Contamination

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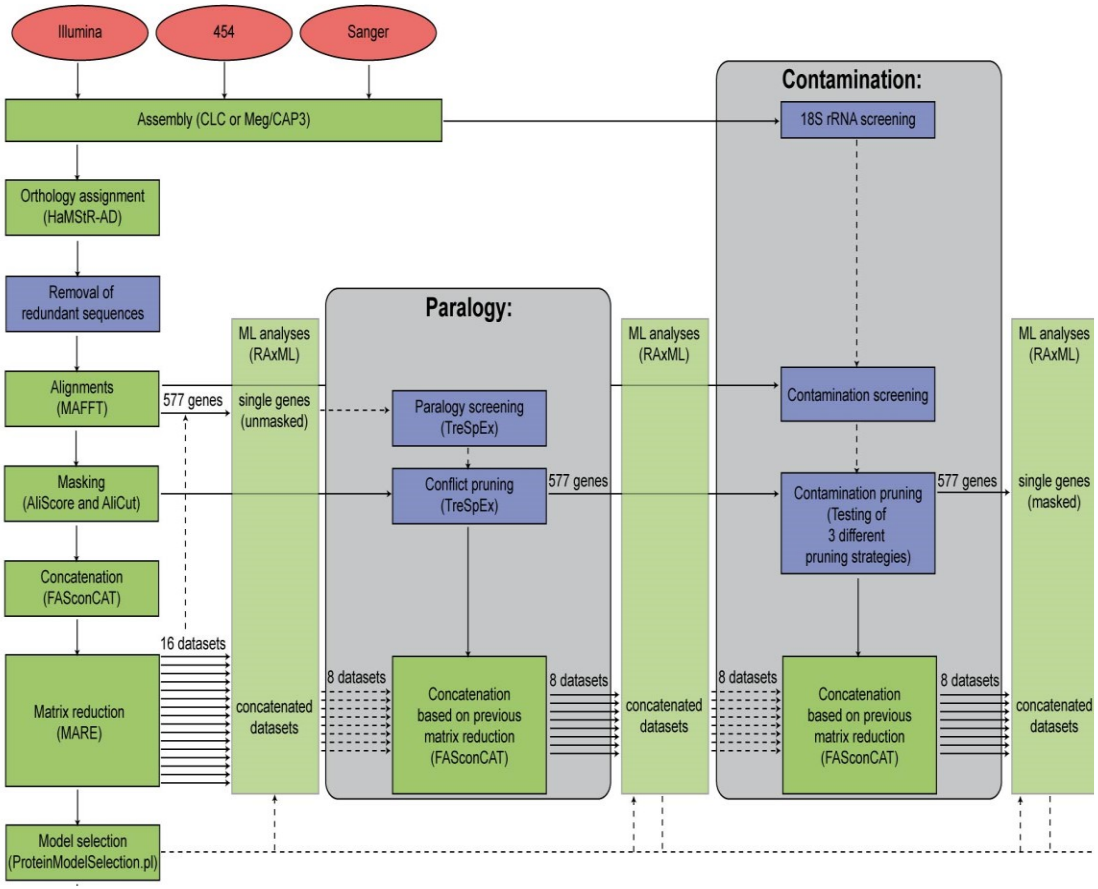
Going beyond the standard



Struck et al. (2014) MBE

Why care about contamination?

You aren't what you eat

Henry Gee

An obscure marine worm does not belong among the molluscs, as had been thought. Rather, it has a claim to being the most primitive extant member of the group of animals that includes vertebrates.

Only those fond of the less-frequented pages of zoology textbooks — the chapters that deal with organisms such as gastrotrichs and gnathostomulids — will have ever heard of a small marine worm called *Xenoturbella bocki*. First described in 1949, this creature has struggled to find a phylogenetic home, and has been loosely attached to many animal groups. The problem is its unassuming nature. *Sans* proper gonads, excretory system, body cavity, even a through gut, the worm has very few distinguishing features. And it is only about 2 cm in length. In the end, zoologists usually admitted defeat and banished it to one of several groups of primitive flatworm.

G. RUDD

Figure 1 **Spot the ordinary flower-girl. Audrey Hepburn as Eliza Doolittle, and *Xenoturbella*.**

A metagenomic approach

Barcoding gene

BLAST

Library

Struck et al. (in review) Curr. Biol.