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### DNA Polymerization in Icy Moon Abyssal Pressure Conditions

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#### Abstract :

Evidence of stable liquid water oceans beneath the ice crust of moons within the Solar System is of great interest for astrobiology. In particular, subglacial oceans may present hydrothermal processes in their abysses, similarly to terrestrial hydrothermal vents. Therefore, terrestrial extremophilic deep life can be considered a model for putative icy moon extraterrestrial life. However, the comparison between putative extraterrestrial abysses and their terrestrial counterparts suffers from a potentially determinant difference. Indeed, some icy moons oceans may be so deep that the hydrostatic pressure would exceed the maximal pressure at which hydrothermal vent organisms have been isolated. While terrestrial microorganisms that are able to survive in such conditions are known, the effect of high pressure on fundamental biochemical processes is still unclear. In this study, the effects of high hydrostatic pressure on DNA synthesis catalyzed by DNA polymerases are investigated for the first time. The effect on both strand displacement and primer extension activities is measured, and pressure tolerance is compared between enzymes of various thermophilic organisms isolated at different depths.

#### 32 Introduction

33

34 Terrestrial life is possible under a large range of chemical and physical 35 conditions. Extremophilic microorganisms push the boundaries of these ranges further than 36 what can be expected from an anthropocentric point of view, inhabiting extreme 37 environments which were previously thought to be too hostile for life. Yet, even extremophilic 38 life is limited to environments above a certain level of water availability (Hallsworth et al., 39 2007; Belilla et al., 2019). Hence, looking for liquid water bodies remains essential for the 40 search of extraterrestrial life and habitable environments. In this context, the subglacial 41 oceans of icy moons of the Solar System are of particular interest (Jebbar et al., 2020; Taubner 42 et al., 2020). Among them, Europa and Enceladus retain most of the attention. Several lines 43 of evidence show that the water would be in interaction with rock, enabling enrichment of 44 subglacial ocean with various ions, metals and organic molecules. Characterization of these 45 interactions is indeed a major goal of future space missions (Pappalardo, 2012; Cable et al., 46 2016). Moreover, these subglacial oceans may possess hydrothermal processes at their 47 bottom. While stronger evidence support this hypothesis for Enceladus (Matson et al., 2007; 48 Hsu et al., 2015; Sekine et al., 2015; Waite et al., 2017), geochemical models also argue in 49 favor of abyssal hydrothermal processes for Europa (Lowell and DuBose, 2005; Zolotov, 2007).

50 Such extraterrestrial abyssal hydrothermal environments would be expected to show 51 similarities with their terrestrial counterparts: hydrothermal vents and black smokers. On 52 Earth, these oceanic environments are observed at various depths, ranging from shallow 53 waters to 5km deep. While displaying extreme conditions such as temperature, pressure and 54 sometimes alkaline pH or heavy metal abundancy, these environments are actually associated 55 with complex and diverse ecosystems, offering energy sources and chemical and physical 56 gradients for life. In the absence of light, the primary producers of hydrothermal vent 57 environments are extremophilic chemolithotrophs. These microorganisms, either belonging 58 to the Bacteria or Archaea domain, therefore make good models for testing habitability and 59 have already been used as such (Taubner et al., 2018).

60 However, the physical and chemical conditions may differ in extraterrestrial abysses. 61 On Earth, deepest hydrothermal vent lies at approximatively 5km under the sea level with in 62 situ pressure of 50MPa (Connelly et al., 2012) and deepest point in the ocean is met in the 63 Mariana Trench at 11km under the sea level at a pressure of approximatively 108MPa. In shear 64 contrast, subglacial oceans of several moons could be hundreds kilometers deep (Schmidt and 65 Manning, 2017). On Europa for example, the ocean is expected to be, depending on the 66 model, up to 100-200km deep (Anderson et al., 1997, 1998; Pappalardo et al., 1999; Spohn 67 and Schubert, 2003; Marion et al., 2003; Thomas et al., 2016) and beneath a 10km thick ice 68 shell (Park et al., 2015), reaching hydrostatic pressures as high as 130-260MPa (Naganuma 69 and Uematsu, 1998).

Even though most of the terrestrial biosphere is permanently under high hydrostatic pressure (HHP), as 88% of the ocean volume is above 10MPa (Jebbar *et al.*, 2015), its effects on complex biological processes remains to be explored. Deep sea organisms have to cope with effects of HHP at the molecular level. Indeed, following Le Chatelier's principle, increases of HHP promotes reduction of volume through production of charges and condensation of biomolecules (Gross and Jaenicke, 1994; Abe *et al.*, 1999). In particular, dissociation of large 76 molecular assemblies such as ribosomes (Gross et al., 1993) and DNA-protein complexes 77 (Kawano et al., 2005) is favored under HHP. Upon higher pressure increase, protein unfolding 78 is facilitated (Jebbar et al., 2020), most proteins losing their tertiary structure at 400MPa (Aertsen et al., 2009). Before unfolding, HHP may have either an inhibitory or a stimulating 79 80 effect on enzymatic activity, depending on the enzyme (Eisenmenger and Reyes-De-Corcuera, 81 2009). Notably, a peptidase complex from an abyssal hyperthermophilic Archaea have 82 showed to be activated by HHP (Rosenbaum et al., 2012). DNA is also reversibly compacted 83 by HHP but remains exceptionally stable as it resists denaturation at even 1GPa (Hedén et al., 84 1964; Girard et al., 2007). Experimental data actually show that nucleic acids are stabilized by 85 high hydrostatic pressure (Macgregor, 1996; Dubins et al., 2001). As a consequence, all 86 biological processes requiring an opening of the DNA double-helix, such as replication, 87 transcription and translation, can be impaired by high hydrostatic pressure (Macgregor, 2002).

88 Yet, DNA synthesis has never been studied under HHP. DNA replication is one of the 89 most conserved process, which must occur in every cell before cell division, thus, to ensure 90 successful inheritance of genetic traits. In cellulo this process is catalyzed by a class of enzymes 91 called DNA polymerases (DNAPs) which take part of a larger complex, the replisome. DNAPs 92 require a DNA strand primed by a DNA or RNA strand with 3'-hydroxyl extremity, 93 deoxyribonucleotide triphosphates (dNTPs) and divalent cations, Mg<sup>2+</sup> or Ca<sup>2+</sup> (Ralec *et al.*, 94 2017). The simplicity of this process has made possible all existing PCR technologies, allowing 95 fast and unexpensive amplification of DNA. In this context, thermostable DNAPs from 96 organisms isolated in hot environments are routinely used. In particular, many B-family DNA 97 polymerases from hyperthermophilic Archaea, showing high thermostability, extension rate 98 and fidelity have been characterized (Zhang et al., 2015). Some were isolated from deep sea 99 organisms which are permanently exposed to high hydrostatic pressure. While their activity is 100 high at ambient pressure, there has been no characterization at physiological or even higher 101 pressure conditions. To our knowledge, it has only been showed that a pressure of 89MPa 102 strongly enhances thermostability of DNA polymerases from both deep sea and shallow 103 waters (Summit et al., 1998).

104 In this study, effects of HHP as high as 100MPa on activity of five thermostable DNAPs 105 are investigated for the first time.

#### 106 Material and methods

- 107
- 108 DNAPs production and purification
- 109

110 To facilitate interpretation of the effects of HHP on polymerase activity, we only used 111 enzymes without  $3' \rightarrow 5'$  exonuclease activity, which allows proofreading, either naturally 112 deprived of this activity or by using exonuclease-deficient mutants (exo<sup>-</sup>).

113 Exonuclease-deficient Pyrococcus abyssi B-family DNAP (PabPolB exo<sup>-</sup>) (D215A) with a 114 Nter his-tag sequence MGSSHHHHHHSSGLVPRGSH was produced and purified as previously 115 described (Gueguen et al., 2001; Gouge et al., 2012). Briefly, enzyme was recombinantly 116 expressed in *Escherichia coli* Rosetta 2 (DE3) cells transformed with a pET28 vector (Novagen) 117 in which gene of PabPolB exo<sup>-</sup> was inserted between NdeI and BamHI restriction sites. Cells 118 were grown to an optical density of 0.7 in LB medium at 37°C under shaking and in presence 119 of kanamycine (50mg.mL<sup>-1</sup>). Expression was then induced by addition of 1mM IPTG and cells 120 were incubated overnight at 30°C. After centrifugation at 3000g for 20min at 4°C, cell pellets 121 were suspended in 50mM Tris/HCl pH 7, 200mM NaCl, 9mM imidazole and 0.1% triton X-100 122 buffer to which were added protease inhibitors (Roche). Cells were lysed by sonication and 123 lysate was incubated 1h at ambient temperature after addition of 50µg.mL<sup>-1</sup> of DNase I. A heat 124 treatment of 75°C during 30min was applied to the supernatant before purifying the protein by column chromatography. HisTrapHP<sup>™</sup> with nickel-affinity resin, HiTrap<sup>™</sup> Heparin HP with 125 126 affinity for DNA-binding proteins and size exclusion Superdex<sup>™</sup> 200 10/300 GL columns (GE 127 Healthcare) were successively used. After dialysis, protein was stored at -20°C in a final buffer 128 containing 50mM Tris–HCl, pH7.5, and 2mM MgCl<sub>2</sub>. Quality and purity of sample was checked 129 by electrospray ionization (ESI) at the mass spectrometry platform at IBS. Observed mass of 130 dominant species was in agreement with a loss of MGSSHHH at Nter. A final concentration of 131 1.16µM (0.106mg/mL) of protein was measured with a NanoDrop<sup>™</sup> device from 132 ThermoFisher. Molar extinction coefficient was determined using an online calculator 133 (https://web.expasy.org/cgi-bin/protparam/protparam).

Other proofreading-lacking DNAPs were all purchased. *Taq* from *Thermus aquaticus*, Vent<sup>®</sup> (*Tli*) exo<sup>-</sup> from *Thermococcus littoralis*, and Deep Vent<sup>®</sup> (*Psb*) exo<sup>-</sup> from *Pyrococcus* specie GB-D were purchased from New England Biolabs. *Pfu* exo<sup>-</sup> from *Pyrococcus furiosus* was obtained from Agilent. Concentrations of purchased polymerases were given by the manufacturers and were all equal to 2000units.mL<sup>1</sup>.

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#### 140 Oligonucleotides and template DNA

141 For extension assays, template DNA was the M13mp18 singled-stranded circular DNA, 142 7249 nucleotides (nt) in length, purchased from New England Biolabs. For experiments at 55.5-65.0°C, the template was primed with a 30nt primer whose sequence was 143 144 TGCCAAGCTTGCATGCCTGCAGGTCGACTC. For gel analysis experiments, this primer was 145 labelled at the 5' end with a Cy5 fluorophore. Since primer-template interaction was no longer stable at higher temperatures, we used an 87nt primer instead whose sequence was 146 147 TGCCAAGCTTGCATGCCTGCAGGTCGACTCTAGAGGATCCCCGGGTACCGAGCTCGAATTCGTAATC 148 ATGGTCATAGCTGTTTCCTG for experiments at 70.0°C.

149 For strand displacement assays, template DNA was an oligonucleotide 87nt in length 150 whose sequence was 151 CAGGAAACAGCTATGACCATGATTACGAATTCGAGCTCGGTACCCGGGGATCCTCTAGAGTCGACCT 152 GCAGGCATGCAAGCTTGGCA and which was labelled with a 6-FAM fluorophore at the 5'-end 153 and primed with 30t quencher whose sequence а was 154 TGCCAAGCTTGCATGCCTGCAGGTCGACTC. Fluorescence was initially quenched by a Deep Dark 155 Quencher I 3'-modification harbored by a 30nt oligonucleotide, whose sequence was 156 ATTCGTAATCATGGTCATAGCTGTTTCCTG, complementary to the sequence of the template 157 from the 5'-end.

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All oligonucleotides were purchased from Eurogentec (Seraing, Belgium).

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#### 160 High-pressure real-time fluorimetry

All fluorescence measurements were performed at various temperatures using a Jasco 161 (Tokyo, Japan) FP-750 spectrofluorometer modified to accommodate a high-pressure cell 162 manufactured by Top Industrie (Vaux-le-Pénil, France). 200µL of reaction mixtures were 163 prepared to be put in custom rectangular quartz microcuvettes manufactured by Jasco (Tokyo, 164 165 Japan) which were sealed with plastic film and joint as follows: approx 1cm<sup>2</sup> of plastic film was 166 placed on top of the microcuvette and an O-ring joint from Sephat (Palaiseau, France) was 167 placed over it to maintain the seal. Mixture volume slightly exceeded microcuvette volume to 168 prevent the entrapment of an air bubble. No evidence of sample leak could be observed with 169 experiments and controls. In particular, no sign of mechanical constraint on plastic film or O-170 ring joint was see. Excessive reaction mixture was removed prior to the experiment.

The measurement chamber was filled with distilled water at the desired temperature. The microcuvette was inserted in a custom metal adapter, which allows fluorescence measurement, then put inside the high-pressure cell while immediately starting signal acquisition. To prevent entrapment of an air bubble inside, excessive water was present in the chamber and removed during closure of the chamber. This allowed a better control and monitoring of temperature equilibrium of the sample.

After sealing, pressure was increased with a manual pump linked to the high-pressure cell through a water-filled metal capillary tube connected to the chamber. Pressure was monitored with a probe manufactured by Top Industrie (Vaux-le-Pénil, France), located between pump and high-pressure cell. HHP were typically reached in 1-2min.

181 Temperature inside the chamber was controlled through the circulation of a heat 182 transfer fluid made with tap water supplemented with 30% ethylene glycol and anti-algae 183 Aqua Stabil from Julabo (Seelbach, Germany). This fluid circulated within the high-pressure 184 cell separately from the chamber and the capillary and was heated with a CORIO CD-200F 185 refrigerated/heating circulator purchased from Julabo (Seelbach, Germany). The temperature 186 to which the circulator had to be set to reach the desired temperature for the reaction was 187 empirically determined by measuring it in the chamber under ambient pressure with a 188 calibrated thermocouple.

189

#### **190** Real-time strand displacement assays

191For real-time strand displacement assays, we used a modified tripartite DNA hybrid192(Dorjsuren *et al.*, 2009). Reaction mixtures consisted of 50mM Tris-Hcl pH8.8, 50mM KCl, 2mM

193 MgCl<sub>2</sub>, 2mM DTT, 200μM dNTPs, 200nM tripartite DNA hybrid. *Pab*PolB exo<sup>-</sup> enzyme 194 concentration was 46,4nM.

195 Excitation was made continuously at 480nm and emission at 525nm was measured 196 every second. Total run length was 15min.

197

#### **198** Real-time extension assays

For real-time extension assays, reaction mixtures consisted of 50mM Tris-Hcl pH8.8, 50mM KCl, 2mM MgCl<sub>2</sub>, 2mM DTT, 200µM dNTPs, 418pM primed M13mp18. Picogreen<sup>™</sup> (Thermofisher) was added at final 3200-fold dilution from the commercial solution. All commercial enzymes were incubated in the same buffer, except *Pfu* exo<sup>-</sup> which was incubated in the buffer provided by the manufacturer (Agilent). *Pab*PolB exo<sup>-</sup> enzyme concentration was 46.4 nM. Commercial enzymes were used at a concentration of 0.01 unit.mL<sup>-1</sup>.

Excitation was made at 485nm every 20s and emission at 520nm was measured for 1s.
 Total run length was either 15 or 30min.

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#### 208 Gel analysis of products

209 Reactions were conducted similarly to the real-time extension assays in the same 210 thermostated fluorescence cell with the fluorimeter turned off and without picogreen. The primer was labelled with a Cy5 fluorophore at the 5' end. After a 30min extension reaction 211 212 under various pressures, decompression, chamber opening and sample retrieval were 213 performed as fast as possible and reactions were stopped by adding an equal volume of 95% 214 formamide, 10mM EDTA on ice. This procedure took approximatively 60s, from the start of 215 decompression to the addition of the formamide. Primer extension products (20  $\mu$ L) were 216 loaded onto TAE-agarose 1% gels and separated by electrophoresis at 100V and 100mA for 5 217 h. Bands containing hybridized extended Cy5-labelled primer were revealed with a Gel Doc 218 XR+ Gel Documentation System (Bio-Rad) used with the fluorescence mode.

219 Results

220

#### 221 Gel analysis of products synthetized under HHP

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We first determined effects of HHP on global DNA synthesis by *Pab*PolB exo<sup>-</sup> by analyzing, after decompression of the sample, the length of primer extension products synthetized under various pressure values and at 55.5 or 65.0°C. Fluorescent products labelled with Cy5 at the 5' end of the elongated 30nt primer were separated on agarose gel electrophoresis (Figure 1).

Products were longer at 65.0°C than at 55.5°C. In contrast, gradual decrease of product
length as pressure increased was observed, from 50MPa at 55.5°C and from 25MPa at 65.0°C.
Little or no increase in product length in comparison with the negative control were observed
at 100MPa in both conditions.

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233 Real-time monitoring of strand displacement activity under HHP

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To analyze effects of HHP in real-time, we used a fluorescence-based tripartite oligonucleotide template system relying on strand-displacement activity by B-family DNAPs (Canceill *et al.*, 1999; Henneke, 2012). The increase of fluorescence caused by strand displacement of the oligonucleotide quenching the fluorescent signal of 87nt template was used as proxy for *Pab*PolB activity. Strand displacement assays were performed for 30min at 55.5°C under 0.1, 10, 50 and 100MPa three times independently (Figure 2).

Fluorescence signal of positive control (6-FAM labelled template annealed to extension primer without the quenching oligonucleotide) slightly decreased over time, presumably caused by photobleaching of the 6-FAM fluorophore. Pressure gradually delayed and slowed down the increase of fluorescence in the enzymatic assays, showing an inhibiting effect on strand displacement activity. The inhibition could be observed from 10MPa and little or no activity could be observed at 100MPa.

247 These experiments were also conducted at additional temperature (55.5, 60, 65, 248 70.0°C) and pressure values (0.1, 35, 50 and 100MPa) (Supplementary Figure 1). Fluorescence 249 increase was faster at 60 and 65.0°C than at 55.5°C. In contrast, at every temperature, HHP 250 gradually delayed fluorescence increase. Fluorescence curve of the unquenched template was 251 slightly higher at 65.0°C than at 55.5 and 60.0°C, which may indicate that basal signal of the 252 fluorophores is dependent on the temperature. At temperatures above theoretical melting 253 temperatures (T<sub>m</sub>) of primer in the presence of the quenching oligonucleotide, respectively 254 58.9°C and 67.1°C, spontaneous denaturation of the tripartite DNA may however have 255 happened, as showed by the increase of fluorescence of the negative control at 70.0°C.

256

257 Real-time monitoring of primer extension activity under HHP

Primer extension activity was also directly monitored by measuring the fluorescence of picogreen which increases as it intercalates in increasing amounts of double-stranded DNA during primer extension. The DNA template was single-stranded M13mp18, allowing extension up to the order of the kbp. We monitored primer extension activity for 30min at 55.5°C under 0.1, 10, 50 and 100MPa three times independently (Figure 3).

264

Curves showed a clear biphasic behavior at 0.1, 10 and 50MPa. Duration of the second phase was reproducibly increased by HHP. In contrast, no clear biphasic behavior could be observed at 100MPa.

268 Variability was higher in this experiment compared to strand displacement assays, as 269 indicated by larger standard deviation values, especially for the positive control (incubation at 270 P<sub>amb</sub> for 2h prior to the fluorescence measurement to achieve maximal primer extension). As 271 with strand displacement experiments, fluorescence decreased over time. All other things 272 being equal, pressure tended to increase all curves, showing a putative effect of HHP on 273 intrinsic picogreen fluorescence or insertion in double-stranded DNA. Nonetheless, pressure-274 inhibition of extension activity was still observable as the plateau was reached later, or not 275 reached at all, at 50 and 100MPa. The observed plateau unlikely resulted from dNTPs 276 depletion as they were provided in large excess and could have resulted instead from 277 unbounded picogreen shortage. In addition, maximum value of first derivative of the curves, 278 corresponding to the maximum increase of fluorescence, decreased with pressure and the 279 corresponding inflexion points, when applicable (0.1, 10 and 50MPa) were delayed 280 (Supplementary Figure 2).

281 To obtain more precise and quantitative information about the fluorescence variation 282 over time as a function of pressure, primer extension assays were replicated three times with 283 additional pressure values and with shorter acquisitions (15min). The curves were 284 transformed so that the value of fluorescence for positive control is equal to 100% and the 285 value of fluorescence for the negative control is equal to 0%, both at every instant. This way, 286 fluorescence was analyzed relative to controls and comparison between conditions was easier 287 (Supplementary Figure 3). By calculating first derivative of these curves, we then determined 288 relative increases of fluorescence as a function of time, roughly corresponding to elongation 289 speeds. Fastest increase in fluorescence over the whole experiment and punctual 290 fluorescence increase were calculated (Figure 4). Both maximum elongation efficiency 291 achieved during the whole 15min run and fluorescence increase at various moments of the 292 run were negatively affected by HHP above 10MPa. Milder pressure values (below 10MPa) 293 had little effect on fluorescence increase.

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# 295 Effect of prior pressure treatment on *Pab*PolB exo<sup>-</sup> primer extension activity at ambient296 pressure

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To determine if the previously observed inhibiting effect of HHP on *Pab*PolB exo<sup>-</sup> was irreversible or not, samples were incubated at 55.5°C and 100MPa during 15, 30 or 60min. Upon decompression, measurement was immediately started and fluorescence was measured for 15min. The experiment was done three times independently and average relative fluorescence curves were determined (Figure 5). Pre-incubation of the sample under HHP, even for longest durations, did not impair significantly the primer extension activity of the enzymes when pressure was decreased to ambient pressure. This shows that effect of pre-incubation on *Pab*PolB exo<sup>-</sup> activity was largely reversible.

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308 Comparison of pressure sensitivity of various thermostable DNA polymerases at 55.5309 and 70.0°C

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311 We then compared sensitivity to HHP of DNAPs from various organisms: TaqPol from 312 the thermophilic bacteria Thermus aquaticus and B-family DNAPs from hyperthermophilic 313 Archaea. Only exo<sup>-</sup> mutants of archaeal DNAPs were used: exo<sup>-</sup> Pfu Pol (Agilent) and Vent<sup>®</sup> 314 exo<sup>-</sup> (NEB), respectively from Pyrococcus furiosus and Thermococcus littoralis, which have 315 both been isolated in a shallow water hydrothermal vents (Lundberg et al., 1991; Kong et al., 316 1993) and Deep Ven Vent<sup>®</sup> exo<sup>-</sup> (NEB) from *Pyrococcus sp.* Strain GB-D , which has been 317 isolated in a 2km deep hydrothermal vent (Jannasch et al., 1992), like Pyrococcus abyssi. All 318 archaeal enzymes had high sequence identity (Supplementary Figure 4).

Primer extension activity was measured during 30min three times independently for each enzyme at 0.1, 10, 50 and 100MPa, at 55.5 or 70.0°C. For reactions at 70.0°C, singlestranded m13mp18 was annealed to a longer primer (87nt rather than 30nt) to prevent melting of the hybrid. Curves were transformed as described previously and average maximum fluorescence increase observed during the whole run was determined. For each enzyme, the value at 0.1MPa was set to 100% in order to compare their elongation efficiency independently (Figure 6).

326 All commercial archaeal enzymes showed gradual inhibition by HHP at both 55.5 and 327 70.0°C. However, increasing the temperature compensated the decrease of activity induced by HHP. *Tag* enzyme turned to be more pressure-tolerant at 70.0°C than Vent<sup>®</sup> exo<sup>-</sup> and Deep 328 Vent<sup>®</sup> exo<sup>-</sup>. At 55.5°C, Deep Vent<sup>®</sup> exo<sup>-</sup> was the most pressure-sensitive DNAP as dramatical 329 330 decrease of maximum achieved elongation speed already started at 10MPa. In contrast, Pfu 331 exo<sup>-</sup> DNAP showed reduced inhibition by HHP in most conditions compared to the other commercial archaeal enzymes. However, Pfu exo<sup>-</sup> was the only enzyme used in the 332 333 commercial buffer which contained triton X-100.

Unlike what was observed at 55.5°C, maximum elongation speed of *Pab*PolB exo<sup>-</sup> was significantly increased at both 10 and 50MPa when reaction occurred at 70.0°C. None of the other tested enzymes showed such behavior. Moreover, at such temperature the maximum observed speed was only halved by 100MPa exposure.

#### 338 Discussion

#### 339

340 We have showed here for the first time that, unlike many enzymes from both 341 extremophiles and non-extremophiles whose activities can be enhanced by HHP 342 (Eisenmenger and Reyes-De-Corcuera, 2009), DNA polymerase are inhibited by HHP above 343 10MPa. Effects of HHP on proteins are rather complex and depend on the protein. As a general 344 rule, response to pressure is governed by Le Chatelier's principle which predicts that a system 345 at the equilibrium will respond to an increase of pressure through a decrease of volume 346 (Heremans, 2009; Jebbar et al., 2015). For proteins, this decrease may result from two distinct 347 effects: reversible compression, especially for proteins with large internal cavities, and 348 unfolding which allows additional condensation of water molecules (Doster et al., 2003; 349 Eisenmenger and Reyes-De-Corcuera, 2009). At 400MPa, most proteins are, hence, fully 350 unfolded (Aertsen et al., 2009). Dissociations of molecular assemblies, such as the ribosome 351 (Pande and Wishnia, 1986; Gross et al., 1993), are also promoted under HHP as it releases 352 sites for water condensation, most assemblies being fully dissociated at 200MPa (Aertsen et 353 al., 2009). Yet, it is not possible to impute the observed HHP inhibition of DNAPs on unfolding. 354 In particular, the post-pressurization experiments show that, whatever its cause, the nearly 355 full inhibition at 100MPa was reversible, just like what was observed with a RNA polymerase 356 from a non-thermophilic abyssal bacteria (Kawano et al., 2004).

357 While gel analysis of primer extension products provides a simple way to assess effects 358 of HHP on DNA polymerization activity, the fact that this analysis can only be made after 359 decompression may bias the results as fast pressure change could have specific effects such 360 as sudden and quick stimulation of primer extension. Nonetheless, these experiments showed 361 that the decrease of total elongated DNA synthetized by PabPolB exo<sup>-</sup> was observable from 50MPa at 55.5°C and from 25MPa at 65.0°C, showing that pressure inhibition of DNAPs activity 362 363 depends on temperature, as confirmed by the primer extension assays. It should also be pointed that PabPolB could realize rolling circle replication of which requires displacement of 364 365 elongated primer and, hence, relies on strand displacement activity which we showed to be 366 inhibited by HHP. Such effect could contribute, to some extent, to the observed inhibition.

367 In contrast, it has been showed that HHP, up to 89MPa, actually increase 368 thermostability of both DNAPs of *Pyroccocus* strains and *Taq* DNAP (Summit *et al.*, 1998). 369 Hence, the HHP inhibition may result instead from subtle changes in protein structures and 370 dynamics enhancing stability at the expense of activity. Psychrophilic enzymes, which present 371 flexibility-inducing traits, may therefore be less sensitive to pressure inhibition. However, no 372 experimental comparison of pressure-sensitivity between homologous thermophilic, 373 mesophilic and psychrophilic deep-sea enzymes has been published, to our knowledge. 374 Nonetheless, synergy between psychrophilic and piezophilic protein traits has been pointed 375 (Capece et al., 2013; Carré et al., 2022).

Strand displacement activity assays were limited by the fact that interaction between the DNA template and quencher-harbouring oligonucleotide is sensitive to pressure. While short simple double stranded DNA fragments can be destabilized by HHP (Hughes and Steiner, 1966; Gunter and Gunter, 1972), HHP actually tend to increase stability of DNA hybrids (Macgregor, 1996; Rayan and Macgregor, 2005). Therefore, if no interference caused by the Deep Dark Quencher I 3'-modification and 6-FAM fluorophore is assumed, interaction between the oligonucleotides was reinforced under HHP. Hence, in addition to any direct effect on the enzyme, strand displacement activity was inhibited by the strengthened interaction between the DNA template and the strand that the enzyme had to displace. Indeed, total inhibition at 100MPa was observed during strand displacement assays whereas some activity could still be observed during primer extension assay. Therefore, assays that directly measure extension activity should be preferred to more indirect methods for HHP studies of DNAPs. One should notice that at higher temperatures the decreased stability of double-stranded DNA could compensate for HHP inhibition of strand displacement activity.

390 The biphasic behavior observed in primer extension activity curves is consistent with 391 the biphasic model of DNAPs enzymatic activity. In such model, the first short phase 392 corresponds to the addition of the first dNTP to the primer by all enzymes which is faster than 393 the following dNTP polymerizations, which correspond to the second phase (Berdis, 2009). 394 Our data suggest that this second phase is more affected by HHP as the quick initial increase 395 of fluorescence was observed at 10 and 50MPa while the second more gradual increase 396 appeared to be delayed at these pressure values and was mostly absent at 100MPa. This 397 stresses the hypothesis that HHP impairs DNAPs activity through direct inhibition of primer 398 extension rather than substrate binding.

399 Surprisingly high tolerance to HHP was observed with Taq DNAP, which originates from 400 Thermus aquaticus, a surface thermophilic bacterium. Since T. aquaticus is less thermophilic 401 than the archaea from which the other tested DNAPs were from, its proteins may be less 402 thermostable, thus less resilient and less rigid (Aguilar et al., 1997; Tehei and Zaccai, 2007; 403 Zaccai, 2013), which could explain its low sensibility to HHP. However, Taq is A-family DNAP 404 whereas all the other tested enzymes are from the B family. Depending on the fold and 405 especially the internal cavities, intrinsic flexibility and, hence, sensitivity to HHP could vary 406 between DNAP families.

407 When compared to the other exo<sup>-</sup> B-family archaeal DNAPs, *Pab*PolB showed increased 408 tolerance to HHP. As little sequence variation is observed between these enzymes, subtle 409 structural changes, at the level of internal cavities or interdomain hinges, may explain these 410 differences. PabPolB exo<sup>-</sup> was the only tested enzyme that was not purchased but produced 411 and purified by us. In general, little information about piezophilic adaptation can be inferred 412 from protein sequences as they are mostly dictated by temperature in abyssal environments 413 (hot hydrothermal vents or cold waters and sediments) (Nath and Subbiah, 2016). 414 Nonetheless, in comparison to their non-piezophilic homologs, enzymes from deep-sea 415 organisms tend to have denser cores with smaller residues, less salt bridges (Carré et al., 416 2022).

417 Still, increasing temperature compensated HHP inhibition of all tested enzymes. This 418 could result from two separate causes. First, the evaluated enzymes are hyperthermophilic, 419 their optimal temperature being between 72 and 80°C for archaeal DNAPs (Zhang et al., 2015), 420 increasing the temperature from 55.5 to 70.0°C may hence be sufficient to account for the 421 increase of the maximum elongation speed. Second, temperature may directly reduce the 422 inhibiting effects of HHP through the increase of molecular motion and flexibility (Daniel and 423 Cowan, 2000). Nonetheless, the present work stresses the importance of heat sources in deep 424 environments where organisms are constantly under HHP. This is especially true for putative 425 extraterrestrial abysses which could be deeper and exposed to pressure values above 100MPa 426 (Naganuma and Uematsu, 1998).

427 Pressure adaptation of abyssal microorganisms still remains unclear. In particular,
 428 complex processes such as DNA replication can be affected by HHP in a complex manner as it

429 involves multiple protein, multimeric assemblies, proteins and DNA. Moreover, care should be taken when extrapolating data obtained in vitro on simple protein systems studied in 430 431 buffers of given composition to the physiological intracellular context. Cytoplasmic crowding, 432 interactions with piezolytes or with the other replisome proteins may indeed limit the effects 433 of HHP on DNAPs. While HHP tend to disrupt multimeric assemblies and, hence, could impair 434 replisome formation, depending on the volumetric parameters of each protein-protein and 435 protein-DNA interaction, GINS or PCNA complexes could limit pressure-sensitivity of DNAPs. 436 In particular, it has been shown that addition of PCNA improves strand displacement activity 437 (Henneke et al., 2005) and fidelity (Castillo-Lizardo et al., 2014) of PabPolB in vitro.

438

439 DNAPs could work better within the replisome by interacting with, for example, GINS
 440 or PCNA complexes. . In particular, interactions with GINS or PCNA complexes

Nonetheless, the deepest hydrothermal vents on Earth are found at a depth of 5km and most are found above 2km deep, limiting the pressure conditions to which such these organisms are actually exposed. Another possibility could be that high temperatures are sufficient to compensate inhibitory effects of HHP. Indeed, most of our experiments were made at 55.5°C, which is below the temperature range at which *Thermococcales* species such as *P. abyssi* grow (Erauso *et al.*, 1993).

447 This could stress even more the dependency on temperature of abyssal 448 hyperthermophilic microorganisms and the need to search for heat sources in the 449 extraterrestrial deep oceans.

#### 450 Conclusion

In this work, effects of high hydrostatic pressure (HHP) on DNA polymerases (DNAPs) of abyssal and surface (hyper)thermophilic microorganisms was explored for the first time. By using various fluorescence-based approaches, including real-time fluorimetric assays, we showed that HHP inhibits total DNA synthesis, strand displacement activity and extension rate. These effects were showed to be reversible, mitigated by higher temperature and dependent on the enzymes.

457

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459

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- 465 High-pressure experiments were conducted with the BioHP platform of the IBS.
- 466

#### 467 Author contributions

468

All authors proposed and contributed in their respective expertise and participated in writing the manuscript. L.C. designed research, conducted experiments, analyzed data, wrote the paper and made the figures, G.H., E.H. and D.F. designed research and corrected the paper, E.G. and B.F. designed research, wrote and corrected the paper.

- 473
- 474 Disclosure statement

475

The authors are not aware of any affiliations, memberships, funding, or financialholdings that might be perceived as affecting the objectivity of this review.



480 Figure 1: Gel analysis of products of *Pab*PolB exo<sup>-</sup> under HHP

481 Extension of the Cy5-labeled 30nt long primer hybridized on a m13MP18 DNA template of

482 7249nt in length under pressure values indicated above and temperatures indicated on the

483 left.



#### 486 Figure 2: Realtime monitoring of strand displacement activity of *Pab*PolB exo<sup>-</sup> under HHP

A: tripartite DNA hybrid used for these experiments consists of a 87nt template labelled at the 5' end with a 6-FAM modification hybridized to a 30nt primer and to a 30nt oligonucleotide labelled with a Deep Dark Quencher I modification at the 3' end. Unless this oligonucleotide is removed, the fluorescence of the 6-FAM is quenched. B: strand displacement activity of *Pab*PolB exo<sup>-</sup> under various pressure conditions. The curves represent the average fluorescence over three independent experiments and the colored area corresponds to the standard deviation. Controls are indicated.



497 Figure 3: Realtime monitoring of primer extension activity of *Pab*PolB exo<sup>-</sup> under HHP

498 Fluorescence signal of picogreen intercalant during the extension of the unlabelled 30nt long 499 primer hybridized on a m13MP18 DNA template. The curves represent the average 500 fluorescence over three independent experiments and the colored area corresponds to the 501 standard deviation. Controls are indicated.

494



**504** Figure 4: Effect of HHP on elongation speed of *Pab*PolB exo<sup>-</sup>

Primer extension curves were normalized using positive and negative controls as, respectively,
 superior and inferior limits. First derivatives were calculated for each of the three
 independently obtained curves. Error bars correspond to standard deviation. Colors represent
 pressure value (see legend).



511 Figure 5: Effect of pre-compression on primer extension activity of PabPolB exo<sup>-</sup> at P<sub>amb</sub>

512 Primer extension curves were normalized using positive and negative controls as, respectively,

513 superior (100%) and inferior (0%) limits. The curves represent the average fluorescence over

514 three independent experiments. Incubation under HHP prior to fluorescence measurement is

515 indicated. Error bars represent standard deviation.



517 Figure 6: Comparison of pressure-sensitivity of various DNAPss

518 Primer extension curves were normalized using positive and negative controls as, respectively, 519 superior and inferior limits. First derivatives were calculated for each of the three 520 independently obtained curves. Average maximum observed speed is plotted as a function on 521 the enzyme and pressure/temperature combination. To facilitate observation of the effect of 522 HHP on elongation speed, for each temperature and enzyme, maximum speed at 0.1MPa was 523 set to 100% and speeds at the other pressure values were compared to them. DNA template-524 primer hybrids used in each temperature condition are schematically represented below 525 legend.



527

**528** Supplementary Figure 1: Effect of HHP on strand displacement activity of *Pab*PolB exo<sup>-</sup> at

#### 529 various temperatures

530 Fluorescence signal of the 6-FAM fluorophore harboured by the 87nt long DNA template

531 increasing as the 30nt long oligonucleotide modified with a Deep Dark Quencher I is displaced

532 by the enzyme. Curves were obtained only once. Controls are indicated. Notice that signal of

533 the negative control at 70.0°C increases with heat as a consequence of spontaneous

534 denaturation of DNA.



537 Supplementary Figure 2: Position and value of maximum fluorescence increase during primer-

- **538** extension assays
- 539 Bars represent standard deviation. As no biphasic behaviour could be observed at 100MPa,
- 540 only values obtained at 0.1, 10 and 50MPa correspond to an inflexion point.



543 Supplementary Figure 3: HHP relative primer extension curves of *Pab*PolB exo<sup>-</sup>

544 A: Raw data for extension curves (green), positive (red) and negative (blue) controls, 545 corresponding to the three independent measurements made at 1MPa and 55.5°C. B: relative 546 fluorescence curves, based on raw data depicted in A, made using positive and negative 547 controls as, respectively, superior (100%) and inferior (0%) limits. C: red arrows indicate 548 localization of maximum value, after equilibration of pressure and temperature (blue line), of 549 first derivative of relative fluorescence, corresponding to the maximum elongation speed; green dotted lines indicate additional timepoints at which values of first derivative were 550 551 retrieved to be plotted in Figure 4. D: average relative fluorescence curves calculated over 552 three independent experiments for every tested pressure values.

Vent_exo+ Pfu_exo+	MILDTDYITKDGKPIIRIFKKENGEFKIELDPHFQPYIYALLKDDSAIEEIKAIKGERHG MILDVDYITEEGKPVIRLFKKENGKFKIEHDRTFRPYIYALLKDDSKIEEVKKITGERHG MITDADVITEDGKPIIPIFKKEKGEFKVEVDITEPPVIYALLKDDSAIDEVKKITAEBHG	60 60
Deep_Vent_exo+	MILDADYITEDGKPIIRIFKKENGEFKVEYDRNFRPYIYALLKDDSQIDEVRKITAERHG ##:*,##################################	60
Vent_exo+ Pfu_exo+	KTVRVLDAVKVRKKFLGREVEVWKLIFEHPQDVPAMRGKIREHPAVVDIYEYDIPFAKRY KIVRIVDVEKVEKKFLGKPITVWKLYLEHPQDVPTIREKVREHPAVVDIFEYDIPFAKRY	120 120
Pab_exo+ Deep_Vent_exo+	KIVRITEVEKVQKKFLGRPIEVWKLYLEHPQDVPAIREKIREHPAVVDIFEYDIPFAKRY KIVRIIDAEKVRKKFLGRPIEVWRLYFEHPQDVPAIRDKIREHSAVIDIFEYDIPFAKRY * **: :, **, ******: :*****************	120 120
March		100
Vent_exo+ Pfu exo+	LIDKGLIPMEGDEELKLLAFDIEIFYHEGDEFGKGEIIMISYADEEEAKVIIWKNIDLPY LIDKGLIPMEGEEELKILAFDIETLYHEGEEFGKGPIIMISYADENEAKVITWKNIDLPY	180
Pab_exo+ Deep_Vent_exo+	LIDKGLTPMEGNEELTFLAVDIETLYHEGEEFGKGPIIMISYADEEGAKVITWKSIDLPY LIDKGLIPMEGDEELKLLAFDIETLYHEGEEFAKGPIIMISYADEEEAKVITWKKIDLPY	180 180
22.2		
Vent_exo+	VDVVSNEREMIKRFVQVVKEKDPDVIITYNGDNFDLPYLIKRAEKLGVRLVLGRDKEHPE VEVVSSEREMIKRELRITREKDPDIIVTYNGDSEDEPYLAKRAEKLGIKLITGRDGSE	240
Pab_exo+	VEVVSSEREMIKRLVKVIREKDPDVIITYNGDNFDFPYLLKRAEKLGIKLPLGRDNSE	238
Deep_Vent_exo+	VEVVSSEREMIKRFLKVIREKDPDVIITYNGDSFDLPYLVKRAEKLGIKLPLGRDGSE	238
	· * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *	
Vent_exo+	PKIQRMGDSFAVEIKGRIHFDLFPVVRRTINLPTYTLEAVYEAVLGKTKSKLGAEEIAAI	300
Pab exo+	PKMORMGDSLAVEIKGRIHFDLFPVIRRTINLPTYTLEAVYEAIFGKSKEKVYAHEIAEA	298
Deep_Vent_exo+	PKMQRLGDMTAVEIKGRIHFDLYHVIRRTINLPTYTLEAVYEAIFGKPKEKVYAHEIAEA **:**:** ***:** ***:******************	298
Vent_exo+	WETEESMKKLAQYSMEDARATYELGKEFFPMEAELAKLIGQSVWDVSRSSTGNLVEWYLL	360
Pfu_exo+	WESGENLERVAKYSMEDAKATYELGKEFLPMEIQLSRLVGQPLWDVSRSSTGNLVEWFLL	358
Pab_exo+ Deep_Vent_exo+	WETGKGLERVAKYSMEDAKVTFELGKEFFPMEAQLARLVGQPVWDVSRSSTGNLVEWFLL WETGKGLERVAKYSMEDAKVTYELGREFFPMEAQLSRLVGQPLWDVSRSSTGNLVEWYLL	358 358
	***: :.::::*:*:*******:**:**** :*:*:*** :*:*:***	
Vent_exo+	RVAYARNELAPNKPDEEEYKRRLRTTYLGGYVKEPEKGLWENIIYLDFRSLYPSIIVTHN	420
Pfu_exo+	RKAYERNEVAPNKPSEEEYQRRLRESYTGGFVKEPEKGLWENIVYLDFRALYPSIIITHN	418
Pab_exo+ Deen Vent exo+	RKAYERNELAPNKPDEREYERRLRESYEGGYVKEPEKGLWEGIVSLDFRSLYPSIIITHN RKAYERNELAPNKPDEREYERRLRESYAGGYVKEPEKGLWEGLVSLDERSLYPSIIITHN	418
beep_vent_exov	* ** ***:******************************	410
Vent_exo+	VSPDTLEKEGCKNYDVAPIVGYRFCKDFPGFIPSILGDLIAMRQDIKKKMKSTIDPIEKK	480
Pfu_exo+	VSPDTLNLEGCKNYDIAPQVGHKFCKDIPGFIPSLLGHLLEERQKIKTKMKETQDPIEKI VSPDTLNDENCKEVDVAPQVGHKFCKDEPGETPSLLGNLLEEPQKTKKPMKESKDPVEKK	478
Deep Vent exo+	VSPDTLNREGCREYDVAPEVGHKFCKDFPGFIPSLLGNLLEENQAINRMKESKDFVEKK	478
	******	
Vent_exo+	MLDYRQRAIKLLANSYYGYMGYPKARWYSKECAESVTAWGRHYIEMTIREIEEKFGFKVL	540
Pab exo+	LLDYRORATKILANSYYGYYGYAKARWYCKECAESVTAWGRATIELVWRELEENFGFRVL	537
Deep_Vent_exo+	MLDYRQRAIKILANSYYGYYGYAKARWYCKECAESVTAWGREYIEFVRKELEEKFGFKVL	538
	**************************************	
Vent_exo+	YADTDGFYATIPGEKPELIKKKAKEFLNYINSKLPGLLELEYEGFYLRGFFVTKKRYAVI	600
Pfu_exo+	YIDTDGLYATIPGGESEEIKKKALEFVKYINSKLPGLLELEYEGFYKRGFFVTKKRYAVI	598
Deep_Vent_exo+	YIDTDGLYATIPGAKPEEIKKKALEFVDYINAKLPGLLELEYEGFYVRGFFVTKKKYALI * ****:*******************************	598
Vent_exo+	DEEGRITTRGLEVVRRDWSEIAKETQAKVLEAILKEGSVEKAVEVVRDVVEKIAKYRVPL	660
Pfu_exo+	DEEGKVITRGLEIVRRDWSEIAKETQARVLETILKHGDVEEAVRIVKEVIQKLANYEIPP	658
Pab_exo+ Deep_Vent_exo+	DEEGKIVTRGLEIVRRDWSEIAKETQAKVLEAILKHONVDEAVKIVKEVTEKLSKYEIPP DEEGKIITRGLEIVRRDWSEIAKETQAKVLEAILKHONVEEAVKIVKEVTEKLSKYEIPP *****: ******:***********************	658
Vent exo+	EKLVIHEQITRDLKDYKAIGPHVAIAKRLAARGIKVKPGTIISYIVLKGSGKISDRVILL	720
Pfu_exo+	EKLAIYEQITRPLHEYKAIGPHVAVAKKLAAKGVKIKPGMVIGYIVLRGDGPISNRAILA	718
Pab_exo+	EKLVIYEQITRPLSEYKAIGPHVAVAKRLAAKGVKVKPGMVIGYIVLRGDGPISKRAIAI	717
<pre>vent_exo+</pre>	ENLVITEQIIMPLHEYKAIOPHVAVAKKLAARGVKVRPGMVIGYIVLRODGPISKRAILA #004.*!#0#0000 * :#0#00000000000000000000000000	718
Vent_exo+	TEYDPRKHKYDPDYYIENQVLPAVLRILEAFGYRKEDLRYQSSKQTGLDAWLKR 7	74
Pfu_exo+	EEYDPKKHKYDAEYYIENQVLPAVLRILEGFGYRKEDLRYQKTRQVGLTSWLNIKKS 77	75
Deep Vent exo+	EEFDERNINTUAETTIENQVLPAVERILKAFGYKKEDLKYQKTKQVGLGAWLKF // EEFDLRKHKYDAEYYIENOVLPAVLRILEAFGYRKEDLRWOKTKOTGLTAWINTKKK 7'	75
	*:* :***** :********** **********::*.::*.	

554 Supplementary Figure 4: Sequence alignments between exo<sup>+</sup> forms of tested archaeal
555 enzymes

556 Since sequences of exo<sup>-</sup> mutants of commercial enzymes were unknown, intein-free 557 sequences of wild-type exo<sup>+</sup> enzymes were compared instead. Sequences of 558 *Pyrococcus* specie GB-D, *Thermococcus littoralis* and *Pyrococcus furiosus* PolsB present 559 sequence identity to *P. abyssi* PolB of 89.4%, 76.3% and 83.8%, respectively.

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