

1 Isoprenoidal glycerol dialkanol diethers: a series of novel archaeal lipids in  
2 marine sediments

3

4 Xiao-Lei Liu <sup>a\*</sup>, Julius S. Lipp <sup>a</sup>, Jan M. Schröder <sup>a</sup>, Roger E. Summons <sup>b</sup>, Kai-Uwe  
5 Hinrichs <sup>a</sup>

6

7 <sup>a</sup> Organic Geochemistry Group, MARUM Center for Marine Environmental Sciences & Dept. of Geosciences,  
8 University of Bremen, 28359 Bremen, Germany

9 <sup>b</sup> Department of Earth, Atmospheric, and Planetary Sciences, Massachusetts Institute of Technology,  
10 77 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02139-4307, USA

11 \* Corresponding author. *E-mail address:* xliu@uni-bremen.de (Xiao-Lei Liu).

12

13 **Keywords:** GDD, GDGT, HPLC-MS, qTOF, core lipid, benthic Archaea, lipid recycling,  
14 biphytane diol

15

## 16 **ABSTRACT**

17 We report a new series of archaeal lipids, widespread in marine sediments and  
18 tentatively assigned as isoprenoid glycerol dialkanol diethers (GDDs). These lipids are  
19 structural analogues of isoprenoid glycerol dialkyl glycerol tetraethers (GDGTs) with one  
20 glycerol unit missing and with each biphytanyl moiety possessing a terminal hydroxyl  
21 group. The structural identification is based on molecular formulae determined from  
22 accurate mass measurement and interpretation of mass spectral fragmentation patterns.  
23 Acetylation of GDD-0 confirmed the presence of three hydroxyl groups, and ether  
24 cleavage and reduction of the products afforded two biphytanyl chains. Tests of different

25 protocols for both extraction and acid hydrolysis indicate that GDDs are not formed  
26 during sample preparation. The co-existence of GDDs and GDGTs in 12 selected marine  
27 sediment samples of varying origin showed that the ring distribution in these two ether  
28 lipid pools is related and implies that the two compound classes share a common  
29 biological source. The presence of isoprenoid GDDs is possibly linked to the occurrence  
30 of biphytane diols in marine sediments, where both GDD and diol can be either  
31 biosynthetic intermediates or degradation products, and it also supports the recently  
32 proposed fossil lipid recycling by benthic archaea (Takano, Y., Chikaraishi, Y., Ogawa,  
33 O.N., Nomaki, H., Morono, Y., Inagaki, F., Kitazato, H., Hinrichs, K.-U., Ohkouchi, N.,  
34 2010. Sedimentary membrane lipids recycled by deep-sea benthic archaea. *Nature*  
35 *Geoscience* 3, 858–861). GDD core lipid was detected in a culture of  
36 *Methanothermococcus thermolithotrophicus*, suggestive of a potential biological function  
37 of these compounds, but no intact polar lipids (IPLs) containing GDDs as core lipids  
38 have been detected to date.

39

## 40 **1. Introduction**

41 During the last decade, isoprenoidal glycerol dialkyl glycerol tetraethers (GDGTs)  
42 have been recognized as widespread archaeal lipids in marine and terrestrial  
43 environments (Schouten et al., 2000, 2002; Lipp et al., 2008), while the other archaeal  
44 lipid type, glycerol dialkyl diethers, is usually abundant in hydrocarbon seeps at the  
45 ocean's seafloor (e.g., Hinrichs et al., 1999; Pancost et al., 2001). These ether lipids have  
46 attracted increasing interest from different fields of geobiological research largely  
47 because they can be used as proxies to trace the activity of Archaea in modern and

48 ancient environments. The development of liquid chromatography mass spectrometry  
49 (LC-MS) has facilitated identification and quantification of archaeal lipids (e.g.,  
50 Hopmans et al., 2000; Sturt et al., 2004) and opportunities for exploring novel types of  
51 archaeal lipids have become available as a result.

52 Previous studies of archaeal cultures, such as methanogens (Tornabene and  
53 Langworthy, 1979; Koga et al., 1993), have found both diether- and tetraether-based  
54 lipids as major membrane constituents. In general, three categories of archaeal lipids are  
55 found in environmental samples: IPLs, glycerol ether core lipids (e.g., GDGT core lipids)  
56 and degraded fossil products such as polyisoprenoidal hydrocarbons. Archaeal lipids in  
57 their intact form, mainly glyco- and phospholipids, contain one or two labile polar head  
58 groups attached to the glycerol ether core. The polar head groups of IPLs, especially  
59 phospholipids, can be rapidly hydrolyzed after cell decay (e.g., White et al., 1979), which  
60 makes IPLs suitable proxies for live prokaryotes. However, their applicability to low-  
61 activity seafloor sediment remains controversial (cf. Lipp and Hinrichs, 2009;  
62 Schouten et al., 2010) and will require further validation. IPLs can be detected with LC-  
63 MS in lipid extracts of biomass from cultures, marine particulate organic matter and  
64 sediments (e.g., Sturt et al., 2004; Schouten et al., 2008; Lipp et al., 2008; Rossel et al.,  
65 2010). GDGT core lipids are thought to represent a predominantly fossil signal and are  
66 ubiquitous in various depositional environments where they occur with high structural  
67 diversity (Schouten et al., 2000). They are relatively stable and are able to survive in  
68 sediments over tens of millions of years (e.g., Kuypers et al., 2001), so that they can serve  
69 as biomarkers of past archaeal activity and components of molecular proxy ratios, such as  
70 the paleo sea surface temperature indicator TEX<sub>86</sub> (e.g., Schouten et al., 2002). Smaller

71 fossil derivatives of archaeal lipids amenable to analysis by gas chromatography (GC),  
72 such as biphytane diols (Schouten et al., 1998; Saito and Suzuki, 2010) and biphytanic  
73 diacids (Meunier-Christmann, 1988; Birgel et al., 2008) have been found in both recent  
74 sediments and ancient rock samples. However, it is not clear whether these biphytane  
75 derivatives are products of isoprenoidal GDGT degradation or intermediates in lipid  
76 biosynthesis. In addition, a series of C<sub>80</sub>, C<sub>81</sub> and C<sub>82</sub> isoprenoid biphytanyl tetraacids  
77 were identified in crude oil (Lutnaes et al., 2006, 2007) and the authors assumed that they  
78 were of recent archaeal origin.

79 Our knowledge of the biosynthesis of archaeal lipids is limited although a  
80 pathway, based on both IPL analysis and genetic studies, has been proposed (Koga and  
81 Morii, 2007). Expanding knowledge of the distribution of archaeal lipid derivatives in  
82 nature should promote a better understanding of the activity of Archaea, the origin and  
83 fate of archaeal lipids in different geologic settings and the limitations of related  
84 molecular proxies. Modification of the analytical protocol revealed numerous compounds  
85 that presumably have been overlooked in previous studies (e.g., Hopmans et al., 2000).  
86 Here we report the identification of a novel series of lipids, i.e., so-called isoprenoidal  
87 glycerol dialkanol diethers (GDDs). We discuss their distribution in marine sediments as  
88 well as the evidence pertaining to their source and potential biosynthetic significance.

89

## 90 **2. Materials and methods**

### 91 *2.1. Materials and sample preparation*

92 Twelve globally distributed marine subsurface sediments from various geological  
93 settings including open ocean samples with low total organic carbon (TOC) content and

94 continent margin samples with high TOC content (Table 1) were immediately frozen  
95 after collection and stored at -80°C until extraction and analysis. More detailed  
96 information on sampling sites is given by Liu et al. (2011). Samples were freeze-dried  
97 and extracted using the modified Bligh and Dyer protocol as described by Sturt et al.  
98 (2004). In addition, one archaeal culture, *Methanothermococcus thermolithotrophicus*  
99 strain (DSM 2095), grown at 85°C in enamel-protected fermentors with stirring (400 rpm)  
100 and continuous gassing (H<sub>2</sub>/CO<sub>2</sub>, 80:20) and harvested in the exponential growth phase,  
101 was provided by M. Baumgartner and K. Stetter (University of Regensburg, Germany).  
102 Using an ultrasonic probe (HD 2200, Bandelin electronic GmbH & Co. KG, Germany),  
103 0.5 g freeze-dried biomass of *Methanothermococcus thermolithotrophicus* was extracted  
104 (4 x) with dichloromethane (DCM): methanol (MeOH) [20 ml; 1:1, v/v] for 15 min. In  
105 order to test the existence of IPL precursors of GDD an aliquot (1%) of the total lipid  
106 extract (TLE) of *Methanothermococcus thermolithotrophicus* was spiked with 200 ng of  
107 a C<sub>46</sub> GDGT standard (Huguet et al., 2006) before splitting it into two aliquots for direct  
108 lipid analysis and for treatment with 6 M HCl/MeOH [1 ml; 1:9, v/v] at 70°C for 3 h to  
109 hydrolyze the IPLs to core lipids.

110

## 111 2.2. Analysis of GDGTs and GDDs

112 One aliquot of each sample was dissolved in 200 µl hexane/isopropanol (99:1, v/v)  
113 for HPLC-MS. Separation was performed with a Prevail Cyano column (2.1×150 mm,  
114 3 µm; Grace, Germany) maintained at 35°C in an Agilent 1200 series HPLC instrument.  
115 Using a flow rate of 0.25 ml min<sup>-1</sup>, the gradient of the mobile phase was first held for  
116 5 min with 100% eluent A [*n*-hexane/isopropanol, 99:1 (v/v)], followed by a linear

117 gradient to 90% A and 10% B [*n*-hexane/isopropanol, 90:10 (v/v)] in 20 min, followed by  
118 a linear gradient to 100% B at 35 min, and finally holding at 100% B for 5 min. After  
119 analysis the column was equilibrated with 100% A at 0.6 ml min<sup>-1</sup> for 5 min. Detection  
120 was achieved with an Agilent 6130 MSD single quadrupole mass spectrometer, coupled  
121 to an Agilent 1200 series HPLC instrument via a multimode ion source in atmospheric  
122 pressure chemical ionization (APCI) mode. APCI settings were: nebulizer pressure 60 psi,  
123 vaporizer temperature 250°C, drying gas (N<sub>2</sub>) flow 6 l min<sup>-1</sup> and drying gas temperature  
124 200°C, capillary voltage 2 kV, and corona current 5 μA. With Chemstation software the  
125 detector was set for selective ion monitoring (SIM) of [M+H]<sup>+</sup> ions (*m/z* 1302, 1300,  
126 1298, 1296, 1292, 1246, 1244, 1242, 1240 and 1236, fragmentor voltage 190 V).

127         In addition, small amounts of GDD-0 (acyclic GDD) and GDD-cren (GDD  
128 corresponding to crenarchaeol) were isolated from the combined extracts of the twelve  
129 sediments by collecting fractions manually through a flow splitter installed between the  
130 HPLC instrument and detector. The LC method used for isolating small amounts of GDD  
131 was as described above for GDD analysis. In order to record accurate molecular masses  
132 in full scan and MS<sup>2</sup> spectra, isolated GDDs were injected again into an Agilent 1200  
133 series HPLC system coupled to an Agilent 6520 quadrupole time-of-flight (qTOF) mass  
134 spectrometer through an APCI interface. The APCI source temperature was 350°C with a  
135 gas (N<sub>2</sub>) flow of 4 l min<sup>-1</sup>. The qTOF parameters for auto MS/MS scanning mode with  
136 MS<sup>1</sup> range *m/z* 500-2000 and MS<sup>2</sup> *m/z* 100-2000 were: capillary voltage 1 kV, corona  
137 current 5 μA, fragmentor voltage 150 V, skimmer voltage 65 V and octapole voltage  
138 750 V. The qTOF system was tuned and calibrated with Agilent commercial tuning mix  
139 to reach a mass accuracy better than 2 ppm.

140 Relative ring distributions of GDGTs and GDDs were determined using peak  
141 areas of the  $[M+H]^+$  ions of compounds containing 0, 1, 2, 3, and 5 rings. Because proper  
142 standards were unavailable, we assumed an identical response factor for GDDs, GDGTs  
143 and C<sub>46</sub> GDGT when we calculated their absolute concentrations in the culture extract,  
144 and the ratio of GDDs vs. GDGTs was estimated directly from the peak area of  
145 isoprenoid GDGTs and GDDs according to  $(\text{GDDs}) / (\text{GDGTs} + \text{GDDs}) \times 100\%$ . The  
146 resulting ratio (cf. Table 1) probably does not represent the relative abundance of GDDs  
147 properly but is useful for comparison of different samples.

148

### 149 *2.3. Analysis of acetylated GDD*

150 For determination of the number of OH groups in GDD, an aliquot of purified  
151 GDD-0 was transferred into a 2 ml vial and dried with N<sub>2</sub>; 1 ml acetic anhydride and  
152 pyridine (1:1,v:v) was added, and the mixture was kept at 50°C for 1 h. Acetylated GDD-  
153 0 was analyzed with APCI-MS by infusing the sample directly into the ion source with a  
154 syringe pump set at 0.2 ml min<sup>-1</sup>.

155

### 156 *2.4. Analysis of alkyl moieties released by ether cleavage*

157 One aliquot of isolated GDD-cren was transferred to a 2-mL vial and dried with  
158 N<sub>2</sub>, then 0.5 ml BBr<sub>3</sub> (1 M in DCM; Aldrich) was added. The reaction was performed at  
159 60°C for 2 h. After evaporating the solvent and residual BBr<sub>3</sub> with N<sub>2</sub>, 0.5 ml  
160 superhydride (LiEt<sub>3</sub>BH, in THF, Aldrich) were added to reduce the bromides to  
161 hydrocarbons at 60°C for 2 h. Adding a few drops of water quenched the reaction. The  
162 hydrocarbons were extracted (3 x) with *n*-hexane and the extracts combined for GC-MS.

163 In order to analyze potential hydroxylated compounds, one aliquot of the ether  
164 cleavage/reduction products was transferred into a 2-ml vial, dried with a flow of N<sub>2</sub> and  
165 mixed with 100 µl BSTFA (N,O-bis(trimethylsilyl)trifluoroacetamide) and 100 µl  
166 pyridine at 70°C for 1 h. GC-MS was performed with an Agilent 5975C inert XL MSD  
167 system equipped with an Agilent DB-5HT column (30 m x 250 µm x 0.25 µm).  
168 Separation was achieved using an oven temperature program of 60°C (1 min) to 150°C at  
169 10°C min<sup>-1</sup> and then to 320°C (held 36 min) at 5°C min<sup>-1</sup>.

170

#### 171 2.5. Tests for production of GDDs from GDGTs

172 To test potential production of GDD via degradation of GDGT during sample  
173 extraction and preparation, three experiments were conducted. In the first, 1 µg of  
174 purified GDGT-0 was subjected to acid hydrolysis as described above for the *M.*  
175 *thermolithotrophicus* culture (experiment A). For the second, pre-extracted sediment,  
176 which was extracted with accelerated solvent extraction and subsequently checked for the  
177 absence of extractable lipids, was spiked with another aliquot of 1 µg of purified GDGT-  
178 0 before extraction with the Bligh and Dyer method (experiment B).

179 The third experiment evaluated the influence of three different extraction  
180 protocols on the yield of GDGT and GDD (experiment C). Freeze-dried and  
181 homogenized sediment (M76/1 GeoB 12806-2) was separated into six aliquots of 1.5 g  
182 dry wt. Homogenization was achieved using a freezer mill (CryoMill, Retsch GmbH,  
183 Haan, Germany) cooled with liquid N<sub>2</sub> (cf. Lipp et al., 2008). Each aliquot was spiked  
184 with 1 µg C<sub>46</sub> GDGT standard (Huguet et al., 2006). The first two aliquots were extracted  
185 with the Bligh and Dyer protocol in four steps, twice with phosphate buffer and twice



186 with trichloroacetic acid (TCA) buffer (cf. Sturt et al., 2004); the second two aliquots  
187 were extracted with only phosphate buffer (4 x), and the last two aliquots were extracted  
188 using an accelerated solvent extractor (ASE 200, DIONEX) with a mixture of  
189 DCM:MeOH (9:1, v/v) and three cycles of 5 min each at 100°C and  $7.6 \times 10^6$  Pa (cf.  
190 Leider et al., 2010).

191

### 192 **3. Results and discussion**

#### 193 *3.1. Identification of isoprenoidal GDDs*

194 A novel series of compounds structurally related to the known isoprenoidal  
195 GDGTs with 56 Da lower molecular mass was recognized in extracts of marine sediment  
196 samples (Table 1). The components eluted several minutes after GDGT during normal  
197 phase HPLC (Fig. 1). For instance, the analogues of GDGT-0 ( $[M+H]^+$ ,  $m/z$  1302) and  
198 crenarchaeol ( $[M+H]^+$ ,  $m/z$  1292) show molecular ions  $[M+H]^+$  at  $m/z$  1246 and 1236,  
199 respectively. Their MS<sup>2</sup> spectra gave dominant fragment ions at  $m/z$  669 and 663,  
200 respectively, representing the fragments of a glycerol moiety plus one ether-bound  
201 biphytandiol (with one free OH; no ring for  $m/z$  669 and three rings for  $m/z$  663).  
202 Consequently, the neutral losses of 577 Da and 573 Da correspond to biphytandiols with  
203 0 and 2 rings (Fig. 2).

204 Accurate mass determination of the two compounds via time-of-flight mass  
205 spectrometry with less than 2 ppm of mass uncertainty showed a  $[M+H]^+$  at  $m/z$   
206 1246.2950 and 1236.2166, respectively, affording calculated formulae  $C_{83}H_{168}O_5$  and  
207  $C_{83}H_{158}O_5$ . Based on this, their elution pattern relative to GDGTs and their MS<sup>2</sup> spectra,  
208 these lipids were tentatively identified as isoprenoid GDDs.

209 Three additional observations support this structural assignment. Firstly, the  
210 acetylated GDD-0 gave a molecular ion at  $m/z$  1372, which can be interpreted as  
211 acetylation of three OH groups with an added mass of 126 Da. Secondly, identical  
212 compounds were released by ether cleavage/reduction from GDD-cren and crenarchaeol,  
213 i.e., mixtures of biphytanes with two and three rings. Theoretically, biphytane mono-ols  
214 might be released by ether cleavage of GDD, but no alcohols were detected in the  
215 BSTFA-derivatized sample. This confirms that C-O bonds of hydroxyl functions are  
216 susceptible to attack by  $\text{BBr}_3$  with subsequent reduction of the bromides to biphytane  
217 hydrocarbons by superhydride. Thirdly, the degradation tests on GDGT-0 showed that  
218 after 72 h acid hydrolysis at 70°C only small amounts of GDD-0 had been generated  
219 from GDGT-0 (Table 1). This detection of GDD-0 as a degradation product of GDGT-0  
220 provides further evidence for the proposed structure of GDDs.

221

### 222 3.2. Occurrence of GDDs and GDGTs

223 Twelve marine sediment samples from six sites (Table 1) were analyzed for the  
224 occurrence of isoprenoidal GDDs and GDGTs. In all of them GDDs coexisted with the  
225 corresponding GDGTs. The ratio of signal responses of total GDDs vs. sum of total  
226 GDGTs and GDDs ranged from 3.5% to 17% (Table 1), suggesting a substantial  
227 contribution of GDDs to the overall pool of sedimentary archaeal lipids. The ring  
228 distribution of GDDs and GDGTs with identical numbers of rings is illustrated as a cross  
229 plot in Fig. 3 in order to expose potential relationships of the two compound classes.  
230 Since GDDs contain only one glycerol, no regioisomers with parallel and antiparallel  
231 glycerol units (cf. Sinninghe Damsté et al., 2002) exist (Fig. 3e). However, two isomers

232 related to the two options of coupling the dicylic and tricyclic biphytanol moieties to  
233 glycerol are probably present but were not chromatographically resolved.

234 In general, the data plots of compounds with one, two and three rings scatter  
235 within a deviation of a few % along the 1:1 line (Fig. 3b-d), but GDD-0 shows a trend to  
236 lower relative abundance than GDGT-0 (Fig. 3a) while GDD-cren is relatively more  
237 abundant than the corresponding GDGT (Fig. 3e). This phenomenon is analogous to the  
238 relationship between biphytane diols and GDGTs (Schouten et al., 1998), where, in a  
239 selection of marine sediments, the tricyclic biphytane diol was present in higher relative  
240 abundance than the tricyclic biphytanes released by ether cleavage. This observation  
241 likely indicates that isoprenoid GDDs share common sources and/or formation pathways  
242 with biphytane diols.

243 *Methanothermococcus thermolithotrophicus* contained both the core lipids of  
244 GDD-0 and GDGT-0 in abundance of 22 ng GDD-0 and 240 ng GDGT-0 g<sup>-1</sup> biomass,  
245 respectively. After acid hydrolysis of the TLE their abundance increased to 140 ng GDD-  
246 0 and 12000 ng GDGT-0 g<sup>-1</sup> biomass. Although no IPLs of GDD were found in either the  
247 marine sediments or the archaeal culture, the increase in GDD abundance in acid-  
248 hydrolyzed TLE may reflect the presence of GDD IPLs.

249

#### 250 3.4. Source of GDDs

251 By analogy with previously identified biphytane diols (Schouten et al., 1998), the  
252 coexistence of GDDs and GDGTs with similar ring distribution in the biphytanyl chains  
253 suggests that these compounds have closely related if not identical biological sources.  
254 However, for interpreting the environmental occurrence of GDDs, knowledge of their

255 formation pathway is crucial. Three principal scenarios need to be considered and are  
256 briefly discussed: (i) production during sample preparation; (ii) diagenetic production in  
257 sediments; (iii) production as intermediates in GDGT biosynthesis or as products of cell  
258 metabolism.

259         Firstly, GDD production during sample preparation cannot be entirely excluded  
260 but the experimental evidence argues against this as a major mechanism. Different  
261 extraction protocols (experiment C) provided different yields of GDDs and GDGTs  
262 (Fig. 4) but the effect of TCA or elevated temperature and pressure during ASE  
263 extraction did not result in an increased relative yield of GDD within the uncertainty of  
264 quantification. Likewise, in the experiment in which purified GDGT-0 was added to  
265 extracted sediment, no production of GDD-0 occurred during Bligh and Dyer extraction  
266 (experiment B). Finally, no GDD-0 was detected within 24 h of subjecting GDGT-0 to  
267 acid hydrolysis (experiment A). The production of 0.2% GDD-0 after 72 h of acid  
268 hydrolysis is low compared to the relative abundance of GDDs in sediments (Table 1).  
269 These experiments strongly suggest that GDDs were already present in the sediments and  
270 not formed during sample preparation.

271         Secondly, the formation of small quantities of GDD during prolonged acid  
272 hydrolysis shows that, in principle, diagenetic production of these compounds in  
273 sediments is a conceivable mechanism over long timescales. A diagenetic link of GDGTs  
274 and GDDs is consistent with the general relationship of their ring distributions (Fig. 3).  
275 Diagenetic processes could also involve biotic mechanisms such as the recently proposed  
276 recycling of exogenous GDGTs by benthic archaea (Takano et al., 2010; cf. Liu et al.,  
277 2011). The conclusions drawn by Takano et al. (2010) were based on selective uptake of

278 stable isotope label in the glycerol moiety of GDGTs during incubation. The mechanism  
279 would require an intermediate to which newly synthesized glycerol is added; GDDs  
280 fulfill the criteria as intermediate in such a scenario.

281         The detection of GDD-0 as a free core lipid in the TLE of *Methanothermococcus*  
282 *thermolithotrophicus* was probably not due to its artificial production according to the  
283 result of ‘experiment C’. Consequently, even though GDD IPLs were not found, a  
284 biological function as normal functional lipids or intermediates in GDGT synthesis  
285 should not be ruled out. Assuming that GDDs represent components of archaeal  
286 membranes or biosynthetic intermediates, their existence may provide new insights into  
287 the biosynthetic pathway leading to ether lipids. According to the proposed pathway, the  
288 biphytane skeleton should be formed via head-to-head condensation of two archaeol units  
289 (Nemoto et al., 2003). This pathway seems inconsistent with a biological function of  
290 GDDs in archaeal membranes. An alternative, currently unknown biosynthetic pathway,  
291 which can fuse biphytandiol and glycerol units with ether bonds, may be responsible for  
292 this.

293

#### 294         **4. Conclusions**

295         A series of novel archaeal lipids was tentatively assigned as glycerol dibiphytanol  
296 diethers, in which a primary OH group was located on the terminal ( $\omega$ ) carbon. Future  
297 nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) analysis of isolated compounds should provide  
298 confirmation of the structures reported here for GDDs with additional information on  
299 their stereochemistry. The coexistence of GDDs with corresponding GDGTs, their  
300 widespread distribution and remarkable abundance in marine sediments qualify these

301 compounds as important archaeal lipid components in sediments and important targets in  
302 future studies. Diagenesis of GDGTs, especially biodegradation by benthic archaea is a  
303 possible source of GDDs in sediments but also a biological origin should not be excluded  
304 at this point as GDD core lipid was also found in a culture of *Methanothermococcus*  
305 *thermolithotrophicus*. However, so far, no IPL derivatives of GDD have been detected.

306

### 307 **Acknowledgments**

308 This research used samples provided by the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program  
309 (IODP), which is sponsored by the US National Science Foundation and participating  
310 countries under management of Joint Oceanographic Institutions (JOI), Inc. We are  
311 grateful to the participating scientists and ship crews of the Integrated Ocean Drilling  
312 Program (IODP Expedition 311), the Ocean Drilling Program (ODP Legs 160, 201 and  
313 204) and RV Meteor cruise M76/1. We thank J. Rullkötter for providing frozen samples  
314 from ODP Leg 160, and M. Baumgartner and K. Stetter for providing  
315 *Methanothermococcus thermolithotrophicus*. V. Heuer and Y.S. Lin helped to collect  
316 samples and Y. Takano gave useful comments on data analysis. We thank E. Schefuß for  
317 providing access to his ASE system and F. Schubotz, S. Xie, M. Kellermann and A.  
318 Leider for help with experiment and sample preparation. The study was funded by  
319 Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, Germany) through the international graduate  
320 college EUROPROX for a scholarship to X-L.L. Additional funding to support  
321 laboratory work was provided by the European Research Council Advanced Grant  
322 DARCLIFE, the DFG via MARUM Center for Marine Environmental Sciences and  
323 awards (# ETBC OCE-0849940 and ARC-0806228) from the US National Science

324 Foundation to R.E.S. We thank P. Schaeffer and two other anonymous reviewers for  
325 constructive comments.

326

327

328 **References**

329

- 330 Birgel, D., Elvert, M., Han, X., Peckmann, J., 2008. <sup>13</sup>C-depleted biphytanic diacids as  
331 tracers of past anaerobic oxidation of methane. *Organic Geochemistry* 39, 152–  
332 156.
- 333 Hinrichs, K.-U., Hayes, J.M., Sylva, S.P., Brewer, P.G., De Long, E.F., 1999. Methane-  
334 consuming archaeobacteria in marine sediments. *Nature* 398, 802–805.
- 335 Hopmans, E.C., Schouten, S., Pancost, R.D., van der Meer, M.T.J., Sinninghe Damsté,  
336 J.S., 2000. Analysis of intact tetraether lipids in archaeal cell material and  
337 sediments by high performance liquid chromatography/atmospheric pressure  
338 chemical ionization mass spectrometry. *Rapid Communications in Mass  
339 Spectrometry* 14, 585–589.
- 340 Huguet, C., Hopmans, E.C., Febo-Ayala, W., Thompson, D.H., Sinninghe Damsté, J.S.,  
341 Schouten, S., 2006. An improved method to determine the absolute abundance of  
342 glycerol dibiphytanyl glycerol tetraether lipids. *Organic Geochemistry* 37, 1036–  
343 1041.
- 344 Koga, Y., Nishihara, M., Morii, H., Akagawa-Matsushita, M., 1993. Ether polar lipids of  
345 methanogenic bacteria: structures, comparative aspects, and biosyntheses.  
346 *Microbiological Reviews* 57, 164–182.
- 347 Koga, Y., Morii, H., 2007. Biosynthesis of ether-type polar lipids in archaea and  
348 evolutionary considerations. *Microbiology and Molecular Biology Reviews* 71,  
349 97–120.



350 Kuypers, M.M.M., Blokker, P., Erbacher, J., Kinkel, H., Pancost, R.D., Schouten, S.,  
351 Sinninghe Damsté, J.S., 2001. Massive expansion of marine Archaea during a  
352 mid-Cretaceous oceanic anoxic event. *Science* 293, 92-95.

353 Leider, A., Hinrichs, K.-U., Mollenhauer, G., Versteegh, G.J.M., 2010. Core-top  
354 calibration of the lipid-based  $U_{37}^{K'}$  and  $TEX_{86}$  temperature proxies on the southern  
355 Italian shelf (SW Adriatic Sea, Gulf of Taranto). *Earth and Planetary Science*  
356 *Letters* 300, 112–124.

357 Lipp, J.S., Morono, Y., Inagaki, F., Hinrichs, K.-U., 2008. Significant contribution of  
358 Archaea to extant biomass in marine subsurface sediments. *Nature* 454, 991–994.

359 Liu, X.-L., Lipp, J.S., Hinrichs, K.-U., 2011. Distribution of core and intact GDGTs in  
360 marine sediments. *Organic Geochemistry* 42, 368-375.

361 Lutnaes, B.F., Brandal, Ø., Sjöblom, J., Krane, J., 2006. Archaeal  $C_{80}$  isoprenoid  
362 tetraacids responsible for naphthenate deposition in crude oil processing. *Organic*  
363 *and Biomolecular Chemistry* 4, 616–620.

364 Lutnaes, B.F., Krane, J., Smith, B.E., Rowland, S.J., 2007. Structure elucidation of  $C_{80}$ ,  
365  $C_{81}$  and  $C_{82}$  isoprenoid tetraacids responsible for naphthenate deposition in crude  
366 oil production. *Organic and Biomolecular Chemistry* 5, 1873–1877.

367 Meunier-Christman, C., 1988. *Geochimie organique de phosphates et schistes bitumineux*  
368 *marocains: Géochimie, étude, phosphatogénèse*. PhD thesis, University of  
369 Strasbourg, 133 pp.

370 Nemoto, N., Shida, Y., Shimada, H., Oshima, T., Yamagishi, A., 2003. Characterization  
371 of the precursor of tetraether lipid biosynthesis in the thermoacidophilic archaeon  
372 *Thermoplasma acidophilum*. *Extremophiles* 7, 235–243.

373 Pancost, R.D., Hopmans, E.C., Sinninghe Damsté, J.S., MEDINAUT Shipboard  
374 Scientific Party, 2001. Archaeal lipids in Mediterranean cold seeps: molecular  
375 proxies for anaerobic methane oxidation. *Geochimica et Cosmochimica Acta* 65,  
376 1611–1627.

377 Rossel, P. E., Elvert, M., Ramette, A., Boetius, A., Hinrichs, K. -U., 2010. Factors  
378 controlling the distribution of anaerobic methanotrophic communities in marine  
379 environments: evidence from intact polar lipids. *Geochimica et Cosmochimica*  
380 *Acta* 75, 164–184.

381 Saito, H., Suzuki, N., 2010. Distribution of acyclic and cyclic biphytanediols in recent  
382 marine sediments from IODP Site C0001, Nankai Trough. *Organic Geochemistry*  
383 41, 1001–1004.

384 Schouten, S., Hoefs, M.J.L., Koopmans, M.P., Bosch, H.-J., Sinninghe Damsté, J.S., 1998.  
385 Structural characterization, occurrence and fate of archaeal ether-boundacyclic  
386 and cyclic biphytanes and corresponding diols in sediments. *Organic*  
387 *Geochemistry* 29, 1305–1319.

388 Schouten, S., Hopmans, E.C., Pancost, R.D., Sinninghe Damsté, J.S., 2000. Widespread  
389 occurrence of structurally diverse tetraether membrane lipids: Evidence for the  
390 ubiquitous presence of low-temperature relatives of hyperthermophiles.  
391 *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA* 97, 14421-14426.

392 Schouten, S., Hopmans, E.C., Schefuß, E., Sinninghe Damsté, J.S., 2002. Distributional  
393 variations in marine crenarchaeotal membrane lipids: a new tool for  
394 reconstructing ancient sea water temperatures? *Earth and Planetary Science*  
395 *Letters* 204, 265–274.

396 Schouten, S., Hopmans, E.C., Bass, M., Boumann, H., Standfest, S., Könneke, M., Stahl,  
397 S.A., Sinninghe Damsté, J.S., 2008. Intact membrane lipids of “*Candidatus*  
398 *Nitrosopumilus maritimus*”, a cultivated representative of the cosmopolitan  
399 mesophilic group I Crenarchaeota. *Applied and Environmental Microbiology* 74,  
400 2433–2440.

401 Sinninghe Damsté, J.S., Schouten, S., Hopmans, E.C., van Duin, A.C.T., Geenevasen,  
402 J.A.J., 2002. Crenarchaeol: the characteristic core glycerol dibiphytanyl glycerol  
403 tetraether membrane lipid of cosmopolitan pelagic crenarchaeota. *Journal of Lipid*  
404 *Research* 43, 1641–1651.

405 Sturt, H.F., Summons, R.E., Smith, K., Elvert, M., Hinrichs, K.-U., 2004. Intact polar  
406 membrane lipids in prokaryotes and sediments deciphered by high-performance  
407 liquid chromatography/electrospray ionization multistage mass spectrometry-new  
408 biomarkers for biogeochemistry and microbial ecology. *Rapid Communications*  
409 *in Mass Spectrometry* 18, 617–628.

410 Takano, Y., Chikaraishi, Y., Ogawa, O.N., Nomaki, H., Morono, Y., Inagaki, F., Kitazato,  
411 H., Hinrichs, K.-U., Ohkouchi, N., 2010. Sedimentary membrane lipids recycled  
412 by deep-sea benthic archaea. *Nature Geoscience* 3, 858–861.

413 Tornabene, T.G., Langworthy, T.A., 1979. Diphytanyl and dibiphytanyl glycerol ether  
414 lipids of methanogenic archaeobacteria. *Science* 203, 51–53.

415 White, D.C., Davis, W.M., Nickels, J.S., King, J.D., Bobbie, R.J., 1979. Determination of  
416 the sedimentary microbial biomass by extractable lipid phosphate. *Oecologia* 40,  
417 51–62.

418

419 **Figure captions**

420

421 **Fig. 1.** HPLC-APCI-MS chromatogram (SIM mode, shown as extracted ion  
422 chromatogram EIC), showing GDDs and corresponding GDGTs in the TLE of marine  
423 sediment sample M76/1 GeoB 12806-2. GDGTs and corresponding GDDs are labeled in  
424 the same color. Molecular structures of possible GDD isomers were not shown.

425

426 **Fig. 2.** MS<sup>2</sup> (qTOF) mass spectra showing dominant fragment ions for GDD-0 and GDD-  
427 cren.

428

429 **Fig. 3.** GDGT vs. GDD plots showing ring distribution of GDGTs and GDDs in 12  
430 marine sediment samples.

431

432 **Fig. 4.** Yield of GDGTs and GDDs with three different extraction protocols. Error bars  
433 were calculated from two replicate samples for each extraction protocol. Concentrations  
434 of GDGTs and GDDs (ng/g dry sediment) in the TLE of each sample are based on  
435 duplicated analysis. 'B&D +PO<sub>4</sub>' and 'B&D +PO<sub>4</sub> +TCA' represent the Bligh and Dyer  
436 extraction with only phosphate buffer and with both phosphate and TCA buffers,  
437 respectively. 'ASE' stands for extraction performed by accelerated solvent extraction.

438

**Table 1**

The ratio of total GDDs vs. the sum of total GDGTs and GDDs in 12 marine sediment samples<sup>a</sup> and other samples. Since appropriate standards were not available for GDD quantification, the ratio is based on detector responses and may therefore not represent the relative abundance of GDDs properly. However, the ratio is useful for comparison of different samples.

	Sample	GDDs/(GDGTs+GDDs) (%)
M 76/1	GeoB 12806-2	4.5
Namibia Margin	GeoB 12807-2	9.3
ODP Leg 201	1229D 4H4	17.0
Peru Margin	1229A 22H1	11.1
ODP Leg 201	1226B 10H3	8.6
Equatorial Pacific	1226E 20H3	8.8
ODP Leg 204	1250D 6H5	11.3
Hydrate Ridge	1250D 12H5	9.9
IODP Exp. 311	1327C 10H5	10.9
Cascadia Margin	1327C 13X6	10.7
ODP Leg 160	966C 5H02	3.5
Mediterranean	966C 7H04	7.6
Methanothermococcus thermolithotrophicus	TLE hydrolyzed TLE	8.6 1.1
GDGT-0 + extracted sediment + B&D <sup>b</sup>		n.d. <sup>c</sup>
GDGT-0 + acid hydrolysis at 70°C for 24 h		n.d. <sup>c</sup>
GDGT-0 + acid hydrolysis at 70°C for 72 h		0.2

<sup>a</sup> Detailed sampling data of marine sediment samples is given by Liu et al. (2011); <sup>b</sup>B&D,

Bligh and Dyer extraction; <sup>c</sup> n.d., GDDs not detected .

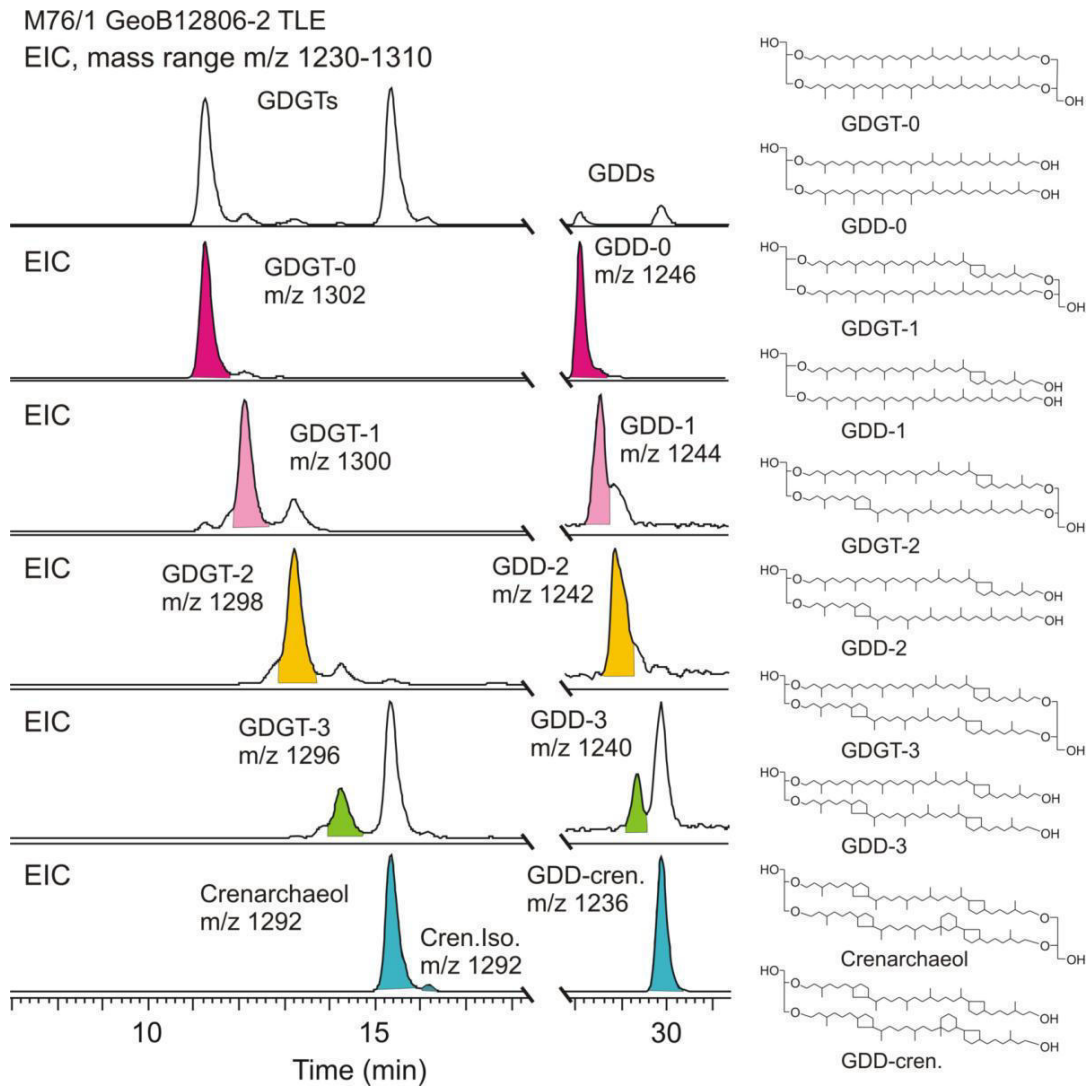


Figure 1.

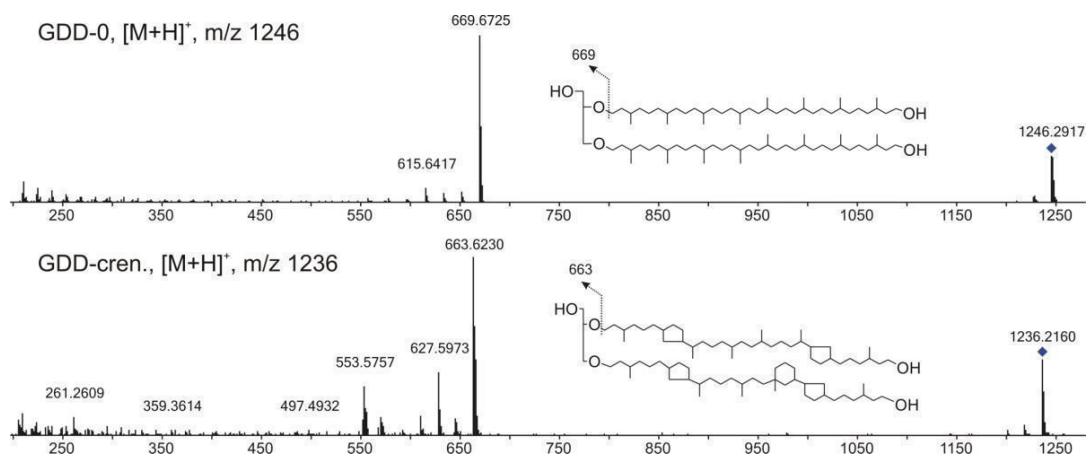


Figure 2.

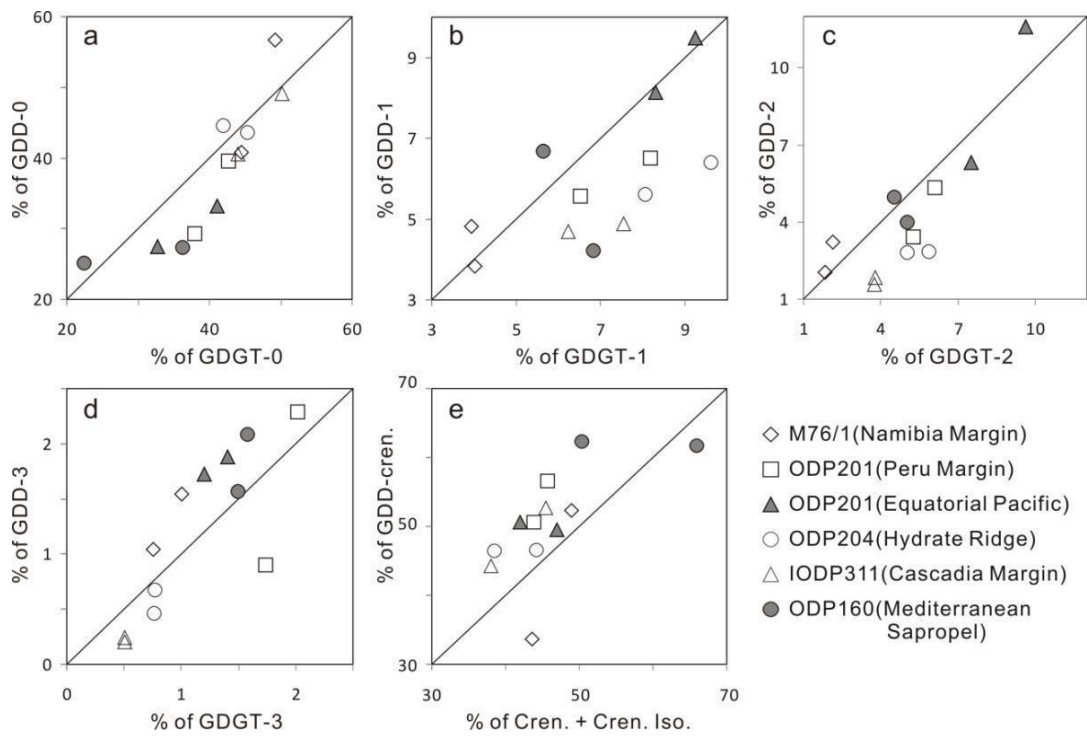


Figure 3.



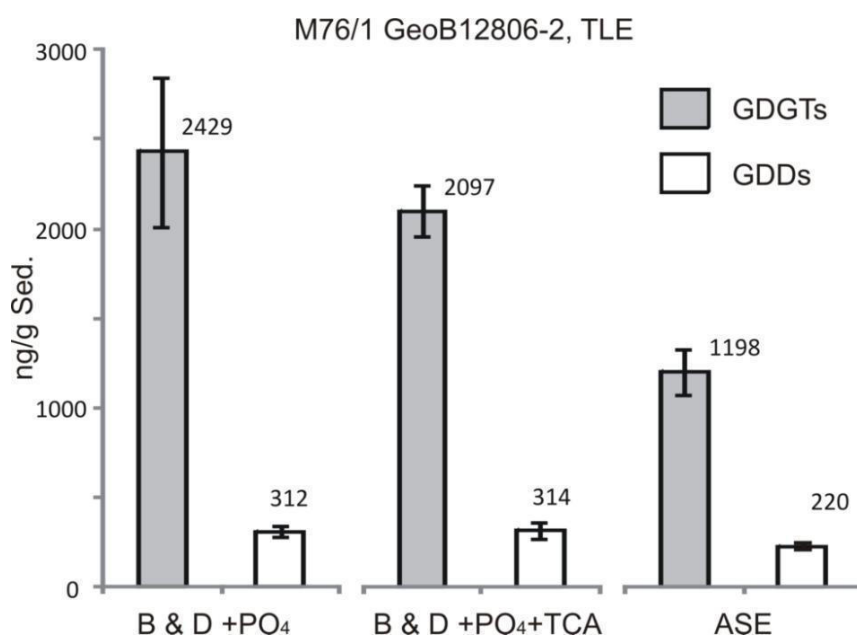


Figure 4.