

Photosynthetic Light Reactions in Diatoms. II. The Dynamic Regulation of the Various Light Reactions

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1 Chapter 2: Photosynthetic light reactions in diatoms. II. The

2 dynamic regulation of the various light reactions

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23 Abstract

24 Photosynthesis in diatoms is performed using the same basic modules as cyanobacteria and 25 plants. It can be regulated on multiple levels depending on the environmental cues, allowing 26 diatoms to adjust their photosynthetic light reaction towards optimum whilst at the same time 27 minimizing photodamage induced by light. In recent years, tremendous progress has been 28 gained in understanding these acclimation processes, revealing several diatom-specific features. 29 In this chapter, we trace several paths through the photosynthetic electron transport chain to 30 optimize photosynthesis. We review how diatoms repair photoinactivated reaction centers and 31 which mechanisms they have to preempt photodamage. Finally, photoprotection is set in an 32 ecophysiological context, highlighting differences in photoprotection of diatoms from different 33 habitats.

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36 Key words: alternative electron flow, diatoms, Lhcx, NPQ, photoinhibition, photosynthesis,

37 Photosystem II repair, xanthophyll cycle

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66 Abbreviations

- 67 ³Chl: triplet chlorophyll a
- 68 AEF: alternative electrons flow
- 69 AOX: Alternative Oxidase
- 70 ATP: adenosine triphosphate
- 71 C. meneghiniana: Cyclotella meneghiniana
- 72 CCM: carbon concentrating mechanisms
- 73 CEF: cyclic electron flow
- 74 Chl: chlorophyll
- 75 cyt $b_6 f$: cytochrome $b_6 f$ complex
- 76 Dd: diadinoxanthin
- 77 DES: De-epoxidation state
- 78 Dt: diatoxanthin
- 79 ECS: electrochromic shift
- 80 ETR: electron transport rate
- 81 FCP: fucoxanthin-chlorophyll-binding protein complex
- 82 Fd: ferredoxin
- 83 Flv: flavodiiron
- 84 FNR: ferredoxin-NADP⁺ reductase
- 85 H₂O₂: hydrogen peroxide
- 86 LEF: linear electron flow
- 87 LHC: light-harvesting complex
- 88 NADP⁺/NADPH: nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide phosphate
- 89 NDH: NADPH dehydrogenase
- 90 NPQ: Non-Photochemical fluorescence Quenching
- 91 NPQs: sustained NPQ
- 92 $^{1}O_{2:}$ singlet oxygen
- 93 P. tricornutum: Phaeodactylum tricornutum
- 94 P680: special chlorophyll pair in the PSII core
- 95 P700: special chlorophyll pair in the PSI core
- 96 pmf: proton motive force
- 97 PQ: plastoquinone
- 98 PSI: photosystem I
- 99 PSII: photosystem II
- 100 PTOX: plastoquinone terminal oxidase
- 101 qE: energy dependent quenching
- 102 qI: photoinhibitory quenching
- 103 qT: quenching based on state transitions
- 104 qZ: quenching based on conversion of violaxanthin via antheraxanthin to zeaxanthin
- 105 ROS: reactive oxygen species
- 106 SOD: superoxide dismutase
- 107 T. pseudonana: Thalassiosira pseudonana
- 108 WWC: water-to-water cycle
- 109 ΔpH : osmotic component of the pmf
- 110 $\Delta \psi$: electric component of the pmf
- 111 σPSII: functional absorption cross section of PSII
- 112

113 Introduction

114 As outlined in the previous chapter "Photosynthetic light reactions in diatoms. I. The lipids and 115 light-harvesting complexes of the thylakoid membrane", diatoms share the same elementary 116 photosynthetic modules with other organisms performing oxygenic photosynthesis. The linear 117 photosynthetic electron flow involves two photosystems and results in the transfer of electrons 118 from water, the primary electron donor, to the terminal acceptor, nicotinamide adenine 119 dinucleotide phosphate, NADPH (Fig. 1). Photosystem II (PSII) transfers electrons from the 120 Oxygen Evolving Complex, where water oxidation takes place, to the plastoquinones (POs) in 121 the thylakoid membrane. Photosystem I (PSI) in diatoms catalyzes the electron transfer from 122 the lumen-soluble electron carrier cytochrome c_6 (Böhme and Kunert 1980) to ferredoxin (Fd). 123 In the stroma, the ferredoxin-NADP⁺ reductase (FNR) mediates the electron transfer from Fd 124 to NADP⁺. The intersystem electron chain, which comprises PQs, the cytochrome $b_{6}f$ complex 125 (cyt $b_6 f$) and cytochrome c_6 , mediates in-series functioning of the two photosystems. In low iron 126 environments, diatoms can replace the iron containing cytochrome c₆ and Fd by the copper-127 containing plastocyanin and the flavin-containing flavodoxin, respectively (La Roche et al. 128 1996; Strzepek and Harrison 2004; Groussman et al. 2015). The coupling of the electron 129 transfer with proton accumulation within the lumen through water splitting and proton pumping 130 across the thylakoid via the cyt b_{6f} generates an electrochemical proton gradient or proton 131 motive force (pmf), which comprises an osmotic component, ΔpH , and an electric one, $\Delta \psi$. The 132 pmf is used by the chloroplast CF1Fo-ATP synthase to bind a phosphate group to an adenosine 133 diphosphate (ADP) molecule and thus synthesize adenosine triphosphate, ATP. If diatoms share 134 the same elementary bricks with other organisms performing oxygenic photosynthesis, the 135 regulation of their photosynthetic activities and repair processes show several peculiarities, 136 which we will highlight in detail in the following sub chapters.

137 The other major electron transport route, electron flow in the mitochondrial respiratory chain, 138 is similar in diatoms and the green lineage. It can occur either via the classical electron flow 139 involving complex I, III and IV or via complex I coupled to the Alternative Oxidase (AOX). 140 Both pathways generate a pmf which fuels ATP synthesis thanks to the mitochondrial ATPase. 141 The AOX pathway can behave as a valve to dissipate reducing power under stress conditions 142 in the green lineage (Selinski et al. 2018) which similarly works in diatoms (Murik et al. 2019). 143 Full-chain respiration and AOX pathways are in competition and can compensate each other in 144 diatoms (Bailleul et al. 2015; Schober et al. 2019). Mitochondrial electron transport will not be 145 covered in this chapter, except for its involvement in optimizing photosynthesis (see "1.4 Water-to-water cycles" and "1.5 Chlororespiration, redox state of the plastoquinone pool, and 146

- 147 *pmf in the dark"*).
- 148

149 **1. The regulation of photosynthetic electron flow**

150 1.1 The role of pmf as a master regulator of photosynthesis

151 The main constraint for the photosynthetic electron transfer is to adjust its activity to the amount 152 of light received and to the metabolic needs in terms of NADPH and ATP, despite a variable 153 environment (Kramer et al. 2003; Peltier et al. 2010). When light absorption exceeds the 154 capacity of the electron transfer chain, the over-reduction of the photosynthetic chain can lead 155 to the photodestruction of both PSII (Nixon et al. 2010) and PSI (Sonoike 2011) (see also "2. Photosystem II photoinactivation and repair"). Indeed, when an over-reduction of the acceptor 156 157 side of PSII and/or PSI occurs, the photochemical yield decreases and the yields of other 158 relaxation pathways increase in a complementary way. The probability of charge recombination 159 between the oxidized special chlorophyll a pair of PSII (P680⁺) and reduced phaeophytin in 160 PSII, forming the triplet state of chlorophyll a (³Chl), increases when electrons cannot be moved 161 fast enough (Krieger-Liszkay 2005; Vass 2011). There is also the possibility of direct 162 population of ³Chl in the PSII antennae by electron spin flip (Santabarbara et al. 2001; 163 Triantaphylidès and Havaux 2009). When ³Chl interacts with O_2 , singlet oxygen (¹ O_2) is 164 produced, a very toxic molecule which can degrade lipids, pigments or proteins, like the D1 165 protein (Krieger-Liszkay 2005; Halliwell 2006; Nixon et al. 2010; Triantaphylidès and Havaux 166 2009; Vass 2011). PSI acceptor side limitation (and possibly PSII acceptor side limitation as 167 well (Pospíšil 2009)) also favors reduction of O₂ into superoxide anion radicals and hydrogen 168 peroxide (H₂O₂). In the presence of free transition metals such as iron, copper or manganese, 169 H₂O₂ can be converted via the Fenton reaction into the very reactive hydroxyl radical, which 170 e.g. eventually destroys the iron-sulfur centers involved in the electron transfer (Halliwell 2006; 171 Pospíšil 2009; Dietz et al. 2016; Sonoike 2011). The process is almost irreversible because there 172 is no known repair mechanism for PSI (Sonoike 2011). Collectively, ¹O₂, superoxide, H₂O₂ and 173 the hydroxyl radical are called reactive oxygen species (ROS).

The lumenal pH regulates photoprotection of the two photosystems through the de-excitation of PSII under excess light conditions (Kramer et al. 2003; Holt et al. 2004, and see "3.4 The molecular regulation and characteristics of qE") and the 'photosynthetic control' which is the modulation of the activity of the cyt b₆f by the lumenal pH. The photosynthetic control sets the kinetically limiting step of the linear electron flow at cyt b₆f level and by doing so protects PSI by avoiding its acceptor side limitation (Rumberg and Siggel 1969; Laisk et al. 2005; Joliot and Johnson 2011). Moreover, the ATP/NADPH ratio must be adjusted to the metabolic needs of

181 the carbon fixation and other metabolic pathways fueled by the light phase of photosynthesis 182 (Allen 2002). The ratio of ATP to NADPH produced by the LEF is lower than that required for 183 C fixation in the Calvin-Benson-Bassham cycle (CBB cycle). Based on the stoichiometry of 14 184 c subunits per ATP synthase from spinach (Hahn et al. 2018), 14 protons are needed to produce 185 3 ATP, which are, together with 2 NADPH+H⁺, required to reduce one molecule of carbon 186 dioxide in the CBB cycle. With the constitutive Q cycle taking place at the cyt $b_6 f$ (Mitchell 187 1975; Sacksteder et al. 2000), a total of 12 H⁺ are translocated to the lumen for the movement 188 of 4 electrons needed to reduce 2 NADP molecules in LEF. Therefore, the ATP-to-NADPH 189 ratio produced by the LEF is 1.28. However, the ATP-to-NADPH requirement for the CBB 190 cycle is 1.5 and can increase due to carbon concentrating mechanisms (CCM), resulting in an 191 ATP shortfall (Eberhard et al. 2008; Peltier et al. 2010; Curien et al. 2016). Here again, the 192 flexibility of the ATP/NADPH stoichiometry produced by the photosynthetic machinery is 193 modulated by the pmf, which is increased by alternative electrons flows (AEFs) fueling the 194 ATP synthase (see "2.2 Alternative electron flows provide photoprotection and flexibility in 195 response to metabolic demand"). In plants and green algae, the flexibility of photosynthesis is 196 therefore largely dependent on the pmf, which plays the dual role of driving ATP and regulating 197 photoprotection mechanisms through its osmotic component, the ΔpH (Kramer et al. 2003).

198 Whether the pmf is a master regulator of the photosynthetic electron transfer in diatoms like in 199 plants is still an open question. In diatoms, the ATP/NADPH produced by the LEF could be 200 different depending on the efficiency of the Q cycle and on the (yet unknown) stoichiometry of 201 c subunits per ATP synthase (Fig. 1). The occurrence of a Q cycle in diatoms seems to be at 202 play based on electrochromic shift (ECS) measurements, i.e. changes in absorption of 203 photosynthetic pigments due to $\Delta \psi$ (Witt 1979; Bailleul et al. 2010a). Like in plants, the 204 increase of ECS concomitant with the cyt $b_6 f$ turnover indicates the move of two positive 205 charges (protons) for one electron transferred to cytochrome c_6 (Bailleul et al. 2015). Also, the 206 high ATP demand of the CCM in diatoms (Hopkinson et al. 2011) strongly suggests that 207 mechanisms increasing the pmf are needed (see next section). Clearly, the rapid and reversible, 208 energy dependent regulation of the light harvesting system of PSII (=qE, a major 209 photoprotection mechanism) is regulated by the ΔpH in diatoms (see "3.4 The molecular 210 regulation and characteristics of qE"). So far, there is no clear evidence for a 'photosynthetic 211 control' in diatoms but the observation that P700, the special pair of PSI, is oxidized after a 212 pulse of high light could reflect such a control (Shimakawa and Miyake 2018).

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215 1.2 Alternative electron flows provide photoprotection and flexibility in response to metabolic 216 demand

217 In the green lineage, the ATP shortfall is managed by various AEFs, which are auxiliary routes 218 of electron transfer operating along the photosynthetic chain and sharing part of the components 219 of the LEF (Eberhard et al. 2008; Peltier et al. 2010; Curien et al. 2016). Here, we name AEFs 220 all electron transfer pathways involving PSII and/or cyt $b_{6}f$ (both generating a pmf), which do 221 not end up in the generation of NADPH. In the green lineage, the AEFs comprise the cyclic 222 electron flow around PSI (Shikanai 2007) and various water-to-water cycles (WWCs), which 223 are electron transfers from water at PSII via O₂ back into water by the means of various oxidases 224 (Eberhard et al. 2008; Curien et al. 2016). These oxidases include the plastoquinone terminal 225 oxidase (PTOX) which reroutes electrons from the plastoquinols, the Mehler reaction and 226 flavodiiron proteins (Flvs) on the acceptor side of PSI, or the rerouting of reducing power 227 towards the mitochondrial oxidases of the oxidative phosphorylation pathway through the 228 malate shuttle (Eberhard et al. 2008; Peltier et al. 2010; Curien et al. 2016).

229 All those pathways increase the pmf and generate extra ATP, allowing the adjustment of the 230 light phase of photosynthesis with the metabolic requirements (Eberhard et al. 2008; Peltier et 231 al. 2010; Curien et al. 2016). AEFs also protect both photosystems from excess light by three 232 means. First, because they offer supplementary electron sinks, they avoid over-reduction of the 233 photosynthetic chain which otherwise would lead to the creation of ROS. Then, the adjustment 234 of the ATP-to-NADPH ratio by AEFs optimizes the capacity of the CBB cycle to consume 235 photosynthetic electrons and to prevent such over-reduction. Last, because they modulate ΔpH , 236 all AEFs also contribute to the protection of PSII and PSI through 'photosynthetic control' and 237 qE (Kramer et al. 2003; Peltier et al. 2010). AEFs are especially important for photoprotection 238 when the substrates of photosynthesis (CO₂ or light) and/or the metabolic demand vary (Kramer 239 et al. 2003; Peltier et al. 2010). We next describe the main AEFs in diatoms.

240

241 1.3 Cyclic electron flow around PSI

The existence of cyclic phosphorylation in chloroplasts was first proposed by Arnon and collaborators (Arnon et al. 1954; Arnon and Chain 1975). In plants, genetic analyses have identified two pathways allowing the transfer of electrons from PSI acceptors to the PQ pool, one involving the proteins PGRL1 and PGR5 and the other one passing through the chloroplast NADPH dehydrogenase, NDH (Shikanai 2007). Based on the structure of the cyt $b_6 f$, a third mechanism proposed by Mitchell (1975) was reiterated recently which involves the injection of electrons from Fd to the Qi site of the cyt $b_6 f$ (Iwai et al. 2010; Nawrocki et al. 2019). In

plants, rates of the cyclic electron flow (CEF) rate can reach up to ~100 electrons s⁻¹ PSI⁻¹ (Joliot 249 250 and Johnson 2011), but which of the three proposed mechanisms dominates is still a matter of 251 debate. The NDH is not found in diatoms (nor in other microalgae with the notable exception 252 of prasinophytes, Oudot-Le Secq et al. 2007). PGRL1 and PGR5 are present in diatoms 253 (Grouneva et al. 2011; Grouneva et al. 2016) and recent reports suggest an involvement of 254 PGRL1 in CEF of Phaeodactylum tricornutum (Zhou et al. 2020). The existence of CEF, 255 measured as a PSI activity in conditions of PSII inhibition, was demonstrated in diatoms using 256 both P700 reduction and ECS (Maxwell and Biggins 1976; Bailleul et al. 2015) (Fig. 1). The measured rates, however, correspond to 5 to 10 electrons s⁻¹ PSI⁻¹ in most diatom species 257 (Maxwell and Biggins 1976; Bailleul et al. 2015), even though higher rates were measured in 258 polar diatoms (~25 electrons s⁻¹ PSI⁻¹, Goldman et al. 2015) or in iron stress conditions (up to 259 55 electrons s⁻¹ PSI⁻¹, Thamatrakoln et al. 2013). This suggests that if CEF may not play such 260 261 a constitutive and ubiquitous role as in plants, it can become a key player of the photosynthetic 262 regulation in some species and conditions.

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264 1.4 Water-to-water cycles

The occurrence of WWCs in diatoms were first tested by comparing oxygen and fluorescence measurements derived photosynthetic electron transport rates (ETR). While there is a strong correlation between O_2 production and ETR under low light conditions, discrepancies were measured under higher light intensities (Wagner et al. 2006). Later, direct measurements of photosynthesis-driven oxygen consumption, even in conditions minimizing the photorespiration, confirmed the presence of the WWC (Eisenstadt et al. 2010).

271 The Mehler reaction reroutes electrons from Fd to reduce O₂ into superoxide (Fig. 1) (Mehler 272 1951; Asada 2000). Superoxide is then reduced by the superoxide dismutase (SOD) into H_2O_2 , 273 which is further scavenged by the ascorbate peroxidase to form water and oxidized ascorbate 274 (Asada 2000). Such WWC has been hypothesized to contribute to the generation of extra ATP 275 and to protect PSI from over-reduction of its electron acceptors (Ort and Baker 2002). The 276 Mehler reaction has been identified in plants (Asada 2000), green algae (Chen et al. 1996), and 277 cyanobacteria (Asada et al. 1975). In the dinoflagellate genus Symbiodinium, the Mehler 278 reaction was proposed as the main alternative electron flow (Roberty et al. 2014). Oxygen 279 photoreduction measured in the diatoms Nitzschia epithemioides and Thalassiosira pseudonana was ascribed to the Mehler reaction (Waring et al. 2010) but its rate in vivo is difficult to 280 281 estimate because of sources of confusion with other WWCs. Based on the nature of the metal 282 cofactor, Fe-containing SODs and CuZn-containing SODs have been described (Wolfe-Simon et al. 2005). In diatoms, a MnSOD has been found in the plastid of *T. pseudonana* whereas this enzyme is usually present in mitochondria of other species (Wolfe-Simon et al. 2006). This peculiarity could contribute to the ecological success of diatoms in low iron regions of the ocean. Flv proteins play an important role in photoprotection and ATP/NADPH adjustment in cyanobacteria, green algae, mosses and some plants excluding angiosperms (Yamamoto et al. 2016) but genes encoding Flv are not found in the genomes of diatoms (Zhang et al. 2009).

289 The electrons downhill PSI can be rerouted to the mitochondria, a transfer of reducing power 290 enabled by malate shuttles with low rates though (Scheibe et al. 2005). Also other observations 291 suggest strong energetic exchanges between organelles in the green lineage (Cardol et al. 2009; 292 Cardol et al. 2010). The reducing power is then converted into ATP through the oxidative 293 phosphorylation pathway, which can occur either via the classical mitochondrial electron flow 294 or via complex I coupled to AOX. The AOX pathway behaves as a valve and dissipates reducing 295 power from the chloroplast under stress conditions in the green lineage (Yoshida et al. 2011; 296 Kaye et al. 2019) but probably also in diatoms (Murik et al. 2019), e.g. under iron stress (Allen 297 et al. 2008). In addition, regardless of the light conditions, there is a strong constitutive coupling 298 between diatom plastids and mitochondria, involving about 10% of photosynthetically 299 generated electrons, which is coupled to the plastidic import of the extra ATP generated in the 300 mitochondrion (Bailleul et al. 2015). Exchanges of ATP between organelles also occur in the 301 green lineage, which is responsible for a pmf across the thylakoids in the dark, resulting from 302 the hydrolysis of ATP of mitochondrial origin (Tanada 1951; Paul and Volcani 1976; Finazzi 303 and Rappaport 1998; Peers and Price 2006; Takizawa et al. 2007). However, the peculiarity of 304 diatom's photosynthesis is the constitutive nature of this energetic interaction. It is unknown 305 how this connection contends with the four membranes surrounding the plastid. One possibility 306 involves an interplay between the CBB cycle and the mitochondrial glycolysis, an unusual 307 metabolic configuration in stramenopiles (Liaud et al. 2000; Smith et al. 2016; Río Bártulos et 308 al. 2018).

309 All AEFs listed above form a network of inter-connected, flexible and largely interchangeable 310 electron flows. If the energetic interactions between plastid and mitochondrion seem to be the 311 major constitutive AEF in diatoms, it is likely that other modes of electron flows play a crucial 312 role in specific conditions (high light, nutrient stress, low temperature, or CO₂). One should e.g. 313 mention the nitrogen and sulfur assimilation pathways which consume photosynthetic electrons 314 coming from reduced PSI acceptors (Schmidt and Trebst 1969; Foyer and Noctor 2006). 315 Because they generate extra pmf, resulting in ATP synthesis without providing NADPH to the 316 CBB cycle, these pathways can also be considered as AEFs. Nitrogen assimilation has been proposed to be an important sink for photosynthetic electrons of diatoms under periods of
unbalanced light to dark reactions (Lomas & Glibert 1999). Electron cycling around PSII
protects PSII and has been described in diatoms, too (Lavaud et al. 2002c; Feikema et al. 2006;
Wagner et al. 2016), but it does not participate to pmf and thus does not meet the definition of
AEFs of this chapter.



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323 **Figure 1**

324 Schematic representation of the photosynthetic electron transfer chains. The linear electron flow 325 is represented as a bold blue arrow. Proton movements are represented by red arrows. The CBB 326 cycle is represented in grey. The unknowns are represented by blue dashed lines (for alternative 327 electron flows), a green dashed line (PSII cyclic electron flow), a red dashed line and red 328 question marks (Q cycle in the cyt $b_6 f$, ATP demand for CCM and number of c subunits). PSI 329 cyclic electron flow could be mediated via PGRL1/PGR5 or via another yet unknown 330 plastoquinone reducing pathway.

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333 1.5 Chlororespiration, redox state of the plastoquinone pool, and pmf in the dark

Chlororespiration is a respiratory-like electron transport taking place in thylakoids and resulting in the oxidation of stromal reductants (Fd, NADPH). It can occur in the dark and involves two enzymes: NADPH dehydrogenase (type I NDH in plants, type II NDH in green algae, Jans et al. 2008) which transfers electrons from NADPH or Fd towards the (oxidized) PQs, and the thylakoid-bound plastid terminal oxidase (PTOX) which reduces O₂ into water thanks to (reduced) plastoquinols (Bennoun 1982) (Fig. 1). Because it combines PQ reducing (NDH) and 340 oxidizing (PTOX) enzymatic activities, chlororespiration influences the redox state of the PQ 341 pool (Bennoun 1982) which in the green lineage, cyanobacteria but also in diatoms is an 342 important signaling trigger (Pfannschmidt et al. 2009; Lepetit and Dietzel 2015). PTOX is 343 present in two copies in diatom genomes (Burki et al. 2012), it is expressed at least under iron 344 stress conditions (McDonald et al. 2011) and targeted to the plastid (Burki et al. 2012), and 345 there is physiological evidence for chlororespiration taking place in diatoms (Jakob et al. 1999; 346 Dijkman and Kroon 2002). However, no NDH has been found in diatoms so far (Fig. 1) and 347 the importance of chlororespiration for diatoms might have been overestimated in the past. The 348 existence of a pmf in the dark, visualized through the development of Non-Photochemical 349 fluorescence Quenching (NPQ), has long been seen as evidence for an efficient proton pumping 350 chlororespiratory activity in diatom plastids (Jakob et al. 1999, 2001; Grouneva et al. 2009; 351 Cruz et al. 2011; Kennedy et al. 2019). However, the almost complete suppression of the dark 352 pmf in the absence of mitochondrial respiration (via anaerobiosis or pharmacological 353 inhibition) in several diatoms demonstrates that the pmf generated in the dark originates instead 354 rather from the hydrolysis of mitochondrial ATP by the plastidic CF1Fo-ATP synthase 355 (Bailleul et al. 2015).

When PTOX re-oxidizes the plastoquinols produced by PSII, it generates a peculiar WWC which does not involve the cyt $b_6 f$ (Nawrocki et al. 2015). The PSII-PTOX pathway can play an important role in the regulation of the ATP/NADPH ratio and photoprotection in stress conditions, e.g. in cyanobacteria and prasinophytes under iron stress (Bailey et al. 2008; Cardol et al. 2008), or in alpine plants (Streb et al. 2005). These cases seem to be exceptions and this pathway is considered to be usually negligible compared to the LEF in the light but plays a crucial role during dark periods (Nawrocki et al. 2015).

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366 2. Photosystem II photoinactivation and repair

367 PSII is susceptible to photoinactivation through multiple, non-exclusive paths (reviews Oguchi 368 et al. 2011; Vass 2012; Zavafer et al. 2015; Campbell and Serôdio 2020). A direct path likely 369 acts through a low-probability absorbance of a photon by the manganese cluster of the Oxygen 370 Evolving Complex, leading to loss of capacity for photooxidation of water and then to 371 photochemical destruction of PSII by subsequent photon excitations (Tyystjarvi et al. 2005). 372 This path is provoked primarily by UV and blue photons and shows limited sensitivity to the 373 instantaneous physiological state of the cell (Havurinne and Tyystjarvi 2017; Murphy et al. 374 2017). This direct path occurs across excitation levels at nearly constant probability per photon. 375 Alternately, photons captured by the PSII antennae can provoke formation of ³Chl within the 376 antennae or reaction center, which can in turn generate destructive ¹O₂. This path is thus 377 influenced by the antennae absorbance spectra and cross section and hence likely by qE (see 378 "3.4 The molecular regulation and characteristics of qE"). There is, as yet, no direct evidence 379 that induction of qE actually lowers susceptibility to photoinactivation in diatoms, although 380 such an effect is usually assumed based on investigations on qE in plants (Li et al. 2002). The 381 antenna-dependent photoinactivation path also depends directly upon the degree of PSII 382 closure, which in turn reflects the balance between incoming excitation and the downstream 383 flow of electrons away from PSII, often characterized by the lifetime (τ) for PSII re-opening 384 as measured by Fast Repetition and Relaxation Fluorescence (FRRF) (Kolber et al. 1998). 385 Thirdly, charge recombination within PSII may lead to generation of ³Chl, and then subsequent 386 ¹O₂ generation and damage to PSII. This photoinactivation path may dominate under low light 387 when delivery of sequential excitations to PSII are widely spaced, increasing the probability of 388 recombination within PSII (Ohad et al. 2011; Keren et al. 1997).

389 Diatoms show low primary susceptibilities to PSII photoinactivation when compared to other 390 phytoplankton lineages, and within diatoms large centric diatoms show lower susceptibilities 391 than do smaller centrics, probably related to optical attenuation by the package effect in larger 392 cells (Key et al. 2010; Wu et al. 2011; Wu et al. 2012; Wu et al. 2015; Campbell and Serôdio 393 2020). We speculate that the relatively low sensitivity of diatoms to photoinactivation may 394 relate to the photonic crystal nature of the diatom siliceous frustule (Goessling et al. 2018) 395 which modulates the internal light field of diatom cells. We also note that beyond the rather 396 unusual model species P. tricornutum (Havurinne and Tyystjarvi 2017) there are fewer 397 mechanistic studies of photoinactivation of PSII from pennate (Petrou et al. 2010; Petrou et al. 398 2012) than from centric diatoms. It is reasonable to expect different optics in the pennates and therefore the centric bias of mechanistic studies to date should be kept in mind, in contrast tothe ecological dominance of pennates in many habitats.

401

402 2.1 Kinetic overlap of photoinactivation and downregulation of PSII

403 Loss of [PSII]_{active} through either photoinactivation path leads to lowered variable fluorescence 404 from PSII and thus can overlap both phenomenologically and kinetically with reversible 405 downregulation of [PSII]active through induction of qE (Grouneva et al. 2008; Kuzminov and 406 Gorbunov 2016; Buck et al. 2019). From an ecophysiological point of view the suppression of 407 productivity through sustained loss or downregulation of [PSII]active, through whatever 408 mechanism, may be more important than the direct metabolic burden of PSII repair (Raven 409 2011). Prolonged suppression of PSII activity extending after the end of high light exposure 410 imposes an opportunity cost of loss of potential productivity, but keeps the cell in a state pre-411 acclimated for a return to higher light, as for example through mixing. Evolution may favor this 412 conservative strategy of prolonged down-regulation over more rapid relaxation of down-413 regulation to maximize short-term productivity at the risk of oxidative damage to the cell. The 414 kinetic overlap of PSII photoinactivation and repair (also summarized under the term qI, 415 photoinhibitory quenching) with the induction and relaxation of qE can be particularly 416 problematic for mechanistic characterization of the photophysiology of diatoms, where large 417 amplitude inductions of qE-like processes (see "3.3 Non-Photochemical fluorescence *Quenching (NPQ)*") can persist in darkness, requiring low light for timely relaxation (Goss et 418 419 al. 2006), thereby becoming difficult to distinguish from the overlapping influence of PSII 420 repair under low light or even in darkness (Li et al. 2016).

421

422 2.2 PSII repair

423 Photoinactivation of PSII is countered by a PSII repair cycle (Nixon et al. 2010; Komenda et 424 al. 2012; Nishiyama et al. 2014) that proteolytically removes photoinactivated subunit(s), in 425 concert with subunit replacement through translation mediated by chloroplastic ribosomes. It is 426 critical to note that although photoinactivation of PSII may precede recovery through repair, 427 the two processes show distinct kinetics and light responses. PSII photoinactivation rate shows 428 a nearly linear dependence upon instantaneous excitation levels ((Oguchi et al. 2011; Vass 429 2012; Campbell and Serôdio 2020). In contrast, PSII repair in diatoms reaches saturation under fairly low light (Wu et al. 2012). Under some conditions diatoms can therefore accumulate 430 431 considerable pools of [PSII]inactive (Wu et al. 2011; Wu et al. 2012; Campbell et al. 2013; Lavaud 432 et al. 2016) representing intermediate stages in the PSII repair cycle (Grouneva et al. 2011). 433 This temporal offset between photoinactivation and repair can result in a tradeoff between 434 strategies. A 'just-in-time' repair strategy requires cellular investment in sufficient 435 instantaneous PSII repair capacity to counter PSII photoinactivation immediately, with 436 sufficient metabolic capacity allocated to run key proteases and chloroplastic ribosome activity. 437 In contrast, a 'warehouse' strategy involves protein investment into larger pools of [PSII]inactive 438 waiting around for eventual repair. In *T. pseudonana*, the burden of maintaining PSII repair is 439 low under low light, as slow rates of photoinactivation mean that PSII must only be replaced 440 on generational time scales (Li et al. 2015). The low light cells thus follow a 'just-in-time' 441 strategy. As growth light increases, the burden of PSII repair grows, until under light above the 442 growth optima maintenance of PSII repair comes to dominate chloroplastic nitrogen 443 metabolism, thereby restricting capacity for growth and forcing the cells towards a 'warehouse' 444 strategy where [PSII]_{inactive} waits for repair. Behrenfeld et al. (1998) noted that phytoplankton 445 can tolerate a degree of photoinhibitory burn down of the standing pool of [PSII]_{active} without 446 suffering an immediate loss of net photosynthesis, showing that the remaining pool of 447 [PSII]_{active} can accelerate their photochemical turnover to compensate for loss of [PSII]_{active}. 448 This implies a 'warehouse' strategy with an offset between photoinactivation and later repair. 449 Lavaud et al. (2016) found that in P. tricornutum a large capacity for NPQ accompanied a 'just-450 in-time' strategy of repairing [PSII]inactive rapidly. In contrast, Skeletonema costatum 451 compensated for limited capacity to induce sustained NPQ with a 'warehouse' strategy by 452 maintaining a large pool of [PSII]_{inactive} awaiting repair. We thus find a compensatory balance 453 between capacity to downregulate PSII through NPQ with capacity to accumulate large pools 454 of [PSII]_{inactive} or excess [PSII]_{active}.

Interestingly, in diatoms the PsbA (D1) & PsbD (D2) subunits both turnover at similar rates (Wu et al. 2011; Wu et al. 2012; Campbell et al. 2013; Li et al. 2016), contrary to text book descriptions which focus on PsbA turnover. We have not pursued the implications as to whether PsbA or PsbD are both subject to direct photoinactivation in parallel, or whether turnover of PsbD simply closely tracks primary photoinactivation of PsbA.

The FtsH protease complex is a membrane associated structure usually comprised of six FtsH isoform subunits, implicated as the primary protease mediating removal of PsbA from thylakoid membranes (Nixon et al. 2010; Komenda et al. 2012), along with roles in turnover of other complexes (Malnoë et al. 2014). Diatom capacity for PsbA turnover is predictable from the FtsH:PsbA ratio which in turn varies depending upon the predicted light dynamics of the original source habitats of strains (Campbell et al. 2013). The 'just-in-time' strategy requires a higher FtsH:PsbA ratio than the 'warehouse' strategy. Furthermore, PSII repair continues in the 467 dark in diatoms (Li et al. 2016), which we hypothesize is driven by tight integration of 468 chloroplastic and mitochondrial metabolism to fuel the chloroplastic ATP requirements for 469 FtsH, RNA transcription and translation (Prihoda et al. 2012; Bailleul et al. 2015). This capacity 470 for dark repair of previously photoinactivated PSII allows for temporal offsets between episodes 471 of net photoinactivation under high light with transient accumulation of [PSII]inactive and 472 subsequent counteracting repair in low light or darkness, and could thereby contribute to the 473 success of diatoms in environments of fluctuating light. Furthermore, dark turnover of PsbA may contribute to a 'warehouse' strategy where [PSII]inactive is recycled in the dark. 474

475 Although large centric diatoms show lower susceptibility to photoinactivation than their smaller 476 cousins, they can also show 'luxury' turnover of PSII subunits beyond the rates predicted by 477 the photoinactivation (Li et al. 2016). This surprising finding suggests that turnover of subunits 478 can use both [PSII]_{active} and [PSII]_{inactive} as substrates, with a repair system only imperfectly 479 discriminating in favor of [PSII]_{inactive}. The three layer organization of diatom thylakoids may 480 alter or restrict the interaction of the FtsH protease complex with PSII, possibly lowering 481 capacity to discriminate in favor of [PSII]_{inactive} (Komenda et al. 2007), and thereby implying a 482 continuous repair process where the lifetime of a PsbA (or PsbD) is determined by lateral 483 delivery to FtsH rather than by the rate of instantaneous photoinactivation. Recently it was 484 shown that photodamaged PSII reaction centers are physically separated from intact PSII 485 complexes and form repair center clusters (Levitan et al. 2019). A particular steric puzzle is 486 how any PSII housed in the central of the three thylakoid layers can interact with ribosomes 487 and membrane associated FtsH complexes, but these repair centers may be located rather at the 488 outer layers or the thylakoid margins. As a final idiosyncrasy Grouneva et al. (2011) found only 489 a single, plastid encoded FtsH protein isoform in diatom thylakoids (Maxwell, Grouneva, Aro 490 & Campbell; unpublished). In contrast, in other eukaryotic photoautotrophs multiple FtsH 491 protein isoforms are encoded by genes in the nucleus and imported into the chloroplast to form 492 a hetero-hexameric FtsH structure. Thus, either diatoms carry an unusual hexamer of a single 493 isoform of FtsH; or additional divergent subunits have not as yet been annotated as contributing 494 to the chloroplastic FtsH complex of diatoms; or PSII repair in diatoms involves alternate paths. 495

496 **3. Photoprotection in diatoms**

497 When the amount of light absorbed by the light harvesting system exceeds the capacity of the 498 photosynthetic electron transport chain to transfer electrons from the sites of photochemistry to 499 electron acceptors, which also depends on energy consuming pathways such as e.g. the CBB 500 cycle, photorespiration or nitrite reduction, high concentrations of ROS both at PSII and PSI 501 can be produced. On one hand, ROS have various signaling functions well documented in plants 502 and green algae (Dietz et al. 2016) and there is some evidence that ROS may be signaling 503 substances also in diatoms (Lepetit and Dietzel 2015). On the other hand, ROS are strong 504 oxidants and if produced in large amounts and not detoxified, they will eventually kill the cells 505 (Havaux et al. 2005; Petroutsos et al. 2016) (see also "1.1 The role of pmf as a master regulator 506 of photosynthesis"). Hence, all photosynthetic organisms have various strategies to cope with 507 excess light. These strategies include mechanisms to preempt the formation of ROS as well as 508 strategies to deal with the consequences of high levels of ROS. The latter strategy involves both 509 antioxidative agents to directly quench ROS and the capacity to remove and replace 510 photodamaged proteins (see "2.2 PSII Repair").

511

512 **3.1** Detoxification of reactive oxygen species

513 Carotenoids, besides their role in light harvesting, are important antioxidants. The classical 514 example is β -carotene in the reaction center of PSII, which quenches ${}^{1}O_{2}$ generated via energy 515 transfer from ³Chl (Latowski et al. 2014). Interestingly, diatoms can accumulate huge amounts 516 of xanthophyll cycle (XC) carotenoids (namely diadinoxanthin (Dd) and its de-epoxidized form 517 diatoxanthin (Dt)) in the thylakoid membrane upon prolonged high light acclimation (Lepetit 518 et al. 2010), which is triggered by a reduced PQ pool (Lepetit et al. 2013). For dynamic 519 photoprotection, however, the effective molecule is Dt, whose concentration is depending on 520 XC activity, triggered by the ΔpH (see "3.4 The molecular regulation and characteristics of 521 qE''). The larger the ΔpH , the more Dt is synthesized in the XC. Dt fulfills a dual role: When 522 bound to specific light harvesting proteins, Dt mediates thermal dissipation of absorbed energy 523 via qE, i.e. this absorbed energy cannot be used to drive photosynthesis. When dissolved in the 524 thylakoid lipid membrane (see "Photosynthetic light reactions in diatoms. I. The lipids and 525 light-harvesting complexes of the thylakoid membrane"), Dt acts as a strong antioxidant 526 (Lepetit et al. 2010). As constitutive thermal dissipation is not desirable for diatom cells especially under fluctuating light conditions and the pH regulated diadinoxanthin de-epoxidase 527 528 de-epoxidizes both protein bound and membrane dissolved Dd, there is no constitutive 529 antioxidative Dt pool in the thylakoid membrane under low and moderate light conditions.

530 Tocopherols are potent antioxidants (Demmig-Adams and Adams 2002; Havaux et al. 2005). 531 Diatoms possess a full plastid targeted tocopherol biosynthesis pathway based on KEGG 532 predictions, which is different from other heterokonts/stramenopiles (Nonoyama et al. 2019). 533 Indeed, tocopherol biosynthesis proteins are present in diatom plastid fractions (Schober et al. 534 2019) and pronounced amounts of tocopherol are found in diatom thylakoid membranes, which 535 increase, similarly to the XC pool, upon acclimation to prolonged high light (Fig. 2). As the 536 antioxidative potential of tocopherols even increases in the presence of carotenoids (Böhm et 537 al. 1997), tocopherols together with the high amounts of membrane dissolved carotenoids 538 provide diatom thylakoids with a strong antioxidative capacity.



539

540 Figure 2

541 Amount of XC pigments (sum of Dd and Dt) and α -tocopherol, normalized on chlorophyll *a*, 542 in thylakoids of *P. tricornutum* and *Cyclotella meneghiniana*. Diatoms were grown under low 543 light (LL, 40 µmol photons m⁻² s⁻¹) or high light (HL, 180 µmol photons m⁻² s⁻¹) for several 544 generations before thylakoid isolation and pigment quantification was performed as described 545 in Lepetit et al. (2010). α -tocopherol separation and quantification was performed by Kerstin 546 Flieger (University of Leipzig, Germany) using a reversed phase column in an HPLC with a 547 coupled fluorescence detector.

548

549 Furthermore, the plastidic levels of superoxide and H_2O_2 can be lowered via superoxide 550 dismutase and ascorbate peroxidase, respectively. While this route exists in diatoms, its 551 respective importance is not clarified yet and species-specific differences do exist (Rijstenbil 552 2001; Rijstenbil 2003; Roncarati et al. 2008; Waring et al. 2010). Other antioxidants such as 553 ascorbic acid, glutathione and phenolic compounds including flavonoids complement the 554 antioxidative capacity of diatoms, but huge species-specific differences in their concentrations 555 are apparent (Foo et al. 2017; Smerilli et al. 2017; Smerilli et al. 2019).

556

557 3.2 Prevention of reactive oxygen species formation

558 Besides detoxifying ROS and ROS generated products, carotenoids also protect photosynthetic 559 organisms including diatoms before ROS can actually be created. They are involved in NPQ 560 discussed in chapter 3.3, but carotenoids are also very effective quenchers of ³Chl if orientated 561 closely enough and thereby preempting the formation of ${}^{1}O_{2}$ (Triantaphylidès and Havaux 562 2009). Other strategies to avoid the formation of ROS include photorespiration as well as 563 various AEFs (see "1.2 Alternative electron flows provide photoprotection and flexibility in 564 response to metabolic demand"). Interestingly, reversible plastid movement in response to light 565 intensity has been observed in the diatom *Pleurosira laevis*, thus increasing the absorption cross 566 section under low light conditions to maximize light harvesting, but decreasing it under high 567 light conditions due to plastid crowding in the cell center and resulting self-shading (Furukawa 568 et al. 1998). Whether such a phenomenon can contribute to photoprotection in other diatoms 569 remains questionable, as in the diatom *Coscinodiscus granii* plastid movement is also induced 570 after prolonged high light exposure, which is not reversible and is correlated with cell death 571 though (Goessling et al. 2016).

572

573 3.3 Non-Photochemical fluorescence Quenching (NPQ)

574 NPQ is a collective term for different phenomena, which all act to lower photosystem II 575 fluorescence. However, these phenomena are distinct from the suppression of fluorescence 576 caused by the onset of photochemical quenching, i.e. the oxidation of the primary PSII electron 577 acceptor Q_A by a drain of electrons from the ETR due to consumption of NADPH and ATP in 578 the CBB cycle. Importantly, it is by measuring fluorescence that NPQ can be tracked in the lab, 579 but for cellular physiology the amount of fluorescence emission is less relevant than the two 580 other major processes an excited Chl* a electron can use to revert to the ground state (heat 581 dissipation, photochemistry). A decrease in fluorescence by NPQ can have different origins, 582 and several distinct NPQ components are described in plants, see e.g. Derks et al. (2015), 583 Malnoë (2018), and Pinnola and Bassi (2018). Often, but not always, an increase in NPQ 584 indicates an increase in photoprotection (Li et al. 2002; Takahashi and Badger 2011).

585 There are three classical, primarily kinetically defined NPQ components: qE (energy dependent 586 quenching), qI (photoinhibitory quenching), and qT (quenching based on state transitions). qE 587 comprises photoprotection mechanisms which are rapidly induced upon a generation of a Δph 588 (usually upon exposure to excess light conditions) over time scale of seconds to minutes. qE is 589 also rapidly relaxed upon return to non-saturating light conditions. qI describes processes 590 characterized by a much slower recovery under low light or dark conditions than qE related 591 processes. By virtue of this kinetic definition, qI encompasses drops in fluorescence yield 592 induced by damaged or inactivated PSII reaction centers (see "2.1 Kinetic overlap of 593 photoinactivation and downregulation of PSII"), but also processes induced by a sustained 594 thermal dissipation independent of PSII damage, e.g. in evergreen plants during winter. 595 Therefore, for plants the term qZ was introduced to distinguish some of these slowly recovering 596 processes by their underlying mechanism. qZ describes thermal dissipation processes, which 597 are formed within minutes and exclusively rely on the de-epoxidation of violaxanthin via 598 antheraxanthin to zeaxanthin, independent of the qE providing protein PsbS (Nilkens et al. 599 2010). Its relaxation also follows strictly the epoxidation of zeaxanthin via antheraxanthin to 600 violaxanthin. In diatoms, recent works start to disentangle the various qI components by 601 introducing the sustained NPQ (NPQs) parameter, which describes within qI those slowly 602 recovering NPQ processes that are independent of PSII damage and repair (Wu et al. 2012; 603 Lacour et al. 2018).

604 Despite some debates, qT is well understood in the green lineage. qT includes a reversible 605 movement of LHCII antennae between PSII and PSI, where these LHCII antennae modulate 606 the PSII and PSI absorption cross section (Nawrocki et al. 2016; Pan et al. 2018). Also, state 607 transitions are often paralleled by a change in thylakoid macrostructure, with fewer thylakoid 608 stacked regions when LHCII detaches from PSII and shuttles towards PSI (Chuartzman et al. 609 2008; Nagy et al. 2014). The trigger for state transitions is the redox state of the PQ pool, which 610 is sensed via a thylakoidal kinase, STN7 in plants, STT7 in Chlamydomonas (Depege et al. 611 2003; Bellafiore et al. 2005). A reduced PQ pool activates STN7/STT7, which then 612 phosphorylates LHCII and thus induces its detachment from PSII. Diatoms do not display 613 stacked and non-stacked thylakoidal regions under normal growth conditions, which 614 historically has been used to argue against a possible existence of state transitions. Moreover, 615 in the diatom P. tricornutum previous experiments indicated the absence of state transitions 616 (Owens 1986). In this study, a protocol adapted from plants was applied which uses green light 617 as 'PSII light' and far-red light as 'PSI light'. We meanwhile know that there is no strict and 618 stable discrimination of far-red absorption in PSII in P. tricornutum, as also PSII can absorb in 619 the far-red due to the presence of Lhcf15 (Herbstová et al. 2015; Herbstová et al. 2017) (see 620 "Photosynthetic light reactions in diatoms. I. The lipids and light-harvesting complexes of the 621 thylakoid membrane"). Interestingly, in P. tricornutum there is a putative kinase with strong 622 homology to STT7/STN7, whose function is as yet unclear. Moreover, time resolved 623 fluorescence analyses revealed a spectral component developing under NPQ conditions, which 624 the authors speculated to result from a transfer of some PSII antennae to PSI (Miloslavina et al. 625 2009). Given the fact that not all aspects of diatom NPQ assigned to qE are fully clarified yet (see next chapter) and that most studies on diatom NPQ characteristics have been performed on 626 627 only a handful of species while there are ~ 100,000 diatom species to explore (Mann and 628 Vanormelingen 2013), the absence of state transitions in diatoms should not been taken for 629 granted yet.

630

631 3.4 The molecular regulation and characteristics of qE

632 In recent years, major understandings of the molecular regulation of qE in diatoms have been 633 acquired. In addition, there are numerous reports on the ecophysiological distribution and 634 importance of qE in diatoms (see "4. Variable adjustment of diatom light-response in different 635 ecosystems"). qE strongly depends on the presence of the xanthophyll pigment Dt (Arsalane et 636 al. 1994; Olaizola et al. 1994; Lavaud et al. 2002b; Goss et al. 2006; Park et al. 2010; Lavaud 637 and Lepetit 2013; Roháček et al. 2014; Blommaert et al. 2017; Lacour et al. 2020). This pigment 638 is produced from Dd via action of a de-epoxidase in the presence of a ΔpH across the thylakoid 639 membrane (Hager and Stransky 1970). Usually, this happens in excess light when the 640 photosynthetic light reactions are limited by what the CBB cycle can metabolize (oxidation of 641 NADPH, hydrolysis of ATP). However, the de-epoxidation also occurs to some extent in dark 642 conditions, likely due to a backwards reaction of the thylakoidal ATP synthase pumping protons 643 into the lumen (Bailleul et al. 2015) or possibly some kind of 'chlororespiration' (Jakob et al. 644 1999) (see also "1.5 Chlororespiration, redox state of the plastoquinone pool, and pmf in the 645 dark").

Dt is converted back to Dd in the absence of a pronounced ΔpH, i.e. under low light and to some extent also dark conditions, catalyzed via an epoxidase which then operates faster than the de-epoxidase (Blommaert et al. 2021). Interestingly, after a switch from high light the epoxidation reaction in diatoms is faster under low light conditions than in darkness (Goss et al. 2006; Blommaert et al. 2017). As the epoxidase requires NADPH as co-substrate, its synthesis through photochemical reactions under low light conditions (not in darkness) in combination with a putatively small NADPH/NADP pool has been proposed to cause this 653 peculiar feature (Goss et al. 2006), but also another mode of redox control has been postulated 654 recently (Blommaert at al. 2021). The XC of diatoms shows further differences compared to 655 the green lineage: The epoxidation reaction of diatoms is much faster (Goss et al. 2006), but 656 gets downregulated under high light, possibly reflecting its regulation by the stromal pH 657 (Mewes and Richter 2002; Goss et al. 2006) or redox regulation (Blommaert et al. 2021). The 658 de-epoxidase is activated at a much lower ΔpH than in the greens (Jakob et al. 2001), especially 659 when high concentrations of the co-substrate ascorbate are available (Grouneva et al. 2006). Also, the de-epoxidase of diatoms has a considerable higher affinity for ascorbate (Grouneva 660 661 et al. 2006). Finally, in contrast to the 'greens', the abolishment of the ΔpH does not directly 662 remove qE. As long as a Dt is present, it still provides qE (Goss et al. 2006). Hence, the amount 663 of short-term high light induced de-epoxidation of Dd to Dt is usually linearly correlated to the 664 establishment of qE in diatoms, while the epoxidation of Dt back to Dd is linearly correlated to 665 the relaxation of qE (Lavaud et al. 2002a; Goss et al. 2006; Lavaud and Lepetit 2013; Blommaert et al. 2017). In this aspect, the diatom qE rather resembles the qZ mechanism 666 667 described for plants (see "3.3 Non-Photochemical fluorescence Quenching"), except that 668 diatom qE/qZ operates on a faster timescale. Therefore, the tuning of the XC in diatoms can be 669 best explained in the framework of its utmost importance for induction of qE (Wilhelm et al. 670 2006): As changes in the pH of the lumen/stroma only indirectly trigger qE via 671 activation/deactivation of the XC enzymes, the enzymatic reactions must proceed very rapidly. 672 In line with this, the kinetic properties of both de-epoxidase and epoxidase reaction can be 673 altered in P. tricornutum depending on the long term acclimation to different light intensities 674 (Kuczynska et al. 2020). We must emphasize that in the diatoms C. meneghiniana and Navicula 675 sp. there is a component of qE that is independent of the XC, but rather relies on the 676 establishment of the ApH alone (Grouneva et al. 2008; Derks and Bruce 2018). So far, 677 mechanistically little is known about this NPQ component, but for C. meneghiniana, Grouneva 678 et al. (2008) demonstrated that it requires the initial presence of certain amounts of Dt.

679 In addition to Dt, thylakoid membrane proteins called Lhcx have a key role for qE in diatoms. 680 These proteins belong to the Lhc superfamily and usually are encoded by multiple slightly 681 different copies in the diatom genome (see "Photosynthetic light reactions in diatoms. I. The lipids and light-harvesting complexes of the thylakoid membrane"). When individual Lhcx 682 683 proteins are lowered or increased by reverse genetics, the capacity for qE is simultaneously 684 either lowered or increased (Bailleul et al. 2010b; Ghazaryan et al. 2016; Taddei et al. 2016; 685 Lepetit et al. 2017; Buck et al. 2019). Moreover, in various diatom species and communities, 686 Lhcx proteins increase in response to light stress conditions (Bailleul et al. 2010b; Park et al.

2010; Zhu and Green 2010; Lepetit et al. 2013; Laviale et al. 2015; Blommaert et al. 2017; 687 688 Lepetit et al. 2017; Taddei et al. 2018). Other stressors such as iron, copper, phosphorus, or 689 nitrogen limitation increase the amount of some Lhcx, too, also followed by an increase of qE 690 capacity (Zhu et al. 2010; Taddei et al. 2016; Helliwell et al. 2020). Three (Lhcx1,2,3) of the 691 four Lhcx proteins present in *P. tricornutum* can confer qE independently of each other, while 692 also synergistically adding additional qE capacity (Buck et al. 2019). By using multiple 693 functionally complementary Lhcx genes whose expression is dependent on different 694 environmental triggers, diatoms tune their qE capacity depending on the environmental 695 constraints. Interestingly, the Lhcx4 protein in *P. tricornutum* cannot induce qE by itself (Buck 696 et al. 2019), although it might do so on top of Lhcx1 mediated NPQ (Taddei et al. 2016). Lhcx4 697 is also regulated differently, being strongly upregulated under constant darkness (Nymark et al. 698 2009; Taddei et al. 2016).

699 Lhcx proteins intimately interact with Dt to provide qE. In P. tricornutum, neither Dt nor Lhcx 700 are able to induce any qE individually (Buck et al. 2019), indicating that both components are 701 involved in the same mechanism. Lhcx and Dt induced qE reduces the functional absorption 702 cross section of PSII (σPSII) (Kuzminov and Gorbunov 2016; Giovagnetti and Ruban 2017; 703 Xu et al. 2018; Buck et al. 2019). Strikingly, when extrapolating the linear relationship between 704 decrease of σ PSII and increase of qE to a thermal dissipation rate of 100%, a σ PSII value 705 remains which is the size of a dimeric PSII core without any peripheral antenna both in P. 706 tricornutum (Buck et al. 2019) and in T. pseudonana (Xu et al. 2018). Thus, most likely Lhcx 707 and Dt induce a disconnection of the outer antennae from the PSII core, resulting in the strong 708 drop in σ PSII (Buck et al. 2019). Such an antennae detachment is corroborating previous results 709 obtained by time resolved fluorescence spectroscopy (Miloslavina et al. 2009). In this model, 710 the antenna detachment thereby preempts flow of excitation energy from the antenna to the PSII 711 core, lowering excitation pressure on the photosynthetic system.

712 How the fluorescence in the detached antennae complexes is actually quenched is still a matter 713 of debate. Lhcx genes (also termed LhcSR/Li818) are spread throughout the eukaryotic 714 photosynthetic kingdom, being present in most taxa which rely on light harvesting proteins as 715 main antennae, with the major exception of land plants (Dittami et al. 2010; Blommaert et al. 716 2020). So far, an involvement of Lhcx/LhcSR proteins in qE, besides in diatoms, has been 717 demonstrated in the green alga C. reinhardtii (Peers et al. 2009), the eustigmatophyte 718 Nannochloropsis oceanica (Park et al. 2019), and the moss Physcomitrella patens (Alboresi et 719 al. 2010). Insights from these different organisms may be extrapolated to get clues about the 720 nature of diatom quenching. Based on ultrafast transient absorption and fluorescence spectroscopy measurements, multiple different quenching mechanisms including chlorophyllcarotenoid excitation energy transfer as well as chlorophyll-chlorophyll and chlorophyllcarotenoid charge transfer states have been suggested to be responsible for qE in plants and green algae (summarized in de la Cruz Valbuena et al. 2019; Bennett et al. 2019). This ambiguity may partly be due to two major facts:

726 i) In order to avoid scattering artifacts, ultrafast spectroscopy experiments are often recorded 727 on isolated thylakoids or pigment protein complexes which need to be specifically treated to 728 induce NPQ (such as by lowering pH or removing detergent). Whether the so induced 729 quenching complexes actually represent the *in vivo* situation remains questionable (see also 730 Elnour et al. 2018). Also, for interpretation of the different spectroscopic features, one needs to 731 impose several assumptions on them by referring to spectra obtained from other individually 732 measured pigment protein complexes, the latter also not necessarily reflecting the true *in vivo* 733 situation.

ii) These ultrafast spectroscopy experiments are experimentally challenging, with difficulties
to find the 'right' experimental laser power and exposure time to avoid artefacts due to
bleaching and annihilation processes or due to generation of qI phenomena (see Van Oort et al.
2018; Buck et al. 2019).

Because of these technical challenges, Van Oort et al. (2018) argued that many conclusions based on ultrafast spectroscopic experiment are actually experimental artifacts. As even in the green line the nature of the quenching pigments is unclear, in diatoms there is currently no solid idea of the pigments involved in the actual heat dissipation process.

742 However, several reports indicate the presence of two major qE sites in diatoms. One site is 743 assigned directly dependent on Dt and resides at the PSII core, while the other one is rather 744 induced by ΔpH and located in detached antennae complexes (Miloslavina et al. 2009; 745 Chukhutsina et al. 2014; Giovagnetti and Ruban 2017; Taddei et al. 2018). Such an 746 interpretation is, however, difficult to reconcile with the prime dependency of diatom qE on Dt, 747 with the ΔpH rather having an indirect effect on qE by regulating the XC. We assume that these 748 results may, at least partially, be cofounded by the problems described above and may instead 749 rather represent a mixture of qE and qI processes (Kuzminov and Gorbunov 2016; Buck et al. 750 2019). Also, there may exist diatom species specific differences, with Cyclotella possessing a 751 more complex qE behavior than P. tricornutum (Grouneva et al. 2008) which could explain the observation of even a third qE site in Cyclotella (Chukhutsina et al. 2014). For P. tricornutum 752 753 there is strong evidence that the major qE mechanism is dependent on the presence of Lhcx proteins and the conversion of Dd into Dt, which detaches the peripheral antennae and thus
establishes the major site of qE (Fig. 3) (Kuzminov and Gorbunov 2016; Buck et al. 2019).

756 It remains to be elucidated whether Lhcx proteins form actual part of these detached quenching 757 complexes or whether, in concert with Dt, they only induce the uncoupling of peripheral 758 antennae and their transformation into the dissipative state. Different biochemical studies do 759 not provide a conclusive picture about localization of Lhcx proteins yet: Lhcx have been found 760 in preparations of the peripheral antennae (Beer et al. 2006; Lepetit et al. 2010; Taddei et al. 761 2018), PSI (Grouneva et al. 2011; Taddei et al. 2018) but also in PSII (Taddei et al. 2018, Kansy 762 et al. 2020). It is clear that LhcSR/Lhcx proteins can bind pigments including substantial 763 amounts of carotenoids (Bonente et al. 2011), strikingly different to PsbS, the protein mediating 764 qE in plants. Hence, in diatoms Lhcx proteins may bind XC pigments, which would be the most 765 parsimonious explanation for the intimate connection of the XC and Lhcx in conferring qE. 766 Unfortunately, recent x-ray structures of diatom antennae do not include Lhcx proteins (Nagao 767 et al. 2019; Pi et al. 2019) and no in vitro Lhcx protein reconstitution including pigments is 768 available yet. However, it was recently shown that some specific part of the Lhcx proteins is 769 essential for providing qE (Buck et al. 2021). By modeling this modified Lhcx sequence on the 770 structure of Lhcf4, it became clear that especially one prominent tryptophan in this region may 771 most likely coordinate the binding of a Dd/Dt molecule in the second membrane spanning helix, 772 which therefore would provide an explanation for the intimate link of Lhcx and Dt in conferring 773 qE (Buck et al. 2021).

774 Given the difficulty of identifying Lhcx proteins within isolated pigment protein complexes in 775 diatoms, a rather loose association amongst them is likely. We assume that Lhcx proteins may 776 primarily be located within the PSII supercomplexes, such as in C. reinhardtii (Tokutsu and 777 Minagawa 2013; Scholz et al. 2019). As experimental evidence suggests that qE in diatoms 778 involves a disconnection of the peripheral antennae from PSII, we assume a localization of 779 Lhcx rather in between the peripheral antennae and the PSII core complex. Here, the conversion 780 of Dd into Dt bound to Lhcx could induce a conformational shift or rearrangement of Lhcx 781 which leads to a disconnection of the peripheral antennae including a switch into the thermal 782 dissipative state (Fig. 3). The Lhcx proteins could move together with the peripheral antennae 783 or stay associated with PSII. This model is similar to our earlier model (Lavaud and Goss 2014; 784 Goss and Lepetit 2015), but including only one qE quenching site.

785



Figure 3

Model of how Lhcx and Dt generate qE in P. tricornutum. Depending on their environmental conditions, cells are in a low or high, but yet inactive qE state, which potential qE capacity is determined by the amount of XC pigments and Lhcx proteins present. Upon excess light exposure, the established ΔpH leads to the conversion of Dd into Dt, which induces a reduction in σ PSII by thermal dissipation in the outer, uncoupled FCP antennae (Fucoxanthin chlorophyll binding proteins), shifting the cells into the active qE state.

797 **4. Variable adjustment of diatom light-response in different ecosystems**

798 In the recent years, there has been a significant effort in exploring the light-response diversity 799 among diatoms in relation to their growth form and their specific marine ecosystem and habitat. 800 Diatoms are unique in that they conquered virtually every aquatic habitat, whose characteristics 801 diverge enormously. In that regard, one of the processes that has received the most interest is 802 NPQ and associated XC (see Bertrand 2010; Brunet and Lavaud 2010; Lavaud and Goss 2014; 803 Lacour et al. 2020). Different diatom strains and ecotypes grown under similar conditions in 804 stable culture collection conditions for years and even decades retain differences in effective 805 and potential NPQ and related XC and Lhcx features (Dimier et al. 2007; Lavaud et al. 2007; 806 Bailleul et al. 2010b; Petrou et al. 2011; Barnett et al. 2015; Blommaert et al. 2017; Croteau et 807 al. 2020). Different ecotypes and species can show similar Dd+Dt pool sizes and de-epoxidation 808 states (DES) with completely different XC-mediated NPQ kinetics and capacities. This results 809 possibly from Dd+Dt pools with different functionality and localization and different 810 expression of Lhcx proteins (see "3.4 The molecular regulation and characteristics of qE"), 811 generating a different overall quenching efficiency of Dt.

812 The quenching efficiency of Dt has been considered as a solid index of the adaptation of a strain 813 to a given habitat with a specific light climate (Lacour et al. 2020). Diatoms adapt their fast 814 light-response to the light climate of their habitat, in terms of average light dose and light 815 fluctuations, through the molecular control of NPQ by Dt and Lhcx synthesis. Some authors 816 even proposed a classification of Dd-containing microalgae in three distinct ecological groups 817 based on their XC properties vs. irradiance and light fluctuations (Dimier et al. 2007; Dimier et 818 al. 2009). The quenching efficiency and other NPQ features are indeed influenced by ecological 819 niche adaptation with no apparent phylogenetic connection, the most obvious example being 820 benthic forms that inhabit estuarine intertidal flats (Barnett et al. 2015; Blommaert et al. 2017; 821 Blommaert et al. 2018). In turn, NPQ is regarded as a functional trait likely participating in the 822 cost-benefit photoadaptive strategy, the geographical distribution and seasonal dynamics of a 823 species (Irwin and Finkel 2017). NPQ characteristics have been indeed related to i) latitude 824 (Bailleul et al. 2010b; Laviale et al. 2015), ii) different marine (Strzepek and Harrison 2004; 825 Lavaud 2007) and freshwater (Shi et al. 2016) ecosystems, iii) different habitats of the same 826 ecosystem, i.e. seasonal habitat succession in polar systems (Petrou et al. 2011; Croteau et al. 827 2020) or different intertidal sediment types (Barnett et al. 2015; Blommaert et al. 2017), and iv) 828 seasonal dynamics of phytoplankton in a given ecosystem or habitat (Dimier et al. 2007; 829 Polimene et al. 2014). In the following, we will focus on three ecosystems where diatoms are

830 found abundantly: the water column, the coastal intertidal flats and the polar regions.

831 4.1 Diatoms of the phytoplankton

832 The light climate of planktonic diatoms shows a depth-dependent attenuation of irradiance and 833 modification of the light spectrum (Stomp et al. 2007; Jaubert et al. 2017). The dynamics of the 834 XC and NPQ, together with other fast-responding photophysiological processes such as the 835 PSII cyclic electron cycle (Lavaud et al. 2002c; Lavaud et al. 2007; Wagner et al. 2016), are 836 relevant for the regulation of the photosynthetic productivity of plankton diatoms in the mixed 837 upper layer of the water column (Brunet and Lavaud 2010; Polimene et al. 2014) and during 838 blooming (Fujiki et al. 2003). Diatoms cope especially well with a fluctuating light climate 839 where they lose less of the absorbed light via alternative electron pathways compared to green 840 algae and thus reach higher growth rates (Wagner et al. 2006). This is achieved by a more 841 balanced and cost-effective qE via a concerted regulation of XC pigments and Lhcx synthesis 842 in a narrow range of irradiance (Wagner et al. 2006; Lavaud et al. 2007; Giovagnetti et al. 2014; 843 Lepetit et al. 2017). Such response is an adaptive advantage in well-mixed habitats where 844 competition for light strongly influences phytoplankton groups and species dynamics 845 (Widdicombe et al. 2010; Polimene et al. 2012; Schofield et al. 2017) and their functional and 846 evolutionary ecology (Tozzi et al. 2004; Benoiston et al. 2017).

847 The ecophysiological connection between NPQ and XC features and the *in situ* light climate 848 was investigated by comparing strains from different habitats (Lavaud 2007; Lacour et al. 849 2020). In general, species adapted to higher average light doses or stronger light fluctuations 850 (estuaries and coasts) showed higher Dt quenching efficiencies than counterparts adapted to 851 more stable light environments (semi-enclosed bays and open ocean). Contrastingly, the latter 852 rely more on regulatory processes better suited to cope with more gradual light changes such 853 as a fast turnover of the D1 protein to balance photodamage (Wu et al. 2012; Lavaud et al. 854 2016) (see also "2.2 PSII repair"). Diatoms that can have both a planktonic and a benthic life 855 (tychoplankton) perform diverse responses, with some representatives showing NPQ features 856 similar to coastal centric diatoms (Perkins et al. 2018; Lacour et al. 2020), while those that 857 inhabit intertidal flats resemble open ocean species (Barnett et al. 2015; Lacour et al. 2020).

858

859 4.2 Diatoms of the microphytobenthos

860 Benthic diatoms that inhabit the sediment of intertidal flats experience an extremely complex 861 light environment depending on a multifaceted combination of tidal and diurnal cycles that 862 control the alternation between sharp very low light/darkness periods (during immersion and at 863 night) and open-field like light fluctuations during daytime emersions. They also have to deal 864 with a photic zone condensed to the first hundreds of µm in the sediment (Kühl and Jorgensen 865 1994). Additionally, other environmental cues such as temperature and salinity can vary rapidly 866 between extremes (Paterson and Hagerthey 2001). Similarly to plankton counterparts, NPQ and 867 related XC pigment dynamics in benthic diatom strongly depend on light as a function of 868 latitude, season, tidal cycle, penetration in the sediment, daily light dose and light fluctuations 869 during emersion (Lavaud and Goss 2014). These temporal NPQ dynamics, together with other 870 photoprotective processes such as the PSII repair cycle (Frankenbach et al. 2018), help benthic 871 diatoms in maintaining their photosynthetic efficiency during emersion (Laviale et al. 2015; 872 Cartaxana et al. 2016). Differences in photoadaptive traits between benthic diatoms are believed 873 to partially explain the differential distribution of growth forms between contrasting 874 sedimentary habitats (i.e. muddy vs. sandy), and they are also claimed to be involved in the 875 hourly species succession within the biofilm during emersion (Underwood et al. 2005).

876 The two main growth forms of benthic diatoms are the non-motile epipsammon and the motile 877 epipelon. Epipsammon usually dominates in coarser sandy sediment where light penetrates 878 deeper, and it lives in close association with sediment particles. This growth form - similar to 879 plankton counterparts adapted to high average light doses or strong light fluctuations - first 880 relies on XC based NPQ for its photoprotection (Cartaxana et al. 2011; Barnett et al. 2015), and 881 some of them reach some of the highest quenching efficiencies (Lacour et al. 2020). Their high 882 NPQ capacity is based on a large Dd+Dt pool size, high kinetic constants of the XC enzymes, 883 a strong DES and possibly the use of the violaxanthin-antheraxanthin-zeaxanthin cycle under 884 harsh light exposure (Barnett et al. 2015; Blommaert et al. 2017; Blommaert et al. 2018).

885 Contrastingly, epipelon dominates in fine cohesive muddy sediment where it undergoes active 886 'vertical migration' modelled onto the tidal and diurnal cycles, i.e. it migrates upward the 887 sediment at daytime emersion to form a biofilm at the surface and perform photosynthesis. 888 Epipelic diatoms can also use motility to position themselves along the sediment light gradient 889 and escape from excess light (Consalvey et al. 2004), which generates a strong interplay 890 between behavioral (phototactic motility) and physiological regulation of photosynthesis 891 (Laviale et al. 2016; Blommaert et al. 2018; Frankenbach et al. 2018). Therefore, epipelic 892 diatoms rely less on NPQ and generally show a weaker quenching efficiency (Lacour et al. 893 2020). Besides, epipelic diatoms rely on a more efficient repair capacity of PSII photodamage 894 than epipsammon (Frankenbach et al. 2018), an ability strikingly similar to their plankton 895 counterparts adapted to a relatively stable light environment (Lavaud et al. 2016). Also, benthic 896 diatoms may contain a higher number of Lhcx proteins (17 in Seminavis robusta, Blommaert 897 et al. 2020) to adjust their NPQ capacity to cope with combined environmental stresses (Laviale 898 et al. 2015; Blommaert et al. 2017), but this awaits confirmation by more sequenced benthic diatoms. Critically, studies regarding the full budget of absorbed light energy and its fate
including diverse alternative electron paths, as done in planktonic species (Wagner et al. 2006;
Jakob et al. 2007; Bailleul et al. 2015), are not yet available for benthic species.

902

903 4.3 Polar diatoms

Diatoms also thrive in polar ecosystems, characterized by very different light climates related to specific, often seasonal, habitats: in sea-ice, underneath the ice, at the marginal ice zone, and in summer free-ice open waters. Furthermore, high latitude habitats are characterized by extreme changes in photoperiods over the year, from complete darkness to 24 h light per day.

908 The combined effects of light with temperature, nutrient availability, and ocean acidification

909 on the regulation of photosynthesis in polar diatoms have been recently extensively considered

910 (Petrou et al. 2016; Trimborn et al. 2017; Hoppe et al. 2018; Lewis et al. 2019; Strzepek et al.

911 2019; Yan et al. 2019). In general, polar diatoms show photoadaptive features of very low light

and temperature acclimation, for instance: i) specific features of Rubisco activity (Valegård et
al. 2018) including a high cellular Rubisco content (Young et al. 2015; Gerecht et al. 2019) to

compensate for the slow enzymatic rate, ii) very active AEF processes (Alderkamp et al. 2012;
Goldman et al. 2015; Schuback et al. 2015; Trimborn et al. 2019), iii) the ability to repair
damaged PSII even below 0°C (Petrou et al. 2010), and iv) a strong antioxidant activity
(mycosporine-like amino acids and ROS scavengers (Hernando et al. 2002; Janknegt et al.
2008; Ha et al. 2016)).

919 The pattern of NPQ-related light-response and Dd+Dt pool size is similar to the one of 920 temperate plankton diatoms. It correlates with diurnal and seasonal light dynamics 921 (Schallenberg et al. 2019; Schuback and Tortell 2019), depth (Kashino et al. 2002; Hashihama et al. 2010; Alderkamp et al. 2013) and horizontal light climate heterogeneity, i.e. Dd+Dt pool 922 923 size is larger in free-ice open waters and at the marginal ice zone than in waters covered with 924 ice. It also depends on the depth of snow covering the floe (Aikawa et al. 2009; Alou-Font et 925 al. 2013; Galindo et al. 2017). Also noteworthy is the high number of FCP and Lhcx proteins 926 (11 isoforms) found in the bipolar strain Fragilariopsis cylindrus (Mock et al. 2017). Such as 927 in temperate counterparts, most Lhcx isoforms are downregulated in darkness (Kennedy et al. 928 2019) and some are upregulated under high light exposure (Park et al. 2010; Kvernvik et al. 929 2020).

Although they are adapted to very low light, bottom sea-ice diatom communities possess the
physiological panoply for responding to sudden and relatively prolonged irradiance increase,
e.g. in spring, due to snow flash melt (Griffith et al. 2009; Katayama and Taguchi 2013; Arrigo

et al. 2014). Alderkamp and colleagues (Alderkamp et al. 2010; Alderkamp et al. 2011;
Alderkamp et al. 2013; Joy-Warren et al. 2019) demonstrated how NPQ, XC pigments and PSII
repair mitigate photoinhibition in polar diatom communities, and how this controls their
productivity by strongly modulating the coupling between ETR and carbon fixation (Schuback
et al. 2017; Ryan-Keogh et al. 2018).

938 Polar diatoms are able to sustain a functional photosynthetic machinery during winter polar 939 night at least for 1.5 months and to reactivate photosynthesis upon the spring onset of light 940 within less than 24 h (Kvernvik et al. 2018). While this involves many concerted physiological 941 and metabolic adjustments (Kennedy et al. 2019; Morin et al. 2020), NPQ and XC pigments 942 (and likely AEFs) are of primary importance especially during re-illumination to reactivate 943 photosynthesis (Lacour et al. 2019; Morin et al. 2020). In these conditions, even a low photon 944 flux is dramatically in excess of photosynthetic capacity, and light onset is anticipated in some 945 species via Dt synthesis in the dark, switching PSII in the dissipative state (='dark NPQ') 946 (Kennedy et al. 2019; Lacour et al. 2019). Dt synthesis in darkness occurs possibly through the 947 build-up of a transthylakoidal ΔpH via chlororespiration and/or plastid-mitochondria coupling 948 (see "1.5 Chlororespiration, redox state of the plastoquinone pool, and pmf in the dark"). Upon 949 re-illumination, dark NPQ provides immediate protection (Lacour et al. 2019), onto which 950 light-driven Dt accumulation based NPQ is added (Morin et al. 2020), which supports the rapid 951 transition towards fully operational photosynthesis (Kvernvik et al. 2018; Morin et al. 2020).

952

953 **Outlook**

954 A wealth of knowledge about photosynthesis in diatoms has been gathered in the last decades, 955 but most of these data have been acquired using only a handful of model species. Considering 956 the ecophysiological diversity of diatoms, these data can only represent a small part of the 957 puzzle. The remarkable flexibility of photosynthetic electron flows and especially the tight 958 interplay with mitochondrial respiration needs to be addressed under various stress conditions 959 and in different diatom species to understand how diatoms optimize electron flows. In this 960 regard, a closer look into mitochondrial respiration may help dissecting further peculiarities of 961 diatoms compared to the green lineage. We also need a first highly resolved image of the diatom 962 ATP synthase to get an idea of the proton requirement per ATP synthesis. In addition, the 963 identity of the actual fluorescence quenching pigments involved in thermal dissipation is 964 unclear so far, and the molecular details of the photosynthetic repair machinery are not known 965 yet. For all these questions, the application of modern genome editing tools such as CRISPR-966 Cas will be essential. Moreover, the development of heterotrophic diatom model systems, as 967 proposed for *Cyclotella cryptica* and *Cylindrotheca fusiformis* (Falciatore et al. 2020), could 968 enable for the first time studying processes in heterotrophic mutants (lethal in autotrophic 969 diatoms) which include plastid division and development, but also thylakoid (protein complex) 970 and pigment synthesis. Finally, the further exploration of the functional and ecological diversity 971 of different growth forms and species isolated from different marine habitats will help better 972 understanding how the specificities of diatom photosynthesis support their worldwide 973 ecological success.

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