MEANtools: multi-omics integration towards metabolite

2 anticipation and biosynthetic pathway prediction

- 3
- 4 Kumar Saurabh Singh ^{1, 3, 5, 6 #}, Hernando Suarez Duran ¹, Elena Del Pup ¹, Olga
- 5 Zafra-Delgado², Saskia C.M. Van Wees³, Justin J.J. van der Hooft^{1, 4 #}, Marnix H.
- 6 Medema^{1#}

7 ¹Bioinformatics Group, Wageningen University, Wageningen, the Netherlands

- ⁸ Departamento de Genética Molecular de Plantas, Centro Nacional de Biotecnología–Consejo Superior de Investigaciones
 ⁹ Científicas, Campus Universidad Autónoma, 28049 Madrid, Spain
- 10 ³Plant-Microbe Interactions, Institute of Environmental Biology, Utrecht University, the Netherlands
- 11 ⁴ Department of Biochemistry, University of Johannesburg, Auckland Park, Johannesburg 2006, South Africa
- 12 ⁵ Plant Functional Genomics, Brightlands Future Farming Institute, Maastricht University, the Netherlands
- 13 ⁶ Faculty of Environment, Science and Economy, University of Exeter, TR10 9FE Penryn Cornwall UK
- 14 * Corresponding authors, <u>kumarsaurabh.singh@maastrichtuniversity.nl</u>, justin.vanderhooft@wur.nl, <u>marnix.medema@wur.nl</u>
- 15

16 Abstract

17 During evolution, plants have developed the ability to produce a vast array of 18 specialized metabolites, which play crucial roles in helping plants adapt to different 19 environmental niches. However, their biosynthetic pathways remain largely elusive. In 20 the past decades, increasing numbers of plant biosynthetic pathways have been 21 elucidated based on approaches utilizing genomics, transcriptomics, and 22 metabolomics. These efforts, however, are limited by the fact that they typically adopt 23 a target-based approach, requiring prior knowledge. Here, we present MEANtools, a 24 systematic and unsupervised computational integrative omics workflow to predict 25 candidate metabolic pathways *de novo* by leveraging knowledge of general reaction 26 rules and metabolic structures stored in public databases. In our approach, possible 27 connections between metabolites and transcripts that show correlated abundance 28 across samples are identified using reaction rules linked to the transcript-encoded 29 enzyme families. MEANtools thus assesses whether these reactions can connect 30 transcript-correlated mass features within a candidate metabolic pathway. We validate 31 MEANtools using a paired transcriptomic-metabolomic dataset recently generated to 32 reconstruct the falcarindiol biosynthetic pathway in tomato. MEANtools correctly

anticipated five out of seven steps of the characterized pathway and also identified
 other candidate pathways involved in specialized metabolism, which demonstrates its
 potential for hypothesis generation. Altogether, MEANtools represents a significant
 advancement to integrate multi-omics data for the elucidation of biochemical pathways
 in plants and beyond.

- 38
- 39

40 Introduction41

Plants have long been recognized for their ability to produce a variety of chemical 42 compounds, known as specialized metabolites (SM). It is estimated that a total of over 43 44 200,000 plant SMs have been reported so far that can be classified into distinct 45 metabolite classes, mainly terpenoids, alkaloids, phenolics, sulphur-containing 46 compounds, and fatty-acid derivatives ¹. Additionally, metabolomics has revealed an 47 extensive plant 'dark matter', in the sense that a major proportion of metabolites are yet structurally unknown². Also, the functions of most plant SMs are largely 48 49 unexplored, but they are generally regarded as crucial for fitness and survival ³⁻⁷. 50 Humans have harnessed these chemical compounds in various areas, including 51 traditional medicines, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and agricultural products. The 52 biosynthesis of SMs, however, often hinges on external triggers and follows specific metabolic pathways, which are largely unknown⁸. This poses a substantial challenge 53 54 in obtaining, cultivating, and extracting these compounds in quantities suitable for research or commercial production. This lack of knowledge has driven interest in 55 56 developing new methodologies to predict and identify new metabolic products as well 57 as the enzymes that catalyze their biosynthesis.

58

59 In the past decades, along with cost reductions, substantial progress in the generation of high-throughput omics datasets has resulted in increasing numbers of high-quality 60 61 genome assemblies, transcriptome, metabolome, and enzyme reaction datasets ⁹. 62 Moreover, advances in synthetic biology allow the validation of *in silico* analyses *in* 63 vivo, increasing the rate at which novel SMs and the associated enzymes can be characterized ¹⁰. This has amplified the discovery and characterization of biosynthetic 64 65 pathways in plants. Reconstructing biosynthetic pathways computationally requires details about genes that encode enzymes catalyzing reactions, as well as the 66

67 metabolites involved in these processes. Tools such as plantiSMASH ¹¹, PhytoClust ¹² and PlantClusterFinder ¹³ are instrumental in identifying gene clusters that are likely 68 69 to encode enzymes associated with SM pathways. Yet, many SM pathways in plants 70 do not have their genes chromosomally clustered. Additionally, co-expression 71 analyses can be employed to predict functional associations between genes based on their expression patterns ^{14,15}. In general, individual omics-based investigations, such 72 73 as genomics, transcriptomics, or metabolomics, have played pivotal roles in 74 delineating specific metabolic pathways and their correlated metabolic products ^{16–27}. 75 Nevertheless, despite these advancements, the intricate genetic makeup and 76 functional diversity of plant biosynthetic pathways continue to present a formidable 77 challenge. Specifically, a key limitation to current transcriptome- and metabolomebased pathway discovery strategies is that they require prior knowledge on a 78 compound or enzyme that can be used as 'bait' ²⁸ to identify other compounds and/or 79 enzymes involved in the same pathway. Yet, prior such knowledge may not always be 80 81 available.

82 A promising solution to this limitation may be found in the integrative analysis of 83 genomic, transcriptomic, and metabolomics data. Due to the intricate, cooperative 84 interplay of genes and metabolites in SM biosynthesis, implementing multi-omic approaches ensures a comprehensive perspective on the entire process. Indeed, the 85 86 inclusion of multiple omics layers has facilitated the discovery of several biosynthetic pathways ^{29–35}. Multi-omics integration strategies can be broadly separated into four 87 88 categories: conceptual, statistical, model, and pathway-based. Each strategy presents 89 distinct challenges, and all have been reviewed in detail before, with multiple examples of successful usage ^{36,37}. Such integrative omics technologies ⁹ provide new 90 91 opportunities for systematic, unsupervised multi-omics approaches for untargeted or 92 de novo discovery of pathways involved in the biosynthesis of SMs.

93

Here, we introduce MEANtools, a computational pipeline that combines statistical- and reaction-rules-based integration strategies. MEANtools implements a mutual rankbased ¹⁵ correlation approach to capture mass features that are highly correlated with biosynthetic genes. Our pipeline makes use of general reaction rules and metabolite structures, stored in public databases like RetroRules ³⁸ and LOTUS ³⁹, to predict putative reactions that either constitute intermediate steps or complete biosynthetic pathways. The workflow enables users to explore the biosynthetic potential associated with identified mass features and formulate specific hypotheses about potentialpathways associated with the corresponding metabolites.

103

104 **Results**

105

106 MEANtools integrates omics data to link transcripts to metabolites

107 MEANtools integrates mass features from metabolomics data and transcripts from 108 transcriptomics data to predict possible metabolic reactions and thus generates 109 hypotheses that can be prioritized for experimental validation (Figure 1a). Reaching 110 the prediction stage involves several independent steps, including formatting and 111 annotating the input data, thereby ensuring the data is ready for subsequent 112 meaningful analysis. MEANtools then leverages RetroRules ³⁸, a retrosynthesis-113 oriented database of enzymatic reactions annotated with known and predicted protein 114 domains and enzymes linked to each reaction, to assess whether observed chemical 115 differences between metabolites (inferred from observed mass shifts) can logically be 116 explained by reactions that are known to be catalyzed by transcript-associated protein 117 families (Figure 1b). To identify putative structure annotations for metabolite features, MEANtools matches their masses to LOTUS³⁹, a comprehensive well annotated 118 resource of Natural Products, taking into account possible adducts (Figure 1c). 119 120 MEANtools correlates the expression of genes with co-abundant metabolites across 121 samples in paired transcriptomics and metabolomics experiments, ideally spanning a 122 range of different conditions, tissues and timepoints. Although the correlation 123 approach has aided the characterization of diverse metabolic processes in plants by 124 reducing the dimensionality of the problem and thus generating a small set of testable 125 hypotheses, it is known to result in a high number of false positive metabolite-transcript 126 associations when used in isolation. As illustrated in Figure 1d, we use a mutual rank-127 based correlation method that maximizes highly correlated metabolite-transcript 128 associations.

129

130 MEANtools then integrates all this information to identify sets of transcript-metabolite 131 pairs that are both highly correlated in abundance and then highlight cases where the 132 metabolites are logically connected by catalytic activities associated with these same 133 transcripts. Thus, MEANtools generates a reaction network where each node is a 134 mass signature within the metabolome, or an unmeasured *ghost mass signature* ⁴⁰. In 135 this network, nodes are linked by directed edges representing enzymatic reactions that 136 can be catalyzed by at least one of the enzyme families encoded by the genes 137 correlated to one of the two mass signatures the reaction links. This network 138 representation of the data allows users to explore the biosynthetic potential of any 139 molecular structure and generate concrete hypotheses about possible pathways 140 leading up to (or from) a given metabolite, which can be tested in the laboratory. 141 Results are displayed in a variety of formats for users to interact with, describing 142 predicted metabolic pathways along with the metabolites, enzymes and reactions that 143 are potentially involved in them. Altogether, MEANtools serves as a strong basis for 144 the development of methodologies to explore ways in which paired genomic, 145 transcriptomic, and metabolomic data can be used to analyze biosynthetic diversity.

146

¹⁴⁷ RetroRules and LOTUS database integration

148

149 In the above process, strongly correlated mass feature-transcript pairs are examined 150 using the general reaction rules obtained from the RetroRules. All enzymatic reactions in the RetroRules database are cross-referenced with the MetaNetX⁴¹, a repository of 151 152 metabolic networks that MEANtools uses to identify the mass differences (shifts in the 153 masses) between the substrates and products of known enzymatic reactions (Figure 154 1e). MEANtools then annotates all reactions with an associated mass shift. This step 155 needs to be executed only once, either during the initial retrieval of the database or 156 when it is updated. As a next step, users can manually annotate a subset of mass 157 signatures (mass-to-charge ratios of the measured ions) in the metabolomic dataset 158 with metabolite structures (Figure 1f & g). Alternatively, MEANtools can assign 159 potential structure matches by identifying adducts in the metabolome and querying the 160 LOTUS database for matching metabolites based on molecular weight (Figure 1c). 161

¹⁶² To determine the significance of the presence of experimentally characterized ¹⁶³ biosynthetic reactions in the RetroRules database, we tested the presence of selected ¹⁶⁴ biosynthetic reactions from the Singh et al., review Figure 1 ⁹ (Supplementary File 1). ¹⁶⁵ Among 187 experimentally characterized biochemical reactions, 134 were found in the ¹⁶⁶ RetroRules database and 53 were missing. The presence of 72% of selected reactions ¹⁶⁷ in the RetroRules database is significantly higher (χ^2 -statistic: 35.10; DF=1; p < 0.001) 168 than expected under the null hypothesis of equal probability. This indicates that 169 RetroRules database has a good coverage of experimentally characterized 170 biosynthetic reactions, enhancing its reliability for further pathway analysis. 171 Additionally, for the same set of experimentally characterized reactions, we 172 investigated the presence of structures for both the substrates and the products, from 173 the list of experimentally characterized biosynthetic reactions, in the LOTUS database 174 (Supplementary File 1). Compared to the total 374 structures from the selected 175 reactions, 132 structures were found in the database with a significance of p < 0.001176 (χ^2 -statistic: 32.353; DF=1), highlighting substantial structural overlap.

177

178 RetroRules is populated with ~43,000 reactions annotated with enzymes that are 179 predicted to be associated with all reactions. Most of these annotated enzyme-reaction 180 associations, however, are the result of propagating the annotation of characterized 181 reactions to other reactions with the same enzyme commission (EC) number and they 182 therefore of various reliability and require verification. To increase confidence in the enzymatic annotations, we cross referenced each reaction in RetroRules to the 183 manually curated reaction databases Rhea⁴² and KEGG⁴³. We refined reaction-184 185 enzyme associations supported by experimental evidence and then propagated these 186 annotations through KEGG-orthology groups (Methods). This way, we generated three datasets namely, strict, medium, and loose, differing in the coverage of chemical 187 188 space and confidence in the enzymatic annotations. This was done to remove the 189 most generic Pfam annotations. Loose dataset contains 2,704,948 reaction rules-190 enzyme associations expanded from the RetroRules database by cross-referencing 191 with the Rhea and KEGG-orthology database (Supplementary Figure 1). Medium 192 dataset contains 429,267 entries consist of experimentally validated entries together 193 with the ECDomainMiner predictions. Finally, the strict dataset contains 67,501 194 experimentally validated entries (Supplementary Figure 1). These datasets are 195 specifically developed for enzyme function prediction and are especially relevant when 196 specificity is preferred over sensitivity. All three datasets come with taxonomic origin 197 annotations. Users can therefore not only select the datasets between loose, medium, 198 strict, but also use the taxonomy of the samples (Supplementary Figure 2) for further 199 refinement of their analyses based on the species-specificity of Pfams.

200

201

202 Reconstruction of the falcarindiol pathway in tomato

203

204 To assess the performance of MEANtools in predicting metabolic pathways, we used 205 data derived from a recently published paired omics dataset. Specifically, we assessed 206 whether MEANtools would be able to reconstruct the falcarindiol pathway in tomato 207 using the dataset published by Jeon *et al.* in 2020³² in the study that originally elucidated this pathway. MEANtools correctly anticipated five out of seven 208 209 transformations of intermediate metabolites in the falcarindiol pathway, along with the 210 enzymes that catalyze the reactions. The initial untargeted metabolomics and 211 transcriptomics data comprised 11266 mass features and 20576 transcripts. To 212 narrow down the counts and select the most informative mass features and transcripts, 213 we performed differential abundance analysis of mass features and differential 214 expression analysis of transcripts across samples and time-points. After selecting 215 features and transcripts based on a corrected p-value and log fold change threshold 216 of 0.01 and 2, respectively, 1230 mass features and 7590 transcripts remained. 217 Correlation analysis (step 1), with a minimum absolute *Pearson* correlation coefficient 218 of 0.1, further refined the count of informative mass features and transcripts. Four 219 networks (N) were created with different decay rates (DR). The number of transcripts 220 and mass features assigned to functional clusters in N1 (DR=5) were 2912 (38.4% of 221 input genes) and 232 (18.9% of input mass features) respectively. Similarly, for N2 222 (DR=10) the count was 5488 (72.3%) and 236 (19.2%). For N3 (DR=25) and N4 (DR=50) the count was 6491 (85.5%) / 238 (19.3%), and 6420 (84.6%) / 238 (19.3%) 223 224 respectively. MEANtools also returns a p-value for every transcript-mass feature 225 correlation. This p-value is based on the hypothesis test whether the true correlation 226 between the two datasets is zero. The distribution of the p-values resulting from the 227 correlation step (Supplementary Figure 3) is heavily skewed towards the right and 228 significantly (Kolomogorov-Smirnov statistics=0.987; p-value=~0.0) deviates from 229 what would be expected under the null hypothesis of no significant effects, showing a 230 subset of transcripts and mass features that are significantly associated and reflecting 231 real biological interactions.

232

In the functional clusters (FCs), we first looked for biosynthetic genes (based on
 classification using plantiSMASH profile hidden Markov models) predicted to be

235 involved in SM pathways, specifically for falcarindiol-related genes ³². Our analysis 236 revealed a single FC in N2 encompassing three out of the four biosynthetic genes from 237 this cluster (Figure 2c). This FC, containing all three key biosynthetic genes related to 238 the falcarindiol pathway, also included a CYP450 gene suspected to be involved in the 239 modification of dehydrocrepenynic acid—one of the pathway intermediates within the pathway ³². Other FCs that harbored mass-features present in Figure 2c were merged 240 241 and taken further to the pathway prediction step of MEANtools. By using only experimentally validated enzyme-reaction associations (strict settings), MEANtools 242 243 anticipated the second step of the falcarindiol biosynthesis pathway as proposed by 244 Jeon et al. (crepenynic acid -> dehydrocrepenynic acid), seen in Figure 3b. For this 245 step, MEANtools predicted Solyc12g100250.1, which shows strong correlation (0.744; p-value 1.106E-10 (Figure 2D; Supplementary File 2) that Jeon et al. identified as a 246 247 major desaturase in the falcarindial pathway that was linked to this reaction using transient expression ³². MEANtools also anticipated steps five and six of the pathways 248 249 proposed by Jeon et al., (i.e., octadecene diynoic acid -> octadecadiene diynoic acid 250 -> metabolite 6 -> metabolite 7), as seen in Figure 3a, and provided candidate genes 251 encoding enzymes with a protein domain that has been characterized as able to 252 perform each reaction. To further explore the predictive power of MEANtools, we 253 repeated the analysis with *medium* and *loose* settings. As we moved from strict to 254 medium and then to *loose* settings, we observed an increase in enzyme associations 255 due to the inclusion of less specific Pfam annotations (Supplementary Figure 6). 256 Distribution of the correlation coefficients of all mass feature-transcript associations 257 for the falcarindiol pathway can be seen in Supplementary Figure 4. A table with all 258 the predictions is available in Supplementary File 2.

259

260 Identification of Functional Clusters encompassing other tomato metabolic pathways261

Within the Jeon *et al.*, dataset ³², a wider investigation unveiled multiple FCs housing biosynthetic genes primarily from three distinct metabolic pathways: the hydroxy cinnamic acid amide (HCAA) pathway ⁴⁴ the α -tomatine pathway ⁴⁵, and the chlorogenic acid pathway ⁴⁶.

266

We identified two FCs containing biosynthetic genes associated with the synthesis of *p*-coumaroyl-CoA from phenylalanine, a process catalyzed by PAL and 4CL, as well 269 as the subsequent biosynthesis of p-coumaroyltyramine, a reaction mediated by THT 270 (Figure 4). Interestingly, all metabolites within these two functional clusters were 271 putatively annotated within the superclass of phenylpropanoids and polyketides 272 (Supplementary File 1). Figure 4c depicts the FC containing PAL (Solyc10g086180; 273 node with a pink border) and 4CL (Solyc03g117870; node with orange border), and 274 metabolites involved in the conversion of phenylalanine to p-coumaroyl-CoA. This FC 275 also contains other co-expressed genes along with PAL and 4CL. Additionally, the 276 correlation analysis performed by MEANtools revealed another FC (Figure 4f) related 277 to the production of p-coumaroyltyramine catalyzed by THT (Solyc08g068790; node 278 with a red border). According to the expression heatmaps depicted in Figure 4a and 279 b, while PAL and 4CL showed constitutive expression patterns across both mock and 280 treated samples, THT exhibited significant differential expression (p-value < 0.05 and 281 logFC = 4.7) in samples treated with fungal pathogens compared to mock-treated ones. Both the metabolite and genes present in the THT FC (Figure 4f) show 282 283 overlapping abundance and expression patterns (highlighted with black solid bar in 284 the heatmaps of Figure 4a-b).

285

286 In another biosynthetic pathway, namely the α -tomatine pathway, we observed the presence of genes distributed across multiple FCs (Supplementary Figure 5). This 287 288 pathway involves nine specific biosynthetic genes responsible for converting 289 cholesterol into α -tomatine, and these genes have been extensively characterized in 290 tomato ⁴⁵. MEANtools captured all biosynthetic genes involved in the glycoalkaloid 291 metabolism (GAME) group, including GAME1, GAME4, GAME6, GAME7, GAME11, 292 GAME12, GAME17, and GAME18, in nine different FCs (Supplementary figure 9). 293 Furthermore, GAME9, an APETALA2/Ethylene response factor, related to regulator of 294 the steroidal glycoalkaloid pathway in tomato, was also captured within one of the 9 295 FCs. Additionally, we found biosynthetic genes involved in the synthesis of precursors 296 for the α -tomatine pathway, such as SQS (Squalene Synthase), TTS1 (β -Amyrin 297 Synthase), TTS2 (β-Amyrin Synthase), and SSR2 (Sterol Side Chain Reductase 2), 298 present in multiple instances throughout the network. We used coexpression network 299 to merge FCs, resulting in coexpression edges between biosynthetic genes from the 300 pathway α-tomatine GAME12 transaminase, and 2-oxoglutarate-dependent 301 dioxygenase GAME11, and GAME17 (UDP-glucosyltransferase) and GAME1 (UDP-302 galactosyltransferase) (Supplementary figure 8). Additionally, MEANtools successfully

303 pinpointed another crucial biosynthetic gene associated with the chlorogenic acid 304 biosynthetic pathway, known as HQT (Hydroxycinnamoyl-CoA quinate: 305 hydroxycinnamoyl transferase). HQT plays a pivotal role in facilitating the 306 transformation of quinic acid into caffeoyl quinic acid, which represents another 307 specialized metabolite within the phenylpropanoid pathway.

308

309 MEANtools facilitates prioritization of reaction steps using reaction likelihood scores 310 MEANtools generates reaction-likelihood scores based on substrate-enzyme 311 association, for each anticipated reaction (Figure 5). To obtain the score, the likelihood 312 of each atom in the substrate is calculated for being a site-of-metabolism using the 313 GNN-SOM ⁴⁷ method. This results in an array of likelihoods for each atom in the substrate. Later, using ReactionDecoder ⁴⁸, reaction centers and bond cleavages are 314 315 predicted between each substrate and product. MEANtools makes use of this 316 information to extract likelihood scores only for atoms that are involved in reaction 317 centers and bond cleavages. The maximum value of likelihood score within the 318 reaction center represents the reaction likelihood score. Figure 5c shows the 319 distribution of likelihood scores for experimentally characterized enzyme-substrate 320 pairs, referred to as Known in Supplementary file 1, and randomly assembled enzyme-321 substrate pairs as Random. The likelihood scores differ significantly (Mann-Whitney U 322 statistic: 2573.0, P-value: 4.4e-07) between Known and Random pairs, with median 323 and mean values of 0.86 and 0.70 for Known pairs, and 0.29 and 0.39 for Random 324 pairs, respectively.

325

326 **Discussion**

327

328 MEANtools can generate testable hypotheses on metabolic pathways with little to no 329 prior knowledge, by integrating metabolomics and transcriptomics data. This method effectively automates the identification of key Pfam domains required for a specific 330 331 reaction and allows users to tune the reaction-Pfam domain associations according to 332 their level of confidence or based on the taxa of origin. To do so, MEANtools queries 333 RetroRules, a retrosynthesis-oriented enzymatic reactions database, showing that 334 tools and methods within the retrosynthetic biology and synthetic pathway design 335 fields have considerable application potential for metabolic pathway prediction and 336 potentially SM discovery.

337

338 Metabolomics and transcriptomics datasets are typically used as CSV-formatted pre-339 processed tables featuring mass-feature abundances and transcript expressions, 340 respectively. Integrating such datasets solely through Pearson-based correlations 341 often results in many false-positive associations. Additionally, determining an optimal 342 threshold for eliminating weak correlations poses significant challenges. The use of 343 mutual-rank statistics has proven effective for constructing global gene co-expression networks, as demonstrated by Wisecaver et al ⁴⁹. Leveraging this approach, we 344 345 utilized the mutual rank-based method to develop a correlation-based global gene-346 metabolite network. This network highlights strongly correlated genes and 347 metabolites. Ideally, individual FCs should advance to the next stage of pathway prediction. However, the FCs size may sometimes be insufficient for forming a 348 349 complete biosynthetic pathway. The FCs size proved stable across the treatment combinations in Jeon et al. (2020) dataset ³² (Supplementary Figure 7). Given that 350 351 genes and metabolites in plant biosynthetic pathways tend to overlap, FCs are also 352 overlapping in nature. MEANtools provides a script (merge clusters.pv) to merge 353 multiple FCs that share common mass features. Mass features that exhibit distinct 354 abundance patterns across samples are then grouped into separate clusters following 355 this merging process. This step is crucial for ensuring enough mass features and 356 transcripts remain to either fully or partially reconstruct a biosynthetic pathway. Changing the size of FCs is also possible using the ClusterONE ⁵⁰ inbuilt parameter. 357 358 However, this also changes the clustering pattern of mass features and transcripts. 359 Additionally, the current method to provide significance to each FC could also be 360 improved, as this was originally developed for co-expression datasets.

361

362 The RetroRules database is publicly available as SQLite database and can be used 363 directly with MEANtools. The three reaction rules datasets resulting from RetroRules, loose, medium, and strict are available in a single CSV file in the GitHub repository. 364 365 MEANtools includes these three different datasets as an input parameter (strict, medium, and loose, respectively) to allow the user to constrain the predictions for 366 367 specific purposes and find the right balance between sensitivity and specificity, 368 considering the tradeoff between enzymatic annotation confidence and diversity of the 369 resulting set of enzymatic reactions. In the strict dataset, which is a smaller subset of 370 reaction-rule-enzyme associations, the number of resulting candidate genes in the 371 final reaction anticipations was reduced due to its more specific Pfam annotations. On 372 the contrary, reaction anticipations with the loose set were associated to unrelated 373 Pfams (Supplementary Figure 7), such as AminoTran 1 2 or Glyco transf 20, 374 responsible for transferring amino and sugar groups respectively ⁵¹. Such unrelated 375 Pfams were not found in the strict rule dataset, as shown in the hydroxylation of 376 octadecadiene-diynoic acid into metabolite 6 and its subsequent hydroxylation into 377 metabolite 7. These spurious links, coming from RetroRules, have been kept in the 378 loose dataset after applying the Pfam cutoff of 6, which highlights the importance of 379 using the strict rules dataset when specificity is preferred over sensitivity. Most 380 importantly, both predictions correctly predict the enzyme associated to the conversion 381 of octadecadiene- divide acid into metabolite 6, as reported by Jeon et al., $(2020)^{32}$. Transient expression of this enzyme in Nicotiana benthamiana (Solyc10g100250) was 382 383 experimentally associated to depletion of crepenynic acid and the production of two 384 new metabolites ³². According to the observed LC-MS profile, one of the metabolites 385 was putatively identified as octadecadiene- diynoic acid, making plausible the role of 386 Solvc10g100250 in its conversion to metabolite 6. By cross-checking these reaction-387 enzyme association datasets with sets of correlated enzyme-coding genes and 388 metabolites, MEANtools effectively filters the set of possible mass shift-reaction 389 associations based on the available -omics evidence.

390

391 In the reconstruction of PAL and THT biosynthetic pathways, the reconstruction of 392 reaction steps using the second step of MEANtools was hindered due to two main 393 factors. Firstly, the conversion of phenylalanine to p-coumaroyl-CoA involves 394 stereoisomers, which are not captured by the mass spectrometric data. Secondly, the 395 conversion to p-coumaroyltyramine requires two substrates, tyrosine, and p-396 coumaroyl-CoA, whereas RetroRules-based rules are designed for single-substrate 397 reactions only. Although RetroRules contains a rule for the stereomeric conversion of 398 phenylalanine to p-coumaroyl-CoA, MEANtools filters such rules involving stereomeric 399 structures to avoid complexity.

400

The initial construction of this substructure map occurs once, either during the initial retrieval of the RetroRules database or during updates (step 1 Figure 1b). MEANtools uses this substructure map to generate pathway predictions. To this end, in step 2 (Figure 1c), it predicts possible metabolites and their corresponding molecular 405 structures for each mass feature by identifying possible adducts and querying the 406 LOTUS database, or a user-defined metabolite database that can be supplied in CSV 407 format. The LOTUS database was converted to an SQLite format to be compatible 408 with MEANtools, and it was made available in the GitHub repository. In step 3 (Figure 409 1e-q), MEANtools exclusively gueries reactions that would yield metabolites with mass 410 features that can be mapped within the metabolome or as ghost mass signatures. 411 Collectively, this strategic approach enables MEANtools to efficiently utilize computing 412 resources when generating in-silico molecules. Because of step 3, MEANtools 413 produces a sequence of subsequent reactions, along with predicted products for all 414 pairs of mass signatures, correlated enzyme-coding genes, and references to 415 characterized reactions and enzymes that served as the rules for predicting these reactions. Step 3 can be iterated multiple times, as desired by the user, enabling the 416 417 generation of pathway predictions extending beyond a single enzymatic reaction away 418 from the initial query molecule.

419

420 Because of MEANtools' flexible and modular design, there is room for improvement in 421 many of its processing steps. Annotating mass signatures with predicted structures 422 can be improved by allowing to load MS/MS data and use mass spectral library and networking-based annotation approaches ⁵² to increase accuracy and allow validation, 423 424 in a similar way as done by MetWork ⁴⁰. Gene-metabolite clusters can further be 425 improved by a more elaborate co-expression and/or molecular network analysis. 426 Converting predicted reaction networks into directed acyclic graphs (DAGs) is 427 currently used to study and present unsupervised predictions, but more complex 428 manipulations of the network may allow for predictions better tailored for the user, such 429 as prioritizing specific reactions or molecular substructures, for example by integrating 430 MS2LDA analyses ⁵³. We also note that further curating the reaction-Pfam domain 431 associations or allowing the user better control over them by allowing customized reaction-rule databases could improve the method as well: some enzyme domains 432 433 may be linked to large numbers of reactions, likely leading to false positives when the 434 objective is to predict biosynthesis pathways, but these enzyme domains could be 435 useful when exploring the biosynthetic potential of a structure when designing a 436 synthetic pathway. Finally, the reaction likelihood scores can also be improved by 437 adopting or developing precise methods for reaction site predictions.

438

Altogether, we present a novel computational method to predict metabolic pathways guided by multi-omics evidence, allowing researchers to conveniently generate testable and easy-to-browse hypotheses. Furthermore, we anticipate that our work provides the basis for future work to expand the numbers of ways in which paired genomic, transcriptomic and metabolomic data can be used to link natural product chemistry to biosynthesis genes and producers, and to analyze biosynthetic diversity in nature.

446

447 Methods

448

449 Correlation-based integration generates testable associations

450 Global reconstruction of co-expression modules in gene expression data has been 451 shown to be a powerful method to identify groups of genes involved in the same 452 metabolic pathway when querying for modules with genes that encode biosynthetic 453 enzymes ⁴⁹. In MEANtools, instead of generating co-expression modules using 454 transcriptomics dataset, functional clusters (FC) are generated for different network 455 sizes by integrating transcriptomics and metabolomics data (Figure 1d). Inspired from 456 the work of Wisecaver et al. 49, correlation values between mass features and 457 transcripts are first converted to mutual ranks (MR) ⁵⁴, which are then subjected to an 458 exponential decay function that converts continuous MR values to numbers between 459 0 and 1 and referred here as *edge weights*. Both node types and edge weights are 460 further subjected to clustering using ClusterONE ⁵⁰, which results in multiple 461 overlapping FCs. Each FC represents a significant association of mass abundance 462 and transcripts expression patterns across samples. In a network view, mass feature 463 and transcripts represent two unique node types connected by edge weights. 464 MEANtools allows users to visualize the expression of each FC in the form of 465 heatmaps with transcripts sorted in three categories according to the protein domains 466 they encode, following the same categorization used by plantiSMASH: scaffold-467 generating enzymes, tailoring enzymes, and the remaining genes ¹¹.

468

469 Rescaling input data using Median Absolute Deviation (MAD)

470

471 MEANtools employs the Median Absolute Deviation (MAD) for data rescaling. MAD 472 calculates the median of all values within the dataset, which represents the 50th

473 percentile. It then determines the absolute difference between each value and the 474 calculated median and ensures that the differences are expressed as positive values, 475 regardless of whether they are greater or less than the median. Finally, computing the 476 median of these absolute differences yields the MAD (equation 1). 477 MAD = median(|Xi - median(X)|)478 479 (1) where X_i refers to the i_{th} row element present in the data matrices 480 481 482 Computation of mutual rank and edge weights 483 484 Pairwise correlations of transcripts and mass features are converted to mutual ranks 485 (MR; calculated as a geometric mean of the rank of *Pearson* correlation coefficient (PCC) of transcript A to mass feature A and of the PCC rank of mass feature A to 486 487 transcript A. This MR statistic is calculated for every transcript-mass feature pair. Since 488 the MR value can vary between 1 and *n*-1, where n represents the total number of 489 features in either the transcriptomic or metabolomic dataset, we transform the MR 490 scores into edge weights, ranging between 0 and 1, using an exponential decay 491 function ⁴⁹. By default, MEANtools computes edge weights by using four different rates 492 of decay (5, 10, 25, 50) resulting in five different networks of varying sizes (equation 493 2). The modified exponential decay function is: 494 $Ni \rightarrow j: e^{-(MR-1)i \rightarrow j}$

495 496

(2)

⁴⁹⁷ where $i \rightarrow j$ refers to multiple decay rates and $N_{i \rightarrow j}$ represents a combined network ⁴⁹⁸ generated using $i \rightarrow j$ decay rates. MR denotes the estimated mutual rank between ⁴⁹⁹ genes and metabolites. Gene–metabolite pairs that show lower edge score than 0.01 ⁵⁰⁰ are excluded in the N_{i→i} networks.

501

502 MEANtools then employs the graph-clustering method ClusterONE ⁵⁰, which identifies 503 overlapping clusters of transcripts and mass features. Clustered transcripts and mass 504 features can assemble into a biologically significant sub-network, which we refer to as 505 a *functional cluster* (FC). Such clusters represent a higher-level organization of the

transcriptome and metabolome. The average number of FCs per network decreases with increasing network size. For each FC, ClusterONE assigns a p-value derived from the comparison between edges within the FC and those that radiate out of the FC. The resulting network, stemming from various decay rates, is then stored within an SQLite database.

511

⁵¹² Mass-shifts associated to reactions serve as templates for pathway predictions

513 MEANtools leverages the established relationships between reactions and their 514 associated mass shifts to scan the input metabolome. It assigns molecular structures 515 to each mass feature of the metabolome by mapping them with a list of adducts and 516 then guerying LOTUS database (downloaded on 10/10/2023). LOTUS database was 517 converted to an SQLite format to be compatible with MEANtools and made available 518 in the GitHub repository. It identifies pairs of mass features with discernible differences 519 in mass-charge ratios that can be logically explained by known reactions. Within this 520 process, one mass feature is annotated as a potential substrate, while the other is 521 marked as a product. It is worth noting that a given mass shift might be assigned to 522 more than one reaction, and many reactions are bidirectional in nature. Consequently, 523 any pair of mass features can be associated with multiple reactions, considering both 524 forward and reverse directions. Additionally, recognizing that not all metabolites within 525 a metabolic pathway may reach detectable levels in the (measured) metabolome, 526 MEANtools optionally generates 'ghost mass signatures.' These ghost signatures 527 serve as virtual, unmeasured intermediates between any two metabolites that possess 528 measured mass signatures. This concept, recently introduced in MetWork ⁴⁰ in the 529 construction of metabolic networks based on MS/MS spectra, is also applied here. 530 Notably, although the ghost mass feature is provided as an option to use for all 531 reactions, it automatically gets switched on when MEANtools fails to assign mass 532 features either as substrates or products. By incorporating information on reaction-533 mass-shift associations, MEANtools constructs a comprehensive reaction network. 534 This network comprises mass signatures connected by annotated reactions and forms 535 the foundational framework for the subsequent prediction of metabolic pathways.

536

537 *Prediction of metabolic pathways*

538 MEANtools leverages the reaction network to facilitate the generation of pathway 539 predictions. Initially, it predicts potential metabolites along with their corresponding

540 molecular structures for each mass signature. Subsequently, MEANtools employs the 541 RDKit ^{55,56} Python package (v 2019.03.2.0) to computationally generate *in silico* 542 structures resulting from each reaction-associated substrate.

543

Given the substantial number of reactions cataloged in RetroRules, generating all product molecules for the metabolite structures predicted in a metabolome by querying every reaction can be time-consuming and computationally intensive. From each reaction, new metabolites emerge, leading to a large number of molecular structures. To expedite this process, MEANtools relies on -omics evidence, specifically the reaction-substrate-enzyme pairs under the confinement of FCs, to guide the generation of *in-silico* molecules.

551

552 Further acceleration is achieved by targeting specific substructures within each 553 metabolite structure, employing a divide-and-conquer strategy (Figure 6). For each 554 metabolite structure, MEANtools initiates by verifying the presence of specific atoms, 555 such as N or C. Upon success, the next step involves querying reactions that pertain 556 only to simple substructures, like N=N and C=C. If both atoms are present, MEANtools 557 extends its search to reactions centered on substructures like C=N and C-N. In subsequent rounds, MEANtools explores more complex substructures based on the 558 559 substructures identified in prior steps. For instance, metabolites with the C=N substructure are exclusively queried for reactions centered on the C=N-C 560 561 substructure. This iterative process continues until no further successful queries are 562 obtained for a given metabolite.

563

564 Easy-to-browse MEANtools output

565 MEANtools generates user-friendly visualizations and supplementary data in the form 566 of easy-to-browse tables. MEANtools stores these tables in an SQLite database. It 567 also offers python-based utility scripts to retrieve and visualize FCs within the MR-568 based correlation network.

569

570 MEANtools analyzes the reaction network created in the preceding stages to predict 571 candidate metabolic pathways aligned with the user's interests. To accomplish this, 572 the NetworkX ⁵⁶ Python package (v2.4) is utilized. MEANtools constructs a distinct 573 subnetwork for each of the initial metabolites provided by the user. These subnetworks 574 are transformed into directed acyclic graphs (DAGs) by identifying any cycles within 575 the network, representing potential reversible reactions. Only links capable of 576 advancing the reaction away from the initial metabolite are retained. In instances 577 where cycles occur among metabolites at the same reaction distance from the initial 578 metabolite, the edge featuring the weakest enzyme-metabolite correlation is 579 eliminated. This approach yields multiple DAGs rooted at the initial metabolites, each 580 offering the potential for candidate metabolic pathways. The longest reaction path in 581 each subnetwork, commencing from the initial metabolite, is identified to predict these 582 pathways. This process is repeated to generate a DAG for each initial metabolite at 583 the termination of the reaction, yielding two pathway predictions for each input 584 structure. MEANtools then delivers the complete reaction network and all DAGs in the form of CSV tables, facilitating seamless import and exploration within Cytoscape. 585 586 Furthermore, pathway predictions are presented as SVG image files, providing 587 comprehensive details regarding the involved metabolites, reactions, genes, and their 588 respective correlations. To enhance user exploration, MEANtools offers an option to 589 generate SVG files for each molecular structure predicted in earlier stages. This lets 590 users pinpoint and prioritize structures or reactions of interest. MEANtools can 591 construct DAGs and pathway predictions rooted at any user-selected molecule.

592

593 **Data availability**

594 Raw paired-transcriptomics and -metabolomics data for the case study was taken from 595 NCBI BioProject: PRJNA509154 and EBI's MetaboLights: MTBLS1039 respectively 596 32 Pre-processed file of the metabolomics data is available at 597 https://github.com/sattely-lab/falcarindiol pathway metabolomics. All the input files 598 used in the case study can be found in the 'data' folder in the MEANtools GitHub 599 repository https://github.com/kumarsaurabh20/meantools.

600

601 **Code availability**

MEANtools is open source and is freely available on its GitHub page
(https://github.com/kumarsaurabh20/meantools), under the permissive MIT license.
The MEANtools documentation and tutorial with the demo data is available on GitHub
at https://meantools.readthedocs.io/en/latest/.

606

607 Acknowledgements

- 608 This work was funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO)
- under the Groot grant [OCENW.GROOT.2019.063]. We thank Jennifer Wisecaver
- 610 (Purdue University, USA) for her valuable insights into co-expression analysis utilizing
- 611 mutual-rank statistics.
- 612

613 **Competing interests**

- 514 JJJvdH is currently member of the Scientific Advisory Board of NAICONS Srl., Milano,
- 615 Italy, and consults for Corteva Agriscience, Indianapolis, IN, USA. M.H.M. is a member
- of the scientific advisory board of Hexagon Bio. The other authors declare to have no
- 617 competing interests.

618 Figure legend

619

620 Figure 1: MEANtools predicts metabolic pathways by integrating transcriptomic, 621 metabolomic, and genomic data. a) Mass signature or mass feature profiles are 622 collected using standard metabolomic data processing pipelines. The feature table 623 has rows as unique features and columns are divided into multiple components, like 624 m/z values, retention times, and mass abundance values across samples. Similarly, 625 the transcript expression matrix is collected using a standard RNA-seq data 626 processing pipeline. In the expression matrix, rows represent different transcripts and 627 columns have normalized count data across samples. b) The RetroRules database is 628 formatted by cross-referencing it with the MetaNetX database for its substrate and 629 related mono-isotopic masses. Based on these masses, mass transition values are 630 calculated for all reactions. c) Feature IDs and m/z values of mass signatures are 631 mapped against a list of user-defined adducts table. By default, MEANtools provides 632 a list of 48 adducts from both positive and negative mode operations. All m/z values 633 are accounted with the adducts masses and PPM value and mapped against the 634 LOTUS database. This mapping results in the putative annotation of each feature ID 635 with specific structures from the LOTUS database. d) Correlations are computed 636 between expression levels of transcripts and abundances of metabolites. e) The 637 protein families/domains encoded by the genes in the correlated transcript-metabolite 638 pairs are used to query RetroRules and identify which enzymatic reactions may be 639 associated with each transcript. f&g) MEANtools then integrate the results of previous 640 steps to identify cases in which metabolite pairs are correlated to a transcript that 641 encodes an enzyme capable of catalyzing a reaction that explains their mutual mass 642 difference. Finally, MEANtools maps the product of these reactions to other mass 643 signatures in the metabolome and repeats the procedure to generate pathway 644 predictions.

645

Figure 2: Identification of the Functional Cluster (FC) belonging to the falcarindiol pathway. a) Network diagram illustrating the connections between transcripts and metabolites within the falcarindiol FC, with pathway-related transcripts marked with an asterisk. b) Heatmap displaying the expression levels of all genes within the falcarindiol FC. c) Heatmap showing the abundance of mass-signatures associated with the falcarindiol FC. d) Summary table presenting the correlations betweentranscripts and metabolites from the falcarindiol FC

653

654 Figure 3: MEANtools reconstructs parts of the falcarindiol pathway as proposed by 655 Jeon et al., and the genes responsible for each enzymatic step. A) MEANtools predicts 656 the second step of falcarindiol biosynthesis in reverse (dehydrocrepenynic acid \rightarrow 657 crepenynic acid). The transformation is annotated with the reaction rule used in the transformation, diameter of reaction and RetroRules-based reaction IDs, enzyme 658 659 support, edge support and reaction likelihood. B) MEANtools predicts the third step of 660 falcarindiol biosynthesis in reverse starting from falcarindiol. Each transformation is 661 annotated with a reaction rule associated with that transformation. Additionally, the reaction rule is annotated with the diameter of the reaction and reaction IDs from 662 RetroRules database. Each transformation in the second step of falcarindiol 663 664 biosynthesis is also annotated with enzyme support, edge support based on 665 correlation values and the reaction likelihood scores.

666

667 Figure 4: Detection of functional clusters (FCs) specific to the phenylalanine (PAL) 668 and p-coumaroyltyramine (THT) pathways. a) Network depicting the relationship 669 between transcripts and mass signatures within the PAL FC. b) Network illustrating 670 the interplay between transcripts and mass signatures within the THT FC. c) Heatmap 671 illustrating the expression levels of all transcripts within the PAL and THT FCs. d) 672 Heatmap displaying the abundance of all mass signatures present in the PAL and THT 673 FCs. e) Correlation matrix highlighting the correlations among transcripts and mass 674 signatures within the PAL FC. f) Correlation matrix displaying the relationships 675 between transcripts and mass signatures within the THT FC, including Mutual rank 676 and transformed edge weights.

677

Figure 5: Overview of the estimation of reaction likelihood scores. A) The transformation of naringenin to 2-hydroxynaringenin requires a flavanone 2hydroxylase enzyme. B) To estimate the likelihood score of this reaction, the SMILES ID and the enzyme EC number was used as an input to the GNN-SOM method. GNN-SOM predicts likelihood scores of each atom in the molecule for being a site-ofmetabolism. As a next step, we take the SMILES ID of the substrate and the product and use the ReactionDecoder tool to identify the reaction centers and possible bond formation/cleavage site(s). Referring to the atom index of the atoms in the reaction center, we select the highest likelihood score. This value represents the reaction likelihood score of a reaction which is 0.94 for the transformation of naringenin to the 2-hydroxynaringenin. C) Distribution of reaction likelihood scores from experimentally validated enzyme-substrate pairs (Known) and randomly assigned enzyme-substrates pairs (Random).

691

692 Figure 6: MEANtools identifies reactions for a molecular structure according to a 693 divide-and-conquer strategy. For each metabolite, MEANtools first queries the 694 presence of key atoms and then continues to query, in rounds, increasingly complex 695 reactant substructures according to which substructures have already been identified. 696 For example, A) a set of metabolites is first gueried for B) nitrogen and carbon atoms. 697 C) Metabolites that pass these criteria are then queried for more complex 698 substructures like C-N or C=C. D) In the following round, MEANtools gueries 699 substructures with more complexity according to which substructures have already 700 been identified: in this manner, only metabolites with the N=C substructure is gueried 701 for the N=C-N substructure.

702

Supplementary Figure 1: Venn diagram of the content of three datasets, namely loose, medium and strict. *Loose* dataset contains reaction rules-enzyme associations from the RetroRules database, cross-referenced with the Rhea and KEGG-orthology database. *Medium* dataset contains experimentally validated entries together with the ECDomainMiner predictions. The *strict* dataset contains only experimentally validated entries.

709

Supplementary Figure 2: Distribution of taxonomic groups in the reaction-enzyme
loose dataset. X- and Y-axis represent categories of the taxonomic group and their
counts respectively.

713

Supplementary Figure 3: Distribution of p-values from the correlation analysis between

the processed transcriptomics and metabolomics datasets from Jeon *et al.*, 2020.

716

Supplementary Figure 4: Distribution of correlation coefficients from the correlation
analysis between the processed transcriptomics and metabolomics datasets from
Jeon *et al.*, 2020 ³².

720

Supplementary Figure 5: Functional clusters (FC) encompassing genes from thealpha-tomatine pathway of *Solanum lycopersicum*.

723

Supplementary Figure 6: Prediction of intermediate steps of falcarindiol pathway from MEANtools using *strict* (A) and *loose* (B) datasets. Number of enzyme associations is reduced while using *strict* dataset due to its more specific Pfam annotations. Blue arrow shows non-specific enzyme associations predicted with *loose* dataset.

Supplementary Figure 7: Distribution of FC node size across decay rates and treatments. For each combination of treatment from the Jeon et al. (2020) dataset ³², fungal effectors, bacterial effectors, and all, the size of functional clusters (FCs) generated by MEANtools is calculated and shown in a boxplot across four decay rates. The FCs size is stable across treatment combinations, with a slight tendency for smaller FCs when all treatments are considered. FCs size increases with decay rate.

735 Supplementary Figure 8: Use of coexpression edges to merge and prioritize FCs. 736 Green edges represent coexpression networks and blue edges represent gene-737 metabolite networks of FCs. Colored nodes represent biosynthetic genes annotated 738 from seven tomato pathways. Coexpression was detected across all treatment 739 dimensions. Coexpression networks and FCs were created with a mutual rank metric 740 and ClusterONE clustering with a decay rate of 10. FCs from the α -tomatine pathway 741 are connected thanks to coexpression edges between the genes GAME12 742 transaminase (Solyc12q006470), and 2-oxoglutarate-dependent dioxygenase 743 (Solyc07g043420), GAME17 (UDP-glucosyltransferase) GAME11 and (Solyc07g043480) and GAME1 (UDP-galactosyltransferase) (Solyc07g043490). Two 744 745 genes associated with the biosynthesis of 4-coumarate CoA ligase (4CL) were also 746 connected by coexpression edges in the hydroxy cinnamic acid amide (HCAA) pathway. Merging FCs via coexpression edges between biosynthetic genes was 747 robust across decay rates 10 and 25, with only the connections belonging to the HCAA 748 749 pathways displayed in decay rate 5.

750 **References**

- Osbourn, A. E. & Lanzotti, V. Plant-derived natural products: Synthesis,
 function, and application. *Plant-derived Natural Products: Synthesis, Function, and Application* 1–597 (2009) doi:10.1007/978-0-387-85498-4/COVER.
- Da Silva, R. R., Dorrestein, P. C. & Quinn, R. A. Illuminating the dark matter in metabolomics. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A* **112**, 12549–12550 (2015).
- 7563.Aharoni, A., Jongsma, M. A. & Bouwmeester, H. J. Volatile science? Metabolic757engineering of terpenoids in plants. *Trends Plant Sci* **10**, 594–602 (2005).
- Shen, S. *et al.* An Oryza-specific hydroxycinnamoyl tyramine gene cluster
 contributes to enhanced disease resistance. *Sci Bull (Beijing)* 66, 2369–2380
 (2021).
- Final Field Strength Field
- 6. Chae, L., Kim, T., Nilo-Poyanco, R. & Rhee, S. Y. Genomic signatures of specialized metabolism in plants. *Science (1979)* **344**, 510–513 (2014).
- 765
 7. Erb, M. & Kliebenstein, D. J. Plant Secondary Metabolites as Defenses,
 766 Regulators, and Primary Metabolites: The Blurred Functional Trichotomy. *Plant*767 *Physiol* 184, 39–52 (2020).
- 8. Medema, M. H. & Osbourn, A. Computational genomic identification and
 functional reconstitution of plant natural product biosynthetic pathways. *Nat Prod Rep* 33, 951–962 (2016).
- Singh, K. S., van der Hooft, J. J. J., van Wees, S. C. M. & Medema, M. H.
 Integrative omics approaches for biosynthetic pathway discovery in plants. *Nat Prod Rep* 39, 1876–1896 (2022).
- 10. Cravens, A., Payne, J. & Smolke, C. D. Synthetic biology strategies for
 microbial biosynthesis of plant natural products. *Nature Communications 2019*10:1 10, 1–12 (2019).
- 11. Kautsar, S. A., Suarez Duran, H. G., Blin, K., Osbourn, A. & Medema, M. H.
 plantiSMASH: automated identification, annotation and expression analysis of
 plant biosynthetic gene clusters. *Nucleic Acids Res* 45, W55–W63 (2017).
- 78012.Töpfer, N., Fuchs, L. M. & Aharoni, A. The PhytoClust tool for metabolic gene781clusters discovery in plant genomes. Nucleic Acids Res 45, 7049–7063 (2017).
- 13. Schläpfer, P. *et al.* Genome-Wide Prediction of Metabolic Enzymes, Pathways,
 and Gene Clusters in Plants. *Plant Physiol* **173**, 2041–2059 (2017).
- 14. Li, C. *et al.* Single-cell multi-omics in the medicinal plant Catharanthus roseus.
 Nature Chemical Biology 2023 19:8 19, 1031–1041 (2023).
- Wisecaver, J. H. *et al.* A Global Coexpression Network Approach for
 Connecting Genes to Specialized Metabolic Pathways in Plants. *Plant Cell* 29,
 944–959 (2017).
- 16. Qi, X. *et al.* A gene cluster for secondary metabolism in oat: Implications for
 the evolution of metabolic diversity in plants. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A* **101**,
 8233–8238 (2004).
- Field, B. & Osbourn, A. E. Metabolic diversification Independent assembly of
 operon-like gene clusters in different plants. *Science (1979)* **320**, 543–547
 (2008).
- Field, B. *et al.* Formation of plant metabolic gene clusters within dynamic
 chromosomal regions. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A* **108**, 16116–16121 (2011).
- 19. Winzer, T. *et al.* A Papaver somniferum 10-gene cluster for synthesis of the anticancer alkaloid noscapine. *Science* **336**, 1704–1708 (2012).

799	20.	Itkin, M. et al. Biosynthesis of antinutritional alkaloids in solanaceous crops is
800		mediated by clustered genes. Science 341, 175–179 (2013).
801	21.	King, A. J., Brown, G. D., Gilday, A. D., Larson, T. R. & Graham, I. A.
802		Production of bioactive diterpenoids in the euphorbiaceae depends on
803		evolutionarily conserved gene clusters. Plant Cell 26, 3286–3298 (2014).
804	22.	Shang, Y. et al. Biosynthesis, regulation, and domestication of bitterness in
805		cucumber. Science (1979) 346, 1084–1088 (2014).
806	23.	Huang, A. C. et al. A specialized metabolic network selectively modulates
807		Arabidopsis root microbiota. Science 364, (2019).
808	24.	Chen, X. et al. A pathogenesis-related 10 protein catalyzes the final step in
809		thebaine biosynthesis. Nat Chem Biol 14, 738–743 (2018).
810	25.	Shang, Y. et al. Biosynthesis, regulation, and domestication of bitterness in
811		cucumber. Science (1979) 346, 1084–1088 (2014).
812	26.	Lau, W. & Sattely, E. S. Six enzymes from mayapple that complete the
813		biosynthetic pathway to the etoposide aglycone. Science 349 , 1224–1228
814		(2015).
815	27.	Rajniak, J., Barco, B., Clay, N. K. & Sattely, E. S. A new cyanogenic
816		metabolite in Arabidopsis required for inducible pathogen defence. <i>Nature</i> 525 .
817		376–379 (2015).
818	28.	Aoki, K., Ògata, Y. & Shibata, D. Approaches for Extracting Practical
819		Information from Gene Co-expression Networks in Plant Biology. Plant Cell
820		Physiol 48 , 381–390 (2007).
821	29.	Nett, R. S., Dho, Y., Low, Y. Y. & Sattely, E. S. A metabolic regulon reveals
822		early and late acting enzymes in neuroactive Lycopodium alkaloid
823		biosynthesis. Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A 118 , (2021).
824	30.	Fang, H. et al. A monocot-specific hydroxycinnamoylputrescine gene cluster
825		contributes to immunity and cell death in rice. Sci Bull (Beijing) 66, 2381-2393
826		(2021).
827	31.	Liu, Z. et al. Drivers of metabolic diversification: how dynamic genomic
828		neighbourhoods generate new biosynthetic pathways in the Brassicaceae.
829		New Phytologist 227, 1109–1123 (2020).
830	32.	Jeon, J. E. et al. A Pathogen-Responsive Gene Cluster for Highly Modified
831		Fatty Acids in Tomato. Cell 180, 176-187.e19 (2020).
832	33.	Hong, B. et al. Biosynthesis of strychnine. Nature 2022 607:7919 607, 617-
833		622 (2022).
834	34.	Ding, Y. et al. Genetic elucidation of interconnected antibiotic pathways
835		mediating maize innate immunity. Nat Plants 6, 1375–1388 (2020).
836	35.	Nett, R. S., Lau, W. & Sattely, E. S. Discovery and engineering of colchicine
837		alkaloid biosynthesis. Nature 584, 148–153 (2020).
838	36.	Cavill, R., Jennen, D., Kleinjans, J. & Briedé, J. J. Transcriptomic and
839		metabolomic data integration. Brief Bioinform 17, 891–901 (2016).
840	37.	Rai, A., Saito, K. & Yamazaki, M. Integrated omics analysis of specialized
841		metabolism in medicinal plants. <i>Plant J</i> 90, 764–787 (2017).
842	38.	Duigou, T., Du Lac, M., Carbonell, P. & Faulon, J. L. RetroRules: a database
843		of reaction rules for engineering biology. Nucleic Acids Res 47, D1229–D1235
844		(2019).
845	39.	Rutz, A. et al. The LOTUS initiative for open knowledge management in
846		natural products research. <i>Elife</i> 11 , (2022).
847	40.	Beauxis, Y. & Genta-Jouve, G. MetWork: a web server for natural products
848		anticipation. Bioinformatics 35, 1795–1796 (2019).

849 850	41.	Moretti, S., Tran, V. D. T., Mehl, F., Ibberson, M. & Pagni, M. MetaNetX/MNXref: unified namespace for metabolites and biochemical
851		reactions in the context of metabolic models. Nucleic Acids Res 49, D570–
852		D574 (2021).
853	42.	Bansal, P. et al. Rhea, the reaction knowledgebase in 2022. Nucleic Acids Res
854		50 , D693 (2021).
855	43.	Kanehisa, M. & Goto, S. KEGG: Kyoto Encyclopedia of Genes and Genomes.
856		Nucleic Acids Res 28 , 27 (2000).
857	44.	Von Roepenack-Lahaye, E. et al. p-CoumaroyInoradrenaline, a Novel Plant
858		Metabolite Implicated in Tomato Defense against Pathogens. Journal of
859		Biological Chemistry 278 , 43373–43383 (2003).
860	45.	Itkin, M. et al. Biosynthesis of antinutritional alkaloids in solanaceous crops is
861		mediated by clustered genes. Science (1979) 341 , 175–179 (2013).
862	46.	Niggeweg, R., Michael, A. J. & Martin, C. Engineering plants with increased
863		levels of the antioxidant chlorogenic acid. Nat Biotechnol 22, 746–754 (2004).
864	47.	Porokhin, V., Liu, L. P. & Hassoun, S. Using graph neural networks for site-of-
865		metabolism prediction and its applications to ranking promiscuous enzymatic
866		products. <i>Bioinformatics</i> 39 , (2023).
867	48.	Rahman, S. A. et al. Reaction Decoder Tool (RDT): extracting features from
868		chemical reactions. <i>Bioinformatics</i> 32 , 2065–2066 (2016).
869	49.	Wisecaver, J. H. et al. A Global Coexpression Network Approach for
870 871		Connecting Genes to Specialized Metabolic Pathways in Plants. <i>Plant Cell</i> 29 , 944–959 (2017)
872	50	Nepusz T. Yu H & Paccanaro A. Detecting overlapping protein complexes
873	00.	in protein-protein interaction networks <i>Nature Methods</i> 2012 9:59 471–472
874		(2012).
875	51.	Breton, C., Šnaidrová, L., Jeanneau, C., Koča, J. & Imberty, A. Structures and
876		mechanisms of glycosyltransferases. <i>Glycobiology</i> 16 , 29R-37R (2006).
877	52.	Beniddir, M. A. et al. Advances in decomposing complex metabolite mixtures
878		using substructure- and network-based computational metabolomics
879		approaches. <i>Nat Prod Rep</i> 38 , 1967–1993 (2021).
880	53.	Van Der Hooft, J. J. J., Wandy, J., Barrett, M. P., Burgess, K. E. V. & Rogers,
881		S. Topic modeling for untargeted substructure exploration in metabolomics.
882		Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A 113 , 13738–13743 (2016).
883	54.	Obayashi, T. & Kinoshita, K. Rank of Correlation Coefficient as a Comparable
884		Measure for Biological Significance of Gene Coexpression. DNA Research 16,
885		249–260 (2009).
886	55.	RDKit. https://www.rdkit.org/.
887	56.	Hagberg, A., Swart, P. J. & Schult, D. A. Exploring network structure,
888		dynamics, and function using NetworkX. Preprint at (2008).
889		
890		



their protein domains

to known enzymatic reactions

known enzymatic reactions and correlated with enzymes capable of catalyzing them.





6

4

d)

895	0.73	0.58	0.7	0.73	0.77	0.75	0.79	0.73	0.76	0.75	0.77	0.72	0.71
882	0.83	0.75	0.83	0.84	0.75	0.88	0.85	0.81	0.81	0.86	0.89	0.86	0.77
82	0.81	0.7	0.79	0.84	0.75	0.82	0.83	0.77	0.78	0.85	0.86	0.83	0.74
51	0.88	0.78	0.85	0.87	0.81	0.86	0.89	0.88	0.82	0.89	0.92	0.89	0.84
58	0.88	0.75	0.84	0.87	0.8	0.86	0.89	0.86	0.83	0.89	0.91	0.88	0.83
•	0.86	0.77	0.85	0.86	0.79	0.87	0.89	0.85	0.83	0.88	0.9	0.88	0.82



a)

PAL gene-metabolite network











	V Substr	ucture in metabolite	Substruct	ture not in metabolite	O Substructure untested			
Input metabolites	CN							
Reactant substructures								
N	\checkmark	~	~	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark		
С	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark		
C-C	\checkmark	\checkmark	~	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark		
C=C	\checkmark	\checkmark	~	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark		
N=N	×	×	×	×	×	×		
N-C	~	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark		
N=C	X	\checkmark	\checkmark	X	X	X		
C-N-C	×)	×	×	~)	~)	~)		
C=N-C	01	~	~	0*)	0*)	0*)		
N-C-N	×/	×	×	×/	×/	× /		
N=C-N	O	×	\checkmark	0*	0*	O×		