

# Altered stomatal dynamics of two Euramerican poplar genotypes submitted to successive ozone exposure and water deficit

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#### 10 ABSTRACT

11 The impact of ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) pollution events on the plant drought response needs special 12 attention because spring O<sub>3</sub> episodes are often followed by summer drought. By causing 13 stomatal sluggishness, O<sub>3</sub> could affect the stomatal dynamic during a subsequent drought 14 event. In this context, we studied the impact of O<sub>3</sub> exposure and water deficit (in the presence 15 or in the absence of O<sub>3</sub> episode) on the stomatal closure/opening mechanisms relative to 16 irradiance or vapour pressure deficit (VPD) variation. Two genotypes of *Populus nigra* x 17 deltoides were exposed to various treatments for 21 days. Saplings were exposed to 80 18 ppb/day O<sub>3</sub> for 13 days, and then to moderate drought for 7 days. The curves of the stomatal 19 response to irradiance and VPD changes were determined after 13 days of O<sub>3</sub> exposure, and 20 after 21 days in the case of subsequent water deficit, and then fitted using a sigmoidal model. 21 The main responses under O<sub>3</sub> exposure were stomatal closure and sluggishness, but the two 22 genotypes showed contrasting responses. During stomatal closure induced by a change in 23 irradiance, closure was slower for both genotypes. Nonetheless, the genotypes differed in 24 stomatal opening under light. Carpaccio stomata opened more slowly than control stomata, 25 whereas Robusta stomata tended to open faster. These effects could be of particular interest, 26 as stomatal impairment was still present after O<sub>3</sub> exposure and could result from imperfect 27 recovery. Under water deficit alone, we observed slower stomatal closure in response to VPD 28 and irradiance, but faster stomatal opening in response to irradiance, more marked in 29 Carpaccio. Under the combined treatment, most of the parameters showed antagonistic 30 responses. Our results highlight that it is important to take genotype-specific responses and 31 interactive stress cross-talk into account to improve the prediction of stomatal conductance in 32 response to various environmental modifications.

- Capsule: This study indicates that the possible multiple stomatal responses to environmental stimuli must be taken into account in order to better define the parameters of the stomatal
- 36 Keywords: ozone, drought, stomata, VPD, light

conductance model.

#### 1 Introduction

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Forest health depends at least on our capacities to improve risk assessment. This evaluation depends on our understanding of tree biological and physiological responses to multiple environmental stressors (Sicard et al., 2016). Among abiotic stress factors, tropospheric ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) and drought are detrimental for tree growth and health (Allen et al., 2010; Wittig et al., 2007). O<sub>3</sub> is a phytotoxic air pollutant that impairs gas exchanges and reduces plant biomass (Dizengremel et al., 2013; Jolivet et al., 2016; Wittig et al., 2007). It is a secondary pollutant resulting from a photochemical process in the troposphere, with an annual cycle: higher daily O<sub>3</sub> concentrations are reported in spring and summer, lower ones in autumn and winter. Recurrent spring maxima have been reported in the northern hemisphere (Kalabokas et al., 2017; Monks, 2000; Parrish et al., 2013). On the other hand, drought events are predicted to increase in the near future. Due to global warming, wet regions are becoming wetter and dry regions drier (Liu and Allan, 2013). A reduction of primary growth was observed following the 2003 drought and heat wave (Ciais et al., 2005). Stand mortality was reported all over the world (Allen et al., 2010). Models integrating temperature, vapour pressure deficit (VPD) and rainfall predict an increased probability of similar events in the near future (IPCC, 2014; Lehner et al., 2006; Park Williams et al., 2013). Against this environmental fluctuation, the main physiological responses of trees and more generally plants are the control of transpiration by stomata. In the case of O<sub>3</sub>, stomatal closure limits O<sub>3</sub> entrance. Under drought, stomatal closure prevents water loss. Nevertheless, there is a cost for carbon assimilation under both constraints. Stomata exert a major control on both the water and carbon cycles round the world (Hetherington and Woodward, 2003).

Meta-analyses of published data indicate that ambient O<sub>3</sub> reduces tree biomass production (Li et al., 2017; Wittig et al., 2009), while an analysis of survey data showed how O<sub>3</sub> reduces tree growth (Braun et al., 2014). Different metric indicators have been created to assess critical levels of O<sub>3</sub> for plants. The simplest ones were only based on cumulative exposure levels. The USA selected the SUM-index (sum of all hourly average concentrations over *X* ppb), whereas the EU selected the AOT40 (Accumulated Ozone over a Threshold of 40 ppb) which takes into account hourly O<sub>3</sub> concentrations above 40 ppb *per* hour when irradiance is 50 W.m<sup>-2</sup> minimum (Fuhrer et al., 1997; Musselman et al., 2006). The advantage of these metrics is that they make it simple to determine exposure levels only based on O<sub>3</sub> concentration data. In the early 2000's, the biologically more relevant concept of flux-based approach emerged, resulting in the scientific adoption of the Phytotoxic Ozone Dose over a

threshold of Y nmol.m<sup>-2</sup>.s<sup>-1</sup> (PODy) (Emberson et al., 2007; Hayes and Bangor, 2017; 70 71 Karlsson et al., 2000; Mills et al., 2011). This metric is available for risk assessment and takes 72 O<sub>3</sub> uptake by the leaves through stomata into account. The DO<sub>3</sub>SE model (Deposition of O<sub>3</sub> 73 for Stomatal Exchange) was developed to account for the variation in stomatal opening and 74 closure with climate, soil, and plant factors (Büker et al., 2012; Emberson et al., 2007); it is 75 based on the empirical Jarvis-type stomatal conductance model (Jarvis, 1976). This model was developed using steady-state parameters, and the stomatal dynamic modification 76 77 specifically induced by O<sub>3</sub> was ignored (Hoshika et al., 2013). Tropospheric O<sub>3</sub> is known to 78 slow down the stomatal responses to environmental factors, named stomatal sluggishness. 79 Stomatal sluggishness has been reported in response to changes in light (Dumont et al., 2013; 80 Paoletti and Grulke, 2010), VPD (Dumont et al., 2013; Grulke et al., 2007), and soil water 81 stress (Durand et al., 2019; Gérardin et al., 2018; Hoshika et al., 2013). Hoshika et al. (2017) 82 showed that stomatal sluggishness and closure should be taken into account in stomatal 83 response modelling in a Jarvis-type model. O<sub>3</sub>-induced stomatal sluggishness potentially 84 increases transpiration (Hoshika et al., 2015). O<sub>3</sub>- and drought-induced loss of stomatal 85 function may enhance both leaf water loss and O<sub>3</sub> uptake (Hoshika et al., 2013). In natural 86 conditions, an O<sub>3</sub> spring episode is very likely before summer drought in Europe. Plants 87 subjected to O<sub>3</sub> stress in spring can be particularly sensitive to drought events in summer 88 (Pollastrini et al., 2014). O<sub>3</sub> could affect the stomatal dynamic under drought by causing 89 stomatal sluggishness. The present study aims to decipher the response of stomatal 90 closure/opening relative to light or vapour pressure deficit variation in O<sub>3</sub> and in water deficit 91 stress conditions (with or without previous O<sub>3</sub> stress). The two *Populus deltoides* x nigra 92 (Moench.) genotypes ("Carpaccio" and "Robusta") were documented in our recent 93 experiments under 120 ppb O<sub>3</sub> as being impaired in radial growth and gas exchanges, and 94 exhibiting increased visible leaf injuries and senescence, and changes in detoxification 95 capacities (Dghim et al., 2013; Dumont et al., 2013, 2014a, 2014b; Dusart et al., 2018). Better 96 stomatal control has been observed under O<sub>3</sub> in the Carpaccio genotype as compared to 97 Robusta (Dumont et al., 2013), while both genotypes showed efficient stomatal closure under 98 soil water deficit (Durand et al., 2019; Dusart et al., 2019; Ridolfi and Dreyer, 1997). The 99 present paper addresses the following questions: i) are any of the differences in stomatal 100 dynamics linked to environmental variables (light, VPD) between the two poplar genotypes?, 101 ii) does 80 ppb O<sub>3</sub> or water deficit induce stomatal sluggishness in poplar?, iii) does O<sub>3</sub> 102 treatment modify water-deficit-induced stomatal closure?, and iv) does stomatal dynamics 103 recover after 7 days in the absence of O<sub>3</sub> treatment?

#### 2 Materials and methods

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# 2.1 Plant material and exposure conditions

Cuttings of the two Euramerican poplar genotypes "Carpaccio" and "Robusta" were grown in growth chambers as already described in Dusart et al. (2019) with slight modifications. Cuttings were planted in ten-liter pots filled with a sand/peat mixture (1/1, v/v) and fertilised by adding 15 g of slow-release nutritive granules (Nutricot T-100) and 1 g.L<sup>-1</sup> CaMg(CO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>. For both genotypes, forty-eight plants were randomly distributed in eight phytotronic chambers, i.e. twenty-four plants in control chambers (charcoal-filtered air), and twenty-four plants in chambers set for O<sub>3</sub> treatment (80 nmol.mol<sup>-1</sup> for 13 hours, from 09:00 to 22:00). For reasons of space in the culture chambers and length of measurement times, the experiment was duplicated separately for each genotype. After a 7-day-long acclimation period, the O<sub>3</sub> treatment started while control saplings were exposed to charcoal-filtered air for 13 days. After 13 days (d) of fumigation, the total cumulative sum of O<sub>3</sub> flux (SUM00), the cumulative O<sub>3</sub> dose above a threshold of 40 ppb (AOT 40), and the phytotoxic O<sub>3</sub> dose above a threshold flux of 0 nmol.m<sup>-2</sup>.s<sup>-1</sup> (POD<sub>0</sub>) (based on measured stomatal conductance, see Bagard et al., 2015) were determined (Table S1). At the end of the O<sub>3</sub> exposure period, half of the saplings were submitted to a moderate water deficit for 7 d. Soil Water Content (SWC) was determined with 24 wireless Time Domain Reflectometry (TDR) probes (CWS655E, Campbell Scientific Ltd, Antony, France). A calibration between volumetric SWC measured by TDR and pot weight was performed. The biological available water was expressed as relative extractable water (REW), as described by Wildhagen et al. (2018) for the same soil. Poplars were watered with a known volume of water several times a day to maintain the level of REW stable. For the well-watered treatment, poplars were irrigated at 75 % (±10%) of REW, whereas for the water deficit treatment, irrigation was set to 45% (± 2%) of REW until the end of the experiment (Fig. S1). A cumulative sum of the amount of water added for each treatment for 21 d is presented in Table S1.

#### 130 2.2 Plant growth

- The number of leaves and the diameter at the collar and height were recorded twice a week until the end of the experiment for each individual. At the end of the experiment, leaves, stems and roots were oven-dried at 60 °C until they reached a constant dry mass.
- 134 2.3 Gas exchanges and photosynthetic pigment kinetics

Gas exchanges ( $A_n$ , net  $CO_2$  assimilation, and  $g_s$ , stomatal conductance to water vapour) were measured using a Li-6200 (Li Cor, Lincoln, NE, USA) as described in Dusart et al. (2019). Non-destructive determination of the chlorophyll pigment content was performed with a Dualex (Force-A, Orsay, France). For all non-destructive leaf measurements, the same leaf was used, i.e., the first fully expanded leaf (the 10th leaf from the apex) at the beginning of the  $O_3$  treatment.

- 141 2.4 Stomatal response to irradiance and vapour pressure deficit
- 142 2.4.1 Gas exchange measurements
  - Gas exchange measurements were performed with a Li-6400 system, as described in Durand et al. (2019) with some minor modifications. Parameters of the leaf cuvette were for light: PAR: 800 μmol.m<sup>-2</sup>.s<sup>-1</sup> with 30 μmol.m<sup>-2</sup>.s<sup>-1</sup> of blue irradiance and VPD: 0.8 kPa, until gs reached a steady state (g<sub>0</sub>, defined as a variation lower than 5% over 5 minutes). Then light was turned off (as well as in the phytotronic chamber) until gs got to a new steady state (g<sub>1</sub>), then turned on to 800 μmol.m<sup>-2</sup>.s<sup>-1</sup> until stomatal conductance reached the last steady state (g<sub>2</sub>). The 800 μmol.m<sup>-2</sup>.s<sup>-1</sup> value was chosen to avoid photoinhibition due to excess light (Niinemets and Kull, 2001). A similar procedure was used to monitor gs response to a change of VPD: it was switched to 3 kPa instead of 0.8 kPa (for a fixed PAR: 800 μmol.m<sup>-2</sup>.s<sup>-1</sup>). VPD from leaf tissues to air was controlled with a dew point generator as described in Vialet-Chabrand et al. (2013).

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The obtained stomatal response curves were fitted using the following sigmoidal model (Vialet-Chabrand et al., 2013):

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$$g_s = g_0 + (G - g_0) e^{-e^{(\frac{\lambda - t}{\tau})}}$$

- where  $g_s$  is the fitted stomatal conductance,  $g_0$  and G are the steady-state values of  $g_s$  (mol.m<sup>-</sup>  $^2.s^{-1}$ ), respectively at the start and at the end of the curve,  $\tau$  is a time constant (s),  $\lambda$  is the lag time (s), and t is time (s). The speed of the stomatal response was estimated by calculating the maximum slope (SL<sub>max</sub>), as follows:
- $162 \qquad SL_{max} = \frac{G g_0}{\tau. e}$

- where (G-g<sub>0</sub>) represents the amplitude of the stomatal response and e is Euler's number (e  $\approx$
- 164 2.718). Further information regarding the model parameters and fitting procedure can be
- found in Gérardin et al. (2018) and Durand et al. (2019).

## 166 2.5 Statistical analyses

Statistical analyses were performed using R 3.1.0 (R Development Core Team) open-source software. Linear models created from the *nlme* package (Pinheiro et al., 2018) were used to study growth parameters with ANOVA, including the effects of water deficit,  $O_3$  and genotype. The growth chamber was also tested and excluded from the models because the effect was not significant for all the parameters tested throughout the whole experimental period. Model parameters, G,  $g_0$ ,  $\lambda$ ,  $\tau$ ,  $SL_{max}$  were explored in the same way. The *lme4* package (Bates et al., 2015) was used to fit a linear mixed-effect model on gas exchange and chlorophyll content data with fixed variables (water deficit and  $O_3$  data) whereas biological replicas were random variables. Residual plots of the model were used to assumed heteroscedasticity and variance homogeneity. The *emmeans* package (Lenth, 2016) was used to perform multiple comparisons. To determine if  $O_3$  and water deficit had an additive, synergistic or antagonistic impact on  $g_s$ , we compared the observed effects to the expected additive effects for the saplings exposed to  $O_3$  and then to water deficit (Methods 1 available in Supplementary data).

#### 3 Results

- 182 3.1 Effect on growth, chlorophyll contents and gas exchange kinetics
- O<sub>3</sub> impacted only the stem biomass of the two genotypes. Water deficit only slightly impacted the number of leaves of Robusta genotype, nevertheless leaf surface area decreased in the Carpaccio genotype only (Table S2).

An increase in chlorophyll contents was observed in both genotypes under the WW:FA modality throughout the 21 days of the experiment (Fig. 1A and B), and Robusta systematically contained 1.5 times more chlorophyll than Carpaccio. Chlorophyll contents were significantly lower under O<sub>3</sub> treatment in both genotypes; from 11 days, chlorophyll levels remained lower than the control treatment (Fig. 1A and B). The chlorophyll content of the water deficit treatment (D:FA) was significantly lower in Robusta as compared to the WW:FA modality (Fig. 1A and B). D:O<sub>3</sub> impacted chlorophyll contents similarly to WW:O<sub>3</sub>.

Concomitantly, gas exchanges were recorded twice or three times a week (Fig. 1C and D). The control treatment values decreased throughout the experiment because the leaves received less light (because the upper leaves were still growing). Although net CO<sub>2</sub> assimilation (A<sub>n</sub>) decreased over time, A<sub>n</sub> values were 3 µmol CO<sub>2</sub>.m<sup>-2</sup>.s<sup>-1</sup> higher in the Robusta genotype . ANOVA on A<sub>n</sub> only showed a significant effect of O<sub>3</sub> on both genotypes (Fig. 1C and D). O<sub>3</sub> decreased A<sub>n</sub>, from 10 d in Carpaccio and 6 d in Robusta. After the O<sub>3</sub> treatment was switched off on d 13, Robusta photosynthesis reached the same levels as the control, *i.e.*, 7.5 µmol.m<sup>-2</sup>.s<sup>-1</sup>.

Concerning stomatal conductance values, O<sub>3</sub> decreased g<sub>s</sub> from 6 d in Carpaccio and 2 d in Robusta, with a significant effect only on Carpaccio (Fig. 1E and F). At the end of the 13 d of O<sub>3</sub> fumigation, g<sub>s</sub> went back to the control level in both genotypes, *i.e.*, 400 mmol.m<sup>-2</sup>.s<sup>-1</sup> and 300 mmol.m<sup>-2</sup>.s<sup>-1</sup> in Robusta and Carpaccio, respectively. Water deficit decreased g<sub>s</sub> (around 230 mmol.m<sup>-2</sup>.s<sup>-1</sup>) in both genotypes (Fig. 1E and F). Carpaccio stomata displayed similar conductance values under the D:FA and D:O<sub>3</sub> conditions. A difference was observed in Robusta, *i.e.*, stomata under D:O<sub>3</sub> were less closed than under D:FA (330 mmol.m<sup>-2</sup>.s<sup>-1</sup>, Fig. 1F), resulting in a significant interaction between O<sub>3</sub> exposure and water deficit.

## 209 3.2 Effect of $O_3$ and recovery of stomatal behaviour

#### 3.2.1 Responses to irradiance

At the end of the  $O_3$  treatment (13 d), net  $CO_2$  assimilation in steady state 0, *i.e.*,  $A_0$ , was down from 19.6 to 7.9 µmol.m<sup>-2</sup>.s<sup>-1</sup> in Carpaccio, and from 19.2 to 15.05 µmol.m<sup>-2</sup>.s<sup>-1</sup> in Robusta (Table S3). The steady states of  $g_s$  after stomatal closure ( $g_1$ ) were similar for both genotypes and treatments (around 100 mmol.mm<sup>-2</sup>.s<sup>-1</sup>). After stomatal closure, net  $CO_2$  assimilation reached negative values ( $A_1$ ) due to dark respiration (Table S3). The respiration rates in FA conditions were higher in Robusta than in Carpaccio (-1.6 *vs.* -1.3 µmol.m<sup>-2</sup>.s<sup>-1</sup>). Under WW:O<sub>3</sub> conditions, an increase of respiration was observed, *i.e.*, +30% and +18% in Carpaccio and Robusta, respectively. Concerning the stomatal closure phase, the  $\tau$  and  $\lambda$  parameters were not modified by O<sub>3</sub> treatment in Carpaccio (Fig. 2A and E). In Robusta,  $\tau$  tended to increase under O<sub>3</sub> exposure (1.5 fold) (Fig. 2A) and  $\lambda$  was not modified (Fig. 2E). Moreover,  $\lambda$  values differed between genotypes, with a higher value for Carpaccio (1.2-fold higher) (Fig. 2E). SL<sub>max</sub> values highlighted a trend for an O<sub>3</sub> effect: the stomatal closure speed was reduced by 0.5 fold and 0.4 fold in Carpaccio and Robusta, respectively (Fig. 2I). As regards the stomatal opening phase,  $\lambda$  was 6 min faster in Carpaccio than in Robusta (Fig. 2F).  $\lambda$  was not impacted by O<sub>3</sub> in Carpaccio, whereas it significantly decreased by 25% in

Robusta.  $SL_{max}$  values significantly differed between the two genotypes (Table S4). Stomatal opening was slower in Carpaccio, with an  $SL_{max}$  0.5 fold lower under  $O_3$ , but changes were not significant in Robusta (Fig. 2J). The steady states of conductance ( $g_2$ ) after the opening phase (Table S3) returned to the same levels as the first steady states in Carpaccio. In Robusta under  $O_3$ ,  $g_2$  was 30% lower than  $g_0$  before stomatal closure (Table S3). Similarly, assimilation went back to the same levels ( $A_0=A_2$ ) in the control leaves (Table S5).

After a week without  $O_3$  exposure (21 d), net  $CO_2$  assimilation ( $A_0$ ) went back to the same level as the control in Carpaccio, whereas a 20% decrease in  $CO_2$  uptake was observed in Robusta as compared to the WW:FA modality (Table S3). In parallel,  $g_0$  was the same under the  $O_3$  and control treatments in Carpaccio. As for Robusta,  $g_0$  was higher under  $O_3$ , and stomata opened 31% more (Table S3). During stomatal closure,  $\tau$  and  $\lambda$  values in the WW:O<sub>3</sub> treatments changed non significantly as compared to 13 d (Fig. 2C and G). However, as compared to the WW:FA treatments,  $\tau$  and  $\lambda$  values were 66% and 38% greater in Carpaccio, respectively, and 60% and 15% greater in Robusta, respectively (Fig. 2C and G). SL<sub>max</sub> decreased by 56% in Carpaccio and by 47% in Robusta (Fig. 2K).

Regarding stomatal opening,  $g_1$  was not significantly affected by  $O_3$  in either genotype (Table S3). Final steady states were similar under the WW: $O_3$  and WW:FA treatments, *i.e.*, around 340 mmol.m<sup>-2</sup>.s<sup>-1</sup>.  $\tau$  and  $\lambda$  non significantly decreased under  $O_3$  treatment in both genotypes (Fig. 2D and 2H). Stomatal opening tends to be faster in both genotypes under WW: $O_3$  (Fig. 2L).

#### 3.2.2 Responses to VPD

The study of the vapour pressure deficit response curves consisted in measuring stomatal closure under pressures ranging between 0.8 and 3 kPa. At the end of the  $O_3$  treatment (13 d), the assimilation ( $A_0$ ) and stomatal conductance ( $g_0$ ) values of the initial steady states of Carpaccio and Robusta were almost the same as those of the light response curves (Tables S3 and S4). After stomatal closure,  $CO_2$  assimilation ( $A_1$ ) decreased by 16 to 30% as compared to  $A_0$  depending on genotype or treatment (Table S5). The  $\tau$  parameter in control conditions differed between genotypes (Fig. 3A), as it took Robusta 19 min more than Carpaccio.  $O_3$  increased  $\tau$  by 17 min and 11 min in Carpaccio and Robusta, respectively (Fig. 3A). The  $\lambda$  parameter also differed between the two genotypes in the control conditions: it took Robusta saplings 11 min more to reach the inflection point (Fig. 3C).  $\lambda$  increased under  $O_3$  treatment in both genotypes, *i.e.*, by 12 min and 5 min in Carpaccio and Robusta, respectively (Fig. 3C).

After a week without  $O_3$  treatment, stomatal dynamic responses to VPD still showed a few differences between the control and the  $O_3$  treatment. In Carpaccio,  $O_3$  increased  $\tau$  and  $\lambda$  by 1.8 and 1.6 fold, respectively (Fig. 3B and D).  $SL_{max}$  decreased by 70% in Carpaccio (Fig. 3F). Robusta was impacted in a different way, as  $\tau$  slightly increased by 1.1 fold under  $O_3$  treatment, but  $\lambda$  was unaffected (Fig. 3B and D).

## 3.3 Effect of water deficit on stomatal behaviour

## 3.3.1 Response to irradiance

After 7 days of water deficit treatment, a significant water deficit effect was observed for some parameters of the model. Regarding stomatal closure under light, the initial steady state showed stomatal closure under water deficit conditions (Table S3). Water deficit induced a 45% decrease of  $g_0$  in both genotypes (Table S3). After closure,  $g_1$  showed some marked differences with the control treatment, *i.e.*, an 84% decrease in Carpaccio and a 47% decrease in Robusta. Moreover, stomatal closure was greater in Carpaccio than in Robusta (88 vs. 122 mmol.m<sup>-2</sup>.s<sup>-1</sup> for  $g_1$ , respectively). During the stomatal closure phase,  $\tau$  and  $\lambda$  were unaffected by water deficit in either genotype (Fig. 2C and 2G).

During the stomatal opening phase due to irradiance, the water deficit effect was significant on  $\tau$  and SLmax (Table S4).  $\tau$  decreased by 74% in Carpaccio but increased by 26% in Robusta as compared to the control (Fig. 2D).  $\lambda$  was unaffected in Carpaccio but increased in Robusta (+ 21%) (Fig. 2H). SL<sub>max</sub> increased under water deficit almost 3 times faster in Carpaccio (Fig. 2L). These increases differed significantly between the genotypes (Table S4).

#### 3.3.2 Responses to VPD

After the VPD closing phase,  $g_1$  were unaffected in Carpaccio, whereas it was 50 mmol.m<sup>-2</sup>.s<sup>-1</sup> below the WW:FA values in Robusta (Table S5).  $A_0$  and  $A_1$  decreased under water deficit by the same amplitude (around 30%) in both genotypes (Table S5).

Water deficit affected the stomatal dynamics through a non significant decrease of the  $\tau$  parameter in both genotypes, by 20% in Carpaccio vs. 15% in Robusta (Fig. 3B). The  $\lambda$  parameter was not modified in Carpaccio but decreased in Robusta (-13%) (Fig. 3D). Finally, a lower  $SL_{max}$  was observed: -51% and -33% in Carpaccio and Robusta, respectively, as compared to the control (Fig. 3F).

#### 3.4 Effects of $O_3$ and water deficit on stomatal behaviour

#### 3.4.1 Responses to irradiance

After 7 days of water deficit treatment, most of the parameters showed an antagonistic response in the combined treatment (Fig. 4), except the initial steady state  $g_0$  in Carpaccio. In this genotype, stomatal closure was greater than under the water deficit treatment alone (Table S3). During stomatal closing under irradiance,  $\tau$  slightly increased by 6 min in Carpaccio, inbetween the values under water deficit and  $O_3$  exposure, and was unaffected in Robusta as compared to the control (Fig. 2C).  $\lambda$  showed the same trends as under the D:FA modality (Fig. 2G).  $SL_{max}$  was significantly affected by the water deficit x  $O_3$  interaction (p=0.05): in Carpaccio,  $SL_{max}$  was lower than under the D:FA and WW:O<sub>3</sub> modalities, by 23% as compared to the WW:FA modality. In Robusta,  $SL_{max}$  was in the same range as under D:FA conditions (Fig. 2K). Stomatal opening as a result of irradiance under the combined treatment revealed no significant effect of the water deficit x  $O_3$  interaction on any of the parameters of the models except  $\tau$  (Table S4). In Carpaccio,  $SL_{max}$  values were intermediate between D:FA and WW:O<sub>3</sub> values, almost twice the WW:FA value. In Robusta,  $SL_{max}$  tended to increase as compared to the other treatments (Fig. 2L), resulting in a synergistic effect (Fig. 4).

## 305 3.4.2 Responses to VPD

After 7 days of water deficit treatment on saplings previously submitted to  $O_3$  treatment, no significant effect was observed (Table S4). There was a synergistic effect on  $G(g_1)$ , under the D:O<sub>3</sub> modality, the final steady state tended to be "more closed stomata" in Carpaccio vs. "slightly more open stomata" in Robusta than under the WW:O<sub>3</sub> or D:FA modalities (Table S5). Otherwise, most of the parameters showed an antagonistic effect (Fig. 4). In Robusta, the  $\lambda$  parameter decreased (by 26% as compared to the control) under the combined treatments (Fig. 3D), more than under water deficit or O<sub>3</sub> alone, resulting in a synergistic effect (Fig. 4). In Carpaccio,  $SL_{max}$  decreased in a similar way under all three modalities. (Fig. 3F).

#### 4 Discussion

## 315 4.1 Sluggish stomatal response to $O_3$

In our experiment, the first symptom of the daily exposure to 80 ppb O<sub>3</sub> was visible on g<sub>s</sub>: after one week of exposure, both genotypes closed their stomata in response to O<sub>3</sub>. This stomatal closure was associated with decreased net CO<sub>2</sub> assimilation and chlorophyll contents. Impairment of gas exchanges under O<sub>3</sub> exposure is well documented (Wittig et al., 2007). The decrease in net CO<sub>2</sub> assimilation by the two poplar genotypes under O<sub>3</sub> exposure

had been mentioned previously and mainly linked to the modification of Rubisco activity and chlorophyll degradation (Dghim et al., 2013; Guidi et al., 2001). This impact on photosynthesis was clearly visible for each steady state at 800 µmol.m<sup>-2</sup>.s<sup>-1</sup> of PAR.

In addition, stomatal closure went along with decreased steady states. This stomatal response was reversible: when O<sub>3</sub> exposure was interrupted, saplings rapidly recovered the same steady states as in the control treatment. According to the dynamics parameters in response to irradiance, the lag time ( $\lambda$ ) was not modified by O<sub>3</sub> during stomatal closure, but a few constitutive differences between the genotypes were visible. In Robusta, τ tended to increase under O<sub>3</sub> exposure. The main effect for both genotypes was a trend toward a lower SL<sub>max</sub>, i.e., the so-called O<sub>3</sub> sluggishness. In addition, steady states (g<sub>1</sub>) in the dark were slightly higher. This might have consequences under natural conditions, when O<sub>3</sub> entrance during the night time could be significant (Hoshika et al., 2013) and could enhance water loss (Grulke et al., 2004). From our results, we can propose a hypothetical model of the stomatal daily course (Fig. S2) in conditions of stable diurnal irradiance throughout the day, with maximum VPD at midday. This representation highlights the differences between treatments and genotypes and the potential impact on the O<sub>3</sub> flux, CO<sub>2</sub> assimilation (grey area), or used water (blue area). This theoretical representation was inspired by a hypothetical model of Dumont et al. (2013), the results of a Ball-Berry-type model from Tuzet et al. (2003), and daily conductance measurements from Durand et al. (2019). The differences in g<sub>s</sub> values between treatments, genotypes, and irradiance variations were conserved. As for stomatal closure, the model parameters were also modified during stomatal opening.

The main atmospheric determinant of stomatal opening at midday is VPD (McAdam and Brodribb, 2015). Higher VPD differently affected stomatal behaviour among genotypes in the control. Firstly, the  $\lambda$  parameter differed between the genotypes; Robusta was less responsive to VPD and needed more time to reach the inflection point. This could be linked to constitutive differences between the genotypes. Previous works showed that Robusta stomata were less responsive to VPD variation (Dumont et al., 2013). These genotypic differences could be as determining as differences between species. Differences between species were taken into account in the  $O_3$  flux model (Hayes and Bangor, 2017). It is obvious that the genotypic specificity could also affect the calculation of the species-specific stomatal  $O_3$  flux; moreover,  $O_3$ -induced stomatal closure and sluggishness could affect water use efficiency and transpiration calculations (Dumont et al., 2013; Hoshika et al., 2015; Paoletti and Grulke, 2005). These effects could be of particular interest, as stomatal sluggishness was still present

after O<sub>3</sub> exposure and could be responsible for a greater water use in the middle and at the end of the day (Fig. S2). Interestingly, after O<sub>3</sub> exposure was stopped, Robusta recovered the same assimilation rate as the control whereas Carpaccio photosynthesis remained impaired. Our results are consistent with stomatal recovery after O<sub>3</sub>-induced stress observed in the literature. Similar recovery was reported in white clover (Francini et al., 2007). Nonetheless, this imperfect recovery due to carry-over or 'memory' effects could be particularly detrimental under repeated O<sub>3</sub> exposure (Oksanen, 2003; Oksanen and Saleem, 1999) combined with other biotic or abiotic stresses (Langebartels et al., 1998), *e.g.*, water deficit conditions. However, this 'memory' could also be responsible for a 'conditioning' mechanism through a hormetic response (Agathokleous et al., 2019) and/or cross-tolerance (Walter et al., 2013). In both cases, this effect could modify tree resilience and acclimation to a new disturbance.

#### 4.2 Water deficit induces slower stomatal closure in response to light and VPD

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Water deficit reduced only the total leaf surface of Carpaccio genotype (Table S2) associated with an expected stomatal closure over time (Bogeat-Triboulot et al., 2007; Chaves et al., 2002; Dusart et al., 2019). In response to darkness, the time response parameters were modified, with a few differences between the genotypes. Nevertheless, the lag time and closing speed were not impacted by water deficit in either genotype. Interestingly, in the dark both genotypes had their stomata more closed than the control saplings. Moreover, Robusta stomata were less closed than Carpaccio stomata. This could result in differences in water loss at night (Fig. S2) (Caird et al., 2007). By contrast, stomatal opening following irradiance affected all the parameters of the models. The opening speed increased in both genotypes, especially in Carpaccio. Faster stomatal opening under water deficit has been reported in Phaseolus vulgaris (Barradas et al., 1994). Water loss might increase due to faster stomatal opening, but may also increase the leaf carbon assimilation (Barradas et al., 1994). In response to VPD, water deficit affected stomatal dynamics through a decrease of the τ parameter in both genotypes. The lag time parameter was not modified in Carpaccio and decreased in Robusta. There was great sluggishness in the response to VPD. Stomatal closure sluggishness in response to irradiance and/or VPD has been reported in different species, after leaf excision in *Populus trichocarpa* x *deltoides* (Reich and Lassoie, 1984), under soil water deficit conditions in *Phaseolus vulgaris* (Hoshika et al., 2013), *Nicotiana tabacum* (Gérardin et al., 2018), Populus nigra, and Populus euramericana (Durand et al., 2019). Stomatal closure under soil water deficit or increased VPD was found closely related to ion transport and abscisic acid perception (McAdam and Brodribb, 2015; Pospíšilová, 2003). These

mechanisms could be modified by O<sub>3</sub> through ABA synthesis (McAdam et al., 2017) or through other phytohormones such as ethylene (Wilkinson and Davies, 2010, 2009).

#### 4.3 Antagonistic effect of the successive exposure to $O_3$ and water deficit

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When O<sub>3</sub> exposure was followed by water deficit, we observed a combination of the effects of O<sub>3</sub> or water deficit alone. The impact on height and radial growth was similar to the effect of water deficit alone in both genotypes. Nevertheless, total biomass decreased more following the successive stresses (Table S2). As seen above, water deficit and O<sub>3</sub> separately modified stomatal behaviour in response to VPD or irradiance fluctuations. The interaction between the two stress factors may have modified stomatal responses (Hoshika et al., 2013; Wilkinson and Davies, 2009). Concerning gas exchanges, stomatal closure was observed in both genotypes, with a decreased steady state. Carpaccio stomata tended to be more closed than under O<sub>3</sub> exposure or water deficit alone, whereas Robusta stomata were slightly less closed than under water deficit alone (Fig. S2). Under the combined treatment, most of the parameters showed an antagonistic response, i.e., a weaker response than the expected additive effect (Bansal et al., 2013; Dusart et al., 2019; Pellegrini et al., 2019). τ seemed to increase as compared to the control and drought treatment alone, but less than under O<sub>3</sub> exposure. The lag time and final steady state were modified in the same way as under water deficit alone. In Carpaccio, stomatal sluggishness increased as compared to the separate constraints, and this may have increased transpiration under water deficit. In Robusta, the slower closure was in the same range as under water deficit alone. Regarding stomatal opening due to irradiance, the response was the same as for water deficit alone on all the parameters of the models, without any significant interaction of O<sub>3</sub>. In response to VPD, most of the parameters showed an antagonistic effect, except a synergistic effect on the lag time for Robusta.  $\lambda$  parameters indeed decreased under the combined treatment, more than under water deficit or O<sub>3</sub> exposure alone, as compared to the control. This effect could result from a better detection of environmental variation. The different stomatal behaviours under successive stresses in the two genotypes could result in different water losses (Fig. S2) at the leaf scale. Robusta may have lost more water during the day when exposed to the combined stress than to water deficit alone. These differences in leaf scale between genotypes could be particularly detrimental for a water-deficit sensitive genotype. Nevertheless, in order to model physiological processes, it is important to take constitutive differences in total leaf area between genotypes into account, as this difference could impact extrapolation at the whole tree scale.

## 4.4 Consequences for modelling

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Modelling g<sub>s</sub> is an important issue to use flux-based metrics for forest O<sub>3</sub> risk assessment (Fares et al., 2013). Scientific literature about g<sub>s</sub> models at the leaf level is abundant (see Damour et al., 2010 for a review). Most current models used for O<sub>3</sub>, such as the DO<sub>3</sub>SE model (Emberson et al., 2000), are based on Jarvis multiplicative model (Jarvis, 1976) and do not take O<sub>3</sub>-induced stomatal sluggishness into account (Hayes and Bangor, 2017). Hoshika et al. (2017) proposed to take stomatal sluggishness into account through a single parameter (s) and directly on steady states through an  $O_3$  function ( $f_{O_3}$ ). The main competitor of the Jarvis-type model is based on the Ball-Woodrow-Berry model (BWB) (Ball et al., 1987). This model integrates a more physiological approach and considers the relationship between g<sub>s</sub> and photosynthesis. Its modified version should be preferred for O<sub>3</sub>- induced decoupling between photosynthesis and stomatal conductance (Cailleret et al., 2018; Lombardozzi et al., 2012). Moreover, this model requires adding a soil water function. Contrasting results have been found between the Jarvis or BWB models (Hoshika et al., 2017a). If these models are properly parameterised, they can both accurately predict g<sub>s</sub> in complex ecosystems (Fares et al., 2013). This will depend on available data for model parameterisation and calibration (Fares et al., 2013), but could be crucial for studying O<sub>3</sub>-sensitive tree species. Moreover, our results highlight that it is important to take genotype-specific responses into account, e.g. Carpaccio stomata closed faster than Robusta stomata under VPD, and opened faster under irradiance. Nonetheless, these observations at the leaf scale might not be easily extrapolated at the tree scale because of multiple obstacles: i) scaling up from leaf to canopy is tricky (Ollinger et al., 1997; Zhou et al., 2017), ii) the impact of phenology, aging, and enhanced leaf senescence should be taken into account (Anav et al., 2018), iii) leaf stomatal density is modified in newly formed leaves (Durand et al., 2019; Pääkkönen et al., 1997), iv) detoxification and repair processes occur (Tuzet et al., 2011), and v) conditioning (Agathokleous et al., 2019) or cross-tolerance processes (Tausz et al., 2007) occur too. All these points could challenge the implementation of larger models and the scaling up to whole tree or forest ecosystems.

#### 5 Conclusion

Despite constitutive differences between genotypes, O<sub>3</sub> and water deficit induced stomatal closure and closing sluggishness. 80 ppb O<sub>3</sub> exposure followed by water deficit modified stomatal closure differently between the two genotypes: Carpaccio stomata closed more than under water deficit alone, whereas Robusta stomata closed less than under water

deficit alone. These modifications could have a non-negligible effect on O<sub>3</sub> uptake, carbon storage, and water use efficiency. The underlying mechanisms still need investigations into the active or passive physiological regulation induced by environmental fluctuations (irradiance, VPD, O<sub>3</sub>, soil water deficit, etc.). Previous studies suggested different stomatal closure/opening mechanisms, *i.e.*, i) passive hydric regulation of guard cells (Buckley and Mott, 2002), ii) mediation by a cross-talk between phytohormones (Daszkowska-Golec and Szarejko, 2013), with a particular implication of abscisic acid or ethylene (McAdam and Brodribb, 2015; Wilkinson and Davies, 2010, 2009), iii) O<sub>3</sub> and/or drought-induced stomatal closure through modification of guard cell homoeostasis *via* direct modulation of K<sup>+</sup> channels (Geiger et al., 2009; Vahisalu et al., 2010), alteration of Ca<sup>2+</sup>/H<sup>+</sup> vacuolar antiporters (Dumont et al., 2014a), and production of reactive oxygen species such as H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> (Damour et al., 2010). Understanding these mechanisms and the cross-talks between the O<sub>3</sub> and water deficit responses (as successive stresses or in combination) could allow for a better prediction of g<sub>8</sub> in response to various environmental modifications.

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#### **Figure legends**

- Figure 1: Impact of O<sub>3</sub> or/and water deficit on total chlorophylls (A, B), net CO<sub>2</sub> assimilation
- 785 (C, D) and stomatal conductance to water vapour (E, F). Measurements were conducted on
- leaves of the Carpaccio and Robusta genotypes two to three times a week. For chlorophyll
- contents, results are presented in arbitrary units obtained with Dualex. Means  $\pm$  se,  $n \ge 4$ .
- 788 Blue, WW:FA; orange, D:FA; red, WW:O<sub>3</sub>; green, D:O<sub>3</sub>. FA: filtered air; WW, well-watered;
- 789 D, water deficit; O<sub>3</sub>, ozone. Asterisks indicate the significance of the factors or their
- interactions tested by a linear mixed-effect model: "\*\*\*  $P \le 0.001$ , "\*\*  $P \le 0.01$ , "\*  $P \le 0.05$ ,
- 791 'ns' non-significant.
- Figure 2: Sigmoidal model parameters of stomatal dynamics in response to irradiance changes
- in the Carpaccio and Robusta poplar genotypes after 13 days (A, B, E, F, I, J), or 21 days (C,
- 794 D, G, H, K, L) when submitted to 80 ppb of O<sub>3</sub> for 13 days and/or water deficit for an
- additional week. (A, B, C, D): τ, response time(s); (E, F, G, H): λ, lag time(s); (I, J, K, L):
- SL<sub>max</sub>, maximum slope (mmol.m<sup>-2</sup>.s<sup>-2</sup>). Means  $\pm$  se,  $n \ge 4$ . Letters show the significance levels
- between treatments and genotype; ns, not significant. FA: filtered air; WW, well-watered; D,
- water deficit; O<sub>3</sub>, ozone. ANOVA, P-values are available in Table S4.
- 799 Figure 3: Sigmoidal model parameters of stomatal dynamics in response to VPD changes in
- the Carpaccio and Robusta poplar genotypes after 13 days (A, C, E) or 21 days (B, D, F)
- when submitted to 80 ppb of O<sub>3</sub> for 13 days and/or water deficit for an additional week. (A,
- 802 B):  $\tau$ , response time(s); (C, D):  $\lambda$ , lag time(s); (E, F):  $SL_{max}$ , maximum slope (mmol.m<sup>-2</sup>.s<sup>-2</sup>).
- Means  $\pm$  se,  $n \ge 4$ . Letters show the significance levels between genotype and treatments (p <
- 804 0.05); ns, not significant. FA: filtered air; WW, well-watered; D, water deficit; O<sub>3</sub>, ozone.
- ANOVA, P-values are available in Table S4.
- 806 Figure 4: Combined successive impacts of O<sub>3</sub> exposure and moderate water deficit on the
- parameters of the sigmoidal model for irradiance and VPD responses for the Carpaccio and
- Robusta genotypes.  $\tau$ , response time;  $\lambda$ , lag time, and  $SL_{max}$ , maximum slope;  $g_0$  and G,
- steady-state values of stomatal conductance at the beginning and the end of the experiment.
- 810 Bars represent the mean difference (± 95% confidence interval) between the observed and
- 811 expected additive effects of the combined two stressors. The zero line represents the expected
- additive effects of the combined stressors. Additive effects are in white; when the means were
- greater or lower than zero, they were considered as synergistic (black) or antagonistic (grey),
- 814 respectively. (Bansal et al., 2013).











