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Title page

Overcoming deterrent metabolites by gaining essential nutrients: a lichen/snail case study

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Graphical abstract

The main primary and specialised metabolites in *Usnea taylorii* are *in situ* located by mass spectrometry imaging. Arabitol, which is highly palatable to the snail *Notodiscus hookeri*, counterbalances the deterrent effect of usnic acid and plays a key role in lichen-snail trophic interactions.



Highlights

- The lichen Usnea taylorii contains mainly usnic acid and arabitol.
- In situ mass spectrometry imaging reveals the spatial mapping of the metabolites.
- The land snail Notodiscus hookeri consumes lichen parts containing both metabolites.
- The nutritional activity of snails is governed by the chemical quality of the lichen.
- Primary metabolites overcome the deterrent effect of specialised metabolites.

Abstract

Specialised metabolites in lichens are generally considered repellent compounds by consumers. Nevertheless, if the only food available is lichens rich in specialised metabolites, lichenophages must implement strategies to overcome the toxicity of these metabolites. Thus, the balance between phagostimulant nutrients and deterrent metabolites could play a key role in feeding preferences. To further understand lichen-gastropod interactions, we studied the feeding behaviour and consumption in Notodiscus hookeri, the land snail native to sub-Antarctic islands. The lichen Usnea taylorii was used because of its simple chemistry, its richness in usnic acid (specialised metabolite) and arabitol (primary metabolite) and its presence in snail habitats. Choice tests in arenas with intact lichens versus acetone-rinsed lichens were carried out to study the influence of specialised metabolites on snail behaviour and feeding preference. Simultaneously, usnic acid and arabitol were quantified and located within the lichen thallus using HPLC-DAD-MS and in situ imaging by mass spectrometry to assess whether their spatial distribution explained preferential snail grazing. No-choice feeding experiments, with the pure metabolites embedded in an artificial diet, defined a gradual gustatory response, from strong repellence (usnic acid) to high appetence (D-arabitol). This case study demonstrates that the nutritional activity of N. hookeri is governed by the chemical quality of the food and primarily by nutrient availability (arabitol), despite the presence of deterrent metabolite (usnic acid).

Keywords: Usnea taylorii, Parmeliaceae, *Notodiscus hookeri*, Mass spectrometry imaging, feeding choice, lichen, snail, usnic acid, D-arabitol

17 1. Introduction

18 Lichen symbiosis comprises a fungus, the mycobiont, and photosynthetic partners, the photobiont 19 (chlorophytes and/or cyanobacteria). The mycobiont produces water-soluble specialised metabolites 20 such as mycosporines (Roullier et al., 2011) and lectines (Huneck and Yoshimura, 1996) but also hydrophobic metabolites such as depsides, depsidones and dibenzofurans (Stocker-Wörgötter, 2008). 21 22 Hydrophobic metabolites accumulate as tiny crystals outside the fungal hyphae, in the cortex or the 23 medulla of the lichen thallus (Honegger, 1991). This extracellular localisation makes the metabolites 24 easy to remove using the acetone-rinsing methodology, without degrading the viability and palatability 25 of the lichen (Pöykkö et al., 2005; Solhaug and Gauslaa, 2001).

26 Because lichens are sessile and slow-growing symbiotic organisms, they must defend themselves 27 strongly against lichenivores such as gastropods, which are important lichen feeders (Asplund and 28 Wardle, 2016; Fröberg et al., 2011; Solhaug and Gauslaa, 2012; Vatne et al., 2010). Many experiments 29 have highlighted deterrent and/or toxic activity for some specialised metabolites towards 30 invertebrates, including snails (Emmerich et al., 1993; Gauslaa, 2005; Solhaug and Gauslaa, 2012). 31 Generalist lichenophage species prefer lichens with few specialised metabolites (Benesperi and 32 Tretiach, 2004; Boch et al., 2015; Černajová and Svoboda, 2014; Gauslaa, 2005; Goga et al., 2015), but 33 more than the total amount of metabolites, their nature turns out to be the main discriminant factor 34 in food preference. In the accidental degradation of the lichen herbarium of the Trieste University, the 35 coleopteran Lasioderma serricorne avoided lichen species containing the dibenzofuran usnic acid, the 36 depside atranorin or the depsidone fumarprotocetraric acid (Nimis and Skert, 2006). In a similar way, 37 when snails faced a mixture of Lobaria pulmonaria chemotypes with and without stictic acid 38 (depsidone), a preferential grazing on the depsidone-free lichen was observed (Asplund, 2011a).

39 If the only available resources are lichens rich in specialised metabolites, lichenophages must overcome or be able to metabolise potentially toxic specialised metabolites (Gadea et al., 2017; 40 Hesbacher et al., 1995). Thus, optimal foraging in generalist species implies a balance between 41 defending against toxics and accessing useful nutrients. Indeed, lichen tissues also contain 42 43 carbohydrates, including polysaccharides and reserve carbohydrates such as sugars and polyols. The 44 phagostimulant properties of sugars have previously been highlighted to improve slug baits, 45 particularly disaccharides that appeared more attractive than monosaccharides (Clark et al., 1997; 46 Henderson et al., 1992). Gastropods have the full enzymatic arsenal to degrade and to assimilate 47 sugars and polyols. However, the role of polyols in their feeding choices has not yet been confirmed 48 (Charrier et al., 2006; Charrier and Rouland, 2001; Flari et al., 1995).

As the sub-Antarctic snail *Notodiscus hookeri* Reeve (Charopidae) is an exclusive lichen feeder, it appears to be a relevant model to advance the understanding of the chemical ecology of the lichen/snail interactions. In our previous work, a compromise between appetent polyols and potentially repulsive specialised metabolites was suggested. *N. hookeri* is able to deal with potential toxic metabolites (Gadea et al., 2017) and to select lichen parts according to their gustatory quality (Gadea et al., 2018). Lichens are known to have a sectorial distribution of their specialised metabolites, which can be visualised by spectroscopic experiments as LDI-MSI or vibrational spectroscopy (Le Pogam et al., 2016; Liao et al., 2010). However, it is still not known how the primary metabolites such as sugars and polyols are distributed within the lichen thallus.

58 In this study, we present the first spatial mapping of both attractive and repellent metabolites to 59 account for the nutritional choices made by the snail. To address this question, the lichen Usnea taylorii 60 Hook. f. and Taylor (Parmeliaceae) was selected because of its simple chemistry. First, we followed the 61 snail behaviour in feeding choice arenas to assess the defensive-compound hypothesis described by 62 Gauslaa (2005). We expected that acetone-rinsed thalli would promote food consumption compared 63 to control thalli. At the same time, snails were subjected to no-choice feeding experiments using the 64 pure metabolites embedded in an artificial diet, separately or together. We hypothesised a gradual 65 gustatory response, from strong repellence (usnic acid) to high appetence (D-arabitol). Second, we intended to explore the spatial localisation of the main primary (D-arabitol) and specialised (usnic acid) 66 metabolites of U. taylorii using in-situ mass spectrometry imaging. The patterns of distribution of the 67 68 metabolites were expected to influence the snail feeding strategy.

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70 2. Results

71 2.1. Morphological and chemical characterisation of Usnea taylorii

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2.1.1. Description of Usnea taylorii morphology

73 Microscopic analysis of the fruticose lichen Usnea taylorii reveals a specific morphology that deserves 74 a detailed description to better understand the location of metabolites (Fig. 1a; a complete morphological description of the lichen is available in Text S1). Apothecia (the reproductive parts of 75 76 the lichen) are located at the apex of the Usnea branches and are characterised by their large diameter 77 (2-17 mm) and their jet-black pigmented disc. In cross-section, underneath the black epithecium, asci 78 containing spores are present in the hymenium, covering the algal layer (Fig. 1b). The thallus in cross-79 section shows a very thin cortex, protecting a discontinuous algal layer. The central axis of U. taylorii 80 is divided into several smaller axial strands by the protruding medullae, which are surrounded by some 81 algae. Between these axial strands, lax medulla is observed (Fig. 1c).

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2.1.2. Chemical characterisation of Usnea taylorii

The extraction yields with acetone ranged between 0.5 and 1.0% of specialised metabolites for the six replicates of dried lichen materials with a mean value of 0.8 ± 0.2%. Preliminary experiments showed that more than 95% of the specialised compounds were extracted from the lichen *U. taylorii* by rinsing intact air-dry thalli in acetone. Thalli had only one or two main specialised metabolites. The concentration of usnic acid ranged from 2.5 to 5.4 mg·g⁻¹ dry mass (DM) of lichen, with a mean value \pm s.d. of 4.1 \pm 1.1 mg·g⁻¹ DM (n = 6). Sugar and polyol profiling was also performed. A low diversity was observed, with only seven metabolites quantified. Arabitol was the most important polyol, reaching 138.4 \pm 25.8 mg·g⁻¹ DM (mean value \pm s.d., Table S1, Fig 2).

Preliminary LDI-MS analysis of an acetone extract of *Usnea taylorii* confirmed that the (+)-usnic acid was the only specialised metabolite detected through its deprotonated molecule (m/z 343) along with a fragment ion at m/z 329 ([M-Me]⁻) (Fig. S1). Usnic acid was consequently imaged through the m/z 343 ion. D-arabitol, the major polyol quantified by GC, was also imaged by mass spectrometry. However, because D-arabitol does not absorb at the wavelength of the laser used for LDI-MSI, a MALDI matrix solution was sprayed on *U. taylorii* slices and images were obtained using MALDI-MSI (through its sodium adduct observed at m/z 175).

99 In situ LDI-MSI experiments applied to a slice of Usnea taylorii's branch revealed that usnic acid 100 was located in the peripheral layer of the thallus, *i.e.*, in the cortex and in the uppermost parts of the 101 medulla including the photobiont layer (Fig. 3a). Likewise, usnic acid was allocated to the external 102 layers of the apothecium (epithecium, hymenium and the underside of the apothecium) (Fig. 3c). D-103 arabitol was present mainly in the lax medulla, the cortex and the algal layer (Fig. 4a), but occurred in 104 lower intensities in the axial strands of the lichen branches. In apothecia, the signal corresponding to 105 D-arabitol was stronger in the layer containing the lax medulla and algae than in the external layers of 106 apothecium (epithecium and hymenium) (Fig. 4b). To perform a comparison between lichen parts 107 eaten by snails or not, some branches and apothecia were sliced and analysed by LDI-MSI. Snails 108 consumed parts of the cortex, the algal layer and the lax medulla of the branches. In apothecia, 109 epithecium, hymenium as well as the underside of the apothecium were grazed. All these tissues 110 contain usnic acid (Fig. 3b and 3d) and D-arabitol (Fig. 4).

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112 2.2. Snail behaviour and lichen consumption experiments

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2.2.1.Feeding choice arenas

There was no site effect on the distribution of snails in the feeding choice arenas (Chi² = 0.397, df = 2, P = 0.820). During the nutritional phase, 67.9% (\pm se = 4.11%) of the snails preferred to stay near the rock shelter (rock versus intact lichen P < 0.001, rock versus rinsed lichen P < 0.001), while the rest of the snails were equally distributed (P = 0.70) in arms with intact (16.7 \pm 2.5%) and rinsed lichens (15.5 \pm 3.2%) (Fig. 5).

119 The removal of acetone-soluble metabolites did not promote lichen consumption (mean \pm s.e. 120 = 0.38 \pm 0.12 μ m²/ snail ; BRA = 0.25 \pm 0.11 μ m²/ snail ; MAS = 0.50 \pm 0.21 μ m²/ snail) . No differences 121 were detected among treatments (Chi² = 0.874, df = 1, P = 0.350) and collecting sites (Chi² = 1.553, df = 1, P = 0.213). Morphological analyses of the consumed parts showed distinct marks of radula on the
 cortex, the algal layer and the lax medulla of the branches, while the axial strands of branches always
 remained intact (Fig. 6).

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126 2.2.2.No-choice experiments

Tested metabolites (usnic acid and/or arabitol) were added to a starch gel at the mean concentrations found in the thalli. The feeding experiment lasted 48 hours. Gel-mixed metabolites had a significant impact on their consumption by snails (Chi² = 57.47, df = 3, P < 0.001; Fig. 7). Snails offered gels with usnic acid alone mainly avoided it (Tukey, P < 0.001). Gels supplemented with arabitol were eaten as much as the starch control alone (Tukey, P = 0.795; Fig. 7). Gels containing a mixture of arabitol and usnic acid were consumed more than usnic acid gels alone (Tukey, P < 0.001), but less than arabitol gels alone (Tukey, P = 0.009).

134

135 3. Discussion

136 The fruticose lichen U. taylorii (Parmeliaceae), found in nutrient-poor environments, was expected to 137 be increasingly grazed by the snail N. hookeri, after acetone rinsing. Indeed, Gauslaa (2005) evidenced 138 that acetone-rinsed lichens belonging to Parmeliaceae, rich in specialised metabolites, were more 139 palatable to generalist land snails. Contrary to our expectation snails were equally distributed between 140 rinsed and intact thalli in the four arms of the feeding choice arenas. Most of the snails were counted 141 on the rocks in the two other arms, suggesting that *U. taylorii* could not be a resting place after feeding. 142 Although information about lichen choice was lost because 68% of the snails preferred the rocks, 143 simulations made from the real data set confirmed that absence of difference was not a bias due to a 144 very low power of the test (Table S2). Lichen consumption was not significantly different between treatments. Thus, removal of acetone-soluble metabolites of U. taylorii did not increase lichen 145 146 consumption by the snail. This result is consistent with the results of Asplund (2010), who observed 147 that usnic acid did not affect snail grazing on the lichen Lobaria scrobiculata. In contrast, Asplund 148 (2011b) described snail grazing (Cochlodina laminata) in depth after acetone rinsing of two Lobaria 149 species, while the snail avoided the medulla before removal of acetone-soluble metabolites. However, 150 Lobaria pulmonaria did not contain usnic acid (Asplund et al., 2018), suggesting that other compounds 151 (stictic acid derivatives) were deterrent. According to the study of Boch et al. (2015) only one of three 152 lichen species containing at least usnic acid showed chemical snail defence. From a relationship with 153 lichen frequency in field, the authors deduced that the more the lichen was frequent, the higher was 154 the consumption by snails. This relationship cannot be the rule in the present study since U. taylorii 155 was absent from Branca site. By a deficit in specialised metabolites and a low concentration in usnic acid (4.1 mg.g⁻¹), *U. taylorii* appeared closer to the lichens belonging to Physiaceae and Teloschistales 156

described by Gauslaa (2005) although common in nutrient-rich environments. In these lichens, the author suggested that the specialised metabolites could protect thalli against excess light but could not deter grazing. In line with this, usnic acid is known to provide photoprotection to the algal cells (Nybakken and Gauslaa, 2007) and regulate their development (Bačkor et al., 2010). Gadea et al. (2017) showed that usnic acid was retrieved from faeces of *N. hookeri* after *U. taylorii* intake, meaning that the snail excreted the metabolite, but that did not mean that usnic acid was appetent and/or not toxic for the snail.

164 None of the studies cited above considered primary metabolites as feeding stimulants. For this 165 reason, isolated compounds were tested separately and in mixture, in no-choice experiments. 166 Usnic acid deterred *N. hookeri* when extracted and incorporated in a waxy starch gel, while it was 167 consumed in lichen thalli. In contrast, Asplund et al. (2010) observed that filter paper added with 168 usnic acid from the lichen Lobaria scrobiculata did not affect Cepaea hortensis grazing, despite the high content used (47.6 mg.g⁻¹). Filter paper, made of cellulose and known to be highly attractive 169 170 to helicid snails, could be much more palatable than waxy starch was to N. hookeri. In the present 171 study, the repellent effect of pure usnic acid in the starch gel was mitigated by the addition of Darabitol. The phagostimulant effect of D-arabitol for the snail has already been observed when the 172 173 snail fed on the lichen Argopsis friesiana (Gadea et al., 2018). In a similar way, sucrose increased 174 the amount of agar baits ingested by the slug Deroceras reticulatum, more than glucose, lactose 175 and fructose (Henderson et al., 1992). These studies highlight the key role of primary metabolites 176 for phytophages. Polyols are attractive for snails as nutrient metabolites that provide energy after 177 oxidative conversion and help produce mucus, which enables body hydration, locomotion, and 178 food foraging (Ng et al., 2013). In sub-Arctic lichens, polyol leaching was positively correlated with 179 polyol concentration and in wet conditions (after a rain event, for example, which is so common in the sub-Antarctic), lichens lose up to 10% of their polyols through leaching (Dudley and 180 181 Lechowicz, 1987). Consequently, snails might be first attracted by the exudate of arabitol, licking it and then would start grazing the cortex containing usnic acid. In contrast, the gustatory receptors 182 183 of the snails (i.e. buccal lips and anterior tentacles) were in direct contact with usnic acid when the 184 metabolite was incorporated to starch gels, thus revealing its role in chemical snail defence. Mass 185 spectrometry imaging of the two metabolites gave arguments in support of the snail feeding 186 pattern in the field. Spatial mapping revealed that arabitol and usnic acid were found partly 187 collocated in the cortex and in the apothecia. Accordingly, the snails preferred to graze the 188 apothecia, the lax medulla and the cortex that contained both fungal mycelium and algae with 189 usnic acid and arabitol. In addition to arabitol leaching, the high concentration of arabitol in U. 190 taylorii, thirty times as much as usnic acid, might explain why the feeding stimulus "arabitol" was stronger than the repellent stimulus "usnic acid". This case study reveals that, as in plant-191

phytophage interactions (Jamieson et al., 2017), primary metabolites are able to overcome
deterrent metabolites and should be considered as important as specialised metabolites in lichenlichenophage interactions.

195

196 4. Conclusions

197 High amounts of arabitol, useful for lichen survival in cold places, makes Usnea taylorii vulnerable to 198 grazing by a generalist gastropod, despite the production of a deterrent compound, namely, usnic acid. 199 In addition to classical feeding experiments, the mass spectrometry imaging of deterrent and attractive 200 compounds improved our knowledge of lichen/snail trophic interactions. Although snails are often 201 classified as opportunistic feeders, their nutritional activity appears governed by the chemical quality 202 of the food and primarily by nutrient availability. This lichen/snail case study could be applied to other 203 biological models, for instance, terrestrial gastropods well known as crop pests in agriculture, 204 horticulture and orchards.

205

206 5. Experimental

207 5.1. Snail Collection and Lichen Material

Adult individuals of *Notodiscus hookeri* Reeve (Charopidae) were collected on Possession Island during Austral summer in November 2015. Information about climate and topography is reported in Charrier et al. (2013). Snails came from two fell-fields, Mont Branca (BRA, 46°26′5.61″S; 51°50′10.68″E, 200 m - 383 m) and Mascarin Summit (MAS, 46°26′10.09″ S; 51°45′20.58″ E, 600 m - 930 m) (a map of the sampling sites is available in Gadea et al. (2018)).

The fruticose chlorolichen *Usnea taylorii* Hook. f. & Taylor (Parmeliaceae), encountered at MAS in the snail habitat, was harvested on Possession Island during Austral summer in November 2015. It was identified by Dr Damien Ertz and confirmed by Dr Philippe Clerc. Voucher specimens were deposited at the herbarium of the Faculty of Pharmacy of Rennes 1, Department of Pharmacognosy and Mycology, under the reference REN000141.

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5.2. Macroscopic and microscopic analysis of Usnea taylorii

Thallus morphology was examined using a dissecting microscope Leica MZ6 (Leica Microsystems GmbH, Wetzlar, Germany). Anatomical observations were made using a Leica DM2000 LED microscope (Leica Microsystems GmbH, Wetzlar, Germany). Longitudinal sections of apothecia and cross-sections of thalli were made using a hand-razor blade, and longitudinal sections of thalli were cut from the welldeveloped thicker branches. The ratio "% of axis thickness/% of medulla thickness" = ratio A/M, which is a good discriminator of *Usnea* species (Truong et al., 2011), was calculated. K (potassium hydroxide) and P (*para*-phenylenediamine) spot tests according to Hale (1979) were directly applied to the
 medulla on longitudinal sections of the branches.

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5.3. HPLC-DAD-MS analysis of specialised metabolites

230 5.3.1. Instrumental settings

231 HPLC separation and quantification of usnic acid and Usnea taylorii extracts were performed on a 232 Prominence Shimadzu HPLC system (Marne La Vallée, France) equipped with a Kinetex C₁₈ HPLC column (100 x 4.6 mm, 2.6 μm, 6A, Phenomenex, Torrance, CA, USA). The HPLC system comprises a 233 234 quaternary pump (LC20ASDP), a surveyor autosampler (SIL-20AHT) and a diode array detector (SPD-235 M20A). The separation was achieved using an acidic water/acetonitrile system as previously described 236 (Gadea et al., 2017). The ESI-mass spectra were obtained from an Expression Advion CMS apparatus 237 (Advion, Ithaca, USA) The mass spectra were recorded in the negative-ion mode in a mass range of 100 238 to 1200 Da, applying the same parameters previously described by Gadea et al. (2017). The spectral 239 data from the photodiode array detector were collected 48 min over the 200-500 nm range of the 240 absorption spectrum, and the chromatograms were plotted at the maximum wavelength of absorption $(\lambda \max)$ of the main metabolites. Peaks were assigned according to the retention time, UV spectra and 241 242 mass spectra. The same chromatographic method was applied for the standards and the samples.

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5.3.2. Sample and standard preparation

245 Specialised metabolites of six specimens of the whole fertile thallus of Usnea taylorii (642 to 1000 mg) 246 were extracted by the acetone rinsing method, three times (5 mL, 20 min), at room temperature and 247 were air-dried until the solvent had evaporated (Solhaug and Gauslaa, 2001). Acetone extracts (N=6) 248 were used for the chemical analysis while the rinsed lichen thalli were kept for the feeding choice 249 experiments. The yield, defined as the ratio between the masses of the extracts and the dry lichens, 250 was calculated for each extraction. All extracts obtained from Usnea taylorii were dissolved in bi-251 distilled tetrahydrofuran at the concentration of 0.5 $g \cdot L^{-1}$. Then, the extracts were filtered through a 252 Nylon syringe F2504-1 (Thermo Scientific, Rockwood, USA, 0.45 µm x 4 mm) and transferred to an 253 appropriate vial for automatic injection of 10 μ L aliquot into the HPLC system.

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5.3.3. Analytical method validation

All validation parameters were determined following the International Conference on Harmonization (ICH) Guidelines (ICH, 2005) using HPLC analyses, and the following characteristics were evaluated: linearity, limits of detection (LOD) and quantification (LOQ), repeatability inter-day and intra-day. Four stock standard solutions of (+)-usnic acid (Sigma-Aldrich; 329967) were prepared by dissolving approximately 2 mg in 4 mL tetrahydrofurane to reach a concentration of 0.5 mg.mL⁻¹. Then, six 261 working standard solutions of usnic acid were prepared by appropriate dilution of each stock solution with acetonitrile to generate concentrations ranging from 0.07 to 0.09 mg.mL⁻¹ for the external 262 263 standard calibration curve and the determination of the regression line. Hence, the concentrations of 264 usnic acid in U. taylorii were calculated, based on peak areas. The limits of detection and quantification 265 were determined from the y-intercept standard deviation and the slope of the calibration curve. For the calculation of the intra-day repeatability, a dilution of usnic acid (0.05 mg.mL⁻¹) was injected six 266 267 times the same day. These assays were repeated on four different days for inter-day repeatability. The 268 coefficient of variation and standard deviation were then calculated. Coefficients of variation of less 269 than 10% for intra-day and for inter-day were accepted. The results of the validation are available in 270 Table 1. Concentrations were obtained on the basis of calibration curves and were expressed in mg·g⁻ 271 ¹ DM of the lichen part.

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273 5.4. *Sugar* and *polyol profiling*

Sugars and polyols were extracted from *U. taylorii* entire fertile thalli (N=6) and profiled by gas chromatography-flame ionisation detector (GC-FID) (Thermo-Fisher Scientific, Waltham, CA, USA), as previously described by Gadea et al. (2018). Adonitol (20 mM) was used as internal standard. The metabolites were identified from their retention time by comparison with external standards. Concentrations were obtained on the basis of internal standards and were expressed in mg.g⁻¹ DM of the lichen part.

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281 5.5. Mass Spectrometry Imaging (MSI)

Usnea taylorii samples were hand-cut using a razor blade to afford slices approximately 100 μm thick.
 Branches and apothecia slices were fixed on a carbon-conductive adhesive tape that was, in turn, fixed
 on an indium tin oxide (ITO) slide (Bruker Daltonics, Bremen, Germany, cat. no. 237001). For laser
 desorption ionisation (LDI)-MSI measurement, no further preparation step was required. For matrix assisted laser desorption Ionisation (MALDI)-MSI measurements, DHB matrix solution (50 mg.mL⁻¹ in
 50% methanol) was homogeneously applied with a custom-designed spraying robot.

All MSI measurements were performed using an Autoflex-Speed MALDI-TOF/TOF spectrometer (Bruker Daltonics, Bremen, Germany) equipped with a Smartbeam laser (355 nm, 1000 Hz) and controlled using the Flex Control 3.4 software package. The mass spectrometer was used in the reflectron mode with a negative polarity for LDI-MSI and a positive polarity for MALDI-MSI. Spectra were acquired in the mass range of m/z 100–600 for all (x, y) coordinates corresponding to the imaged tissue.

The laser raster size was set at 35 microns. The signal was initially optimised by manually adjusting the laser power and the number of laser shots fired. Accordingly, full-scan MS experiments

were run by accumulating 400 laser shots per raster position and by using the laser power leading to the best signal-to-noise ratio. Image acquisition was performed using the Flex Imaging 4.0 (Bruker Daltonics) software package. The correlation of the target plate with the optical image was obtained from three distinct teaching points following the procedure of the Flex Imaging software (Bruker Daltonics).

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302 5.6. Snail behaviour experiments

5.6.1. Snail feeding choice arena

Each fertile thallus of *U. taylorii* was divided into two pieces of equal size, always containing a branch with the terminal apothecia. Half of these thalli were randomly taken to extract the specialised metabolites and constituted the rinsed lichens ("Rinsed"). The other group contained intact lichens ("Intact"). Residual acetone was evaporated for at least 20 hours before the experiment.

308 One hundred and sixty-eight N. hookeri per site were divided randomly into eight subgroups of 21 309 snails. No significant differences in shell size were observed among snail subgroups (mean ± s.d. = 4.80 310 \pm 0.37; ANOVA, F = 1.590, df = 7, P = 0.137). Two days before the experiment, snails were starved to enhance their feeding motivation. The snails were placed inside a feeding choice arena with six arms, 311 312 made of plexiglass (Plast'it supplier, Rennes, France, under the concept proposed by Dr. Maryvonne 313 Charrier, Fig. 8). Wet synthetic foam was placed at the bottom of each arena to maintain strong 314 humidity necessary for snail activity. Similar lichen samples were placed at both ends in opposite arms, 315 giving the choice between two: two "Intact" and two "Rinsed" samples. To avoid a stressful condition 316 for snails used to aggregate under a shelter (Dahirel et al., 2018), the two latter arms contained a small 317 bare rock each, representing secure refuges during resting phases. The experiment was replicated 318 eight times per site. Each feeding choice arena received 21 snails and was maintained in a climatic chamber under a light/dark photoperiod set as follows: 10 °C day (12 hours) and 6 °C night (12 hours). 319 320 A rotation of the arenas was done four times a day to avoid a position effect in the climatic chamber. 321 Experiments started at the beginning of the nocturnal phase and ended 48 hours after.

To analyse snail distribution, the position of each snail in the arena was reported. To evaluate lichen consumption, radula marks on lichen thalli were observed under stereomicroscope (Zeiss, France). The area of radula impacts was measured (in µm²/snail) with Labscope software (version 2.0, Zeiss, France).

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5.6.2. No-choice experiments on isolated compounds

Two hundred and forty adult snails were separated into four subgroups: one control and three tested groups of 60 snails each (usnic acid, usnic acid + arabitol and arabitol). No significant difference in shell size was observed among subgroups (mean ± s.d. = 4.81 ± 0.33 mm; ANOVA, F=2.472, df=3, P = 0.062). No-choice experiments were performed in two-compartment Petri dishes (Greiner Bio One, Austria). 331 Wet nonwoven sterile gauze was placed in each compartment to maintain high humidity. Waxy starch 332 gels were prepared at the concentration of 15% and small discs (diameter: 5 mm, thickness 2 mm) 333 were manufactured using a custom-designed device (Plast'it supplier, Rennes, France, under the 334 concept proposed by Dr. Maryvonne Charrier). Metabolites (usnic acid, arabitol or a mixture of usnic 335 acid and arabitol) were added to the gel at the same concentrations as those quantified in the entire fertile thalli (4 mg·g⁻¹ for usnic acid and 100 mg·g⁻¹ for arabitol). Waxy starch gels alone were considered 336 337 as positive controls. Snails had no choice, either facing a gel containing metabolite or a control gel, for 338 48 hours. At the end of the experiment, gels were photographed, and a feeding score was estimated. To calculate the feeding score, a calibrated grid placed on the gel provided the area consumed, then a 339 340 correction factor was applied (x1 for consumption of the surface layer and x2 when the gel was 341 consumed in its full thickness; Fig. S2).

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343 5.6.3. Statistical analyses

344 Snail distribution in the arenas was analysed by a multidimensional logistic model for proportion data. The effect of the site (BRA versus MAS) was tested using a likelihood ratio test on a first model. Since 345 the site did not have a significant effect, a second model was built without any independent variable, 346 347 that allowed the comparison of the proportion of individuals choosing each treatment (intact lichen, 348 rinsed lichen and rock) using a series of Wald tests where p-values were corrected using the false 349 discovery rate method. To analyse lichen consumption (areas in μ m²) according to the treatment 350 (intact versus rinsed) and the snail sampling site, a Wald test was applied on a GLMM (family: quasi, 351 link: identity, variance: $V = \mu$).

In the no-choice experiments, to determine if metabolites were differently consumed compared to the control, a likelihood ratio test was used on a generalised linear model (GLM, distribution: negative binomial, link function: log), in which the snail sampling site was introduced as a fixed factor. Tukey's post hoc pairwise comparisons were realised. As no differences between sampling sites were observed on the feeding score ($\chi^2 = 0.69$, df = 1, P = 0.408), the results of both sampling sites were combined. All statistical analyses were made using R software V. 3.4.3 (R Core Team, 2017). The R packages used were: car, emmeans, Ime4, nnet, MASS, MuMin and RVAideMemoire.

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374 Ethical Statement

The French Polar Institute (IPEV) is the authority that supported this research based on the advice of its scientific council. The sites visited during this study did not require any access authorization. All research and data reported here were obtained in compliance with all current French laws. Collecting and transport of specimens of the species *Notodiscus hookeri* were authorized by the Prefect of Illeet-Vilaine, France, licence N°35–120 delivered in October 2015.

380

381 Figures and Legends

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Fig. 1. Morphological description of *U. taylorii.* (a) *U. taylorii* entire thalli. Insets correspond to the magnification used in (b) for the apothecia and in (c) for the branch. (b) Apothecium in cross-section; (c) branches in cross and longitudinal sections. AL = algal layer; AS = axial strands; C = cortical layer and E = epithecium, HM = hymenium containing asci and spores; HP = hypothecium; LM = lax medulla; UA=underside of the apothecium. In colour online.

388

Fig. 2. Chemical structures of the two main metabolites of *Usnea taylorii*: the specialised metabolite
(+)-usnic acid and the primary metabolite D-arabitol.

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Fig. 3. Distribution of usnic acid ([M-H]⁻ ion; *m/z* 343) in samples of *U. taylorii*. a. Intact branch; b. Grazed branch (cross-sections); c. Intact apothecium, d. Grazed apothecium (longitudinal sections). Each panel features side by side the optical image of the lichen section (left side) and the mass spectrometry imaging results (right side). The grazing marks were highlighted by blue arrows. Intensity scale was adjusted to maximise the visualisation of usnic acid. In colour online.

397

Fig. 4. Distribution of arabitol ($[M+Na]^+$ ion; m/z 175) in samples of *U. taylorii*. a. Grazed branches; b. Intact apothecium. On each panel are side by side the optical image of the lichen section (left side) and the mass spectrometry imaging results (right side). The grazing marks on the branches were 401 highlighted by a blue arrow. Intensity scale was adjusted to maximise differences in segregation of402 arabitol. In colour online.

403

Fig. 5. Snail distribution (means + s.e., N= 21 snails x 8 arenas = replicates x 2 sites) in the arms of feeding choice arenas (three-test choice with two identical opposite arms), during the nutritional phase. The letters *a* and *b* indicate significant differences between arena arms containing lichens and arms containing the little rocks.

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Fig. 6. Snails ate the apothecium (a) and the external layers of branches (b). Arrows designate snailgrazing marks. In colour online.

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Fig. 7. Gel consumption (Mean ± s.e.) by the snails (N=240), according to the metabolite tested on starch gel. Gel consumption was estimated by a feeding score. The positive control was the starch gel without metabolites. The lowercase superscript letters a, b and c indicate significant differences between positive control and usnic acid containing gels (alone or in mixture with arabitol). Gels with arabitol were not significantly different from the positive control.

417

Fig. 8. Choice arena device. Lichen samples, intact or acetone rinsed, and rocks were arranged in
opposite arms. Snails (N=21 x 8 arenas x 2 sites) were placed in the central area at the beginning of the

420 experiment and 48 hours later, snail distribution and lichen consumption were analysed.































- 437 Tables
- **Table 1**: Results of various parameters of validation studies for usnic acid quantification

Parameters	Usnic acid
Calibration curve equation	y = 65613076x - 95165
Correlation coefficient value (R ²)	0.9940
LOD (mg.mL ⁻¹)	0.0001
LOQ (mg.mL ⁻¹)	0.0070
Calibration range (μ g.mL ⁻¹)	0.0070 to 0.0900
Intraday precision (RSD, n=6)	less than 3%
Interday precision (RSD, n=24)	less than 2%

441 LOD, limit of detection; LOQ, limit of quantification; RSD, relative standard deviation

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