

Stacjonarne Studia Doktoranckie  
Ekologii i Ochrony Środowiska

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**Cyjanofagi i ich rola w regulacji występowania sinicowych zakwitów wody**

Cyanophages and their role in the regulation  
of cyanobacterial blooms

Praca doktorska

Wykonana w Katedrze UNESCO Ekohydrologii i Ekologii Stosowanej  
we współpracy z Europejskim Regionalnym Centrum Ekohydrologii PAN

Pod kierunkiem

Prof. dr hab. Joanny Mankiewicz-Boczek

 Łódź, 2021

## **Finansowanie**

Projekt pod tytułem: *Dynamika występowania cyjanofagów i ich gospodarzy w dwóch polskich zbiornikach zaporowych*, finansowany przez Narodowe Centrum Nauki. Nr UMO- 2013/11/NZ8/00607, 2014 – 2017.

Dotacja celowa na działalność związaną z prowadzeniem badań naukowych lub prac rozwojowych oraz zadań z nimi związanych, służących rozwojowi młodych naukowców oraz uczestników studiów doktoranckich pod tytułem: *System „cyjanofag – bakteria” jako potencjalne narzędzie do przeciwdziałania zakwitom sinic*”. Kod projektu: B1511000000995.02, 2015.

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## ***Podziękowania***

***Chciałam w tym miejscu złożyć serdeczne podziękowania osobom, bez których praca ta nie zostałaby ukończona, a w szczególności:***

***Pani prof. dr hab. Joannie Mankiewicz-Boczek za życzliwy nadzór nad kierunkiem mych badań, bezcenną pomoc oraz motywację***

***Panu mgr. Arnolodo Font Nájera  
Pani dr Ilonie Gągale-Borowskiej  
Pani dr Lilianie Serwecińskiej za koleżeńskie wsparcie, pomoc przy analizach, cenne wskazówki***

***Panu prof. dr. hab. Maciejowi Zalewskiemu za wspaniałą przygodę z nauką oraz inspirację do dalszego rozwoju***

***Współautorom publikacji naukowych za udzieloną mi pomoc, cenne rady oraz przekazaną wiedzę***

***ponadto dziękuję również  
Pani dr Renacie Włodarczyk-Marciniak, Pani dr hab. Magdalenie Urbanik,  
Panu mgr. inż. Sebastianowi Ratajskiemu, Pani mgr Indze Grzelak  
oraz Koleżankom i Kolegom z Europejskiego Regionalnego  
Centrum Ekohydrologii PAN i Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego***

***W szczególności zaś najbliższej Rodzinie za wyrozumiałość, ciągłe wsparcie i podtrzymywanie na duchu w trudnych chwilach***

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# I. Wstęp

## 1. Sinice (cyjanobakterie) – dominujący składnik zakwitów wód

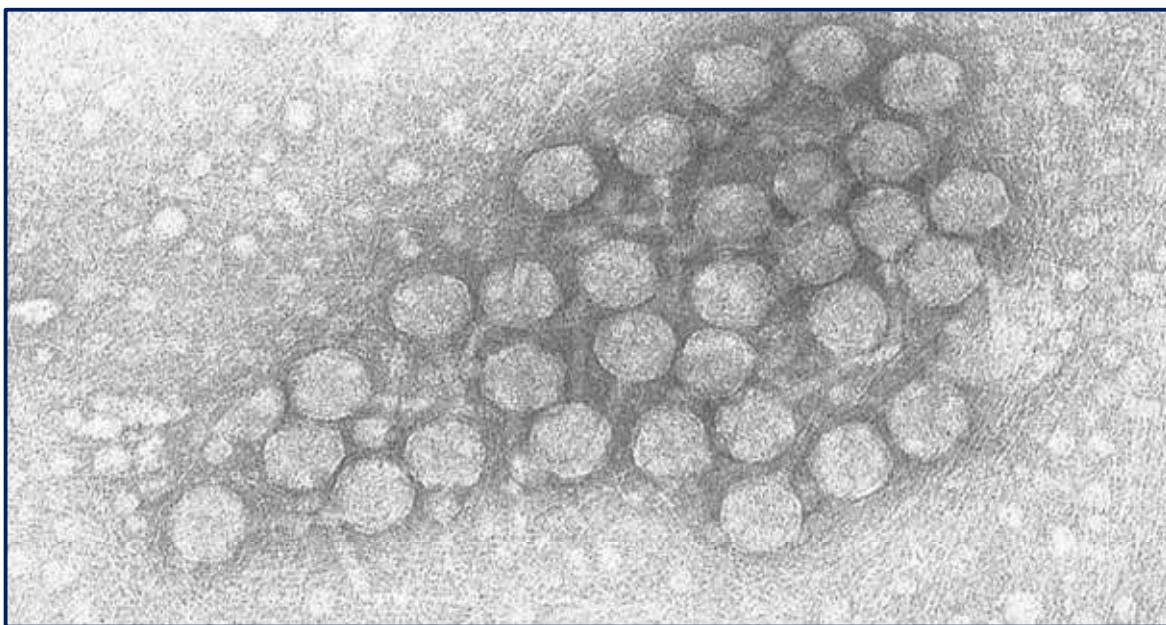
Sinice to grupa organizmów prokariotycznych należących do gromady *Cyanophyta* (*Cyanobacteria*). Są one zdolne do zasiedlania skrajnie różnych środowisk wodnych, od zbiorników termicznych, bagien i strumieni roztopowych, po pokryte lodem jeziora. Istnieją najprawdopodobniej od ponad 3,5 miliarda lat. W tym czasie wykształciły różne cechy adaptacyjne, takie jak zdolność do przeprowadzania fotosyntezy tlenowej oraz wiązania azotu (Whitton i Potts, 2002; Berman-Frank i inni, 2003; Komárek, 2006). Ponadto cyjanobakterie mogą być również symbiontami roślin i grzybów. Powyższe właściwości dają im przewagę konkurencyjną nad innymi organizmami eukariotycznymi wchodzącyymi w skład fitoplanktonu (Whitton i Potts, 2002; Berman-Frank i inni, 2003; Komárek, 2006).

Istnieje wiele korzystnych scenariuszy dotyczących zastosowania sinic. Należą do nich wykorzystanie biomasy cyjanobakterii oraz ich metabolitów do: bioremediacji oraz do produkcji biopaliw, bionawozów, suplementów diety i leków (Zahra i inni, 2020).

Jednakże antropogeniczne zanieczyszczenia substancjami biogennymi, nadmierna emisja CO<sub>2</sub>, zmiany klimatyczne sprzyjające wzrostowi temperatury oraz niektóre parametry hydrodynamiczne zbiorników wodnych (w tym mętność, czas retencji czy też falowanie) mogą sprzyjać powstawaniu zakwitów wód (zakwitów fitoplanktonu) z dominacją sinic (Benayache i inni, 2019; Glibert, 2020; Burford i inni, 2020). Wspomniane zakwity wpływają na degradację ekosystemów wodnych, a tym samym nasilają problem eutrofizacji poprzez: zmniejszanie przejrzystość wody, ograniczanie dostępności tlenu w dolnych partiach słupa wody, wzrost produkcji pierwotnej, spadek bioróżnorodności oraz pogarszanie się parametrów organoleptycznych wody (Merel i inni, 2013; Pearl i Paul, 2012). Ponadto cyjanobakterie mają zdolność do wytwarzania różnego rodzaju związków bioaktywnych, w tym najlepiej poznanych toksycznych metabolitów wtórnych - cyjanotoksyn, takich jak: hepatotoksyny (reprezentowane przez: mikrocystyny i nodularyny), dermatotoksyny (reprezentowane przez: aplysiatoksyny i lyngbyatoksyny-a), neurotoksyny (reprezentowane przez: anatoksynę-a i anotoksynę-a(S)) i cytotoxyny (reprezentowane przez: cylindospermopsyny), niebezpiecznych zarówno dla ekosystemów wodnych, lądowych i człowieka (Zanchett i Oliveira-Filho, 2013; Corbel i inni, 2014; Huisman i inni, 2018; Svirčev i inni, 2019).

## **2. Cyjanofagi – czynnik regulujący występowanie sinic**

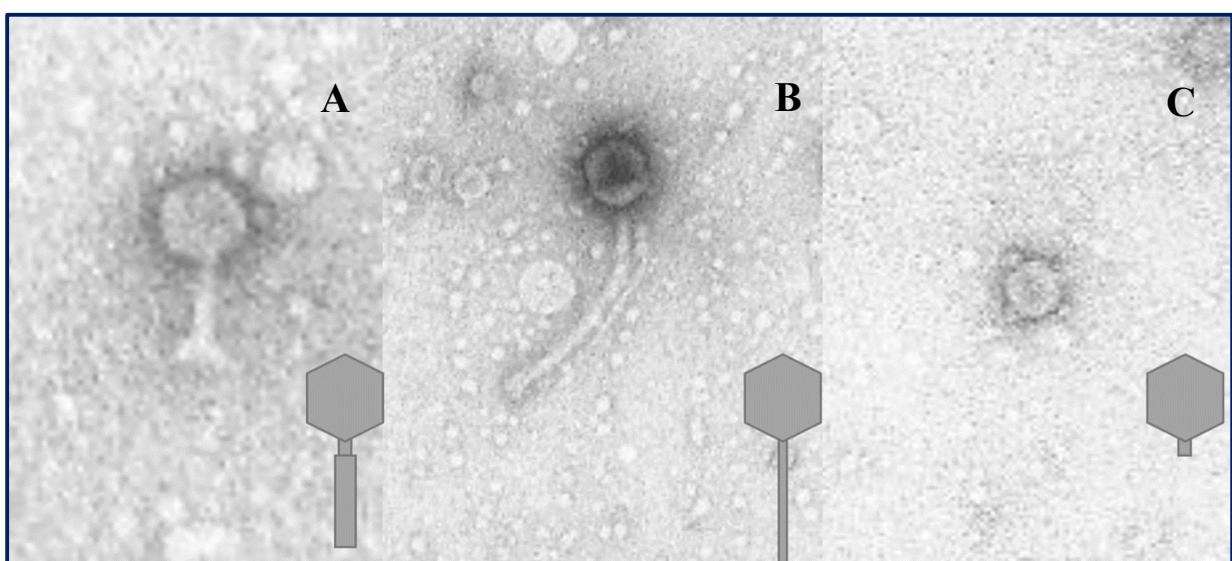
Wirusy występujące w środowisku wodnym (Ryc. 1) stanowią największą grupę patogenów infekujących zarówno drobnoustroje jak i organizmy wyższe (Suttle i Chan, 1994; Ackermann, 2003; Hargreaves i inni, 2013).



**Rycina 1.** Przykład wirusów pozyskanych z zatężonej próbki wody pobranej w sezonie letnim 2015, ze Zbiornika Jeziorsko. Zdjęcie wykonane w Pracowni Obrazowania Mikroskopowego i Specjalistycznych Technik Biologicznych WBiOŚ UŁ przy użyciu transmisyjnego mikroskopu elektronowego.

Cyjanofagi są grupą wirusów infekujących sinice. Te liczne, aktywne biologicznie cząstki, występują zarówno w środowisku morskim jak i słodkowodnym. Uważa się, że są one jednym z ważniejszych czynników wpływających na różnorodność, rozwój i dynamikę występowania populacji cyjanobakterii. Ponadto poprzez proces lizy swojego gospodarza wpływają również pośrednio na dostępność mikroelementów, obieg azotu oraz węgla w ekosystemach wodnych (Suttle i Chan, 1994; Ackermann, 2003; Hargreaves i inni, 2013). Cyjanofagi to wirusy z rzędu *Caudovirales* reprezentujące głównie trzy rodziny fagów ogoniastych, tj. *Myoviridae* (miocyjanofagi, ang. *myocyanophages*), *Siphoviridae* (siphocyjanofagi, ang. *siphocyanophages*) oraz *Podoviridae* (podocyjanofagi, ang. *podocyanophages*) (Ryc. 2). Miocyjanofagi są podobne do fagów T4 i mają izometryczne kapsydy z długimi kurczliwymi ogonkami. Z kolei

siphocyjanofagi są podobne do lambdoidów i mają kapsydy z długimi, niekurczącymi się ogonkami. Natomiast podocyjanofagi mają kapsydy z krótkimi, niekurczącymi się ogonkami i są podobne do T7. Pomimo dominacji powyższych grup, wśród cyjanofagów występują również cząstki podobne do kortykowirusów, które są okrągłymi cząsteczkami o strukturze ikozaedrycznej oraz cząstki podobne do geminiwirusów. Składają się one z dwóch połączonych ze sobą dwudziestościanów bliźniaczych kapsydów (Deng 2008; Li i inni, 2013; Hou i inni, 2018). Miocyjanofagi są najliczniejszą grupą i najprawdopodobniej mają największy zakres gospodarzy, podczas gdy siphocyjanofagi i podocyjanofagi wydają się być ścisłe specyficzne dla gospodarza (Sullivan i inni, 2003).



**Rycina 2.** Typy morfometryczne fagów: A – *Myoviridae*, B – *Siphoviridae* oraz C – *Podoviridae*, na przykładzie wirusów pozyskanych z zateżonych próbek wody w sezonie letnim 2015, ze Zbiornika Jeziorsko. Zdjęcie wykonane w Pracowni Obrazowania Mikroskopowego i Specjalistycznych Technik Biologicznych WBiOŚ UŁ przy użyciu transmisyjnego mikroskopu elektronowego.

### 3. Markery molekularne – narzędzie do monitoringu cyjanofagów

W celu identyfikacji, analizy różnorodności, rozprzestrzeniania się oraz zmian ilościowych cyjanofagów niezbędne jest zastosowanie markerów molekularnych tj. specyficznych genów (ich fragmentów) charakterystycznych dla wirusów sinicowych. Można do nich zaliczyć pomocnicze geny metaboliczne (AMG, ang. *auxiliary metabolic genes*) oraz niektóre geny strukturalne fagów (Takashima i inni, 2007; Wang i inni, 2009; Ou i inni, 2015). Cyjanofagi uzyskały geny AMG poprzez ich horyzontalny transfer od swoich gospodarzy – sinic. Geny AMG wykorzystywane są

do promowania replikacji cząsteczek cyjanofagów podczas procesu infekcji (Hurwitz i U'Ren, 2016). Przykładami takich genów mogą być: - gen kodujący białko D1 fotosystemu II (PSII) (*psbA*, ang. *the D1 protein of photosystem II (PSII) encoded gene*), oraz - gen kodujący białko nonbleaching A (*nblA*, ang. *the nonbleaching protein A encoded gene*) (Wang i inni, 2009; Ou i inni, 2015). Gen *psbA* najprawdopodobniej odpowiada za zachowanie ciągłości procesu fotosyntezy w celu dostarczenia energii do replikacji faga (Wang i inni, 2009). Natomiast ekspresja genu *nblA* faga prowadzi do degradacji fikobilisomów gospodarzy, co zapewnia aminokwasy do syntezy białek cyjanofagowych i pomaga ograniczyć wchłanianie nadmiernych ilości światła (Ou i in, 2015). Jak wspomniano, niektóre geny strukturalne są również dobrym przykładem markerów genowych. Wśród nich można wyróżnić gen *g91* kodujący białko osłonki ogonka u cyjanofagów z rodziny *Myoviridae* (Takashima i inni, 2007, Kimura-Sakai i inni, 2014).

#### **4. Znaczenie badań**

Cyjanofagi są ważnym czynnikiem biologicznym wpływającym na ekologię, biologię oraz ewolucję swoich gospodarzy – sinic. Mimo że pierwsze doniesienia na ich temat zostały opublikowane w 1963, to do tej pory najwięcej informacji zgromadzono na temat cyjanofagów środowiska słonowodnego, w tym cyjanofagów specyficznych względem morskich sinic z rodzaju *Synechococcus* oraz *Prochlorococcus* (Safferman i Morris, 1963; Jing i inni, 2014, Šulčius i inni, 2019). Dotychczasowe badania filogenetyczne słodkowodnych wirusów sinicowych wykazały, że różnią się one zarówno ewolucyjnie jak i genetycznie od swoich morskich odpowiedników (Šulčius i inni, 2019). Dotąd, jak wskazują dane literaturowe, udało się wyizolować i scharakteryzować jedynie 19 cyjanofagów ze środowiska słodkowodnego, co sugeruje, że duża część wirusów sinicowych pozostaje niezbadana (Morimoto i inni, 2020). Badania środowiskowe dotyczące cyjanofagów, które składają się na niniejszą rozprawę doktorską, są pionierskimi w skali kraju i jednymi z nielicznych dotyczących wód słodkich Europy. Jako pierwsze dostarczyły informacji na temat cyjanofagów występujących w dwóch zbiornikach retencyjnych w Polsce Centralnej, uwzględniając ich obecność, dynamikę występowania w odniesieniu do gospodarza, zmienne czynniki fizyko-chemiczne, hydrologiczne oraz cykl dobowy. Dostarczyły również nowych danych na temat zróżnicowanie i rozmieszczenia przestrzennego słodkowodnych cyjanofagów, z uwzględnieniem wybranych czynników fizyko-chemicznych, biorąc pod uwagę dystans geograficzny pomiędzy jeziorami polskimi i litewskimi.

## **II. Hipotezy badawcze**

### Hipoteza badawcza nr 1:

Cyjanofagi z rodziny *Myoviride* wpływają na dynamikę występowania sinic w monitorowanych zbiornikach retencyjnych Polski Centralnej.

### Hipoteza badawcza nr 2:

Zróżnicowanie rodzajowe sinic oraz parametry fizyko-chemiczne zbiorników wodnych z obszaru Polski oraz Litwy wpływają na występowanie cyjanofagów.

### Hipoteza badawcza nr 3:

Cykl dobowy – dzień/noc wpływa na proces transkrypcji u cyjanofagów.

## **III. Cele pracy**

Przedstawione hipotezy zostały sprawdzone przez realizację poniższych celów:

### Cel nr 1:

Analiza jakościowa i ilościowa występowania cyjanofagów oraz sinic, z uwzględnieniem ich genotypów toksynogennych odpowiedzialnych za produkcję mikrocystyn, w Zbiorniku Sulejowskim oraz Zbiorniku Jeziorsko przy użyciu wybranych genów markerowych, w tym ocen wpływu parametrów fizyko-chemicznych i hydrologicznych badanych zbiorników.

### Cel nr 2:

Ocena obecności cyjanofagów w wodach polskich i litewskich, z uwzględnieniem wpływu następujących parametrów abiotycznych i biotycznych: struktura gatunkowa i biomasa sinic, podstawowe parametry fizyko-chemiczne wody oraz dystans geograficzny.

### Cel nr 3:

Ocena aktywności transkrypcji cyjanofagów specyficznych względem sinic z rodzaju *Microcystis* w cyklu dobowym z udziałem genu *g91* (cyjanofagi) oraz genu 16S rRNA (sinice) w Zbiorniku Jeziorsko i Zbiorniku Sulejowskim.

## **IV. Publikacje stanowiące rozprawę doktorską**

Przedstawiona rozprawa doktorska stanowi zbiór opublikowanych artykułów naukowych (włączając 3 artykuły badawcze i 1 artykuł przeglądowy zawierający część oryginalnych wyników badań niniejszej pracy doktorskiej):

- Mankiewicz-Boczek, J., Jaskulska, A., Pawełczyk, J., Gągała, I., Serwecińska, L., Dziadek, J. 2016. Cyanophage infection of *Microcystis* bloom in lowland dam reservoir of Sulejów, Poland. *Microbial Ecology* 71, 315-325, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00248-015-0677-5> (Załącznik 1)

Impact Factor: 4,552

5-letni Impact Factor: 4,770

Lista czasopism MNiSW: 100 pkt (według obowiązującej punktacji)

- Jaskulska, A., Mankiewicz-Boczek, J. 2020. Cyanophages specific to cyanobacteria from the genus *Microcystis*. *Ecohydrology & Hydrobiology* 20 (1), 83-90, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecohyd.2019.06.001> (Załącznik 2)

Impact Factor: 3,215

5-letni Impact Factor: 3,863

Lista czasopism MNiSW: 70 pkt (według obowiązującej punktacji)

- Jaskulska, A., Šulčius, S., Kokociński, M., Koreivienė, J., Nájera, A.F., Mankiewicz-Boczek, J. 2021a. Cyanophage distribution across European lakes of the temperate-humid continental climate zone assessed using PCR-based genetic markers. *Microbial Ecology* (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00248-021-01783-y> (Załącznik 3)

Impact Factor: 4,552

5-letni Impact Factor: 4,770

Lista czasopism MNiSW: 100 pkt (według obowiązującej punktacji)

- Jaskulska, A., Nájera, A.F., Czarny P., Serwecińska, L., Mankiewicz-Boczek, J. 2021b. Daily dynamic of transcripts abundance of Ma-LMM01-like cyanophages in two lowland European reservoirs. *Ecohydrology & Hydrobiology*,  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecohyd.2021.07.003> (Załącznik 4)

Impact Factor: 3,215

5-letni Impact Factor: 3,863

Lista czasopism MNiSW: 70 pkt (według obowiązującej punktacji)

Przedstawione powyżej artykuły naukowe są ze sobą tematycznie powiązane zgodnie z *ustawą Prawo o szkolnictwie wyższym i nauce z dnia 20 lipca 2018 art. 187 punkt 3.*

Skrócony opis informacji dotyczących terenu badań, materiałów i metod, a także wyników analiz, pochodzący z wymienionych prac badawczych i pracy przeglądowej, został zawarty w poniższych punktach:

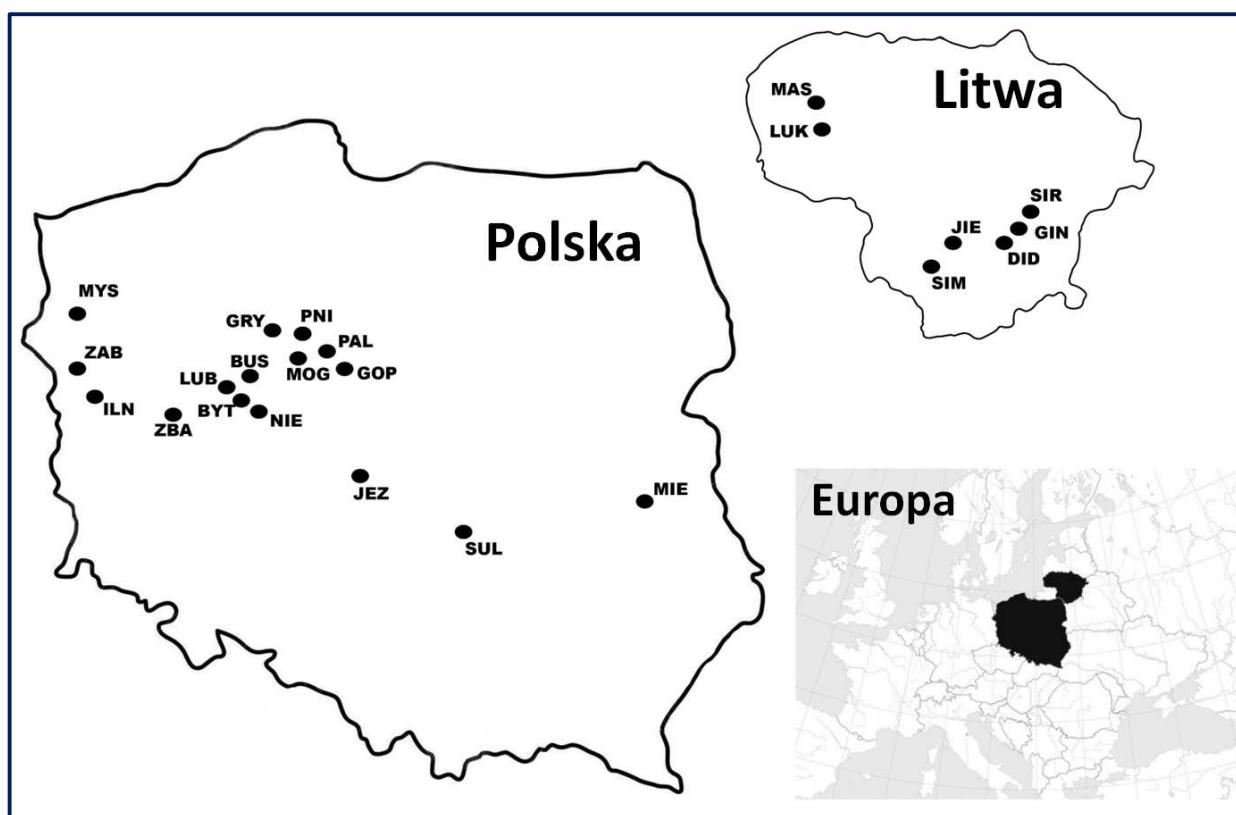
V. Teren badań,

VI. Materiały i metody,

VII. Omówienie wyników.

## V. Teren badań

Do badań wykorzystano próbki wody pochodzące z 16 zbiorników z terenu Polski oraz 7 jezior z terenu Litwy. Wybrane zbiorniki, znajdujące się w strefie klimatu umiarkowanego, posiadają status żywiości od mezotroficznego do hipertroficznego (Ryc. 3, Załącznik 1: Mankiewicz-Boczek i inni, 2016; Załącznik 2: Jaskulska i Mankiewicz-Boczek 2020; Załącznik 3: Jaskulska i inni, 2021a; Załącznik 4: Jaskulska i inni, 2021b).



**Rycina 3.** Lokalizacje stanowisk badawczych na terenie Polski oraz Litwy: Zbiornik Sulejowski (SUL), Zbiornik Jeziorsko (JEZ), Jezioro Lubońskie (LUB), Jezioro Bytyńskie (BYT), Jezioro Buszewskie (BUS), Jezioro Pniewskie (PNI), Jezioro Myśliborskie (MYS), Jezioro Pakoskie (PAL), Jezioro Grylewskie (GRY), Jezioro Mogileńskie (MOG), Jezioro Niepruszewskie (NIE), Jezioro Ilno (ILN), Jezioro Gopło (GOP), Jezioro Żabieńiec (ZAB), Jezioro Zbąszyńskie (ZBA), Jezioro Miejskie (MIE) oraz Jezioro Jieznas (JIE), Jezioro Širvys (SIR), Gineitiškės (GIN), Jezioro Didžiulis (DID), Jezioro Mastis (MAS), Jezioro Lūkstas (LUK) i Jezioro Simnas (SIM).

## **VI. Materiały i metody**

Próbki wody ze stanowisk badawczych wskazanych w punkcie V (Ryc. 3) były pobierane w następującym okresie:

- dla Zbiornika Sulejowskiego – pobór próbek odbywał się w sezonie wegetacyjnym w latach 2009 - 2015 oraz w cyklu dobowym w 2016 roku (**Załącznik 1:** Mankiewicz-Boczek i inni, 2016; **Załącznik 2:** Jaskulska i Mankiewicz-Boczek 2020; **Załącznik 4:** Jaskulska i inni, 2021b),
- dla Zbiornika Jeziorsko – pobór próbek trwał od wiosny do jesieni w roku 2014 - 2015, a także w cyklu dobowym w 2016 roku (**Załącznik 1:** Mankiewicz-Boczek i inni, 2016; **Załącznik 2:** Jaskulska i Mankiewicz-Boczek 2020; **Załącznik 4:** Jaskulska i inni, 2021b),
- dla pozostałych 14 jezior z obszaru Polski oraz 7 jezior z terenu Litwy – pobór próbek z poszczególnych jezior odbył się w roku 2013 oraz 2014 (**Załącznik 3:** Jaskulska i inni, 2021a). Szczegóły poboru próbek zostały zamieszczone w cytowanych publikacjach (**Załącznik 1:** Mankiewicz-Boczek i inni, 2016, **Załącznik 2:** Jaskulska i Mankiewicz-Boczek 2020, **Załącznik 3:** Jaskulska i inni, 2021a, **Załącznik 4:** Jaskulska i inni, 2021b). Łącznie przeprowadzono 129 poborów.

Najważniejsze elementy uwzględnione w badaniach, ich typ oraz użyte metody genetyczne zostały przedstawione na rycinie 4.

W celu scharakteryzowania obecności oraz przeanalizowania dynamiki występowania gospodarzy cyjanofagów - sinic wykonano liczne analizy jakościowe (PCR) oraz ilościowe (qPCR) fragmentów genów specyficznych dla sinic – genu 16S rRNA specyficznego dla cyjanobakterii z rodzaju *Microcystis* oraz genu *mcyA* specyficznego dla szczepów toksynogennych sinic z ww. rodzaju (**Załącznik 1:** Mankiewicz-Boczek i inni, 2016, **Załącznik 2:** Jaskulska i Mankiewicz-Boczek 2020, **Załącznik 3:** Jaskulska i inni, 2021a, **Załącznik 4:** Jaskulska i inni, 2021b). Do analiz jakościowych wspomnianych organizmów posłużyły również uniwersalne markery genetyczne do detekcji sinic (niespecyficzne względem konkretnego rodzaju cyjanobakterii) – fragment genu 16S rRNA oraz fragment genu *rpoB* (**Załącznik 3:** Jaskulska i inni, 2021a; **Załącznik 4:** Jaskulska i inni, 2021b). Ponadto amplifikowany gen *rpoB* z wybranych próbek ze Zbiornika Sulejowskiego oraz Zbiornika Jeziorsko, podczas prowadzonych eksperymentów dobowych, został poddany sekwencjonowaniu, a następnie analizie pozyskanych sekwencji w celu

określenia dominujących rodzajów cyjanobakterii w badanych zbiornikach (**Załącznik 4**: Jaskulska i inni, 2021b).

Dla scharakteryzowania obecności oraz przeanalizowania dynamiki występowania cyjanofagów wykonano również liczne analizy jakościowe (PCR) oraz ilościowe (qPCR) dwóch fragmentów genu *g91*, charakterystycznych dla wirusów z rodziny *Myoviridae* zdolnych do lizy sinic z rodzaju *Microcystis* (**Załącznik 1**: Mankiewicz-Boczek i inni, 2016; **Załącznik 2**: Jaskulska i Mankiewicz-Boczek 2020; **Załącznik 3**: Jaskulska i inni, 2021a; **Załącznik 4**: Jaskulska i inni, 2021b). Przeprowadzono także analizy jakościowe (PCR) innych genów cyjanofagów - *nblA* specyficznego względem cyjanofagów infekujących sinice z rodzaju *Microcystis*, oraz *psbA* rekomendowanego dla detekcji cyjanofagów infekujących sinice z rodzaju *Synechococcus* oraz *Prochlorococcus* (**Załącznik 3**: Jaskulska i inni, 2021a). Dodatkowo część próbek z amplifikowanymi ww. genami cyjanofagów została poddana sekwencjonowaniu w celu ich identyfikacji filogenetycznej, a także uzyskania informacji na temat podobieństw oraz różnić między sekwencjami (**Załącznik 1**: Mankiewicz-Boczek i inni, 2016; **Załącznik 3**: Jaskulska i inni, 2021a; **Załącznik 4**: Jaskulska i inni, 2021b).

Ponadto, w celu oceny dobowej dynamiki transkrypcji cyjanofagów specyficznych dla sinic z rodzaju *Microcystis*, pozyskany materiał RNA, zsyntetyzowano do cDNA i przeanalizowano (RT-PCR) pod kątem względnej ilości kopii transkyptu genu *g91* (**Załącznik 4**: Jaskulska i inni, 2021b) (**Załącznik 4**: Jaskulska i inni, 2021b).

Szczegóły związane z metodami izolowania kwasów nukleinowych, ich jakościowego i ilościowego oznaczania oraz sekwencjonowania wybranych genów sinic i cyjanofagów zostały opisane w cytowanych publikacjach (**Załącznik 1**: Mankiewicz-Boczek i inni, 2016; **Załącznik 3**: Jaskulska i inni, 2021a; **Załącznik 4**: Jaskulska i inni, 2021b).

Woda pochodząca ze zbiorników stanowiących obszar badawczy **Załącznika 1** (Mankiewicz-Boczek i inni, 2016) oraz **Załącznika 3** (Jaskulska i inni, 2021a), została scharakteryzowana pod kątem następujących parametrów fizyko-chemicznych: temperatury wody, odczynu wody (pH), konduktywności, zawartości form całkowitych fosforu i azotu. Ponadto analizy próbek wody ze zbiorników z **Załącznika 1** (Mankiewicz-Boczek i inni, 2016) odnosiły się również do zawartości rozpuszczonego azotu organicznego i rozpuszczonego fosforu organicznego, a także stężenia tlenu rozpuszczonego (szczegółowy opis metod w cytowanej publikacji). Takie parametry jak zawartość tlenu rozpuszczonego, konduktywność, temperatura oraz pomiar pH zostały wykonane *in situ*

podczas poboru próbek przy użyciu tlenomierza firmy WTW® – OXI z wbudowanym termometrem elektronicznym oraz miernika wielofunkcyjnego MM40 firmy Crison®.

Dodatkowo w ramach **Załacznika 3** (Jaskulska i inni, 2021a) przedstawiono analizy składu gatunkowego i biomasy sinic z badanych stanowisk - jezior polskich oraz litewskich wykonane odpowiednio przez Pana Profesora Mikołaja Kokocińskiego oraz Panią Doktor Juditę Koreivienę. Szczegółowy opis metodyki wykorzystanej do powyższych analiz został zawarty w cytowanej publikacji.

W pracy wykorzystano następujące metody statystyczne:

Test Shapiro-Wilka, test korelacji rang Searmana, test ANOVA Rang Kruskala-Wallisa, test U Mann-Whitneya, test Tukeya.

Do przeprowadzenia analiz wykorzystano również następujące oprogramowania: Statistica 10, Vector NTI Advance™ 9, MAFT-DASH, RAxML NG, BioEdit Sequence Alignment Editor 7.2.5, MEGAX software.

Typ badań	Analizowane parametry sinic, cyjanofagów oraz środowiska	Zastosowane metody genetyczne
<p><b>Badania sezonowe</b> ze Zbiornika Sulejowskiego (1) oraz Zbiornika Jeziorsko (2)</p>  <p>1 Fot. Jaskulska A. 2 Fot. Jaskulska A.</p>	<p><b>Geny markerowe sinic:</b> 16S rRNA oraz <i>mcyA</i></p> <p><b>Gen markerowy cyjanofagów:</b> <i>g91</i></p> <p><b>Parametry fizykochemiczne:</b> temperatura wody, odczyn wody, konduktynośc, zawartość całkowitego fosforu i azotu, zawartość rozpuszczonego azotu organicznego i rozpuszczonego fosforu organicznego, zawartość tlenu rozpuszczonego</p> <p><b>Parametr hydrologiczny:</b> czas retencji wody</p>	<p><b>PCR i qPCR:</b> 16S rRNA, <i>mcyA</i> i <i>g91</i></p> <p><b>Sekwencjonowanie metodą Sangera:</b> <i>g91</i></p>
<p><b>Badania porównawcze</b> między zbiornikami Polski i Litwy</p> 	<p><b>Gen markerowy sinic:</b> 16S rRNA</p> <p><b>Geny markerowe cyjanofagów:</b> <i>psbA</i>, <i>nblA</i> i <i>g91</i></p> <p><b>Czynniki biologiczne:</b> biomasa oraz skład gatunkowy sinic</p> <p><b>Parametry fizykochemiczne:</b> temperatura wody, odczyn wody, konduktynośc, zawartość całkowitego fosforu i azotu</p>	<p><b>PCR:</b> 16S rRNA, <i>psbA</i>, <i>nblA</i> i <i>g91</i></p> <p><b>Sekwencjonowanie metodą Sangera:</b> <i>psbA</i>, <i>nblA</i> i <i>g91</i></p>
<p><b>Badania dobowe</b> ze Zbiornika Sulejowskiego oraz Zbiornika Jeziorsko</p> 	<p><b>Geny markerowe sinic:</b> 16S rRNA oraz <i>rpoB</i></p> <p><b>Gen markerowy cyjanofagów:</b> <i>g91</i></p>	<p><b>PCR:</b> 16S rRNA, <i>rpoB</i> i <i>g91</i></p> <p><b>qPCR i RT-PCR:</b> 16S rRNA oraz <i>g91</i></p> <p><b>Sekwencjonowanie metodą Sangera:</b> <i>g91</i></p>

Rycina 4. Metodyka badań – kluczowe elementy.

## VII. Omówienie najważniejszych wyników

### 1. Sezonowa dynamika występowania cyjanofagów oraz sinic z rodzaju *Microcystis*

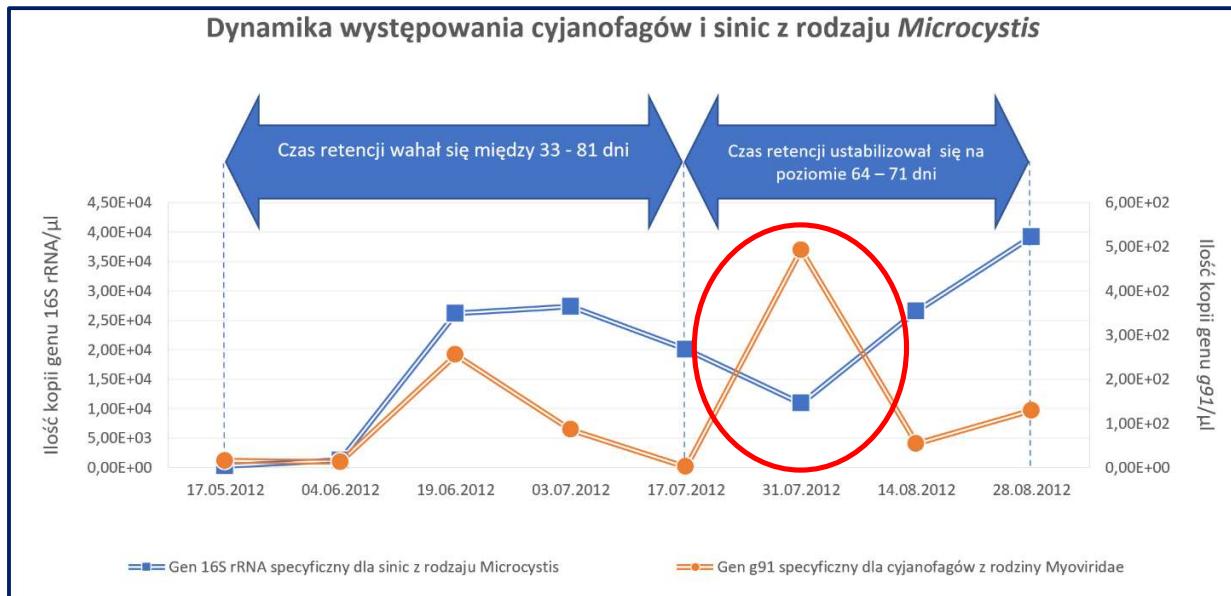
Badania skupiające się na analizie dynamiki występowania cyjanofagów infekujących sinice z rodzaju *Microcystis* w środowisku naturalnym dotąd pochodziły z regionu Azji Wschodniej (Yoshida i inni, 2008a; Kimura i inni, 2012; Xia i inni, 2013). Ponadto nie zidentyfikowano czynników fizyko-chemicznych, które mogłyby wpływać powtarzalnie (w kolejnych sezonach) na infekcje wirusowe w zbiornikach wody słodkiej. W związku z powyższym podjęto się oceny obecności oraz dynamiki występowania cyjanofagów specyficznych względem *Microcystis* (rokrocznie obserwowany zakwit) w Zbiorniku Sulejowskim oraz Zbiorniku Jeziorsko. Ponadto oceniono parametry środowiskowe potencjalnie wpływające na infekcje sinic w Zbiorniku Sulejowskim (**Załącznik 1:** Mankiewicz-Boczek i inni, 2016; **Załącznik 2:** Jaskulska i Mankiewicz-Boczek 2020). Aby zrealizować przedstawione powyżej cele przeprowadzono analizy jakościowe (PCR) i ilościowe (qPCR) genów: 16S rRNA (specyficznego dla sinic z rodzaju *Microcystis*), *mcyA* (specyficznego dla genotypów toksynogennych sinic z wspomnianego rodzaju) oraz *g91* (specyficznego dla cyjanofagów z rodziny *Myoviridae* infekujących sinice z rodzaju *Microcystis*) z próbek wyizolowanych z sezonów letnich z lat 2009 – 2015 ze Zbiornika Sulejowskiego oraz z lat 2014 – 2015 ze Zbiornika Jeziorsko (**Załącznik 1:** Mankiewicz-Boczek i inni, 2016; **Załącznik 2:** Jaskulska i Mankiewicz-Boczek, 2020).

Wskazane analizy molekularne posłużyły do wyznaczenia dynamiki występowania sinic, ich genotypów toksykogennych oraz cyjanofagów. Na ich podstawie wykazano, że cyjanofagi pojawiały się jednocześnie lub po pojawienniu się sinic i współwystępowały do końca sezonów monitoringowych (**Załącznik 1:** Mankiewicz-Boczek i inni, 2016; **Załącznik 2:** Jaskulska i Mankiewicz-Boczek, 2020).

W Zbiorniku Sulejowskim współwystępowanie sinic, w tym genotypów toksynogennych, oraz cyjanofagów miało zbliżoną dynamikę podczas 4 z 7 sezonów monitoringowych, tj. w latach 2009-2011 i 2013 (Ryc. 5, **Załącznik 1:** Mankiewicz-Boczek i inni, 2016). Natomiast w przypadku Zbiornika Jeziorsko nie zaobserwowano podobieństw w przebiegu dynamiki występowania, na podstawie analizy zmian w ilość kopii genów *Microcystis* oraz cyjanofagów (**Załącznik 2:** Jaskulska i Mankiewicz-Boczek, 2020). Jednakże, tak jak zostało już wcześniej wspomniane, cyjanofagi współwystępowały z sinicami w całym okresie monitoringu.

Jednym z sezonów monitoringowych, dla których nie zaobserwowano zależności statystycznych między występowaniem cyjanofagów i ich gospodarzy w Zbiorniku Sulejowskim, był rok 2012 (Ryc. 5). Wspomniany brak istotnych zależności mógł wynikać ze zmiany podobnego trendu występowania sinic oraz cyjanofagów obserwowanego w pierwszej połowie sezonu letniego (maj, czerwiec oraz pierwsza połowa lipca), w zależność antagonistyczną zaobserwowaną w drugiej połowie sezonu (druga połowa lipca i sierpień). Wykazano, że ww. zmianie w dynamice występowania cyjanofagów i sinic towarzyszyła zmiana czasu retencji wody, tzn. w pierwszej połowie badanego sezonu – czas retencji wody był bardziej zróżnicowany i wawał się od 33 do 81 dni, natomiast w drugiej połowie sezonu był utrzymany na stabilnym poziomie 64 – 71 dni (Ryc. 5). Zjawisko to można odnieść do koncepcji „Abiotic-Biotic Regulatory Concept” (Zalewski i Naiman, 1985) wskazującej, że stabilizacja czynników abiotycznych (tj. monitorowany czas retencji wody) wiąże się z możliwością zwiększenie aktywności czynników biotycznych (tj. aktywność cyjanofagów). Stąd podczas stabilizacji czasu retencji wody monitorowane cyjanofagi, mogły odegrać wiodącą rolę w regulacji ilości sinic z rodzaju *Microcystis*, poprzez lizę ich komórek (odnotowany spadek ilości sinic, monitoring ilościowy kopii genu 16S rRNA) z jednoczesnym wzrostem ilości wirusów (monitoring ilościowy kopii genu *g91*) (**Załacznik 1:** Mankiewicz-Boczek i inni, 2016).

**Powыższe wyniki otrzymane w pracy doktorskiej wykazaly, że w analizowanym środowisku – zbiorniki retencyjne Polski Centralnej (centralno-wschodnia część Europy, klimat umiarkowany) cyjanofagi współwystępowały ze swoim gospodarzem - sinicami, mogąc wpływać na lizę komórek cyjanobakterii. Jednakże nie zaobserwowano powtarzającej się zależności w dynamice występowanie wirusów i ich gospodarza, co wskazuje, że cyjanofagi są jednym z wielu czynników mogących wpływać na regulację występowania sinic. Natomiast co interesujące, podczas wykonanego monitoringu, zostało odnotowane zjawisko antagonistyczne w zmianach ilościowych sinic i wirusów, które można odnieść do hipotezy „killing the winner” (Ryc. 5, Yoshida i inni, 2008b), kiedy to cyjanofagi mogły odegrać decydującą rolę w degradacji komórek sinicowych. Ponadto, biorąc pod uwagę dynamikę przebiegu zmian w liczbie kopii genów reprezentujących cyjanofagi i genotypy toksynogenne *Microcystis*, wykazano, że wrażliwość fagów na wspomniane genotypy była znikoma (Załacznik 1: Mankiewicz-Boczek i inni, 2016).**



**Rycina 5.** Dynamika występowania cyjanofagów i sinic z rodzaju *Microcystis* w Zbiorniku Sulejowskim; na czerwono oznaczono zjawisko antagonistyczne w zmianach ilościowych sinic i wirusów; wykres przygotowany na podstawie materiałów przedstawionych w **Załączniku 1:** Mankiewicz-Boczek i inni, 2016.

W ramach 3- letnich badań przeprowadzonych przez Yoshida i inni (2010) również wykazano, że cyjanofagi nie wydają się być czynnikiem powodującym regularnie gwałtowne zmiany dynamiki występowania sinic. Należy wspomnieć, że zgodnie z Kimura i inni (2013) klaster genów *mcy*, a także proces produkcji toksycznych metabolitów w komórkach gospodarza raczej nie wpływa na replikację cząsteczek cyjanofagów.

W oparciu o dane ze Zbiornika Sulejowskiego sprawdzono potencjalne oddziaływanie parametrów fizyko-chemicznych wody (całkowitych form fosforu - TP i azotu - TN, rozpuszczonego azotu organicznego, rozpuszczonego fosforu organicznego, konduktyności, odczynu wody, stężenia oraz temperatury) na zmiany ilości kopii genu *g91* cyjanofagów w latach 2009-2013. Jednym sezonem, w którym nie stwierdzono żadnych istotnych korelacji, był rok 2012. Najprawdopodobniej było to konsekwencją wystąpienia ww. zależności antagonistycznej między badanymi sinicami oraz wirusami. W przypadku pozostałych sezonów **istotne zależności statystyczne zostały wykazane dla różnych parametrów, nie wskazując na jeden lub kilka uniwersalnych parametrów, powtarzalnych w kolejnych sezonach badawczych.** Jednakże warto przypomnieć zależności obserwowane w 2010 roku, które mogły wpływać na rozwój zakwitu

z przewagą *Microcystis* oraz mogły mieć pośredni wpływ na wystąpienie maksymalnej ilości cyjanofagów -  $1,08 \times 10^4$  kopii genu *g91*. Wspomniany zakwit rozwinął się w lipcu w konsekwencji **wydłużenia czasu retencji wody** w zbiorniku - wyliczony czas retencji zmienił się z 16 dni (30 czerwca) do 32 dni (13 lipca) i **optimalnego stężenia biogenów (szczególnie TP 0,25–0,37 mg L<sup>-1</sup>)**. Dodatkowo wykazanie najwyższej liczby kopii genów fagów było poprzedzone **gwaltownym wzrostem temperatury** średnio o około 4°C, z 19,79 (30 czerwca) do 23,68°C (13 lipca) (**Załącznik 1:** Mankiewicz-Boczek i inni, 2016).

## 2. Cyjanofagi obecne w jeziorach polskich i litewskich

Cyjanofagi występujące w środowisku słodkowodnym są słabiej scharakteryzowane w stosunku do cyjanofagów bytujących w środowisku morskim, jednym z czynników na to wpływających jest fakt, iż ich zróżnicowanie genetyczne przewyższa różnorodność genetyczną fagów morskich, m.in. ze względu na bogactwo siedlisk słodkowodnych obejmujących m.in.: bagna, stawy, jezioro wysokogórskie, jeziora oligo-, mezo- i eutroficzne (Watkins i inni, 2014). Dlatego też ograniczona baza danych i narzędzi molekularnych do monitoringu cyjanofagów słodkowodnych powoduje, że wiedza na ich temat jest nadal niewystarczająca. W ramach przedstawionych badań podjęto się oceny zróżnicowania cyjanofagów przy użyciu dostępnych w literaturze genów markerowych w słodkowodnych jeziorach z terenu Polski i Litwy (**Załącznik 3:** Jaskulska i inni, 2021a). Geny specyficzne dla cyjanofagów (*psbA*, *nblA* oraz *g91*) po ich amplifikacji, zostały poddane analizie sekwencji nukleotydowych (**Załącznik 3:** Jaskulska i inni, 2021a).

Podobieństwo, w zakresie od 75 do 98% dla sekwencji genu *psbA*, specyficznego względem cyjanofagów infekujących sinice m.in. z rodzaju *Synechococcus* oraz *Prochlorococcus*, odnotowano dla wybranych do analiz 5 jezior polskich (LUB, PNI, BUS, PAL i ILN) i jeziora litewskiego (GIN). Dla większości analizowanych jezior podobieństwo to wynosiło ponad 90%. Wyjątek stanowiła próbka z jeziora polskiego - ILN, której podobieństwo do pozostałych sekwencji było najniższe i mieściło się w zakresie 75–78%. Biorąc pod uwagę sekwencje genu *psbA* zdeponowane w bazie GeneBank należące do cyjanofagów oraz sinic, wykazano, że analizowane sekwencje genu *psbA* były podobne do sekwencji cyjanofagów morskich infekujących *Synechococcus*, aczkolwiek, największe podobieństwo wykazały między sobą (**Załącznika 3:** Jaskulska i inni, 2021a). Ograniczając analizy filogenetyczne jedynie do sekwencji genu *psbA* należących dla cyjanofagów, wykazano, że sekwencje z jezior polskich i litewskiego (LUB, PNI, BUS, GIN i PAL) stworzyły wspólną grupę z podobieństwem powyżej 95%, wyjątek

stanowiła tylko próbka z jeziora ILN, gdzie analizowana sekwencja była bardziej podobna do sekwencji fagów morskich. (**Załącznika 3:** Jaskulska i inni, 2021a). **Znaczne podobieństwo analizowanych sekwencji genu *psbA* wskazało na możliwość wystąpienia podobnych cyjanofagów w badanych jeziorach.**

Sekwencje genu *nblA*, specyficznego względem cyjanofagów infekujących rodzaj *Microcystis*, pozyskane z 4 polskich (BYT, BUS, PNI i PAL) oraz 2 litewskich (GIN i SIM) jezior wykazały pomiędzy sobą podobieństwo powyżej 88%. Biorąc pod uwagę sekwencje genu *nblA* zdeponowane w bazie danych GeneBank, wykazano ponad 90% podobieństwo badanych sekwencji z jezior polskich i litewskich do nieznanych szczepów cyjanofagów z rodziny *Myoviridae* (AB812972.1 i AB812972) oraz szczepu MaMV-DC (KF356199.1) (**Załącznik 3:** Jaskulska i inni, 2021a).

Ostatnim genem cyjanofagowym wykorzystanym do analiz filogenetycznych był gen strukturalny *g91*, będący również genem specyficznym dla fagów zdolnych do lizy komórek sinic z rodzaju *Microcystis*. Do analiz wybrano 6 próbek z jezior polskich (LUB, BYT, BUS, PNI, PAL i MIE) i 3 próbki z jezior litewskich (JIE, SIM i GIN) (**Załącznik 3:** Jaskulska i inni, 2021a). Pozyskane sekwencje wykazywały między sobą podobieństwo powyżej 90%. Biorąc pod uwagę sekwencje genu *g91* zdeponowane w bazie danych GeneBank, wykazano podobieństwo z sekwencjami cyjanofagów z rodziny *Myoviridae* takimi jak Ma-LMM01 (AB242261.1), Ma-HPM05 (AB258340.1) i MaMV-DC (KF356199.1) (**Załącznik 3:** Jaskulska i inni, 2021a). **Podsumowując, analiza podobieństw sekwencji fragmentów genów *nblA* i *g91* wskazała na obecność specyficznych cyjanofagów względem sinic z rodzaju *Microcystis* w badanych jeziorach na terenie Polski oraz Litwy.**

### **3. Potencjalny wpływ czynników abiotycznych i biotycznych na występowanie cyjanofagów w jeziorach polskich i litewskich**

Mimo rosnącej ilości badań nad rozmieszczeniem cyjanofagów w wodach słodkich oraz wpływem czynników środowiskowych - informacje na ich temat są wciąż niewystarczające. Stąd niniejsze badania miały na celu określenie rozmieszczenia przestrzennego cyjanofagów względem ich gospodarzy - sinic oraz wybranych czynników fizyko-chemicznych, z uwzględnieniem dystansu geograficznego obejmującego obszar ok. 200 000 km. W związku z powyższym przeanalizowano zależności między obecnością cyjanofagów (geny: *psbA*, *nblA* oraz *g91*), obecnością sinic (skład gatunkowy oraz biomasa) oraz parametrami środowiskowymi (temperatura wody, pH,

konduktynośc, TP i TN) przy użyciu analizy głównych składowych (PCA). Do przeprowadzenia wskazanych analiz wykorzystano dane pozyskane z ww. 21 jezior z terenu Polski oraz Litwy (**Załącznik 3**: Jaskulska i inni, 2021a).

Analiza PCA wyodrębniła 2 czynniki odróżniające wspomniane powyżej obiekty badań. Oba czynniki 1 (PC1) i 2 (PC2) wyjaśniały 36,7% wariancji obserwowanych zmiennych.

Zgodnie z otrzymanymi wynikami analizy PCA, jeziora zostały podzielone w ramach następujących 3 grup: grupa A zawierająca 5 jezior z obszaru Polski (LUB, PNI, BUS, BYT i PAL), grupa B skupiająca jeziora z obszaru Litwy (SIM, GIN i JIE) oraz grupa C odnosząca się do jezior z obu krajów (DID, SIR, ILN, MYS, MOG, ZAB, GRY, GOP i ZBA) (**Załącznik 3**: Jaskulska i inni, 2021a). W grupie A i B znalazły się jeziora, w których potwierdzono obecność cyjanofagów na podstawie amplifikacji 2 lub 3 genów markerowych użytych w badaniach. Z kolei w grupie C były te jeziora, w których nie wykryto w ogóle cyjanofagów lub wykryto tylko jeden gen markerowy analizowanych wirusów. Zaobserwowano, że grupa A znaczaco różniła się od grup B i C ( $p = 4,76 \times 10^{-4}$  oraz  $2,2 \times 10^{-4}$ , odpowiednio) pod względem wyników czynnika 1 i 2. Dodatkowo, całkowita zawartość fosforu oraz konduktynośc ( $r = 0,71$  i  $0,70$ , odpowiednio), a także geny *nblA* i *psbA* ( $r = 0,56$  i  $0,52$ , odpowiednio) wykazały najsilniejszą zależność z czynnikiem 1 (Tab. 1). **Wyniki te sugerują, że wyżej wymienione czynniki (TP oraz konduktynośc) mogą być istotnymi zmiennymi wpływającymi na zróżnicowanie przestrzenne między jeziorami Polski i Litwy, a także mogły znaczaco wpływać na rozwój poszczególnych gatunków sinic oraz występowanie monitorowanych cyjanofagów.** Z kolei czynnik 2 ( $p = 6,41 \times 10^{-9}$ ) istotnie różnicował jeziora litewskie wyróżnione w ramach grupy B od jezior z grupy C. To zróżnicowanie między jeziorami mogło wynikać z faktu, że następujące zmienne tj. geny cyjanofagów *g91* oraz *nblA* ( $r = 0,79$ ,  $r = 0,61$ , odpowiednio), oraz pH ( $r = 0,47$ ) były najsilniej powiązane z czynnikiem 2 (Tab. 1). Natomiast umiejscowienie grupy C wynikało z niskich wartości czynnika 1 i 2, na które składały się odpowiednio składniki: najniższa wykrywalność genów oraz niższe wartości parametrów środowiskowych (**Załącznik 3**: Jaskulska i inni, 2021a).

**Tabela 1.** Opis wartości PCA (korelacja Pearsona r) dla poszczególnych zmiennych środowiskowych użytych do wyjaśnienia dystansu przestrzennego między 21 jeziorami Polski i Litwy; tabela przygotowana na podstawie **Załącznika 3:** Jaskulska i inni, 2021a.

Parametry	Zmienne	Czynnik 1 (PC 1)	Czynnik 2 (PC 2)
Fizyko-chemiczne	pH	0,3282	<b>0,4667</b>
	konduktyność	<b>0,6981</b>	-0,3893
	temperatura	0,3220	0,3788
	azot całkowity (TN)	0,3719	-0,3351
	fosfor całkowity (TP)	<b>0,7119</b>	0,0572
Geny cyjanofagów	<i>psbA</i>	<b>0,5156</b>	0,3110
	<i>nblA</i>	<b>0,5636</b>	<b>0,6058</b>
	<i>g91_S</i>	0,4231	<b>0,7937</b>
	<i>g91_L</i>	0,2266	<b>0,6890</b>

Ponadto wykazano, że w ramach grup A, B i C występują różne gatunki sinic. Na przykład *Planktothrix agardhii* (średnia biomasa 15,6 mg L<sup>-1</sup>) był gatunkiem dominującym w grupie A, *Planktolyngbya limnetica* (średnia biomasa 3,2 mg L<sup>-1</sup>) jednym z dominujących gatunków w grupie B, a *Aphanizomenon gracile* w grupie A i B o średniej biomasie odpowiednio 3,27 mg L<sup>-1</sup> i 3,80 mg L<sup>-1</sup> i pięciokrotnie niższej biomasy w grupie C (0,64 mg L<sup>-1</sup>). **Zaobserwowane zróżnicowanie gatunkowe wśród cyjanobakterii najprawdopodobniej wynikało z wpływu różnych czynników fizyko-chemicznych, w tym ww. w ramach PCA: TP, konduktyność i pH.** Natomiast całkowity skład sinic, reprezentowany przez ogólną biomasę sinic w PCA, wyraźnie wpływał na detekcje cyjanofagów, tzn. w jeziorach, w których potwierdzono obecność cyjanofagów na podstawie amplifikacji 2 lub 3 genów markerowych, odnotowano również 2-, 3- krotnie wyższą biomasę cyjanobakterii (**Załącznik 3:** Jaskulska i inni, 2021a). Należy nadmienić, że badania związane z obecnością oraz dalszym monitoringiem genów markerowych takich jak *psbA*, *nblA* oraz *g91* były prowadzone zarówno w Japonii, Chinach, Stanach Zjednoczonych, Kanadzie, Polsce oraz Francji (**Załącznik 3:** Jaskulska i inni, 2021a). Jednakże, wówczas obszar prowadzonych badań ograniczał się do jednego lub dwóch zbiorników wodnych, a tym samym żadne z dotychczasowych badań nie dotyczyło jednociesnej analizy występowania cyjanofagów w odniesieniu do populacji sinic oraz parametrów fizyko-chemicznych z większego obszaru geograficznego, obejmującego co najmniej kilkanaście zbiorników

słodkowodnych. Stąd prezentowane wyniki badań (**Załacznik 3:** Jaskulska i inni, 2021a) jako pierwsze pozwoliły przybliżyć potencjalny związek między cyjanofagami, sinicami oraz wybranymi parametrami środowiskowymi na obszarze obejmującym kilkanaście jezior polskich oraz jeziora litewskie i dystansie geograficznym obejmującym ok. 200 000 km.

#### **4. Dobowa dynamika występowania cyjanofagów oraz sinic z rodzaju *Microcystis***

Cyjanobakterie są organizmami samożywymi, których funkcjonowanie zależy od procesu fotosyntezy, a tym samym od cyklu światła (Straub i inni, 2011; Sought i inni, 2017). Z kolei, u cyjanofagów – wirusów specyficznych względem sinic stwierdzono obecność pomocniczych genów metabolicznych, które zostały pozyskane w drodze horyzontalnego transferu genów od ich gospodarzy. Tym samym uważa się, że proces infekcji cyjanofagowej może zależeć pośrednio lub bezpośrednio od cyklu dzień-noc (Ni i Zeng, 2016). Dotąd analizy infekcji cyjanofagów specyficznych dla sinic z rodzaju *Microcystis*, w cyklu dobowym, w środowisku naturalnym, zostały przeprowadzone tylko w stawie Hirosawanoike w Japonii (Kimura i inni, 2012). Stąd w niniejszych badaniach podjęto się sprawdzenia i potwierdzenia występowania zależności procesu transkrypcji fagów (na przykładzie genu *g91*) od cyklu światła w dwóch zbiornikach Polski Centralnej reprezentujących odmienny obszar geograficzny - Europę (**Załacznik 4:** Jaskulska i inni, 2021b). W pierwszym etapie przeanalizowano dobową dynamikę występowania sinic z rodzaju *Microcystis* z wykorzystaniem genu 16S rRNA oraz cyjanofagów przy użyciu genu *g91*. Następnie sprawdzono dzienną-dzienną dynamikę transkrypcji genu *g91*, zachodzącą w komórkach gospodarza. Wspomniane analizy zostały przeprowadzone na podstawie materiału pozyskanego w ramach 2 dobowych poborów, odpowiednio ze Zbiornika Jeziorsko i Zbiornika Sulejowskiego, prowadzonych w godzinach od 6:00 rano do 4:00 rano dnia następnego (**Załacznik 4:** Jaskulska i inni, 2021b).

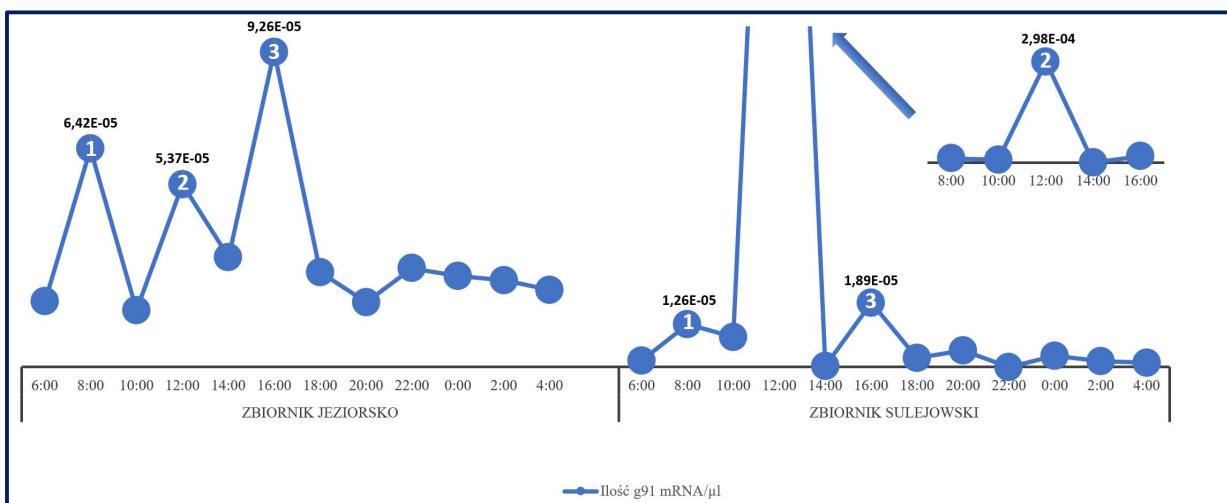
Obecność sinic z rodzaju *Microcystis* wykazano w całym analizowanym okresie w obu zbiornikach. Ilość kopii genu 16S rRNA wała się w zakresie od 5,99E+05 do 1,60E+06 dla Zbiornika Jeziorsko oraz od 6,34E+05 do 1,03E+06 dla Zbiornika Sulejowskiego. Analiza dynamiki zmian ilości kopii wspomnianego genu wykazała po 2 pik wzrostowe podczas monitoringu dobowego w obu zbiornikach, jednakże dynamika dobowej ilości *Microcystis* nie była taka sama. Dla Zbiornika Jeziorsko pierwszy pik odnotowano w godzinach porannych (6:00 - 10:00), a drugi pik wystąpił nad ranem (2:00 – 4:00). Dla Zbiornika Sulejowskiego pierwszy pik wystąpił również rano (6:00), natomiast drugi pik pojawił się w godzinach popołudniowych

(14:00-16:00) (**Załaczek 4:** Jaskulska i inni, 2021b). Przeprowadzona analiza sekwencji genu *rpoB* wykazała współdominację sinic z rodzaju *Microcystis* oraz *Aphanizomenon* w Zbiorniku Jeziorsko, oraz dominację *Microcystis* w Zbiorniku Sulejowskim. Obecność kodominującego rodzaju sinic mogła być jednym z czynników różnicujących analizowaną dobową dynamikę ilości *Microcystis* w obu zbiornikach (**Załaczek 4:** Jaskulska i inni, 2021b).

Cyjanofagi w komórkach gospodarza wykryto we wszystkich analizowanych próbkach na podstawie obecności fragmentu genu *g91*. Ilość kopii genu *g91* wała się w zakresie od 1,04E + 05 do 5,21E + 05, oraz od 4,35E + 03E do 1,53E + 04 odpowiednio w Zbiorniku Jeziorsku i Zbiorniku Sulejowskim. W Zbiorniku Jeziorsko najwyższe wartości obserwowano w godzinach porannych (6:00 - 10:00) oraz kolejno nad ranem (2:00 - 4:00). Natomiast w Zbiorniku Sulejowskim wystąpiły 3 piki wzrostowe. Pierwszy był również rano (6:00 - 10:00), drugi wieczorem (18:00 - 22:00), a ostatni ponownie nad ranem (4:00). Otrzymane wynik ponownie potwierdziły, że dobowa dynamika ilości cyjanofagów specyficznych dla rodzaju *Microcystis* nie była tożsama w obu zbiornikach.

Do sprawdzenie dynamiki zmian transkrypcji genu *g91* cyjanofagów w komórkach gospodarzy użyto względnej wartości transkryptu *g91* otrzymanej poprzez podzielenie ilości kopii transkryptu *g91* przez ilość kopii transkryptu 16S rRNA *Microcystis*. Otrzymana względna ilość transkryptu *g91* mieściła się w zakresie od 1,67E-05 do 9,26E-05 dla Zbiornika Jeziorsko, oraz 5,79E-08 do 2,98E-04 dla Zbiornika Sulejowskiego. W obu zbiornikach dynamika transkrypcji genu markerowego dla cyjanofagów - *g91* miała podobny przebieg. Było to związane z pojawiением się 3 pików wzrostowych w następujących godzinach dziennych: 8:00, 12:00 i 16:00 (Ryc. 6). Najwyższy pik dla Jeziorska odnotowano o 16:00, a dla Zbiornika Sulejowskiego o 12:00. W przypadku godzin wieczornych oraz nocnych ww. transkrypcja utrzymywała się na niskim poziomie w obu zbiornikach (**Załaczek 4:** Jaskulska i inni, 2021b).

**Pomimo różnic między dobową dynamiką ilościową *Microcystis* i cyjanofagów w obu zbiornikach, zauważono, że przebieg transkrypcji genu *g91* badanych fagów, w komórkach gospodarza, był podobny (Ryc. 6). Zaobserwowano większą aktywność cyjanofagów w ciągu dnia - obecność światła i mniejszą w trakcie zmroku i nocy, co może wskazywać na potencjalną dobową zależność replikacji cyjanofagów uzależnioną od procesu fotosyntezy gospodarza (Załaczek 4: Jaskulska i inni, 2021b).**



**Rycina 6.** Dobowa dynamika transkrypcji genu *g91* w Zbiorniku Sulejowskim oraz Zbiorniku Jeziorsko; transkrypt genu *g91* znormalizowano przy użyciu transkryptu genu 16S rRNA specyficznego dla sinic z rodzaju *Microcystis* (tj. *g91/16S*); cyframi 1, 2 oraz 3 oznaczono piki wzrostowe; wykres przygotowany na podstawie **Załącznika 4:** Jaskulska i inni, 2021b.

Zgodnie z danymi literaturowymi tylko nieliczne badania dotyczyły analiz cyklu infekcji wirusów sinicowych w odniesieniu do cyklu dzień-noc w środowisku naturalnym, przy czym, jak już wspomniano, tylko jedne badania, przeprowadzone przez Kimura i inni (2012) opisały dynamikę transkrypcji cyjanofagów specyficznych względem sinic z rodzaju *Microcystis* przy użyciu genu *g91*. Te badania również wykazały wyższą aktywność transkrypcji w godzinach dziennych oraz jej spadek w godzinach nocnych. Na podstawie tych wyników Kimura i inni (2012) zasugerował, że geny fagów są transkrybowane na początku procesu fotosyntezy przeprowadzanej przez gospodarza. Ponadto, przy użyciu analizy genu *g91* DNA obecnego w komórkach gospodarzy oraz w wolnej frakcji cyjanofagów (znajdujących się w toni wodnej) Kimura i inni (2012) sugerowali, że w pełni uformowane cząstki fagów uwalniają się kilka godzin od rozpoczęcia transkrypcji ich genów. Według Kimura i inni (2012) pozyskane wyniki wskazywały, że proliferacja fagów *Microcystis* może zależeć od wydajności fotosyntezy gospodarza bezpośrednio powiązanej z cyklem światła, a tym samym infekcja wirusów sinicowych występuje w cyklu dziennym.

## **VII. Weryfikacja hipotez badawczych - podsumowanie**

### **Hipoteza badawcza nr 1 została potwierdzona na podstawie poniższych wniosków:**

W ramach przedstawionych badań, dotyczących analizy dynamiki występowania cyjanofagów, infekujących sinice z rodzaju *Microcystis* (z uwzględnieniem ich genotypów toksynogennych), wykazano, że cyjanofagi z rodzaju *Myoviridae* pojawiały się równocześnie lub po pojawienniu się sinic i w większości analizowanego okresu – współwystępowały ze swoim gospodarzem. Jednakże, również odnotowano czasowo występujące zjawisko o charakterze „killing the winner”, podczas którego następowało załamanie dynamiki występowania sinic tworzących zakwit – nagły spadek ich ilości, połączony z jednoczesnym szybkim wzrostem ilości cyjanofagów, co sugeruje, że w takich przypadkach fagi mogą być tzw. biologicznym czynnikiem decyzyjnym odpowiedzialnym za regulację ilości cyjanobakterii w zbiornikach słodkowodnych.

### **Hipoteza badawcza nr 2 została potwierdzona na podstawie poniższych wniosków:**

Analizy wpływu parametrów biologicznych (biomasa oraz skład gatunkowy sinic), fizyko-chemicznych (zawartość tlenu rozpuszczonego, konduktywność, temperatura, pH, zawartość TP i TN), a także hydrologicznych (czas retencji wody) na występowanie cyjanofagów wykazały, że: 1) całkowity skład sinic wyrażony poprzez ich biomasę korzystnie wpływał na zwiększenie wykrywalności cyjanofagów; 2) czynniki fizyko-chemiczne takie jak: TP, konduktywność i pH były ważnymi parametrami środowiskowymi różnicującymi jeziora Polski oraz Litwy, które mogły bezpośrednio lub pośrednio (poprzez gospodarza - sinice) wpływać na występowanie cyjanofagów; 3) dodatkowo wpływ hydrologii monitorowanych zbiorników zaporowych - zwiększyły czas retencji wody, sprzyjały wzrostowi infekcji fagowych względem sinic z rodzaju *Microcystis*.

### **Hipoteza badawcza nr 3 została potwierdzona na podstawie poniższych wniosków:**

Analizy ilości transkryptu cyjanofagów, na podstawie genu *g91*, prowadzone w ramach dobowego wymiaru czasu, wykazały, że proces ten był wydajniejszy w godzinach dziennych (tj. szczególnie pomiędzy 08:00-16:00), podczas gdy w godzinach nocnych powyższa aktywność znacznie spadała. Taki przebieg dynamiki transkrypcji cyjanofagów sugeruje, że cykl światła wpływa pośrednio lub bezpośrednio na replikację wirusową w komórkach ich gospodarza.

## **VIII. Załączniki**

Niniejszy rozdział stanowią oświadczenia o współautorstwie oraz opublikowane artykuły naukowe.

**Załącznik 1:** □

Mankiewicz-Boczek, J., Jaskulska, A., Pawełczyk, J., Gągała, I., Serwecińska, L., Dziadek, J. 2016. Cyanophage infection of *Microcystis* bloom in lowland dam reservoir of Sulejów, Poland. *Microbial Ecology* 71, 315-325, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00248-015-0677-5>

Łódź, 16.08.2021

**Oświadczenie o współautorstwie**

Oświadczam, że mój wkład w przygotowanie oryginalnej pracy polegał na:  
przygotowaniu koncepcji planu badań, podsumowaniu uzyskanych wyników oraz wstępnej propozycji  
planu manuskryptu wraz z jego dalszą korektą.  
Swój udział w przygotowaniu pracy oceniam na 30%.

Prof. dr hab. Joanna Mankiewicz-Boczek

Europejskie Regionalne Centrum Ekohydrologii  
Polskiej Akademii Nauk

Oświadczam, że mój wkład w przygotowanie oryginalnej pracy polegał na:  
pomocy przy poborze materiału do badań, wykonanie niezbędnych analiz genetycznych, w tym  
optymalizacji analiz cyjanofagów, fizykochemicznych i statystycznych, oraz współtworzeniu  
ostatecznej wersji manuskryptu.  
Swój udział w przygotowaniu pracy oceniam na 40%.

Mgr Aleksandra Jaskulska

Katedra UNESCO Ekohydrologii  
i Ekologii Stosowanej

Oświadczam, że mój wkład w przygotowanie oryginalnej pracy polegał na:  
pomocy w ilościowej ocenie cyjanofagów i sinic oraz w pomocy w przygotowaniu manuskryptu.  
Swój udział w przygotowaniu pracy oceniam na 10%.

Dr Jakub Pawełczyk

Instytut Biologii Medycznej  
Polskiej Akademii Nauk

Oświadczam, że mój wkład w przygotowanie oryginalnej pracy polegał na:  
pomocy w pozyskaniu materiału do badań oraz w pomocy przy analizach fizyko-chemicznych,  
i statystycznych. Brałam również udział w przygotowaniu ostatecznej wersji manuskryptu.  
Swój udział w przygotowaniu pracy oceniam na 10%.



**Dr Ilona Gągała-Borowska**

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Polskiej Akademii Nauk

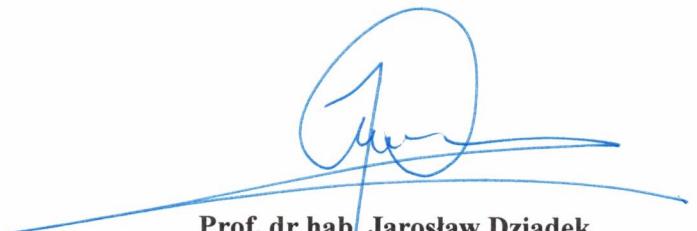
Oświadczam, że mój wkład w przygotowanie oryginalnej pracy polegał na:  
pomocy w przygotowaniu manuskryptu.  
Swój udział w przygotowaniu pracy oceniam na 5%.



**Dr Liliana Serwecińska**

Europejskie Regionalne Centrum Ekohydrologii  
Polskiej Akademii Nauk

Oświadczam, że mój wkład w przygotowanie oryginalnej pracy polegał na:  
pomocy w przygotowaniu manuskryptu.  
Swój udział w przygotowaniu pracy oceniam na 5%.



**Prof. dr hab. Jarosław Dziadek**

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Polskiej Akademii Nauk

# Cyanophages Infection of *Microcystis* Bloom in Lowland Dam Reservoir of Sulejów, Poland

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Received: 14 April 2015 / Accepted: 10 September 2015 / Published online: 24 September 2015  
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**Abstract** An increased incidence of cyanobacterial blooms, which are largely composed of toxicogenic cyanobacteria from the *Microcystis* genus, leads to a disruption of aquatic ecosystems worldwide. Therefore, a better understanding of the impact of environmental parameters on the development and collapse of blooms is important. The objectives of the present study were as follows: (1) to investigate the presence and identity of *Microcystis*-specific cyanophages capable of cyanobacterial cell lysis in a lowland dam reservoir in Central Europe; (2) to investigate *Microcystis* sensitivity to phage infections with regard to toxic genotypes; and (3) to identify key abiotic parameters influencing phage infections during the summer seasons between 2009 and 2013. Sequencing analysis of selected *g91* gene amplification products confirmed that the identified cyanophages belonged to the family *Myoviridae* (95 % homology). Cyanophages and *Microcystis* hosts, including toxic genotypes, were positively correlated in 4 of the 5 years analyzed ( $r=0.67\text{--}0.82$ ). The average percentage of infected *Microcystis* cells varied between 0.1 and 32 %, and no particular sensitivity of the phages to toxicogenic genotypes was recorded. The highest number of cyanophages ( $>10^4$  gene

**Electronic supplementary material** The online version of this article (doi:10.1007/s00248-015-0677-5) contains supplementary material, which is available to authorized users.

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copy number per microliter) was observed in the period preceded by the following: an increase of the water retention time, growth of the water temperature, optimum nutrient concentrations, and the predomination of *Microcystis* bloom.

**Keywords** Cyanophage infection · *Myoviridae* · *Microcystis* · *g91* gene · Real-time PCR · Freshwater

## Introduction

Cyanobacteria are photoautotrophic microorganisms that commonly occur in water bodies. One of the most common genera of high trophic level freshwater cyanobacteria is *Microcystis*. Because of its high tolerance to stress conditions developed through evolutionary adaptations and its rapid biomass growth, *Microcystis* is an important component of cyanobacterial blooms throughout the world [1–4]. An excessive increase in cyanobacterial mass known as the “bloom of blue-green algae” leads to a disruption of aquatic ecosystems owing to the production of cyanobacterial toxins (including hepatotoxins, neurotoxins, cytotoxins, and dermatotoxins), consumption of large amounts of oxygen during cell decomposition, growth of primary production, reduction of water clarity, deterioration of organoleptic parameters, and the consequent decrease in biodiversity [5, 6]. Therefore, improving our understanding of the impact of the environment on the development and activity of cyanobacteria is necessary to enable the use of its natural potential, in particular, biological control agents such as bacteria, viruses, and protozoa [7–9] to limit the associated threat.

The abiotic and biotic factors that regulate the occurrence of cyanobacteria have been studied extensively [3]. However, the knowledge about biotic control of freshwater cyanobacteria, in particular the role of microorganisms, still

remains insufficient [9, 10]. It is thus important to improve our knowledge of the impact of microorganisms, which are characterized by high plasticity to environmental conditions. Furthermore, the identification of factors whose control could effectively lead to a reduction of cyanobacterial blooms at a low investment and without adversely affecting ecosystem homeostasis is important.

Because of their numbers and ubiquity, viruses (phages) have been implicated in the control of the structure and function of bacterial communities in freshwater ecosystems [11–15]. Additionally, phages are thought to be essential for gene transfer and the nutrient cycle [16, 17]. Cyanophages are a type of planktonic viruses that infect cyanobacteria and thus play important roles in modulating cyanobacterial populations (“clonal” diversity, composition, and evolution) and preserving water quality [12–16, 18–20]. Since the 1980s, research on cyanophages has focused on viruses specific to saltwater cyanobacteria [21–25]. In the last decade, studies have examined the diversity of freshwater cyanophages belonging to *Myoviridae*, *Podoviridae*, or *Siphoviridae* and their impact on their hosts, among others: *Synechococcus*, *Microcystis*, *Aphanizomenon*, *Planktothrix*, or/and *Phormidium* genera [11, 18, 19, 26–32].

To date, research on phages specific to *Microcystis* has been carried out in Australia, East Asia, and Northern Europe (UK). Studies have led to the discovery of many phages, including strains Ma-LBP and ΦMHI42 from the family *Podoviridae*; strains Ma-LMM01, Ma-LMM02, Ma-LMM03, Ma-HPM05, and MaMV-DC from the family *Myoviridae*; and strain MaCV-L, which represents corticovirus-like particles [11, 18, 19, 26–29].

Genetically, the most studied cyanophage is strain Ma-LMM01 from the family *Myoviridae*. Molecular genomic analysis of this strain led to the identification of the *g91* gene, which was characterized as a viral sheath protein-encoding gene [12, 13, 19, 26, 33, 34].

To the best of our knowledge, as far as the *g91* gene is concerned, few environmental studies have been conducted. Five of these studies focused on the dynamics of occurrence of phages specific to the *Microcystis* genus [12, 13, 19, 20, 33], and one study examined cyanophage gene diversification [35]. However, these studies were limited to regions of East Asia (Lake Mikata, Japan; Hirosawanoike Pond, Japan; and East Lake, China), and water factors that may influence viral infection were not identified. Furthermore, the effect of the phage on toxic and non-toxic subpopulations of *Microcystis* associated with algal blooms was not fully clarified [12, 19].

The objectives of the present study were as follows: (1) to investigate the presence and phylogenetic affiliations, up to the genus level, of *Microcystis*-specific cyanophages in a lowland dam reservoir of Poland; (2) to investigate the sensitivity of *Microcystis* to phage infections with regard to the number of toxic *Microcystis* genotypes; and (3) to identify a key

abiotic parameter (or parameters) that may have impacted phage infections during the summer seasons between 2009 and 2013.

## Material and Methods

### Sample Collection

The monitoring of cyanobacterial genus *Microcystis*, its potentially microcystin-producing subpopulation, cyanophages specific for *Microcystis* and physical and chemical water parameters was conducted in the shallow lowland dam reservoir in Central Poland, the Sulejów Reservoir ( $51^{\circ} 26' 00''$  N;  $19^{\circ} 55' 25''$  E). Water samples were collected as an integrated water probes (obtained and mixed from different depths i.e., 0–7 m) during the vegetation periods since 2009 until 2013 from the station located in the lower part of the reservoir, close to the dam in Smardzewice (Tresta Station). The total of 45 water samples was collected: 10 samples in 2009 from April till August, 9 samples in 2010 and the same number in 2011 from May till August, 8 samples in 2012 from May till August, and 9 samples in 2013 from May till September.

### Analysis of Physical and Chemical Water Parameters

The physical water parameters including temperature, oxygen concentration (WTW oxygen meter WTW-OXI) and pH (MultiMeter MM 40, Crison) were determined in the sampling site. The dissolved forms of nitrogen (DN) and phosphorus (DP) analysis were performed using ion chromatography as previously described by Gagala et al. [36]. The total nitrogen concentration (TN) analysis was performed using TNT persulfate digestion method [37]. Samples for the total phosphorus (TP) determination were digested with the use of oxidizing decomposition reagent (Oxisolve®, Merck, Darmstadt, Germany) in the Merck MV 500 Microwave Digestion System and analyzed by the ascorbic acid method [38].

### Molecular Analysis

The samples of water for DNA assays (always 100 mL of water was collected) were prepared according to Mankiewicz-Boczek et al. [39]. Filters with cyanobacterial material (pore diameter 0.45 μm, Millipore, USA) were put into the lysis buffer containing 40 mM EDTA, 400 mM NaCl, 0.75 M sucrose, and 50 mM TRIS-HCl (pH 8.3) and frozen as soon as possible. Genetic material was extracted from the filters according to Giovannoni et al. [40] with some modifications which improved the extracted DNA quality and quantity, described by Mankiewicz-Boczek et al. [39]. For the centrifugation, a speed of  $13,000 \times g$  instead of  $10,000 \times g$  was used. For the enzymatic lysis step, a final concentration of proteinase K (Fermentas,

Lithuania) of 275 µg mL<sup>-1</sup> instead of 160 µg mL<sup>-1</sup> was used. During the phenol/chloroform step, a volume of chloroform/isoamyl alcohol (24:1) equal to the volume of supernatant was used.

Extracted DNA was used as the template for qualitative (polymerase chain reaction, PCR) and quantitative (quantitative real-time PCR, qRT-PCR) determination of 16S ribosomal RNA (rRNA) (250 bp) gene fragment specific for the genus *Microcystis*, *mcyA* (395 bp) gene fragment specific for toxic *Microcystis* genotypes and *g91* (132 bp) gene fragment specific for cyanophages infecting the genus *Microcystis*. Characteristics of the above-mentioned genes and the primers used to their amplification are included in Table 1.

### Qualitative Analysis of Genes Studied

The PCR amplification conditions of 16S rRNA was performed according to Ha et al. [41] after Neilan et al. [42] with minor modifications: primer annealing temperature of 51 °C instead of 50 °C was used. Amplification of 16S rRNA and *mcyA* was performed as described previously by Gagala et al. [43]. For both genes, amplifications was carried out in a solution volume of 30 µL containing 1 µL of DNA template and (a) for 16S rRNA: 0.5 µM of both forward and reverse primers, 0.2 mM of deoxynucleotides (dNTPs), 3 mM of MgCl<sub>2</sub>, 1× PCR buffer, 0.1 mg mL<sup>-1</sup> of bovine serum albumin (BSA), and 1 U of *Taq* polymerase (QIAGEN) and (b) for *mcyA*: 0.167 µM of both forward and reverse primers, 0.67 mM of dNTPs, 2.5 mM of MgCl<sub>2</sub>, 1× PCR buffer, 0.1 mg mL<sup>-1</sup> of BSA, and 1 U of *Taq* polymerase (QIAGEN). The reaction conditions were as follows: (a) for 16S rRNA: 95 °C for 10 min, followed by 26 cycles of 94 °C for 10 s, 51 °C for 30 s, and 70 °C for 1 min, and a final extension at 72 °C for 10 min. (b) for *mcyA*: 95 °C for 5 min, followed by 30 cycles of 94 °C for 30 s, 56 °C for 30 s, and 72 °C for 1 min, and a final extension at 72 °C for 10 min.

The *g91* PCR amplification was performed according to Takashima et al. [26] with further described modifications. The reaction was carried out in a solution volume of 30 µL containing 1 µL of DNA template, 0.25 µM of both forward and reverse primers, 0.2 mM of dNTPs, 3 mM of MgCl<sub>2</sub>, 1× PCR buffer, 0.1 mg mL<sup>-1</sup> of BSA, and 1 U of *Taq* polymerase

(QIAGEN). The reaction conditions were modified after Takashima et al. [26] in order to optimize *g91* amplification and were as follows: 95 °C for 5 min, followed by 30 cycles of 94 °C for 30 s, 56 °C for 30 s, and 72 °C for 30 s, and a final extension at 72 °C for 10 min. The initial denaturation step was extended from 2 to 5 min. The step after initial denaturation in 4 °C was omitted. The extension step of 30 s instead of 60 s and final extension step time of 10 min instead of 5 min were used. The number of cycles was reduced from 35 to 30.

The PCR amplification was done with the use of the Eppendorf MasterCycler Gradient thermocycler. The products obtained through PCR amplification were separated by horizontal agarose gel electrophoresis.

From each monitored season, one sample was chosen (13 August 2009, 11 August 2010, 12 July 2011, 31 July 2012, and 24 July 2013), where the highest band intensity (semi-densitometrical analysis with the use of ImageJ tool) of amplified *g91* gene fragment was observed. These samples were subjected for further sequencing analysis (see “Results”).

### Quantitative Analysis of Genes Studied

The analysis of quantitative RT-PCR was made with the use of Maxima™ SYBR Green/ROX qPCR Master Mix (MBI Fermentas) and a real-time PCR system (7900HT, Applied Biosystems).

The qRT-PCR analyses for 16S rRNA and *mcyA* were prepared according to Gagala et al. [43]. Preparation and reaction conditions were adapted for the *g91* gene amplification. Each reaction of *g91* gene, 16S rRNA, and *mcyA* fragments during mentioned analysis was performed in the final volume of 25 µL. The ingredients, including 1× Maxima SYBR green qPCR master mix, 1 µL of template DNA, and 0.3 µM of each primer, were mixed on ice. The three-step cycling protocol was used under the initial denaturation step at 95 °C for 5 min was followed by 45 cycles of DNA denaturation at 95 °C for 15 s; primer annealing at 56 °C (*g91*), 51 °C (16S rRNA), and 55 °C (*mcyA*) for 30 s and strand extension step at 72 °C for 1 min.

Data was acquired during the step of extension. Each analysis was performed in triplicate, and the results presented as mean and standard errors. To verify the specificity and identity

**Table 1** Molecular markers and primer sequences used in the present study

Organism		Targeting gene	Primers	Sequence (5' to 3')	Length [bp]	Reference
Cyanobacteria	Genus <i>Microcystis</i>	16S rRNA	209F 409R	ATGTGCCCGAGGTGAAACCTAAT TTACAATCCAAAGACCTTCCCTCCC	250	[42]
	Toxic genotypes of the genus <i>Microcystis</i>	<i>mcyA</i>	<i>mcyA</i> -f1 <i>mcyA</i> -r1	AACCTATCCCGTTGCTCAGATG CACATCTCCAAGGAAAATACACCCCC	395	[43]
Cyanophages		<i>g91</i>	SheathRTF SheathRTR	ACATCAGCGTTCGTTTCGG CAATCTGGTTAGGTAGGTGCG	132	[26]

of the PCR products generated, melting curve analysis was performed at the end of each qRT-PCR, and the PCR products were analyzed by agarose gel electrophoresis. No unspecific products were determined during this step.

Standard curves were used to calculate the copy number of the *g91*, 16S rRNA, and *mcyA* in the DNA samples analyzed. To set up the calibration standards for *g91* gene analysis, the genomic DNA isolated out of environmental samples was used as a template for PCR amplification of reference sequences. In order to prepare the calibration standards for 16S rRNA/*mcyA*, the genomic DNA of *Microcystis aeruginosa* strain PCC7820, which was provided by Åbo University, was used as a template for PCR amplification of reference sequences.

The obtained products were subsequently cloned into pJET1.2/blunt vector (MBI Fermentas). Prepared plasmid constructs were linearized by digestion with HindIII restriction enzyme. Then, the copy number per microliter of both linear plasmids was determined; they were used in series of 10-fold dilutions for preparation of the standard curves ( $2-2 \times 10^8$  gene copies) (Table 2).

The number of cyanophages and *Microcystis* cells (total and toxicogenic cyanobacteria) was calculated assuming that each genome had only one copy of: *g91*, 16S rRNA and *mcyA*. In order to simply quantify the number of *Microcystis* cell infection by phages (expressed in %), the equation was used as follows: (*g91* gene copy number/16S rRNA gene copy number)  $\times 100$ .

## Nucleotide Sequence Analysis

The *g91* gene fragments amplified in samples from the following dates: 13 August 2009, 11 August 2010, 12 July 2011, 31 July 2012, and 24 July 2013 with the use of SheathRTF/SheathRTR primers specific to cyanophages from the family *Myoviridae* (according to Takashima et al. [26]) were subjected to nucleotide sequence analysis to confirm the accuracy of the obtained products (see Table 1 for the sequence of primers). The PCR products obtained after DNA samples

**Table 2** The qPCR calibration curves parameters and amplification efficiency for genes: *g91* (amplified, sequenced, and verified PCR product from environmental sample containing cyanophages from the family *Myoviridae*), 16S rRNA and *mcyA* specific for genus *Microcystis* (*M. aeruginosa* strain PCC7820)

Target gene	Efficiency (c) <sup>a</sup>	Slope (s)	Y intercept	R <sup>2</sup>
<i>g91</i>	0.93	-3.51	37.49	0.998
16S rRNA	0.98	-3.38	36.79	0.997
<i>mcyA</i>	0.90	-3.56	39.80	0.988

<sup>a</sup> Amplification efficiency (*c*) =  $10^{-1/s} - 1$ ; R<sup>2</sup> the coefficient of determination

(for PCR a *Pfu* DNA polymerase, Thermo Scientific forming blunt-end was used) were initially purified using QIAGEX® II Gel extraction Kit (QIAGEN), subsequently cloned into a pJET1.2/blunt vector (MBI Fermentas) and sequenced. The search for homology was performed with the use of the National Centre for Biotechnology Information (microbial and nucleotide BLAST network service) and Vector NTI Advance™ 9 software (Invitrogen). Each sequenced forward and reversed DNA strand was subjected to BLAST analysis. Additionally, DNA strands for each sample were compared among each other to verify the level of similarity between the obtained sequences (Vector NTI Advance™ 9).

## Statistical Analysis

The nonparametric Spearman's rank correlation test for independent data was used to compare *g91* genes copy number with physical (water temperature), chemical (TN, TP, DN, DP, pH, dissolved oxygen (DO)) and biological water parameters (16S rRNA and *mcyA* gene copy number).

The nonparametric ANOVA Kruskal-Wallis test (multiple comparison) and U Mann-Whitney test (comparison of independent data) was used to compare the *g91* gene copy number and the frequency of phage-infected host cells measured during five consecutive vegetation seasons (2009–2013). Additionally, mentioned analysis was conducted for: TN, TP, DN, DP, water temperature, and pH, also.

Empirical assessment of the normal distribution of variables analyzed was based on the results of W. Shapiro-Wilk test. Statistical analysis was performed with the use of the program STATISTICA 10 (StatSoft Inc.).

## Results

### Physiochemical Parameters of Water

Mean values, range, and standard deviations of the physical and chemical water parameter measurements are given in Table 3. The average concentrations of TN were around 1.2–1.7 mg L<sup>-1</sup>, with an exception in 2013 where average values of mentioned parameter reached almost 7.0 mg L<sup>-1</sup>. The values of average concentrations of TP were approx. 0.2 mg L<sup>-1</sup>; however, exception was observed in 2013 and 2009 when average values were roughly 0.1 mg L<sup>-1</sup>. The dates of average concentrations of DN usually ranged from 0.4 to 1.4 mg L<sup>-1</sup>, although the lowest value was below 0.1 mg L<sup>-1</sup> in 2012. The highest value of average concentrations of DP reached almost 0.4 mg L<sup>-1</sup> in 2011, while the rest of the average values were below 0.1 mg L<sup>-1</sup>. In the case of average concentrations of DO, the lowest valuation was obtained in 2010 as 7.4 mg L<sup>-1</sup> while the rest of the average data ranged from 8.2 to 8.9 mg L<sup>-1</sup>. The water temperature during

**Table 3** Average physical and chemical parameters in the Sulejów Reservoir, station Tresta, in following seasons 2009–2013

Year	TN [mg L <sup>-1</sup> ]	TP [mg L <sup>-1</sup> ]	DN [mg L <sup>-1</sup> ]	DP [mg L <sup>-1</sup> ]	DO [mg L <sup>-1</sup> ]	Water temperature [°C]	pH	Water retention time* days
2009 (n=10)	1.67 (0.10–5.45) (SD=1.99)	0.06 (0.02–0.12) (SD=0.03)	0.40 (0.02–1.16) (SD=0.37)	0.01 (0.00–0.03) (SD=0.01)	8.23 (5.21–10.90) (SD=1.50)	19.64 (15.11–22.87) (SD=2.98)	8.22 (7.86–8.60) (SD=0.25)	55 (26–93) (SD=15)
2010 (n=9)	1.56 (0.50–2.50) (SD=0.76)	0.19 (0.10–0.37) (SD=0.09)	1.60 (0.15–9.55) (SD=2.99)	0.03 (0.01–0.06) (SD=0.02)	7.38 (4.76–8.70) (SD=1.31)	19.30 (12.34–23.68) (SD=4.08)	7.80 (7.05–8.97) (SD=0.56)	18 (4–43) (SD=8)
2011 (n=9)	1.17 (0.10–2.20) (SD=0.78)	0.16 (0.07–0.45) (SD=0.12)	1.43 (0.12–3.69) (SD=1.26)	0.38 (0.19–0.63) (SD=0.14)	8.78 (6.11–10.81) (SD=1.86)	20.84 (16.05–23.35) (SD=2.16)	8.51 — —	35 (2–66) (SD=10)
2012 (n=8)	1.19 (0.35–2.50) (SD=0.71)	0.21 (0.09–0.26) (SD=0.06)	0.07 (0.01–0.35) (SD=0.12)	0.06 (0.01–0.18) (SD=0.05)	8.85 (7.18–11.83) (SD=1.59)	23.06 (16.19–29.07) (SD=4.79)	8.38 (7.20–9.02) (SD=0.61)	60 (23–97) (SD=16)
2013 (n=9)	6.72 (3.10–10.55) (SD=2.31)	0.07 (0.01–0.10) (SD=0.03)	0.40 (0.05–0.78) (SD=0.30)	0.05 (0.01–0.23) (SD=0.07)	8.26 (6.32–10.81) (SD=1.50)	21.03 (17.60–23.91) (SD=2.23)	8.30 (7.72–8.93) (SD=0.41)	30 (8–58) (SD=14)

TN total nitrogen, TP total phosphorus, DN dissolved nitrogen, DP dissolved phosphorus, DO dissolved oxygen, SD standard deviation

\*Average water retention time calculated from the daily retention time during the period of study

all sampling time was above 19 °C and the highest average value exceeding 23 °C was observed in 2012. During the entire study, the pH of water was slightly alkaline, with the highest average value of almost 8.4 recorded in 2012.

### Mutual Occurrence of Cyanophages and *Microcystis*

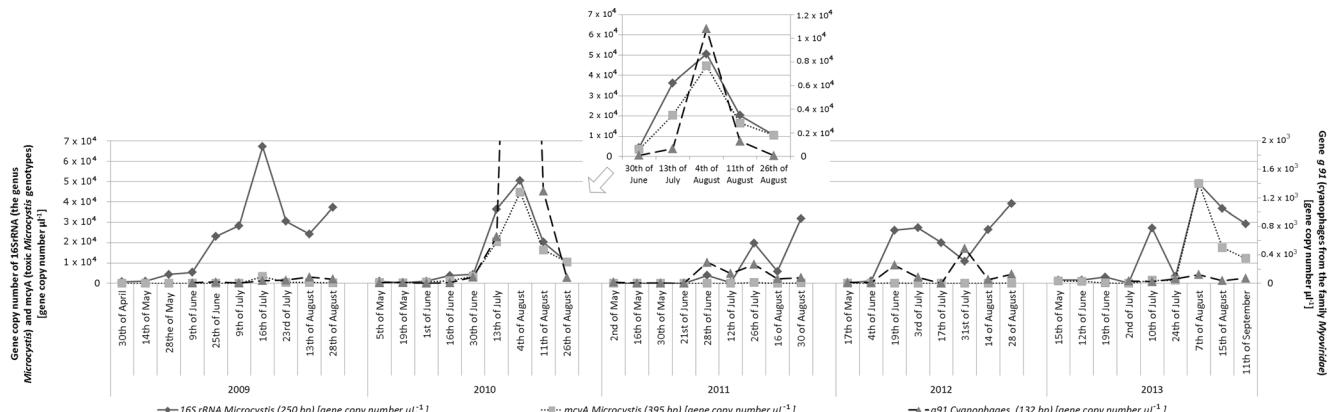
Cyanophages were detected in all monitoring years on the basis of the *g91* gene fragment (supplementary material no. 1). Their presence was observed from May (2010, 2011, and 2012), June (2009) or July (2013) till the end of sampling time (August–September) (Fig. 1). Presence of cyanobacterial genus *Microcystis* (detection based on 16S rRNA gene), including its toxic genotypes (detection based on *mcyA* gene fragment)

was observed throughout the whole period of monitoring, in the following years (Fig. 1).

The highest average value of the *g91* gene copy number was observed in 2010 ( $1.44 \times 10^3$ ) and the lowest were recorded in 2009 ( $2.62 \times 10^1$ ) and in 2013 ( $3.97 \times 10^1$ ) (Table 4).

The average value of the 16S rRNA gene copy number ranged from  $6.85 \times 10^3$  in 2009 to  $2.22 \times 10^4$  in 2011. In other years, the number of copies of 16S rRNA gene was comparable (Table 4).

The highest average value of the *mcyA* gene copy number was observed in 2010 (almost  $1.15 \times 10^4$ ) and the lowest were recorded in 2011 ( $8.03 \times 10^1$ ) and in 2012 ( $3.82 \times 10^1$ ) (Table 4).



**Fig. 1** The dynamic of cyanophages (*g91*), the genus *Microcystis* (16S rRNA) and its toxic genotypes (*mcyA*) characterized in molecular analysis in the Sulejów Reservoir, station Tresta, in the following seasons 2009–2013

**Table 4** Average biological parameters in the Sulejów Reservoir, station Tresta, in following seasons 2009–2013 (SD standard deviation, M median)

Year	Cyanophages	<i>Microcystis</i>		<i>g91/16S rRNA</i>
		<i>g91</i> [gene copy number $\mu\text{L}^{-1}$ ]	16S rRNA [gene copy number $\mu\text{L}^{-1}$ ]	
2009 (n=10)	26.21 (0.00–8.7 $\times 10^1$ ) (SD=3.01 $\times 10^1$ ; M=13.32)	$2.2 \times 10^4$ (7.39 $\times 10^2$ –6.71 $\times 10^4$ ) (SD=2.07 $\times 10^4$ ; M=2.37 $\times 10^4$ )	$4.7 \times 10^2$ (0.02–3.39 $\times 10^3$ ) (SD=10 $\times 10^2$ ; M=41.62)	0.10 (0.00–0.36) (SD=0.11; M=0.07)
2010 (n=9)	$1.4 \times 10^3$ (1.70–1.08 $\times 10^4$ ) (SD=3.54 $\times 10^3$ ; M=81.24)	$1.4 \times 10^4$ (3.28 $\times 10^2$ –5.05 $\times 10^4$ ) (SD=1.80 $\times 10^4$ ; M=4.39 $\times 10^3$ )	$1.1 \times 10^4$ (1.69 $\times 10^2$ –4.47 $\times 10^4$ ) (SD=1.48 $\times 10^4$ ; M=3.56 $\times 10^3$ )	4.20 (0.16–21.37) (SD=6.75; M=1.80)
2011 (n=9)	96.66 (1.70–2.95 $\times 10^2$ ) (SD=1.14 $\times 10^2$ ; M=64.37)	$6.9 \times 10^3$ (0.00–3.18 $\times 10^8$ ) (SD=1.13 $\times 10^4$ ; M=3.72 $\times 10^2$ )	80.26 (0.00–3.49 $\times 10^2$ ) (SD=1.27 $\times 10^2$ ; M=9.05)	32.43 (0.25–100) (SD=43.37; M=7.60)
2012 (n=8)	$1.3 \times 10^2$ (1.40–4.92 $\times 10^2$ ) (SD=1.68 $\times 10^2$ ; M=69.79)	$1.9 \times 10^4$ (2.48 $\times 10^2$ –3.91 $\times 10^4$ ) (SD=1.3 $\times 10^4$ ; M=2.31 $\times 10^4$ )	38.19 (0.00–1.38 $\times 10^2$ ) (SD=4.79 $\times 10^1$ ; M=17.76)	1.68 (0.01–6.10) (SD=2.31; M=0.65)
2013 (n=9)	39.72 (0.00–1.22 $\times 10^2$ ) (SD=4.08 $\times 10^1$ ; M=32.42)	$1.7 \times 10^4$ (1.38 $\times 10^2$ –4.90 $\times 10^4$ ) (SD=1.87 $\times 10^4$ ; M=3.37 $\times 10^3$ )	$9.4 \times 10^3$ (4.8 $\times 10^1$ –4.90 $\times 10^4$ ) (SD=1.61 $\times 10^4$ ; M=1.48 $\times 10^3$ )	2.93 (0.00–23.55) (SD=7.76; M=0.18)

The average percentage of the phage-infected *Microcystis* host cells (*g91/16S rRNA* ratio) ranged from 0.1 % in 2009 to 32 % in 2011 (Table 4). In other years, the average percentage number ranged between 2 and 4 % (Table 4).

### Cyanophage Characteristic

The 127-bp consensus fragment of the analyzed sequences (10 sequences with the length of 101–130 bp from forward and reverse strands received from five selected samples representing 5 years of constant spring/summer monitoring—see “Material and Methods” and “Nucleotide Sequence Analysis” sections and Fig. 2) showed 95 % homology (100 % query coverage) with the viral sheath protein-encoding gene of the strains of Ma-LMM01, Ma-LMM02, Ma-LMM03, Ma-HPM05 (cyanophages from the *Myoviridae* family, isolated from Japan freshwater; GenBank accession number AB242261.1, AB258338.1, AB258339.1, AB258340.1, respectively). Additionally, the gene fragment mentioned possessed the same homologous counterpart in the genome of MaMV-DC phage (cyanophage from *Myoviridae* family isolated from Chinese freshwater; GenBank, accession number KF356199.1). In addition, the BLAST analysis also revealed a number of homology with lower query coverage (<82 %) to uncultured *Myoviridae* clones (data not shown).

When comparing all 10 sequences, both from forward (101–107 bp) to reverse (103–130 bp) strands, the number of positive nucleotides equaled 93 % and sequences showed 17 % identity. When only forward or reverse strands were compared,

positive nucleotides equaled 84 and 68 %, and sequences showed 71 and 52 % identity, respectively (Fig. 2).

### Correlation Analysis

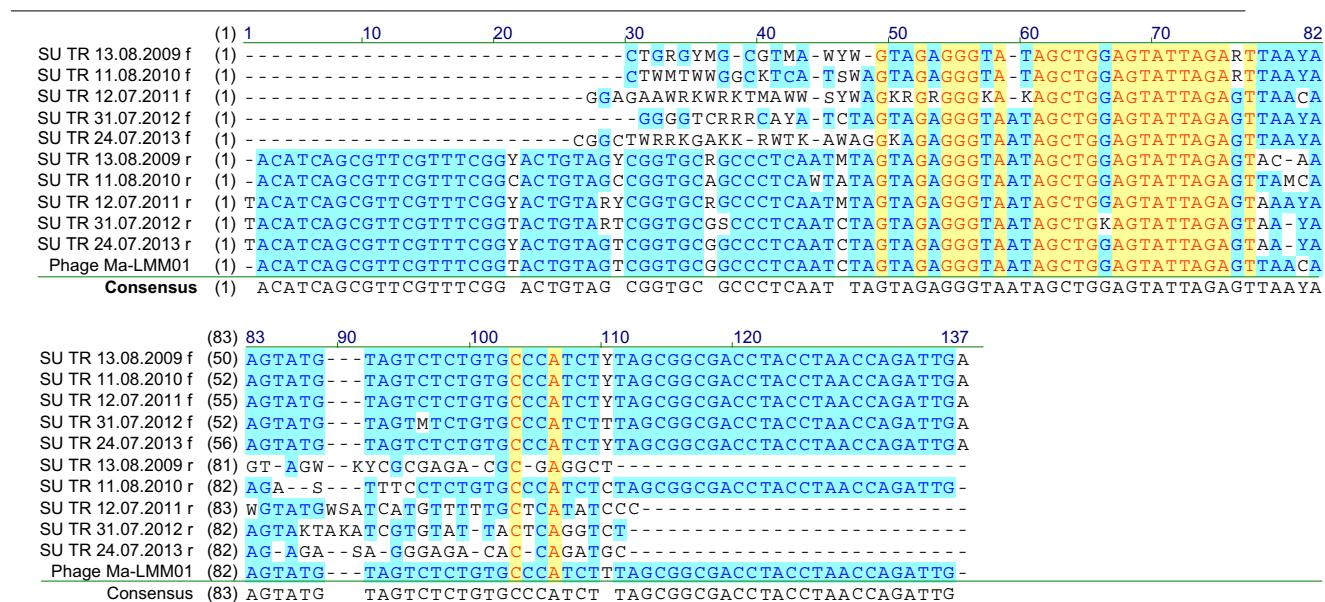
Taking into account the relationship between phages and cyanobacteria, the *g91* gene copy number was positively correlated with both 16S rRNA and *mcyA* gene copy number (number of total *Microcystis* genotypes and its toxic genotypes, respectively), almost in all the years of study (Table 5). The only exception was found during summer season 2012, where there was no significant relationship between the genes mentioned (Table 5).

In turn, based on the ANOVA Kruskal–Wallis test, statistically significant difference was identified for the percentage of phage infection per host cell (*g91/16S rRNA* ratio) ( $H=23.95$ ,  $p<0.0001$ ), in the following years of monitoring.

The negative correlation between *g91* gene copy number was found only with TN (in 2011) and with DN (in 2009 and 2013) (Table 5). Furthermore, above-mentioned gene fragment was positively related with the concentrations of TP and DP, respectively for 2010 and 2009, as well as with DO and water temperature, respectively, for 2013 and 2010. Additionally, there was no correlation with pH (Table 5).

### Discussion

For 5 consecutive years between 2009 and 2013, the prevalence of phage infections was monitored during the summer



**Fig. 2** Alignment sequence analysis of the *g91* gene encoding sheath protein of cyanophages, obtained from five selected samples taken from Sulejów Reservoir in consecutive summer seasons 2009–2013 (f forward

strand; r reverse strand); Phage Ma-LMM01 (NC\_008562.1). Performed using NCBI BLASTN [48]

season in *Microcystis*-dominated cyanobacterial blooms in the Sulejów Reservoir, a lowland dam reservoir in Central Poland. In order to perform mentioned long-term analysis and observe cyclic emergence of studied microorganism, the archive DNA material from the years 2009 to 2011 was used. The size of the material was limited due to applied cyanobacterial cells collection method (please refer to “Material and Methods” section). Despite these methodological drawbacks, the present study demonstrates the occurrence and variability of cyanobacteria and their specific phages in environmental samples.

### Cyanophage Characteristics

The homology of cyanophages identified in subsequent monitoring seasons to phage genome sequences deposited in GenBank (NCBI, USA) were determined by *g91* gene fragment analysis. The 95 % homology between the *g91* fragment (127 bp) sequences isolated in the present study and the viral

sheath protein-encoding gene of the previously isolated *Myoviridae* strains was shown (Ma-LMM01-type phages from Japan and MaMV-DC phage from China) [18, 19, 26, 27, 44] (Fig. 2). Cyanophage Ma-LMM01 was characterized by Yoshida et al. [44] as a lytic myovirus (T4-type phage). This virus was first isolated from Lake Mikata (Japan) and its infectious ability was tested against a single toxic strain of *Microcystis aeruginosa*, i.e., NIES-298, under laboratory conditions [44]. The cyanophage strain MaMV-DC, which also belongs to the family *Myoviridae*, was isolated for the first time from Lake Dianchi (Kunming, China) from a cyanobacterial bloom of *M. aeruginosa* [27]. Ou et al. [27] verified its infectious ability only against the non-toxic *M. aeruginosa* FACHB-524 strain (out of 21 strains tested) under laboratory conditions.

In turn, homology analysis between forward and reverse strands (length from 101 to 130 bp) obtained from samples collected in July or August (five samples), which was the period of most intensive viral infections, showed 93 %

**Table 5** Spearman rank order correlation between *g91* gene quantity and abiotic and biotic parameters in the Sulejów Reservoir, station Tresta, in the following seasons 2009–2013 ( $p < 0.05$ ; statistically significant correlations are marked in italics)

Year	TN	TP	DN	DP	DO	Water temperature	pH	<i>Microcystis</i>	
								16S rRNA	<i>mcyA</i>
2009 (n=10)	0.44	0.55	0.73	0.66	0.30	0.57	0.23	0.77	0.74
2010 (n=9)	0.02	0.75	0.33	0.67	0.15	0.67	0.08	0.82	0.82
2011 (n=9)	0.78	0.12	0.55	0.07	0.07	0.48	NA	0.67	0.78
2012 (n=8)	0.02	0.26	0.38	0.40	0.05	0.33	0.38	0.36	0.57
2013 (n=9)	0.25	0.61	0.85	0.38	0.89	0.17	0.51	0.68	0.75

NA not analyzed

positive nucleotides in the consensus fragment (127 bp). However, due to the incomplete sequences of strands caused by sequencing errors the identical part of these sequences was only 17 % (see Fig. 2). Similarities in the *g91* gene mostly depended on the length of the gene fragment analyzed. A 132-bp fragment of the *g91* gene is a relatively short sequence in the context of the overall size of the *g91* gene (ORF91 2325 bp) [18]. This could prevent the detection of subtle changes between phage genotypes occurring as a result of point mutations. In a study of Kimura et al. [33], the analysis of phylogenetic affiliations based on a longer fragment of the *g91* gene (approximately 500 bp) enabled diversification and identification of more than 400 phage genotypes. Therefore, the diversity of *Microcystis* specific phages in the context of long-term monitoring of the Sulejów Reservoir will be assessed in future studies using larger fragments of the *g91* gene, as suggested by Kimura et al. [33].

### Dynamics of Occurrence

The short fragment of the *g91* gene (132 bp) mentioned previously corresponds to a conserved region among isolated *M. aeruginosa* cyanophages [12, 19, 26]. Therefore, in the present study, it was used as a marker for the detection and quantification of cyanophages belonging to the family *Myoviridae*. Moreover, because of the specificity of the *g91*-gene, the present study focused exclusively on tracking the interactions between cyanophages from the family *Myoviridae* and their specific host, the *Microcystis* genus.

Long-term studies have shown the predominance of the genus *Microcystis*, including *M. aeruginosa* species, in the Sulejów Reservoir in subsequent years [39, 43, 45, 46]. Cyanophages belonging to the family *Myoviridae* accompanied cyanobacteria of the genus *Microcystis* in all surveyed seasons (2009–2013). Generally, the appearance of phages was preceded by or occurred simultaneously with the appearance of the genus *Microcystis* and lasted until the end of a season (Fig. 1). A similar temporal pattern of appearance of cyanophages and *Microcystis*, including toxic genotypes, was observed in 4 of the 5 years of monitoring (Fig. 1). During this time period, a correlation between the *g91* gene (cyanophages), the 16S rRNA gene (total genotype of *Microcystis*), and the *mcyA* gene (toxicogenic genotype of *Microcystis*) was observed (Table 5). The exception was the year 2012, when there was no correlation between the presence of the phage and its host *Microcystis* (Table 5). A possible explanation for these differences is discussed in the following paragraphs.

The number of cyanophages and the ratio of cyanophages to *Microcystis*, including toxic genotypes, were different in consecutive years (Fig. 1, Tab. 4). This result was confirmed by statistical analysis, which showed significant differences in the percentages of infecting phages per host cell among the years of monitoring (assuming, as described in Material and

Methods section, that each cell has one copy of analyzed gene). The present observation is consistent with a previous 3-year study by Yoshida et al. [19], which showed that cyanophages might co-exist with *Microcystis* rather than influence their total number. Moreover, in the present study, the average percentage of infected cells (understood as number of *g91* gene copies as number of phages per number of 16S rRNA for *Microcystis* as number of cell hosts) varied between 0.1 and 32 % (Table 4). This is consistent with data presented in a later study by Kimura-Sakai et al. [35] based on one season monitoring of Hirosawanoike Pond (Kyoto, Japan). In this study, the frequency of Ma-LMM01-type phage-infected *Microcystis* hosts cells (calculated with consideration of the burst size of phage Ma-LMM01, c. 100 cells<sup>-1</sup>) was as high as 30 %. Additionally, the burst size (the number of phage, on average, that are produced per phage-infected cell) for *Microcystis* cell were reported in literature to be around 20–120 phages per cell [11, 44]. The ability of phages to infect only a part of the *Microcystis* population might be related to the simultaneous occurrence of phage-sensitive and insensitive populations. Thus, the presence of cyanophages could result in the replacement of growing susceptible populations by more resistant ones (“killing the winner” hypothesis), rather than having a quantitative impact on *Microcystis* abundance [12, 13, 35].

Additionally, considering the temporal pattern of occurrence and the number of cyanophage and toxic *Microcystis* genotypes, the sensitivity of phages (expressed as their number and proportion in bloom) to the toxic genotypes mentioned was negligible (Table 4 and Fig. 1). The *mcy* gene cluster and mechanism of production of the microcystin molecule may not affect the metabolic pathway or the mechanism of phage replication inside the host cell, which, as suggested by Kimura et al. [33], depends mostly on the photosynthetic system of cyanobacteria.

### Environmental Factors

To explain changes in the abundance of cyanophages and determine their impact (or dependence) on the presence of *Microcystis*-dominated blooms, it was necessary to investigate the complexity of environmental conditions, including biotic and abiotic factors.

In the present study, the 2012 season was different from the others analyzed because of the lack of correlation between phage and *Microcystis* genus abundance (both total and toxic genotypes), and other abiotic parameters, considering the entire time of monitoring (Table 5). During this season, the model of *Microcystis*/cyanophage interaction changed from a similar temporal pattern (first period—17th of May to 17th of July) to an antagonistic coexistence (second period—17th of July to 14th of August) (Fig. 1). This shift was accompanied by a change in the hydrological conditions. In the first period,

the calculated water retention time varied between 33 to 81 days, and in the second period, it stabilized on the level of 64–71 days (data received from The Regional Water Management Authority in Warsaw). According to the “Abiotic-Biotic Regulatory Concept” [47], when abiotic factors become stable and predictable, as observed in the hydrological conditions in the present study in 2012, biotic factors start to manifest themselves. In this case, biotic factors, namely cyanophages, could play an important role in the regulation of other biotic components such as cyanobacteria.

During the other years of monitoring (2009–2011 and 2013) different levels of correlation between abiotic factors (TN, TP, DN, DP, DO, and temperature) and cyanophages were observed (Table 5). It was not possible to select an important parameter affecting annually and repetitively the occurrence of viruses studied in relation to cyanobacteria.

However, among the years of monitoring, 2010 showed the highest gene copy number of cyanophages (max.  $1.08 \times 10^4$  on the 4th of August). Then *Microcystis* bloom developed in late July as a result of increasing of the water retention time in the reservoir (the calculated water retention time changed from 16 days on the 30th of June, to 32 days on the 13th of July) and optimum nutrient concentrations (especially high TP concentration,  $0.25\text{--}0.37 \text{ mg L}^{-1}$ ) [43]. Additionally, the occurrence of the highest gene copy number of cyanophages was preceded by a sudden increase in temperature of approximately  $4^\circ\text{C}$ , from  $19.79$  (30th of June) to  $23.68^\circ\text{C}$  (13th of July) (see [43], Table 4 and Fig. 1).

## Conclusions

Cyanophages associated with *Microcystis* infection were detected based on the presence of the *g91* gene in water samples from the Sulejów Reservoir in Central Poland during five consecutive summers (2009–2013). To the best of our knowledge, the present study is the first to report the identification of *Microcystis*-specific viruses based on *g91* gene amplification in Central Europe. Genetic analysis showed that the cyanophages identified were homologous to the family *Myoviridae*. In the present study, no particular sensitivity of phages against toxic *Microcystis* genotypes was recorded. The behavior pattern of cyanophages and *Microcystis* hosts, including toxic genotypes, was positively correlated in 4 of the 5 years monitored. The year 2012 was exceptional because the pattern of interaction shifted to an antagonistic coexistence in the middle of the summer season. Then, the stabilization of abiotic parameters, i.e., hydrology, might have induced the dominant activity of biotic elements such as cyanophages against *Microcystis* susceptible cells. The average percentage of infected *Microcystis* cells varied between 0.1 and 32 %, reflecting differences in the sensitivity of cells to phage infection during the years of monitoring. An environmental pattern

where the retention time and temperature of water, together with optimum nutrient concentrations, grew simultaneously and the *Microcystis* bloom was predominant, led to recording a period of the highest number of phages in the samples studied ( $>10^4$  gene copy number per microliter).

**Acknowledgments** This research was funded by the National Science Centre (PL), project no. UMO-2013/11/N/NZ8/00607 “Ecological dynamics of cyanophages and their host in Polish water bodies” and partially by no. UMO-2012/07/N/NZ8/00599 “Assessment of the interaction between hepatotoxic cyanobacterium *Microcystis aeruginosa* and pathogenic bacteria of the genus *Aeromonas*.” The authors would like to acknowledge the European Cooperation in Science and Technology, COST Action ES 1105 “CYANOCOST - Cyanobacterial blooms and toxins in water resources: Occurrence, impacts and management” for adding value to this study through networking and knowledge sharing with European experts and researchers in the field”. The Sulejów Reservoir is a part of the Polish National Long-Term Ecosystem Research Network and the European LTER site.

**Conflict of Interest** The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

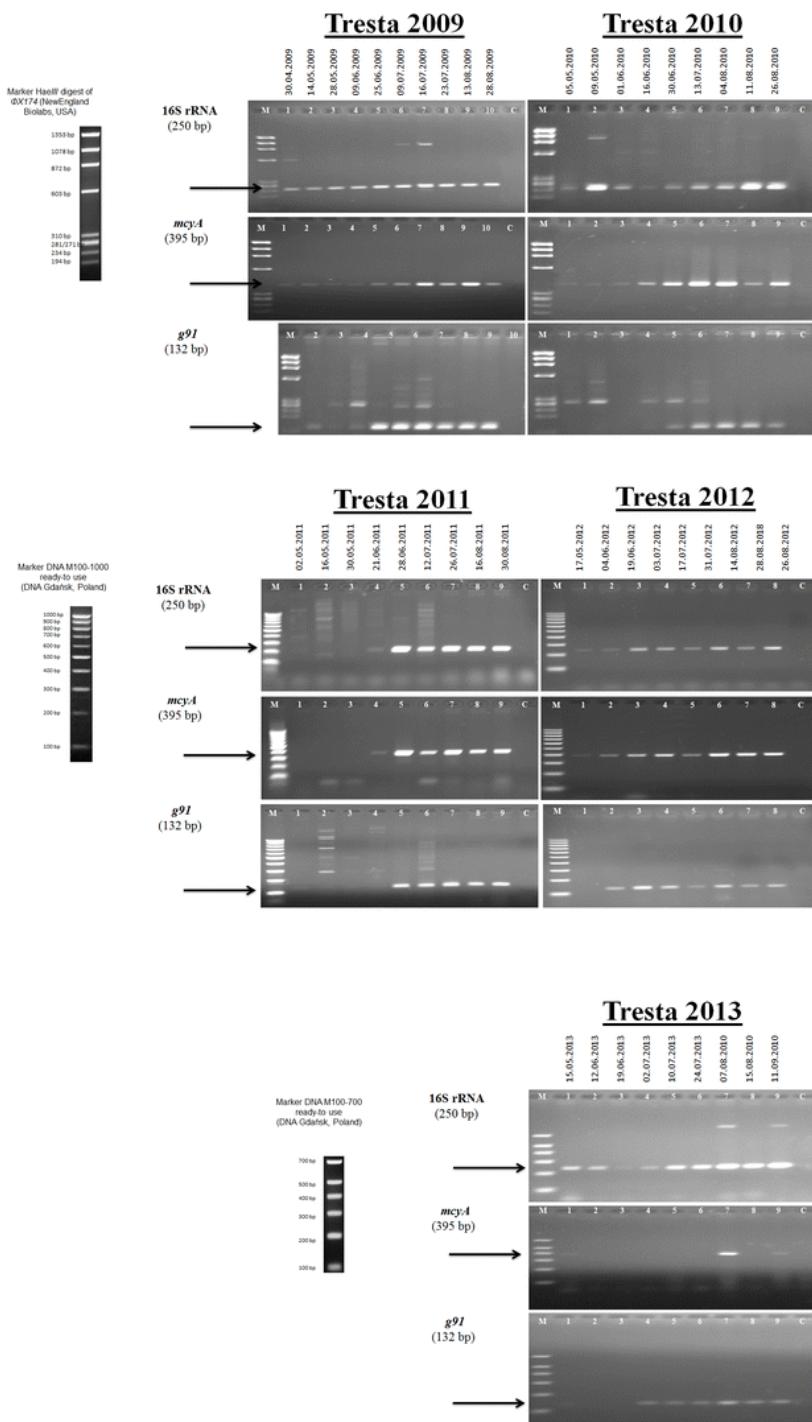
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## Załącznik 1: Materiały dodatkowe



**Fig. S1.** Detection of cyanobacteria from the genus *Microcystis* (fragment of 16S rRNA gene), its toxic genotypes (fragment of *mcyA* gene) and cyanophages specific for *Microcystis* (fragment of *g91* gene) in samples taken from Sulejów Reservoir, station Tresta, in following seasons 2009-2013. M – DNA marker; C – negative control – MiliQ water

**Załącznik 2:** Jaskulska, A., Mankiewicz-Boczek, J. 2020. Cyanophages specific to cyanobacteria from the genus *Microcystis*. Ecohydrology & Hydrobiology 20 (1), 83-90, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecohyd.2019.06.001>

**Lódź, 16.08.2021**

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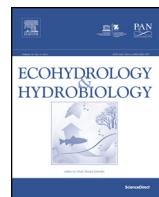
  
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Europejskie Regionalne Centrum Ekohydrologii  
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Review Article

## Cyanophages specific to cyanobacteria from the genus *Microcystis*



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### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 9 January 2019

Received in revised form 4 May 2019

Accepted 27 June 2019

Available online 17 August 2019

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#### Keywords:

Freshwater viruses

Blue-green algae

Genetic markers

Co-occurrence dynamics

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### ABSTRACT

The cyanobacteria constitute a diverse group of prokaryotic organisms widespread in aquatic ecosystems. *Microcystis* is a genus of freshwater cyanobacteria, which poses a possible cause for concern due to its excessive growth and potential for toxin production, which can be aggravated by intensive eutrophication of freshwaters and climate changes. Factors that can potentially affect the biology, ecology and evolution of cyanobacteria are cyanophages. This paper summarizes the current state of knowledge regarding cyanophages specific to *Microcystis* sp. in the natural environment of East Asia and Central Europe. Being a group of planktonic viruses, cyanophages have been studied since the 1960s; information on viruses specific to *Microcystis* sp. was first obtained in the 1970s and are being dynamically developing over the last two decades. There are eight strains of cyanophages capable of lysing *Microcystis* sp. cells reported to date, belonging to *Myoviridae*, *Podoviridae* and *Siphoviridae* families, as well as forming *Corticovirus*-like particles. Available literature data indicates that the gene encoding the sheath protein of the contractile tail (*g91*) is a good molecular marker for tracing *Microcystis* viruses from *Myoviridae* as a form of environmental analysis. It has been suggested that in natural ecosystems, this group of cyanophages can cause a shift in the host population from predominant 'cyanophage infection-sensitive' to 'cyanophage infection-insensitive' cells, rather than influencing the total number of *Microcystis* sp. It was found that nucleotide sequence of the *g91* gene fragment isolated from Central Europe was 95% similar to that of its counterparts from East Asia. However, the research based on molecular primers specific to the *Microcystis* sp. viruses is limited to two of the known strains to date. It is suggested that further studies in molecular biology and ecology of *Microcystis* sp. cyanophages should be based on metagenomics accompanied with physicochemical environmental variables.

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## 1. Introduction

The cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) is a group of heterogeneous bacteria which colonize even the most

unfavourable aquatic environments, from thermal reservoirs, swamps and glacial meltwater streams to ice-capped lakes. The group has most likely been in existence for over 3.5 billion years, during which time its members have gained various adaptations including the ability to conduct oxygenic photosynthesis, and the potential for nitrogen fixation or toxin production (Whitton and Potts, 2002; Komárek, 2006; Berman-Frank et al., 2003). One of their representatives is the genus *Microcystis*; a gas-vacuolate and planktonic cyanobacterium which is commonly found around the world in

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freshwater environments with increased numbers of trophic levels (Chorus and Bartram, 1999; Harke et al., 2016; Xiao et al., 2017). The possibility of a rapid growth of its biomass and the potential of some species/strains to produce hepatotoxins such as microcystin raises concerns from users of the water bodies in which it occurs. Scientific reports have shown that some *Microcystis* populations are permanently loaded with viral infections (Yoshida et al., 2010; Xia et al., 2013; Mankiewicz-Boczek et al., 2016).

Aquatic viruses comprise the largest group of pathogens affecting microbial and higher organisms in freshwater and marine environments. As well as their influence on the biological and ecological processes, evolution and mortality of their hosts, they also influence biogeochemical and nutrient cycling. One particularly significant group of aquatic viruses is the cyanophages, a group of viruses acting as infective agents of cyanobacteria (Hargreaves et al., 2013). The first information regarding such viruses was obtained during the 1960s (Safferman and Morris, 1963); however, more precise data of cyanophages infecting cyanobacteria of the genus *Microcystis* was obtained in the seventies (Safferman et al., 1969; Fox et al., 1976). Since then, there have been many reports about research on *Microcystis* cyanophages, but there are no documents summarizing the information about them. Thus, the purpose of this review is to present current state of knowledge about isolated *Microcystis* cyanophages and molecular studies demonstrating their mutual occurrence with host in freshwater environments.

## 2. Current knowledge about cyanophage strains specific to *Microcystis* sp.

The first described virus specific for *Microcystis* sp. was SM-1. It was classified as a phycovirus based on its

polyhedral capsid and lack of visible tail. It was also found to be a double-stranded DNA virus with a diameter of around 88 nm (Safferman et al., 1969). The next *Microcystis* virus to be identified was labelled SM-2, and its morphology placed it in the *Siphoviridae* family: it was found to bear a polyhedral head with a diameter of around 50–55 nm, measured from edge to edge, and a non-contractile and flexible tail measuring 130–140 nm in length (Fox et al., 1976). However, later findings indicated that strains SM-1 and SM-2 were cyanophages specific to *Synechococcus* sp. (Suttle, 2002; Yoshida et al., 2006).

Following this, Parker et al. (1977) reported that Chaplinskaya and Goryushin (1966) (data not available) isolated the MA-1 cyanophage specific for *Microcystis aeruginosa* (*M. aeruginosa*), *Microcystis pulverea* and *Microcystis musciola* (outdated name). Fifteen years later, Tucker and Pollard (2005) isolated cyanophage Ma-LBP from an Australian tank, which was found to infect *M. aeruginosa*. This virus had a T7-like morphology, with a short, stubby tail and a capsid diameter of 42 nm for Ma-LBPa or 52 nm for Ma-LBPs, placing Ma-LBP in the family *Podoviridae* (Table 1). Additionally, the burst size was estimated at 28 cyanophages per host cell and the latent period was calculated as 11.2 h.

One year later, Yoshida et al. (2006) reported the isolation of the Ma-LMM01 cyanophage from a Japanese freshwater reservoir. Numerous studies have since led to a greater understanding of its morphological structure and genetic characteristics, and have clarified its ecological impact on its host: the cyanobacteria of the genus *Microcystis* (Yoshida et al., 2008; Yoshida et al., 2010; Kimura et al., 2012; Kimura et al., 2013; Kimura-Sakai, 2014). This cyanophage was classified as a member of *Myoviridae* by its icosahedral head and contractile tail. The diameter of the head was estimated as 86 nm and the

**Table 1**  
Characteristics of cyanophages specific for *Microcystis* sp.

Cyanophage	Host strain	Family	Morphological features	Place of isolation	Source
Ma-LBP	<i>Microcystis aeruginosa</i> (isolated from Baroon Lake)	<i>Podoviridae</i>	The head has a diameter in the range of 10–52 nm, the tail is bulky and short	Baroon Lake, Australia	Tucker and Pollard (2005)
Ma-LMM01	<i>Microcystis aeruginosa</i> NIES-298 (National Institute of Environmental Sciences, Japan)	<i>Myoviridae</i>	Isometric head with a diameter of 86 nm and a length of contractile tail in the range of 90–209 nm	Mikata Lake, Fukui Prefecture, Japan	Yoshida et al. (2006)
MaMV-DC	<i>Microcystis aeruginosa</i> FACHB-524 <sup>a</sup> (Institute of Hydrobiology, Chinese Academy of Sciences)	<i>Myoviridae</i>	Isometric head with a diameter of 70 nm and contractile tail length of 160 nm	Dianchi Lake, Kunming City, China	Ou et al. (2013)
Virus-like particles (lack of the official name)	<i>Microcystis aeruginosa</i> PCC 7820 (Dundee University)	<i>Podoviridae</i>	Capsid with a diameter of 52 nm and a non-contractile tail	Rostherene Mere Lake, Cheshire, United Kingdom	Hargreaves et al. (2013)
Virus-like particles (lack of the official name)	<i>Microcystis aeruginosa</i> BC 84/1 (Portsmouth University)	<i>Siphoviridae</i>	Capsid with a diameter of 84 nm and a tail length of 158 nm	Rostherene Mere Lake, Cheshire, United Kingdom	Hargreaves et al. (2013)
MaCV-L	<i>Microcystis aeruginosa</i> HAB1801	Corticivirus-like particles	A round capsid with isohedral symmetry, a diameter ranging from 47 nm to 53 nm	Donghu Lake, Wuhan City, Hubei, China	Li et al. (2013)
ΦMHI42	<i>Microcystis aeruginosa</i> BC84/1 (University of Bristol, UK)	<i>Podoviridae</i>	Capsid with a diameter ranging from 100 nm to 120 nm, with a short, non-contractile tail	A freshwater lake, Hayling Island, Hampshire, United Kingdom	Watkins et al. (2014)

**Table 2**  
Sequences of primers for *Microcystis* cyanophage.

Viruses	Targeted genotypes groups of the tail sheath gene ( <i>g91</i> ) sequences fragments	Primer's sequence (5'-3')	Annealing temperature (°C)	Length (bp)	References
Cyanophages	III	g91 SheathRTF: ACATCAGCGTTCGTTCCG g91 SheathRTR: CAATCTGGTTAGGTAGTCG	58	132	Takashima et al. (2007)
	I-III	g91 DRTPF1: AGYAGTTCYCGCCTTAHTGT g91 DRTPR2: GRTGAYTGRCGTACYARRGC	58	206	Kimura-Sakai et al. (2014)
	I-III	g91 F: AGCCCTYAATATACTAGMGGTAAYA g91 R: ARRAGGGRCGGACAAGKAGA	ld <sup>a</sup>	ld <sup>a</sup>	Kimura et al. (2012)

<sup>a</sup> ld – lack of data.

maximum length of the tail as 209 nm (Table 1). In addition, the cyanophage burst size and latent period were indicated at 50–120 infectious units per cell and 6–12 h, respectively (Yoshida et al., 2006). Its genome was found to be 162 109 bp in length and displayed no homologous genes to known cyanophages; however, some of its genes were found to be highly similar to cyanobacterial genes (e.g. genes of the ribonucleotide reductase and nonbleaching protein A gene). This similarity suggested that horizontal gene transfer may take place between cyanophages specific to *Microcystis* cyanobacteria and their hosts (Yoshida et al., 2008).

The next well-established *Microcystis* phage was MaMV-DC, which was isolated from a Chinese water body between 2013 and 2015; it was found to have an isometrically symmetrical capsid with a diameter of 70 nm and a tail with a length of 160 nm. These features placed the cyanophage within the *Myoviridae* family (Table 1). The virus burst size was found to be about 80 infectious units per cell, its latent period between 24 and 48 h, and the length of its genome 169 223 bp. Sequence analysis of the phage genome confirmed that horizontal gene transfer had taken place between it and its cyanobacterial host (Ou et al., 2013, 2015).

It should be mentioned that virus-like particles able to infect *Microcystis* sp. have also been successfully isolated from the lake sediment in the United Kingdom (Hargreaves et al., 2013), and these were classified into the *Podoviridae* and *Spiphoviridae* families. The particles representing the *Podoviridae* were round capsids with a diameter of 52 nm without any apparent tail structure, while those representing the *Spiphoviridae* family had a capsid with a diameter of 84 nm and a tail 158 nm in length (Table 1). In addition, corticovirus-like cyanophage particles have also been isolated from a Chinese reservoir (Li et al., 2013); they were found to have a round capsid with isohedral symmetry and a diameter ranging from 47 nm to 53 nm (Table 1). In addition, a further *Microcystis* cyanophage named ΦMHI42 has been isolated from an aqueous environment in the United Kingdom. ΦMHI42 has been classified as a member of the *Podoviridae* family: it comprises a capsid with a diameter ranging from

100 nm to 120 nm and a non-contractile, short tail (Table 1) (Watkins et al., 2014).

### 3. Molecular studies on *Microcystis* cyanophages demonstrating their dynamics in the natural environment

Studies of most *Microcystis* cyanophages have provided information regarding their isolation, their morphological features and their taxonomic affiliation, determinations of their numbers and burst size and descriptions of their host interactions under controlled (laboratory) conditions, among other things. However, the genome has been characterized in only two strains: Ma-LMM01 and MaMV-DC. The first molecular marker, i.e. specific gene, intended for the detection and quantification of cyanophages was designed for the strain Ma-LMM01. It was designed by Takashima et al. (2007) based on the Ma-LMM01 genome: three genes encoding the proteins of the sheath protein (*g91*) as well as the alpha- and beta-subunits of ribonucleotide reductase were chosen for sequencing, together with their immediate up- and down-stream regions. Following this, the sequences of these genes from the Ma-LMM01 phage were compared with their counterparts in three other *Myoviridae*: clonal isolates of Ma-LMM02 and Ma-LMM03, acquired from Lake Mikata, Japan, and of Ma-HPM05, from Hirosawanoike Pond, Japan. Although the hosts of Ma-LMM02, Ma-LMM03 and Ma-HPM05 were not specified, all three isolates appeared to be closely related to the Ma-LMM01 cyanophage. Based on their sequence similarities, a characteristic genome sequence known as 'Ma-LMM01-type' was designed. With the sequence known, the conserved sequences of the cyanophage-type *g91* gene fragment, i.e. the gene encoding the sheath protein, were chosen as a molecular marker. The primer SheathRTF/SheathRTR (SheathRT) (Table 2) and real-time PCR specifications were proposed (Takashima et al., 2007). These findings have since allowed the detection and quantitative analysis of DNA and RNA material of cyanophages associated with *Microcystis* cyanobacteria in natural aquatic environments.

### 3.1. Dynamic changes in gene copy number in East Asia

The first analyses of cyanophages specific to *Microcystis* cyanobacteria in the natural environment were conducted in East Asia. Yoshida et al. (2008) made the first description of the population dynamics of *Microcystis* phages and of their hosts by examining the conserved fragments of the *g91* gene for the former and those of the phycocyanin intergenic spacer (PC-IGS) gene for the latter; in addition, they also described the dynamics of potentially toxicogenic populations of hosts by examining the occurrence of the *mcyA* gene. The examinations were conducted from April to December in 2006 in Lake Mikata, Japan. The detected numbers of *g91* gene fragments ranged from  $1.1 \times 10^2$  to  $1.1 \times 10^4$  copies  $\text{ml}^{-1}$ , with an exception found during the beginning of April, when the copy number was below the detection limit. In the case of the PC-IGS gene fragment, the amount was between  $2.7 \times 10^1$  and  $2.0 \times 10^5$  copies  $\text{ml}^{-1}$  and was not detected on December, while the numbers of *mcyA* gene copies  $\text{ml}^{-1}$  ranged from  $5.2 \times 10^1$  to  $2.1 \times 10^3$ . In addition, correlation analysis suggested that the *Microcystis* phage was an important factor in determining the population dynamics of its host, and might be the cause of a shift in composition towards non-microcystin-producing populations: the *killing the winner* hypothesis indicates that cyanophage infections of cyanobacteria can result in the replacement of cyanophage-sensitive populations with cyanophage-insensitive populations.

A subsequent report by Yoshida et al. (2010) examined the dynamics of the *g91* gene fragment and the cyanobacterial gene fragments PC-IGS and *mcyA* over a longer period of time. The analysis was conducted between May and November in the years 2006, 2007 and 2008 in Hirosawanoike Pond, Japan. During this period, the gene copy numbers of phages ranged between  $1.5 \times 10^0 \text{ ml}^{-1}$  and  $1.7 \times 10^3 \text{ ml}^{-1}$ , with the cyanobacterial gene copy numbers of PC-IGS and *mcyA* ranging from  $1.3 \times 10^3 \text{ ml}^{-1}$  to  $5.8 \times 10^8 \text{ ml}^{-1}$  and  $2.5 \times 10^2 \text{ ml}^{-1}$  to  $2.1 \times 10^7 \text{ ml}^{-1}$ , respectively. No clear relationship was found between the phage *g91* gene and PC-IGS *Microcystis* gene. In addition, the number of infected host cells was estimated to be lower than the total number of *Microcystis* cells, ranging from 0.01 to 2.9 cells  $\text{ml}^{-1}$  (the calculation was made using the equation  $i = C/b$ , where  $C$  was the cyanophages number per ml at sampling time and  $b$  was the burst size of Ma-LMM01), which suggested that only a small percentage of the *Microcystis* sp. population might be infected; however, the authors suggest that in this case, the cyanophages may have been a factor which temporary influenced the shift in composition of different *Microcystis* sp. populations.

Xia et al. (2013) examined the population dynamic of *Microcystis* cyanophages, represented by the *g91* gene fragment, and *Microcystis* sp., represented by the PC-IGS gene fragment, from May 2012 to April 2013 in East Lake, China. The findings indicated that the *g91* gene copy number ranged between  $7.16 \times 10^{-1} \text{ ml}^{-1}$  and  $2.53 \times 10^5 \text{ ml}^{-1}$  and the PC-IGS copy number from  $5.43 \times 10^3$  to  $8.39 \times 10^5 \text{ ml}^{-1}$ . Despite the similar population dynamics and significant abundance correlation between phage and cyanobacteria genes, the authors

emphasize that three different types of *M. aeruginosa* were detected during the study, of which only some were susceptible to the Ma-LMM01-type phage.

In a study in Hirosawanoike Pond, Japan, Kimura et al. (2012) examined whether infection with Ma-LMM01-like type cyanophages is closely related to the day/night cycle. The study used quantitative real-time PCR to determine the abundance of the PC-IGS gene, corresponding to *M. aeruginosa* number, and the number of *g91* gene copies per ml of water, corresponding to the number of free phage particles in the water based on DNA material (*g91* DNA) and phages associated with the host cell based on DNA (*g91* DNA) and RNA material (*g91* RNA). Samples were taken every 3 h, starting from 9, over 24-h sampling periods. Sampling was performed twice in autumn 2009. In addition, the occurrence of the PC-IGS gene, represented *M. aeruginosa*, and of the *g91* gene, representing the cyanophage, was determined based on sampling performed once per month during the spring to autumn period 2009.

The results of the two diel analysis indicate that approximately  $10^6$  copies of the PC-IGS gene, representing the cyanobacteria, were present per ml, with a peak occurring at 03:00 for both sampling periods. In contrast, the concentration of *g91*, representing the free virus fraction, ranged from  $10^2$  to  $10^3 \text{ ml}^{-1}$  during the first sampling period, with a peak visible between 15:00 and 18:00, with other peaks visible at 00:00 and between 03:00 and 06:00 during the second sampling period. The *g91* gene copy fragment number, representing the number of cyanophages in the host cell, reached a maximum between  $10^4$  and  $10^6 \text{ ml}^{-1}$ , with peaks visible at 15:00 and 21:00 during the first sampling period, and peaks between 12:00 and 15:00 and at 03:00 during the second sampling period. Additionally, *g91* replication peaked at 12:00 (relative abundance 0.0051) and reached the lowest value at 03:00 (relative abundance 0.0007) during the first sampling period, with a similar pattern of replication observed for the second sampling day.

Kimura et al. (2012) suggest that the peaks of the cyanophage *g91* DNA observed in both fractions during the afternoon may be the result of active cyanophage production, and attribute the night-time peaks to the accumulation of *Microcystis* sp. biomass. As virions may remain trapped by the remains of the host cell or its colonies, and only small amounts can diffuse into the water, the viral infection of cyanobacteria may occur according to a diel cycle. This cycle may be influenced by the presence of light, which influences the intracellular transformations of cyanobacteria associated with photosynthesis. Further analysis identified between  $6.1 \times 10^4$  and  $3.9 \times 10^7$  copies of the PC-IGS gene fragment of the analyzed cyanobacteria per ml of water during the spring-autumn period. In addition, during the study, the concentration of *g91* gene fragments, representing the number free particles of cyanophages per ml of water, ranged from undetectable to  $8.2 \times 10^2$ , whereas the numbers of viruses present in the host cell ranged from  $2.5 \times 10^1$  to  $1.6 \times 10^6$ . Kimura et al. (2012) note considerably fewer *g91* gene copies in the free-phage fraction than in the host cell fraction. Additionally, similar trends were observed for cyanophage and cyanobacteria numbers,

suggesting that part of the cyanobacteria population is continually infected by cyanophages.

TAIL-PCR (thermal asymmetric interlaced PCR) using g91 F/g91 R primers (Table 2) and sequencing of sample DNA was performed to allow clonal analysis of the g91 gene fragments in the fractions of free cyanophages, cyanophages present in host cells and RNA fractions (Kimura et al., 2012). Based on these findings, 87 sequences of the g91 gene were classified into 71 genotypes. Maximum-parsimony network analysis was then performed to divide the obtained genotypes into three sequence groups: Group I consisting of 62 genotypes, Group II consisting of seven genotypes and Group III consisting of two genotypes. It was also found that the previously isolated Ma-LMM01 cyanophage was genetically distinct from these groups (Kimura et al., 2012); however, Kimura-Sakai et al. (2014) later classified Ma-LMM01 to Group III.

It was thus indicated that the above-mentioned SheathRT primers could be used as tools for the detection of Ma-LMM01-like cyanophages also from Group III, and that the true amount of Ma-LMM01-like cyanophages specific for *Microcystis* may be underestimated. Therefore, a new primer set called g91 DRTPF1/g91 DRTPR2 was designed by Kimura-Sakai et al. (2014); these primers were based on 434 sequences representing 43 genotypes present in more than two clones of Ma-LMM01-like type cyanophages obtained by Kimura et al. (2013) and could be used for amplification of 206 bp g91 gene fragments (Table 2) targeting genotype Groups I–III.

The samples were also subjected to quantitative real-time PCR (qPCR) analysis using old and new primers (Kimura-Sakai et al., 2014). Changes in cyanophage level were estimated based on the number of g91 genes per ml of sample taken from Hirosawanoike Pond (Japan) between April and November 2010. The material was tested in two variants: as cyanophage particles present in water and cyanophages present in host cells. SheathRT primer analyses found the concentrations of g91 gene fragments, representing the numbers of cyanophages present in the water, remained below the detection limit throughout the study period. In turn, the concentration of g91 gene fragments, representing cyanophages present in the host cell, remained low from April to August, with a clear increase to  $6.8 \times 10^5$  in early October. The analyses with the new primers found the numbers of g91 gene fragments, representing the numbers of free cyanophages, to remain within the range  $2.8 \times 10^3$  to  $2.0 \times 10^4$  ml<sup>-1</sup> throughout the analysis period. The copy numbers of g91 gene fragments representing cyanophages presented in host cells, remained between  $3.2 \times 10^2$  and  $4.0 \times 10^3$  ml<sup>-1</sup> from April to July, increasing from August to November, with a maximum of  $7.0 \times 10^5$  in early October. In addition, the sequences of the amplified g91 gene fragment obtained with the use of newly-designed primers were mostly conservative.

Kimura-Sakai et al. (2014) conclude that the newly-designed primers for the amplification of g91 gene fragment of Ma-LMM01-like type cyanophages allow greater detection of related viruses from Groups I–III. The best examples were the above-mentioned analyses of the free virus-fraction in water. More importantly, no gene

copies were detectable with the use of the SheathRT primers. With the new primers, the numbers of copies of g91 gene fragments were found in the range of  $10^3$ – $10^4$  ml<sup>-1</sup>. The authors also note that qPCR analyses of the g91 ml<sup>-1</sup> gene based on new primers may underestimate the true number of analyzed cyanophages, due to the existence of yet undiscovered viruses related to Ma-LMM01 cyanophages in the natural environment.

### 3.2. Dynamic changes in the genes copy number in area of Central Europe

Similar research has also been conducted in Central Europe. One such study performed in the Sulejów Reservoir in Poland examined the population dynamics of *Microcystis* cyanobacteria and their toxicogenic strains by assaying 16S rRNA and mcyA gene fragment copy numbers, as well as *Microcystis*-specific cyanophage numbers, represented by the g91 gene fragment, during five consecutive spring and autumn seasons in the years 2009–2013 (Mankiewicz-Boczek et al., 2016). SheathRT primers were used to amplify the g91 gene. The results (relative values) indicated that the 16S rRNA copy numbers fell from  $6.85 \times 10^6$  ml<sup>-1</sup> in 2009 to  $2.22 \times 10^7$  ml<sup>-1</sup> in 2011 while mcyA copy number fell from  $3.82 \times 10^4$  ml<sup>-1</sup> in 2012 to  $1.15 \times 10^7$  in 2011 ml<sup>-1</sup>. Mean g91 gene fragment copy number fell from  $2.62 \times 10^4$  ml<sup>-1</sup> in 2009 to  $1.44 \times 10^6$  ml<sup>-1</sup> in 2010. Mankiewicz-Boczek et al. (2016) indicated that generally the cyanophages appeared simultaneously or after the appearance of the genus *Microcystis* (including toxic genotypes) and accompanied them until the end of each season. The highest number of cyanophages was found in 2010, when a water bloom developed as a result of stabilization of hydrological conditions, an increase in temperature and the presence of optimal nutrient concentrations for the development of blue-green algae.

Further studies performed in this Polish waterbody sequenced the viral sheath protein encoding the g91 gene based on Sanger technology. The obtained data showed 95% homology (100% query coverage) with cyanophage strains Ma-LMM01, Ma-LMM02, Ma-LMM03 and Ma-HPM05, classified as *Myoviridae* isolated from freshwater in Japan. In addition, the Blast analysis also identified homologies with an MaMV-DC strain of *Myoviridae* isolated from a Chinese reservoir (Mankiewicz-Boczek et al., 2016; Yoshida et al., 2008; Ou et al., 2013).

These analyses of the dynamics of the co-occurrence of *Microcystis*, represented by 16S rRNA and mcyA gene fragments, and cyanophages, represented by the g91 gene fragment, were continued in the spring–autumn seasons of 2014 and 2015 in the Sulejów and Jeziorsko Reservoirs (Fig. 1) in accordance with the methodology described by Mankiewicz-Boczek et al. (2016).

In the Sulejów Reservoir, the copy number of the 16S rRNA gene fragment was both higher ( $2.57 \times 10^8$  ml<sup>-1</sup>) and lower ( $2.39 \times 10^4$  ml<sup>-1</sup>) in 2014 than 2015. In turn, the mcyA gene fragment was more abundant ( $3.18 \times 10^7$  ml<sup>-1</sup>) in the 2014 season but least (below the detection limit, i.e.  $<2.00 \times 10^4$  ml<sup>-1</sup>) in 2015. The g91 gene fragment had its highest ( $2.93 \times 10^6$  ml<sup>-1</sup>) and lowest (below the detection limit, i.e.  $<2.00 \times 10^4$  ml<sup>-1</sup>) copy numbers in 2014. The



Fig. 1. Jeziorsko and Sulejów reservoirs, Poland; sampling points are represented by red circles.

mean copy numbers of 16S rRNA, *mcyA* and *g91* gene fragments were  $10^7$ ,  $10^5$  to  $10^6$ ,  $10^5$ , respectively (Table 3). In the case of Jeziorsko Reservoir, 16S rRNA gene copy number peaked at  $4.27 \times 10^9$  in 2015, and reached its lowest value (below the detection limit, i.e.  $<2.00 \times 10^4 \text{ ml}^{-1}$ ) 2014; *mcyA* gene fragment copy number was also the highest in 2015 ( $8.06 \times 10^8 \text{ ml}^{-1}$ ), and the lowest (below detection limit) in 2014; *g91* gene copy number reached  $3.58 \times 10^7$  in 2014, with a minimum value below the detection level. The mean values for the number of copies of the 16S rRNA, *mcyA*, *g91* gene fragments were  $10^8$ ,  $10^7$  to  $10^8$  and  $10^6$  to  $10^7$ , respectively (Table 3). Typically, 10–100 times more copies of the gene fragments were obtained from the Jeziorsko Reservoir than the Sulejów Reservoir. This difference has been attributed to differences in the place and method of taking samples: samples from the Sulejów Reservoir were taken from the water column in the area of the open part of the reservoir while samples from the Jeziorsko Reservoir were taken from the surface of the water (0–0.5 m) from a small bay where the water bloom accumulated.

In addition, the dynamics analyses indicated that cyanophage levels accompanied those of cyanobacteria in the water of both reservoirs, usually from the beginning of the spring season to the end of the autumn season in 2014 and 2015 (Fig. 2). Although the cyanophages and cyanobacteria (including their toxicogenic strains) of the Sulejów Reservoir shared similar population dynamics in 2014, their numbers diverged between 02 July and 21 August 2015, as well as between 18 September and

16 November 2015; this could be explained by the *killing the winner* hypothesis (Fig. 2). In this case, the antagonistic relationship should be understood as an increasing peak in the number of cyanophages with a simultaneous decrease in the amount of cyanobacteria; this is followed by a decrease in the number of cyanophages, which may be accompanied by an increase in the number of cyanobacteria. No clear correlation was found between the dynamics of occurrence of cyanophages and toxicogenic *Microcystis* cyanobacteria in either reservoir in the period 2014–2015 (Fig. 2). However, in the Jeziorsko reservoir, antagonistic relationships occurred between 07 July and 04 August, and again from 24 August to 14 October during the 2014 season. In the 2015 season, cyanophage numbers reflected cyanobacterial numbers, without any apparent antagonistic relationships (Fig. 2).

These findings from the two reservoirs during the spring and autumn seasons 2014 and 2015 also support Yoshida et al. (2010) and Mankiewicz-Boczek et al. (2016), who propose that viruses specific for blue-green algae may co-exist with their host rather than influence their total number. However, the antagonistic events might result from a shift in cyanobacterial population type according to the *killing the winner* hypothesis (Yoshida et al., 2008; Kimura et al., 2013; Kimura-Sakai et al., 2014).

#### 4. Future direction of *Microcystis* cyanophages research

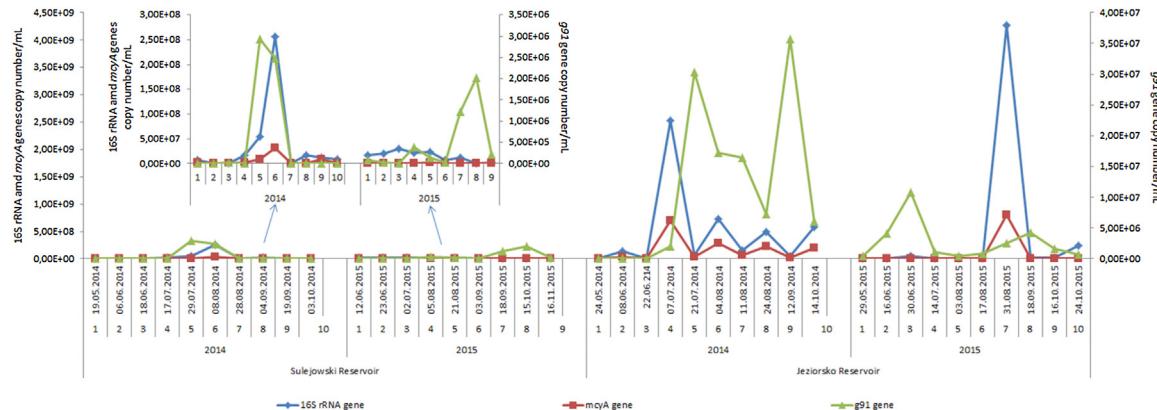
Presented molecular base studies on dynamics of cyanophages specific for *Microcystis* were indirectly

Table 3

*Microcystis* (16S rRNA, *mcyA*) and cyanophage (*g91*) gene fragment copy number  $\text{ml}^{-1}$  in the Sulejów and Jeziorsko reservoirs during the spring–autumn seasons 2014–2015.

Reservoir	Year	<i>Microcystis</i> genes (gene fragment copy number $\text{ml}^{-1}$ )						Cyanophage gene (gene fragment copy number $\text{ml}^{-1}$ )		
		16S rRNA gene			<i>mcyA</i> gene			<i>g91</i> gene		
		Max	Min	Average	Max	Min	Average	Max	Min	Average
Sulejów	2014	$2.57 \times 10^8$	$2.39 \times 10^4$	$3.74 \times 10^7$	$3.18 \times 10^7$	$5.63 \times 10^4$	$5.60 \times 10^6$	$2.93 \times 10^6$	bd	$5.48 \times 10^5$
	2015	$2.94 \times 10^7$	$6.91 \times 10^5$	$1.49 \times 10^7$	$2.20 \times 10^6$	bd	$4.86 \times 10^5$	$2.03 \times 10^6$	bd	$4.61 \times 10^5$
Jeziorsko	2014	$2.53 \times 10^9$	bd	$4.35 \times 10^8$	$7.03 \times 10^8$	bd	$1.44 \times 10^8$	$3.58 \times 10^7$	bd	$1.05 \times 10^7$
	2015	$4.27 \times 10^9$	$4.92 \times 10^5$	$4.62 \times 10^8$	$8.06 \times 10^8$	$1.32 \times 10^4$	$8.15 \times 10^7$	$1.08 \times 10^7$	$4.59 \times 10^5$	$2.71 \times 10^6$

bd – below the detection limit ( $<2.00 \times 10^4 \text{ ml}^{-1}$ ).



**Fig. 2.** The population dynamics of cyanophages (*g91* gene fragment), the genus *Microcystis* (16S rRNA gene fragment), the toxicogenic subpopulation of the genus *Microcystis* (*mcyA* gene fragment) in Sulejów (left-side figure) and Jeziorsko (right-side figure) Reservoirs during the spring–autumn seasons of 2014 and 2015. The numbers 1 to 10 indicate consecutive sampling periods for a single season. The inset graphs for Sulejów Reservoir indicate the measured values in finer scale.

possible by successfully characterized genome of Ma-LMM01 cyanophage strain from *Myoviridae* family which was isolated from the natural environment (Takashima et al., 2007; Yoshida et al., 2008). Therefore, the freshwater dynamic analyses are limited only to the one type of *Microcystis* phage from one particular family, without the possibility of estimation the entire community of mentioned viruses (Kimura et al., 2012; Kimura-Sakai et al., 2014).

Isolation of cyanophages from the environment, together with its genome characterization, is difficult and time consuming, especially that cyanophages can be host specific, targeting cyanobacteria at the strain level (Yoshida et al., 2008). Thus, it would be advisable to look for a suitable tool that can provide information on so far not isolated *Microcystis* cyanophages from different families.

Metagenomics seems to be a promising culture-independent approach since it can provide information on the DNA sequences of a entire collection of viral genomes present in a given environment (Nishimura et al., 2017). The acquired genetic data on cyanophages (from different families) specific for cyanobacteria from *Microcystis* sp. could be used for analyses of their entire composition in further environmental analyses.

Beyond this, abiotic conditions (e.g. physicochemical parameters of water, hydrological conditions, weather) should be analysed concurrently with genetic analysis in various ecosystems around the world. This data could indicate the major factors affecting the lytic/lysogenic capabilities of cyanophages, thus allowing a more accurate assessment of the effect of cyanophages on their hosts (Stough et al., 2017).

## 5. Conclusions

*Microcystis* is a genus of planktonic cyanobacteria which has a large share in freshwater blooms worldwide (Wichelen et al., 2016); however, its biology, ecology and evolution may be influenced by the action of cyanophages. Information is currently available on seven from eight

isolated strains of cyanophages which are capable of lysing *Microcystis* cells. These strains represent viruses from *Myoviridae* (Ma-LMM01 and MaMV-DC strains), *Podoviridae* (Ma-LBP, ΦMHI42 and virus-like particle strains), *Siphoviridae* (one virus-like particle strain) families and *Corticovirus*-like particles (MaCV-L strain) (Table 1) (Parker et al., 1977; Tucker and Pollard, 2005; Yoshida et al., 2006; Ou et al., 2013; Hargreaves et al., 2013; Li et al., 2013; Watkins et al., 2014).

So far, genome sequences have only been obtained for two strains: Ma-LMM01 and MaMV-DC. Based on this information, the fragment of the gene encoding the sheath protein (*g91*) was chosen as a suitable molecular marker for studying the population dynamics of DNA and RNA material of *Microcystis*-specific cyanophages in the natural ecosystems of East Asia and Central Europe (Takashima et al., 2007; Yoshida et al., 2008; Mankiewicz-Boczek et al., 2016). This population analysis suggested that a small portion of cyanobacterial populations is permanently infected by cyanophages, which appear to be associated with the cyanobacteria rather than affecting their total numbers; however, infection may shift the cyanobacterial population from 'cyanophage infection – sensitive' *Microcystis* in favour of 'cyanophage infection – insensitive' individuals in accordance with the *killing the winner* hypothesis (Takashima et al., 2007; Yoshida et al., 2008; Kimura et al., 2012; Mankiewicz-Boczek et al., 2016).

In addition, the expression of the *g91* gene by cyanophages in host cells indicated a diurnal infection pattern, which was associated with intensified gene expression in the presence of sunlight: maximum expression was seen during the afternoon hours and minimum around midnight. It was concluded that the diurnal infection pattern could directly result from the dependence of the host cell on photosynthesis process (Kimura et al., 2012).

Finally, particles associated with the host cells were found to be more numerous than those present in the water outside the host (Kimura et al., 2012). Additionally, the nucleotide sequences of *g91* gene fragments isolated from the aquatic ecosystems of Central Europe showed 95%

similarities to the g91 gene fragments of Ma-LMM01, Ma-LMM02, Ma-LMM03, Ma-HPM05 and MaMV-DC cyanophages isolated from the freshwater reservoirs of East Asia (Mankiewicz-Boczek et al., 2016).

The future direction of the *Microcystis* cyanophage analyses seems to be metagenomics which is culture-independent tool for analyzing cyanophages genomes in complex freshwater microbial communities. Additionally, analyses of physicochemical parameters of water, hydrological conditions, weather, etc., while tracking the presence of *Microcystis* cyanophages in natural environment, could allow for the selection of universal abiotic parameters which enhance the effect of cyanophages on their hosts.

### Conflict of interest

None declared.

### Ethical statement

Authors state that the research was conducted according to ethical standards.

### Funding body

This study partially was supported by the National Science Centre of Poland, project no. UMO-2013/11/N/NZ8/00607 "Ecological dynamics of cyanophages and their host in Polish waterbodies". The authors are grateful to the Laboratory of Microscopic Imaging and Specialist Biological Techniques (Faculty of Biology and Environmental Protection, University of Lodz) for providing equipment to carry out part of the analysis.

### Acknowledgement

None.

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**Załącznik 3:**

Jaskulska, A., Šulčius, S., Kokociński, M., Koreivienė, J., Nájera, A.F., Mankiewicz-Boczek, J. 2021. Cyanophage distribution across European lakes of the temperate-humid continental climate zone assessed using PCR-based genetic markers. *Microbial Ecology* (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00248-021-01783-y>

**Lódź, 16.08.2021**

**Oświadczenie o współautorstwie**

Oświadczam, że mój wkład w przygotowanie oryginalnej pracy polegał na:  
przygotowaniu głównej koncepcji planu badań, wykonaniu niezbędnych analiz genetycznych cyjanofagów i sinic ze wszystkich analizowanych jezior, oraz przygotowaniu ostatecznej wersji manuskryptu.

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poborze próbek do badań, dostarczeniu informacji na temat części wyników fizykochemicznych oraz analizie składu gatunkowego i biomasy sinic z wybranych jezior, a także pomocy w przygotowaniu manuskryptu.  
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Jaskulska, A., Šulčius, S., Kokociński, M., Koreivienė, J., Nájera, A.F., Mankiewicz-Boczek, J. 2021. Cyanophage distribution across European lakes of the temperate-humid continental climate zone assessed using PCR-based genetic markers. *Microbial Ecology* (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00248-021-01783-y>

..Vilnius, 12.08.2021.

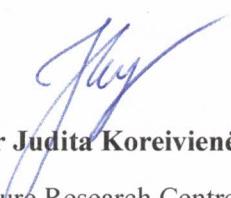
**Declaration of co-authorship**

I declare that my contribution to the preparation of the above-mentioned publication consisted in: sample collection, providing information on some of the physicochemical results and analysis of the cyanobacterial species composition and their biomass from selected lakes, as well as general help in the text preparation.

I assess my participation in the preparation of the work as 10%.

Oświadczam, że mój wkład w przygotowanie oryginalnej pracy polegał na:  
poborze próbek do badań, dostarczeniu informacji na temat części wyników fizykochemicznych oraz analizie składu gatunkowego i biomasy sinic z wybranych jezior, a także pomocy w przygotowaniu manuskryptu.

Swój udział w przygotowaniu pracy oceniam na 10%.



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Jaskulska, A., Šulčius, S., Kokociński, M., Koreivienė, J., Nájera, A.F., Mankiewicz-Boczek, J. 2021. Cyanophage distribution across European lakes of the temperate-humid continental climate zone assessed using PCR-based genetic markers. *Microbial Ecology* (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00248-021-01783-y>

**Vilnius, 17.08.2021**

**Declaration of co-authorship**

I declare that my contribution to the preparation of the above-mentioned publication consisted in:  
assistance in the interpretation of the genetic results of cyanophages and general help in the text preparation.

I assess my participation in the preparation of the work as 10%.

Oświadczam, że mój wkład w przygotowanie oryginalnej pracy polegał na:  
pomocy w interpretacji wyników analiz genetycznych cyjanofagów oraz ogólnej pomocy w przygotowaniu manuskryptu.

Swój udział w przygotowaniu pracy oceniam na 10%.



**Dr Sigitas Šulčius**

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# Cyanophage Distribution Across European Lakes of the Temperate-Humid Continental Climate Zone Assessed Using PCR-Based Genetic Markers

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Received: 10 March 2021 / Accepted: 24 May 2021

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## Abstract

Studies of the diversity and distribution of freshwater cyanophages are generally limited to the small geographical areas, in many cases including only one or few lakes. Data from dozens of various lakes distributed at a larger distance are necessary to understand their spatial distribution and sensitivity to biotic and abiotic factors. Thus, the objective of this study was to analyze the diversity and distribution of cyanophages within the infected cells using marker genes (*psbA*, *nblA*, and *g91*) in 21 Polish and Lithuanian lakes. Physicochemical factors that might be related to them were also analyzed. The results demonstrated that genetic markers representing cyanophages were observed in most lakes studied. The frequently detected gene was *psbA* with 88% of cyanophage-positive samples, while *nblA* and *g91* were found in approximately 50% of lakes. The DNA sequence analyses for each gene demonstrated low variability between them, although the *psbA* sequences branched within the larger cluster of marine *Synechococcus* counterparts. The principal component analysis allowed to identify significant variation between the lakes that presented high and low cyanobacterial biomass. The lakes with high cyanobacterial biomass were further separated by country and the different diversity of cyanobacteria species, particularly *Planktothrix agardhii*, was dominant in the Polish lakes and *Planktolyngbya limnetica* in the Lithuanian lakes. The total phosphorous and the presence of cyanophage genes *psbA* and *nblA* were the most important factors that allowed differentiation for the Polish lakes, while the pH and the genes *g91* and *nblA* for the Lithuanian lakes.

**Keywords** Cyanobacteria · Cyanophage · *PsbA* · *NblA* · *g91*

## Introduction

Cyanophages, viruses infecting cyanobacteria, are numerous biologically active entities in aquatic ecosystems and play an important role in determining host population

diversity, dynamics, and evolution [1–4]. Most of the currently known cyanophages are members of *Myoviridae* (mycyanophages), *Siphoviridae* (siphocyanophages), and *Podoviridae* (podocyanophages) families [5–7]. Among these, the diversity of mycyanophages is probably the most well represented in public databases to date. However, some studies indicate that sipho- and podoviruses might exhibit higher actual diversity compared to members of *Myoviridae* [8–10]. Cyanophage distribution is often correlated with the distribution of their hosts, and their abundance changes in time and space [1, 11, 12]. Cyanoprokaryota (cyanobacteria), including scum-forming genera *Microcystis*, single-celled members of *Cyanobium* or *Synechococcus*, and filamentous species belonging to *Lyngbya*, *Oscillatoria*, *Planktothrix*, and *Phormidium*, are widely distributed photosynthetic organisms [13]. Among them, *Microcystis* and *Synechococcus* are two of the most described in the context of susceptibility to viral infections [14–16]. Moreover, the

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environmental studies indicated that the distribution and diversity of cyanophages might be directly or indirectly (through the host) affected by physicochemical agents [17–20]. According to Finke and Suttle [21], the diversity of the marine phage community depends on a promoted variety of environmental factors including salinity, temperature, and concentration of nutrients, followed by water column mixing. Solar radiation may damage viral particles and negatively influence infection efficiency as described by Wilhelm et al. [22] in the marine environment. The studies of freshwater cyanophages conducted by Cheng et al. [23] also showed that decay of their infectivity was correlated with UV intensity. The cyanophage composition was also found to be influenced by seasonal variations and water column depth as described by Hurwitz et al. [24] based on ocean metagenomics studies. Despite the growing number of researches on cyanophages, the information about their complex diversity and distribution in freshwater remains insufficient.

Recently, Finke and Suttle [21] showed that a specific individual gene (*gp43*), that is, used as a genetic marker to assess virus diversity, can highly reflect the variation observed by the whole genome and gene content comparisons. The diversity of cyanophages can be assessed using phage group/clade-specific molecular markers such as those encoding major capsid protein, portal protein, tail sheath protein, and DNA polymerase [25–27]. The host-derived cyanophage auxiliary metabolic genes (AMGs) are also widely used to assess cyanophage diversity and distribution. For example, genes *psbA* and *nblA*, which encode the D1 protein of photosystem II (PSII) and nonbleaching protein A, respectively [16, 28]. The *psbA* genes were reported as highly prevalent among some marine myo- and podocyanophages (clade A) which infected *Prochlorococcus* and *Synechococcus* [4, 29–31]. The *psbA* genes were also identified in some freshwater cyanophages (e.g., *Synechococcus* phage S-CRM01); however, their prevalence in this aquatic environment is less known [4, 32]. The *nblA* gene was also proposed as the genetic marker and was found in freshwater cyanophages infecting *Microcystis* and then *Planktothrix* [15, 16, 33]. However, some studies indicated that this gene is highly conserved and thus tends to underrepresent genetic diversity [15, 16, 33–35]. The structural gene *g91* encoding tail sheath protein in cyanophages infecting *Microcystis aeruginosa* was used to assess their diversity. Based on the comparative analysis of this gene, three major genotypes were distinguished and their spatial and temporal distribution have been tracked [36, 37].

The occurrence and monitoring of freshwater cyanophages based on the abovementioned genes were conducted *in situ* in several different ecosystems in Japan [28, 36–39], China [16, 40], France [41], the USA [4], Poland [42], and Canada [43]. However, most of the studies conducted so

far were limited to one or two water bodies and none of them referred to the occurrence and diversity of freshwater cyanophages, including a larger geographical area. Presuming that differences in cyanophage community compositions would increase with geographic distance (distance-decay hypothesis) and that spatial distribution patterns is a result of interplay between cyanophages, cyanobacteria, and environmental conditions; one could expect that observed cyanophage diversity would reflect the area surveyed. Therefore, the present study aimed to determine the diversity and spatial distribution of active cyanophages community, which were infecting cyanobacteria, from an extensive area spanned over two countries. Towards this aim, we analyzed sequence diversity of three different marker genes (*psbA*, *nblA*, and *g91*) in 21 lakes of the temperate-humid continental climate zone (Poland and Lithuania), in an area with a span of approx. over 200,000 km<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 1). Besides, we assessed the relationship between the occurrence of marker genes, their sequence diversity, cyanobacterial communities composition, and environmental variables. Such information could be helpful to explore the potential linkage between cyanophages and their host—cyanobacteria, their spatial distribution between waterbodies, and sensitivity on environmental factors.

## Materials and Methods

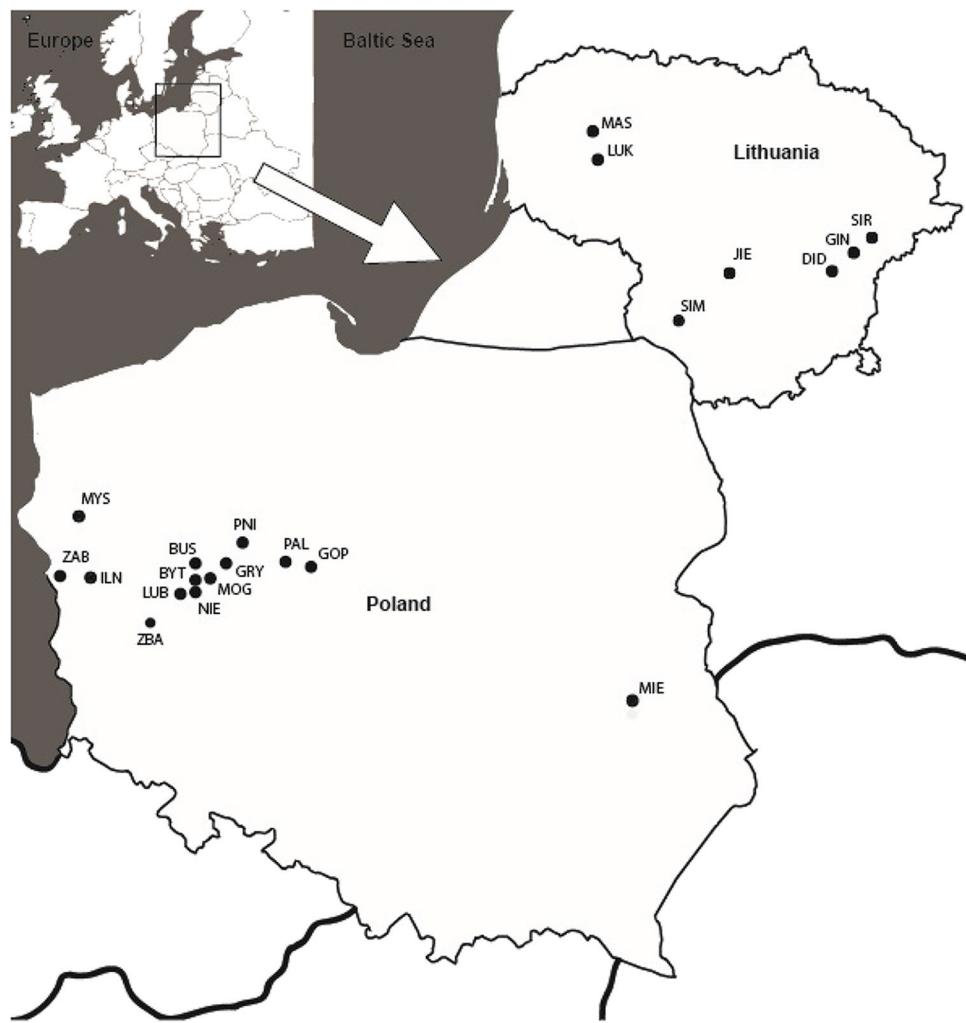
### Source of Material

Samples were collected from 14 Polish and 7 Lithuanian lakes situated in the temperate-humid continental climate zone. They were the subject of research on cyanobacteria in our previous publication [44]. Samples were collected from the following: Lubosińskie (LUB), Bytyńskie (BYT), Buszewskie (BUS), Pniewskie (PNI), Myśliborskie (MYS), Pakoskie (PAL), Grylewskie (GRY), Mogileńskie (MOG), Niepruszewskie (NIE), Ilno (ILN), Gopło (GOP), Żabiniec (ZAB), Zbąszyńskie (ZBA), Miejskie (MIE), Jieznas (JIE), Širvys (SIR), Gineitiškės (GIN), Didžiulis (DID), Mastis (MAS), Lükstas (LUK), and Simnas (SIM) (Fig. 1, Fig. S1). They represent fertile lakes from meso-eutrophic to hypertrophic with high phytoplankton diversity (Table S1).

### Sampling

Samples were collected from the central part of the lake in August 2013 and July–August 2014 (Fig. 1, Fig S1). Integrated phytoplankton samples were collected from the epilimnion in stratified lakes or from the surface water layer in polymictic lakes from one sampling station using a water sampler. Approximately, 300 mL of water samples were collected to aseptic plastic bottles as integrated water probes

**Fig. 1** Study site of lakes in Poland and Lithuania



from the water column (e.g., mixed water from samples taken every 1 m deep) during the early afternoon (Fig. 1, Fig. S1). The 1-L phytoplankton samples were preserved with acidified Lugol's solution with a final concentration of 1% immediately after sampling. The samples were transferred to the laboratories and stored under cool and dark conditions until they were analyzed.

### Measurements and Analyses of Physicochemical Parameters

Water temperature, pH, and conductivity were determined in situ using a multiparameter probe. Integrated water samples were collected for chemical analyses. The water samples were analyzed for total nitrogen (TN) and total phosphorus (TP) with a HACH spectrophotometer [45, 46].

### Analysis of Cyanobacterial Composition

Phytoplankton samples were sedimented in 1-L glass cylinder for 48 h, gently decanted off, and the final sample

volume of 20–30 mL was used for further analysis. Cyanobacterial species identification [47–49] and counts were conducted using light microscopes under  $\times 400$  magnification. The enumeration of specimens was carried out in 100–150 fields of Fuchs-Rosenthal chamber, which ensured that at least 400 specimens were counted to reduce the error to less than 10%. A single cell, a coenobium, or a filament represented one specimen in the analysis. The biovolume of each species was determined through a volumetric analysis of cells using geometric approximation and expressed as a wet weight following Wetzel and Likens [50].

### Isolation and Amplification of Genes

Freshwater samples in the volume of 100 mL each were filtered onto 0.45  $\mu\text{m}$  nitrocellulose membrane filters (Millipore, USA). Subsequently, filters containing cell fraction were inserted in the 2 mL of lysis buffer (400 mM NaCl, 40 mM EDTA, 0.75 M sucrose, and 50 mM TRIS–HCl; pH 8.3), then stored at –20 °C before DNA extraction.

DNA was isolated from stored filters according to hot phenol-mediated extraction described by Giovannoni et al. [51] with minor changes described by Mankiewicz-Boczek et al. [52] including the modification of centrifugation speed (13,000 g) and the final concentration of proteinase K (275 µg mL<sup>-1</sup>). The extracted nucleic acid was used as a template for molecular analyses of the genes for general presence of cyanobacteria, 16S rRNA (258 bp), and the specific presence of *Microcystis* genus, 16S rRNA (250 bp), and for cyanophages—*psbA* (740 bp), *nblA* (200 bp), and the *g91* (*g91\_S* – 132 bp, and *g91\_L* – 206 bp) which together cover all three genotype groups distinguish by Kimura-Sakai et al. [37]. All nucleotide primers and parameters of PCR are described in Table S2 and Table S3 (supplementary materials).

## Sequencing of Cyanophage Genes

DNA samples for nucleotide Sanger sequence analyses (Table 1) of genes: *psbA*, *nblA*, and *g91* were chosen based on the good quality PCR amplicons. In consequence, the *psbA*, *nblA*, *g91\_S*, and *g91\_L* were analyzed

and deposited in Genbank database for six (LUB, BUS, PAL, PNI, GIN, and ILN (accession numbers: MW853986 to MW853991, respectively)), six (BUS, SIM, BYT, PAL, PNI, and GIN (accession numbers: MW853992 to MW853997, respectively)), nine (LUB, MIE, BUS, SIM, BYT, PAL, PNI, JIE, and GIN (accession numbers: MW853982 to MW853985, respectively)), and four (SIM, BYT, JIE, and GIN (accession numbers: MW853992 to MW853997, respectively)) lake samples, respectively. To prepare samples for sequencing, the selected DNA samples were amplified with the use of Pfu DNA polymerase (forming blunt-end; Thermo Scientific) according to producer procedure and PCR conditions showed in Table S3. The specific primer sequences, chemical concentration, and amplification program for PCR can be found in Table S2 and Table S3. Obtained PCR products were purified with the use of QIAGEX® II Gel extraction Kit (QIAGEN), cloned into pJET1.2/blunt vector (Thermo Scientific), and sequenced (Genomed S.A.). The obtained forward sequences were improved by reverse complementation and the primer sequences were clipped out with the use of a BioEdit Sequence Alignment Editor (version 7.2.5).

**Table 1** Presence of cyanobacteria and cyanophage amplicons, and PCA group results of studied lakes

Country	Lakes	Cyanobacteria 16S rRNA*	Cyanophages <i>psbA</i>	<i>Microcystis</i> spp. 16S rRNA	<i>nblA</i> **	<i>g91_S</i> **	<i>g91_L</i> **	PCA groups
Poland	LUB	+	+	+	+	+	+	A
	BYT	+	+	+	+	+	+	A
	BUS	+	+	+	+	+	na	A
	PNI	+	+	+	+	+	+	A
	PAL	+	+	+	+	+	na	A
	MIE	+	na	+	+	+	na	-
	NIE	+	+	+	na	na	na	-
	MYS	+	na	+	na	na	+	C
	GRY	+	+	na	na	na	na	C
	MOG	+	na	+	na	na	na	C
	ILN	+	+	na	na	na	na	C
	GOP	+	+	na	na	na	na	C
	ZAB	+	na	+	na	na	na	C
	ZBA	+	+	+	na	na	na	C
Lithuania	DID	+	+	+	na	na	na	C
	SIR	+	na	+	na	na	na	C
	JIE	+	+	+	na	+	+	B
	SIM	+	+	+	+	+	+	B
	GIN	+	+	+	+	+	+	B
	MAS	+	na	+	na	na	na	-
	LUK	+	na	+	na	na	na	-

+, presence of amplicon; na no amplicon; \*, universal 16S rRNA gene sequence for cyanobacteria; \*\*, gene fragments specific for *Microcystis* cyanophages; -, not grouped

A phylogenetic tree was constructed for the *psbA* gene. A cluster was performed, separately, for cyanophage and cyanobacterial sequences with 90% similarity. The cyanophages and cyanobacteria sequences were taken from the NCBI non-redundant database (<https://blast.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Blast.cgi>). Then, the sequences were aligned with the use of MAFFT-DASH and the tree was constructed with the use of RAxML NG.

In case of the search for similar sequences of gene fragments (*nblA* and *g91*) shorter than 200 bp, the online Local Alignment Search Tool (BLAST), based on data from the following databases: the NCBI non-redundant sequence database (<https://blast.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Blast.cgi>), JGI virus public database (<https://img.jgi.doe.gov/>), and viruSITE integrated database ([www.virusite.org](http://www.virusite.org)), were used.

## Statistical Analysis

The principal component analysis (PCA) was used to evaluate the spatial distance between 21 lakes according to the total abundance of different cyanobacterial species, the occurrence of cyanophage genes (*psbA*, *nblA*, *g91\_S* and, *g91\_L*), and the environmental factors including nutrients (TP and TN) and physicochemical parameters (temperature, pH, and conductivity). All data were transformed to avoid skewed distributions with the subtraction of the mean and the division with the standard deviation ((x-mean)/Sd). Groups were defined according to the number of genes detected for each lake. The one-way ANOVA and Tukey's tests were used to measure significant differences between the groups with the scores obtained for the PC1 and PC2 (Table S4). The PCA was performed with PAST 4.03 [53]. Levine's test was used to check homogeneity of variance from the means. The proposed statistical analysis is used to condensate multivariate databases often obtain in environmental studies, allowing to identify the most important factors that explain the highest variance within a set of samples [54].

## Results and Discussion

Cyanophages are specialized to infect cyanobacteria and could play an important role in modulating harmful blooms. As cyanophage distribution was found related to the occurrence of their hosts [1, 11, 12], it is needed to obtain knowledge of the cyanobacteria composition and factors influencing their growth in the study area. Analysis of cyanobacteria—potential virus host—indicated that their 16S rRNA gene was found in all studied lakes (Table 1). The total cyanobacteria biomass varied from 0.04 to 40.47 mg L<sup>-1</sup> (Table S1). Filamentous cyanobacteria from the genera *Aphanizomenon*, *Cuspidothrix*, *Dolichospermum*,

*Limnothrix*, *Planktolyngbya*, *Pseudanabaena*, *Planktothrix*, or *Raphidopsis* were among the dominants in most studied lakes. Additionally, *Microcystis* was among the dominant genera (0.57–1.35 mg L<sup>-1</sup>) in three lakes based on the microscopic analysis, and their overall presence was confirmed in 18 lakes according to the genetic analysis—16S rRNA (Tables 1 and 2, Table S1).

The study area (Fig. 1) was represented by the temperate-humid continental climate zone characterized by hot summers [55] together with water parameters which are shown in the following ranges: water pH 7.4–9.01, water temperature 16.3–27.8 °C, and conductivity 251–729.1 µS cm<sup>-1</sup>. While total nitrogen and total phosphorus concentrations varied between 0.85–7.5 and 0.02–0.47 mg L<sup>-1</sup>, respectively (Table S1), such parameters, conducive to eutrophication, ensured background and favored the development of cyanobacteria [56, 57].

According to the authors' knowledge, the presented studies are the first which refer to the relationship between the occurrence of all three cyanophage marker genes simultaneously (*psbA*, *nblA*, and *g91*), their sequence diversity, cyanobacterial communities composition, and environmental variables from the freshwater environment of an extensive area (approx. over 200,000 km<sup>2</sup>). Moreover, the results described below confirmed that the environmental factors, most likely local, may have an important role in shaping the genetic variation in phages.

## Cyanophages Occurrence and Diversity

The cyanophage genes (*psbA*, *nblA*, or *g91*) presented in host cells were detected in 16 from the 21 studied lakes (Fig. 1, Table 1). The lack of amplification of selected marker genes for cyanophages in some lakes, despite the presence of their potential hosts, may have been related to the number of the genes below the detection limit or used genetic markers not targeting the different phage communities, present in the lakes studied. According to Schrader et al. [58], the PCR inhibitors should be also taken into consideration.

The *psbA* was found in 88% cyanophage-positive samples (Table 1). Its DNA sequences were found between 75 and 98% of similarity for five Polish lakes (LUB, PNI, BUS, PAL, and ILN) and one Lithuanian lake (GIN). The variants with the highest similarity level were observed between LUB-PNI (98%) and BUS-GIN (95%). The *psbA* sequence of ILN had the lowest level of similarity (75–78%) with the analyzed sequences. Although all *psbA* sequences observed in this study branched within the larger cluster of marine cyanophages, they also grouped more closely to each other than to their marine counterparts (Fig. 2). Most of the *psbA* sequences showed 95–100% similarity to each other (data were not shown), with the only exception of Lake ILN

(Fig. 3). The *psbA* sequences were intermixed, indicating that there were no differences in the distribution of cyanophages between distant lakes. Therefore, the higher divergence of ILN from other lakes may suggest that other, most likely local, factors might be responsible for the diversity of the cyanophage community, whereas the *psbA* sequences from Polish lake ILN appeared to be the most similar with marine *Synechococcus* mycyanophage genome (S-CAM22) (Fig. 3). As it was described by Dreher et al. [26], the *psbA* similarity to the marine counterparts was also confirmed within *Synechococcus*-specific S-CRM01 cyanophage, isolated from freshwater Copco Reservoir (Northern California, USA). The high similarity of freshwater cyanophages *psbA* to marine cyanomyoviruses was also found in East lake (China) by Ge et al. [59]. Moreover, the *psbA* of novel freshwater Ma-LEP *Microcystis* podocyanophage, isolated from Erie lake (USA) by Jiang et al. [4], also presented high sequence similarity with marine S-CBP4 *Synechococcus* podocyanophage. The above results, of freshwater *psbA* sequence similarities to their marine counterparts, indicated that this genetic marker can be used to study the diversity among freshwater and marine phages as already described by Chenard and Suttle [32].

The *nblA*, *g91\_S*, and *g91\_L* *Microcystis* cyanophage genes were found in 50%, 56%, and 44% of cyanophage-positive samples, respectively (Table 1). All *nblA* sequences observed in this study from the analyzed samples (BYT, BUS, PNI, PAL, GIN, and SIM) if compared to each other showed high similarity, ranging from 88 to 99%. The highest level of sequence similarity (96%) was found between two Polish lakes—BYT and BUS—and between two Lithuanian lakes—GIN and SIM. The *nblA* sequences from analyzed samples were highly similar (> 90%) with their corresponding gene fragments of uncultured *Myoviridae* phages (AB812972.1 and AB812972) and MaMV-DC (KF356199.1). The literature data indicated that the *nblA* gene is highly conserved and, hence, may underrepresent the existing diversity among cyanophages [34]. The *g91\_S* sequences obtained from six Polish lakes (LUB, BYT, BUS, PNI, PAL, and MIE) and three Lithuanian lakes (JIE and SIM) were similar in the range of 90–97% between them. Only GIN showed the lowest similarity (80–85%) when compared to all other sequences. Whereas the *g91\_L* from the one Polish (BYT) and three Lithuanian lakes (JIE, GIN, and SIM) were similar in the range of 95–96%, the *g91\_S* and *g91\_L* sequences from this study were convergent (> 91%) with their counterparts in culturable (MaMV-DC, KF356199.1; Ma-LMM01, AB231700.1) and unculturable (MH117957.1) *Microcystis* cyanophages. The above results might indicate the presence of Ma-LMM01-like phages within investigated lakes, as it was also showed in the Bay of Quinte (a Lake Ontario, Canada) by Rozon and Short [43] or Sulejowski Reservoir (Poland) by Mankiewicz et al. [42].

In the case of lakes where there was no positive detection of *nblA* and *g91* genes represented Ma-LMM01-like phages, it is also possible that other *Microcystis*-specific phages occur, which genomes were not characterized yet.

## Environmental Variables

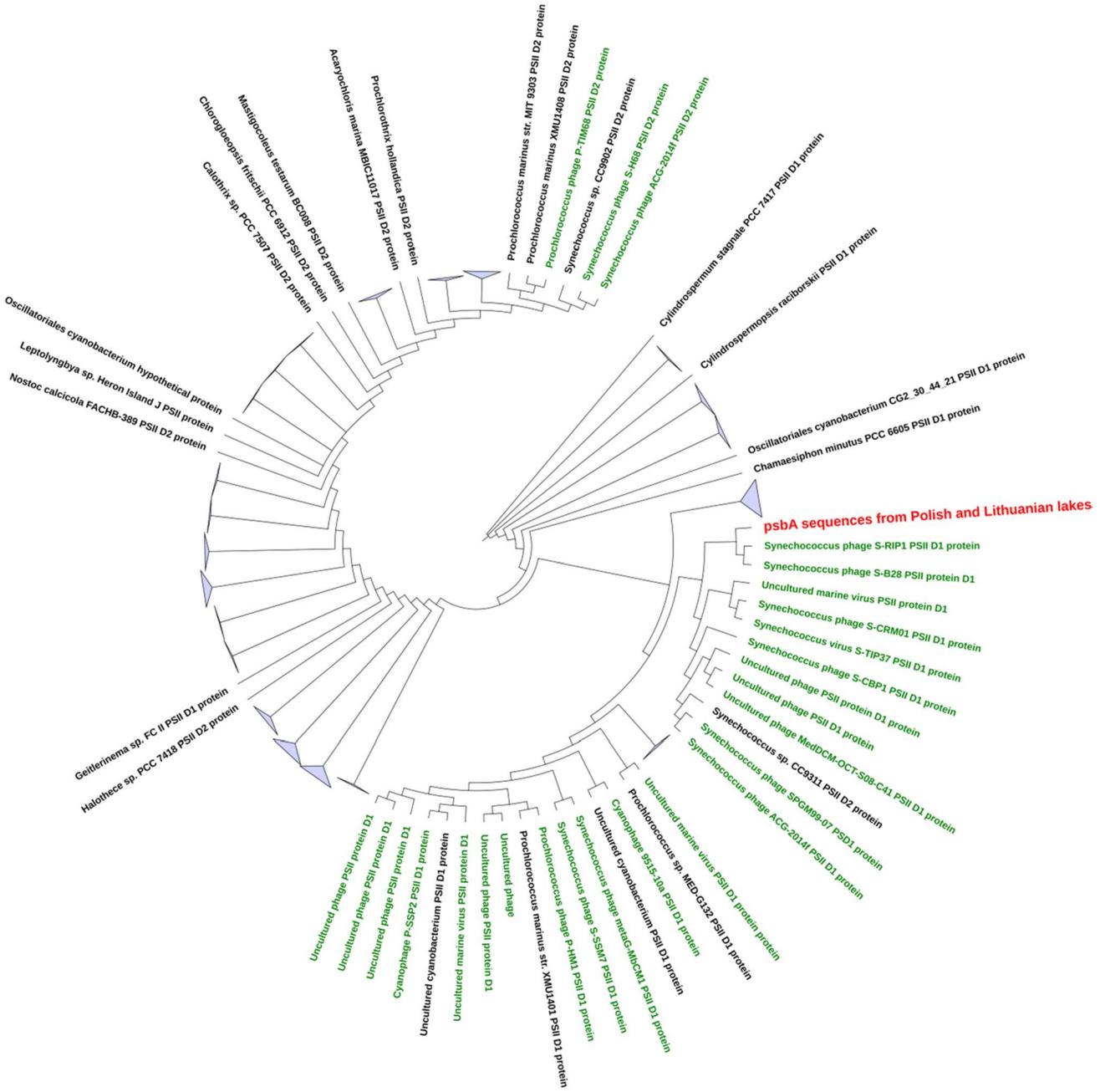
Principal component analysis (PCA) showed the relationships between cyanophages, cyanobacteria, and the physicochemical parameters of water (Fig. 4). The PC1 and PC2 represented up to 36.7% of the total variance of the observations (19.46% and 17.24%, respectively; see also Fig. S3). The PCA scores and loadings (estimated with the Pearson correlation [ $r$ ]) are described in the supplementary material Table S4 and S5, respectively. The PCA grouped lakes into three different clusters: groups A including only Polish lakes (LUB, PNI, BUS, BYT, and PAL), B including only Lithuanian lakes (SIM, GIN, and JIE), and group C (DID, SIR, ILN, MYS, MOG, ZAB, GRY, GOP, and ZBA) including both Polish and Lithuanian lakes. In groups A and B, two or three cyanophage genetic markers were detected while group C consisted of lakes with only one or none of the studied genes (Table 2, Fig. 4). Group A was significantly segregated from groups B and C ( $p = 4.76 \times 10^{-4}$  and  $2.2 \times 10^{-4}$ , respectively; see Table S6). The PC1 presented the highest positive correlations with the TP and conductivity ( $r = 0.71$  and 0.70, respectively), followed by the occurrence of cyanophage genes—*nblA* and *psbA* ( $r = 0.56$  and 0.52, respectively) (see Table S5). These results suggested that the abovementioned factors could be important variables contributing to the spatial distancing between the Polish and Lithuanian lakes and favored the development of particular cyanobacteria [56, 57], which can differ in A and B groups analyzed (Fig. 4). The modest relationship between the abundance of some viral genes and TP was indicated for the Bay of Quinte by Rozon and Short [43]. Moreover, TP as one of the most important parameters for the regulation of cyanobacterial occurrence could directly influence in their development and thus becoming available to phages for the genome replication process inside the host cell [60, 61].

Whereas the Lithuanian lakes in group B were significantly differentiated from group C by the vertical component—PC2 ( $p = 6.41 \times 10^{-9}$ ; Table S7 and Fig. 4), which could be explained by the high positive correlations observed between the PC2 and the cyanophage genes—*g91\_S*, *g91\_L*, and *nblA* ( $r = 0.79$ , 0.69, and 0.61, respectively), followed by the pH ( $r = 0.47$ ) (see Table S7), cyanophages have a wide range of pH tolerances; however, a decrease in pH below the host's optimal requirements may directly affect the host's cells homeostasis and thus negatively affect the intracellular cyanophage replication process [20]. Thus, group C was characterized not only with the lowest detection of cyanophage genes, but also the lowest values of environmental

**Table 2** Comparison of the variables among three lake groups distinguished in PCA

Group	Lakes	pH	Cond ( $\mu\text{S} \cdot \text{cm}^{-1}$ )	Temp (°C)	TN ( $\text{mg} \cdot \text{l}^{-1}$ )	TP ( $\text{mg} \cdot \text{l}^{-1}$ )	TN:TP ratio	CYAN ( $\text{mg} \cdot \text{l}^{-1}$ )	Dominant cyanobacteria and their biomass ( $\text{mg} \cdot \text{l}^{-1}$ ) <sup>*</sup>
A	LUB, BYT, BUS, PNL, PAL	8.76 ± 0.17	627 ± 73	22.9 ± 0.78	1.97 ± 0.29	0.270 ± 0.13	8.8 ± 4.4	14.21 ± 15.18	<i>Planktothrix agardhii</i> 1.85–38.33 (av. 15.67), <i>Aphanizomenon gracile</i> 2.28–5.32 (av. 3.80), <i>Limnothrix</i> spp. 0.91–2.20 (av. 1.75), <i>Raphidiopsis raciborskii</i> 1.43, <i>Jagginema subtilissimum</i> 0.69, <i>Microcystis aeruginosa</i> 1.35
B	JIE, GIN, SIM	8.72 ± 0.26	320 ± 66	23.7 ± 6.5	1.51 ± 0.23	0.063 ± 0.015	25.3 ± 9.0	16.55 ± 9.86	<i>Aphanizomenon gracile</i> 0.63–5.99 (av. 3.27), <i>Planktothrix</i> spp. 2.96–3.41 (av. 3.19), <i>Pseudanabaena limnetica</i> 3.80, <i>Microcystis viridis</i> 0.89, <i>Woronichinia naegeliana</i> 2.47, <i>Cスピロトリクス issachenkoi</i> 15.88
C	ZBA, GOP, GRY, ILN, MYS, ZAB, DID, SIR, MOG	8.22 ± 0.55	521 ± 109	21.1 ± 3.3	1.88 ± 0.77	0.087 ± 0.073	42.9 ± 45.5	8.60 ± 12.08	<i>Planktothrix agardhii</i> 8.58–36.35 (av. 14.22), <i>Aphanizomenon gracile</i> 0.47–0.81 (av. 0.64), <i>Pseudanabaena limnetica</i> 0.73–0.89 (av. 0.81), <i>Isaginema subtilissimum</i> 0.01–0.14 (av. 0.08), <i>Aphanizomenon flos-aquae</i> 0.09, <i>Raphidiopsis raciborskii</i> 0.06, <i>Synechococcus salinarum</i> 0.15, <i>Dolichospermum lemmermannii</i> 0.42, <i>Dolichospermum planctonicum</i> 0.44, <i>Microcystis</i> spp. 0.57, <i>Limnothrix redekei</i> 0.04, <i>Aphanizomenon keibani</i> 0.73, <i>Planktothrix</i> spp. 2.27, <i>Pseudanabaena limnetica</i> 1.46

A, presence of three genes; B, presence of two–three genes; C, presence of one or none gene



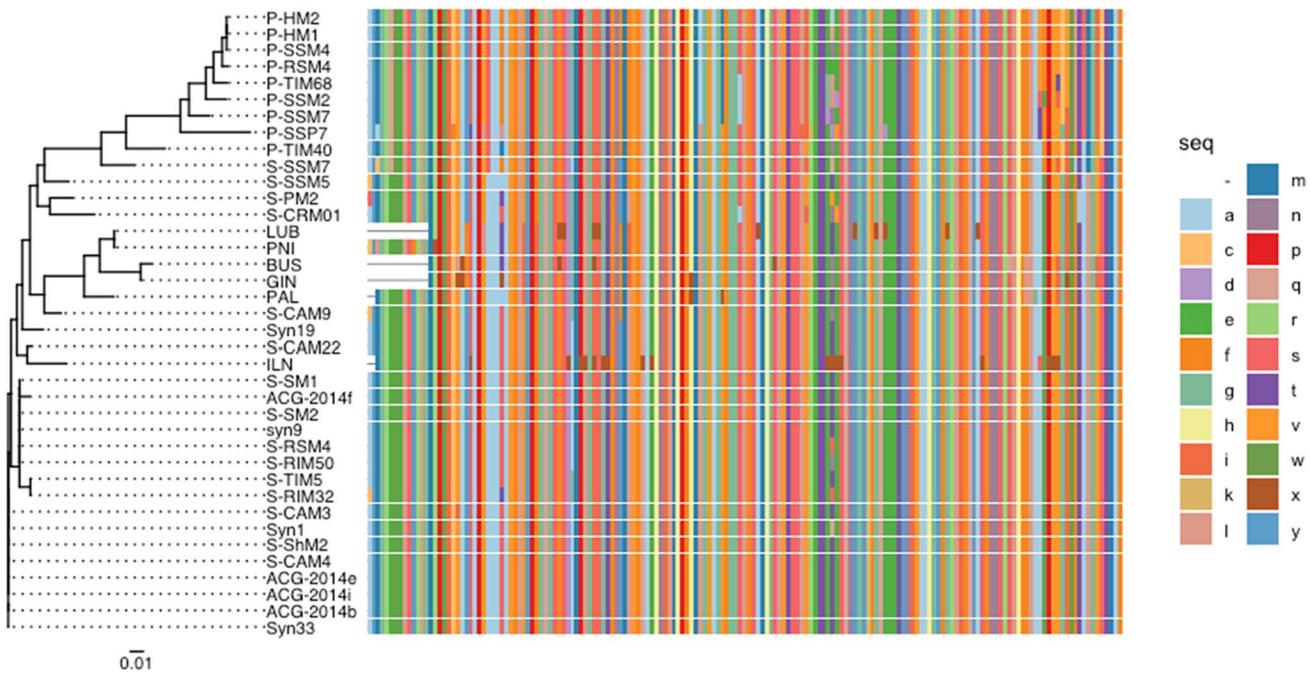
**Fig. 2** Phylogenetic tree of *psbA* sequence fragment alignment among different cyanophages and cyanobacteria

factors, and therefore, was found negatively scored in the PCA (Fig. 4, Table S4).

The *psbA* sequences presented in LUB, PNI, BUS, PAL, and GIN lakes were aligned close to each other within the phylogenetic tree, with exception of ILN lake (Fig. 3). While after comparing their presence with physicochemical factors as part of the PCA analysis (Fig. 4), the mentioned *psbA* sequences with high similarity were divided into two groups: A (LUB, PNI, BUS, and PAL) and B (GIN). The separateness of *psbA* ILN based on its higher sequence divergence was also reflected

within PCA results, as the one which was subjected to group C (Fig. 4). This observation might confirm the important role that the environmental factors, most likely local, may have in shaping the genetic variation in phages.

As it was shown, different cyanobacterial species were subjected to different groups highlighted with the use of PCA analysis (Fig. 4, Table S1). For instance, *Planktothrix agardhii* (average biomass  $15.6 \text{ mg L}^{-1}$ ) was a characteristic-dominant species in group A, *Planktolyngbya limnetica* ( $3.2 \text{ mg L}^{-1}$ ) in group B (Fig. 4), whereas *Aphanizomenon gracile* was the

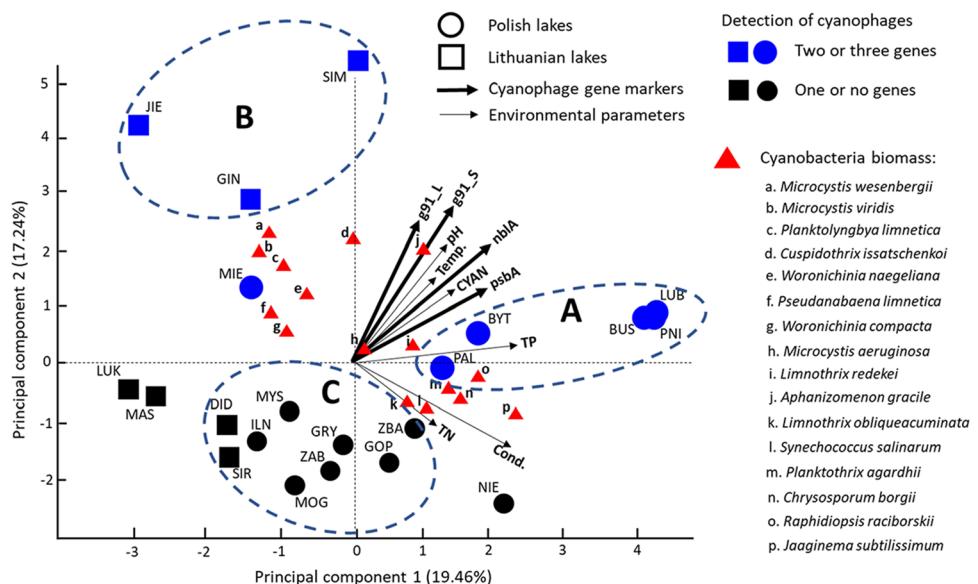


**Fig. 3** Phylogenetic tree and multiple amino acid sequence alignment of psbA gene fragments among different cyanophages

dominant species found in groups A and B with average biomass of  $3.27 \text{ mg L}^{-1}$  and  $3.80 \text{ mg L}^{-1}$ , respectively, and had five times lower biomass in the group C ( $0.64 \text{ mg L}^{-1}$ ) (Fig. 4, Table S1). Observed species differentiation might result from the influence of different physicochemical factors. For example, lakes from group A where *P. agardhii* was a dominant species were positively related to TP which is in line with previous studies that demonstrated domination of this cyanobacterium in hypertrophic lakes with high concentrations of phosphorus

[62, 63]. Also, *A. gracile* is a common dominant species in temperate lakes adapted to various types of environmental and nutritional conditions [64–66]. However, the cyanobacteria composition represented by total biomass was found to rather enhance the cyanophage genes occurrence (Table 2, Table 1S) than single species highlighted within PCA results. It was observed that in the lakes where two–three cyanophage genes were determined, also cyanobacteria biomass was two–three times higher (Table 2, Table 1S).

**Fig. 4** Principal component analysis (PCA) based on environmental–physicochemical variables, diversity, and biomass of cyanobacterial species and cyanophage genes' presence for Polish and Lithuanian lakes



## Conclusions

The research of cyanophages based on the amplification of *psbA*, *nblA*, and *g91* genes confirmed their occurrence in most of the studied lakes. The DNA sequences obtained for each gene showed a high similarity between them. Also, the similarity to their marine *Synechococcus* mycyanophage (*psbA*) and freshwater *Microcystis* mycyanophages (*nblA* and *g91*) counterparts was confirmed. Furthermore, the *psbA* revealed higher diversity, in comparison to the *nblA* and *g91* genes. In consequence, no clear distribution pattern for cyanophages can be detected. The principal component analysis showed that TP and pH could be important environmental parameters differentiating the sampling sites between the lakes and might directly or indirectly (by cyanobacteria) influence the occurrence of cyanophages.

**Supplementary Information** The online version contains supplementary material available at <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00248-021-01783-y>.

**Acknowledgements** The authors sincerely thank Lauren Zielinski from the IHE Delft Institute for Water Education for her help in the edition of the text in the English language.

**Data Accessibility** -DNA sequences: Genbank accessions AB812972.1, AB812972, KF356199.1, KF356199.1, AB231700.1, MH117957.1, MW853973, MW853974, MW853975, MW853976, MW853977, MW853978, MW853979, MW853980, MW853981, MW853982, MW853983, MW853984, MW853985, MW853986, MW853987, MW853988, MW853989, MW853990, MW853991, MW853992, MW853993, MW853994, MW853995, MW853996, MW853997.

## Declarations

**Ethics Approval** The research was done according to ethical standards.

**Conflict of Interest** The authors declare no competing interests.

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**Załącznik 3:** Materiały dodatkowe

**Cyanophage distribution across European lakes of the temperate-humid continental climate zone assessed using PCR-based genetic markers**

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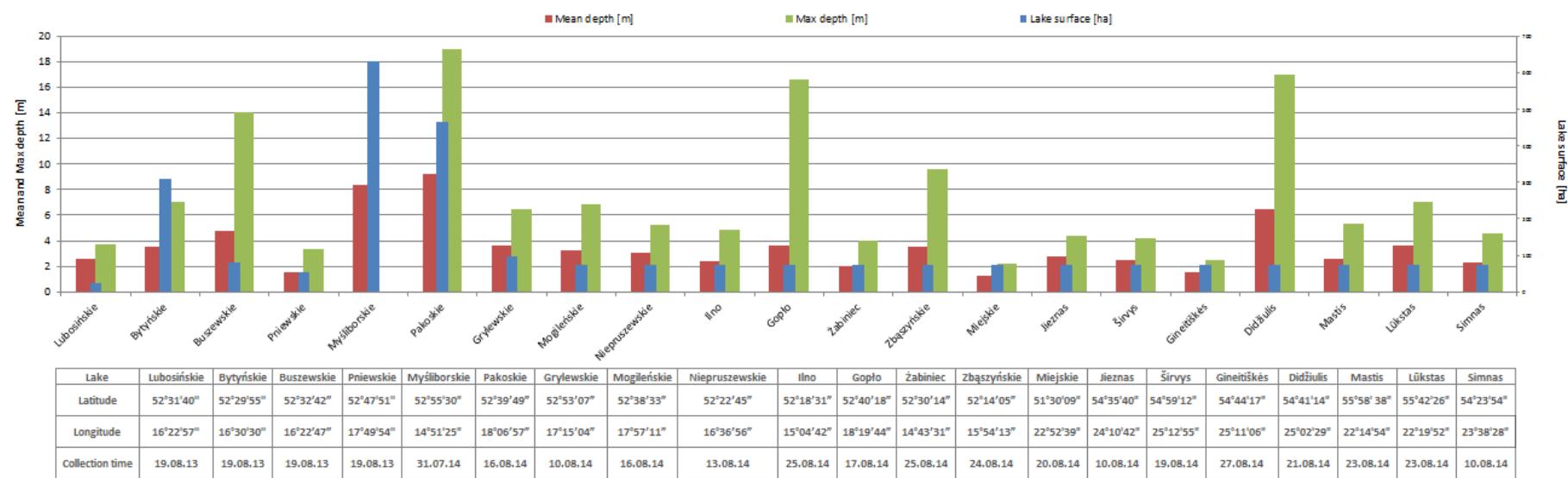
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**Fig. S1** Basic information about investigated site eg. mean and max lakes depth, lakes surface, lakes latitude, lakes longitude, collection time

**Table S1** Physicochemical parameters and cyanobacterial composition in studied lakes.

Country	Lakes	Trophic state	pH	Cond [uS*cm <sup>-1</sup> ]	Tem p [°C]	TN [mg l <sup>-1</sup> ]	TP [mg l <sup>-1</sup> ]	TN:TP ratio	CYAN [mg l <sup>-1</sup> ]	Dominant cyanobacteria and their biomass [mg L <sup>-1</sup> ]*
Poland	LUB	eutrophic	8.81	676.20	23.20	1.55	0.470	3	40.47	<i>Planktothrix agardhii</i> 38.33
	BYT	eutrophic	8.56	729.10	22.60	2.20	0.160	14	2.51	<i>Microcystis aeruginosa</i> 1.35
	BUS	eutrophic	8.78	588.10	23.30	2.29	0.250	9	13.30	<i>Aphanizomenon gracile</i> 5.32, <i>Limnothrix redekei</i> 2.13, <i>Limnothrix</i> sp. 2.20, <i>Planktothrix agardhii</i> 1.85
	PNI	eutrophic	8.65	587.10	23.70	1.96	0.310	6	6.51	<i>Aphanizomenon gracile</i> 2.28, <i>Raphidiopsis raciborskii</i> 1.43, <i>Jaaginema subtilissimum</i> 0.69, <i>Limnothrix redekei</i> 0.91
	MYS	eutrophic	8.50	593.60	25.10	1.70	0.150	11	0.10	<i>Aphanizomenon flos-aquae</i> 0.09
	PAL	eutrophic	9.00	555.60	21.70	1.85	0.160	12	8.25	<i>Planktothrix agardhii</i> 6.81
	GRY	eutrophic	8.50	680.10	27.00	1.05	0.060	18	0.38	<i>Raphidiopsis raciborskii</i> 0.06, <i>Jaaginema subtilissimum</i> 0.14, <i>Synechococcus salinarum</i> 0.15
	MOG	eutrophic	7.40	596.80	21.60	2.45	0.020	123	13.70	<i>Planktothrix agardhii</i> 10.75
	NIE	eutrophic	8.60	681.70	23.60	7.50	0.130	58	2.73	<i>Chrysosporum bergii</i> 0.37, <i>Jaaginema subtilissimum</i> 0.55, <i>Limnothrix vacuolifera</i> 0.83, <i>Planktolyngbya limnetica</i> 0.33
	ILN	eutrophic	8.30	449.20	19.20	1.10	0.130	8	0.04	<i>Jaaginema subtilissimum</i> 0.01, <i>Limnothrix redekei</i> 0.04
	GOP	eutrophic	7.50	537.40	22.30	2.35	0.020	118	13.85	<i>Planktothrix agardhii</i> 8.58, <i>Pseudanabaena limnetica</i> 1.46
	ZAB	eutrophic	8.80	370.20	17.50	3.00	0.240	13	2.93	<i>Dolichospermum lemmermannii</i> 0.42, <i>Dolichospermum planctonicum</i> 0.44, <i>Aphanizomenon gracile</i> 0.81, <i>Microcystis</i> sp. 0.57
	ZBA	eutrophic	9.00	618.50	17.20	2.80	0.060	47	37.48	<i>Planktothrix agardhii</i> 36.35
	MIE	eutrophic	8.70	326.00	21.40	1.50	0.050	30	10.31	<i>Aphanocapsa</i> sp. 1.38, <i>Planktolyngbya limnetica</i> 5.60, <i>Radiocystis geminata</i> 1.10
Lithuania	JIE	hypertrophic	8.53	383.00	27.20	1.66	0.049	34	10.22	<i>Pseudanabaena limnetica</i> 3.80, <i>Planktolyngbya limnetica</i> 3.41, <i>Microcystis viridis</i> 0.89,

									<i>Aphanizomenon gracile</i> 0.63
SIR	hypertrophic	7.81	447.00	20.50	1.28	0.055	23	3.83	<i>Aphanizomenon gracile</i> 0.47, <i>Planktothrix agardhii</i> 1.23, <i>Pseudanabaena limnetica</i> 0.73
GIN	eutrophic	8.61	251.00	16.30	1.62	0.062	26	11,51	<i>Woronichinia naegeliana</i> 2.47, <i>Planktolyngbya limnetica</i> 2.96, <i>Aphanizomenon gracile</i> 3.19
DID	hypertrophic	8.20	397.80	19.70	1.22	0.048	25	5.08	<i>Aphanizomenon kelbanii</i> 0.73, <i>Planktolyngbya</i> sp. 2.27, <i>Pseudanabaena limnetica</i> 0.89
MAS	hypertrophic	8.40	334.00	17.00	1.15	0.160	7	6,13	<i>Snowella</i> sp. 3.26, <i>Woronichinia compacta</i> 1.73
LUK	meso-eutrophic	8.50	276.80	17.00	0.85	0.038	22	2.97	<i>Planktolyngbya limnetica</i> 0.47, <i>Pseudanabaena limnetica</i> 0.89, <i>Woronichinia naegeliana</i> 0.56
SIM	hypertrophic	9.01	326.00	27.80	1.24	0.079	16	27.91	<i>Aphanizomenon gracile</i> 5.99, <i>Cuspidothrix issachenkoi</i> 15.88

pH - water pH, Cond – water conductivity of water, Temp. - water temperature, TN - total nitrogen, TP - total phosphorus, CYAN - total biomass of cyanobacteria; \*dominant cyanobacteria – indicated the strains which constituted 10% of total cyanobacteria biomass

**TABLE S2** Sequences of primers used in presented study

Biotic element	Targeting gene		Primer sequence (5'-3')	Annealing temperature [°C]	Length (together with primer sequences) [bp]	References
Cyanobacteria	Cyanobacteria	16SSF	CGGACGGGTGAGTAACGCGTG	58	258	1
	16S rRNA*	16SSR	CCCATTGCAGAAAATTCCCC			
	<i>Microcystis</i> spp.	209F	ATGTGCCGCGAGGTGAAACCTAAT	51	250	2
	16S rRNA	409R	TTACAATCAAAGACCTTCCTCCC			
Cyanophages	<i>psbA</i>	Pro-psbA-1F	AACATCATYTCWGGTGCWGT	50	740	3
		Pro-psbA-1R	TCGTGCATTACTTCCATACC			
	<i>nblA</i>	nblARTF	GTGAGTGCCATTCTCTGC	55	200-211	4
		nblARTR	TCTTCTTGATGATAGCCGC			
	<i>g91_S</i> **	SheathRTF	ACATCAGCGTTCGTTTCGG	56	132	5
		SheathRTR	CAATCTGGTTAGGTAGGTGCG			
	<i>g91_L</i> ***	g91 DRTPF1	AGYGAGTTYCGCCTTAHTGT	58	206	6
		g91 DRTPR2	GRTGAYTGRCGTACYARRGC			

\* universal 16S rRNA gene sequence for cyanobacteria

\*\* *g91* gene fragment with the lenght of 132 bp\*\*\* *g91* gene fragment with the lenght of 206 bp

**TABLE S3** Content of reagents used per PCR mixtures and description of PCR reaction conditions

Target genes	Cyanobacteria 16S rRNA**	<i>Microcystis</i> spp. 16S rRNA	<i>psbA</i>	<i>nblA</i>	<i>g91_S</i> ***	<i>g91 gene_L</i> ****					
PCR buffer	1x	1x	1x	1x	1x	1x					
MgCl <sub>2</sub>	3 mM	3 mM	3 mM	3 mM	3 mM	3 mM					
Forward primers	0.5 μM	0.5 μM	0.4 μM	0.4 μM	0.25 μM	0.25 μM					
Content of reagents per one gene PCR mixture	Reverse primers	0.5 μM	0.5 μM	0.4 μM	0.25 μM	0.25 μM					
dNTPs	0.2 mM	0.2 mM	0.2 mM	0.2 mM	0.2 mM	0.2 mM					
BSA	0.1 mg ml <sup>-1</sup>	0.1 mg ml <sup>-1</sup>	0.1 mg ml <sup>-1</sup>	0.1 mg ml <sup>-1</sup>	0.1 mg ml <sup>-1</sup>	0.1 mg ml <sup>-1</sup>					
<i>Taq</i> polymerase	1U	1U	0.85 U	0.85 U	1 U	1 U					
Temperature and time division	Temp [°C]	Time*	Temp [°C]	Time*	Temp [°C]	Time*	Temp [°C]	Time*	Temp [°C]	Time*	
Initial denaturation	95	10 min	95	10 min	95	5 min	95	5 min	95	5 min	
PCR steps	Denaturation	94	10 sec <sup>1</sup>	94	10 sec <sup>1</sup>	95	30 sec <sup>2</sup>	95	30 sec <sup>2</sup>	94	30 sec <sup>3</sup>
	Annealing of primers	58	30 sec <sup>1</sup>	51	30 sec <sup>1</sup>	55	30 sec <sup>2</sup>	55	30 sec <sup>2</sup>	56	30 sec <sup>3</sup>
	Strand extension	70	60 sec <sup>1</sup>	70	60 sec <sup>1</sup>	72	45 sec <sup>2</sup>	72	45 sec <sup>2</sup>	72	30 sec <sup>3</sup>
	Final extension	72	10 min	72	10 min	72	5 min	72	5 min	72	10 min

\*min - minutes, sec - seconds

<sup>1</sup> - stage repeated for 26 cycles

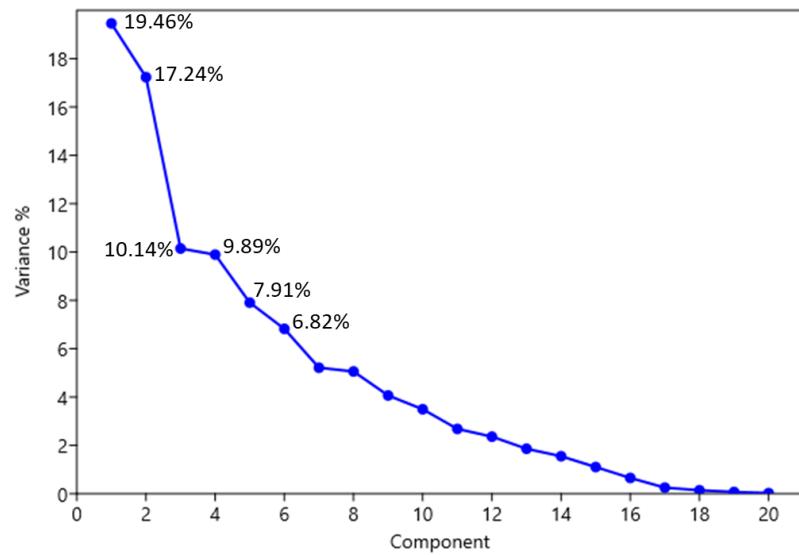
<sup>2</sup> - stage repeated for 34 cycles

<sup>3</sup> - stage repeated for 30 cycles

\*\* universal 16S rRNA gene sequence for cyanobacteria

\*\*\* *g91* gene fragment with the lenght of 132 bp

\*\*\*\* *g91* gene fragment with the lenght of 206 bp



**Fig. S3** Summary of principal components and their total variance (%) to explain the spatial distance (PCA) between 21 Polish and Lithuanian lakes.

**Table S4** Description of PCA scores to plot the spatial distance between 21 Polish and Lithuanian lakes.

Country	Lake	PC 1	PC 2	Grouping
Poland	LUB	4.1856	0.95	A
	BYT	1.7033	0.54	A
	BUS	4.068	0.80	A
	PNI	4.1476	0.82	A
	MYS	-0.88939	-0.85	C
	PAL	1.2041	-0.08	A
	GRY	-0.1574	-1.44	C
	MOG	-0.83694	-2.21	C
	NIE	2.0785	-2.49	
	ILN	-1.3378	-1.38	C
	GOP	0.48175	-1.76	C
	ZAB	-0.34285	-1.93	C
Lithuania	ZBA	0.8285	-1.16	C
	MIE	-1.4343	1.37	
	JIE	-2.9652	4.28	B
	SIR	-1.7371	-1.69	C
	GIN	-1.4177	2.85	B
	DID	-1.7745	-1.08	C
	MAS	-2.7993	-0.60	
	LUK	-3.1655	-0.46	
	SIM	0.16068	5.50	B

**Table S5** Description of PCA loadings (Pearson correlation  $r$ ) for the different environmental variables used to explain the spatial distancing between 21 Polish and Lithuanian lakes.

Parameter	Variable	PC 1	PC 2
Environmental factors	pH	0.32826	0.46672
	Conductivity (Cond.)	0.69807	-0.38933
	Temperature (Temp.)	0.32198	0.37879
	TN	0.37191	-0.33512
	TP	0.71194	0.057194
	Cyanobacterial Biomass (CYAN)	0.38034	0.35261
Cyanophage genes	<i>psbA</i>	0.51564	0.311
	<i>nblA</i>	0.56362	0.60583
	<i>g91_S</i>	0.4231	0.79374
	<i>g91_L</i>	0.22663	0.68897
Cyanobacterial biomass	<i>Chrysosporum bergii</i>	0.49199	-0.062073
	<i>Aphanizomenon gracile</i>	0.33695	0.62544
	<i>Cuspidothrix issatschenkoi</i>	0.0082554	0.60458
	<i>Raphidiopsis raciborskii</i>	0.62532	-0.04905
	<i>Jaaginema subtilissimum</i>	0.8514	-0.18826
	<i>Limnothrix obliqueacuminata</i>	0.36197	-0.24887
	<i>Limnothrix redekei</i>	0.38151	0.071305
	<i>Microcystis aeruginosa</i>	0.071168	0.1485
	<i>Microcystis viridis</i>	-0.39936	0.50322
	<i>Microcystis wesenbergii</i>	-0.36868	0.71944
	<i>Planktolyngbya limnetica</i>	-0.32491	0.47156
	<i>Planktothrix agardhii</i>	0.39348	-0.095758
	<i>Pseudanabaena limnetica</i>	-0.41471	0.28758
	<i>Synechococcus salinarum</i>	0.35222	-0.23102
	<i>Woronichinia compacta</i>	-0.30411	0.17423
	<i>Woronichinia naegeliana</i>	-0.244	0.32206

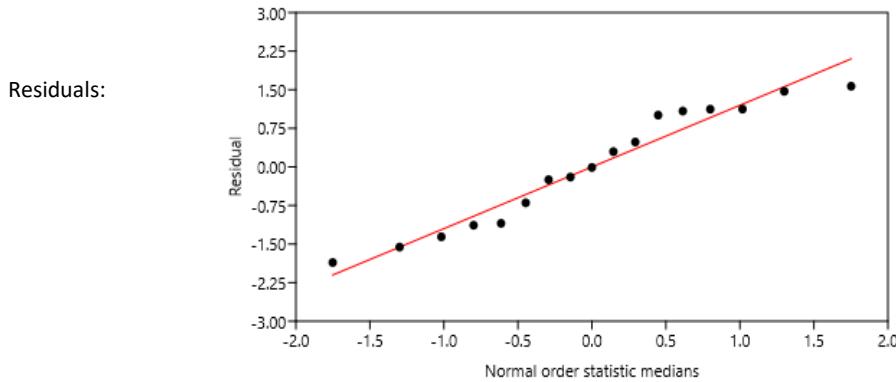
**Table S6** Description of statistical analysis for the PC1

**1) Test for equal means**

	Sum of sqrs	df	Mean square	F	p (same)
Between groups:	54.8415	2	27.4208	18.77	1.09E-04
Within groups:	20.4513	14	1.4608		Permutation p (n=99999)
Total:	75.2928	16	0.00059		

**2) Levene's test for homogeneity of variance, from means**

p (same): 0.2119 Samples are normally distributed



**3) Tukey's test**

	Group A	Group B	Group C
Group A		4.76E-04	2.20E-04
Group B	7.16		0.618
Group C	7.767	1.346	

Group A is significantly different from B and C

Significance  $p < 0.05$  is highlighted in red.

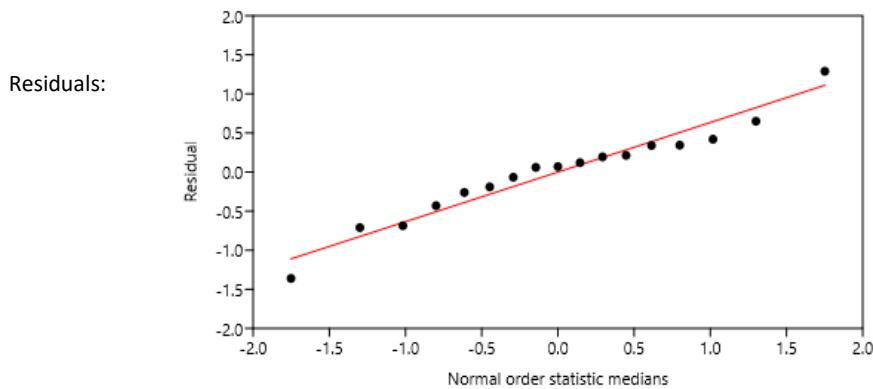
**Table S7** Description of statistical analysis for the PC2

**1) Test for equal means**

	Sum of sqrs	df	Mean square	F	p (same)
Between groups:	74.984	2	37.492	91.76	8.99E-09
Within groups:	5.72052	14	0.408609		Permutation p (n=99999)
Total:	80.7046	16	1.00E-05		

**2) Levene's test for homogeneity of variance, from means**

p (same): 0.06219       $p > 0.05$ , then data is normally distributed



**3) Tukey's test**

	Group A	Group B	Group C
Group A		5.83E-06	1.06E-04
Group B	10.92		6.41E-09
Group C	8.353	18.95	

All groups are different between each other

Significance  $p < 0.05$  is highlighted in red.

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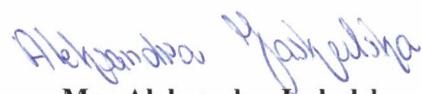
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**Załącznik 4:** Jaskulska, A., Nájera, A.F., Czarny P., Serwecińska, L., Mankiewicz-Boczek, J. 2021. Daily dynamic of transcripts abundance of Ma-LMM01-like cyanophages in two lowland European reservoirs. Ecohydrology & Hydrobiology

Łódź, 24.08.2021

**Oświadczenie o współautorstwie**

Oświadczam, że mój wkład w przygotowanie oryginalnej pracy polegał na:  
zaproponowaniu głównej koncepcji planu badań oraz planu manuskryptu, poborze materiału do badań,  
wykonaniu niezbędnych analiz genetycznych, przygotowaniu ostatecznej wersji manuskryptu.  
Swój udział w przygotowaniu pracy oceniam na 55%.

  
**Mgr Aleksandra Jaskulska**

Katedra UNESCO Ekohydrologii  
i Ekologii Stosowanej

Oświadczam, że mój wkład w przygotowanie oryginalnej pracy polegał na:  
pomocy przy wykonaniu niezbędnych analiz genetycznych, pomocy w przygotowaniu manuskryptu.  
Swój udział w przygotowaniu pracy oceniam na 10%.



**Mgr Arnoldo Font Nájera**

Katedra UNESCO Ekohydrologii  
i Ekologii Stosowanej

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pomocy przy wykonaniu niezbędnych analiz genetycznych, pomocy w przygotowaniu manuskryptu.  
Swój udział w przygotowaniu pracy oceniam na 10%.

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*dr n. biol. Piotr Czarny*

**Dr Piotr Czarny**

Uniwersytet Medyczny w Łodzi

Oświadczam, że mój wkład w przygotowanie oryginalnej pracy polegał na:  
pomocy w przygotowaniu manuskryptu.  
Swój udział w przygotowaniu pracy oceniam na 5%.

**Dr Liliana Serwecińska**

Europejskie Regionalne Centrum Ekohydrologii  
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Oświadczam, że mój wkład w przygotowanie oryginalnej pracy polegał na:  
współtworzeniu koncepcji planu badań oraz planu manuskryptu, pomocy w interpretacji wyników  
badań, a także dalszej pomocy w przygotowaniu manuskryptu.  
Swój udział w przygotowaniu pracy oceniam na 20%.

**Prof. dr hab. Joanna Mankiewicz-Boczek**

Europejskie Regionalne Centrum Ekohydrologii  
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## Short Communication

## Daily dynamic of transcripts abundance of Ma-LMM01-like cyanophages in two lowland European reservoirs

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## ARTICLE INFO

## Article history:

Received 28 April 2021

Revised 29 June 2021

Accepted 6 July 2021

Available online xxx

## Keywords:

16S rRNA

*Microcystis*

Cyanobacteria

g91

Cyanophages

## ABSTRACT

The light-dark cycle seems to influence the infection pattern of cyanophages. This may be related to their dependence on the photosynthetic process of their hosts - cyanobacteria. The present study examined the daily occurrence dynamic of *Microcystis* with the use of the 16S rRNA gene and the Ma-LMM01-like cyanophages with the use of the g91 gene in Jeziorsko and Sulejow reservoirs (Poland). Also, the daily expression pattern of mentioned cyanophages' gene was investigated. The daily dynamic of cyanophage was mainly associated with *Microcystis* occurrence. However, the g91 transcription exhibited greater activity during daylight and lowered within nighttime in both water bodies. The maximum transcription was found at 4:00 PM in Jeziorsko and 12:00 PM in Sulejow reservoirs. Additionally, the g91 gene fragments shared a high level of similarity with *Microcystis* specific cyanophages Ma-LMM01 and MaMV-DC strains.

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## 1. Introduction

Cyanophages, as *Cyanoporkaryota* (cyanobacterial) viruses, can directly or indirectly affect mortality, the composition, and the evolution of their host (Morimoto et al., 2020; de Oliveira Santos, 2021). It was reported that *Microcystis* spp. can be permanently loaded with viral infections (Yoshida et al., 2010; Xia et al., 2013; Mankiewicz-Boczek et al., 2016). Moreover, cyanophages that lyse toxigenic genotypes of *Microcystis* spp. can cause

the release of the toxic metabolites into the environment what might harmful for water organism and people (Suttle, 2005; Jassim and Limoges, 2013; Chorus and Welker, 2021). The above-mentioned process was observed in Toledo (Ohio), where microcystin contamination ( $>1\mu\text{g L}^{-1}$ ) of drinking water was noticed after lysis of *Microcystis* toxic strains by Ma-LMM01-like cyanophages in Lake Erie (Steffen et al. 2017). In cases such as the above, it is essential to increase the knowledge of the interactions between organisms, taking into account the role of viruses, and abiotic parameters. The ecohydrological approach using the understanding of relationships between hydrological and biological processes in aquatic ecosystems, goes out towards the above-mentioned problem (Zalewski et al., 1997; Zalewski and Robarts, 2003). Within its framework, innovative system solutions are sought to prevent and counteract complex environmental threats. However, the first step in developing solutions based on natural pro-

Abbreviations: g91, the sheath protein encoding gene; *rpoB*, the RNA polymerase subunit encoding gene.

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecohyd.2021.07.003>

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cesses is to understand the interactions between organisms at the molecular level (Zalewski, 2000; Zalewski and Robarts, 2003). Our previous study has identified and monitored the cyanophages' dynamics specific to *Microcystis* spp. during the summer seasons 2009–2013 in a eutrophic Polish lowland reservoir (Mankiewicz-Boczek et al., 2016). Cyanophages from the *Myoviridae* family have co-occurred with *Microcystis* spp., and a correlation between their occurrence was observed. In the mentioned study, the structural gene of *g91* encoding the viral sheath protein was used as a marker of cyanophages from the *Myoviridae* family specific to cyanobacteria of the *Microcystis* genus. The sequence of the tested structural gene is considered as a marker of the viral lytic cycle, and it was obtained from the genome sequence known as 'Ma-LMM01-type' cyanophage, which is based on genomes of Ma-LMM01 cyanophage and homologous to other cyanophages obtained from the freshwater sources in East Asia (Japan) (Mankiewicz-Boczek et al., 2016; Yoshida et al., 2006; Takashima et al., 2007; Yoshida et al., 2008; Stough et al., 2017). The life processes of cyanobacteria, as photosynthetic organisms, depend on a daily cycle (Straub et al., 2011). The photosynthesis process is indispensable for the function of cyanobacterial cells as it serves as their main source of ATP and NADPH, as well is needed for the acquisition of organic compounds, carbon dioxide and other mineral substances (Thomson et al., 2016). According to Sought et al. (2017) analyzes, the transcription pattern of some genes involved in the oxygenic photosynthesis process depends on the daylight. Due to the fact that the host-derived genes have been found in cyanophages, it is thought that they can use the diurnal behavior of their hosts to multiply descendant phages (Ni and Zeng, 2016). In the case of Ma-LMM01-like cyanophages, specific to the *Microcystis* genus, the diel cycle into the natural host population was shown only in Hirosawanoike Pond in Japan (Kimura et al., 2012). According to available literature, there is a lack of such information from other geographic locations. Thus, the present study attempts to determine the evidence of cyanophages' diurnal presence and transcriptional rhythm from two lowland reservoirs from Central Europe (Poland) for better understanding cyanophage-cyanobacteria dependences. Towards this aim, we analyzed the daily occurrence dynamics of *Microcystis* spp. with the use of 16S rRNA gene, the Ma-LMM01-like cyanophages diurnal presence in the *Microcystis* cells with the use of *g91* gene, and the daily relative For transcript abundance of cyanophage *g91* gene within a natural host cell population, during the day/night summer periods in 2016 in the Jeziorsko and Sulejow reservoirs. Additionally, the homology of the *g91* gene was compared to its counterparts using the GenBank database, and the most dominant genus of cyanobacteria was identified using the *rpoB* gene.

## 2. Material and Methods

Jeziorsko (JE) ( $51^{\circ}47'13''N$ ;  $18^{\circ}39'30''E$ ) and Sulejow (SU) ( $51^{\circ}26'00''N$ ;  $19^{\circ}55'25''E$ ) are lowland dam reservoirs situated in central Poland (Fig. 1), water bloom is observed every summer, with the occurrence of *Microcystis* spp.

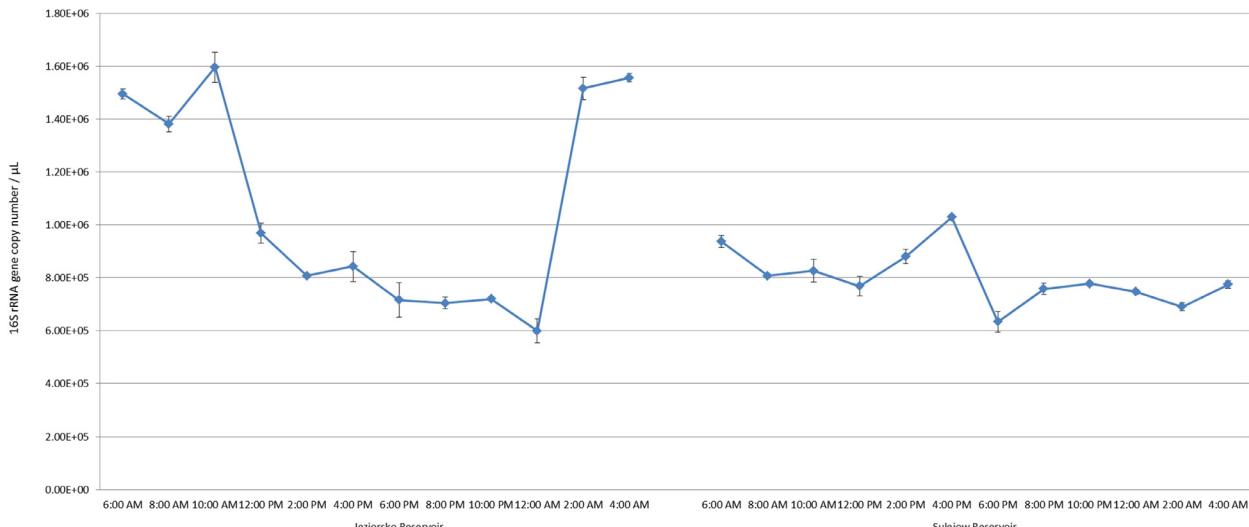
and *Aphanizomenon* spp. (Mankiewicz-Boczek et al., 2011, 2016; Gała et al., 2012; Jaskulska and Mankiewicz-Boczek, 2019). The monitoring points in each reservoir were situated in part from the dam side, while all samples were taken from surface water (0 - 0.5 m) (Fig. 1). Samples for nucleic acid extraction were taken every two hours during a diel cycle in August 2016. For RNA analysis, filters were protected against RNases with the StayRNA Buffer (A&A Biotechnology) and stored at  $-80^{\circ}C$ . The filters for DNA analysis were placed into lysis buffer and immediately frozen ( $-20^{\circ}C$ ). DNA was isolated according to Giovannoni et al. (1990) with minor changes described by Mankiewicz-Boczek et al. (2006). The genes fragments of 16S rRNA, *rpoB*, and *g91* were amplified with pair of primers 209F: 5'-ATGTGCCGCGAGGTGAAACCTAAT-3', 409R: 5'-TTACAATCAAAGACCTTCCTCCC-3' for 16S rRNA (Neilan et al., 1997); *rpoBF*: 5'-GTAGTTGTARCCNTCCCA-3', *rpoBR*: 5'-RCMCMGACGAAGAACG-3' for *rpoB* (Rajaniemi et al., 2005) and *sheathRTF*: 5'-ACATCAGCGTTCGTTCCG-3', *sheathRTR*: 5'-CAATCTGGTTAGGTAGGTCTG-3' for *g91* (Takashima et al., 2007). The most dominant genus of cyanobacteria was identified with the *rpoB* gene because it has been shown to be a reliable gene marker that provides better resolution for their differentiation (Gaget et al., 2011). The acquired forward sequences of the *rpoB* and *g91* genes fragments were corrected by reverse complementation and shortened by clipping the primer sequences with the use of a BioEdit Sequence Alignment Editor (version 7.2.5). A neighbor-joining phylogenetic tree was constructed for the gene *g91* with the MEGAX software ([www.megasoftware.net](http://www.megasoftware.net)). For transcript, the abundance of *g91* material was extracted from filters according to Christiansen and Kurn Mayer (2017), with the use of Tri Reagent (Sigma Aldrich). DNA residues were removed with the use of DNase I AMPD1-1KT Amplification Grade (Sigma Aldrich). Following this, total RNA content was reverse transcribed into cDNA with TranscriptMe (Blirt) as instructed by the producer. The number of transcripts and genes copies studied were analyzed by real-time PCR, according to the protocol Mankiewicz-Boczek et al. (2016) and Nolan et al. (2006). According to Pinto et al. (2012), the cyanobacterial 16S rRNA gene was chosen to normalize the raw expression levels of cyanophage transcripts within the host cells. Based on the protocol described by Yoshida et al. (2010), the relative number of the Ma-LMM01-like cyanophages *g91* mRNA was determined by dividing the amounts of mentioned transcript copies by the quantities of *Microcystis* 16S rRNA transcript copies.

## 3. Results and Discussion

The presence of the *Microcystis* genus represented by the 16S rRNA gene was confirmed during diurnal monitoring in both reservoirs (Fig. 2). The value of the 16S rRNA gene copy number ranged from  $5.99E+05$  to  $1.60E+06$  in JE and from  $6.34E+05$  to  $1.03E+06$  in SU. In the case of JE, the highest value was shown in the morning (6:00–10:00 AM) and late-night (02:00–4:00 AM) time, when it ranged from  $1.38E+06$  to  $1.60E+06$ . For SU, the highest values were found in the morning (6:00 AM) and af-



**Fig. 1.** Jeziorsko and Sulejow reservoirs location; sampling points were marked with black dots.

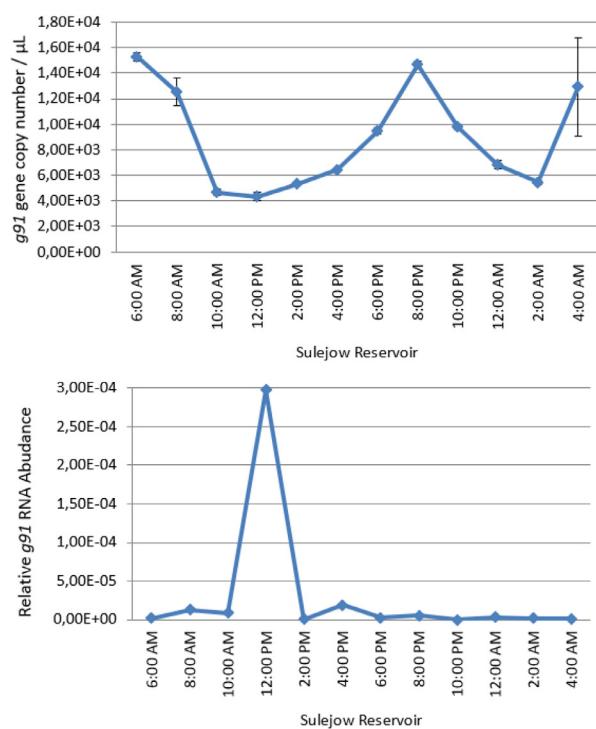
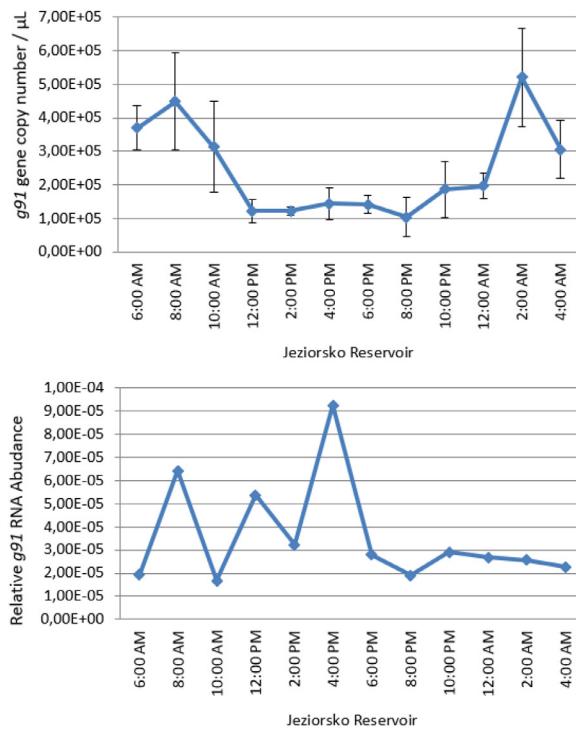


**Fig. 2.** The population dynamics of the genus *Microcystis* (16S rRNA gene fragment) in Jeziorsko (left-side figure) and Sulejow (right-side figure) reservoirs during the diurnal cycle in August 2016.

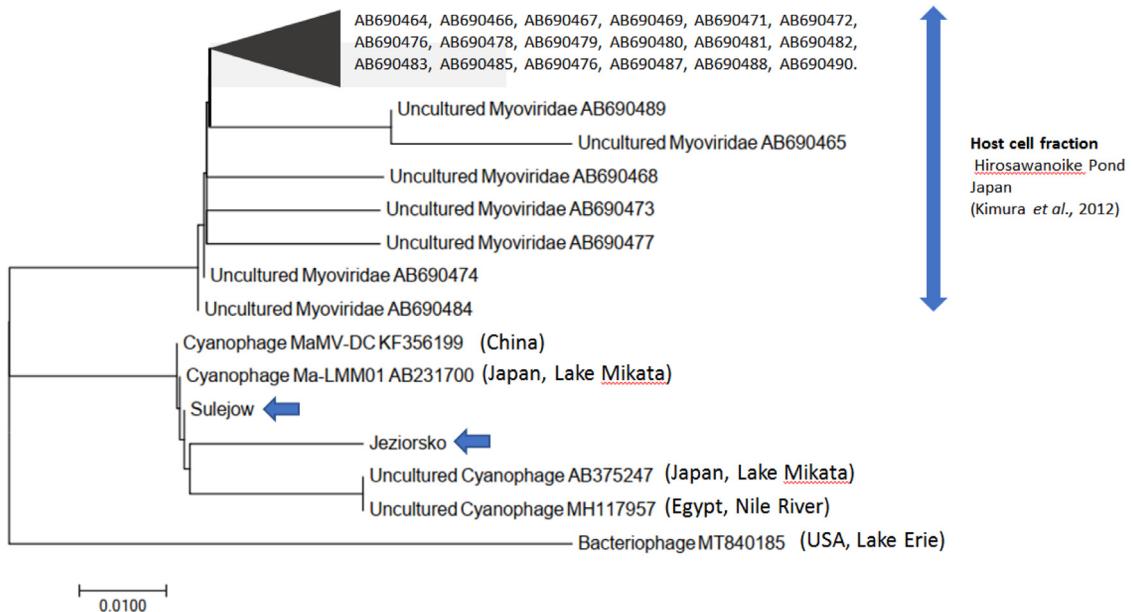
ternoon (2:00-4:00 PM) hours in the gene copy number between 8.80E+05 and 1.03E+06 (Fig. 2). The daily dynamics of *Microcystis* spp. occurrence represented by 16S rRNA gene copy number were found to have various patterns depending on the reservoir, which could be explained, inter alia, by the different genera dominance in studied days. The analyzes of *rpoB* nucleotide sequences (accession numbers: MZ429428, MZ429429, MZ429430) showed that *Microcystis* spp. and *Aphanizomenon* spp. co-dominated in JE, while the *Microcystis* genus was

the dominant group in SU (Table S1, supplementary materials).

Based on the fact that the *g91* gene fragment was detected in all analyzed samples, it can be assumed that cyanophages were present in host cells during the studied days. The value of the *g91* gene copy ranged between 1.04E+05 - 5.21E+05 and 4.35E+03 - 1.53E+04 in JE and SU, respectively. The highest values were observed in the morning (6:00 - 10:00 AM) and late-night (2:00 - 4:00 AM) on the level between 3.04E+05 - 5.21E+05 in JE. The



**Fig. 3.** The occurrence dynamic of cyanophages based on *g91* gene fragments (the upper graphs) and the transcription dynamic (bottom charts) based on *g91* genes transcripts normalized with the use of 16S rRNA *Microcystis* transcripts (i.e., *g91*/16S) based on  $\mu\text{L}^{-1}$  of cDNA material in Jeziorsko (left-side figure) and Sulejow (right-side figure) reservoirs during the diurnal cycle in August 2016.



**Fig. 4.** Neighbour-joining phylogenetic tree construction based on the sequence of *g91* gene. Genbank accession numbers are given. The bar under the graph represents the nucleotide substitutions per position.

three peaks of the *g91* gene copy number were found in SU, ranging between 9.48E+03 - 1.53E+04. The first one was in the morning (6:00 - 10:00 AM), the second one was in the evening (6:00 PM - 10:00 PM), and the last peak was at 4:00 AM. The analyzed transcripts also were found

to be presented throughout the entire investigated sampling period. During the JE daily period, the relative *g91* transcript abundance ranged between 1.67E-05 to 9.26E-05, while in SU, it was between 5.79E-08 to 2.98E-04. A similar time of increase in *g91* transcription, which oc-

curred from morning till afternoon at 08:00 AM, 12:00 PM, and 04:00 PM, was found in both reservoirs. For JE, the highest peak was at 04:00 PM, and 12:00 PM for SU. In the late afternoon and night hours, the transcription was low (Fig. 3.).

We observed some differences in the presented abundance dynamics of analyzed gene fragments between both reservoirs. Precisely, only in the case of JE, the present dynamics of *Microcystis* 16S rRNA was significantly convergent (Spearman's Rho;  $r_s = 0.63636$ ,  $p$  (2-tailed) = 0.0261) with cyanophage g91 DNA. As well there were observed the highest copies amount of this cyanophage gene during morning and late-night hours. In SU, an increase in the g91 copies amount was found additionally during afternoon time, after the appearance of a higher 16S rRNA gene copy number. It might be suspected that the increase in the amount of g91 cyanophage copies was related to the accumulation of *Microcystis* spp. near the surface due to vertical migration. Such a situation was observed during night time by Kimura et al. (2012) within its second investigated diurnal period. Kimura et al. stated that the increase in g91 DNA copy number was rather related to mentioned *Microcystis* spp. accumulation. Despite the observed differences between daily dynamics occurrence of *Microcystis* spp. and cyanophage in JE and SU, it was found that the cyanophage g91 transcription pattern in host cell from both studied reservoirs was similar. It exhibited greater activity during daylight and lower within the night time and thus also reflected the transcription results presented by Kimura et al. (2012). It can be assumed that the result from JE and SU confirmed the possibility of a daily trend for cyanophages infection, which may indicate the important role of the light cycle in mentioned process.

Additionally, the g91 gene fragments from both reservoirs were compared with their counterparts obtained from the GenBank database (Fig. 4, Fig. S1 and Fig. S2 from supplementary materials). The JE and SU nucleotide sequences (accession numbers: MZ429431, MZ429432, respectively) clustered in one group with Ma-LMM01 from Lake Mikata (Japan), MaMV-DC from China reservoir, and with an uncultured cyanophage from the Nile River (Egypt). The g91 sequences described by Kimura et al. (2012) - Hirosawanoike Pond (Japan) - and the Lake Erie (USA) created two separate groups, which appeared to be distinct from those of JE and SU (Fig. 4). These differences were most likely a result of point mutations that have happened through the co-evolution history with the host strain that occurs locally (Morimoto et al., 2020).

## Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank prof. dr hab. Tomasz Śliwiński for valuable advice on the methodology of genetic research and dr Sebastian Ratajski for help in the field sampling. The authors are also grateful to the Laboratory of Microscopic Imaging and Specialist Biological Tech-

niques (Faculty of Biology and Environmental Protection, University of Łódź) for providing equipment to carry out part of the analysis.

## Funding

This study was partially supported by the National Science Centre of Poland, project no. UMO-2013/11/N/NZB/00607 "Ecological dynamics of cyanophages and their host in Polish water bodies".

## Data Accessibility

DNA sequences: GenBank accessions MZ429428, MZ429429, MZ429430, MZ429431, MZ429432

## Availability of data and material

The data generated or analyzed during this study are included in this article.

## Supplementary materials

Supplementary material associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at doi:[10.1016/j.ecohyd.2021.07.003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecohyd.2021.07.003).

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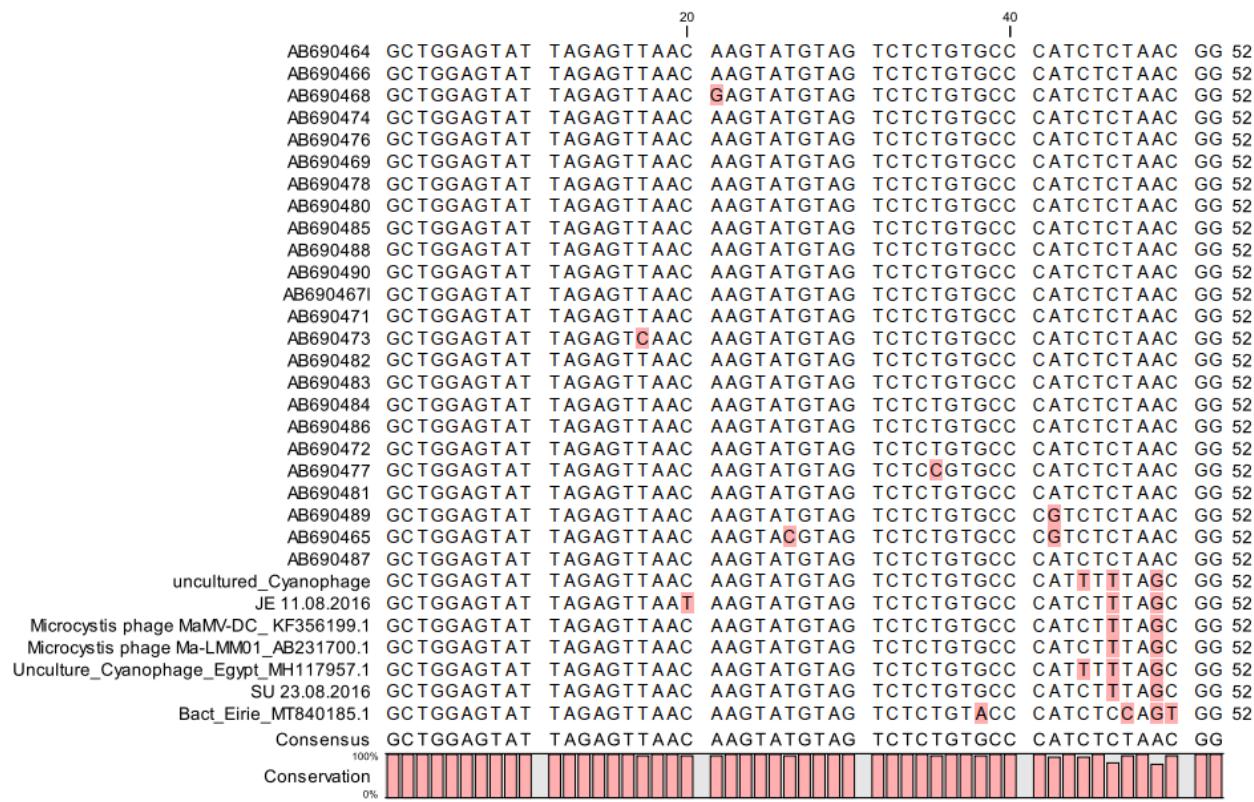
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**Załącznik 4:** Materiały dodatkowe

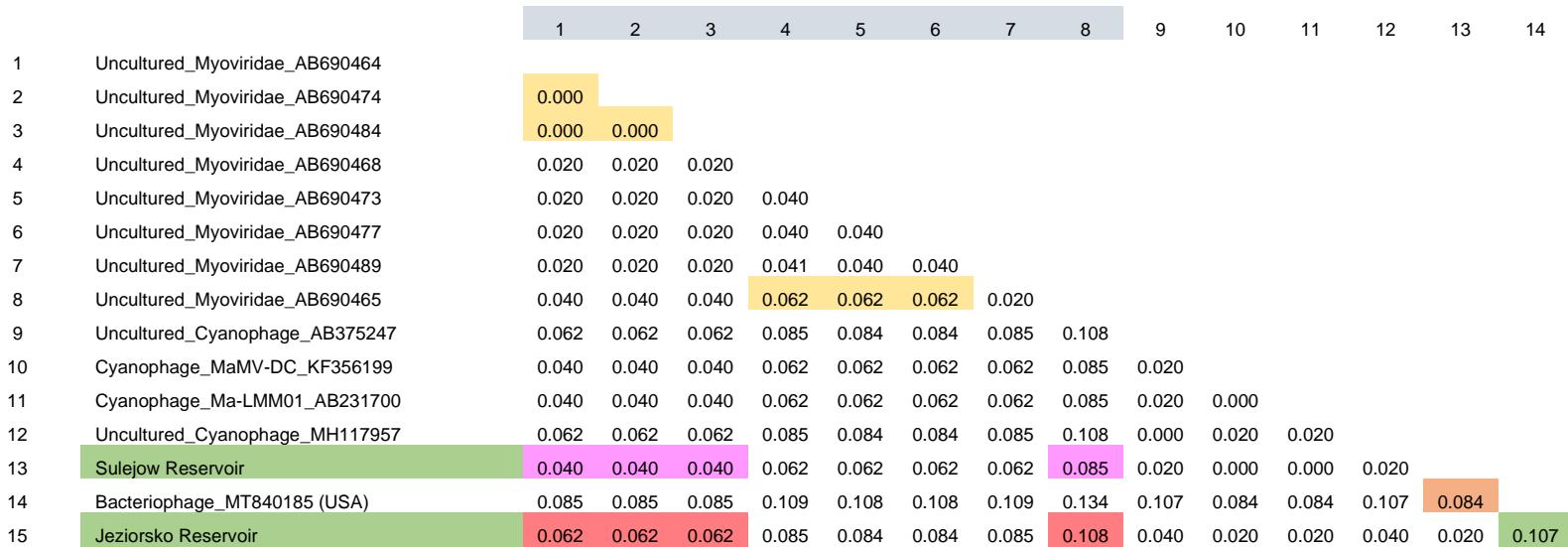
**Table S1.** The similarity of *rpoB* gene nucleotide sequences from this study to their counterparts in the GenBank database.

Sample no	Reservoir	GenBank accessions	Assigned organism	Query cover [%]	Identity [%]
1	Jeziorsko*	MZ429428	<i>Microcystis aeruginosa</i> (CP046058.1)	100	98.31
		MZ429429	<i>Aphanizomenon flos-aquae</i> (MT453463.1)	100	99.62
2	Sulejow	MZ429430	<i>Microcystis aeruginosa</i> (CP046058.1)	100	98.64

\* The product obtained from Jeziorsko divided into 2 fractions on an electrophoresis gel. Both were sequenced.



**Fig. S1.** Alignment of the *g91* gene nucleotide sequences from Jeziorsko (MZ429431) and Sulejow (MZ429432) reservoirs, and the GenBank database. Nucleotide substitutions are marked in red.



**Fig. S2.** Pairwise distance matrix based on *g91* gene nucleotide sequences from Jeziorsko (MZ429431) and Sulejow (MZ429432) reservoirs, and the GenBank database.

## **IX. Streszczenie**

Sinice (cyjanobakterie) to grupa organizmów prokariotycznych, które istnieją najprawdopodobniej od ponad 3,5 miliarda lat. W tym czasie wykształciły liczne mechanizmy adaptacyjne pozwalające im zasiedlać skrajnie różne ekosystemy wodne oraz dające im przewagę konkurencyjną nad innymi organizmami eukariotycznymi wchodzącyymi w skład fitoplanktonu. W świetle zmian klimatycznych sprzyjających globalnemu ocieplieniu, wraz ze wzrostem ilości zanieczyszczeń biogennych pochodzenia antropogenicznego oraz wzrostem emisji CO<sub>2</sub> – zwiększa się również udział cyjanobakterii w powierzchniowych zakwitach wody. Tym samym sinice wpływają na intensyfikację problemu eutrofizacji wód słono- oraz słodkowodnych. Ponadto ich zdolność do wytwarzania toksycznych metabolitów wtórnego – cyjanotosyn stanowi poważne zagrożenie dla ekosystemów wodnych oraz człowieka.

Biologicznie czynnymi częstotliwościami, zdolnymi do infekcji sinic są wirusy – cyjanofagi. Uważa się, że są one ważnym czynnikiem determinującym różnorodność genetyczną oraz rozwój populacji cyjanobakterii. Ponadto, cyjanofagi poprzez proces degradacji komórek swoich gospodarzy mogą odgrywać ważną rolę w cyklu biogeochemicznym środowiska wodnego. Pierwsze doniesienia na temat cyjanofagów pochodzą już z lat 60. Jednakże, mimo kilkudziesięciu lat badań nad tymi wirusami, najwięcej informacji na ich temat udało się zgromadzić na podstawie badań prowadzonych dla środowiska słonowodnego, które jest o wiele bardziej homogeniczne niż zróżnicowane ekosystemy słodkowodne. Dotychczasowe badania filogenetyczne słodkowodnych wirusów sinicowych wykazały, że różnią się one zarówno ewolucyjnie jak i genetycznie od swoich morskich odpowiedników. Jednym z narzędzi wykorzystywanych do detekcji, identyfikacji, analiz ilościowych i filogenetycznych cyjanofagów są tzw. markery molekularne tj. specyficzne dla nich geny - wśród nich można wyróżnić pomocnicze geny metaboliczne np.: *psbA* i *nblA* oraz geny strukturalne tak jak gen *g91*.

W związku z powyższym przedstawiona praca doktorska miała na celu analizę jakościową i ilościową występowania słodkowodnych cyjanofagów oraz sinic (z uwzględnieniem ich genotypów toksynogennych odpowiedzialnych za produkcję mikrocystyn) w Zbiorniku Sulejowskim oraz Zbiorniku Jeziorsko przy użyciu wybranych genów markerowych, w tym analizę wpływu parametrów fizyko-chemicznych i hydrologicznych badanych zbiorników. Ponadto przeprowadzono ocenę obecności cyjanofagów w wodach polskich i litewskich (geny: *psbA*, *nblA* oraz gen *g91*), z uwzględnieniem wpływu takich parametrów biotycznych i abiotycznych jak

struktura gatunkowa i biomasa sinic, podstawowe parametry fizyko-chemiczne wody oraz dystans geograficzny. Przeanalizowano także aktywność transkrypcji cyjanofagów specyficznych względem sinic z rodzaju *Microcystis* w cyklu dobowym z udziałem genu *g91* (cyjanofagi) oraz genu 16S rRNA (sinice) w Zbiorniku Jeziorsko i Zbiorniku Sulejowskim.

Pozyskane wyniki wykazały, iż cyjanofagi, specyficzne m.in. względem sinic z rodzaju *Microcystis* oraz sinic z rodzaju *Synechococcus* były obecne w badanych, po raz pierwszy pod tym kątem, słodkowodnych jeziorach Polski oraz Litwy. Zostało to również potwierdzone na podstawie znacznego podobieństwa fragmentów genów fagów: *psbA* i *nblA* oraz *g91*, dostępnych w bazie GenBank. Z kolei podczas kilkuletnich analiz sezonowej dynamiki występowania cyjanofagów, infekujących sinice z rodzaju *Microcystis* (z uwzględnieniem ich genotypów toksynogennych), wykazano, że pojawiały się one równocześnie lub po pojawieniu się sinic i w większości monitorowanych okresów – współwystępowały ze swoimi gospodarzami w zbiornikach Sulejowskim oraz Jeziorsko. Jednakże, w powyższych badaniach zaobserwowano również zjawisko o charakterze „killing the winner”, podczas których to okresów następowało załamanie dynamiki występowania sinic tworzących zakwit – ich nagły spadek, połączony z szybkim wzrostem ilości cyjanofagów. W przypadku analizy wpływu parametrów biotycznych oraz abiotycznych na występowanie cyjanofagów wykazano, że:

1. Całkowity skład sinic wyrażony poprzez ich biomasę korzystnie wpływał na zwiększenie wykrywalności cyjanofagów;
2. Czynniki fizyko-chemiczne takie jak: TP, konduktowność i pH były ważnymi parametrami środowiskowymi różnicującymi jeziora Polski oraz Litwy, które mogły bezpośrednio lub pośrednio (poprzez gospodarza - sinice) wpływać na występowanie cyjanofagów;
3. Dodatkowo wpływ hydrologii monitorowanych zbiorników zaporowych - zwiększyły czas retencji wody, sprzyjały wzrostowi infekcji fagowych względem sinic z rodzaju *Microcystis*.

Natomiast, biorąc pod uwagę monitoring dobowych zmian w dynamice występowania sinic z rodzaju *Microcystis* i swoistych dla nich cyjanofagów, na podstawie analizy zmian ilościowych transkryptu genu *g91* cyjanofagów w ciągu doby, zaobserwowano, że proces transkrypcji przebiegał intensywniej w godzinach dziennych (08:00-16:00), co sugeruje, że cykl światła wpływa pośrednio lub bezpośrednio na replikację wirusową w komórkach ich gospodarza.

## X. Abstract

Cyanobacteria are a group of prokaryotic organisms that have probably existed for more than 3.5 billion years. During this time, they have developed numerous adaptive mechanisms that allow them to inhabit extremely diverse aquatic ecosystems and give them a competitive advantage over other eukaryotic organisms of phytoplankton. Due to climatic changes favoring global warming, the increase of biotic pollutants of anthropogenic origin, and CO<sub>2</sub> emission, cyanobacteria's contribution to surface water blooms is also increasing. Thus, cyanobacteria impact the problem of saltwater and freshwater eutrophication. Moreover, their ability to produce toxic secondary metabolites (cyanotoxins) poses a severe threat to aquatic ecosystems and humans.

Cyanophages (viruses) are biologically active particles capable of infecting cyanobacteria. They are considered to be an essential factor determining the genetic diversity and development of cyanobacterial populations. Moreover, through the process of degradation of their host cells, cyanophages may play an important role in the biogeochemical cycle of the aquatic environment. The first reports on cyanophages date back to the 1960s. However, despite decades of research on these viruses, most information has been gathered from studies conducted for saltwater environments, which are much more homogeneous than diverse freshwater ecosystems. Previous phylogenetic analyses of freshwater cyanobacterial viruses have shown that they differ evolutionarily and genetically from their marine counterparts. One of the tools used for detection, identification, and quantitative and phylogenetic analyses of cyanophages are so-called molecular markers (genes specific for them). Among these genes, we can distinguish auxiliary metabolic genes such as: *psbA* and *nblA* as well as structural genes such as *g91* gene.

Given the above, the presented thesis aimed to provide the qualitative and quantitative analyses of the occurrence of freshwater cyanophages and cyanobacteria (including their toxigenic genotypes responsible for the production of microcystins) in Sulejow and Jeziorsko reservoirs. The above-mentioned analysis was made the use of the selected marker genes. Additionally, the influence of physicochemical and hydrological parameters of the studied reservoirs was also investigated.

Moreover, the presence of cyanophages in Polish and Lithuanian waters (genes: *psbA*, *nblA*, and *g91* gene) was analyzed, together with taking into account the influence of such biotic and abiotic parameters as species structure and biomass of cyanobacteria, basic physical and chemical parameters of water, and geographical distance. The transcription activity of cyanophages specific

for cyanobacteria of the genus *Microcystis* was also analyzed on a diurnal cycle involving the *g91* gene (cyanophages) and the 16S rRNA gene (cyanobacteria) in Jeziorsko and Sulejow reservoirs. The results showed that cyanophages, specific for cyanobacteria of the genus *Microcystis* and cyanobacteria of the genus *Synechococcus*, were present in freshwater lakes of Poland and Lithuania. This was also confirmed by the significant similarity of phage gene fragments *psbA*, *nblA* and *g91* to their counterparts available in the GenBank database. The analyses of seasonal occurrence of cyanophages infecting cyanobacteria of *Microcystis* genus (including their toxigenic genotypes) showed that they appeared simultaneously or after cyanobacteria had appeared, and in most of the monitored periods, they co-occurred with their hosts in Sulejow and Jeziorsko reservoirs.

However, in the above-mentioned studies, a phenomenon of "killing the winner" was also observed. There was a breakdown in the dynamics of cyanobacterial bloom occurrence - their sudden decrease was combined with a rapid increase in the number of cyanophages. In the case of the analysis of biotic and abiotic parameters influence on the occurrence of cyanophages, it was shown that:

1. The total composition of cyanobacteria expressed by their biomass positively influenced the increase in the detection of cyanophages;
2. Physical and chemical factors such as: TP, conductivity, and pH were important environmental parameters differentiating lakes of Poland and Lithuania, which could directly or indirectly (through the host - cyanobacteria) affect the occurrence of cyanophages;
3. Additionally, the influence of hydrology of the monitored dam reservoirs - increased water retention time-favored increased phage infections against cyanobacteria of the genus *Microcystis*.

On the other hand, considering the monitoring of daily changes in the dynamics of occurrence of cyanobacteria of the genus *Microcystis* and their specific cyanophages (based on the analysis of quantitative changes in the transcript of the cyanophage *g91* gene during the day) it was observed that the transcription process was more intense during daylight hours (08:00-16:00), suggesting that the light cycle directly or indirectly affects viral replication in their host cells.

## XI. Literatura uzupełniająca

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## XII. Pozostała aktywność naukowa

### Publikacje nie wchodzące w cykl składający się na pracę doktorską:

- Godlewska M., Balk H., Kaczkowski Z., Jurczak T., Izydorczyk K., Długoszewski B., **Jaskulska A.**, Gągała-Borowska I., Mankiewicz-Boczek, J. 2018. Night fish avoidance of *Microcystis* bloom revealed by simultaneous hydroacoustic measurements of both organisms. *Fisheries Research*, 207, 74–84. doi: 10.1016/j.fishres.2018.05.025.
- Kaczkowski Z., Wojtal-Frankiewicz A., Gągała I., Mankiewicz-Boczek J., **Jaskulska A.**, Frankiewicz P., Izydorczyk K., Jurczak T., Godlewska M. 2017. Relationships among cyanobacteria, zooplankton and fish in sub-bloom conditions in the Sulejów Reservoir. *Journal of Limnology*. doi: 10.4081/jlimnol.2017.1521.
- Jaskulska A.** 2017. Host-virus interactions between freshwater cyanobacteria and their cyanophages. *Ecohydrology; Nature-Based Solutions for Enhancement of Sustainability Potential*. ISBN 978-83-928245-4-1.
- Mankiewicz-Boczek J., Gągała I., Jurczak T., Pawełczyk J., **Jaskulska A.**, Dziadek J. 2015. Bacteria homologous to *Aeromonas* capable of microcystin degradation. *Open Life Sciences (Central European Journal of Biology)*. 10: 106–116.
- Gągała I., Izydorczyk K., Jurczak T., Pawełczyk J., Dziadek J., Wojtal-Frankiewicz A., Jóźwik A., **Jaskulska A.**, Mankiewicz-Boczek J. 2014. Role of Environmental Factors and Toxic Genotypes in the Regulation of Microcystins-Producing Cyanobacterial Blooms. *Microbial Ecology*. 67(2): 465-479.

### Komunikaty zjazdowe krajowe i międzynarodowe:

- 2021 Mankiewicz-Boczek J., Serwecińska L., Gągała-Borowska I., Jurczak T., Font Nájera A., **Jaskulska A.**, Morón-López J. Bakterie i wirusy w regulacji występowania sinic produkujących mikrocystyny. XI Ogólnopolska Konferencja Hydromikrobiologiczna – Hydromicro 2021 „Mikroorganizmy wodne – zagrożenia i nadzieje”. Sopot, 9-11 czerwca 2021. Prezentacja ustna.
- 2019 Mankiewicz-Boczek J., Gągała-Borowska I., Izydorczyk K., Jurczak T., Serwecińska L., Frątczak W., **Jaskulska A.**, Font Najera A., Zalewski M. Control and mitigation of microcystin-producing cyanobacteria Occurrence in lowland dam reservoirs. 11th Int. Conf. Toxic Cyanobacteria, 5-10 May 2019, Kraków, Poland. Prezentacja ustna.
- 2017 **Jaskulska A.**, Serwecińska L., Mankiewicz-Boczek J. Diurnal dynamics of cyanophages from *Myoviridae* family. 10th Symposium for European Freshwater Sciences. 02 - 07 lipiec 2017, Olomouc, Czechy. Prezentacja plakatu.
- 2017 Mankiewicz-Boczek J., Gągała I., **Jaskulska A.**, Serwecińska L., Font Najera F., Jurczak T. Impact of microorganisms on the regulation of microcystin-producing cyanobacteria. International Symposium Ecohydrology for the Circular Economy

- and Nature-Based Solutions towards mitigation/adaptation to Climate Change. 26-28 September 2017, Lodz, Poland. Prezentacja ustna.
- 2017 **Jaskulska A.**, Serwecińska L., Mankiewicz-Boczek J. The potential of degradation of cyanobacteria phycobilisomes by viruses. International Symposium Ecohydrology for the Circular Economy and Nature-Based Solutions towards mitigation/adaptation to Climate Change. 26-28 September 2017, Lodz, Poland. Prezentacja plakatu.
- 2016 **Jaskulska A.**, Serwecińska L., Gągała I., Pawełczyk J., Mankiewicz-Boczek J. Ecological interaction between cyanobacteria of the *Microcystis* genus and cyanophages specific for them. 10th International Conference on Toxic Cyanobacteria. 23 – 28 października 2016, Wuhan, Chiny. Prezentacja ustna.
- 2016 **Jaskulska A.**, Serwecińska L., Gągała I., Pawełczyk J., Mankiewicz-Boczek J. Infekcja wirusowa sinic z rodzaju *Microcystis* w Zbiorniku Jeziorsko. II Ogólnopolska Konferencja Doktorantów Nauk o Życiu BioOpen 2016. 12 – 14 maj 2016, Łódź, Polska. Prezentacja ustna.
- 2016 Gągała I., Pawełczyk J., **Jaskulska A.**, Jurczak T., Mankiewicz-Boczek J. Wykorzystanie markerów molekularnych do oceny potencjału sinic do produkcji mikrocystyn oraz potencjału różnych bakterii towarzyszących zakwitom do ich degradacji. VI Krajowa Konferencja Bioindykacyjna: „Praktyczne wykorzystanie systemów bioindykacyjnych do oceny jakości i toksyczności środowiska i substancji chemicznych”. 20 – 22 kwiecień 2016, Szczecin, Polska. Prezentacja plakatu.
- 2016 Mankiewicz-Boczek J., Gągała I., Jurczak T., Jaros D., Karwaciak I., Kokociński M., **Jaskulska A.**, Pułaski Ł. Śledzenie bioaktywności sinic z wykorzystaniem biosensorów komórkowych. VI Krajowa Konferencja Bioindykacyjna: „Praktyczne wykorzystanie systemów bioindykacyjnych do oceny jakości i toksyczności środowiska i substancji chemicznych”. 20 – 22 kwiecień 2016, Szczecin, Polska. Prezentacja ustna.
- 2015 Mankiewicz-Boczek J., Gągała I., Jurczak T., Jaros D., Karwaciak I., Kokociński M., **Jaskulska A.**, Pułaski Ł. Application of cell biosensors in ecotoxicology of cyanobacteria – novel determination of toxicity. 9th Symposium for European Freshwater Sciences. 05-10 lipiec 2015, Genewa, Szwajcaria. Prezentacja ustna.
- 2015 **Jaskulska A.**, Gągała I., Pawełczyk J., Jurczak T., Dziadek J., Mankiewicz-Boczek J. Identification of interactions between microorganisms and the dynamics of toxic cyanobacterial blooms. 9th Symposium for European Freshwater Sciences. 05 - 10 lipiec 2015, Genewa, Szwajcaria. Prezentacja plakatu.
- 2015 Gągała I., Karwaciak I., Ratajewski M., Pułaski Ł., Jurczak T., Kokociński M., **Jaskulska A.**, Mankiewicz-Boczek J. Zróżnicowane podejście do oceny zagrożenia ze strony zakwitów sinicowych. V Krajowa Konferencja Bioindykacyjna

- „Praktyczne wykorzystanie systemów bioindykacyjnych do oceny jakości i toksyczności środowiska i substancji chemicznych”. 27 – 29 maj 2015, Lublin, Polska. Prezentacja ustna.
- 2015 **Jaskulska A.**, Serwecińska L., Gągała I., Pawełczyk J., Dziadek J., Mankiewicz-Boczek J. Cyanophages infection of *Microcystis* bloom in lowland dam reservoir of Sulejów, Poland. XXXIV Międzynarodowa Konferencja Polskiego Towarzystwa Fykologicznego. 18-21 maj 2015, Rzeszów, Polska. Prezentacja plakatu.
- 2014 Gągała I., Pawełczyk J., Jurczak T., **Jaskulska A.**, Jaros D., Karwaciak I., Kokociński M., Izidorczyk K., Pułaski Ł., Dziadek J., Mankiewicz-Boczek J. Occurrence and investigation of threat posed by toxic cyanobacterial blooms and other coexisting microorganism in the Sulejów Reservoir, Central Poland. 17TH Workshop of The International Association of Phytoplankton Taxonomy And Ecology (IAP). 14 - 21 wrzesień 2014, Kastoria, Grecja. Prezentacja ustna.
- 2014 Gągała I., Jaros D., Karwaciak I., **Jaskulska A.**, Kokociński M., Pułaski Ł., Mankiewicz-Boczek J. Zastosowanie biosensorów komórkowych w ekotoksykologii sinic – badania wstępne. IV Krajowa Konferencja Bioindykacyjna: „Praktyczne wykorzystanie systemów bioindykacyjnych do oceny jakości i toksyczności środowiska i substancji chemicznych”. 28 – 30 maj 2014, Olsztyn, Polska. Prezentacja ustna.
- 2014 Gągała I., Pawełczyk J., Jurczak T., **Jaskulska A.**, Izidorczyk K., Jaros D., Karwaciak I., Kokociński M., Godlewska M., Pułaski Ł., Dziadek J., Mankiewicz-Boczek J. Toxic cyanobacteria in the Sulejow Reservoir - the occurrence and threat. XXXIII Międzynarodowa Konferencja Polskiego Towarzystwa Fykologicznego. 19 – 22 maj 2014, Cetniew, Polska. Prezentacja ustna.
- 2013 **Jaskulska A.**, Mankiewicz-Boczek J. Cyanophages – the potential to natural biodegradation of cyanobacteria. Międzynarodowe Sympozjum - Ecohydrology, Biotechnology & Engineering: Towards the Harmony between Biogeosphere and Society on the basis of Long Term Ecosystem Research. 16 -22 wrzesień, Łódź, Polska. Prezentacja plakatu.

#### **Ukończone kursy i szkolenia:**

- 2016 Kurs pt.: „Profilowanie ekspresji miRNA” organizowany przez MBS Szkolenia, Konferencje, Usługi Sp. z o.o. 20 – 21 maj 2016, Warszawa, Polska.
- 2015 Kurs pt.: „Projektowanie starterów i sond do PCR i Real Time PCR – analiza bioinformatyczna” organizowany przez Blirt S. A., dział DNA – Gdańsk. 23 -24 wrzesień 2015, Gdańsk, Polska.
- 2015 Szkolenie pt.: „New methods of confocal and two - photon confocal microscopy”. 14 – 23 kwiecień 2015, Łódź, Polska.
- 2014 Szkolenie pt.: „Coaching biznesowy”. 9 – 10 czerwiec 2014, Łódź, Polska.

- 2014 Szkolenie pt.: „Komercjalizacja wiedzy i współpraca z przedsiębiorcami”. 8 – 10 grudzień 2014, Łódź, Polska.
- 2014 Warsztaty pt.: „Kształtowanie Krajobrazu dla Przyrody i Rozwoju Regionalnego: Możliwości Zielonej Infrastruktury”. 4 - 5 listopad 2014, Osowiec-Twierdza, Polska.
- 2014 Szkolenie pt.: „Chromatografia gazowa (GC). Warsztaty Laboratoryjne”. 10 – 11, 17 – 18 maj 2014, Katowice, Polska.

**Pomoc przy organizacji konferencji:**

- 2017 Pomoc przy organizacji Międzynarodowego Sympozjum - Ecohydrology for the Circular Economy and Nature-Based Solutions towards mitigation/adaptation to climate change. 26 – 28 wrzesień, Łódź, Polska.
- 2016 Pomoc przy organizacji VI Krajowej Konferencji Bioindykacyjnej: „Praktyczne wykorzystanie systemów bioindykacyjnych do oceny jakości i toksyczności środowiska i substancji chemicznych”; sekretariat konferencji. 20 – 22 kwiecień 2016, Szczecin, Polska.
- 2014 Pomoc przy organizacji IV Krajowej Konferencji Bioindykacyjnej: „Praktyczne wykorzystanie systemów bioindykacyjnych do oceny jakości i toksyczności środowiska i substancji chemicznych”; sekretariat konferencji. 28 – 30 maj 2014, Olsztyn, Polska.
- 2013 Pomoc przy organizacji Międzynarodowego Sympozjum - Ecohydrology, Biotechnology & Engineering: Towards the Harmony between Biogeosphere and Society on the basis of Long Term Ecosystem Research. 16 -22 wrzesień, Łódź, Polska.

**Udział w projektach badawczych niezwiązanych z pracą doktorską:**

- 2016 „Opracowanie i wdrożenie metody rekultywacji jezior i ochrony wód powierzchniowych w oparciu o naturalne technologie biologiczne wykorzystujące pożyteczne mikroorganizmy”, realizowanego w ramach Programu GEKON, umowa o dofinansowanie nr 267948, realizowanego przez Mikronatura Środowisko Sp. z o.o.; wykonawca,
- 2014 - 2016 „Zastosowanie komórkowych biosensorów reporterowych w ekotoksykologii sinic: nowe „tarcze” dla bioaktywności”; nr UMO-2012/07/B/NZ8/03991 finansowanego przez Narodowe Centrum Nauki, realizowanego przez Europejskie Regionalne Centrum Ekohydrologii PAN w Łodzi; wykonawca,
- 2014 - 2016 „Mikrobiologiczne aktywizatory w złożach denitryfikacyjnych stosowanych do oczyszczania zanieczyszczeń azotanowych dla wdrażania Ramowej Dyrektywy Wodnej i Dyrektywy Azotanowej”; nr PBS1/A8/2012 finansowanego przez

Narodowe Centrum Badań i Rozwoju, realizowanego przez Europejskie Regionalne Centrum Ekohydrologii PAN w Łodzi; wykonawca.