

H3K27me3 conditions chemotolerance in triple-negative breast cancer

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1	H3K27me3 is a determinant of chemotolerance
2	in triple-negative breast cancer
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4	Justine Marsolier ^{1,2,*} , Pacôme Prompsy ^{1,2,*} , Adeline Durand ^{1,2#} , Anne-Marie Lyne ^{3#} , Camille
5	Landragin ^{1,2} , Amandine Trouchet ^{1,2} , Sabrina Tenreira Bento ³ , Almut Eisele ³ , Sophie Foulon ⁴ , Léa
6	Baudre ^{1,2} , Kevin Grosselin ^{4,5,6} , Mylène Bohec ⁷ , Sylvain Baulande ⁷ , Ahmed Dahmani ² , Laura Sourd ² , Eric
7	Letouzé ⁸ , Anne-Vincent Salomon ^{9,10} , Elisabetta Marangoni ² , Leïla Perié ^{3,‡} , Céline Vallot ^{1,2,‡}
8	
9	Affiliations:
10	1 CNRS UMR3244, Institut Curie, PSL University, Paris, France
11	2 Translational Research Department, Institut Curie, PSL University, Paris, France
12	3 CNRS UMR168, Institut Curie, PSL University, Sorbonne University, Paris, France
13	4 CNRS UMR8231, ESPCI Paris, PSL University, Paris, France
14	5 HiFiBio SAS, Paris, France
15	6 Current Affiliation: Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, Cambridge MA, USA
16	7 Genomics of Excellence (ICGex) Platform, Institut Curie, PSL University, Paris, France
17	8 Functional Genomics of Solid Tumors laboratory, Centre de Recherche des Cordeliers, Sorbonne
18	University, Inserm, USPC, Paris Descartes University, Paris Diderot University, Paris, France
19	9 Pathology-Genetics-Immunology Department, Institut Curie, PSL Research University, Paris, France.
20	10 INSERM U934, Institut Curie, PSL Research University, Paris, France
21	
22	* These authors contributed equally to this work
23	# These authors contributed equally to this work
24	‡ co-last authors
25	
20	

26 Correspondence to <u>celine.vallot@curie.fr</u>

- 27 Summary
- 28

29 Residual disease, formed by cancer cells persistent to therapy, remains one of the major clinical challenges towards full cure^{1,2}. In triple-negative breast cancers, persistence to chemotherapy 30 31 results in the highest risk of recurrence among all breast cancer subtypes³. If there is now consensus that the drug-tolerant state is defined by non-genetic features^{4,5}, understanding the mechanisms 32 33 driving tumor cells to drug-tolerance stands as a pre-requisite to efficiently fight recurrence. Here, 34 we show that the repressive histone mark H3K27me3 is a determinant of cell fate at the onset of 35 chemotherapy exposure, monitoring epigenomes, transcriptomes and lineages with single-cell 36 resolution. We show that the persister expression program is primed with both H3K4me3 and 37 H3K27me3 in unchallenged cells, H3K27me3 being the lock to its transcriptional activation. We 38 further establish that H3K27me3 controls cell fate upon chemotherapy exposure: alleviating the 39 genome from H3K27me3 enhances the potential of each cancer cell to tolerate chemotherapy insult. 40 Conversely, we demonstrate that preventing H3K27me3 demethylation simultaneously to 41 chemotherapy inhibits the transition to drug-tolerant state, and delays tumor recurrence in vivo. 42 Our results highlight how chromatin landscapes shape the potential of cancer cells to respond to 43 initial therapeutic insult.

44

45 Introduction

46 Emergence of resistant phenotypes from initially responding or partially-responding tumors has been modeled as a multi-step process in cancer^{6,7}. Initially, post drug insult, only a pool of persister cells -47 48 also called drug-tolerant persister cells (DTPs) - manage to tolerate the cancer treatment and survive. 49 These cells constitute a reservoir of cells from which drug-resistant cells, actively growing under cancer treatment, can ultimately emerge^{6,8,9}. In triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC), both genetic and 50 51 transcriptomic mechanisms have been proposed to drive cancer evolution towards chemoresistance, 52 through combined selective and adaptive modes of evolution¹⁰. The recent identification of a multi-53 clonal reversible drug-tolerant state post neo-adjuvant chemotherapy in patient-derived xenografts 54 (PDX)⁵ suggested that the earliest steps of chemoresistance in TNBC are not driven by genetic 55 alterations, but rather by non-genetic plasticity in multiple cancer cells. Similarly, in other cancer types, 56 drug-tolerant states have been identified solely characterized by changes in transcriptomic and 57 epigenomic features in response to targeted therapies or chemotherapies^{4,11,12}. 58 Genetic history of many cancer types has been extensively modelled thanks to both bulk and single-59 cell approaches^{10,13}. In contrast, little is known about the epigenomic heterogeneity and dynamics of

60 acquisition of epigenetic alterations. While recent studies have focused on the evolution of DNA 61 methylation^{14,15} - among the most stable epigenetic locks to gene expression - contribution to tumor 62 evolution of more versatile epigenetic modifications has remained poorly understood. Single-cell 63 methods to map repressive and permissive histone modifications, key players of cellular plasticity, have emerged only recently^{16,17}, enabling the study of epigenomic diversity within biological systems. 64 Studying cases of acquired resistance in luminal and triple-negative cancer in PDX with single-cell 65 66 chromatin profiling, we had identified the first examples of epigenomic clones within tumors, solely 67 defined by H3K27me3 landscapes¹⁶. We had detected resistant-like H3K27me3 landscapes in initial 68 untreated tumors, proposing histone modifications as a molecular player of tumor evolution 69 processes. Here, we focused on the earliest steps of cancer treatment prior to the emergence of 70 resistant populations, to identify the initial epigenomic mechanisms driving drug tolerance. Thanks to 71 a characterization of epigenomic and transcriptomic evolution under chemotherapy at single-cell 72 resolution, we show that H3K27me3 epigenomes, and not H3K4me3, are a proxy of cancer cell 73 evolution upon initial chemotherapy insult. We discovered that the persister expression program is 74 actually in a bivalent chromatin configuration in untreated cells, and locked by H3K27me3. Tracing cell 75 lineages together with transcriptomics, we further reveal that H3K27me3 is a key determinant of cell 76 fate upon initial chemotherapy exposure in TNBC: depriving cells of H3K27me3 enhances the potential 77 of each tumor cell to tolerate chemotherapy. Finally, preventing cells under chemotherapy insult to 78 demethylate H3K27me3 residues inhibits their potential to tolerate chemotherapy, and delays tumor 79 recurrence in vivo.

80

81 Deriving persister cells from patient tumor models. We focused on mechanisms of drug tolerance in 82 residual TNBC, for which patients have the poorest outcome. Resistance to adjuvant chemotherapy 83 cannot be easily studied as biopsies are not routinely performed when the disease progresses (Fig. 1a). 84 To circumvent these limitations, we modeled, in vivo and in vitro, phenotypes of drug-response 85 observed in patients. In vivo, we first treated three patient-derived xenograft (PDX) models - PDX 95, 86 PDX_39 & PDX_172 - established from patients with residual TNBC^{16,18}, with Capecitabine, the standard 87 of care for residual breast tumors (Fig. 1b, Extended Figure 1). After the first round of chemotherapy 88 treatment, mice displayed a pathological complete response (pCR), but tumors eventually recurred 89 ('recurrent') and mice were treated again with chemotherapy, to which tumors responded to various

90 extents, some maintaining constant tumor volume under treatment ('resistant') (Fig. 1b). These
91 recurrent tumors potentially arose from persister cells, surviving initial chemotherapy treatment⁸. We
92 isolated persister cells by pooling the fat pad from mice with pCR (from 4 to 14, Extended Fig. 1a, 1f &
93 1l). To phenocopy a clinical situation of partial response, we also generated 'residual' tumors for one

- 94 model (PDX_95, n=2) (Extended Fig. 1a) by administering half the dose of Capecitabine.
- 95 In vitro, we treated an initially chemosensitive TNBC cell line (MDA-MB-468), with Fluorouracil (5-FU)¹⁹, 96 the active metabolite of Capecitabine, which is not converted *in vitro*. We drove independently three 97 pools of cells to chemotolerance and subsequently to chemoresistance with prolonged 5-FU treatment 98 (>15 weeks, Fig. 1e). After 3 weeks, only few cells survived drug insult (0.01% of the initial population, 99 Extended Fig. 2a), out of which a minority (36%) divided after 10-15 additional days (Extended Fig. 2a-100 b); this group of cells, surviving initial chemotherapy, are referred to as 'persister' cells. Over 15 weeks, 101 populations of resistant cells emerged, with doubling times comparable to untreated cells and an IC50 102 to 5-FU over 4-fold higher than untreated population (Extended Fig. 2b).
- 103

104 Identification of a pool of basal persister cells in vivo and in vitro. To characterize transcriptomic 105 evolution of untreated cells towards chemotolerance and subsequently chemoresistance, we 106 performed single-cell RNA-seq (scRNA-seq) in both cell lines and PDX models (Fig. 1c, 1f, Extended Fig. 107 1 & 2). In vivo, scRNA-seq was mandatory to identify the rare human persister cells among the vast 108 majority of stromal mouse cells. Out of the fat pad, we typically isolated hundreds of persister cells 109 per mouse. In vivo, persister cells from different mice grouped within one or two expression clusters 110 (Extended Fig. 1b, 1g-h & 1m-n). In vitro, diverse cell populations (res #1, 2 and 3) with distinct 111 expression programs, originated from the pool of persister cells, all grouped within common clusters 112 across experiments (scRNA-based clusters R2/R4, Extended Fig. 2c). In vivo and in vitro, persister cells 113 recurrently activated a set of common pathways compared to untreated cells (Fig. 1c-f, Extended Fig. 114 1c-d, 1i-j, 1o-p Extended Fig. 2d-e). Originating from KRT5-expressing cancer cells, persister cells 115 recurrently activated sets of genes further establishing basal cell identity, such as KRT14 (Fig. 1c, 1f, 116 Extended 1j & 1p). Compared to untreated cells, persister cells in vivo and in vitro also showed an 117 activation of genes associated with the Epithelial-to-Mesenchymal Transition (EMT, Fig.1c-f, Extended 118 Fig. 1c-d, 1j & 1p, Extended Fig. 2d & 2f) - such as TAGLN, an actin-binding protein, previously shown to promote metastasis through EMT²⁰, and NNMT, characteristic of the metabolic changes that 119 120 accompany EMT^{21–23}. Persister cells also activated genes involved in the TNFalpha/NF-KB pathway. Part of the persister expression program remained patient-specific: in PDX_95 and in vitro persister cells 121 122 showed for example an activation of the TGF- β pathway with the expression of multiple players 123 including ligands and receptors (Fig.1c & 1f, SI Tables 1-4).

124 In vivo, we showed that persister and residual tumor cells actually clustered together (Fig. 1c, cluster 125 R4), thereby sharing common expression features, suggesting similar mechanisms of chemotolerance 126 independent of the residual burden. Yet we detected a higher number of cells in G0/G1 within persister 127 populations than in residual or untreated tumors (Extended Fig. 1e-k-q), a characteristic recapitulated in vitro (Extended Fig. 2g) and in line with previous reports^{1,4,11,24}. In vitro, we identified two clusters of 128 129 persister cells (clusters R2 and R4), that differ by their expression of additional EMT markers such as 130 CDH2 (Fig. 1f) and TWIST1. Early individual non-cycling persisters (day 33) solely belonged to cluster 131 R2/CDH2- whereas dividing persisters could either belong to R2/CDH2- or R4/CDH2+ (Fig.1f). Overall, 132 we identified both in vivo and in vitro a reservoir of persister basal cells with EMT markers and 133 activated NF-KB pathway. NF-KB signaling pathway and EMT associated-genes were proposed as 134 potential drivers of chemoresistance in various tumor types, including lung^{25,26}, pancreatic²⁷, breast^{28,29}. Here we pinpoint NF-KB and EMT pathway activation as the earliest common molecular
events at the onset of chemotolerance in TNBC, defining a common Achilles' heel to target
chemotolerant cells before they phenotypically diversify.

138

139 **Cell fate bias under chemotherapy.** To follow clonal evolution under therapeutic stress, we had 140 initially introduced unique genetic barcodes in untreated MDA-MB-468 cells prior to our experiments (Extended Fig. 3a). We leveraged our previous barcoding method³⁰ to allow robust detection of 141 142 barcodes within scRNA-seq data (Fig. 1g), as shown by the number of cells with a detected lineage 143 barcode (Extended Fig. 3b). In addition, we verified that barcodes frequencies detected in scRNA-seq 144 data recapitulated those detected in bulk, confirming the sensitivity of barcode detection in scRNA-145 seq data (Extended Fig. 3c). By combining detection of lineage barcode and expression programs at 146 single-cell resolution, we were able to monitor clonal evolution over the course of the treatment and 147 within each expression clusters (Fig. 1g). If non-cycling persisters (day 33) were multi-clonal (62% of 148 unique barcodes), R6 and R8 chemoresistant clusters were constituted of few clones (3 and 4 149 respectively). According to bulk data (Extended Fig. 3d-e), barcode diversity in the cell population 150 decreased with time both under 5-FU and DMSO exposure. Across experiments and time points, the 151 fraction of unique barcodes within the CDH2-/R2 persister cluster was significantly higher than in 152 CDH2+/R4 cluster (average of 41% versus 8% unique barcode, p=1.6e-2, Fig. 1g), demonstrating that if 153 the drug-tolerant state is multi-clonal, only rare persister cells switch to the CDH2+ state.

- 154 To test if the lineages that persist were selected within the untreated population, we next compared 155 barcode frequencies between the starting population and the 5-FU or DMSO-treated cells using 156 additional bulk experiments (Experiment #3, Extended Fig. 3d-g). If surviving cells had no particular 157 predisposition then they should resemble a random draw of the initial untreated population (day 0, 158 Extended Fig. 3f). In contrast to DMSO-treated cells, barcode frequencies of the 5-FU treated cell 159 deviated from this random scenario (Extended Fig. 3g, r=0.68 and r=0.29 respectively), indicating that 160 a fraction of lineages present in the untreated population have a predisposition to tolerate 161 chemotherapy. Using our single-cell barcoding dataset, we were able to identify within the untreated 162 populations, future persisters (n=143, for which the lineage barcode is found both in persisters and 163 untreated cells) and compare them to 'non-persisting' cells (n=201, Extended Fig. 3 h-j). The only 164 transcriptomic differences between those two cell populations were the over-expression of S100A2, a 165 calcium binding protein, and LDHB, a lactate dehydrogenase, in future persister cells, prior to 166 treatment. These results suggest that a difference in the metabolism of cells could be an indicator of 167 their potential for persistence.
- 168

169 Dynamics of genomic and epigenomic features. To hamper the chemo-driven clonal evolution of 170 cancer cells, we next investigated the molecular basis of such rapid phenotypic evolution. Using whole-171 exome sequencing (Extended Fig. 4a), we first analyzed mutations, copy-number alterations (CNA) and 172 related mutational signatures acquired by persister and resistant cell populations since the onset of 5-173 FU treatment. We could not identify any recurrent mutations across experiments (Extended Fig. 4b), 174 or any CNA (amplifications or homozygous deletions) or recurrent mutations affecting known driver 175 genes of breast cancer in any population¹³. Only a minor fraction of mutations found in persister cells 176 were attributed to 5-FU exposure (mutational signature 17³¹) in contrast to resistant cell populations 177 where over 50% of acquired mutations are associated to 5-FU ($p<10^{-10}$, Extended Fig.4c). These results 178 indicated that chemo-related mutations are acquired over a timeframe that is not compatible with the 179 rapid phenotypic evolution seen in persister cells. Finally, computing cancer cell fractions for each

mutation, we confirmed that persister populations are extensively multi-clonal (Extended Fig. 4d), inline with the lineage barcoding results.

182 We next investigated changes in epigenomes during chemotherapy treatment. Using single-cell 183 profiling (scChIP-seq), we observed that H3K27me3 epigenomes faithfully captured the evolution of 184 cell states with chemotherapy (Fig. 2a, Extended Fig. 5a and SI Table 4). Persister cells shared a 185 common H3K27me3 epigenome (cluster E1, Fig. 2b, Extended Fig. 5b), in contrast to resistant cells split 186 in clusters E1 and E3. In comparison to untreated cells, cells from cluster E1 showed recurrent 187 redistribution of H3K27me3 methylation, the highest changes (|log2FC|>2 and adjusted p-value<10⁻¹) 188 occurring specifically at transcription start sites (TSS) and gene bodies (Fig. 2c) and corresponding to a 189 loss of H3K27me3 enrichment (75 regions with log2FC<-2, and 2 regions with log2FC>2). This depletion 190 was associated with the highest changes in gene expression observed by scRNA-seq (Fig. 2d and 191 Extended Fig. 5c) and to the transcriptional de-repression of 22% of persister genes – defined as genes 192 overexpressed in persister versus untreated cells – such as TGFB1, FOXQ1, a transcription factor driving 193 EMT (Fig. 2e, SI Table 4). These epigenomic changes were not necessarily kept in resistant cell 194 populations (Extended Fig. 5d), suggesting the existence of transient epigenomic features in persister 195 cells.

196 In the untreated cells, two epigenomic subclones (E2 & E4 clusters, Fig. 2b) were recurrently identified 197 indicative of an epigenomic heterogeneity in this population (n=3 experiments). In contrast to cells 198 from cluster E4 (median correlation score r=-0.34), a fraction of cells within cluster E2 shared 199 epigenomic similarities with cells from E1 (Fig. 2f, 49/381 cells over r=0.20, p<2.2e-16). Yet these 200 similarities did not affect persister genes (Extended Fig. 5e), and cells remained discernible from the 201 pool of persister cells (no cells from E2 with r score over median r in E1, p<2.2e-16). This suggests that 202 cells from E2 could fuel the persister population when exposed to chemotherapy, with the need of 203 chemo-induced chromatin changes to achieve tolerance. In addition, we also detected rare cells with 204 a persister epigenomic signature, but in only one of our three experiments (60/976 cells – Extended 205 Fig. 5b), suggesting that spontaneous transition to H3K27me3 drug-tolerant state rarely occurs in the 206 absence of chemotherapy.

207

208 Persister expression program is locked by H3K27me3. To test whether H3K27me3 enrichment was 209 the lock to the persister expression program in untreated cells, we treated cancer cells with the EZH2 210 inhibitor (EZH2i-1) UNC1999³², to deplete H3K27me3 from cells, in the absence of chemotherapy. 211 EZH2i-1 treatment phenocopied drug-tolerant state to chemotherapy as expression fold-changes 212 induced by EZH2i-1 were specifically correlated to those induced by chemotherapy exposure at early 213 time points in persister cells (Fig. 2g, Extended Fig. 5f, r=0.71 versus r=0.31 with changes in resistant 214 cells). Furthermore, we observed that EZH2i-1 was sufficient to lead to the activation of 62% of 215 persister genes with depletion of H3K27me3 upon 5-FU treatment (23/37 genes), suggesting that 216 H3K27me3 was the sole lock to their activation (Fig. 2h and Extended Fig. 5g). EZH2i-1 was also 217 sufficient to lead to the over-expression of 60% of persister genes independently of any H3K27me3 218 enrichment in untreated cells (78/131 genes), such as KRT14, suggesting that these genes might be 219 targets of H3K27me3-regulated persister genes. To further test this hypothesis, we explored the 220 existence of potential 'master' transcription factors (TFs) within the *persister* genes. Using CheA3³³, we 221 identified three transcription factors, FOXQ1, FOSL1 and N2RF2, that respectively target 34%, 42% and 222 29% of the persister genes (Extended Fig. 5h-i). All 3 are H3K27me3-regulated persister genes, with a 223 loss of H3K27me3 upon 5-FU (Extended Fig. 5j) and re-expressed by EZH2i-1 treatment, proposing 224 H3K27me3-regulated TF as potential drivers of the persister expression program.

225

226 Priming of the persister expression program. As we observed H3K27me3 changes upon 5-FU 227 treatment precisely at TSS, we further explored the evolution of chromatin modifications at TSS, 228 focusing on H3K4me3, a permissive histone mark shown to accumulate over TSS with active 229 transcription. In contrast to single-cell H3K27me3 epigenomes which were sufficient to separate cell 230 states along treatment (Fig 2a), individual H3K4me3 epigenomes of untreated and persister cells were 231 indiscernible (Fig. 3a-b). Sparse H3K4me3 enrichment was already observed in untreated cells at the TSS of *persister* genes (p<10⁻¹⁵, compared to a set of non-expressed genes, Extended Fig. 6a-b). In 232 233 individual persister cells, H3K4me3 enrichment was significantly more synchronous at the TSS of 234 persister genes with more persister genes simultaneously marked by H3K4me3 in the same cell than 235 in untreated cells (p=4.0e-2, Extended Fig. 6c-d). Based on these results, we reasoned that in untreated 236 cells H3K4me3 and H3K27me3 could either accumulate on the same TSS but in different cells, or 237 H3K4me3 could accumulate together with H3K27me3 in a subset of cells on the same TSS.

238 To test whether H3K4me3 could co-exist with H3K27me3 in the same individual cells prior to 239 chemotherapy exposure, we performed successive immunoprecipitation of H3K27me3 with H3K4me3 240 (or vice-versa) or H3K27me3 (or H3K4me3) with isotype control (IgG) on mono-nucleosome chromatin. 241 In MDA-MB-468 cells, we detected n=1,547 transcription start sites significantly enriched in DNA 242 immunoprecipitated with both H3K27me3 and H3K4me3, compared to the control (H3K27me3/IgG) 243 precipitated fraction (peak-ratio>0.15, q-value<10⁻³, Extended Fig. 6e-h). We found that bivalent 244 chromatin in untreated cells was detected at TSS of genes associated to mammary stem cell and EMT 245 pathways, as well as various developmental pathways (e.g Hedgehog pathway, Extended Fig. 6h-i). The 246 majority of H3K27me3-regulated persister genes (26 out of 37), including the 3 candidate master TFs, 247 were found in a bivalent chromatin configuration in the untreated cell population (e.g TGF- β 1, FOXQ1, 248 FOSL1, Fig. 3b-c, Extended Fig. 6d and SI Table 4). We next studied bivalent chromatin landscapes in 249 additional TNBC cell lines (HCC38 & BT20, Extended Fig. 6i), in our 3 PDX models and n=9 patient 250 samples - 3 of which correspond to the tumors used for PDX derivation (Patient_95, Patient_39 & 251 Patient 172) (Fig. 3d-f, Extended Fig. 7h). We confirm the existence of bivalent programs in all patient 252 tumors, and show that paired PDX models faithfully recapitulate bivalency of patient samples 253 (Extended Figure 7a-f). Bivalent chromatin is also found at genes implicated in EMT and mammary 254 stem cell identity, and developmental pathways (Fig. 3f, Extended Fig. 7h) and at candidate master TFs 255 of the persister programs - FOXQ1, KLF4 or TFCP2L1 - (Fig. 3d-e, Extended Fig. 7g). With a continuum 256 of epigenomic datasets, from patients to PDX, we demonstrate that cancer cells display a set of 257 bivalent TSS, which could lead to the rapid activation of an entire persister expression program upon 258 therapeutic stress.

259

260 Depriving cells of H3K27me3 enhances chemotolerance. To further test if H3K27me3 was a lock to 261 the emergence of persister cells under chemotherapy exposure, we next depleted H3K27me3 from 262 epigenomes prior to chemotherapy treatment in three TNBC cell lines (MDA-MB-468, BT20 and HCC38, 263 Extended Fig. 8). Using EZH2i-1, in addition to an inactive isomer (UNC2400³⁴) and a second EZH2i (GSK126³⁵ referred to as EZH2i-2), we showed that erasing H3K27me3 - without perturbing EZH2 264 265 protein levels - increased the number of persister cells with both EZH2 inhibitors, while the inactive 266 isomer had no effect (Fig. 4a, Extended Fig. 8). By comparing bulk lineage barcode frequencies across 267 conditions, we further demonstrated that EZH2 inhibitors were actually affecting cell fate under 268 chemotherapy exposure, by rescuing the biased lineage frequency induced by 5-FU treatment (Fig. 4b, Extended Fig. 8c). We observed that co-treatment with EZH2i-1 and EZH2i-2 increased correlation 269

270 scores between lineage frequencies in 5-FU and DMSO treated population, whereas co-treatment with 271 the inactive isomer had no effect on lineage frequencies (Fig. 4b, Extended Fig. 8c). Performing 272 combined single-cell transcriptomics and lineage tracing as in Figure 1, we then compared the fraction 273 of unique barcodes across expression clusters under 5-FU exposure with or without EZH2i-1, termed 274 "EZH2i-1 persister" and "persister" respectively (Fig. 4c-e). We observed that co-treating cells with 275 EZH2i-1 significantly increased the fraction of unique lineage barcodes in CDH2+ persister populations, 276 identified in Figure 1 (R3 cluster, p<10⁻⁴ and over 2 fold-increase, Fig. 4e). Altogether, our results 277 showed that H3K27me3 depletion with EZH2 inhibitors rescued the biased lineage frequency observed 278 under chemotherapy treatment, and enabled a wider variety of cells to switch to the CDH2+ drug-279 tolerant state. Overall, depleting H3K27me3 from untreated cells not only launched a persister-like 280 expression program, but it also enhanced the potential of each cancer cell to tolerate chemotherapy. 281

- 282 Preventing H3K27me3 demethylation inhibits chemotolerance. Finally, we tested our ability to inhibit 283 the emergence of persister cells by preventing the depletion of H3K27me3 under chemotherapy exposure using a KDM6A/B - "Lysine demethylase 6A/B" inhibitor (KDM6A/Bi - GSK-J4³⁶) 284 285 simultaneously to chemotherapy. We tested in vitro and in vivo the ability of GSK-J4 to reduce the pool 286 of persister cells upon chemotherapy exposure, reasoning that a reduced number of persister cells 287 would increase the delay to recurrence. In vitro, in opposition to EZH2i, co-treatment with KDM6A/Bi 288 led to a decrease in the number of persisters at day 21 and further completely abolished the growth 289 of persister cells under 5-FU at day 60, whereas it had no effect on untreated cancer cells (Fig. 5a, 290 Extended Fig. 9a-c). Interestingly, administrating KDM6i once persister cells have emerged, rather than in combination to chemotherapy, is inefficient (Fig. 5b, Extended Fig. 9d), demonstrating that the 291 292 switch from untreated to drug-tolerant state, rather than the drug-tolerant state itself, was sensitive 293 to KDM6i. These results were confirmed in two additional TNBC cell lines, BT20 and HCC38 (Extended 294 Fig. 9e-f). In vivo, our objective was to test the potential of KDM6i to limit the emergence of persister 295 cells, when administered simultaneously to chemotherapy. We compared the disease-free survival 296 time of mice treated with Capecitabine alone (n=25) or in combination with KDM6i (n=25). The 297 administration of KDM6i did not inhibit tumor progression in absence of chemotherapy nor was toxic 298 for the mice (Fig. 5c). However administered in combination to chemotherapy, it significantly increased 299 the delay to recurrence (Fig. 5d, p=4.0e-2) in comparison to chemotherapy alone. Our in vitro and in 300 vivo results together suggest that a fraction of cancer cells could need to actively demethylate 301 H3K27me3 residues to tolerate chemotherapy. These results are consistent with a mechanism where 302 persister genes would be repressed by H3K27me3 in untreated cells, and primed with stochastic 303 H3K4me3 in a subset of cells, with the loss of H3K27me3 unlocking the transition to tolerance.
- 304

305 Discussion

306 In conclusion, our study shows that H3K27me3 landscapes are determinants of cell fate upon 307 chemotherapy exposure in TNBC. We demonstrate that, prior to treatment, cells display bivalent 308 chromatin landscapes priming the persister expression program with H3K4me3 and H3K27me3. In 309 other words, genes are ready to be activated with H3K4me3, but are repressed with H3K27me3 that 310 remains the lock to the activation of the persister expression program. Using EZH2 inhibitors and 311 lineage tracing strategies, we further demonstrate that, depleting H3K27me3 from the genome 312 rescues the cell fate bias normally observed upon chemotherapy insult; cells have an equal probability 313 of surviving initial chemotherapy insult. Persister cells could be cells without H3K27me3 or the one 314 releasing the H3K27me3 lock, or a mixture of both phenomena as shown here: co-treating cells with a

H3K27me3 demethylase inhibitor together with 5-FU, we reduced, but not totally abrogated the number of persister cells. We propose that combining chemotherapy with histone demethylase inhibitors at the onset of chemotherapy exposure will delay recurrence by decreasing the pool of persister cells. Several studies had started to interrogate which epigenetic modifiers could regulate expression programs of persister or resistant cells^{11,35,37,38}. Here, we show that even prior to treatment, the epigenome is already a key player, with a priming of the persister program. Our findings highlight how chromatin landscapes can shape the potential of cancer cells for chemotolerance.

322 Our results that depletion of H3K27me3 with EZH2 inhibitors - at the onset of treatment - enhances 323 chemotolerance leaves open questions regarding the role of H3K27me3 landscapes in cancer 324 evolution, and the usage of EZH2i in cancer treatment. Depending on the context and the timing of 325 administration, EZH2i might have drastically different effects, and such subtleties should be carefully 326 considered before therapy combination. In contrast to our observations at the onset of treatment, 327 TNBC cancer cells with long-term acquired chemo-resistance have been shown to display DNA 328 hypomethylation and large H3K27me3 over transposable elements, hence a vulnerability to EZH2i³⁹. 329 EZH2i were also recently shown to lead to MHC Class I upregulation in cancer cells, thereby showing 330 beneficial immunotherapeutic effects^{40,41}. If such cell plasticity represents a therapeutic opportunity, 331 our results also show that EZH2i could also lead, in some contexts, to the activation of a set of genes 332 driving drug-persistence.

333 Isolated examples of bivalent promoters had been found in tumor cells^{42,43}, here we exhaustively map 334 bivalent promoters genome-wide, revealing epigenomic priming of mammary stem cell genes and 335 signaling pathways of known resistance pathways in TNBC⁴⁴, including Hedgehog, WNT, TGF-β, ATP-336 binding cassette drug transporters pathways. Such epigenomic priming is reminiscent of developmental bivalency priming mechanisms⁴⁵ found in stem cells prior to differentiation and 337 338 appears key for the rapid activation of the genes upon therapeutic stress. Remains to be understood, 339 how only a minority of bivalent genes are targeted by gene reactivation upon chemotherapy exposure 340 - which could be associated to the nature of the treatment itself - and whether such priming 341 mechanisms could be shared across cancer types. Determining the precise addressing mechanisms 342 that target H3K27me3 and H3K4me3 writers and readers to TSS of cancer-type bivalent genes under 343 therapeutic stress, will be instrumental in the future to identify dedicated co-factors which could serve 344 as therapeutic targets to further limit the emergence of persister cells.

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433 Methods

434 **Experimental approaches:**

435 Patient samples and PDX models. Patient samples used in this study (n=9) originated from patient 436 treated at Institut Curie with residual triple-negative breast cancers post-neoadjuvant chemotherapy, 437 who gave informed consent for the profiling. In this study, we used three xenograft models generated 438 from three different residual triple-negative breast cancers post-neoadjuvant chemotherapy (HBCx95 439 called PDX 95, HBCx39 called PDX 39 and HBCx172 called PDX 172 in the manuscript, see Extended 440 Table2) established previously at Curie Institute with informed consent from the patient^{46,47}. Female 441 Swiss nude mice were purchased from Charles River Laboratories and maintained under specific-442 pathogen-free conditions. Mouse care and housing were in accordance with institutional guidelines

- 443 and the rules of the French Ethics Committee (project authorization no. 02163.02).
- Fig. 1b: Five mice were not treated and kept as controls (termed "untreated") and twenty-seven mice
 were treated orally with Capecitabine (Xeloda; Roche Laboratories) at a dose of 540 mg/kg, 5 d/week
 for 6 to 14 weeks. Relative tumor volumes (mm3) were measured as described previously¹⁸. Eight mice
- 447 were sacrificed after the first round of chemotherapy to study "residual" tumors (2 mice) or "persister"
- (6 mice) human tumor cells. Seven mice with *"recurrent"* tumors (tumor volume between 200 and 600
 mm3) were treated with a second round of Capecitabine to which they responded or not. *"Resistant"*
- 450 refers to a tumor which maintains a constant volume under this second round of treatment.
- Extended Fig. 1f: Three mice were not treated and kept as controls (termed "untreated") and fourteen
 mice were treated orally with Capecitabine at a dose of 540 mg/kg, 5 d/week for 7 weeks and sacrificed
 to study "persister" human tumor cells.
- 454 Extended Fig. 1I: Six mice were not treated and kept as controls (termed "*untreated*") and four mice 455 were treated orally with Capecitabine for 7 weeks and sacrificed to study "*persister*" human tumor 456 cells.
- 457 Fig. 5c: Five mice were treated intraperitoneally with DMSO, five mice were treated intraperitoneally 458 with GSK-J4 alone at a dose of 50mg/kg, 5d/week for 25 days. Twenty-five mice were treated orally 459 with Capecitabine at a dose of 540 mg/kg, 5 d/week for 36 days and twenty-five mice were co-treated 460 with Capecitabine and GSK-J4 for 36 days. Tumor volumes (mm3) were measured to follow recurrence. 461 Fig. 5d: Disease-free survival was defined as the number of days between the observation of a 462 complete response (relative tumor volume RTV compared to volume at onset of treatment < 0.2) after 463 the first round of Capecitabine treatment, and the appearance of a recurrent tumor (RTV > 3). 464 Statistical analysis was performed using a log-rank test.
- 465 Before downstream analysis (scChIP-seq, scRNA-seq or sequential ChIP-seq), control and treated 466 tumors were digested for 2h at 37°C with a cocktail of Collagenase I (Roche, Ref: 11088793001) and 467 Hyaluronidase (Sigma-Aldrich, Ref: H3506). Cells were then individualized at 37°C using a cocktail of 468 0.25% Trypsin-Versen (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Ref: 15040-033), Dispase II (Sigma-Aldrich, Ref: D4693) and DNase I (Roche, Ref: 11284932001) as described previously⁴⁸. Then, eBioscience red blood cell 469 470 lysis buffer (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Ref: 00-4333-57) was added to the cell suspension to remove red 471 blood cells. To increase the viability of the final cell suspension, dead cells were removed using the 472 Dead Cell Removal Kit (Miltenyi Biotec, Ref:130-090-101).
- 473

474 Cell lines, culture conditions and drug treatments. MDA-MB-468 cells were cultured in DMEM (Gibco-475 BRL, Ref: 11966025), supplemented with 10% heat-inactivated fetal calf serum (Gibco-BRL, Ref: 10270-476 106). HCC38 and BT20 cell lines were cultured in RPMI 1640 (Gibco-BRL, Ref: 11875085), supplemented
477 with 10% heat-inactivated fetal calf serum. All cell lines were cultured in a humidified 5% CO2

atmosphere at 37 °C, and were tested as mycoplasma negative. GSKJ4 (KDM6A/B inhibitor, Sigma, Ref:
SML0701), GSKJ5 (GSK-J4 inactive isomer, Abcam, Ref: ab144397), UNC1999 (EZH2 inhibitor, Abcam,
Ref: ab146152), UNC2400 (UNC1999 inactive isoform, Tocris, Ref: 4905) and GSK126 (EZH2 inhibitor,
Sigma, Ref:) were used at indicated concentrations. Cells were treated with 5 μM of 5-FU (Sigma, Ref:
F6627) alone or in combination with KDM6A/Bi or EZH2i for indicated days. For EZH2i, cells were
pretreated with UNC1999, UNC2400 or GSK126 for 10 days before the addition of 5-FU for an

- 484 additional 21 days (Figure 4 and Extended Figure 8).
- 485

486 Colony forming assay. TBNC cells were plated in 6 multi-well plates at a density of 200,000 cells per
487 well and treated with the indicated drugs for 60 days (MDA-MB-468, Fig. 5a/b and Extended Fig. 9b)
488 or 56 days (BT20) or 50 days (HCC38) (Extended Fig. 9). Cultures were incubated in humidified 37 °C
489 incubators with an atmosphere of 5% CO2 in air, and treated plates were monitored for growth using
490 a microscope. At the time of maximum foci formation, colony formation was evaluated after a staining
491 with 0.5% Crystal Violet (Sigma, ref: C3886).

492

493 **Cell proliferation, doubling time and IC50.** MDA-MB-468, HCC38 and BT20 cells were stained with 494 Trypan Blue (Invitrogen, Ref: T10282) exclusion test, and counted using a Countess automated cell 495 counter (Invitrogen, Ref: C10228) at indicated time of treatment (Fig. 4a and Extended Fig.8a/d/f).

496 Doubling time (Extended Fig.2b) was calculated using this formula:

497 "DoublingTime = duration*log(2)/(log(Final Concentration)-log(Initial Concentration))"
498 For untreated condition and resistant condition, cell numbers were evaluated on cell population during
499 10 days (n=3). For persister condition, cells were counted manually under the microscope at day 13
500 and day 30 of treatment. Doubling time of 5-FU dividing persister cells was studied from single cell to
501 confluent colony by assaying cell number every 4 days during 27 days (n= 9 single cells).

502 MDA-MB-468 untreated and chemoresistant cells were plated in 96 multi-well plates at a density of 503 10,000 cells per well and treated with increased concentration of 5-FU (1µM to 0.5M) for 72h. Cell 504 cytotoxicity was assayed with XTT kit (Sigma, Ref: 11465015001) and IC50 was calculated as the 505 concentration of 5-FU that is required to obtain 50% of cell viability (Extended Fig. 2b).

- 506 Cells were classified as 'persister', 'growing persister' or 'resistant' based on a combination of 2
 507 biological markers : (i) doubling time under 5-FU, (ii) IC50 to 5-FU (Extended Figure 2b, Fig. 1e):
- 508-'persister' correspond to non-dividing cells (infinite doubling time) or cells dividing with a509doubling time significantly higher than resistant cells under 5-FU
- 510 511

 'resistant' correspond to cells with a doubling time comparable to untreated cells and a significant higher IC 50 to 5-FU compared to untreated cells

512 It should be noted that due to low number of persister cells (0.01% of initial population), we could not513 measure the IC50 to 5-FU.

514 For Extended Fig. 9d cells were treated with 5-FU at 5uM and indicated concentrations of GSK-J4 or

515 GSK-J5 (D-5 indicated 5 days pre-treatment with GSK-J4 or GSK-J5 before 5-FU treatment (D0), D0

516 indicated co-treatment 5-FU and GSK-J4 or GSK-J5, D10 and D30 indicated that treatment with GSK-J4

517 or GSK-J5 started 10 days or 30 days respectively after the onset of 5-FU treatment (D0). The number

518 of persister cells were counted manually under the microscope at day 42 (n=3).

519 The GraphPad PRISM 9 was used for statistics and the results represent the mean ± sd of three 520 independent experiments. Statistical analysis was performed using the Bonferroni test for multiple

521 comparisons between samples (Fig. 4a, Extended Fig. 8a/d/f, Extended Fig. 9b/d and Extended Fig.2b-

right) or one-tailed Mann-Whitney test for the comparison between two conditions (Extended Fig. 2b-left).

524

525 Western blotting. In Extended Fig. 8b/e/g, DMSO- and EZH2i-treated cells were lysed at 95°C for 10 526 minutes in Laemmli buffer (50 mM Tris-HCl [pH 6.8], 2% SDS, 5% glycerol, 2 mM DTT, 2.5 mM EDTA, 527 2.5 mM EGTA, 4 mM Sodium Orthovanadate, 20 mM Sodium Fluoride, protease inhibitors, 528 phosphatase inhibitors) and proteins concentrations were measured using a Pierce BCA protein Assay 529 Kit (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Ref: 23225/23227). 10 µg of proteins were then separated on a 4-15% 530 Mini-PROTEAN TGX Stain-Free Gel (Bio-Rad, Ref: 4568085) at 160V. After transfer, the membrane was 531 blocked for 1 h at room temperature in PBS pH 7.4 containing 0.1% Tween-20 and 1% milk (Regilait). 532 Incubation anti-H3K27me3 (Dilution: 1:2000, Cell Signaling, Ref: 9733) or EZH2 (Dilution: 1:2000, Cell 533 Signaling, Ref: 5246) or Tubulin (Dilution: 1:1000, Thermo Fisher Scientific, Ref: 31460) primary 534 antibodies diluted in PBS pH 7.4, 0.1% Tween-20 were performed at 4°C overnight. Following 2h 535 incubation at room temperature with an anti-rabbit or mouse peroxidase-conjugated secondary 536 antibody (Dilution: 1:10000, Thermo Fisher Scientific, Ref: 31460 or Ref: 31430) diluted in PBS pH 7.4, 537 0.1% Tween-20, antibody-specific labeling bands were revealed (Bio-Rad, ChemiDoc MP) using a 538 SuperSignal West Pico PLUS Chemiluminescent Substrate (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Ref: 34579).

539

Lentivirus packaging and cell transduction. Lentivirus was produced by transfecting the barcode plasmids pRRL-CMV-GFP-BCv2Ascl and p8.9-QV and pVSVG into HEK293T cells as previously described³⁰. MDA-MB-468 cells from ATCC were infected at passage 11 with lentivirus produced from the barcode library (pRRL-CMV-GFP-BCv2Ascl) which includes 18206 different barcodes of 20bp of a random stretch, at a low multiplicity of infection (MOI 0.1) to minimize the number of cells marked by multiple barcodes. Three weeks after transduction, cells were sorted for GFP expression to select cells with barcode insertion, and used for drug treatment.

547

Single-cell RNA-seq. For each single cell suspension (DMSO-D0-#1, 5-FU-D33-#1, 5-FU-D214-#1, 5-FU-549
D67-#2, 5-FU-D171-#2, 5-FU-D50-#3, 5-FU-D77-#3 and 5-FU-D202-#3) or PDX dissociated cells
(PDX_95, PDX_39 or PDX_172, untreated and persister cells), approximately 3,000 cells were loaded
on a Chromium Single Cell Controller Instrument (Chromium Single Cell 3'v3, 10X Genomics, Ref: PN-1000075) according to the manufacturer's instructions. Samples and libraries were prepared according
to the manufacturer's instructions. Libraries were sequenced on a NovaSeq 6000 (Illumina) in PE 28-8-91 with a coverage of 50,000 reads/cell.

555

Bulk lineage barcode library preparation and sequencing. Lineage barcodes are recovered by isolating
genomic DNA from cells of interest (NucleoSpin Tissue, Mini kit for DNA from cells and tissue,
Macherey Nagel, Ref: 740952.50). From the isolated genomic DNA, barcodes are amplified with three
nested PCR steps as decribed in³⁰ (see Extended Table 1 for primer sequence). In short, after a first
specific PCR for the common region of the lineage barcodes, the amplified material was prepared for
sequencing by addition of the illumina sequencing adaptaters and indexing and purification.
Sequencing was done in order to obtain 50 reads, on average, per barcoded cell.

563

Bulk ChIP-seq. ChIP experiments were performed as previously described¹⁶ on 3x10⁶ MDA-MB-468
cells (DMSO-D67-#2, DMSO-D77-#3, DMSO-D113-#4, 5-FU-D67-#2, 5-FU-D77-#3, 5-FU-D113-#4) using
an anti-H3K27me3 antibody (Cell Signaling Technology, Ref: 9733 - C36B11). Sequencing libraries were

567 prepared using the NEBNext Ultra II DNA Library Prep Kit (NEB, Ref: E7645S) according to the 568 manufacturer's instructions. Libraries were sequenced on a NovaSeq 6000 (Illumina) in SE50 mode. 569

570 Single-cell ChIP-seq. Cells (DMSO-D60-#1, DMSO-D77-#3, DMSO-D131-#5, 5-FU-D33-#1, 5-FU-D67-#2, 571 5-FU-D171-#2, 5-FU-D147-#3, 5-FU-D131-#6) were labeled by 15 min incubation with 1 μ M CFSE 572 (CellTrace CFSE, ThermoFisher Scientific, Ref: C34554). Cells were then resuspended in PBS 573 supplemented with 30% Percoll, 0.1% Pluronic F68, 25 mM Hepes pH 7.4 and 50 mM NaCl. Cell 574 encapsulation, bead encapsulation and 1:1 droplet fusion was performed as previously described¹⁶, 575 see Extended Table 1 for the sequence of bead barcodes. Immunoprecipitation with H3K27me3 576 antibody (Cell signaling, Ref: 9733 - C36B11) or H3K4me3 antibody (Cell signaling, Ref: 9751-C42D8), 577 DNA amplification and library were performed as in¹⁶. Libraries were sequenced on a NovaSeq 6000 578 (Illumina) in PE100, with 4 dark cycles on Read 2, with a coverage of 100,000 reads/cell.

579

580 Quantitative chromatin profiling with chromatin indexing. Chromatin isolation, indexing, 581 immunoprecipitation and library preparation was adapted from⁴⁹. Briefly, 50,000 MDA-MB-468 were 582 lysed and digested with MNase for 20min at 37°C in the following buffer: 46mM Tris-HCl pH 7.4, 583 0.154M NaCl, 0.1% Triton, 0.1% NaDoc, 4.65mM CaCl2, 0.47x Protease Inhibitor Cocktail (Roche, Ref: 584 11873580001) and 0.09u/uL MNase (Thermo Scientific, Ref: EN0181). Fragmented nucleosomes were 585 then ligated for at least 24h at 16°C to double-stranded barcoded adapters containing 8bp barcodes 586 to combine samples: Pac1-T7-Read2-8bpBarcode-linker-Pac1 (Extended Table 1). Next, 5 indexed 587 chromatin samples (DMSO, 5-FU, UNC, 5-FU + UNC, GSK-J4) were pooled, each containing a different 588 8-bp barcode, to perform anti-H3K27me3 ChIP (Cell Signaling, Ref: 9733 - C36B11) on 250,000 cells in 589 total in each pool. ChIP and DNA amplification was carried out as for scChIP-seq¹⁶ and a sequencing 590 library was produced for both IP and input pools and sequenced on NovaSeq 6000 (Illumina) in PE100 591 mode.

592

Sequential ChIP-seq. Primary ChIP experiments were performed as described previously¹⁶ on 10x 10⁶ 593 594 untreated MDA-MB-468, BT20 or HCC38 cells or untreated PDX_95, PDX_39 or PDX_172 tumor 595 dissociated cells using the anti-H3K27me3 antibody (Cell Signaling, Ref: 9733 - C36B11 – MDA-MB-468) 596 or anti-H3K4me3 antibody (Cell Signaling, Ref: 9751-C42D8 – MDA-MB-468-bis, BT20, HCC38 and PDX 597 models). After washes, samples were eluted twice at 37°C for 15 min under agitation in an elution buffer (50mM Tris-Hcl pH8, 5mM EDTA, 20mM DTT, 1% SDS) as in. Samples were diluted 10 times to 598 599 decrease SDS and DTT concentration. 10% of the eluted chromatin was kept as primary ChIP. 600 Secondary ChIP, re-ChIP, was performed overnight on the rest of the primary immuno-precipitated 601 chromatin using an anti-H3K4me3 antibody (MDA-MB-468) or anti-H3K27me3 (MDA-MB-468-bis, 602 BT20, HCC38 and PDX models) or using an anti-IgG antibody (Cell signaling, Ref: 3900 – all samples) as 603 a control, to determine the background level of the re-ChIP experiment. After washes, samples were 604 eluted twice at 65°C for 15 min under agitation in 0.1M NaHCO3 and 1% SDS as in⁵⁰. After reverse 605 crosslinking and DNA clean-up, 3 to 15 ng of immunoprecipitated DNA were used to prepare the 606 sequencing libraries using the NEBNext Ultra II DNA Library Prep Kit (NEB, Ref: E7645S) according to 607 the manufacturer's instructions. Libraries were sequenced on a NovaSeq 6000 (Illumina) in SE100 608 mode. For MDA-MB-468, we verified that the two ways (H3K27me3->H3K4me3 and H3K4me3-609 >H3K27me3) yielded similar results. We found a significant overlap of the 1,547 and 2,490 bivalent 610 genes obtained with the two ways (p=2.2e-16, Ext. Fig. 6g) and found that the enriched pathways were 611 strongly correlated (Pearson's r = 0.81, Ext. Fig. 6h).

612

613 CUT&Tag on frozen tumor samples. CUT&Tag was performed as in Kaya-Okur et al. with minor 614 modifications on 50,000 to 100,000 nuclei with 1:50 antibody (Cell Signaling Antibodies : Anti-615 H3K27me3, Ref: 9733- C36B11, Anti-H3K4me3, Ref: 9751- C42D8)^{17,51}. All washes were performed in 616 a volume of 500µL and all centrifugations were done using a swinging bucket centrifuge at 1300g, 617 4min, at 4°C for nuclei preparation and 600g, 8min, 4°C for subsequent steps. Nuclei were extracted 618 and permeabilized from 10-20mg frozen tumor tissues by incubating samples 10min on ice in 6mL ice-619 cold NE1 buffer (20mM HEPES pH7.2, KCl 10mM, spermidine 0.5mM, glycerol 20%, BSA 1%, NP-40 1%, 620 digitonin 0.01%, proteases inhibitor 1x) after mechanical dissociation. Following antibody incubation 621 and tagmentation, samples were incubated for 1h at 55°C with max speed agitation with 3uL SDS10% 622 and 2,5uL 20mg/mL proteinase K. After DNA extraction (Qiagen, Ref: 139046 MaXtract High density), 623 PCR amplification (with 17 cycles, 20s at 63°C combined annealing/extension step) of the sequencing 624 libraries was performed and profiles were checked on the Agilent TapeStation using High-sensitivity 625 D1000 reagents. CUT&Tag libraries were sequenced on a NovaSeq 6000 (Illumina) in PE50 mode.

626 627

628 Whole exome sequencing. Genomic DNA from samples (DMSO-D0, DMSO-D147-#3, DMSO-D171-#5, 629 DMSO-D131-#6, 5-FU-D67-#2, 5-FU-D153-#2, 5-FU-D50-#3, 5-FU-D147-#3, 5-FU-D171-#5 and 5-FU-630 D131-#6) were extracted with NucleoSpin Tissue, Mini kit for DNA from cells and tissue (Macherey 631 Nagel, Ref: 740952.50) and sequenced on a NovaSeq 6000 (Illumina) with a 100X depth.

632

633 Computational approaches:

634 Single-cell RNA-seq analysis. The scRNA-seq sequencing files were preprocessed using the cellRanger 635 pipeline. For PDX samples, files were aligned against hg19 and mm10 genomes and only cells with a 636 majority of human reads were retained for the analysis. For the MDA-MB-468 human cell line, 637 sequences were aligned against the hg38 genome only. Cells with less than 3,000 cells for MDA-MB-638 468 or 2,500 for PDX or more than 8,000 detected genes, or more than 100,000 reads were filtered 639 out, as well as cells with a percent of mitochondrial reads greater than 15% or a percentage of spike in 640 greater than 5%. Normalization, dimensionality reduction and Louvain clustering was done using 641 monocle3 (v0.2.2)⁵² keeping the first 50 Principal Components (PC). Cell cycle was determined for each 642 cell using Seurat (v3.1.5)⁵³. For MDA-MB-468 datasets, we removed from subsequent analysis clusters 643 with less than 0.5% of the total cells (150 cells) (clusters R1, R5, R7, R9, R11 and R12). Differentially 644 expressed genes were obtained by comparing raw gene expression values using edgeR GLM statistical 645 model⁵⁴. For the PDX model, persister cells were compared to cells from the untreated tumor; for 646 MDA-MB468 cells, cells from cluster R2 (persister cells) were compared to cells from cluster R10 647 (untreated population). Genes were considered significantly overexpressed if the fold change was 648 higher than 3 and the adjusted p-value less than 0.01. For MDA-MB-468 samples, as the number of 649 cells was high, a subset of 500 cells per cluster was subsampled from each cluster for the differential 650 analysis and downstream steps. Intra-cluster correlation scores were calculated using Pearson's 651 correlation score, with a random subsampling of n=500 cells per cluster.

652

653 Single-cell lineage barcode extraction from 10X datasets. To detect the lentiviral inserted barcodes in 654 the 10x sequencing data we used custom R scripts. To avoid running scripts on all reads we: 1. used 655 samtools to extract all unmapped reads from the 10x output bam file, 2. used awk to take reads with 656 either a 3' or 5' 20bp match to the constant flanking region of the barcode allowing one mismatch, 3. retained only reads with both a 10x cell barcode and 10x UMI. We then located the 20bp match to one of the constant flanking regions allowing one mismatch (but filtered out reads where a mismatch was in the first or last base to ensure the barcode is at the expected position). We then further required a 4bp exact match on the other side of the barcode, and then extracted the 20bp viral barcode, read name, 10x cell barcode and 10x UMI.

- 662 To assign one viral barcode to each 10x cell barcode, we determined a consensus viral barcode for 663 each UMI. For each position in the barcode we returned the most frequently observed base and the 664 proportion of reads supporting this consensus. Barcodes associated with a 10x CB-UMI pair were 665 filtered if the proportion of reads supporting a position was ≤ 0.5 at ≥ 3 positions. Next, one viral 666 barcode for each 10x cell barcode was taken as a consensus across all remaining CB-UMI pairs for each 667 10x cell barcode. We took the most frequently observed base for each position and the barcode was 668 filtered if the proportion of UMIs supporting a position is ≤ 0.5 at ≥ 3 positions. Finally, we checked 669 whether the viral barcodes were in our barcode library and excluded them if not. UMAPs were colored 670 according to lineage identity, for cells each color corresponding to a unique viral barcode. For 671 comparison with bulk datasets, pseudo-bulk barcode frequencies were computed and normalized to 672 10,000 total barcodes/sample, as for bulk.
- 673

674 Bulk barcode pre-processing. The analysis pipeline was performed as previously published⁵⁵. In brief, 675 using R-3.4.0 (R Development Core Team (2019) http://www.R-project.org), raw reads were first 676 filtered for perfect to the input index- and common-sequences using XCALIBR 677 (https://github.com/NKI-GCF/xcalibr) and filtered against the barcode reference list. Correlation 678 between technical (PCR) replicates (Extended Fig. 3j) was used as quality control: samples were then 679 normalized and filtered for a Spearman correlation between replicates higher than 0.6 and barcodes 680 present in only one of the two replicates were set to zero. The mean of the replicates was used for 681 downstream analysis.

682

683 Bulk and single-cell lineage barcode analysis. All barcode frequencies were transformed with asinh. 684 Shannon indexes to assess barcode diversity were computed as described previously⁵⁶. Normalized 685 frequencies from bulk and single-cell datasets were clustered using hierarchical clustering based on 686 Spearman correlation and Ward method. Frequencies across time points and conditions were 687 compared with a Spearman correlation coefficient and associated p-value. To test whether barcode 688 frequencies within DMSO and 5-FU treated cells correspond to a random sampling of the initial 689 untreated population, we used proportionate sampling PPS to simulate an *in silico* barcode frequency 690 vector from a consensus barcode frequency vector of the initial population - obtained from n=6 691 drawings – and compared simulated and observed frequencies as above. For single-cell datasets, we 692 computed the fraction of unique barcodes as the number of unique detected barcodes over the total 693 number of detected barcodes, for a given cluster or cell population.

694

695

696 Bulk ChIP-seq analysis and consensus peak annotations. Raw sequencing files were mapped in single-697 end mode using bowtie with options '-k 1 -m 1' ^{57,58} against the human genome (hg38). PCR duplicates 698 were removed using Picard Mark Duplicates function (GitHub Repository. 699 http://broadinstitute.github.io/picard/). In order to define a consensus annotation specific to our 700 MDA-MB-468 model, peaks were first called on each of all bulk MDA-MB-468 samples, both DMSO 701 and 5-FU treated, against their respective inputs using Zerone⁵⁷ with a confidence of 95% and window size of 1,000bp for H3K27me3 mark and 500bp for H3K4me3 mark. Peaks were further merged together when closer than 10,000bp. For H3K4me3 this defined the *consensus peak annotation* with a total of 29,714 peaks. For H3K27me3, peaks were further filtered to refine annotation: (i) only keeping peaks having signal in at least two samples and (ii) removing small peaks (< 2,000bp) with overestimated signal due to window size normalization. A total of 9,568 consensus peaks were found for H3K27me3 landscapes in 5-FU and DMSO treated cells, defining the H3K27me3 *consensus peak annotation*.

709

Single-cell ChIP-seq read processing. The single-cell ChIP-seq sequencing files were preprocessed
 using our single-cell ChIP-seq dedicated pipeline

712 (https://github.com/vallotlab/scChIPseq_DataEngineering).

713 Each #Read 2 was first splitted into a cell barcode sequence composed of the first 79 nucleotides and 714 the last 22 nucleotides corresponding to genomic DNA. Full #Read 1 and genomic DNA of #Read 2 were 715 mapped in paired-end mode to hg38 whole genome using STAR (v2.6.0c) with parameters '--716 alignEndsType EndToEnd –outFilterMultimapScoreRange 2 –winAnchorMultimapNmax 1000 – 717 alignIntronMax 1-peOverlapNbasesMin 10 --alignMatesGapMax 450' for PDX model and against hg38 718 only for MDA-MB-468 cell line, by keeping only reads having no more than one reportable alignments 719 and 2 mismatches. For each barcode (*i.e* cell), reads with identical #Read 1 starting sites were marked 720 as duplicates, probably emerging from reverse-transcription or PCR duplicates. #Read 1 sequences 721 paired with unmapped #Read 2, and falling within the same 50bp-window, were further stacked into 722 one read, as possibly originating from PCR duplicates or from the same nucleosome. 723 For H3K27me3 and H3K4me3 experiments in MDA-MB-468 cells, reads were counted according to two 724

- annotations: (i) within *consensus peak annotation* (used in Fig. 2a-d, 2f, Extended Fig. 5b,e), and (ii) within a TSS-based annotation (used in Fig. 2e,g, 3a-b, Extended Fig. 5j, 6a-d), comprising 52,138 regions of 10kbp centered around TSS of all transcripts of protein coding and IncRNAs from Gencode v34⁵⁹. For PDX untreated tumors, H3K27me3 and H3K4me3 experiments, reads were counted according to TSS-based annotation. For all experiments and annotations, only cells with a coverage over 1,000 reads were kept for downstream analysis, see Extended Table 3 for sample and cell numbers.
- 731

Single-cell ChIP-seq filtering, dimensionality reduction and clustering. QC filtering, dimensionality
 reduction, and clustering were done using ChromSCape⁶⁰, (https://github.com/vallotlab/ChromSCape)
 with default parameters for H3K4me3 datasets, resulting 1,345 cells with signal over 4,983 TSS. For
 H3K27me3 datasets, minimum coverage was increased to 3,000 reads/cell and for each sample the
 number of cells was randomly downsampled at 500 cells per sample to ensure equal contribution of
 each datasets to dimensionality reduction. The resulting matrix contains 3,576 cells with signal over
 8,858 peaks.

In order to exclude from the subsequent analysis known copy number variation (CNV) regions between samples, CNV regions previously identified using ChromHMM⁶¹ on the input of bulk experiment of MDA-MB-468 samples were used by ChromSCape as regions to exclude from the analysis. Coverage tracks of *metacells* for scChIP-seq were obtained by aggregating the signal of single-cells into cumulative signals in each cluster. We define a group of cells as being more 'synchronous' regarding a set of genes (e.g. persister genes) if they have a significantly higher number of genes with H3K4me3 signal, according to a Wilcoxon non-parametric rank test. 747 Differential analysis of H3K27me3 chromatin landscapes genome-wide. These analyses were done 748 using consensus peak annotations, to assess for genome-wide changes without a priori on gene 749 annotation. For each scChIP-seq datasets, for each cluster (E1, E2, E4), pseudo-bulk samples were 750 generated by summing up reads from individual cells provided there were more than 50 cells in the 751 sample in the given cluster. Pseudo-bulk scChIPseq signals are normalized by the total number of reads 752 for all cells of the corresponding population ('persister' or 'untreated'). For each loci, both pseudo-bulk 753 tracks are shown at the same magnification, with the same range for the y-axis to enable comparison 754 between pseudo-bulk tracks.

755 We performed two differential analysis based on counts within the consensus peak annotation: (i) one 756 to define the specific chromatin changes in persister cells versus untreated cells (Fig. 2c-d, Extended 757 Fig. 5e), where we compared pseudo-bulks and bulks of persister cells to pseudo-bulks and bulks of 758 untreated cells, and (ii) one to compare chromatin landscapes of subpopulations within the untreated 759 populations (Extended Fig. 5e). For (i), as persister cells grouped within one cluster, we combined n=2 760 pseudo-bulks to n=4 bulk matrices from biological replicates to perform differential analysis using 761 Limma package⁶². Peaks with a log2FC over 1 and under -1 and an adjusted p-value below 0.1 were 762 considered significantly enriched or depleted of H3K27me3 in persister cells. For Fig. 2c, we used a 763 generic hg38 genome gene/TSS annotation that classifies regions into categories, e.g. gene TSS, 764 intergenic or enhancer regions. For each category we test whether this category is significantly more 765 prevalent in differentially enriched peaks between persister and untreated states versus in all peaks. 766 The 'enrichment' metric is the log2(number of differential peaks in the category/total number of peaks 767 in that category). Fisher's exact test was used to compare the localization of depleted H3K27me3 peaks 768 in respect to gene annotation.

Epigenomics and transcriptome data comparison. To integrate epigenomic and trancriptome data (SI_Table 4, Fig. 3c), for each gene we combined both TSS-based and peak-based differential analysis (considering peaks closer than 1kbp to the TSS) with the same thresholds as above. We represented this integration as a donut plot (Fig. 3c), taking into consideration all *persister* genes n=168 and adding independently, for each, information on H3K27me3 status upon 5-FU treatment (depleted in TSS or nearby peak, or unchanged), on bivalent status in untreated cells (see related section for thresholds) and on presence in the top 100 of CheA3 predicted TFs (see below).

777

769

778 Gene regulatory networks. In order to test whether persister genes are co-regulated by master 779 regulators, we ran CHeA3³³ data mining algorithm (from TF-target interaction based on multiple 780 sources, e.g. ENCODE, GTEx co-expression, ReMap ChIP-seq, EnrichR, ARCHS4 co-expression and ChIP-781 seq from the literature) to find TFs with regulons enriched in persister genes in vitro and in PDXs. In 782 order to create a background control to assess the quality of the ranking score given by CHeA3, we ran 783 ChEA3 for 1000 random gene sets, expressed in our scRNA-seq data and of the same size. The inverse 784 of the ChEA3 score of the top ranking 100 TF regulons enriched in our persister genes were significantly 785 greater than for the random background gene sets for all models (one-sided T-test p.values with 786 respectively for MDA-MB-468, PDX_95, PDX_39 and PDX_172: 2.2e-16, 5.8e-08, 6.9e-3 & 6.9e-05).

787

Chromatin indexing analysis. The bulk chromatin indexing sequencing files were first demultiplexed
 by matching the first 8 bases of #Read 2 without any mismatches to the 8-bp long index of each sample
 from a pool of 5 samples. The same demultiplexing was done for the corresponding inputs. Afterwards,
 mapping and demultiplexing was done as in bulk ChIP-seq (see above). Relative total amounts of

immunoprecipitated DNA were determined as the ratio of the number of reads in the IP by the number
of reads in the corresponding input for each sample within the pool. Coverage tracks were normalized
with this ratio.

795

796 Sequential ChIP-seq analysis. Fastq files for primary (ChIP) and secondary (ChIP-reChIP) 797 immunoprecipitation were processed as for bulk ChIP-seq (see above). For the MDA-MB-468 cell line, 798 sequential ChIP-seq was processed with H3K27me3 as primary ChIP then H3K4me3 as secondary ChIP 799 or vice versa. For other *in vitro* models and PDXs only the latter H3K4me3 -> H3K27me3 way was kept 780 as peaks were more easily identifiable in the secondary ChIP profiles. IgG secondary ChIP was used as 801 a negative control.

- For the H3K27me3 -> H3K4me3 reChIP datasets, peaks were called on the secondary ChIP (H3K4me3 or IgG) with MACS2⁶³ using the primary H3K27me3 signal as control and with parameters 'macs2 callpeak --call-summits -p 0.1 --nomodel --extsize 300'. Summits closer to each other by 1,000 bp were merged using Bedtools⁶⁴. Only peaks overlapping both the TSS annotation and the H3K27me3 consensus peak annotation obtained from ChIP-seq experiments (see above) were kept to focus on TSS chromatin landscapes. A ratio and associated p-value for each peak was calculated as follows:
- (i) Reads were counted within the 2kbp region around the peak summit ("peak") as well as in
 the 20kbp region around peak ("locus") in each ChIP-reChIP. A ratio of "peak" / "locus" was calculated
 in order to control for the relative increase in signal in this region (presence of a peak).
- 811 (ii) Reads were counted in the 2kbp region around the summits ("peak") as well as in the
 812 500kbp region around peak ("area") in the primary ChIP and the ChIP-reChIP to create a contingency
 813 table.
- A Fisher exact test was performed on the contingency table to reject the null hypothesis that the number of reads in "peaks" compared to reads in "area" is greater in the ChIP-reChIP than in the primary ChIP. P-values were adjusted for multiple testing using the Benjamini-Hochberg procedure⁶⁵.
- 817 In order to choose adequate thresholds for adjusted p-value and "peak"/"locus", we calculated the 818 number of false positives for p-values ranging from 0.1 to 0.001 and ratios ranging from 10 to 25% 819 (Extended Fig. 6f), using H3K27me3/IgG ChIP and ChIP-reChIP as a negative control. An adjusted p-820 value threshold of 0.001 and peak ratio threshold of 15% was chosen to minimize false positives peaks 821 and resulted in 1,266 bivalent peaks covering 1,547 TSS.
- 822 For the H3K4me3 -> H3K27me3 reChIP datasets, peaks were first called on primary ChIP using MACS2 823 without control with parameters '--call-summits -p 0.01 --nomodel --extsize 300'. The number of reads 824 in the region 2.5kbp upstream and downstream of each peak were counted in the primary and 825 secondary ChIP. Reads were normalized by total library size. First, the ratio between secondary and 826 primary ChIP were calculated for each peak and then the odd-ratio between each TSS and it's 60 827 closest neighbours were calculated from the ratios. In order for a TSS to be considered bivalent, the 828 odd ratio of a given peak compared to the 60 closest neighbour peaks must be greater than 4. Then, A 829 Fisher exact test was performed on the contingency table to reject the null hypothesis that the number 830 of reads in secondary compared to reads in primary ChIP is greater in the given peak than in it's 60 831 neighbor peaks. P-values were adjusted for multiple testing using the Benjamini-Hochberg 832 procedure⁶⁵. In order to choose adequate thresholds for adjusted p-value and "peak"/"locus", we 833 calculated the number of false positives for p-values ranging from 0.001 to 1e-30, using H3K4me3/IgG 834 ChIP and ChIP-reChIP as a negative control. Adjusted p-value thresholds were always lower than 0.001 835 and were defined so that we obtained the greatest number of bivalent peaks in the 836 H3K4me3/H3K27me3 experiment compared to the H3K4me3/IgG negative control.

- The comparative coverage tracks were generated by calculating the log2 ratio of secondary ChIP versus primary ChIP using Deeptools bamCompare and then smoothed. For each loci, H3K27me3/H3K4me3 and H3K27me3/IgG or H3K4me3/H3K27me3 and H3K4me3/IgG tracks are shown at the same magnification and with the same range for the y-axis for comparison between tracks.
- 841

Bulk CUT&TAG of patient tumors to assess bivalency. Fastq files for H3K27me3 and H3K4me3 were
processed as for bulk ChIP-seq (see above). For each sample, reads were counted on the TSS
annotation and normalized using log2 RPKM. Then, only the top 15% most covered TSS were kept for
H3K4me3 and H3K27me3. Bivalent TSS were taken as the intersection of these highly covered TSS.

846

847 Gene set analysis. For all gene set analysis, we applied hypergeometric tests to identify gene sets 848 enriched within significantly overexpressed genes (scRNA), genes devoid of H3K27me3 (scChIP-seq) or 849 bivalent genes (Sequential ChIP-seq, bulk Cut&Tag) from MSigDB v5 database⁶⁶, correcting for multiple 850 testing with the Benjamini-Hochberg procedure. Gene sets with an adjusted p-value below 0.1 were 851 considered significantly enriched. The gene background universe for hypergeometric testing was the entire set of expressed genes for scRNA or the 32,937 genes present in Gencode for scChIP-seq or 852 853 bivalent gene lists. The tests were performed on all lists, but we display only the relevant following 854 lists: 'c2_curated' related to breast (searching for 'MAMMARY' or 'BREAST'), 'c2_curated' related to 855 'KEGG', 'c5_GO'and 'c7_hallmark', filtering out genetic-event related lists (containing 'AMPLICON').

856 When displaying gene set analysis of multiple samples, we first selected gene sets significantly 857 enriched in 3/3 of PDXs or in vitro samples or at least 7/9 samples for human tumors. Then, gene sets 858 were ranked by the average adjusted p-values, and only the top 5 gene sets of each category were 859 displayed. The dotplots representing pathway enrichment across multiple samples were done using 860 clusteRprofileR⁶⁷. The gene ratio stands for the fraction of genes belonging to each pathway. For the 861 PDX and in vitro experiments, the -log10 adjusted p-value of the main models are displayed, 862 respectively PDX_95 and MDA-MB-468. In order to calculate the significativity of overlaps when we 863 compared multiple set of pathways, we used the Exact Test of Multi-set intersections⁶⁸.

864

865 Whole Exome Sequencing data analysis. The WES sequencing files were mapped using bwa-mem⁶⁹ to 866 the human genome (hg19). Reads falling in the targeted regions were then filtered based on their 867 mapping quality and PCR duplicates were removed. Local Indel Realignment and Base Score Recalibration was applied to deduplicated reads using GATK⁷⁰. Somatic variants were called with 868 869 Mutect2⁷¹ using early passage 16 (p16) and a series of patient blood samples as reference (referred as 870 "blood", see Extended Fig. 4a). At this step, only mutations labeled as 'PASS' or 't_lod_fstar' were kept 871 additional filters were applied based on http://best-practices-for-processing-htsand 872 data.readthedocs.io/en/latest/mutect2_pitfalls.html. Using p16 as the "normal" sample allowed to 873 directly obtain somatic variants acquired after treatment or not to 5-FU, but we hypothesized that 874 some germline variants might be wrongly called somatic variants so we filtered out variants that were 875 reported in ExAC Non Finnish European database, effectively removing 231 variants possibly germline. 876 For MDA-MB-468 persisters & resistant samples, mutations also present in one of the untreated 877 samples were removed. Mutations occurring in a breast cancer driver gene list from¹³ was used to 878 annotate mutations falling in driver genes.

GAP⁷² was used to calculate with precision absolute copy number and B allele frequencies (BAF) taking
 depth of coverage and allele frequency from a set of known germline variants from the⁷³ as inputs,
 and using "blood" as normal sample. Palimpsest⁷⁴ was then used to calculate the Cancer Cell Fraction

(CCF) of each mutation in each sample, *i.e.* the proportion of cells in the population bearing the
mutation, correcting by purity, BAF and absolute copy number of the segment. Then mutations were
classified in either 'subclonal' or 'clonal' depending on their CCF. Finally, de novo mutational signatures
were obtained from the mutations context and matched to a set of known signatures from COSMIC v2
(https://cancer.sanger.ac.uk/cosmic/signatures_v2) that were observed in breast cancer (i.e.
signatures 1, 2, 3, 8, 13, 17, 18, 20, 26 & 30).

888 889

Data and code availability

All sequencing files were deposited to GEO under a private repository GSE164716. All statistical analysis was performed in R (v4.1) using custom R scripts. Codes for data analysis are available at the following repositories <u>https://github.com/vallotlab/ChemoPersistance</u> and https://github.com/TeamPerie/lentiviral barcode detection in10X data/.

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945

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949

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961

962 Author contributions.

JM, AD, CL, LB, SBT, AE and AT performed experiments. scChIP-seq experiments were conducted
together with SF and KG. PDX experiments were performed by EM, LS and AD. MB and SB performed
sequencing. PP and CV performed omics data analysis. Lineage barcoding data were analyzed by AML,
CV and LP. Whole exome sequencing data were analyzed together with EL. CV, LP and JM conceived
and designed experiments. CV, JM, PP and LP wrote the manuscript with input from all authors.

968

969 **Competing interest declaration**.

- 970 CV is founder and equity holder of One Biosciences.
- 971

972 Additional Information.

973 Correspondence and requests for materials should be addressed to <u>celine.vallot@curie.fr</u>.

974 Extended legends

975 Extended Figure 1: In vivo models of chemotolerance in TNBC. a. Graph of the relative tumor volumes 976 over time (days) for PDX_95 for eight mice treated with a first round of Capecitabine. b. (Left) UMAP 977 representation of scRNA-seq datasets, colored according to expression clusters. (Right) Histogram of 978 the frequency of each expression cluster in the indicated samples. c. Barplot displaying the top 5 979 pathways activated in persister cells. d. UMAP representation of scRNA-seq datasets, colored 980 according to log2 expression signals for persister genes, log2FC and adjusted p-values are indicated 981 above the graph. e. Histogram of the proportion of cells in the different cell cycle phases based on 982 expression of cell cycle in the scRNA-seq datasets. Proportions in each sample were compared to 983 untreated sample using Fisher exact test, p-values are indicated. f. Graph of the relative tumor 984 volumes over time (days) for PDX_39 for fourteen mice treated with Capecitabine and three untreated 985 mice. g. UMAP representation of scRNA-seq datasets, colored according to sample ID. h. UMAP 986 representation of scRNA-seq datasets, colored according to expression clusters. i. Barplot displaying 987 the top 5 pathways activated in persister cells. j. UMAP representation of scRNA-seq datasets, colored 988 according to log2 expression signals for persister genes, log2FC and adjusted p-values are indicated 989 above the graph. k. Histogram of the proportion of cells in the different cell cycle phases based on 990 expression of cell cycle in the scRNA-seq datasets. Proportions in persister sample were compared to 991 untreated sample using Fisher exact test, p-value are indicated. I. Graph of the relative tumor volumes 992 over time (days) for PDX 172 for four mice treated with Capecitabine and six untreated mice. m. UMAP 993 representation of scRNA-seq datasets, colored according to sample ID. n. UMAP representation of 994 scRNA-seq datasets, colored according to expression clusters. o. Barplot displaying the top 5 pathways 995 activated in persister cells. **p.** UMAP representation of scRNA-seq datasets, colored according to log2 996 expression signals for persister genes, log2FC and adjusted p-values are indicated above the graph. q. 997 Histogram of the proportion of cells in the different cell cycle phases based on expression of cell cycle 998 in the scRNA-seq datasets. Proportions in persister sample were compared to untreated sample using 999 Fisher exact test, p-value are indicated.

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1001 Extended Figure 2: : In vitro model of chemotolerance in TNBC. All the experiments were performed 1002 in MDA-MB-468 cells. a. (Left) Histogram representing the percentage of the untreated population 1003 that tolerates 5-FU. (Right) Histogram representation of the percentage of persister cells that can 1004 proliferate actively under chemotherapy treatment. b. (Left) Histogram representation of the 5-FU 1005 IC50 of untreated and chemoresistant populations. (Right) Histogram representation of the doubling 1006 time (in days) of MDA-MB-468 untreated, persister and resistant cells. (n=3, Mean ± sd, Anova 1007 Bonferroni's multiple comparisons test). c. (Left) UMAP representation of scRNA-seq datasets, colored 1008 according to expression cluster membership. (Right) Histogram representing the frequency of each 1009 cluster in the indicated samples. d. Barplot displaying the top 5 pathways activated in MM468 persister 1010 cells. e. Dot plot representing -log10(q-value) of gene enrichment studies in PDX 95 versus MDA-MB-1011 468 (MM468). Linear regression, associated correlation score and p-value are indicated. f. UMAP plot 1012 representing scRNA-seq datasets, points are colored according to log2 gene expression signals for 1013 differentially expressed genes between persister cells from cluster R2 and untreated cells from cluster 1014 R10, log2FC and adjusted p-values are indicated above the graph. g. Histogram of the proportion of 1015 cells in the different cell cycle phases based on expression of cell cycle in the scRNA-seq datasets. For 1016 each experiment, proportions in each sample were compared to the corresponding DMSO sample 1017 using Fisher exact test, p-value are indicated.

1018 Extended Figure 3 : Tracing lineages in cancer cells under 5-FU treatment. All the experiments were 1019 performed in MDA-MB-468 cells. a. Experimental design showing the infection of cells with a lentivirus 1020 produced from the plasmid barcode library (pRRL-CMV-GFP-BCv2AscI). Cells were then treated with 1021 indicated drugs and scRNA-seq was performed. b. Histogram of the fraction of cells with detected 1022 lineage barcodes in scRNA-seq data for each sample. Numbers above bars are the number of cells with 1023 a lineage barcode. c. Clustering of lineage barcode frequencies - detected by bulk and scRNA-seq -1024 using Pearson's correlation score. The size of the dots is proportional to the correlation score. d. 1025 Heatmap showing the frequency of individual lineage barcodes (rows), measured by bulk sequencing 1026 in different samples for experiment #3 (columns) and color coded as indicated. Normalized frequencies 1027 are clustered with hierarchical clustering, with Pearson's correlation score and Ward method. e. 1028 Dotplot of Shannon diversity indexes calculated from bulk datasets at each different time points under 1029 5-FU or DMSO treatment. f. Dot plot representation comparing normalized barcode frequency in 1030 simulated population versus initial population (D0), based on bulk data from experiment #3. 1031 Correlation scores and associated p-value are indicated. g. Dot plot comparing normalized barcode 1032 frequency in the DMSO-treated cells at D50 and D147 (Left) or 5-FU-treated cells at D77 and D147 1033 (Right) compared to the initial population at D0, based on bulk data from experiment #3. Pearson's 1034 correlation scores and associated p-value are indicated. h. UMAP representation of lineage-barcoded 1035 cells. Cells in orange are untreated cells having a lineage barcode found in at least one persister cell. 1036 Cells in red are matched persister cells. Cells in grey are cells having a lineage barcode which is not 1037 common between persister and untreated cells. i. Volcano plot of differential analysis between 1038 'persisting' and 'non persisting' untreated cells. j. Distribution of correlation scores between barcode 1039 frequencies of two replicates.

1041 Extended Figure 4: Genetic profiling of chemotolerant and resistant cells. All the experiments were 1042 performed in MDA-MB-468 cells. a. (Left) Schematic view of the experimental design used to analyze 1043 the whole exome of untreated, persister and resistant cells. (Right) Graph of the coverage of bases per 1044 sample for MDA-MB-468 untreated, persister and resistant cells (n=4). b. Venn diagram of the number 1045 of total mutations identified in chemoresistant populations (n=4). c. Histogram representations of the 1046 proportions of mutations associated to each cosmic mutational signature in the untreated, persister 1047 and resistant populations (n=2 experiments). d. Histogram representing the cancer cell fraction for 1048 untreated, persister and resistant cells (n=2 experiments).

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1050 Extended Figure 5: Detailed profiling of H3K27me3 landscapes in MDA-MB-468 cells under 5-FU 1051 treatment. All the experiments were performed in MDA-MB-468 cells. a. Schematic view of the 1052 experimental design used to analyze chromatin landscapes of persister and resistant cells. All samples 1053 were analyzed at the single cell level except 5-FU-D77-#3 and 5-FU-D113-#4. Samples used for bulk 1054 ChIP analysis are indicated with a black asterix. **b.** Histogram representing the frequency of epigenomic 1055 clusters within each sample. c. Scatterplot representing for each differentially enriched H3K27me3 1056 peak, log2 expression FC versus log2 enrichment FC for the associated gene. Pearson's correlation 1057 scores and associated p-value are indicated. d. Cumulative scH3K27me3 profiles over TGFB1 and 1058 FOXQ1 in resistant cells. e. Venn diagram representation of the region-based differential analysis 1059 performed to extract regions depleted in H3K27me3 jointly in E2/E1 compared to E4 (scChIP seq 1060 dataset) f. Dot plot representing log2 expression fold-change induced by 5-FU in resistant cells versus 1061 EZH2i-1 induced changes, and compared to the untreated population (D0). Correlation scores and 1062 associated p-value are indicated. g. Doughnut plot displaying the fraction of 5-FU persister genes

1063 potentially regulated or not by H3K27me3 and expressed upon EZH2i-1 treatment. After 21 days of co-1064 treatment, 62% of 5-FU persister genes with H3K27me3 depletion are expressed (23/37 genes). h. 1065 Heatmap representation of the targets within persister genes of the three TF identified by ChEA3 that 1066 are part of the persister genes. Blue color stands for target genes while white means the gene is not a 1067 target. i. Mean rank of TF enrichment in persister genes obtained by ChEA3 for FOXQ1, FOSL1 and 1068 NF2F2 in persister genes (red line) compared to the average mean rank in 100 sets of randomly picked 1069 genes (green curve). The rank of indicated TFs is calculated using the ChEA3 score on a total of 1632 1070 TFs. j. Cumulative scH3K27me3 and scH3K4me3 enrichment profiles over FOSL1 and NR2F2 in 1071 untreated and persister MDA-MB-468 cells (D33 - H3K27me3 and D60 - H3K4me3). Log2FC for 1072 H3K27me3 and scRNA are indicated for the comparison of persister and untreated populations.

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1074 Extended Figure 6: Analysis of H3K4me3 and H3K4me3/H3K27me3 enrichment in untreated cells. a. 1075 Heatmap representation of single-cell H3K4me3 enrichment at H3K27me3-regulated persister genes, 1076 non-expressed protein coding genes and housekeeping genes in untreated cells (D0) and persister cells 1077 (D60). b. Violin plots representing the distribution of percentage of cells with H3K4me3 signal across 1078 H3K27me3-regulated persister genes, non-expressed protein coding genes and housekeeping genes. 1079 c. Violin plot representing the distribution of percentage of H3K27me3-regulated persister genes with 1080 H3K4me3 signal in untreated cells (D0) and persister cells (D60). One-tailed Mann-Whitney test is used 1081 for the comparison between the two conditions d. (Up) Cumulative scH3K4me3 profiles over the 1082 TGFB1 locus between untreated cells (D0) and persister cells (D60). (Down) H3K27me3->H3K4me3 and 1083 H3K27me3->IgG sequential ChIP-seq profiles of TGFB1 in the untreated population. Comparative 1084 tracks show enrichment over IgG control with associated odd ratio and adjusted p-value. e. Dot plot 1085 of the false positive peaks (H3K27me3 -> IgG) by the number of bivalent peaks (H3K27me3 -> 1086 H3K4me3) at various p-values and peak to region ratios. Used thresholds are indicated in red. f. Dot 1087 plot of the false positive peaks (H3K4me3 -> lgG) by the number of bivalent peaks (H3K4me3 -> 1088 H3K27me3) at various p-values and peak to region ratios. Used thresholds are indicated in red. g. Venn 1089 diagram of MDA-MB-468 bivalent genes found by sequential ChIP-seq in the H3K4me3-H3k27me3 1090 way, the H3K27me3-H3K4me3 way. The enrichment of the intersection between the two ways is 1091 tested using a Fisher test. h. Dotplot of the -log10(adjusted p.value) of bivalent pathways (as in g.) in 1092 the H3K4me3-H3K27me3 and the H3K27me3-H3K4me3 ways. i. (Left) Barplot displaying the top 5 1093 pathways enriched in H3K27me3/H3K4me3 bivalent genes identified in untreated cells in MDA-MB-1094 468, BT20 and HCC38. X-axis corresponds to -log10 adjusted p-values. (Right) Venn diagram displaying 1095 the intersection of the pathways enriched in H3K27me3/H3K4me3 bivalent genes identified in the 1096 untreated cells. P.value corresponds to the significativity of the overlap calculated with Exact Test of 1097 **Multi-set Intersections**

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1099 Extended Figure 7 : Investigating chromatin bivalency in vivo and in human tumors. a-c. Barplot 1100 displaying the top pathways enriched in H3K27me3/H3K4me3 bivalent genes identified in the human 1101 tumor sample from Patient 95 or in the corresponding PDX model PDX 95 (a), Patient 39/PDX 39 (b) 1102 or Patient 172/PDX 172 (c). d-f. Venn diagram displaying the intersection of the pathways enriched 1103 in H3K27me3/H3K4me3 bivalent genes identified in the untreated cells in the human sample from 1104 Patient_95 and its corresponding PDX model (d), Patient_39/PDX_39 (e) or Patient_172/PDX_172 (f). 1105 g. H3K27me3 and H3K4me3 chromatin profiles of KLF4 in 8 human tumor samples. The percentage of 1106 tumoral cells are indicated for each sample. h. Dotplot showing the top pathways enriched in genes 1107 displaying a dual H3K27me3 and H3K4me3 enrichment in the human tumor samples from MSigDB 1108 c2_curated KEGG and c5_GO annotations. Color of the dot corresponds to adjusted p-values and the1109 size of the dot corresponds to the gene ratio.

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1111 Extended Figure 8: Modulation of chemotolerance to 5-FU with EZH2i in vitro. a. Histogram 1112 representing the number of MDA-MB-468 cells pretreated or not with EZH2i-1 (UNC1999) and after 1113 treatment over 21 days with 5-FU (n=3, Mean ± sd, p-value correspond to Anova Bonferroni's multiple 1114 comparisons test). b. Representative images of immunoblotting of MDA-MB-468 cells treated for 21 days with DMSO or indicated EZH2 inhibitors. EZH2, Tubulin and H3K27me3 are represented. c. 1115 1116 Clustering of samples according to lineage barcode frequencies, detected by bulk analysis, using 1117 Pearson's correlation score. MDA-MB-468 were co-treated with DMSO or 5-FU and EZH2i-1 for 21 days 1118 (Up) or pretreated with indicated EZH2i ("EZH2i-1": UNC1999, inactive EZH2i-1: "UNC2400" or EZH2i-1119 2: "GSK126") for 10 days and then co-treated with DMSO or 5-FU for 21 days (Down). d/f. Histogram 1120 representing the number of BT20 (d) or HCC38 (f) cells pretreated with EZH2i inhibitors and after 1121 treatment over 21 days with 5-FU (n=3, Mean ± sd, p-value correspond to Anova Bonferroni's multiple 1122 comparisons test). e/g. Representative images of immunoblotting of BT20 (e) or HCC38 (g) cells 1123 treated for 21 days with DMSO or indicated EZH2 inhibitors. EZH2, Tubulin and H3K27me3 are 1124 represented. For gel source data, see Supplementary Figure 1

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1126 Extended Figure 9: Modulation of chemotolerance to 5-FU with KDM6i in vitro. a. Projection of 1127 MDA-MB-468 cells treated with GSK-J4 onto the UMAP scH3K27me3 space. b. Histogram representing 1128 the number of MDA-MB-468 cells after treatment over 21 days with DMSO or 5-FU alone or in 1129 combination with KDM6i (GSK-J4) (n=3, Mean ± sd, p-value correspond to Anova Bonferroni's multiple 1130 comparisons test). c. Colony-forming assay of MDA-MB-468 treated over 60 days with DMSO or 5-FU 1131 alone or co-treated with GSK-J4 inactive isomer (GSK-J5). d. Histogram representing the number of 1132 MDA-MB-468 cells after treatment over 50 days with DMSO or 5-FU alone or co-treatment with 1133 KDM6A/Bi (GSKJ-4) or its inactive isomer (GSK-J5) added at the indicated days (n=3, Mean ± sd, p-value 1134 correspond to Anova Bonferroni's multiple comparisons test). e/f. Colony-forming assay of BT20 (e) or 1135 HCC38 (f) cells co-treated with DMSO or 5-FU and indicated concentrations of KDM6i (GSKJ-4) or its 1136 inactive isomer (GSK-J5). The data correspond to 1 of 3 biological replicates.

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1138 Extended Table 1: Summary of all models and technologies. Details of the models, samples,1139 technologies used as well as the output of each experiment.

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1141 Extended Table 2: Primer sequences. Primers for lineage barcode detection, scChIP-seq beads
 1142 sequence and chromatin indexing index sequences are indicated.

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1144Extended Table 3: Summary of single-cell ChIP-seq count tables. Analyzed samples and corresponding1145cell numbers over 1,000 reads are indicated.

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Component 1untpersresComponent 1Component 1Figure 1: Identification of a pool of basal persister cells in TNBC in vivo and in vitro. a.Schematic representation of the standard of care for TNBC patients and the generation of patient-derived xenograft models. b. Graph of the relative tumor volumes (RTV) over time (days). Colored growth curves correspond to tumors which have been further studied by scRNA-seq. Black arrows indicate the start of the second round of Capecitabine treatment for the corresponding mice. c. (Up) Phenotypes and cell numbers are indicated, with the number of mice used to collect samples in brackets. (Down) UMAP representation of PDX scRNA-seq datasets, colored according to sample of origin (first panel - cluster ID are indicated) or log2 gene expression signal for differentially expressed genes between persister cells and untreated tumor pathways activated in persister cells from the 3 PDX models, among MSigDB c2_curated Breast/Mammary and c7_Hallmark pathways. P-value associated with the intersection is indicated below (exact test of multi-set intersections) (Right) Barplot displaying the intersection of the cell proliferation of triple negative breast cancer cell line MDA-MB-468 (MM468) treated with 5-FU (green for persister cells, and orange lines for resistant cells) or with DMSO (untreated - grey lines). f. (Up) Schematic view of the experimental design. Experiment number and corresponding passage of cells at DD are indicated. (Down) UMAP representation of MDA-MB-468 cells schNA-seq datasets, colored according to the sample of origin (first panel - cluster ID are indicated) or log2 gene expression signal for differentially expressed genes between persister cells. (Lett) Venn Magram displaying the intersection is the same of the cell proliferation of the sample of origin (first panel - cluster ID are indicated) or log2 gene expression signal for differentially expressed genes between pers



Figure 2: H3K27me3 represses the persister expression program prior to chemotherapy exposure. All experiments were performed in MDA-MB-468 cells. **a.** UMAP representation of scChIP-seq H3K27me3 datasets, cells are colored according to the sample of origin. Persister and resistant samples correspond to 5-FU-treated cells, days of treatment are indicated. **b.** Same as in a. with cells colored according to cluster membership. E1, E2 correspond to epigenomic-based clusters. **c.** Enrichment of H3K27me3 significantly depleted peaks in persister cells compared to all peaks across various gene annotation categories (see Methods). Full bars indicate adjusted p-value<1.0e-2. Empty bars indicate non-significant adjusted p-values. "PC" indicates protein coding genes. **d.** Repartition of H3K27me3 depleted peaks within log2 expression fold-changes quantiles from scRNA-seq experiments. **e.** Cumulative scH3K27me3 profiles over **TGFB1** and **FOXQ1** in untreated and persister cells (D33). Log2FC and adjusted p-value correspond to differential analysis of cells from cluster E1 versus cells from clusters E2 + E4. **f.** Violin plot representation of the cell-to-cell inter-correlation scores between cells from clusters E1, E2 or E4 and cells from E1. Pearson's correlation scores were compared using a two-tailed Mann-Whitney test, p-value are indicated above plots. **g.** Dot plot representing log2 expression fold-change induced by 5-FU or EZH2i-1 at D33 versus D0. Pearson's correlation scores and associated p-value are indicated. **h.** Bulk H3K27me3 chromatin profiles for **TGFB1** and **FOXQ1** in cells treated with DMSO, 5-FU or EZH2i-1 at D33.

Figure 3: Epigenomes of untreated cells are primed with co-accumulation of H3K27me3 and H3K4me3. a. UMAP representation of scChIP-seq H3K4me3 datasets, cells are colored according to the sample of origin - untreated cells (D0) and persister cells (D60). **b.** (Up) Cumulative scH3K4me3 enrichment profiles over *FOXQ1* in untreated cells (D0) and persister cells (D60). 'ns' stands for not significant after differential testing comparing untreated and persister cells. (Down) H3K27me3->H3K4me3 and H3K27me3->IgG sequential ChIP-seq profiles of *FOXQ1* in the untreated population. Comparative tracks show enrichment over IgG control with associated odd ratio and adjusted p-value. **c.** Doughnut chart displaying the fraction of persister genes (n=168) with H3K27me3 loss upon 5-FU treatment or with bivalent chromatin at TSS in untreated cells. Candidate master TFs - among persister genes - are indicated with the number of persister genes potentially regulated by the corresponding TF in parentheses. **d.** (Left) H3K27me3 and H3K4me3 chromatin profiles of human tumor samples for candidate master TF (Patient_39, Patient_95 and Patient_172). The percentage of tumoral cells are indicated for each sample. (Right) H3K4me3->H3K27me3 and H3K4me3->H3K27me3 and H3K4me3->H3K27me3 and H3K4me3->EG sequential ChIP-seq profiles of untreated population of the three derived PDX_models (PDX_39, PDX_95 and PDX_172). Comparative tracks show enrichment over IgG control with associated odd ratio and adjusted p-value. **e.** H3K27me3 and H3K4me3 chromatin profiles for *FOXQ1* of 6 additional human tumor samples. The percentage of tumoral cells are indicated for each sample. **f.** Dotplot showing the top pathways enriched in genes displaying a dual H3K27me3 and H3K4me3 enrichment in human tumor samples. Color of the dot corresponds to adjusted p-values and the size of the dot corresponds to the gene ratio, i.e the fraction of bivalent genes belonging to this pathway. Stars indicate human tumor samples used to establish our PDX models

Figure 4: EZH2 inhibition rescues cell fate biais upon chemotherapy exposure. All the experiments were performed in MDA-MB-468 cells. **a.** Histogram representing the number of cells after treatment with 5-FU alone or 5-FU and EZH2i over 21 days, relative to the number of cells at D0. Cells were pre-treated with EZH2i-1, inactive EZH2i-1 or EZH2i-2 for 10 days prior to chemotherapy treatment. (n=3, Mean ± sd, Anova multiple comparisons test with Bonferroni's correction). **b.** Clustering of samples according to lineage barcode frequencies, detected by bulk analysis, using Spearman correlation score. **c.** UMAP representation of scRNA-seq datasets, colored according to the sample of origin. Cells were treated with DMSO (untreated) or with 5-FU alone (persister) or with 5-FU and EZH2i-1 (EZH2i-1 persister). **d.** UMAP representation of scRNA-seq datasets, barcoded cells were selected and colored according to hierarchical clusters **e.** (Left) UMAP representation of scRNA-seq datasets, barcoded sdiversity detected in the scRNA-seq data within hierarchical clusters, and across samples. Colors correspond to sample ID as in 4c. Ratio of unique barcodes/total barcodes and p-value are indicated (two-tailed Fisher test).

Figure 5: Simultaneous KDM6i and chemotherapy treatment inhibits chemotolerance *in vitro* **and delays recurrence** *in vivo.* **a.** Colony forming assay at day 60 for 5-FU treated MDA-MB-468 cells in combination with DMSO or indicated concentrations of the KDM6i GSK-J4. **b.** Colony forming assay at day 60 for 5-FU treated MDA-MB-468 cells in combination or not with 1µM of GSK-J4 or its inactive isomer GSK-J5, either simultaneously - added at D0 - or added at day 39 of chemotherapy treatment. **c.** Relative tumor volumes for n=60 mice treated with either DMSO, GSK-J4, Capecitabine or a combination of Capecitabine and GSK-J4. Dashed line indicates the threshold to detect recurrent tumors, RTV=3. **d.** Kaplan-Meier plot of the overall disease-free survival probability since pathologic complete response pCR to initial treatment (tumor volume<20mm3), number of mice treated and pvalue are indicated (log-rank test).

Extended Figure 4 17 a

Extended Figure 6 🖗

Pancreas_beta_Cells Hedgehog_Path ER_Response_Early Kras_Signaling_UP

Kras_Path_UP Hedgehog_Path UV_Response_UP Kras_Path_DN ER_Response_Late Hedgehog_Path Kras_Signaling_UP EMT

p=8.8e-17

Extended Figure 7

Extended Figure 8

in EZH2i-1

DMSO

EZH2i-1

DMSO

EZH2i-2

kDa

-110

75

50

37

20

15

DMSO

е ВТ20

D56

f **HCC38**

D50