not reported the presence of large
334 eukaryotic viruses as a result of filtering methods during isolation and extraction [18]. For
335 instance, although filtering methods efficiently remove bacteria, filters have also been shown

336 to remove more than 99% of *Mimivirus* and 90% of herpes viruses [18]. It is possible that these
337 viruses are present more often than originally considered, though it remains to be seen what
338 role they may play within the host. It should also be mentioned that there is an urgent need to
339 develop improved references for characterizing the virome, as evidenced by the large
340 percentage of sequences that were unclassified in the assembled reference, yet originated from
341 viral fractions. The resulting sequencing catalog generated from this study is composed of
342 nearly full genomes of high quality, serving as an important reference for future virome studies.

343 Prior to antibiotic perturbation, the phage population was dominated by equal
344 proportions of *Bacteroidetes* phages and *Firmicutes* phages, reflecting the bacterial community
345 which was dominated by *Bacteroidetes* and *Firmicutes*. During the antibiotic perturbation, a
346 significant change occurred on the viral community composition. Although antibiotics do not
347 directly target viruses, our results demonstrated significant changes in the bacterial community,
348 which in turn largely impacted the gut bacteriophage community. During this time,
349 *Bacteroidetes* phages were largely reduced and replaced by *Gammaproteobacteria* phages. It
350 is possible that the outgrowth of *E.coli/Shigella* during antibiotic treatment led to the bloom of
351 their respective bacteriophage (*i.e.* *Escherichia shigella* phage) as expected in Lotka-
352 Volterra/Kill-the-Winner dynamics [14, 35]. Interestingly, numerous studies have
353 demonstrated a significant association between the NOD2 risk allele and the increase in relative
354 abundance of *Enterobacteriaceae* [36-38]. However, contrary to a previous study in humans,
355 no unique changes occurred in the bacteriophage community specific to the NOD2 KO [34].
356 After the antibiotic perturbation, compositional shifts in the murine bacterial and viral
357 communities were significantly correlated, where changes in the communities occurred in a
358 similar direction and magnitude. *Gammaproteobacteria* phages were reduced, whereas an
359 increase in *Firmicutes* phages occurred and remained until the end of the study. These changes
360 in the phage community were also reflected in the bacterial community through an increase in
361 the phyla *Firmicutes*. On the other hand, while *Bacteroidetes* phages did increase after Day 21,

362 their relative abundance remained low compared to Day 0. This was in contradiction to
363 observed shifts in the bacterial community, which featured higher relative abundances of
364 *Bacteroidetes* bacteria compared to Firmicutes bacteria at Days 71 and 86. It is possible that
365 the loss of *Croceibacter* phage, which disappeared during the antibiotic perturbation, may have
366 been a regulator of *Bacteroidetes* bacteria, further revealing that virus-bacteria community
367 dynamics of the gut are complex. Moreover, the identification of *Firmicutes* and *Bacteroidetes*
368 phages associated with their bacterial phyla (*i.e.* *Firmicutes* and *Bacteroidetes*) both prior to the
369 perturbation and at the conclusion of the study, suggests an important role in the virus-bacterial
370 dynamics of these communities in maintaining host health. Nonetheless, ultimately the viral
371 community had an impaired recovery, though the community appeared to be re-approaching a
372 structure similar to Day 0 (pre-treatment).

373 Taken together, the antibiotic perturbation caused a delayed recovery in the gut virome
374 independent of genotype. The perturbation led to substantial shifts in the murine gut viral
375 community, further emphasizing the beneficial and detrimental effects viruses can have in
376 response to environmental and host factors. In particular, the results presented here indicated
377 that bacteriophage species may be playing an important role in either upregulating or
378 downregulating the bacterial community, and their loss might contribute to a disturbed
379 microbiome. Restoring a healthy virome may therefore be a central goal of microbiota-targeted
380 therapies, which could be a disruptive approach in a variety of intestinal disorders, from IBD
381 to colorectal cancer, and highlights the importance of better understanding factors contributing
382 to resilience.

383

384 **Competing Interests**

385 The authors declare no competing interests, financial or otherwise, in relation to this work.

386

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394

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488 **Figure Legends**

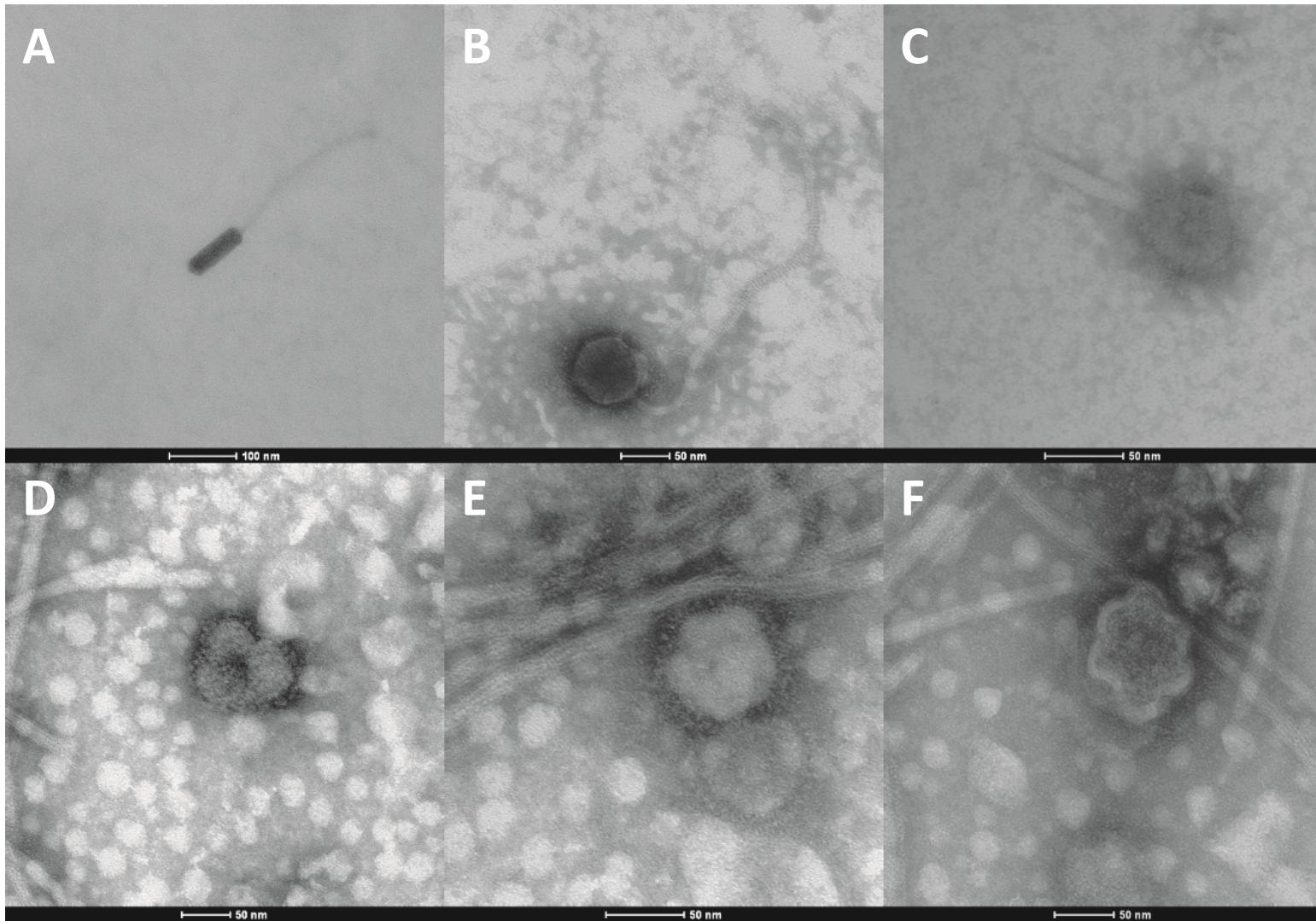
489 **Figure 1.** Transmission electron micrographs (TEM) of purified virus-like particles from
490 murine feces negatively stained with 2% aqueous uranyl acetate. **(A-C)** Bacteriophages from
491 the family Siphoviridae and Myoviridae, respectively, and **(D-F)** Eukaryotic viruses with
492 morphological similarity to PPR virus or MMTV virus.

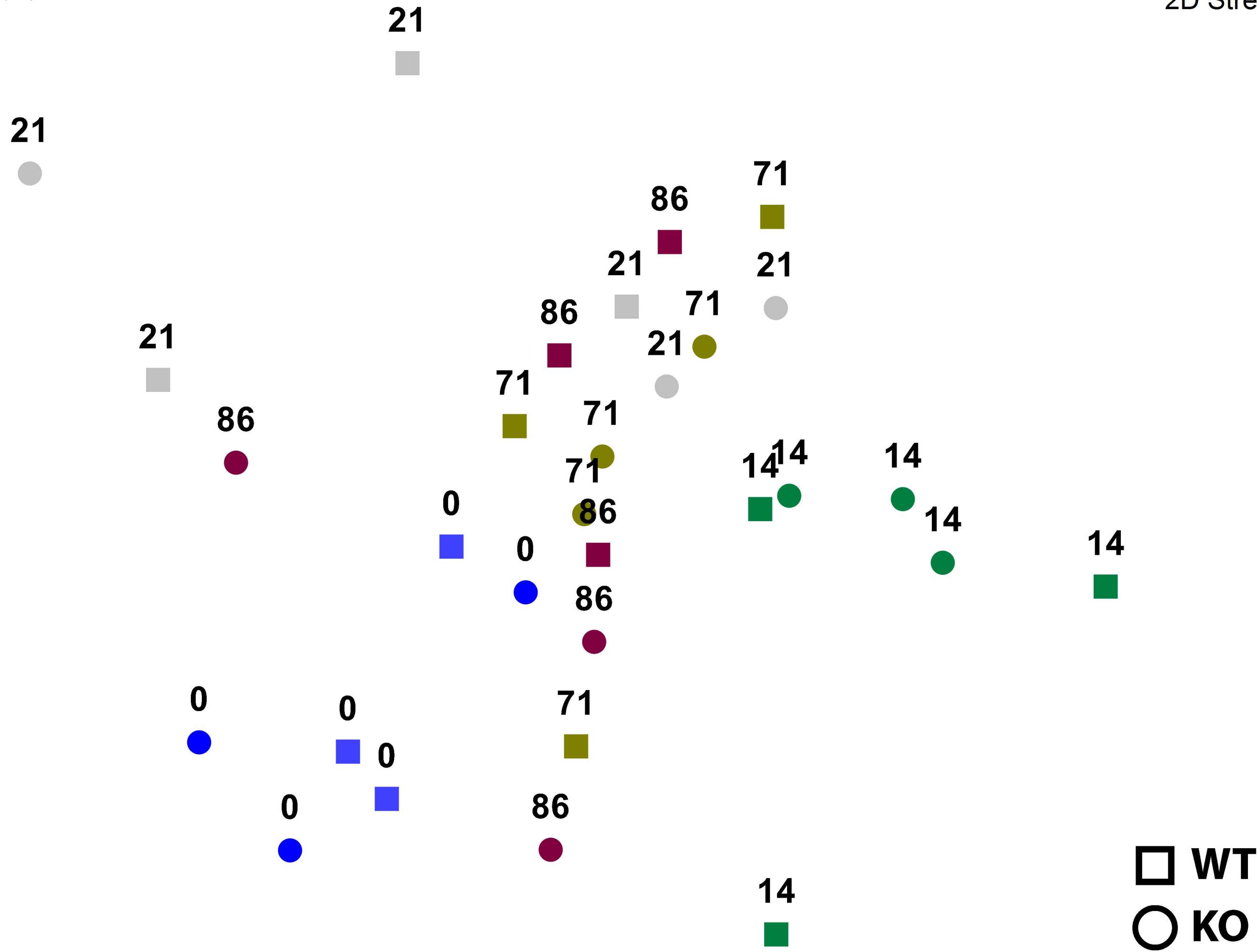
493 **Figure 2.** Non-metric multidimensional scaling (NMDS) analysis of the murine fecal viral
494 community composition of NOD2 KO (triangles) and C57BL/6J WT (circles). Analysis based
495 on the Bray-Curtis similarity index of the relative abundance of viral OTUs at species level
496 across time (Day 0 = pre-treatment, Days 14-86 = post-treatment).

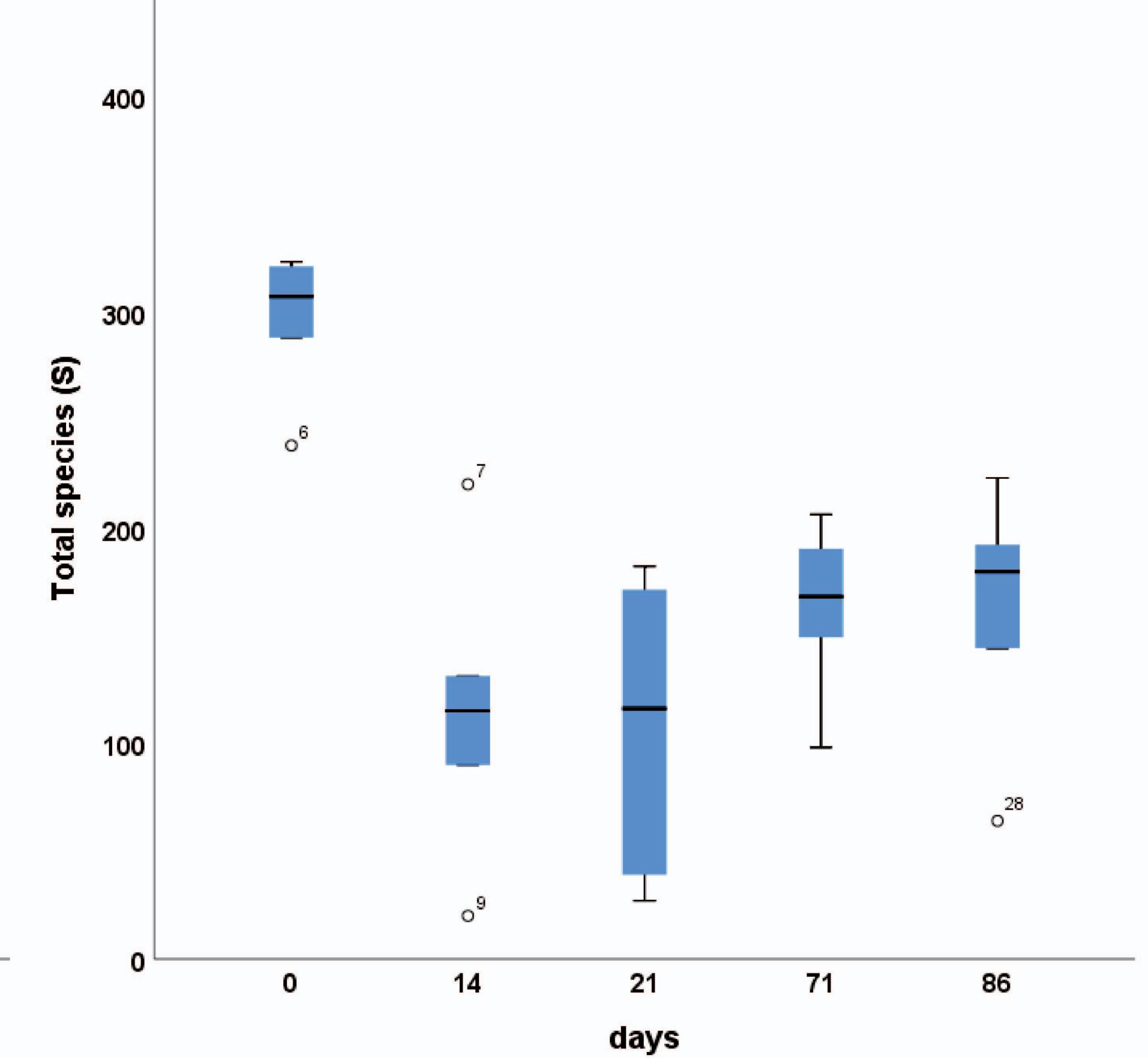
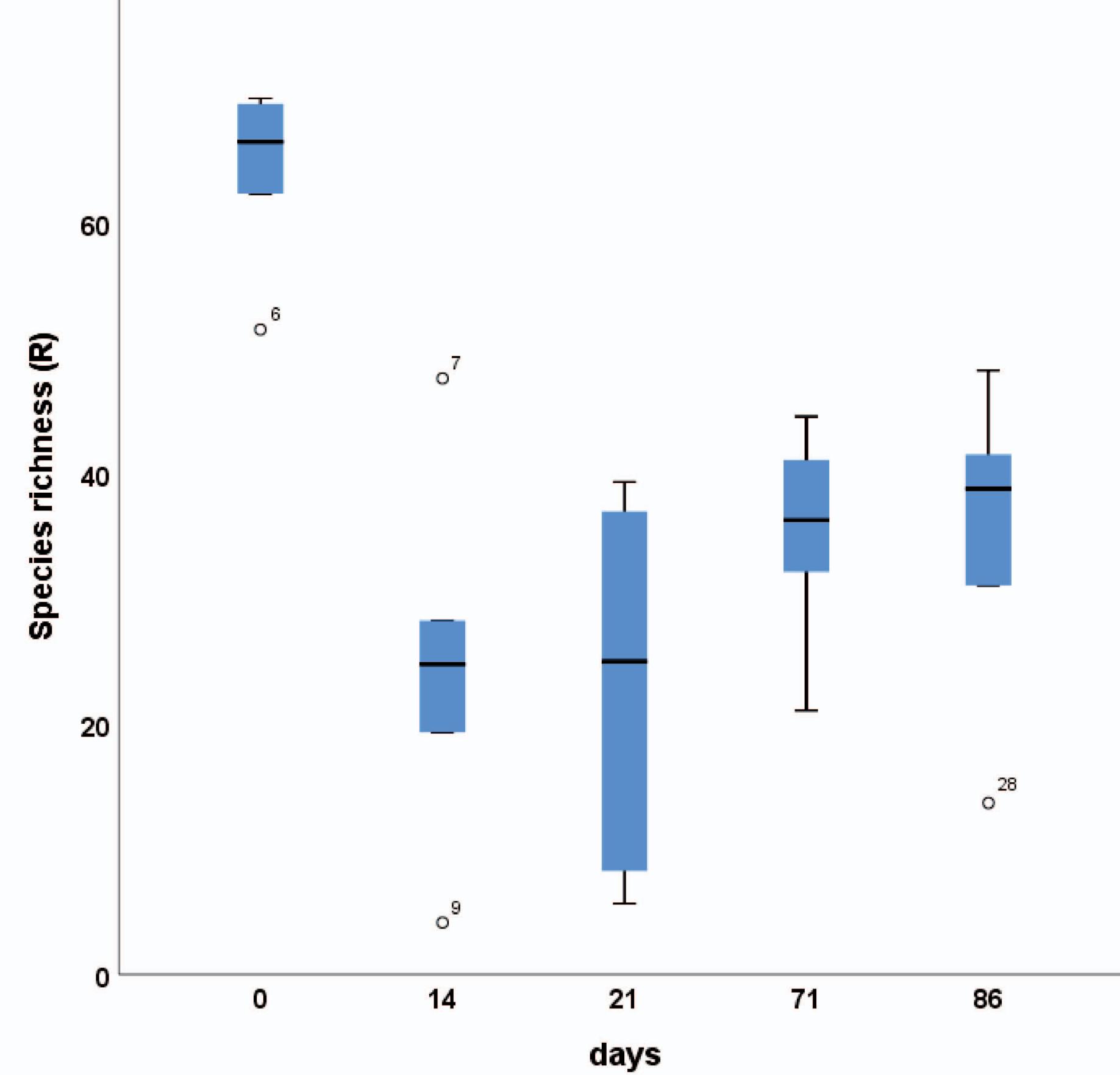
497 **Figure 3. (A)** Viral community composition of the reference virome from sequence reads of all
498 murine fecal samples. Contigs were assigned to known viral sequences by the UniProt viral
499 database. **(B)** Prokaryotic viral community composition in KO and WT mice across time (Day
500 0 = pre-treatment, Day 14 = antibiotic treatment, Days 21-86 = post-treatment). Bacteriophages
501 were grouped according to their blastx hits in the UniProt viral sequence database. Roman
502 numbers represent individual mice.

503 **Figure 4.** Relative abundance (%) of **(A)** *Bacteroidetes*, *Firmicutes*, and *Gammaproteobacteria*
504 phages, compared to the relative abundance (%) of the corresponding bacteria. Phages were
505 grouped based on their classification by blastx against the UniProt viral database. Time is
506 represented in days (Day 0 = pre-treatment, Day 14 = antibiotic treatment, Days 21-86 = post-
507 treatment). (Error bars = +/- 2 SE, n = 3).


508 **Figure 5.** Constrained dbRDA plot of the murine fecal viral community composition of KO
509 (triangles) and WT (circles) across time fitted to the fecal bacterial community composition in
510 DistLM sequential tests with R² selection criteria and forward selection procedure. Lengths of
511 vector overlays indicate the relative influences of related predictor variables. Time is
512 represented in days (Day 0 = pre-treatment, Day 14 = antibiotic treatment, Days 21-86 = post-
513 treatment).

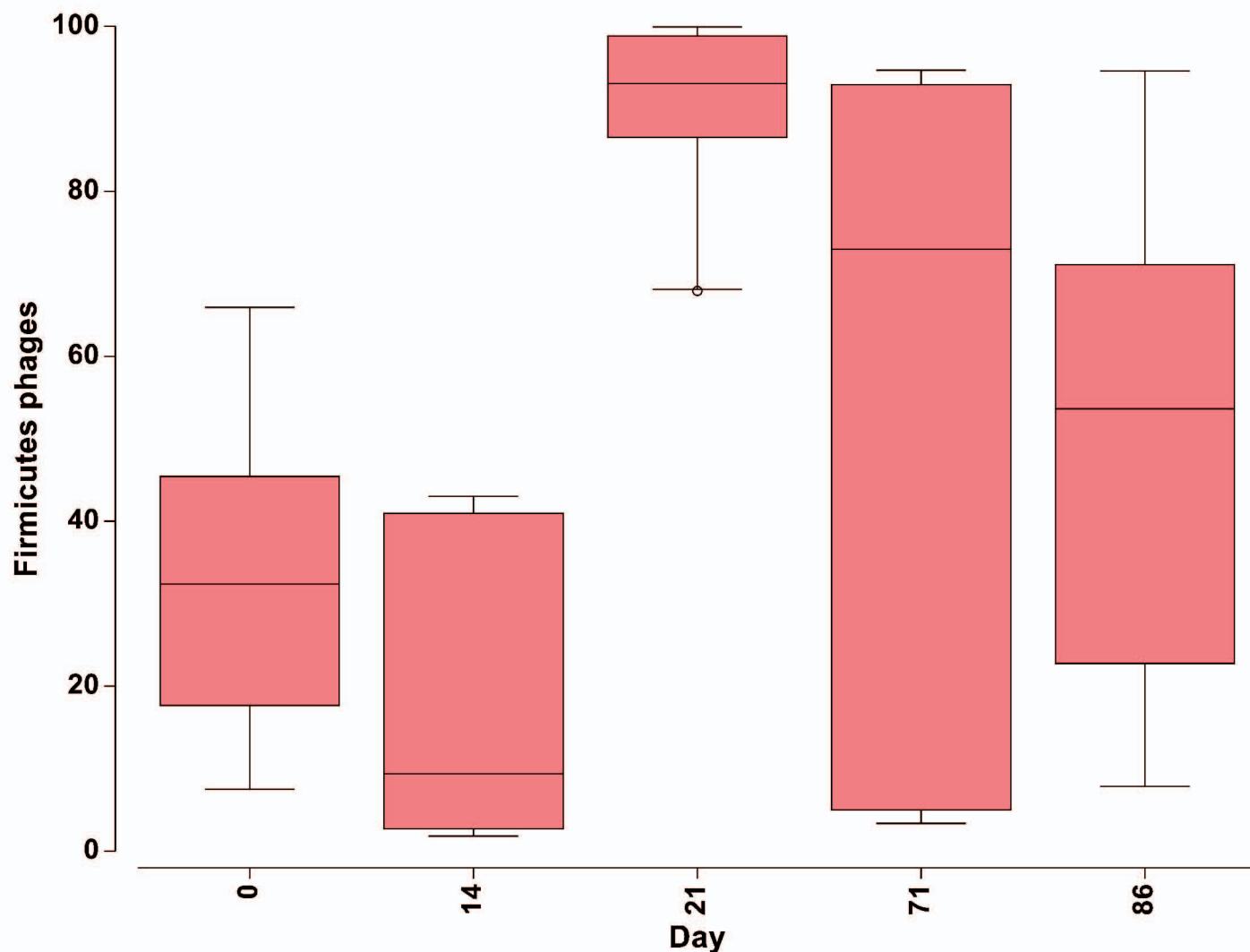
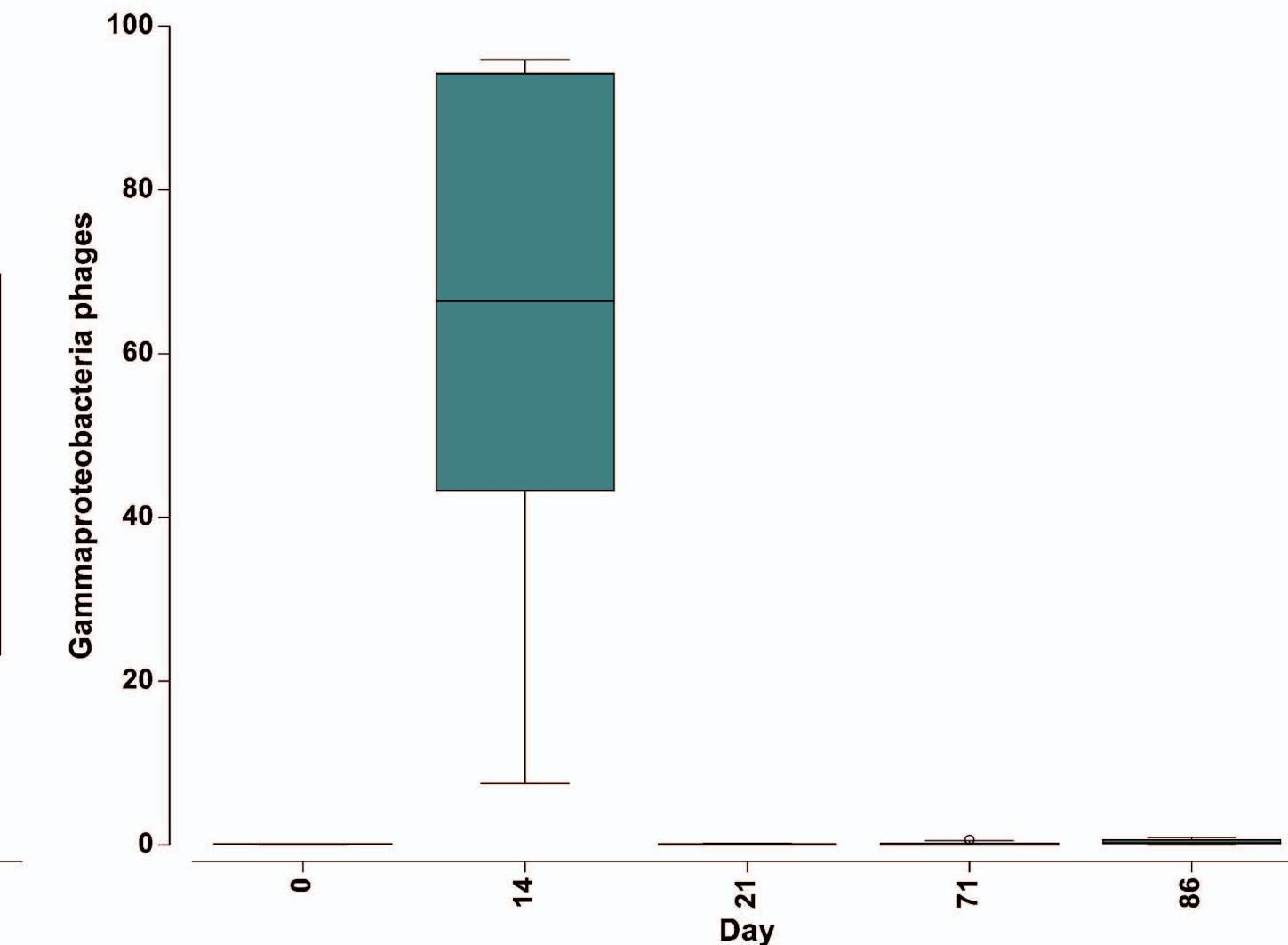
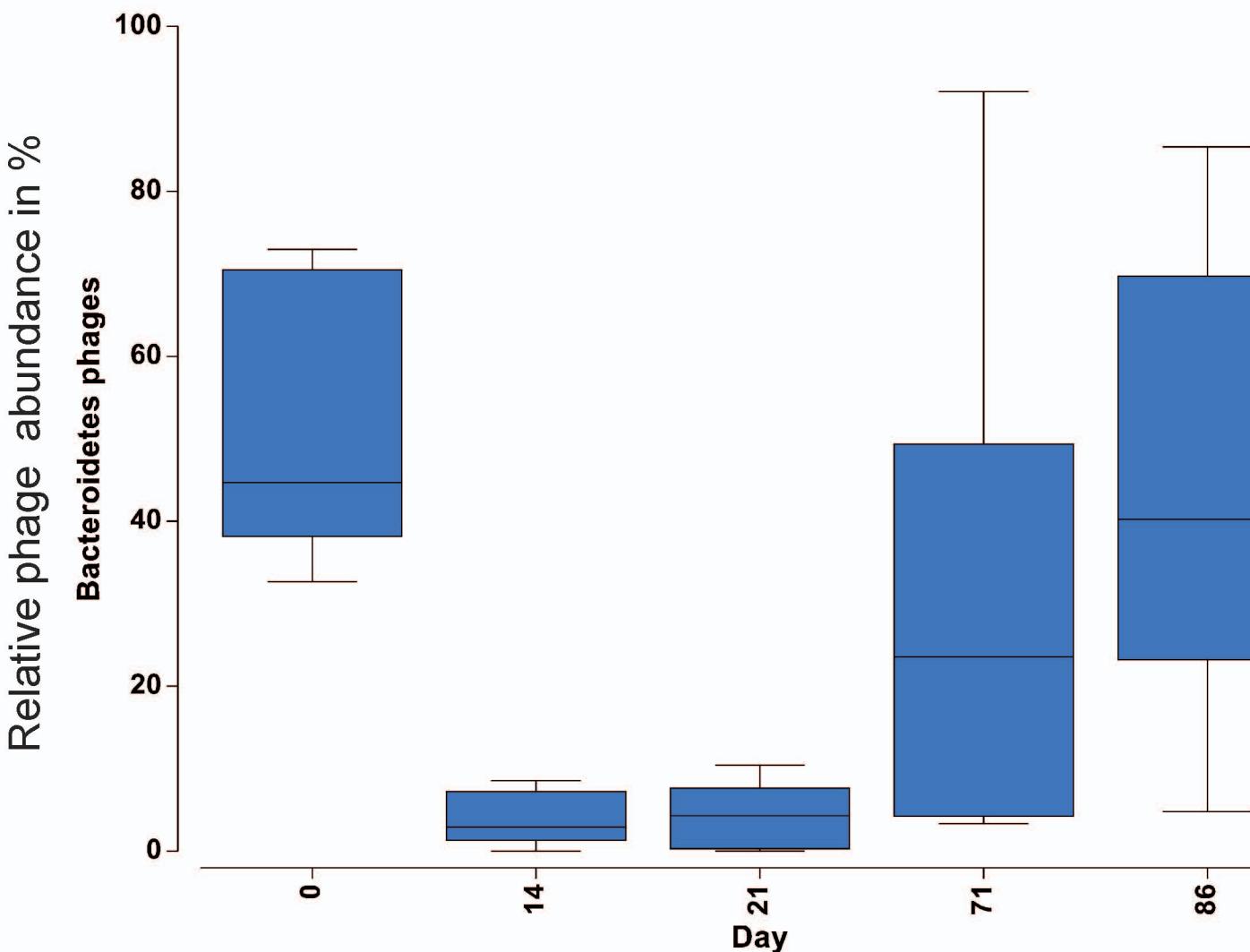
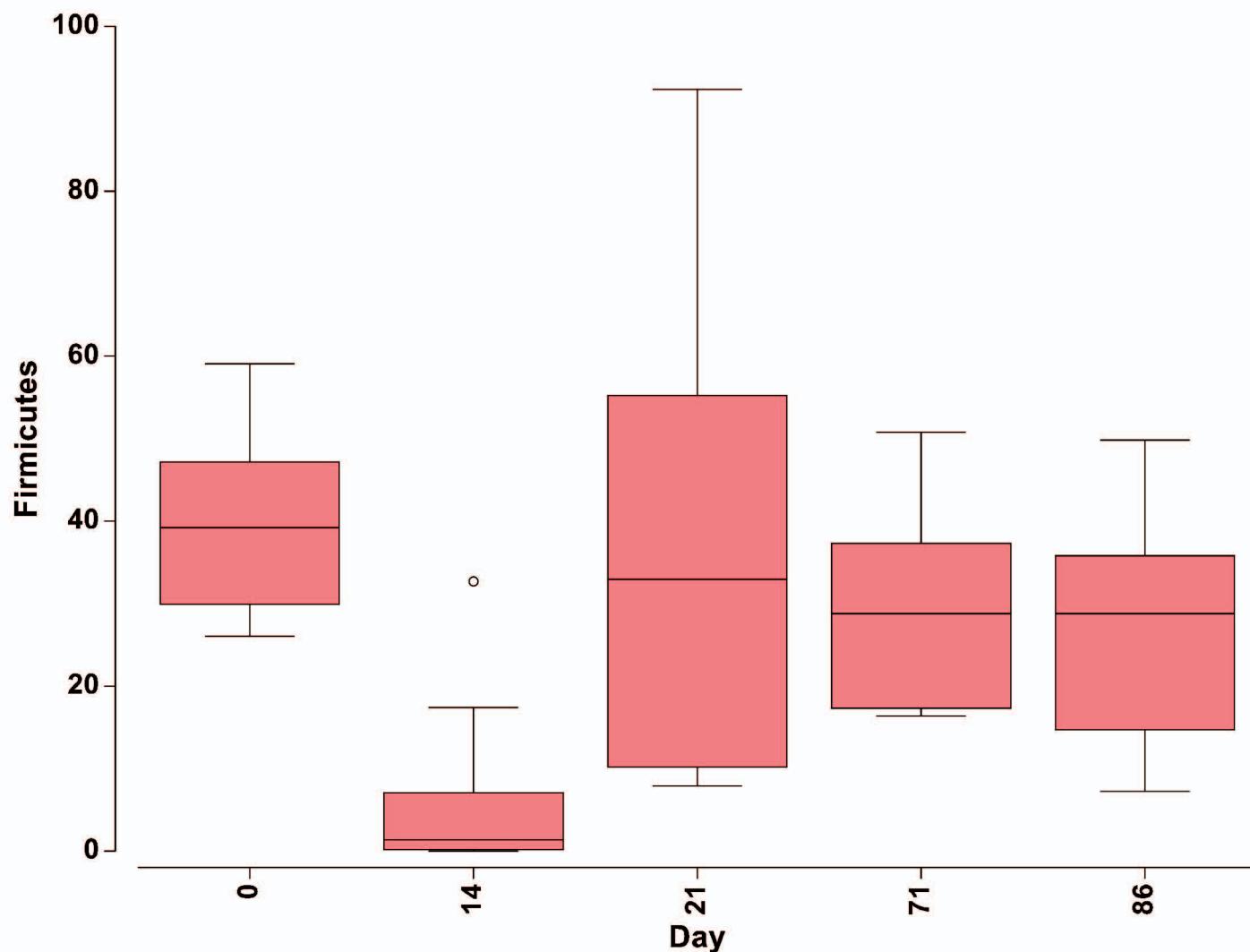
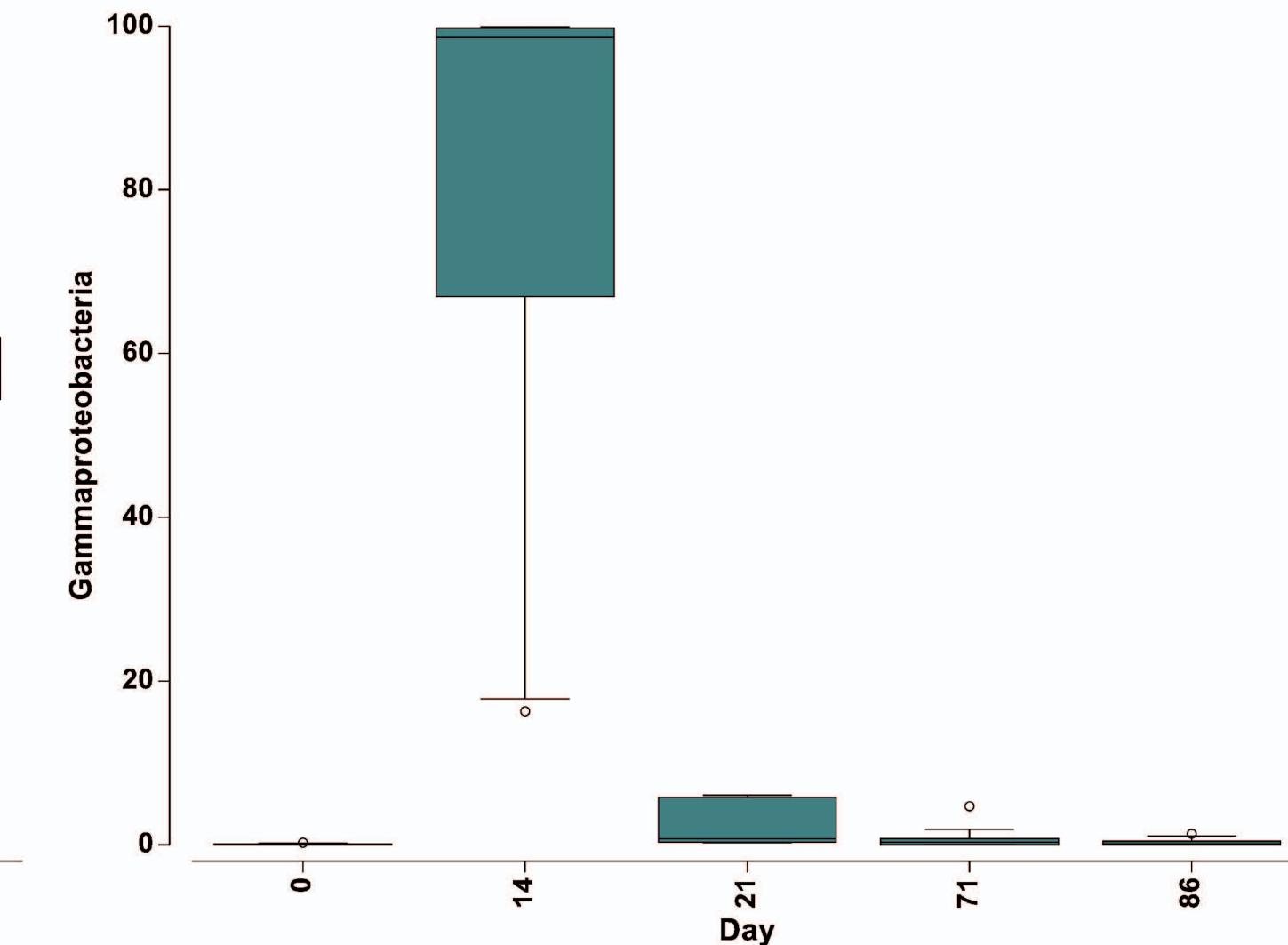
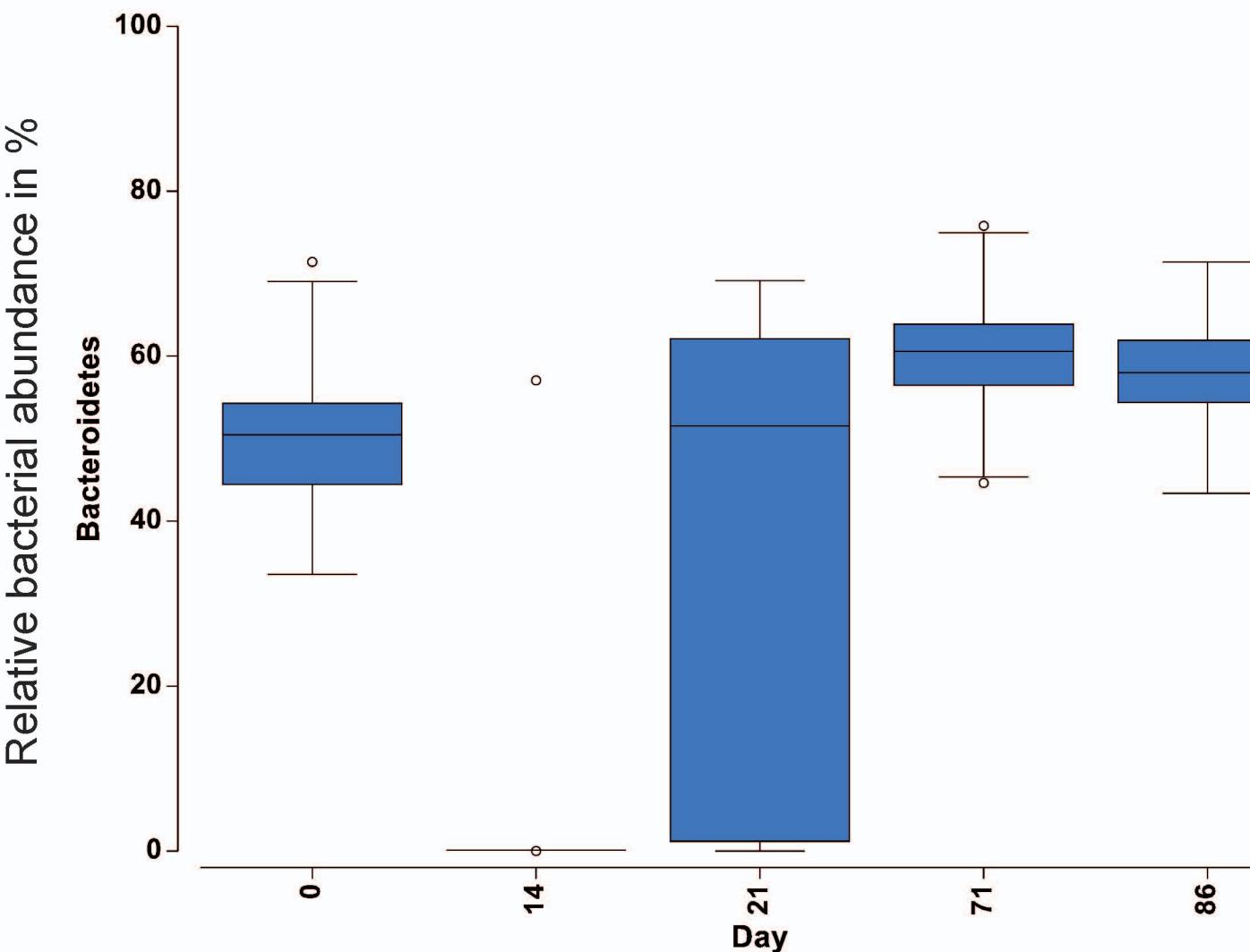


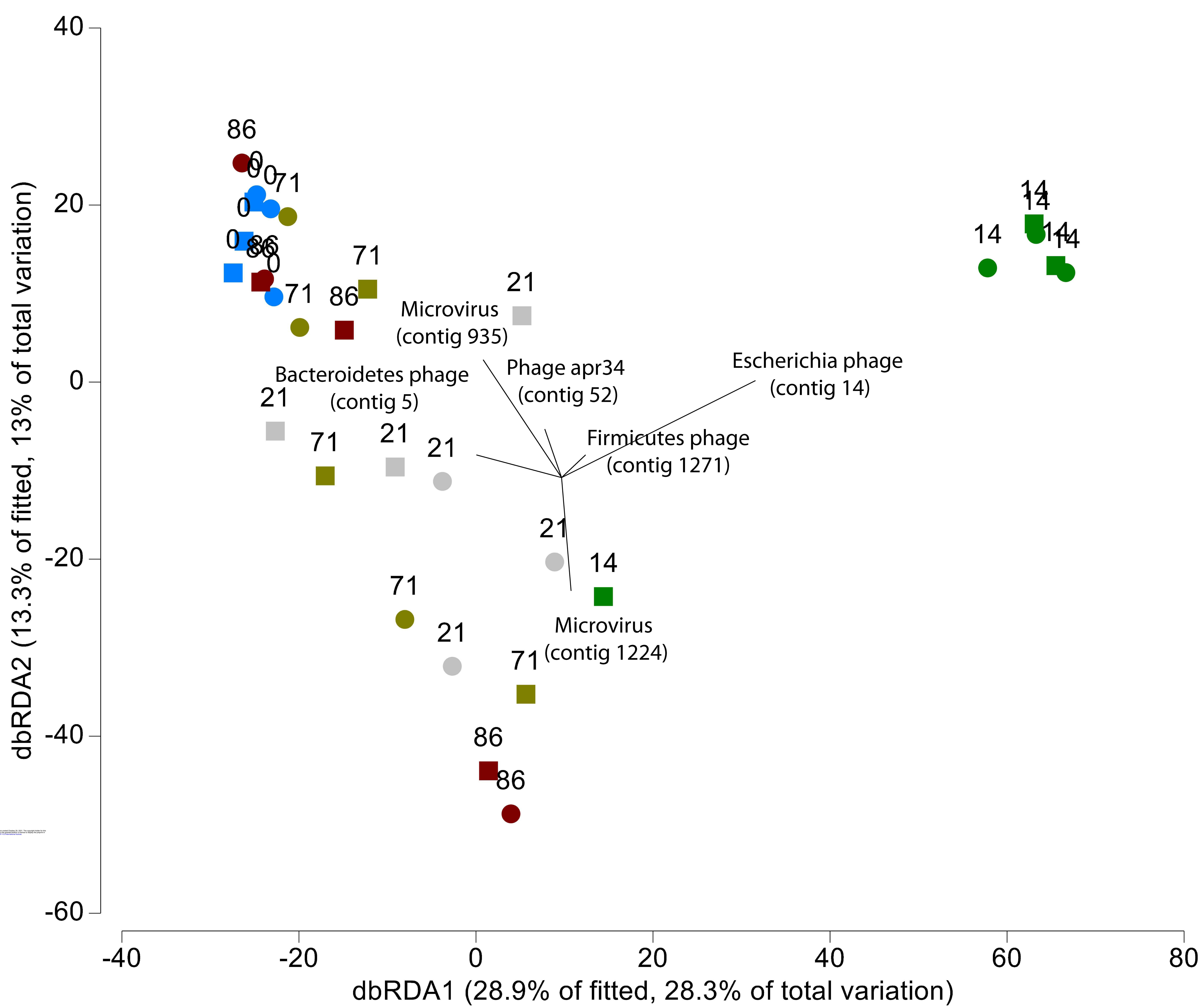




NOD2-knockout mice







170	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	54	WT	day 49	17	I	54_WT_d49	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
171	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	55	WT	day 49	17	J	55_WT_d49	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
172	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	4	KO	day 71	17	A	4_KO_d71	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
173	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	5	KO	day 71	17	A	5_KO_d71	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome & virome
174	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	6	KO	day 71	17	A	6_KO_d71	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
175	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	7	KO	day 71	17	A	7_KO_d71	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome & virome
176	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	11	KO	day 71	17	B	11_KO_d71	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
177	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	32	KO	day 71	17	C	32_KO_d71	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome & virome
178	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	35	KO	day 71	17	D	35_KO_d71	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
179	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	36	KO	day 71	17	D	36_KO_d71	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
180	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	37	KO	day 71	17	D	37_KO_d71	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
181	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	38	KO	day 71	17	D	38_KO_d71	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
182	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	24	WT	day 71	17	F	24_WT_d71	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome & virome
183	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	43	WT	day 71	17	G	43_WT_d71	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
184	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	44	WT	day 71	17	G	44_WT_d71	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
185	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	45	WT	day 71	17	G	45_WT_d71	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome & virome
186	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	46	WT	day 71	17	H	46_WT_d71	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
187	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	47	WT	day 71	17	H	47_WT_d71	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
188	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	51	WT	day 71	17	I	51_WT_d71	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
189	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	52	WT	day 71	17	I	52_WT_d71	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
190	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	53	WT	day 71	17	I	53_WT_d71	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome & virome
191	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	54	WT	day 71	17	I	54_WT_d71	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
192	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	55	WT	day 71	17	J	55_WT_d71	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
193	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	4	KO	day 86	17	A	4_KO_d86	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
194	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	5	KO	day 86	17	A	5_KO_d86	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome & virome
195	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	6	KO	day 86	17	A	6_KO_d86	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
196	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	7	KO	day 86	17	A	7_KO_d86	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome & virome
197	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	11	KO	day 86	17	B	11_KO_d86	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
198	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	32	KO	day 86	17	C	32_KO_d86	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome & virome
199	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	35	KO	day 86	17	D	35_KO_d86	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
200	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	36	KO	day 86	17	D	36_KO_d86	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
201	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	37	KO	day 86	17	D	37_KO_d86	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
202	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	38	KO	day 86	17	D	38_KO_d86	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
203	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	24	WT	day 86	17	F	24_WT_d86	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome & virome
204	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	43	WT	day 86	17	G	43_WT_d86	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
205	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	44	WT	day 86	17	G	44_WT_d86	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
206	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	45	WT	day 86	17	G	45_WT_d86	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome & virome
207	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	46	WT	day 86	17	H	46_WT_d86	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
208	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	47	WT	day 86	17	H	47_WT_d86	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
209	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	51	WT	day 86	17	I	51_WT_d86	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
210	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	52	WT	day 86	17	I	52_WT_d86	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
211	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	53	WT	day 86	17	I	53_WT_d86	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome & virome
212	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	54	WT	day 86	17	I	54_WT_d86	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome
213	NOD2	mouse	feces	male	55	WT	day 86	17	J	55_WT_d86	Kiel,Germany	none	bacteriome

Intestinal Virome: Tables

Table S2. ANOSIM pairwise comparison of viral communities between time points. Day 0 before antibiotic perturbation; day 14 to day 86 post antibiotic perturbation.

Groups	R	P-value	Possible Permutations	Actual Permutations	Number >= Observed
0, 14	0.889	0.002	462	462	1
0, 21	0.58	0.004	462	462	1
0, 71	0.685	0.002	462	462	1
0, 86	0.581	0.002	462	462	1
14, 21	0.417	0.087	462	462	9
14, 71	0.615	0.002	462	462	1
14, 86	0.589	0.002	462	462	3
21, 71	0.089	0.216	462	462	65
21, 86	0.078	0.297	462	462	137
71, 86	-0.069	0.621	462	462	370

Intestinal Virome: Tables

Table S3. SIMPER analysis: pairwise test of differences between time points of groups (day 0 and day 14). Average dissimilarity = 93.92

Species	Host prediction	Group 0		Group 14		Contrib%	Cum.%
		Av.Abund	Av.Abund	Av.Diss	Diss/SD		
Escherichia phage (contig 14)	Gammaproteobacteria	0.00	2.46	3.93	1.89	4.18	4.18
Escherichia phage (contig 3817)	Gammaproteobacteria	0.00	2.40	3.86	1.83	4.11	8.29
Microvirus (contig 935)	Bacteroidetes	2.13	0.09	3.32	1.76	3.53	11.83
Escherichia phage (contig 186)	Gammaproteobacteria	0.00	1.98	3.15	1.97	3.36	15.18
Escherichia phage (contig 32)	Gammaproteobacteria	0.00	1.72	2.75	1.94	2.92	18.11
Phage apr34 (contig 52)	Bacteroidetes	1.79	0.11	2.59	2.07	2.76	20.86

Intestinal Virome: Tables

Table S4. SIMPER analysis: pairwise test of differences between time points of groups (day 0 and day 86). Average dissimilarity = 86.64

Species	Group 0	Group 86				
	Av.Abund	Av.Abund	Av.Diss	Diss/SD	Contrib%	Cum.%
Microvirus (contig 935)	2.13	0.00	3.61	1.73	4.17	4.17
Firmicutes phage (contig 28)	1.03	2.02	3.08	1.13	3.56	7.73
Firmicutes phage (contig 624)	1.02	1.95	3.05	1.11	3.52	11.25
Phage apr34 (contig 52)	1.79	0.00	2.85	2.04	3.29	14.54
Bacteroidetes phage (contig 5)	1.32	1.75	2.65	1.37	3.06	17.59
CrASSphage (contig 2)	1.18	1.64	2.56	1.34	2.95	20.54

Intestinal Virome: Tables

Table S5. Proportion of variance in bacterial communities explained by the 29 most important viral OTUs as predictor variables in DistLM tests.

Predictor variables were identified using adjusted R² selection criteria and forward selection.

Variable	Marginal Tests				Sequential Tests					
	SS(trace)	Pseudo-F	P	Prop.	R ²	SS(trace)	Pseudo-F	P	Prop.	Cumul.
Escherichia phage (contig 14)	25419	9.5639	0.001	0.25460	0.2546	27008	11.854	0.001	0.29744	0.29744
Phage apr34 (contig 52)	7889.7	2.4026	0.014	0.079025	0.32234	6763.1	2.699	0.003	0.067741	0.32234
Microvirus (contig 1224)	5608.1	1.6664	0.049	0.056172	0.37717	5473.5	2.2886	0.006	0.054824	0.37717
Firmicutes phage (contig 1271)	4807.6	1.4165	0.064	0.048154	0.42542	4816.9	2.0992	0.011	0.048248	0.42542
Bacteroidetes phage (contig 5)	7722.8	2.3475	0.013	0.077354	0.46132	3584.3	1.5995	0.047	0.035901	0.46132
Microvirus (contig 935)	8083.6	2.4668	0.006	0.080967	0.55711	2922.9	1.3881	0.207	0.029276	0.490596