



University of Naples "Federico II"  
**Marine Microbial Diversity**

aa 2022-2023

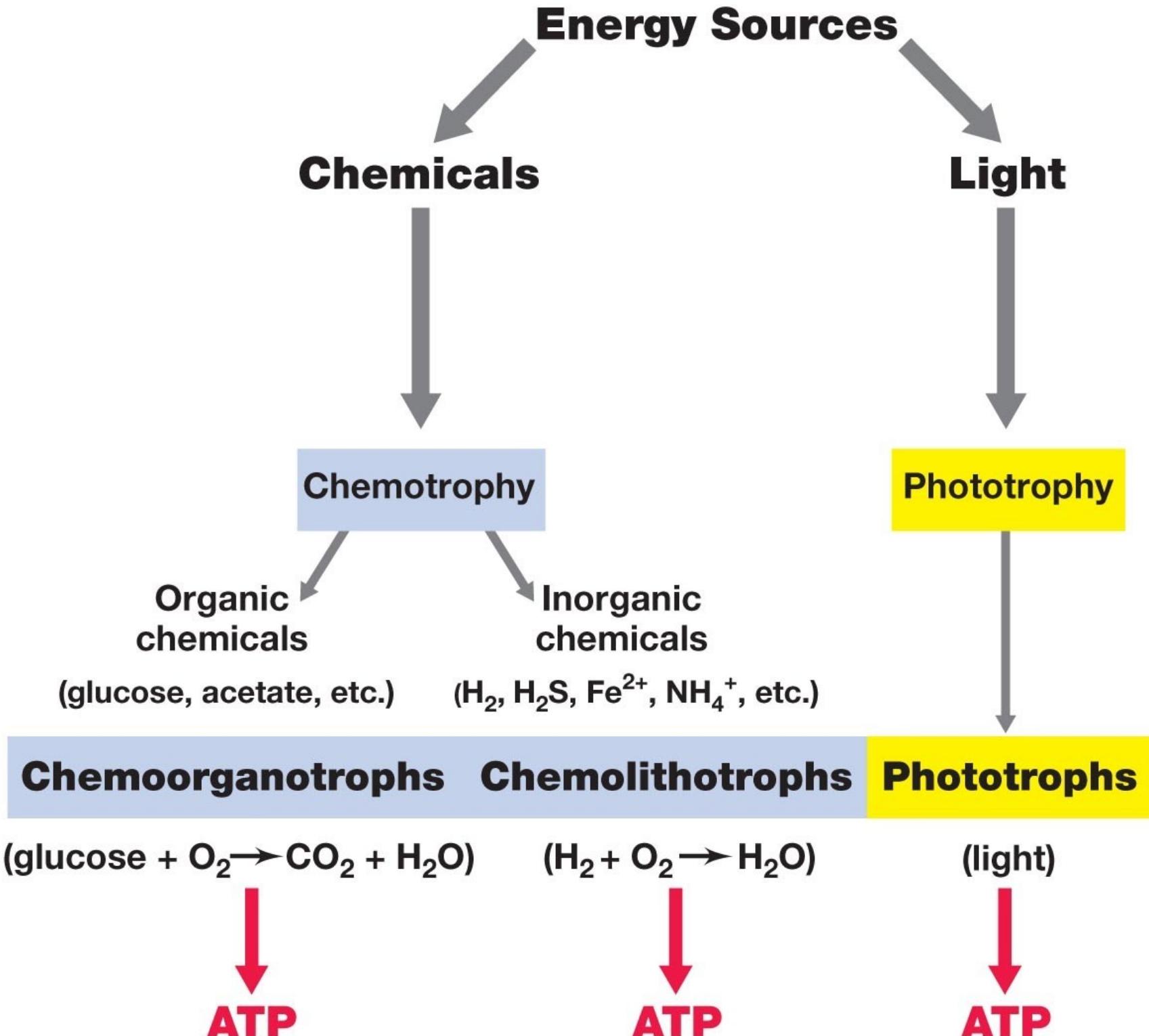
# Nutritional Groups 2

# *Life is based on RedOx reactions*

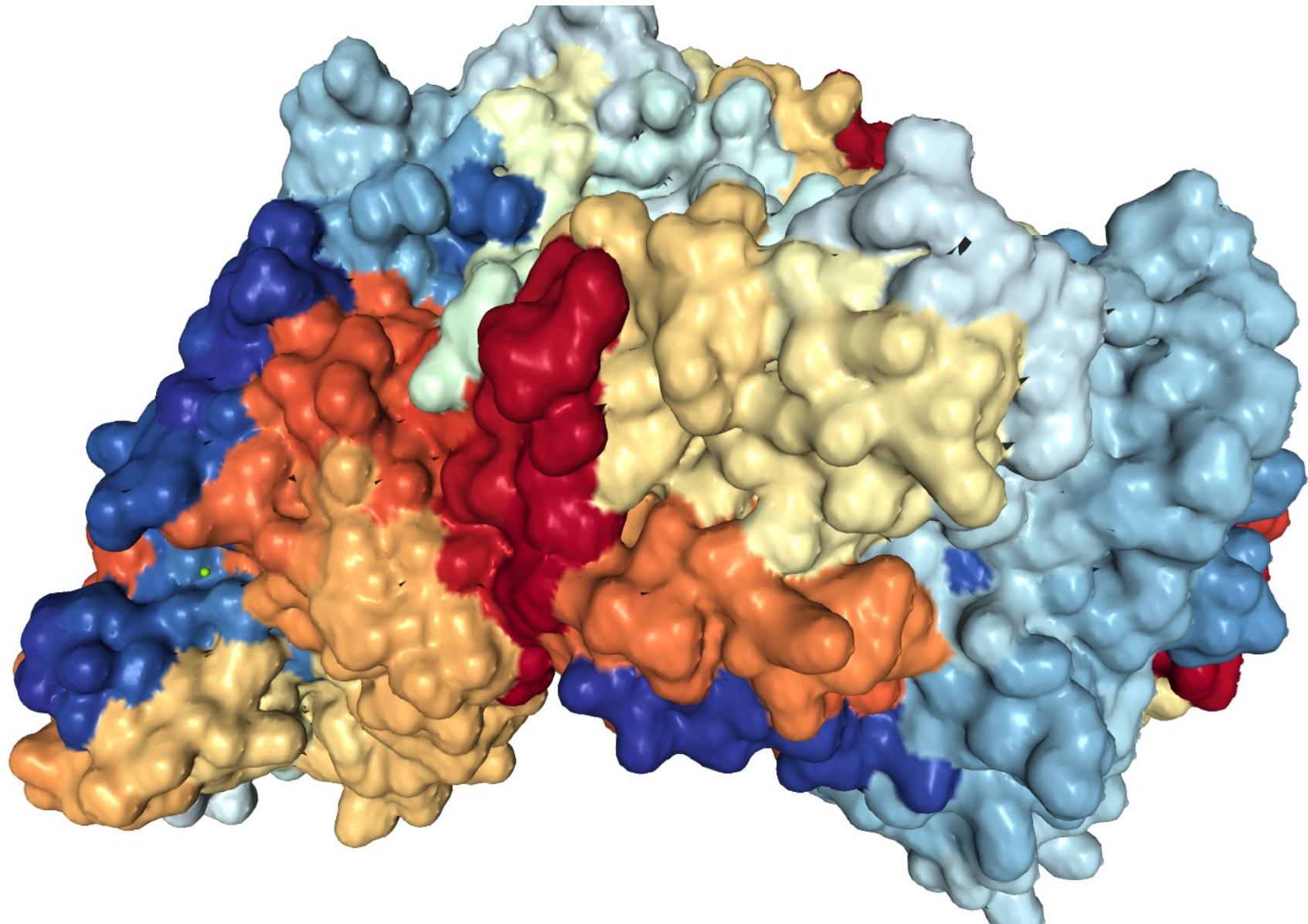
Refresher:

An **oxidation-reduction** (redox) **reaction** is a type of chemical reaction that involves a **transfer of electrons** between two species. An oxidation-reduction reaction is any chemical reaction in which the oxidation number of a molecule, atom, or ion changes by gaining or losing an electron.

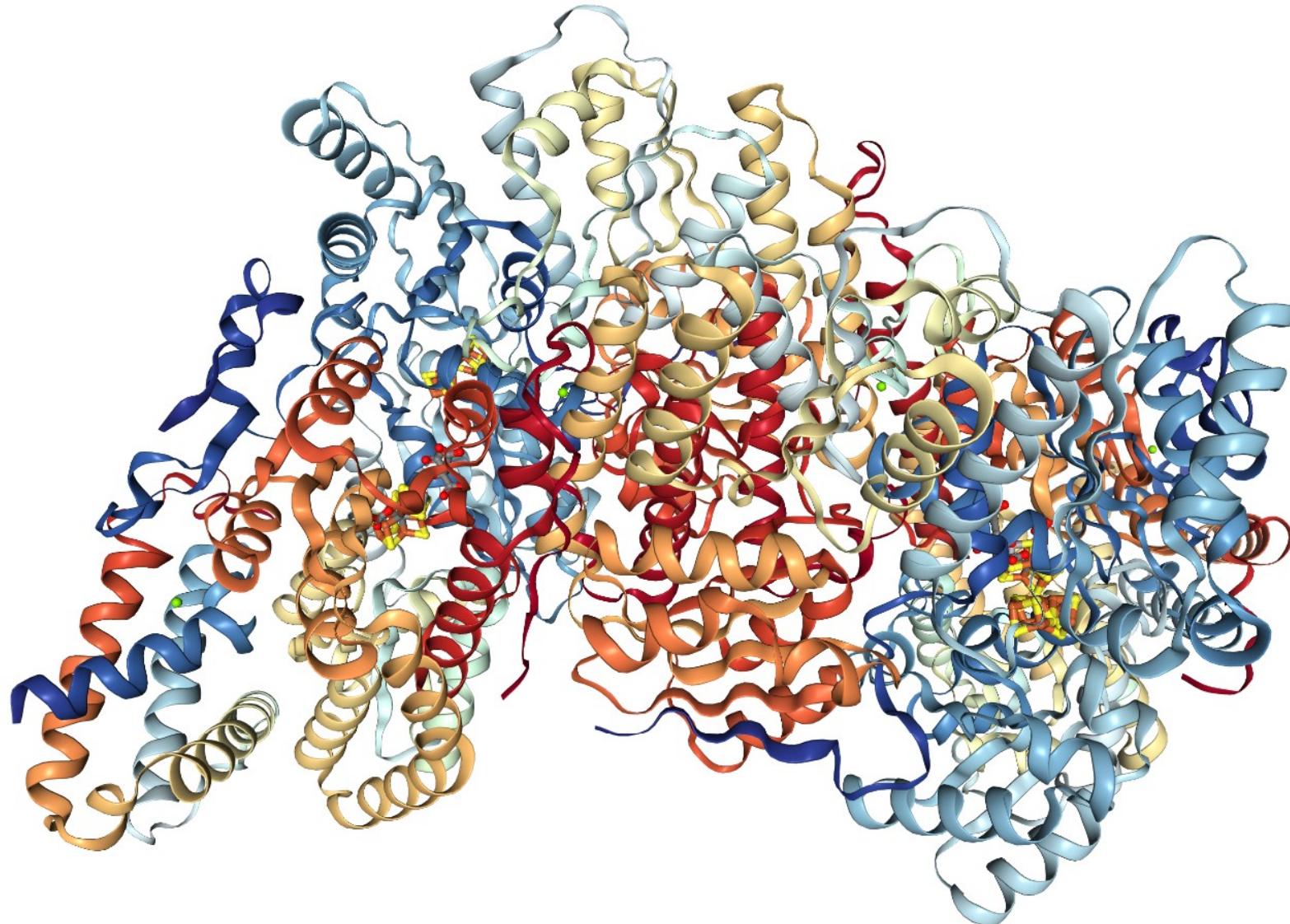




# Life is *literally* electric



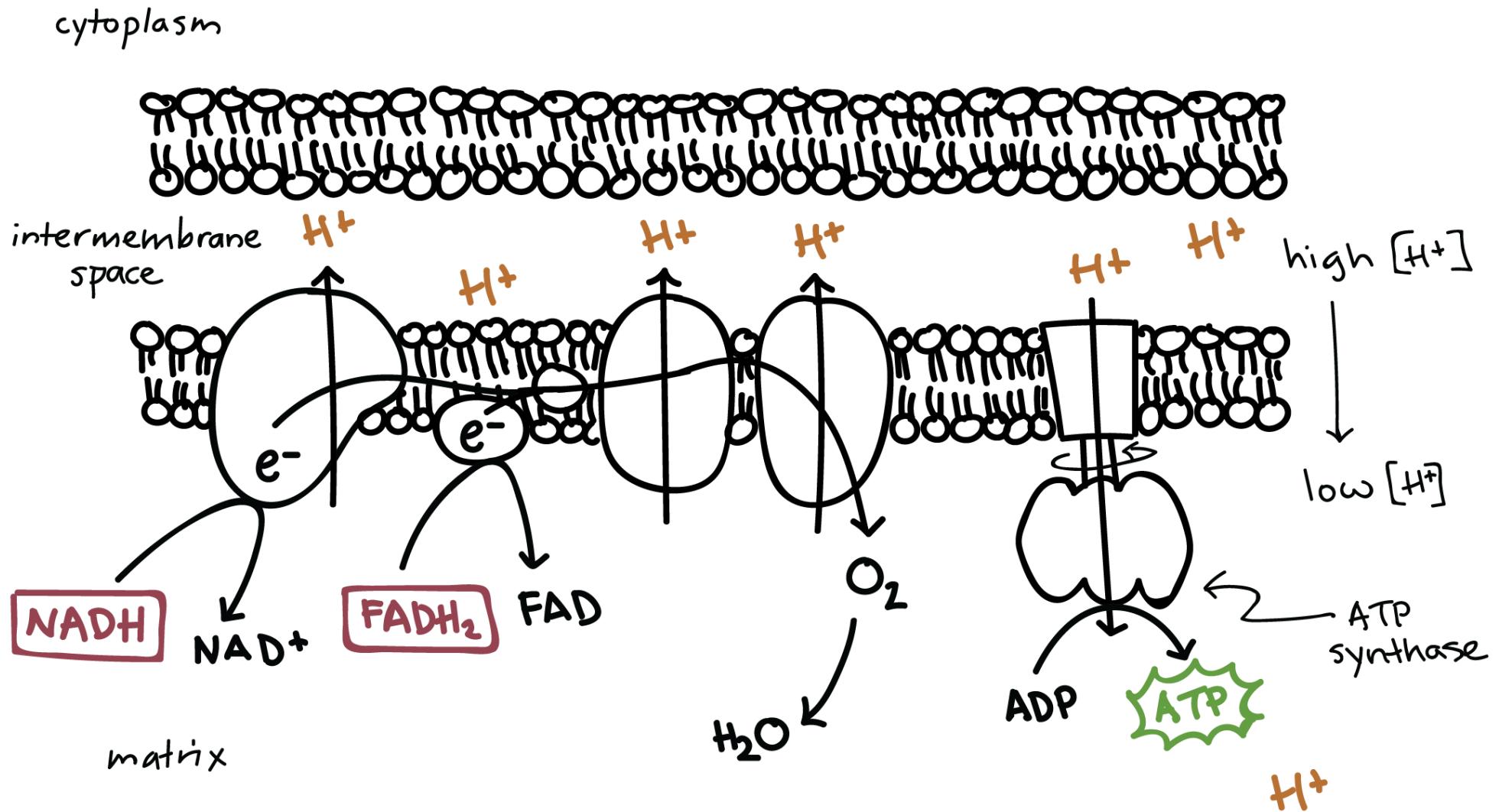
# Life is *literally* electric



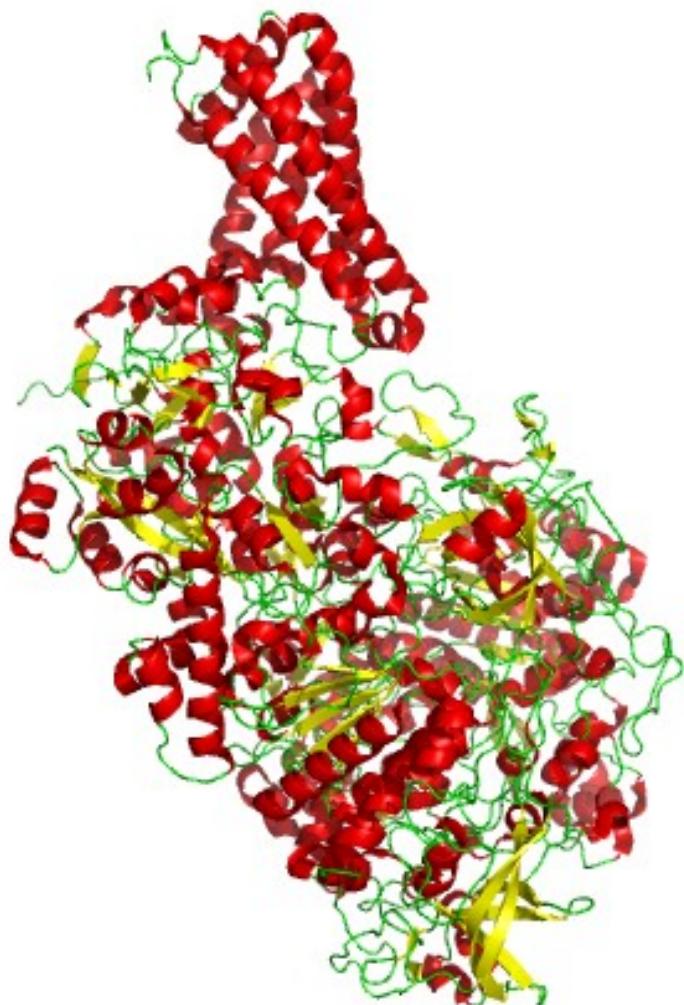
# Life is *literally* electric



# Life is *literally* electric

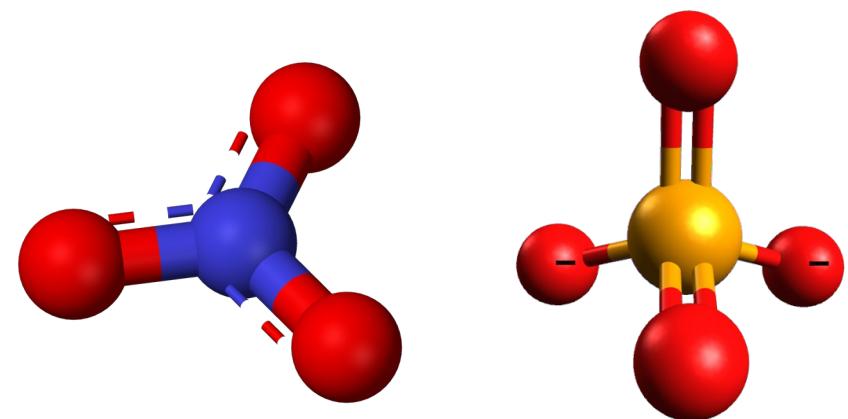


# One more thing to keep in mind...



nitrite reductase enzyme ( $\text{NO}_3^- \rightarrow \text{NO}_2^-$ )

While working primarily on **Nitrate**, this reductase enzyme can also act on **Selenate**, thus being **promiscuous** with regard to the substrate



# Heterotrophy

- *Heterotrophy* is the use of organic carbon sources for anabolic purposes
- Major pathways are *Glycolysis* and *Tri-Carboxylic Acid cycle* (TCA cycle)
- Coupled to *aerobic* or *anaerobic respiration*. Aerobic chemorganoheterotrophy is a major sink of oxygen
- Many heterotrophic microorganisms have the “*fermentation option*”

# Fermentation

- Fermentation is a major metabolism in *absence of inorganic electron acceptors*. Fermenting organisms can be *obligate* or *facultative*
- In fermentation redox balance is achieved by having the substrate serve as *both electron donor and electron acceptor* and that ATP is synthesized by *substrate-level phosphorylation*. PMF is not involved
- Redox balance is achieved in fermentations by the *excretion* from the cell of fermentation products, reduced substances such as *acids* or *alcohols* that are produced as end products of the catabolism of the original fermentable substance
- Fermentations are classified by either the substrate fermented or the products formed. A diverse array of products can be produced

# Aerobic and Anaerobic Respiration

- *Respiration* is the process of using an *inorganic terminal electron acceptor* in the electron transport chain
- *Aerobic respiration* is the dominant process in the extant biosphere
- Because the O<sub>2</sub>/H<sub>2</sub>O couple is most electropositive, more energy is available when O<sub>2</sub> is used as a terminal electron acceptor than when any other acceptor is used
- Other electron acceptors involved in anaerobic respiration are manganic ion ( $Mn_4^+$ ), ferric iron ( $Fe_3^+$ ), nitrate ( $NO_3^-$ ), and nitrite ( $NO_2^-$ ), sulfate ( $SO_4^{2-}$ ), elemental sulfur ( $S^0$ ), and carbon dioxide ( $CO_2$ ) among others
- Prokaryotes performing aerobic and anaerobic respiration can be both *heterotrophs* and *autotrophs*

# Assimilative and Dissimilative Reductions

- Inorganic compounds (e.g.  $\text{NO}_3^-$ ,  $\text{SO}_4^{2-}$ ,  $\text{CO}_2$ ) are reduced by many organisms as sources of cellular nitrogen, sulfur, and carbon (e.g. amino groups, sulfhydryl groups, organic carbon). This is **assimilative reduction** because the group is assimilated
- This is different from respiration, which is the reduction of inorganic compound for energy conserving reason. This is also known as **dissimilative reduction**, and often the product are excreted from the cell
- Most organisms carry out an assortment of assimilative metabolisms, whereas a more restricted group catalyze dissimilative metabolisms
- Several inorganic compounds can be both electron donor or electron acceptors (e.g.  $\text{S}^0$ ) **depending on the redox couple involved**

# The Energetics of Chemolithotrophy

- *Chemolithotrophs* are organisms that obtain energy from the oxidation of inorganic compounds
- Chemolithotrophs can tap into many natural sources of inorganic electron donors, including *geological*, *biological*, and *anthropogenic*
- *Mixotrophs* are chemolithotrophs that require organic carbon as a carbon source
- Many sources of reduced molecules exist in the environment
- The oxidation of different reduced compounds yields varying amounts of energy

# *Types of Chemolithotrophy*

e<sup>-</sup> donors

$H_2$ ,  $NH_4^+$ ,  $H_2S$ ,  $S_{(n)}^-$ ,  $S^0$ ,  $S_2O_3^{2-}$ ,  $S^{2-}$ ,  $CH_4$ ,  $CO$ ,  $Fe^{2+}$ ,  $As^{3+}$ , etc...

e<sup>-</sup> acceptors

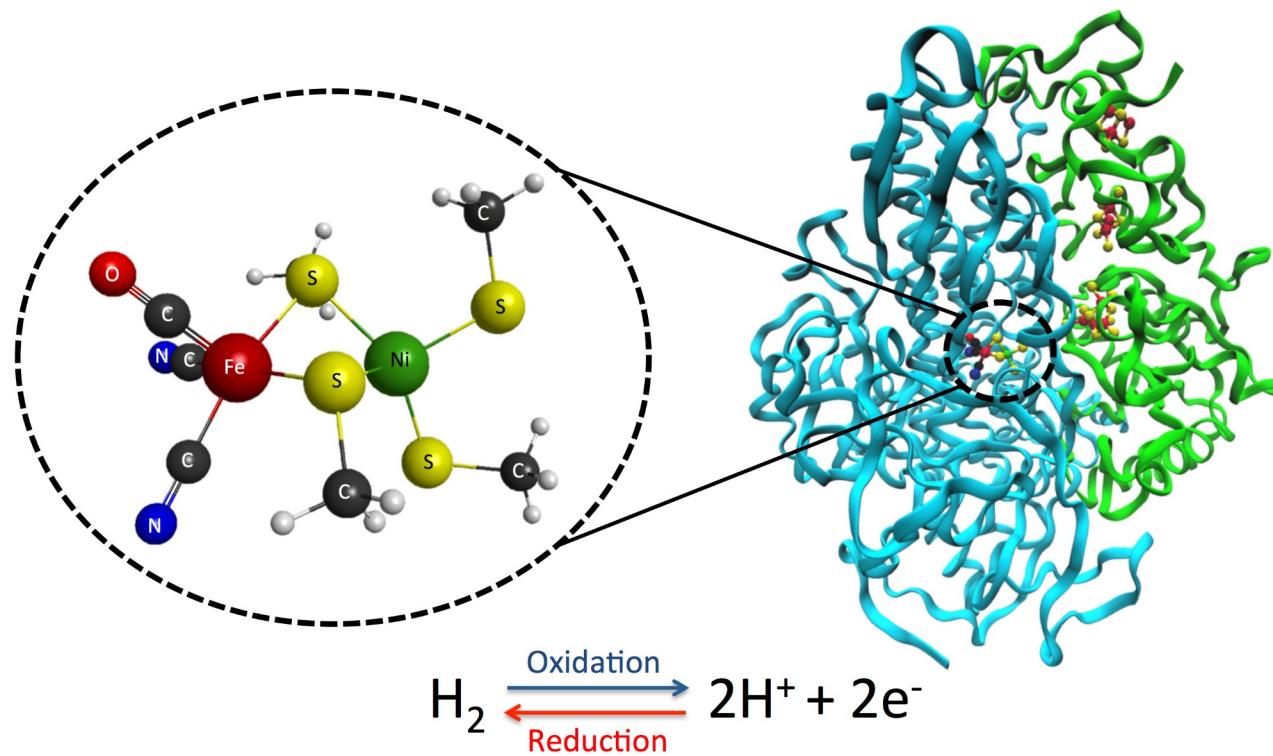
$O_2$ ,  $NO_3^-$ ,  $NO_2^-$ ,  $N_2O$ ,  $NO$ ,  $SO_4^{2-}$ ,  $SO_3^{2-}$ ,  $S^0$ ,  $CO_2$ ,  $Fe^{3+}$ ,  $Mn^{2+}$ ,  $SeO_4^{2-}$ ,  $AsO_4^{3-}$ ,  $UO_3^{2-}$ ,  $TeO_4^{2-}$ , etc...

# Hydrogen Oxidation

- *Hydrogen* ( $H_2$ ) is a common product of microbial metabolism, especially of some fermentations, serpentinization and volcanic activity
- Hydrogen oxidizers obtain the most energy per two electrons oxidized
- A number of (phylogenetically different) aerobic chemolithotrophs can use hydrogen (known as *knallgas* bacteria), producing water as byproduct
- *Anaerobic chemolithotrophs* can also oxidize hydrogen at the expenses of other oxidized compounds (e.g. nitrate, sulfate, ferric iron,  $CO_2$ )

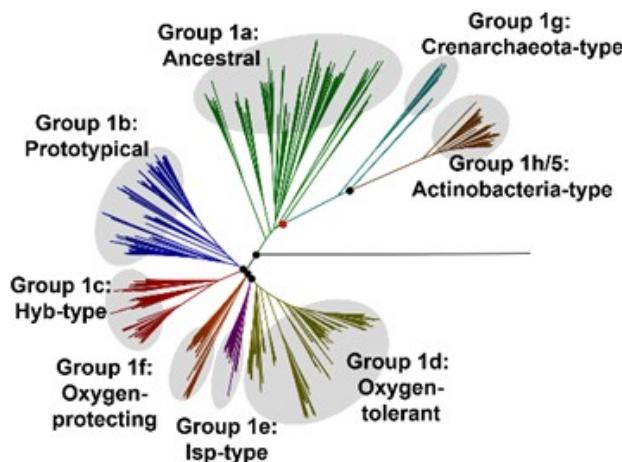
# Hydrogen Oxidation

- *Hydrogenases* are the key enzymes in hydrogen oxidation
- The active site can be either a *[NiFe]*, *[FeFe]* or *[Fe]* center
- Hydrogenases are both *membrane bound*, *periplasmic* or *cytosolic*, and can be *respiratory*, *assimilatory* or *hydrogen producing*

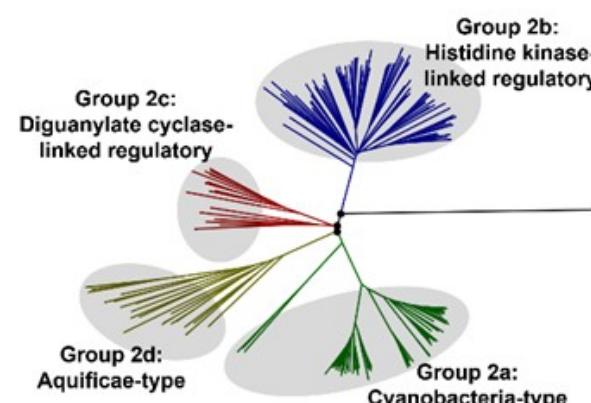


# Hydrogen Oxidation

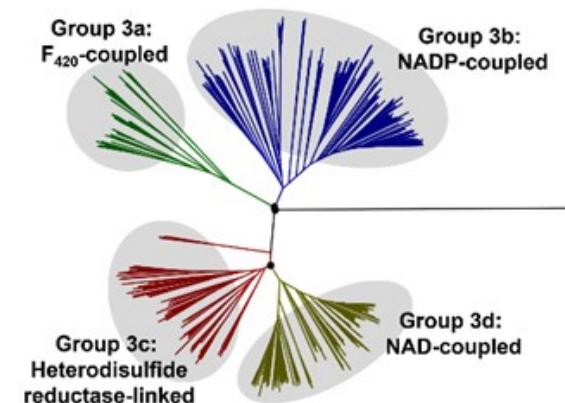
## Group 1: Membrane-bound H<sub>2</sub>-uptake [NiFe]-hydrogenases



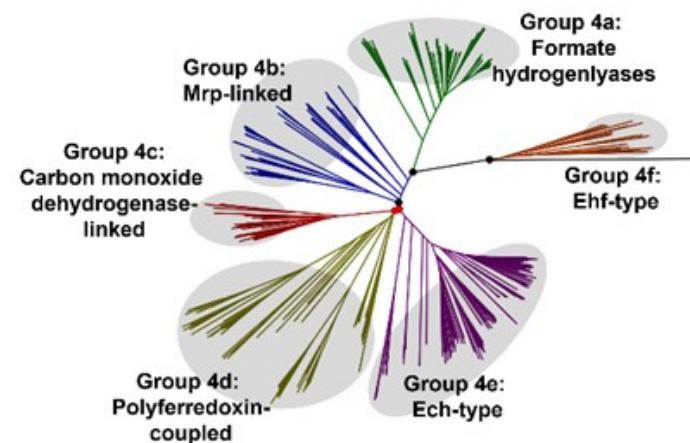
## Groups 2: Cytosolic H<sub>2</sub>-uptake [NiFe]-hydrogenases



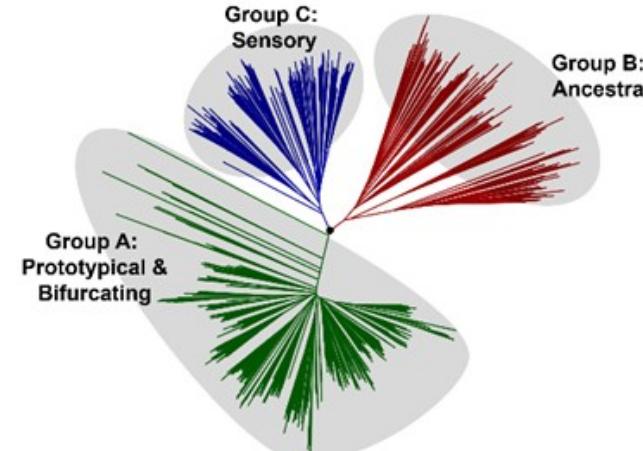
## Group 3: Cytosolic bidirectional [NiFe]-hydrogenases



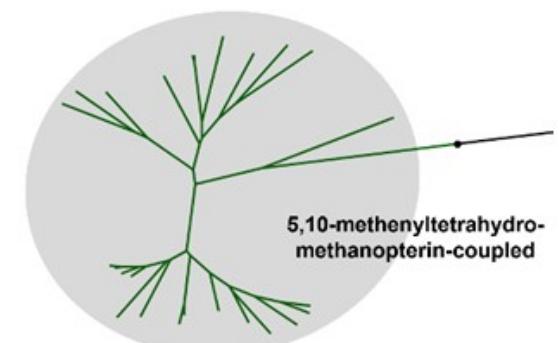
## Group 4: Membrane-bound H<sub>2</sub>-evolving [NiFe]-hydrogenases



## [FeFe]-hydrogenases



## [Fe]-hydrogenases



# Hydrogen oxidation (aerobic)

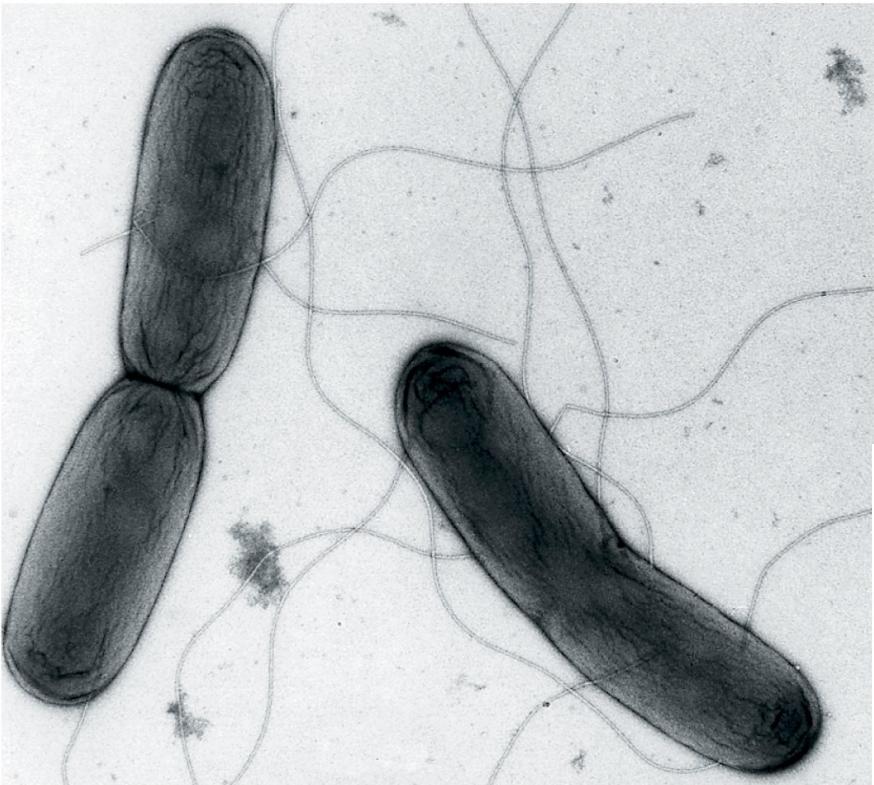


Figure 12-14 Brock Biology of Microorganisms 11/e  
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*Ralstonia eutropha*

Two hydrogenases are present: the membrane-bound is involved in energetics (PMF), while the cytoplasmic (assimilatory) makes NADH for Carbon Fixation

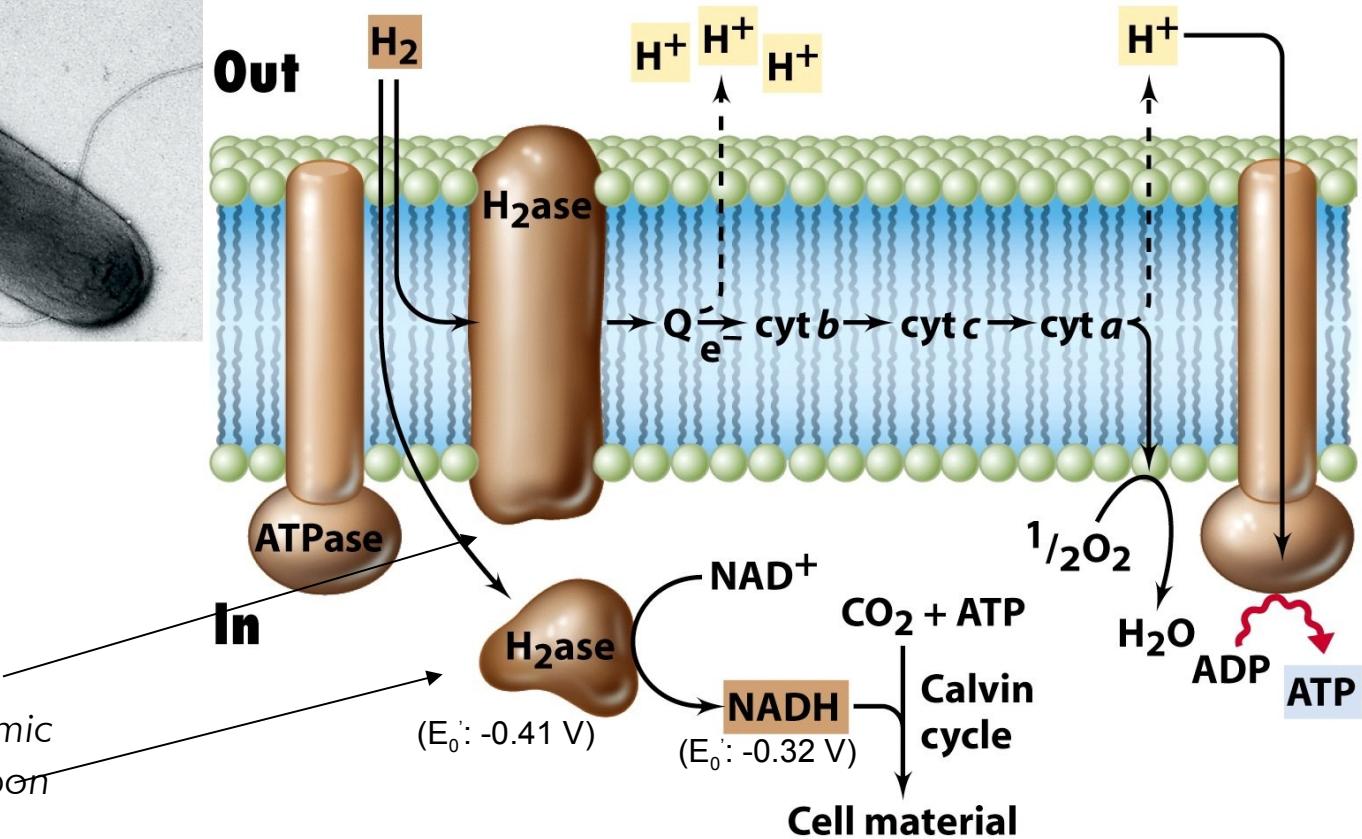
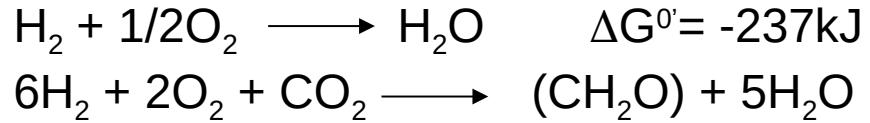
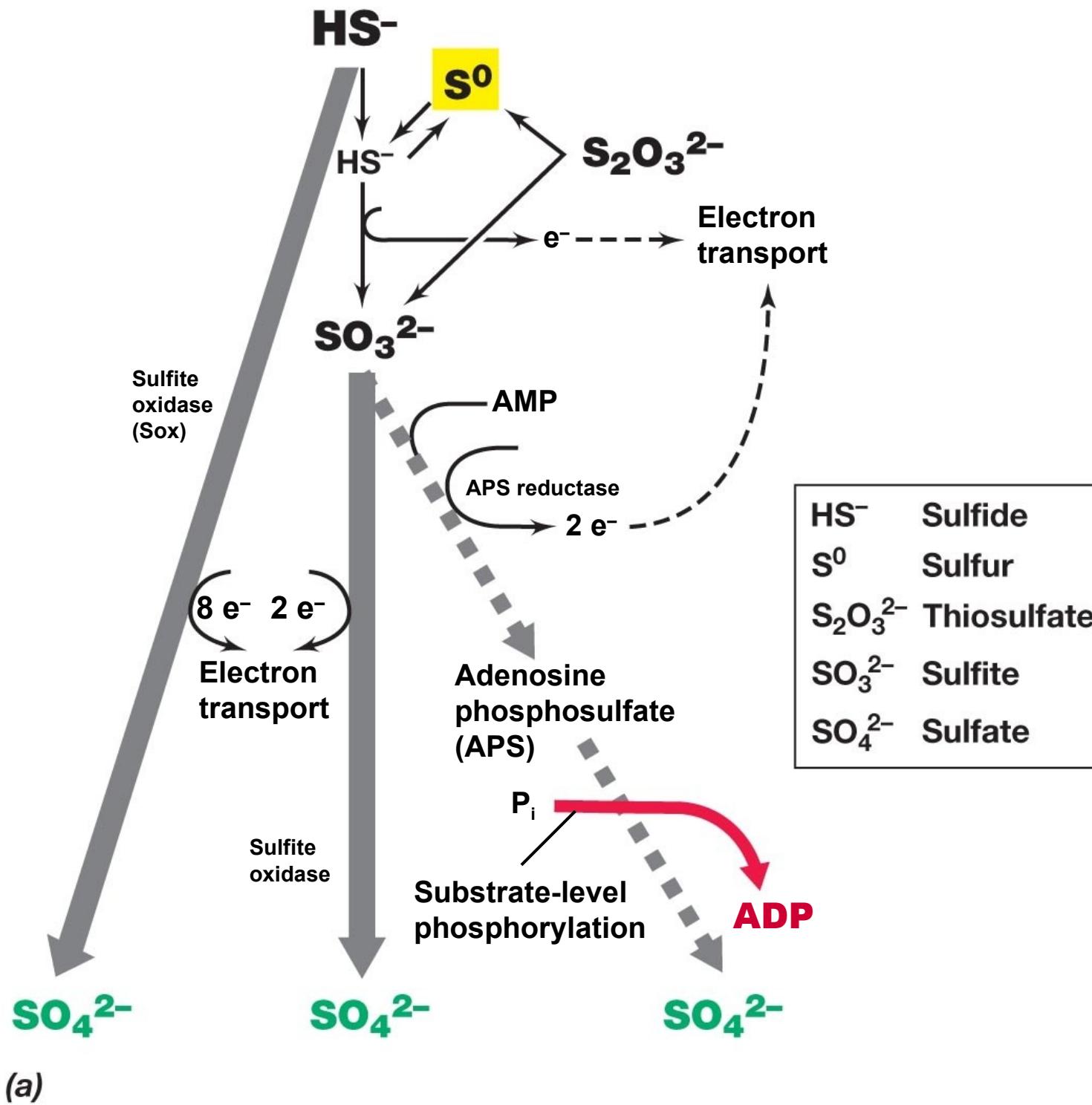
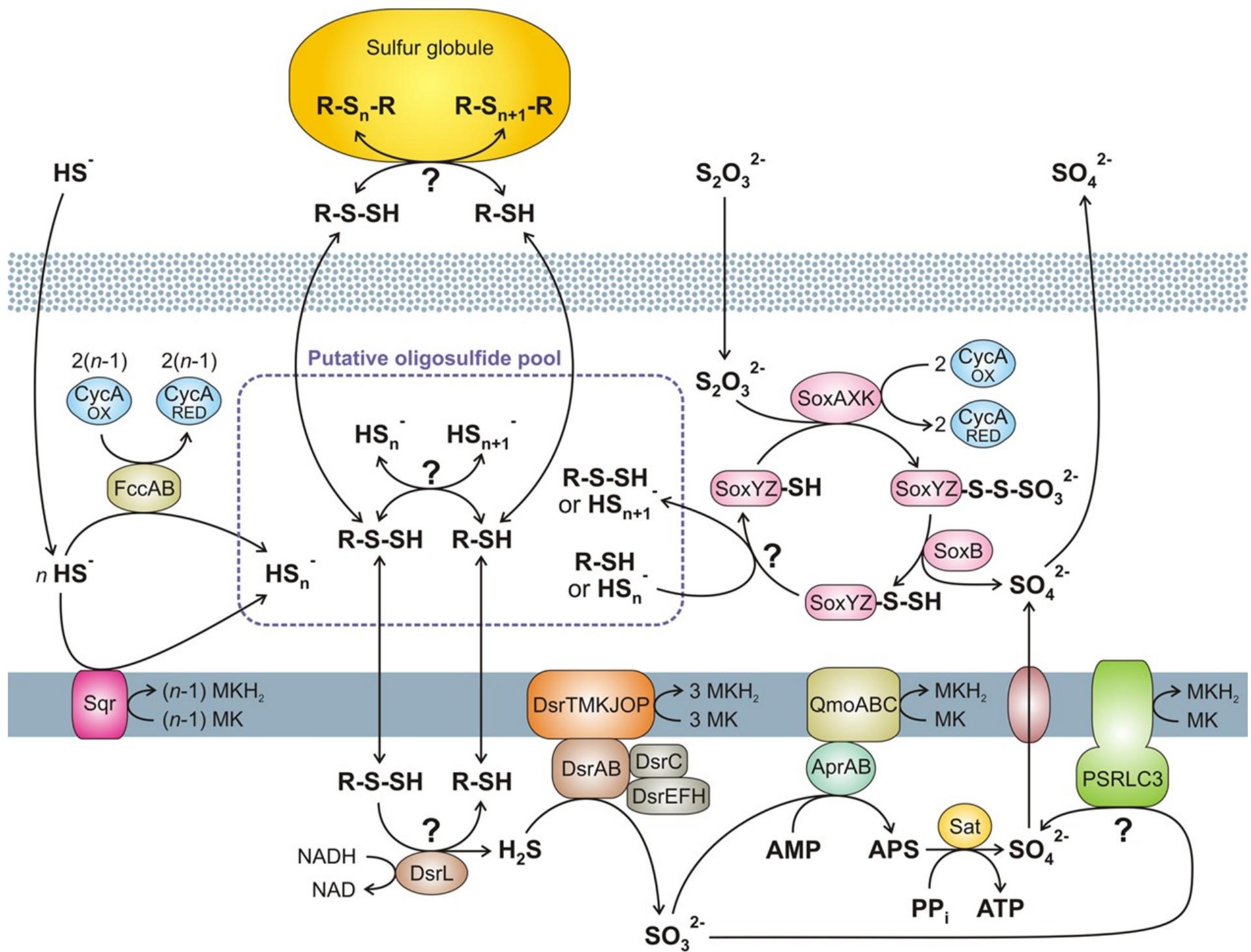


Figure 17-25 Brock Biology of Microorganisms 11/e  
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# Oxidation of Reduced **Sulfur** Compounds

- Many reduced sulfur compounds are used as electron donors
- $H_2S$ ,  $S^0$ ,  $S_2O_3^-$  are commonly used
- One product of sulfur oxidation is  $H^+$ , which results in a lowering of the pH of its surroundings
- Several enzymes are involved in sulfur compound oxidation (e.g. *Sox*, *Aps*, *Sulfite Oxidase*)
- Sulfur Oxidizers are major player in numerous extreme environments
- Usually aerobic, but some organisms can use nitrate as an electron acceptor





# Sulfate Reduction

- Sulfate ( $\text{SO}_4^{2-}$ ) is reduced by the *sulfate-reducing bacteria (SBR)*, a highly diverse group of obligately anaerobic bacteria widely distributed in nature
- The end product of sulfate reduction is *hydrogen sulfide ( $\text{H}_2\text{S}$ )*, an important natural product that participates in many biogeochemical processes
- *Sulfate reduction* is a widespread and important pathway of organic matter degradation in anaerobic sediments. Sulfate reducers can be autotrophic or heterotrophic
- A number of sulfate reducers are member of the class *Deltaproteobacteria* of the phylum Proteobacteria
- *Hydrogen* and a number of *organic compounds and organic acids* (e.g. Acetate, Lactate, Propionate, Butyrate, Ethanol and other alcohols Long-chain fatty acids) are used as electron donors in sulfate reduction

# Sulfur Reduction

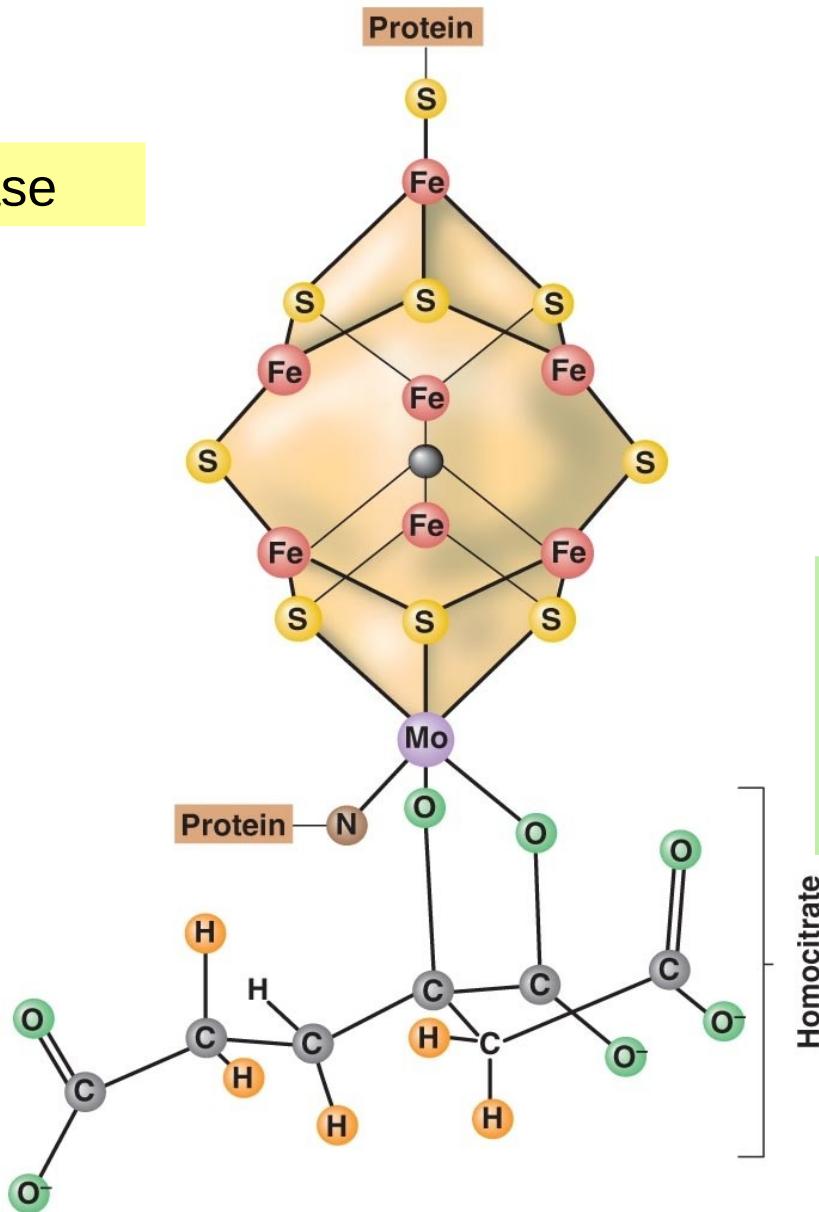
- Besides sulfate, most sulfate-reducing bacteria can also conserve energy from the *reduction of elemental sulfur to sulfide*
- A variety of non-sulfate-reducing Bacteria and Archaea can also reduce sulfur in anaerobic respiration. These prokaryotes are phylogenetically diverse, and often can respire additional compounds (e.g. nitrate)
- *Sulfur reduction* has been proposed as a potentially ancestral metabolism

# Nitrogen Fixation

- Only certain prokaryotes can fix nitrogen
- Nitrogen fixation is a key process in the N cycle
- Some nitrogen fixers are free living and others are symbiotic
- Reaction is catalyzed by nitrogenase, sensitive to the presence of oxygen
- A wide variety of nitrogenases use different metal cofactors (MoFe, V, and FeS)
- Nitrogenases are promiscuous enzymes. They catalyze a high number of side reactions (e.g. cyanide, cyanate, acetylene, azide, hydrogen, thiocyanate, carbonyl sulfide)

# FeMo-co, the Iron-Molybdenum Cofactor from Nitrogenase

Dinitrogenase

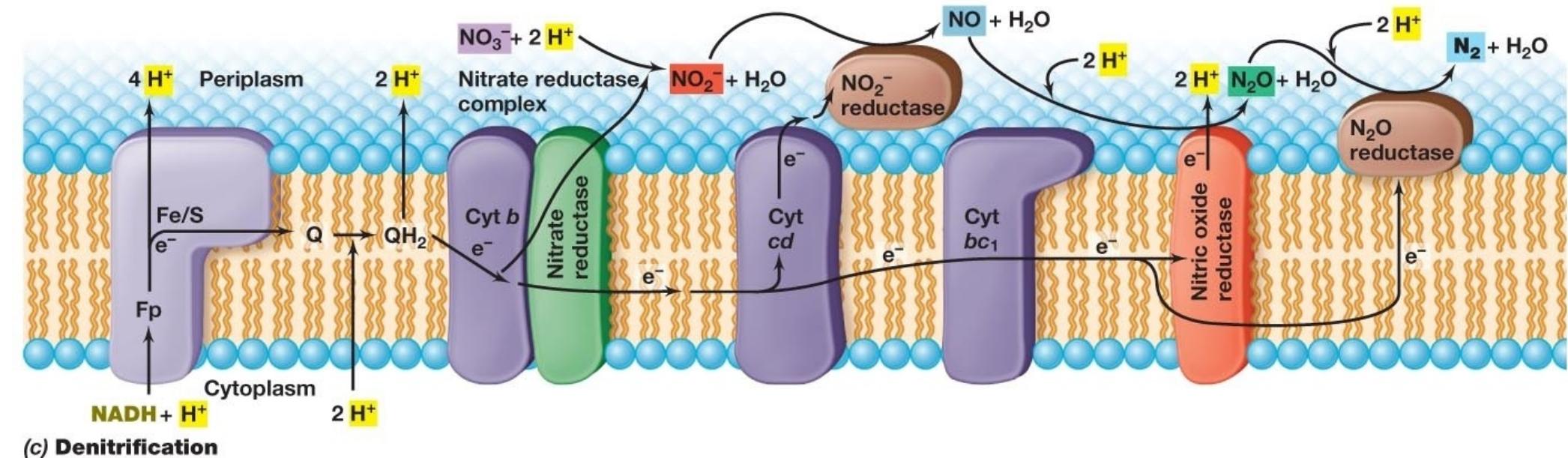
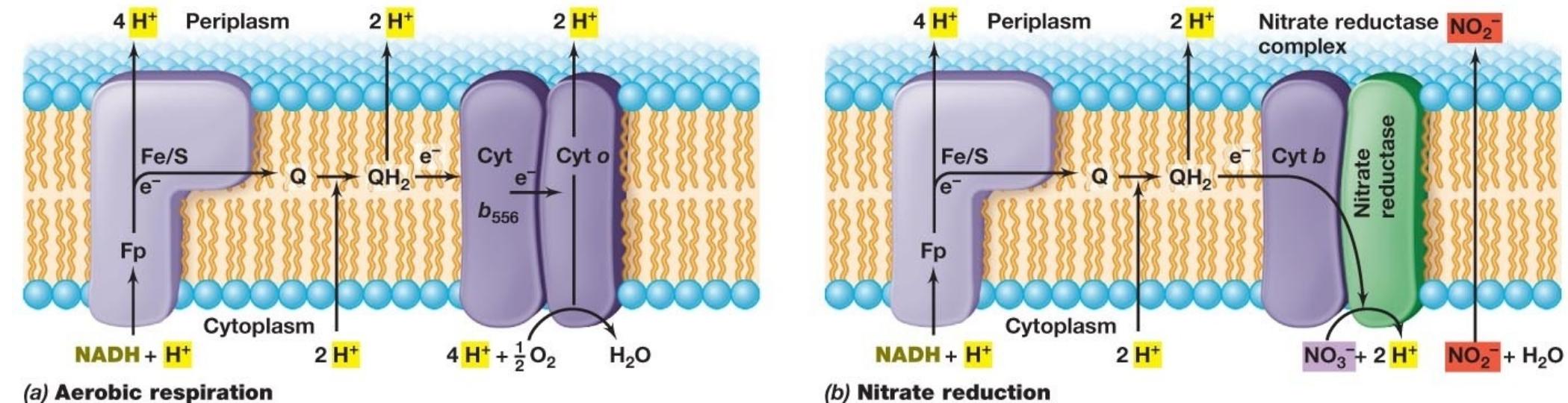


Alternative nitrogenase

- V
- Mo
- Fe

# Oxidized Nitrogen Species Reduction

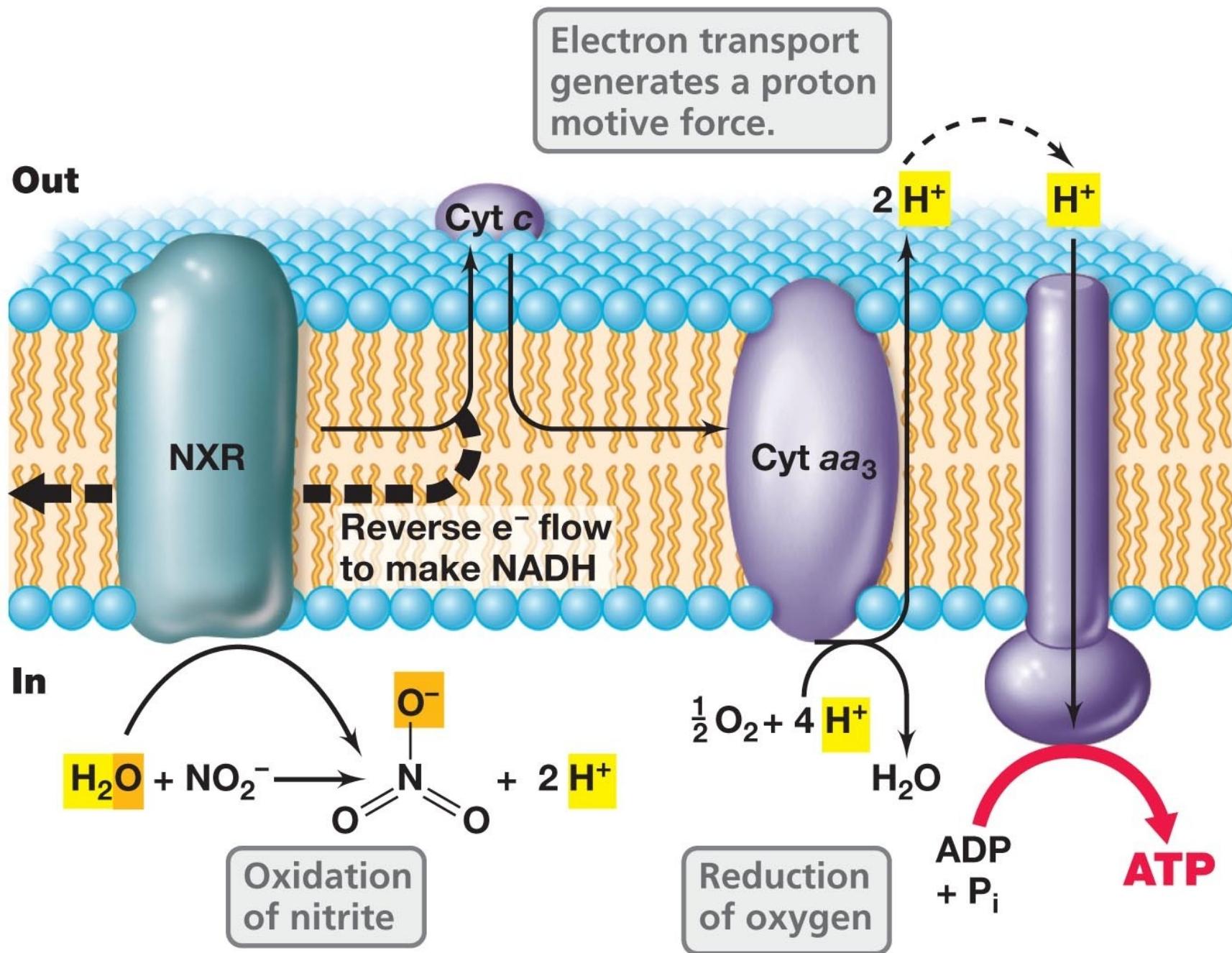
- Inorganic nitrogen compounds are some of the *most common electron acceptors in anaerobic respiration*
- One of the most common alternative electron acceptors for dissimilative purposes is nitrate. It can be reduced with two electrons to nitrite, or reduced further to nitric oxide, nitrous oxide, and dinitrogen gas. This process is known as *Denitrification*
- Nitrate can also be reduced all the way to ammonia, in this case the process is known as *Dissimilatory Nitrate Reduction to Ammonia (DNRA)*
- Three different enzymes can catalyze the first step of nitrate reduction (nitrate to nitrite): *assimilatory nitrate reductase (Nas)*, *membrane bound nitrate reductase (Nar)* and the *periplasmic nitrate reductase (Nap)*



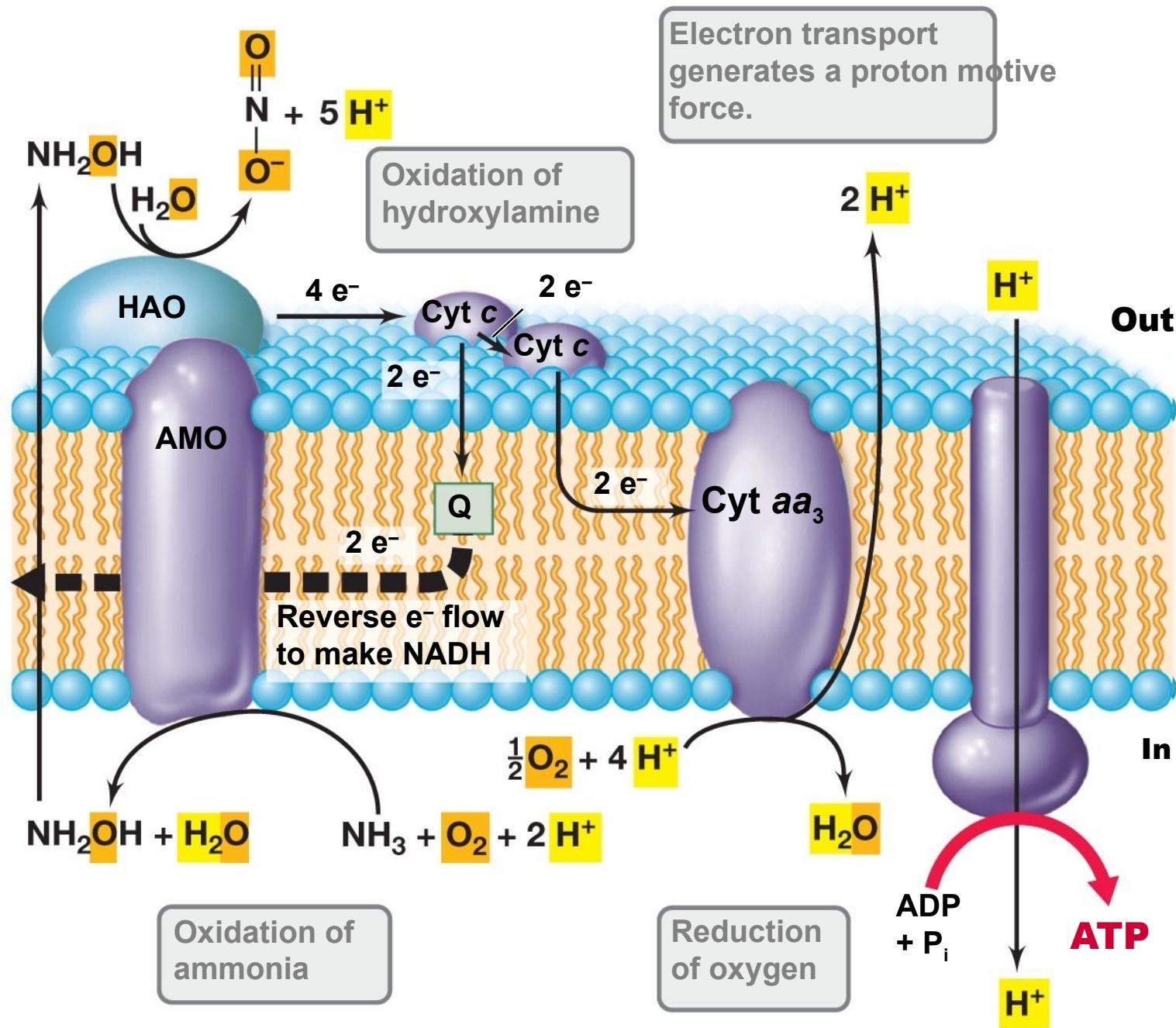
# Nitrification

- $\text{NH}_3$  and  $\text{NO}_2^-$  are oxidized by *nitrifying prokaryotes* during the process of *nitrification*; major player in the *N cycle*
- Two groups of bacteria Carry out ammonia or nitrite oxidation: *Nitrospira* and selected genera of the *Proteobacteria* (*Nitrosomonas*, *Nitrosospira*, *Nitrosococcus*, *Nitrosolobus*, and *Nitrobacter*, *Nitrospina*, *Nitrococcus*)
- One group of archaea carries out ammonia oxidation (*Thaumarchaeota*)
- Key enzymes are *ammonia monooxygenase*, *hydroxylamine oxidoreductase*, and *nitrite oxidoreductase*
- Only small energy yields from this reaction

# Oxidation of Nitrite to Nitrate by Nitrifying Bacteria



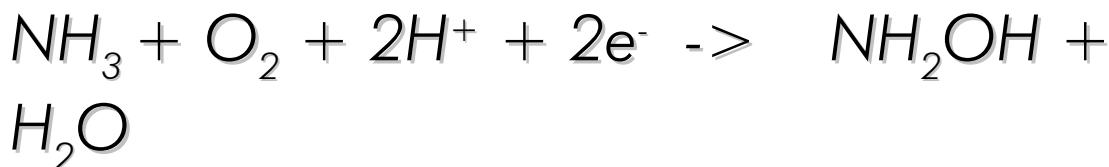
# Oxidation of Ammonia by Ammonia-Oxidizers



# Oxidation of Ammonia (Nitrification): *Nitrosomonas* and *Nitrobacter*

Nitrification = 2 steps

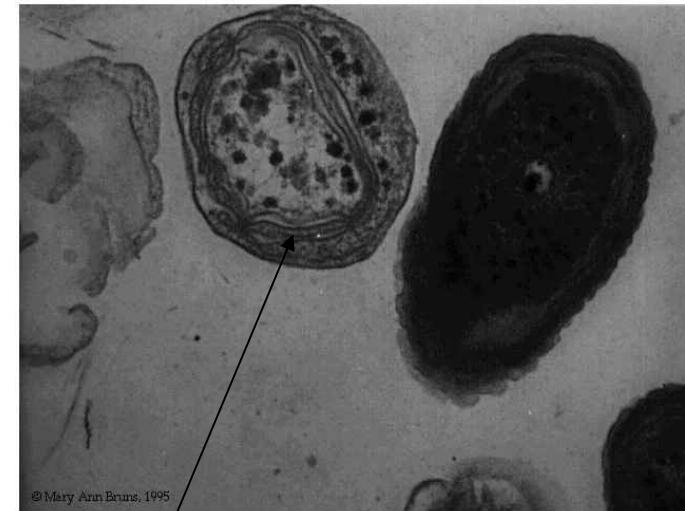
Ammonia oxidation



ammonia monooxygenase

Bacteria need  $\text{CO}_2$  and oxygen

*Nitrosomonas* sp.



hydroxylamine oxidoreductase converts

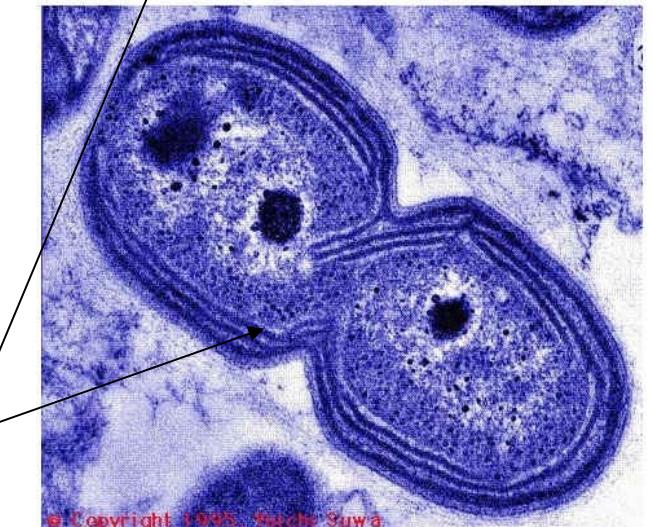
$\text{NH}_2\text{OH}$  to  $\text{NO}_2^-$

Nitrite oxidation



nitrite oxidoreductase

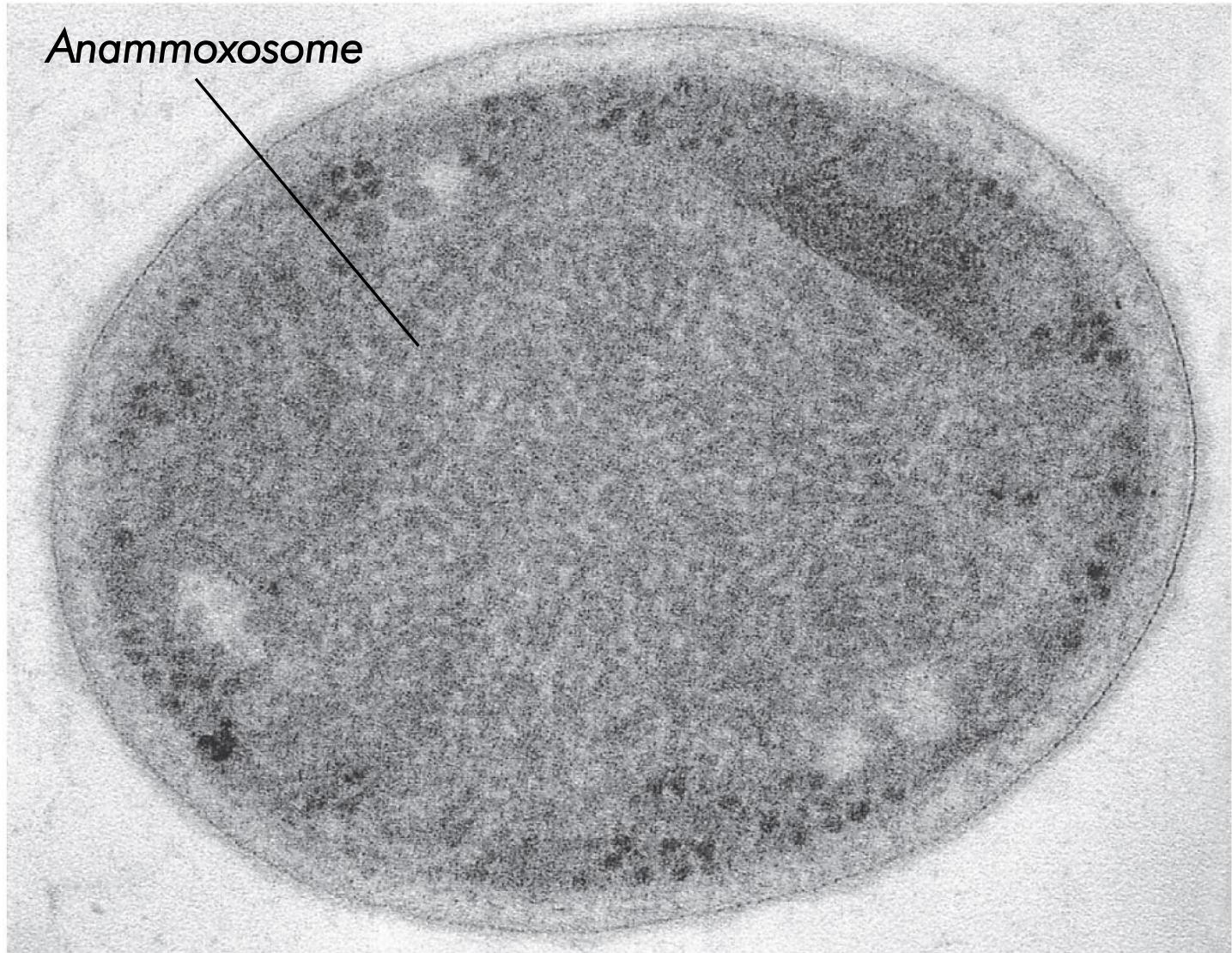
Note stacked membranes



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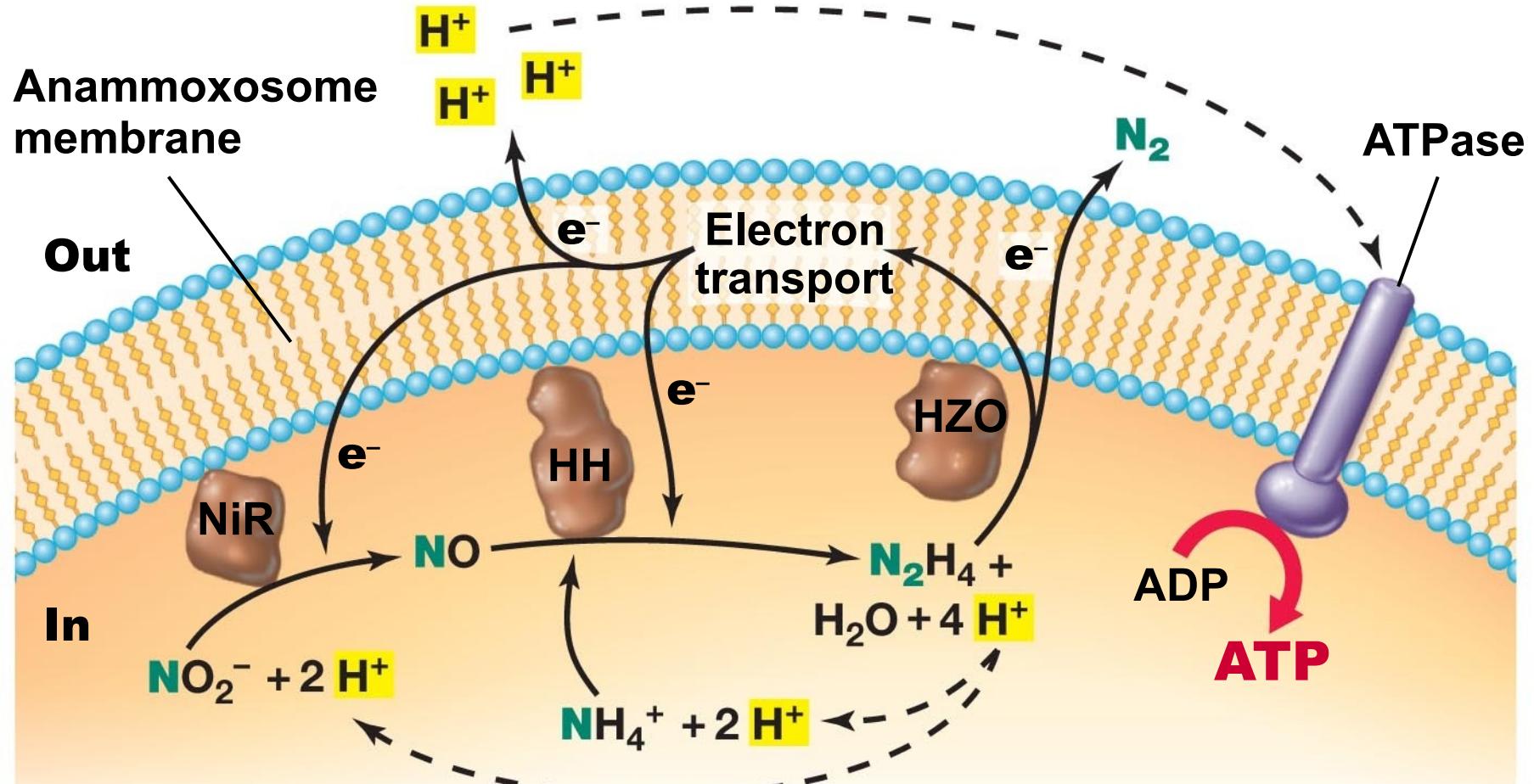
# Anaerobic Ammonia Oxidation **Anammox**

- **Anammox:** anaerobic ammonia oxidation (discovered 1999!)  
-  $\text{NH}_4^+ + \text{NO}_2^- \rightarrow \text{N}_2 + 2 \text{H}_2\text{O}$
- Performed by unusual group of obligate anaerobes  
(Planctomycetes, order Brocadiales)
- **Anammoxosome** is a membrane-enclosed compartment where anammox reactions occur
  - Lipids that make up the anammoxosome are not the typical lipids of Bacteria
  - Protects cell from reactions occurring during anammox
  - **Hydrazine** ( $\text{H}_2\text{N}=\text{NH}_2$ ), a very strong reductant, is an intermediate of anammox
- **Major sink for fixed nitrogen.** May be responsible for 30-50% of the N<sub>2</sub> gas produced in the oceans. It limits oceanic primary productivity



(b)

Richard Webb and John A. Fuerst

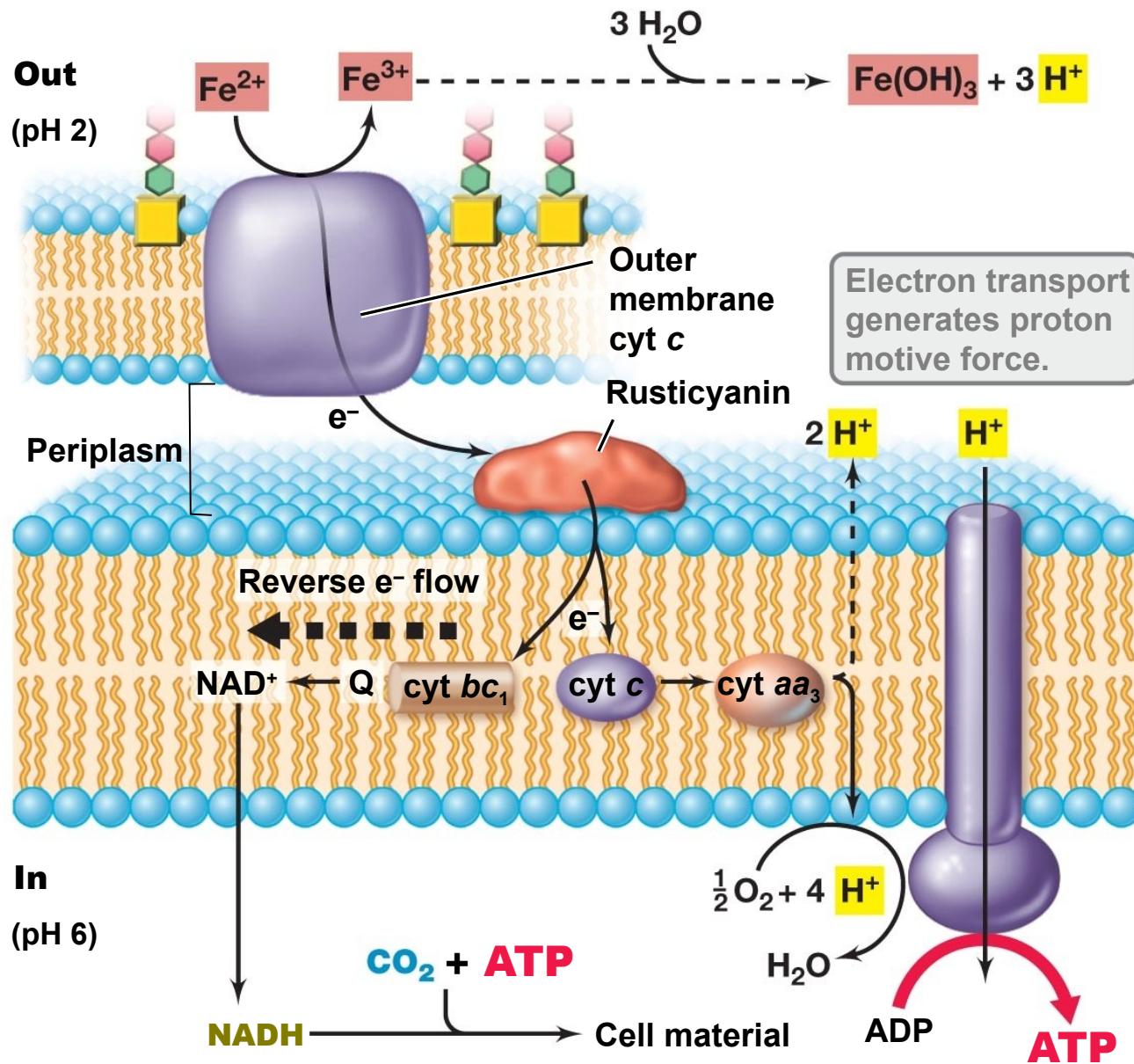


(c)

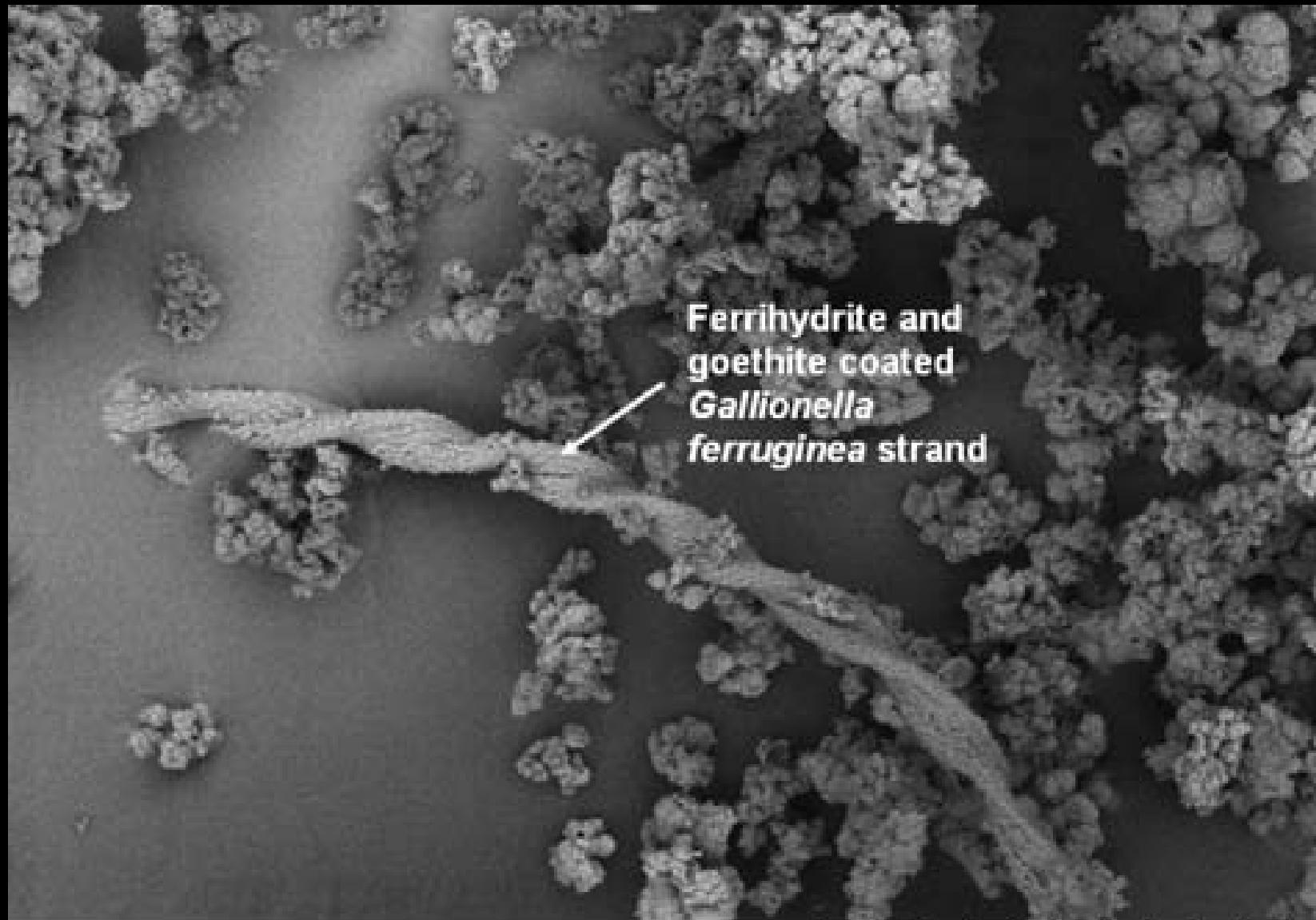
# Iron Oxidation

- Ferrous iron ( $\text{Fe}^{2+}$ ) oxidized to ferric iron ( $\text{Fe}^{3+}$ )
- Ferric hydroxide precipitates in water
- Many Fe oxidizers are acidophiles (and can grow at pH < 1)
- Associated with mine drainage and geothermal emissions
- Both Bacteria and Archaea can oxidize iron
- Some anoxygenic phototrophs can oxidize  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$  anaerobically using  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$  as an electron donor for  $\text{CO}_2$  reduction

# Iron-Oxidizing Bacteria



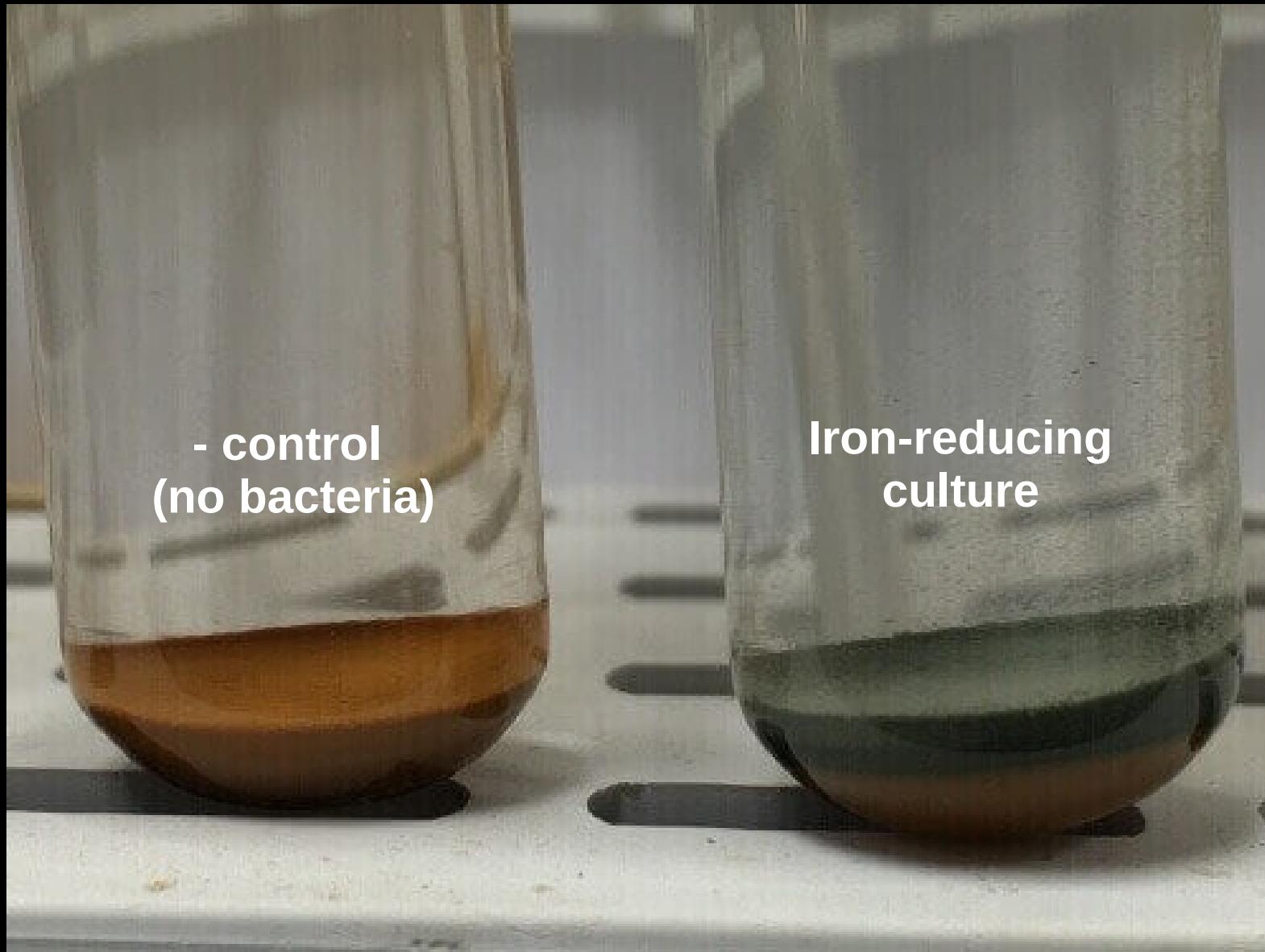
# Iron Hydroxide Twisted Stalks



jmbE-0132 3.0kV 9.4mm YAGBSE

10.0  $\mu\text{m}$

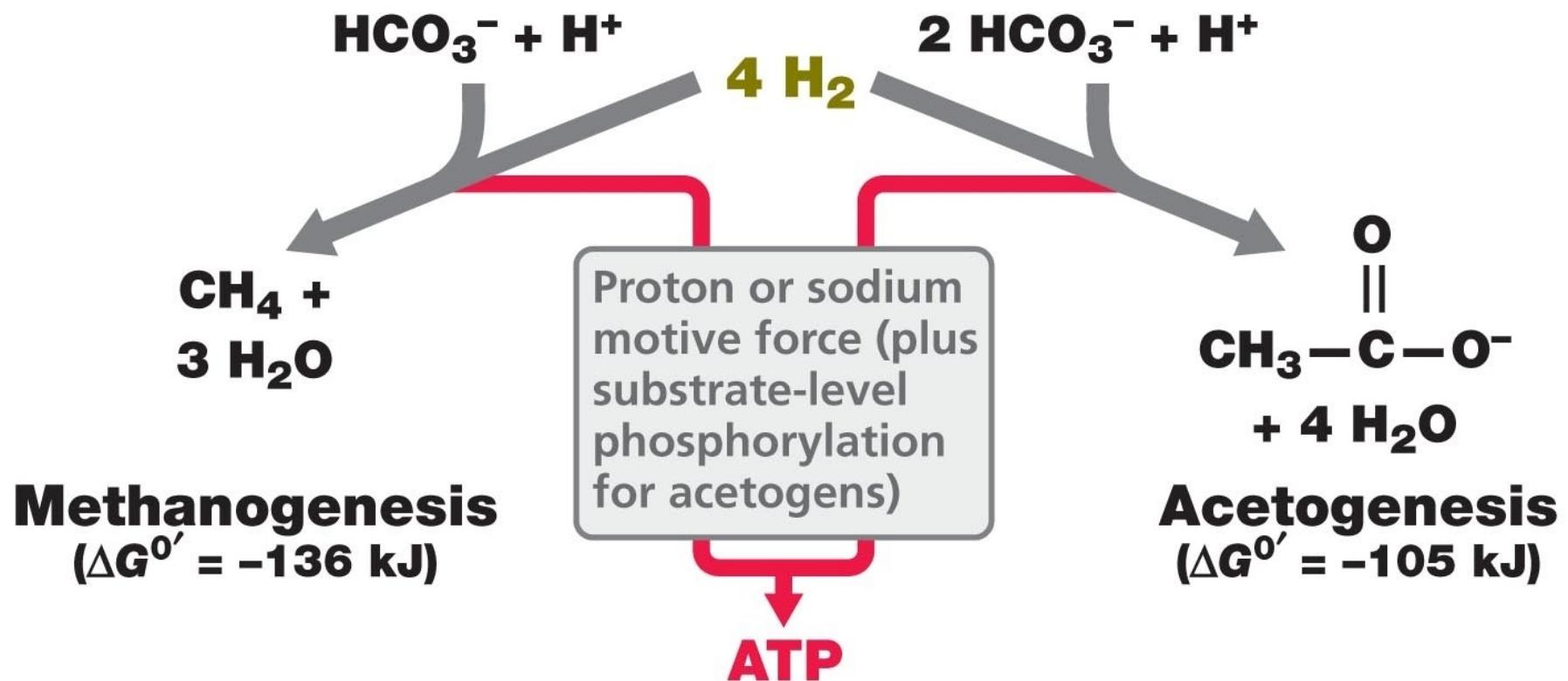
# Iron-Reducing Bacteria



# *Methanogenesis* and *Acetogenesis*

- The production of methane (*methanogenesis*) is carried out by a strictly anaerobic group of *Archaea*. *Acetogenesis* is carried out prevalently by *gram positive Bacteria* (especially members of the genera *Clostridium* or *Acetobacterium*)
- The reduction of  $\text{CO}_2$  by  $\text{H}_2$  to form methane or acetic acid is a form of *anaerobic respiration* in which  $\text{CO}_2$  is the *electron acceptor AND carbon source*. Other organic electron donors are used by some groups
- Energy conservation in acetogenesis results from both substrate-level phosphorylation and PMF. In methanogenesis substrate-level phosphorylation does not occur

# Methanogenesis and Acetogenesis



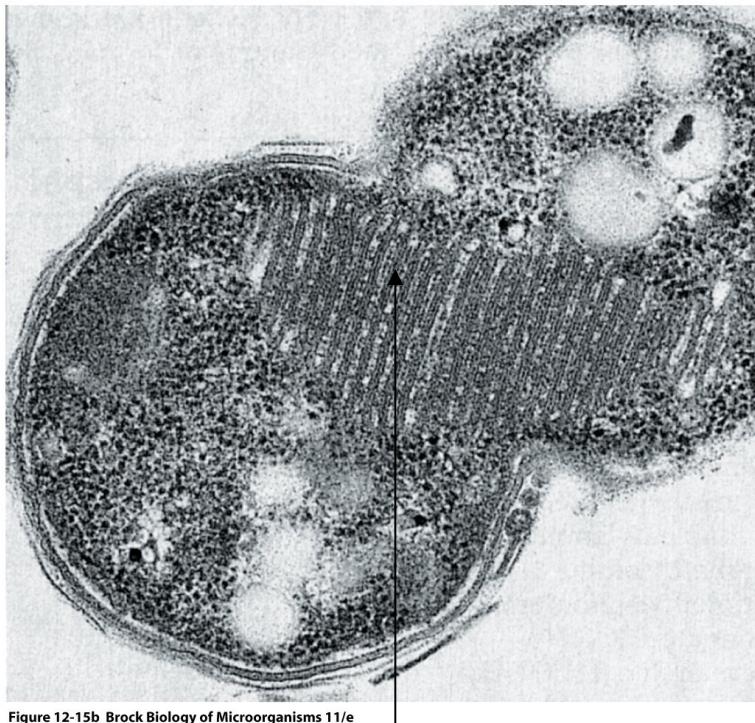
# Methane Oxidation

- Global sink of methane, a strong greenhouse gas
- Exists in two forms *Aerobic Methane Oxidation*, and *Anaerobic Methane Oxidation*
- Diverse members of the Bacteria carry out the former (*Proteobacteria*, *Verrucomicrobia*, while the latter is carried out by a polyphyletic of Archaea (*ANME group*) and Bacteria (*NC10 candidate division*)
- Aerobic Methane Oxidizers work alone in oxidizing methane, while ANME require a *bacterial partner* to carry out Anaerobic Methane Oxidation

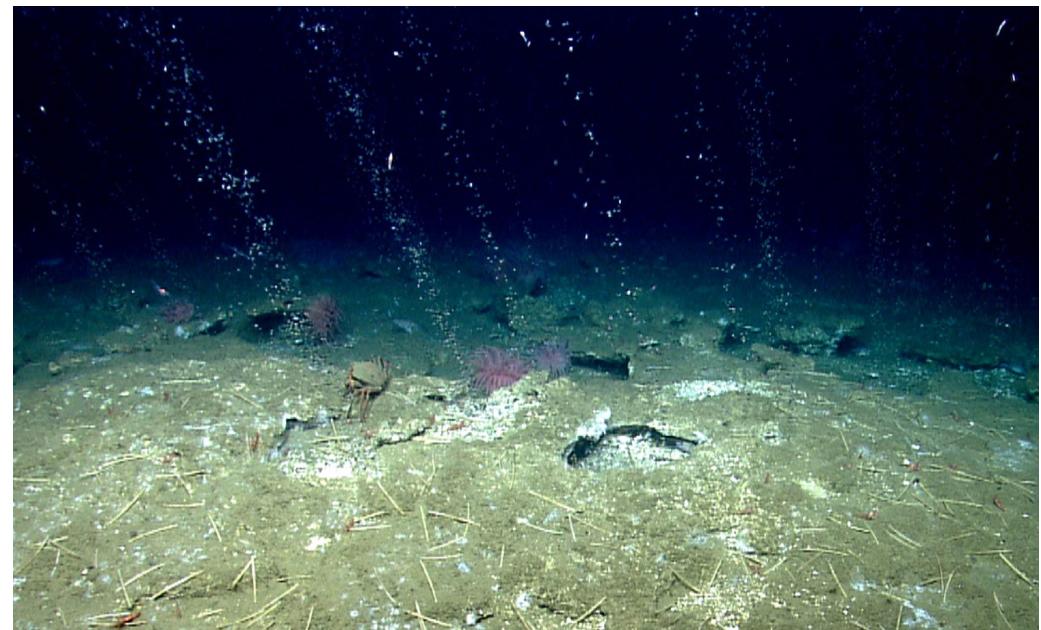
# Aerobic *Methane* Oxidation

- Limited to areas where methane reaches *oxic* areas
- *Methanotrophs* (organisms performing aerobic methane oxidation) are a special class of *Methylotrophs*
- Aerobic-methane oxidizers are exclusively Bacteria of the phyla *Proteobacteria* (*Alpha*, *Beta* and *Gamma* classes) and *Verrucomicrobia*
- Aerobic Methane Oxidizers oxidize methane by first initiating reduction of an oxygen atom to H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> and transformation of methane to CH<sub>3</sub>OH using *methane monooxygenases (MMOs)*

# Aerobic Methane Oxidation



D.W.Ribbons



Note stacked membranes

Cold seeps: bubbling methane

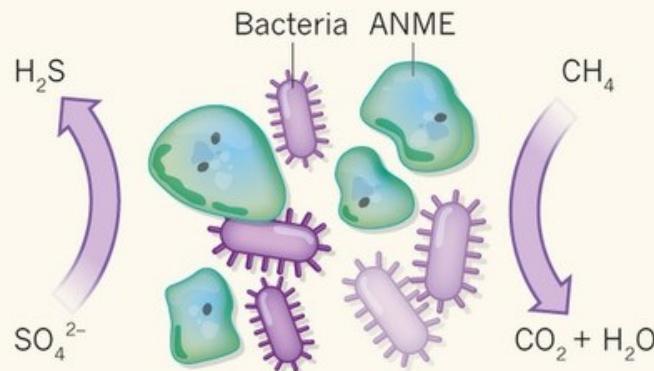


# Anaerobic **Methane** Oxidation

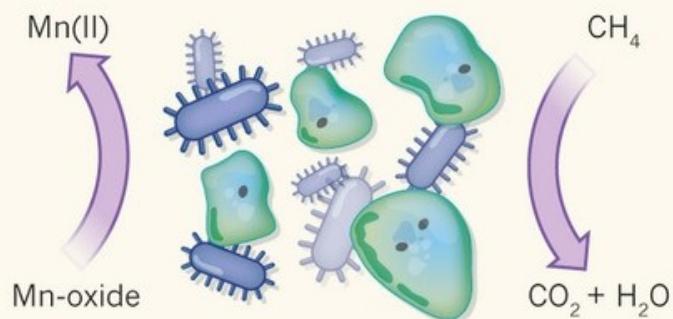
- Anaerobic Oxidation of Methane – also known as AOM - is *the major sink* of methane worldwide
- It is responsible for the *removal of up to 90%* of the  $85\text{-}300 \text{ Tg CH}_4 \text{ yr}^{-1}$  released from the seafloor
- AOM happens in anoxic sediments, and it has been reported in the *methane-sulfate transition zone* (from few mm to 200 mbsf) in worldwide sediments.
- AOM is driven by the yet *uncultured anaerobic methanotrophic archaea group* (ANME), usually syntrophically coupled to sulfate-reducing bacteria (SRB)
- Recently (**2010!!!**) a new *intra-aerobic* metabolism has been discovered, *coupling anaerobic methane oxidation to nitrate reduction (n-damo)*

# Types of AOM

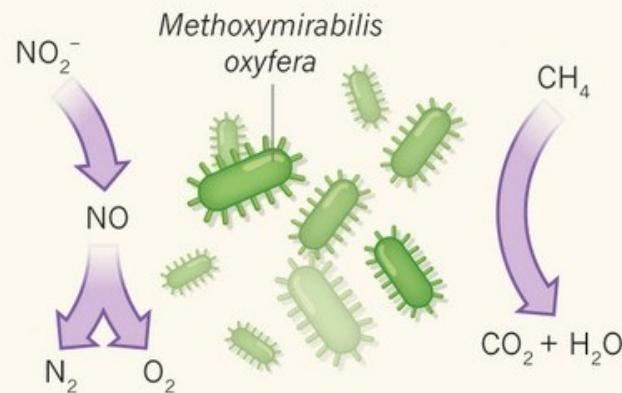
**a** AOM coupled to sulphate reduction



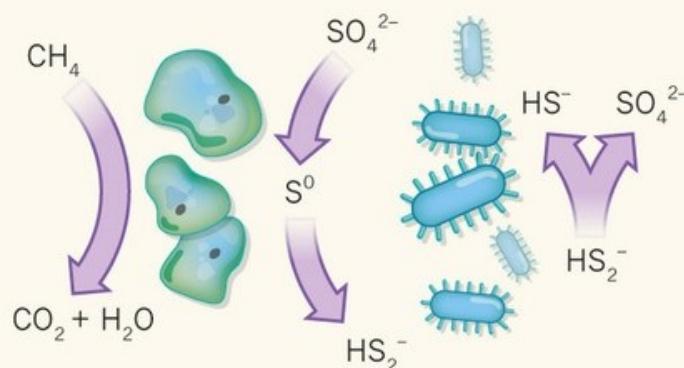
**b** AOM coupled to metal-oxide reduction



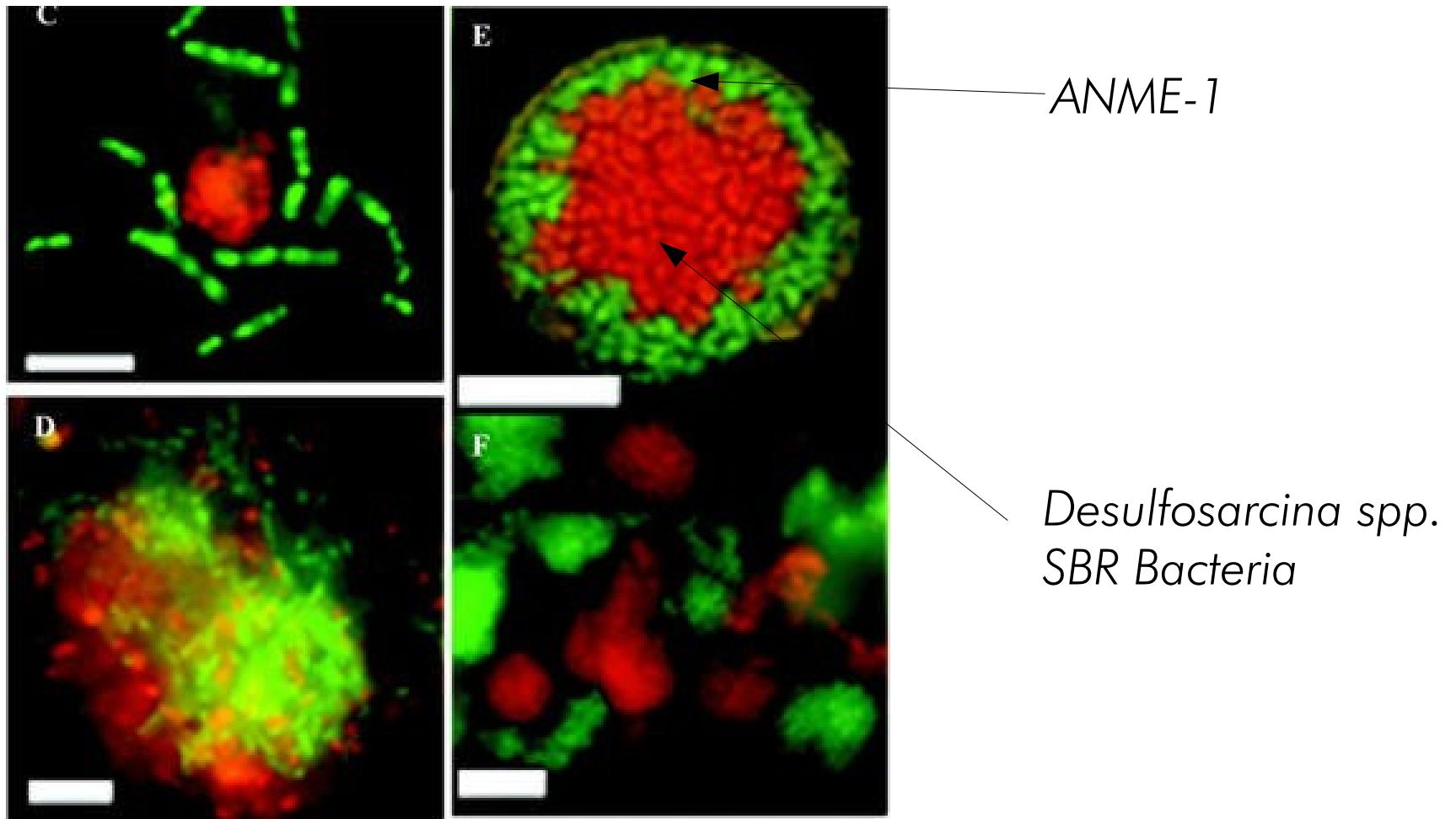
**c** AOM by nitrite dismutation



**d** AOM and disulphide disproportionation

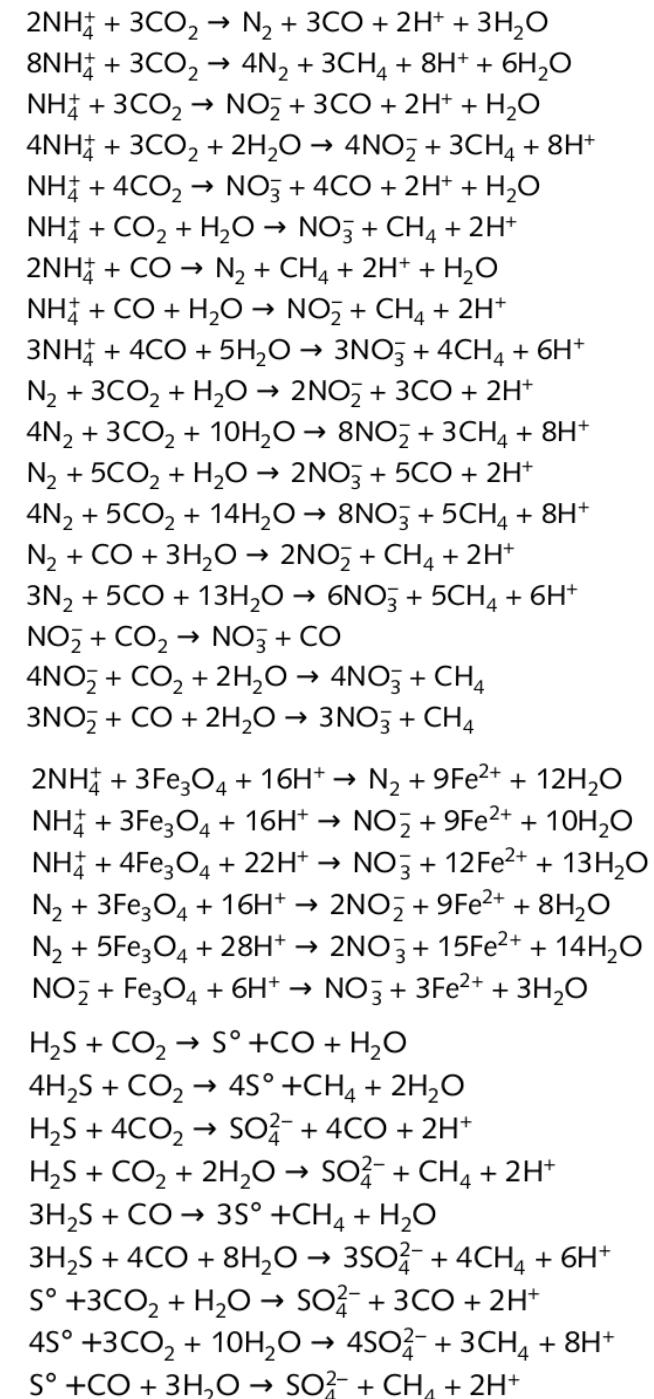
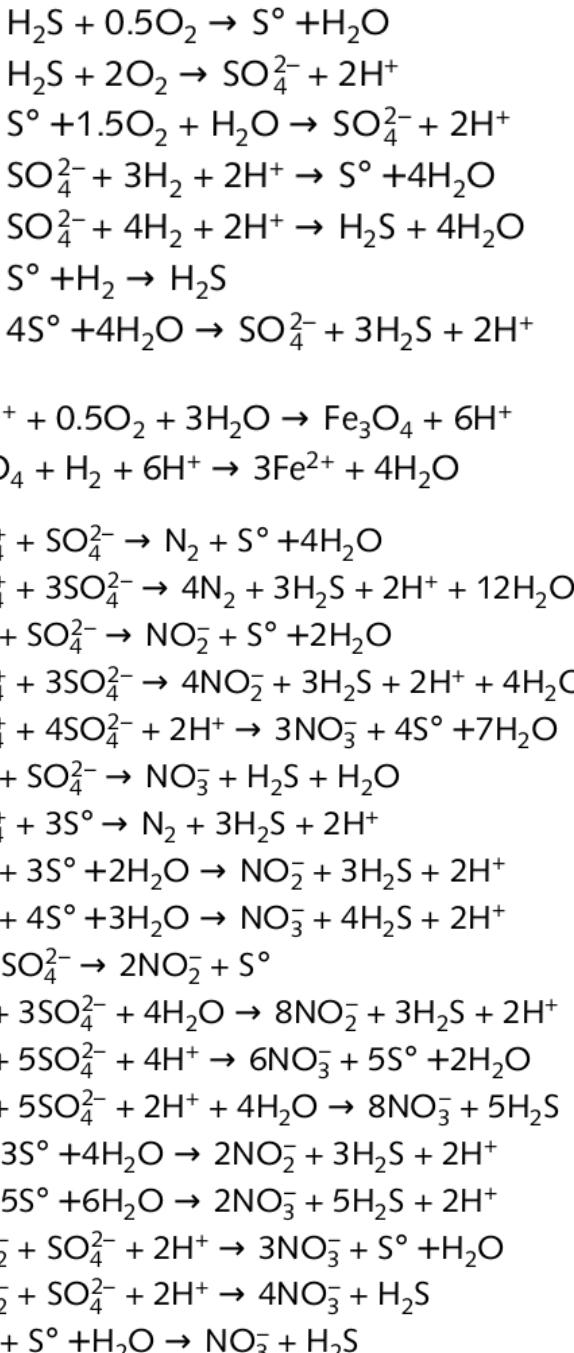
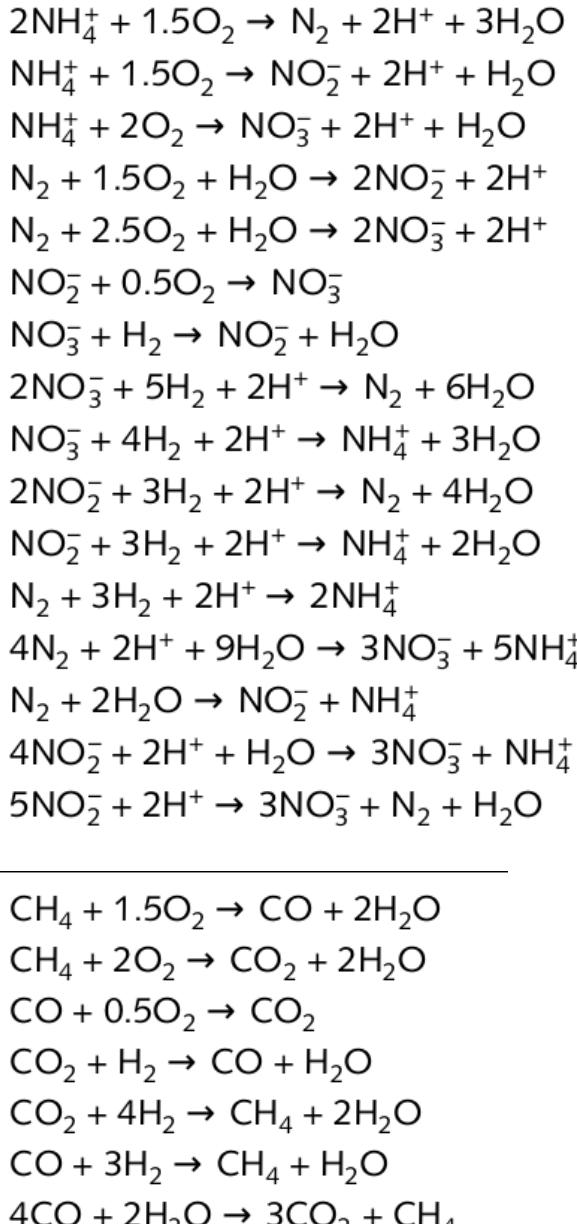


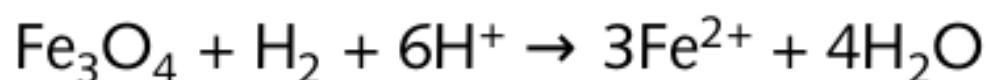
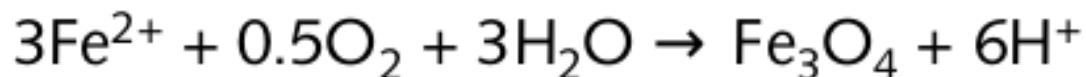
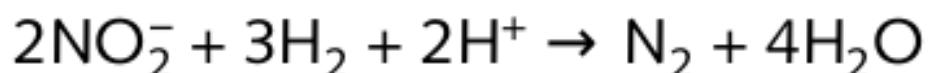
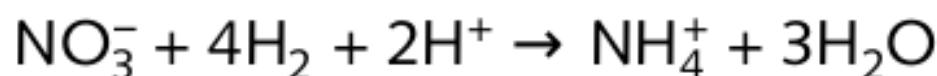
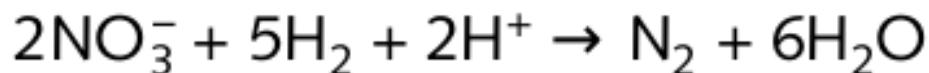
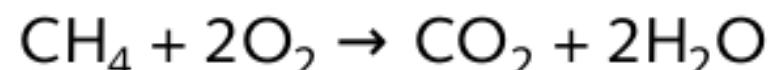
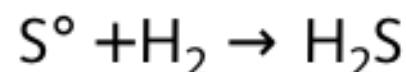
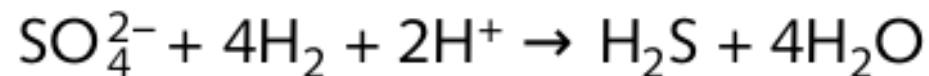
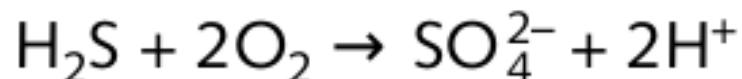
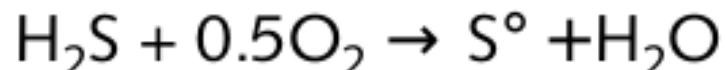
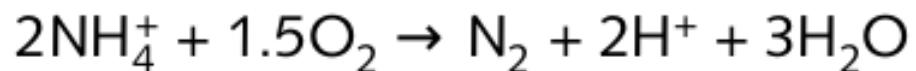
# ANME and SBR



# Diversity of redox reactions

## Reaction





# This week read

Jelen B, Giovannelli D, Falkowski PG . 2016. The Role of Microbial Electron Transfer in the Coevolution of the Geosphere and Biosphere. *Annual Review of Microbiology*, 70:45–62.

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