

1 **A genomic amplification affecting a carboxylesterase gene cluster confers**  
2 **organophosphate resistance in the mosquito *Aedes aegypti*: from genomic**  
3 **characterization to high-throughput field detection**

4 **Running head:** genomic amplification associated with insecticide resistance

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46  
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48 **Abstract**

49 By altering gene expression and creating paralogs, genomic amplifications represent a key  
50 component of short-term adaptive processes. In insects, the use of insecticides can select gene  
51 amplifications causing an increased expression of detoxification enzymes, supporting the  
52 usefulness of these DNA markers for monitoring the dynamics of resistance alleles in the field.  
53 In this context, the present study aims to characterise a genomic amplification event associated  
54 with resistance to organophosphate insecticides in the mosquito *Aedes aegypti* and to develop  
55 a molecular assay to monitor the associated resistance alleles in the field. An experimental  
56 evolution experiment using a composite population from Laos supported the association  
57 between the over-transcription of multiple contiguous carboxylesterase genes on chromosome  
58 2 and resistance to multiple organophosphate insecticides. Combining whole genome  
59 sequencing and qPCR on specific genes confirmed the presence of a ~100 Kb amplification  
60 spanning at least five carboxylesterase genes at this locus with the co-existence of multiple  
61 structural duplication haplotypes. Field data confirmed their circulation in South-East Asia and  
62 revealed high copy number polymorphism among and within populations suggesting a trade-  
63 off between this resistance mechanism and associated fitness costs. A dual-colour multiplex  
64 TaqMan assay allowing the rapid detection and copy number quantification of this  
65 amplification event in *Ae. aegypti* was developed and validated on field populations. The  
66 routine use of this novel assay will improve the tracking of resistance alleles in this major  
67 arbovirus vector.

68 **Key words:** genomic amplification, insecticide resistance, mosquito, *Aedes aegypti*,  
69 carboxylesterase, diagnostic assay

70

71

## 72 **1 | INTRODUCTION**

73 The amplification of genomic regions overlapping genes can affect fitness by creating paralogs  
74 that can diverge to generate novel functions or by altering gene expression levels (Iskow et al.,  
75 2012). Often called genomic amplification when multiple copies are present, this mechanism  
76 has been shown to be a major driver of short-term adaptation (Kondrashov, 2012). Indeed,  
77 amplification events are frequent in natural populations (Campbell & Eichler, 2013) and can be  
78 subjected to positive selection (Chatonnet et al., 2017; Cooper et al., 2007; Zhang, 2003).

79 In insects, genomic amplifications have been shown to play a key role in the evolution  
80 of insecticide resistance by three distinct mechanisms. First, the duplication of genes encoding  
81 insecticide targets can allow resistant individuals to reduce the fitness costs associated with  
82 target-site mutations by allowing the co-existence of the susceptible and the resistant alleles  
83 (Assogba et al., 2015; Labbé et al., 2007). Second, the neofunctionalization of new gene copies  
84 can lead to novel adaptive functions (Zimmer et al., 2018). Third, genomic amplifications  
85 affecting genes encoding detoxification enzymes leading to their over-expression can confer  
86 the insect a higher capacity to degrade or sequester insecticides (Bass & Field, 2011). This latter  
87 mechanism has been reported in all three mosquito genera of high medical importance, *Aedes*,  
88 *Anopheles* and *Culex*, affecting various detoxification enzyme families including cytochrome  
89 P450 monooxygenases (*P450s*) and carboxy/choline esterases (*CCEs*) (Cattel et al., 2019;  
90 Lucas et al., 2019; Weetman et al., 2018).

91 Genomic amplifications affecting *CCEs* have even been described as the most common  
92 route of enzyme over-production in mosquitoes (Bass & Field, 2011). A classic example comes  
93 from the house mosquito *Culex pipiens* in which amplified carboxylesterases genes (in  
94 conjunction with the *ace-1* G119S target-site mutation) have spread across the globe, providing  
95 high resistance to organophosphate insecticides (Raymond et al., 2001). In *Aedes* mosquitoes,  
96 the low chance of occurrence of the G119S *ace-1* mutation because of strong genetic constraints

97 (Weill et al., 2004) suggest that *CCE* amplifications play a central role in organophosphate  
98 resistance and are thus of high interest for resistance monitoring.

99 In the tiger mosquito *Aedes albopictus*, the over-expression of two *CCE* genes (*CCEAE3A* and  
100 *CCEAE6A*) through gene amplification was associated with resistance to the organophosphate  
101 insecticide temephos (Grigoraki et al., 2017). In the yellow fever mosquito *Aedes aegypti*,  
102 AAEL023844 (formerly *CCEAE3A*) and other *CCE* genes belonging to the same genomic  
103 cluster were also found overexpressed through gene amplification in temephos-resistant  
104 populations (Faucon et al., 2015, 2017; Poupardin et al., 2014). Further functional studies  
105 confirmed that *CCEAE3A* is able to sequester and metabolize the active form of temephos in  
106 both *Ae. aegypti* and *Ae. albopictus* (Grigoraki et al., 2016). Although the genomic structure  
107 and polymorphism of this *CCE* amplification was studied in *Ae. albopictus* (Grigoraki et al.,  
108 2017) such work has not been conducted in *Ae. aegypti*. In addition, the role of *CCEAE3A*  
109 amplification in resistance to other insecticides remains unclear. Finally, no high-throughput  
110 assay has yet been developed to track this resistance mechanism in natural populations although  
111 such a tool would significantly ease resistance monitoring and management.

112 In this context, we combined an experimental evolution experiment with RNA-seq and  
113 whole genome sequencing to confirm the association between this genomic amplification, the  
114 overexpression of *CCE* genes and resistance to the organophosphate insecticide malathion in  
115 *Ae. aegypti*. Bioassay data also support the importance of the *CCE* amplification in resistance  
116 to other organophosphates insecticides. Comparing gene Copy Number Variations (CNV)  
117 between the different genes of this genomic cluster suggested the presence of at least two  
118 distinct haplotypes occurring in South-East Asia (SEA), both associated with resistance.  
119 Investigating their spatial dynamics in natural populations confirmed their co-occurrence in the  
120 field with a high copy number polymorphism within and among populations. Based on these  
121 results, we developed a novel high-throughput multiplex TaqMan assay allowing the

122 quantitative detection of this *CCE* amplification in hundreds of individual mosquitoes within a  
123 few hours. By reducing the human power and infrastructure needs associated with bioassays,  
124 this molecular assay will facilitate the tracking of organophosphate resistance alleles in natural  
125 *Ae. aegypti* populations.

126

## 127 **2 | MATERIAL AND METHODS**

128

### 129 **2.1 | Field sampling and mosquito lines**

130 *Aedes aegypti* larvae and pupae were collected in households and temples of eleven villages  
131 belonging to five provinces of Laos in 2014 (Table S1). Previous work confirmed the  
132 circulation of organophosphate and pyrethroid resistance alleles in these populations together  
133 with the presence of amplification affecting AAEL023844 (formerly *CCEAE3A*) (Marcombe  
134 et al., 2019). These populations were maintained under controlled conditions ( $27 \pm 2$  °C and  $80$   
135  $\pm 10\%$  relative humidity) at the Institut Pasteur of Laos for 5 generations and used for  
136 experimental evolution (see below).

137 A second round of larvae collection was conducted in 2017 for studying the spatial dynamics  
138 of *CCE* genomic amplifications in SEA. Fourteen different populations were sampled in Laos,  
139 Thailand and Cambodia (see details in Table S1) and adults were stored individually at  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$   
140 in silica gel until molecular analyses.

141

### 142 **2.2 | Experimental selection**

143 A Laos composite population was created by pooling 50 virgin males and 50 virgin females of  
144 each population into a single cage (Table S1). This population was then maintained for 2  
145 generations without insecticide selection to allow genetic mixing before initiating insecticide  
146 selection. The Laos composite population was then split in 2 lines ( $N > 1000$  in each line): one

147 line being maintained without insecticide selection (NS line) while the second line (Mala line)  
148 was artificially selected with malathion at the adult stage for 4 consecutive generations (from  
149 G1 to G5). For this, batches of thirty-three-day-old non-blood-fed adult mosquitoes (~1000  
150 individuals of mixed sex) were exposed at each generation to filters papers impregnated with  
151 malathion using WHO test tubes. A constant dose of 5% malathion coupled with an exposure  
152 time of 10 min (leading to ~90% mortality at G1) were used through the whole selection  
153 process. Surviving adults (mainly females) were collected 48h after insecticide exposure, blood  
154 fed on mice and allowed to lay eggs to generate the next generation.

155 Three-day-old non-blood-fed adult females (not exposed to insecticide) were sampled after four  
156 generations and used for bioassays and molecular work. Mosquitoes were identified as follows.  
157 G1: initial composite population, G5-NS: line maintained without insecticide pressure for four  
158 generations, G5-Mala: line maintained under malathion selection for four generations. Sampled  
159 mosquitoes were stored at -20°C until molecular analyses.

160

### 161 **2.3 | Bioassays**

162 Bioassays were used to monitor the dynamics of malathion resistance during the selection  
163 process. Four replicates of 20 three-day-old non-blood-fed females not previously exposed to  
164 insecticide and reared in same insectary conditions were sampled at each generation and  
165 exposed to the insecticide as described above using the same dose and exposure time as for  
166 artificial selection. Mortality was recorded 48h after exposure.

167 Cross resistance to other insecticides was investigated in G5 individuals (G5-Mala and G5-NS)  
168 not previously exposed to insecticide. Calibrated individuals were exposed to three distinct  
169 insecticides: the organophosphates fenitrothion and temephos, and the pyrethroid deltamethrin.  
170 For the adulticides fenitrothion and deltamethrin, bioassays were performed on eight replicates  
171 of fifteen three-day-old non-blood-fed females with the following doses and exposure times:

172 fenithrotrion 1% for 30 min, deltamethrin 0.05% for 20 min. Mortality rates were recorded 48h  
173 after exposure. For the larvicide temephos, bioassays were performed on eight replicates of  
174 twenty calibrated third instar larvae exposed to 0.08 mg/ $\mu$ L temephos for 24h in 200 ml tap  
175 water and mortality was recorded at the end of exposure.

176

## 177 **2.4 | RNA sequencing**

178 RNA-sequencing was performed to compare gene expression levels between the NS line, the  
179 Mala line and the fully susceptible reference line Bora-Bora. This experiment was performed  
180 on unexposed G6 individuals (progeny of the last generation of selection) in order to avoid gene  
181 induction/repression effects that can be caused by insecticide exposure. For each line, four  
182 RNA-seq libraries were prepared from distinct batches of 25 calibrated three-day-old non-  
183 blood-fed females not exposed to insecticide. Total RNA was extracted using Trizol® (Thermo  
184 Fisher Scientific) following manufacturer's instructions. RNA samples were then treated with  
185 the RNase-free DNase set (Qiagen) to remove gDNA contaminants and QC checked using  
186 Qubit (Thermo Fisher Scientific) and bioanalyzer (Agilent). RNA-seq libraries were prepared  
187 from 500 ng total RNA using the NEBNext® Ultra™ II directional RNA library Prep Kit for  
188 Illumina (New England Biolabs) following manufacturer's instructions. Briefly, mRNAs were  
189 captured using oligodT magnetic beads and fragmented before being reverse transcribed using  
190 random primers. Double stranded cDNAs were synthesized end-repaired and adaptors were  
191 incorporated at both ends. Libraries were then amplified by PCR for 10 cycles and purified  
192 before QC check using Qubit fluorimeter and Bioanalyzer. Libraries were then sequenced in  
193 multiplex as single 75 bp reads using a NextSeq500 sequencer (Illumina).

194 After unplexing and removing adaptors, sequenced reads from each library were loaded into  
195 Strand NGS V3.2 (Strand Life Science) and mapped to the latest *Ae. aegypti* genome assembly  
196 (Aaeg L5) using the following parameters: min identity = 90%, max gaps = 5%, min aligned

197 read length = 25, ignore reads with >5 matches, 3'end read trimming if quality <20, Kmer size  
198 = 11, mismatch penalty = 4, gap opening penalty = 6, gap extension penalty = 1. Mapped reads  
199 were then filtered based on their quality and alignment score as follows: mean read quality >  
200 25, max N allowed per read = 5, mapping quality  $\geq 120$ , no multiple match allowed, read length  
201  $\geq 35$ . Quantification of transcription levels was performed on the 14626 protein-coding genes  
202 using the DESeq method with 1000 iterations (Anders & Huber, 2010). Only the 11825 genes  
203 showing a normalized expression level  $\geq 0.5$  (~0.05 RPKM) in all replicates for all lines were  
204 retained for further analysis. Differential gene transcription levels between each line across all  
205 replicates were then computed using a one-way ANOVA followed by a Tukey post-hoc test  
206 and P values were corrected using the Benjamini and Hockberg multiple testing correction  
207 (Benjamini & Hochberg, 1995). Genes showing a fold change (FC)  $\geq 3$  (in either direction) and  
208 a corrected P value  $\leq 0.001$  in the G6-Mala line versus both susceptible lines (G6-NS and Bora-  
209 Bora) were considered as differentially transcribed in association with insecticide resistance.

210

## 211 **2.5 | Whole genome sequencing**

212 The occurrence of a genomic amplification affecting the *CCE* cluster on chromosome 2 at ~174  
213 Mb was investigated by sequencing the whole genome of the Nakh-R population from Thailand  
214 as compared to the fully susceptible line Bora-Bora. This population was used for the genomic  
215 characterization of this CCE amplification because *i*) this population was known resistant to  
216 carry organophosphate resistance alleles (Faucon et al., 2015), *ii*) it showed an over-expression  
217 of this CCE gene cluster likely associated with a genomic amplification (Faucon et al., 2015,  
218 2017) *iii*) it was collected from the field and therefore can be used to control for genetic drift  
219 effects potentially occurring in the laboratory selected line (G5-Mala). For each population,  
220 genomic DNA was extracted from 2 batches of 50 adult females and gDNA extracts were then  
221 pooled in equal proportion into a single sequencing library as described in Faucon et al., (2015).



222 Whole genome sequencing was performed from 200 ng gDNA. Sequencing libraries were  
223 prepared according to the TruSeq DNA Nano Reference guide for Illumina Paired-end Indexed  
224 sequencing (version oct 2017) with a mean insert size of 550 bp. Sequencing was performed on  
225 a NextSeq 550 (Illumina) as 150 bp paired-reads. After unplexing and adaptor removal, reads  
226 were mapped to the latest *Ae. aegypti* genome assembly (Aaeg L5) using BWA-MEM with  
227 default parameters (version 0.7.12). Sequenced reads were then sorted using samtools sort  
228 (version 1.2), annotated using Picard FixMateInformation (version 1.137) and PCR duplicates  
229 were identified using Picard MarkDuplicates (version 1.137). Normalized coverage profiles  
230 between the resistant and the susceptible populations were then compared using non-duplicated  
231 reads with a mapping quality score above 60.

232

## 233 **2.6 | Quantification of Copy Number Variations**

234 Among the six genes located within the genomic amplification detected on chromosome 2,  
235 three genes clearly annotated as *CCE* and distributed throughout the cluster were studied:  
236 AAEL019678, AAEL023844 (formerly *CCEAE3A*) and AAEL005113 (*CCEAE1A*). For each  
237 gene, specific primer pairs were designed using NCBI primer Blast (Table S2). In order to  
238 quantify CNV in natural populations and in individuals, genomic DNA was extracted either  
239 from seven pools of five adult females (mean CNV comparison between lines) or from single  
240 adult females (estimation of amplification prevalence) using the cetyltrimethylammonium  
241 bromure (CTAB) method (Collins et al., 1987) and diluted to 0.5 ng/ $\mu$ L prior to amplification.  
242 Pooled samples were amplified in duplicates while individual mosquito samples were amplified  
243 only once. Quantitative PCR reactions consisted of 3  $\mu$ L gDNA template, 3.6  $\mu$ L nuclease free  
244 water, 0.45  $\mu$ L of each primer (10 $\mu$ M), and 7.5  $\mu$ L of iQ SYBR Green Supermix (Bio-Rad).  
245 PCR amplification were performed on a CFX qPCR system (Bio-Rad) with cycles as follows:  
246 95°C 3 min followed by 40 cycles of 95°C 15 secs and 30 secs for hybridization. A dilution

247 scale made from a pool of all gDNA samples was used for assessing PCR efficiency. Data were  
248 analyzed using the  $\Delta\Delta C_t$  method (Pfaffl, 2001) taking into account PCR efficiency. Two control  
249 genes (the *P450* AAEL007808 and the chloride channel protein AAEL005950) shown to be  
250 present as single copies in multiple *Ae. aegypti* strains and populations (Faucon et al., 2015)  
251 were used for normalization. For each gene, CNV were expressed as mean relative gDNA  
252 quantity as compared to the fully susceptible line Bora-Bora. For assessing genomic  
253 amplification frequencies, all individuals showing a CNV  $\geq 2.5$ -fold as compared to the Bora-  
254 Bora line were considered positive. This threshold was chosen in order to avoid false positives  
255 as a consequence of qPCR technical variations ( $< 2$ -fold in negative control samples). Structural  
256 duplication haplotypes were assigned based on the detection of CNV for all three CCE genes  
257 (haplotype A) or only for AAEL019678, and AAEL023844 (haplotype B).

258 Individual CNV levels obtained for the *CCE* gene AAEL023844 by qPCR were cross-validated  
259 by digital droplet PCR (ddPCR). Briefly, each sample was partitioned into  $\sim 20,000$  nanoliter-  
260 sized droplets using the QX 200 droplet generator (Bio-Rad) by mixing synthetic oil with 20  
261  $\mu\text{L}$  PCR mix containing 2X ddPCR Evagreen supermix (Bio-Rad), 0.9 mM of each primer and  
262 5  $\mu\text{L}$  of template gDNA at 0.5 ng/ $\mu\text{L}$ . Emulsified reaction mixtures were then amplified with a  
263 C1000 thermal cycler (Bio-Rad) for 40 cycles. After amplification, the number of positive and  
264 negative droplets were quantified for each sample using the QX 200 droplet reader (Bio-Rad)  
265 and the positive/negative ratio was used to estimate the initial DNA assuming a Poisson  
266 distribution. A similar procedure was applied to the control gene AAEL007808 present as a  
267 single copy. After normalizing for initial gDNA quantity, CNV were expressed as relative  
268 gDNA quantity as compared to the fully susceptible line Bora-Bora.

269

270

271

## 272 **2.7 | CNV quantification using TaqMan multiplex assay**

273 A TaqMan multiplex assay allowing the concomitant quantification of the *CCE* gene  
274 AAEL023844 (present in both duplication haplotypes) and the control gene AAEL007808 from  
275 single mosquitoes within the same qPCR reaction was developed. For each gene, primers and  
276 probes were designed using Primer3web v 4.1.0 (Rozen & Skaletsky, 2000) with the AaegL5  
277 assembly as reference genome for assessing specificity. For each gene, exonic regions were  
278 targeted in order to limit amplification variations associated with natural polymorphism (Table  
279 S2). The assay was then tested on all individuals detected as positive by qPCR representing 27  
280 individuals belonging to seven populations from three countries. Each reaction mixture  
281 contained 12.5  $\mu\text{L}$  of qPCR probe Master Mix (Bio-Rad), 2.25  $\mu\text{L}$  of each primer (10 $\mu\text{M}$ ),  
282 0.625  $\mu\text{L}$  of each probe (10  $\mu\text{M}$ ), 1.25  $\mu\text{L}$  of nuclease free water and 1  $\mu\text{L}$  of template DNA  
283 (0.5 ng/ $\mu\text{L}$ ). PCR amplifications were performed on a CFX qPCR system (Bio-Rad) with cycles  
284 set as follows: 95°C for 10 min followed by 40 cycles of 95°C for 10 secs and 60°C for 45 secs  
285 followed by FAM and HEX levels reading (see Supplementary File 1 for a user guideline on  
286 this TaqMan assay).

287

## 288 **2.8 | Statistical analysis**

289 All statistical analyses were performed with R v3.6.2 (R Core Team, 2013), using the package  
290 lme4 for all mixed models (Bates et al., 2015). Mortality data were statistically compared across  
291 conditions by using a Generalized Linear Model (GLM) with mixed effects (binomial family)  
292 in which the replicates were included as a random factor. For comparing mean CNV obtained  
293 from pools of mosquitoes, normalized gDNA levels obtained for each gene were  $\text{Log}_2$   
294 transformed and compared across conditions using a GLM with mixed-effects in which the  
295 replicates were included as a random factor. For comparing CNV obtained from individual  
296 mosquitoes, normalized gDNA levels were  $\text{Log}_2$  transformed and compared between genes

297 using a one-way ANOVA. A Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient test was used  
298 to compare normalized gDNA quantities obtained from qPCR and ddPCR.

299

### 300 3 | RESULTS

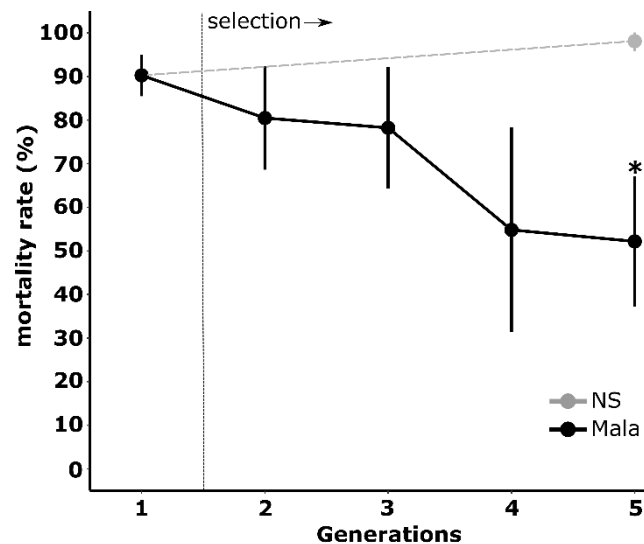
301

#### 302 3.1 | Dynamics of organophosphate resistance during experimental selection

303 Maintaining the Laos composite population under selection with malathion resulted in the rapid  
304 rise of resistance (Figure 1).

305

306



313

314 **FIGURE 1.** Dynamics of malathion resistance during the selection process. Black: Laos  
315 composite population selected with malathion; Grey: Laos composite population maintained  
316 without selection. Stars indicate a significant mortality difference as compared to the initial  
317 population (N=4, GLM mixed effects binomial family, \*p<0.05).

318

319 Mortality to malathion dropped gradually from 90.3% in G1 to 52.2 % after four generations  
320 of selection (GLMER test: z=2.058, P<0.05 for G5-Mala vs G1). Conversely, we observed a  
321 slight (not significant) increase of mortality to 99.1% after four generations without selection  
322 (GLMER test: z=-0.433, P=0.665).

323 Bioassays performed with different insecticides revealed that selection with malathion for four  
324 generations also select resistance to other organophosphate insecticides (Figure 2).

325

326

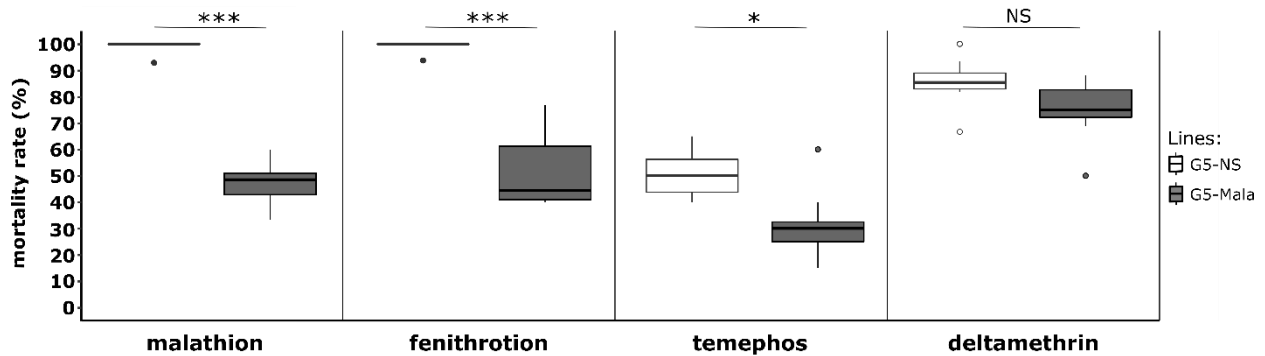
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332 **FIGURE 2.** Cross resistance of the Malathion-resistant line to other insecticides. G5-NS:  
333 Composite population maintained without selection. G5-Mala: composite population selected  
334 with malathion. For each insecticide, stars indicate a significant mortality difference between  
335 G5-NS and G5-Mala individuals (N=8, GLM mixed effects binomial family, \*p<0,05,  
336 \*\*\*p<0,001, NS: non-significant).

337

338 As compared to the G5-NS line, the G5-Mala line showed a significant increased resistance to  
339 the organophosphates fenitrothion at the adult stage (GLMER:  $z=-3.455$ ,  $P<0.005$ ) and  
340 temephos at the larval stage (GLMER:  $z=-2.194$ ,  $P<0.05$ ). Conversely, no significant increased  
341 resistance to the pyrethroid deltamethrin at the adult stage was observed suggesting that  
342 malathion did not select for pyrethroid resistance alleles.

343

### 344 3.3 | Genes associated with malathion resistance

345 RNA-seq analysis identified 84 and 124 genes over- and under-transcribed, respectively, in G6-  
346 Mala adult females (adjusted P value  $\leq 0.001$  and FC  $\geq 3$ -fold) as compared to the susceptible  
347 lines G6-NS and Bora-Bora (Table S3). Among them, 24 genes encoded proteins potentially  
348 associated with known insecticide resistance mechanisms (target-site resistance, cuticle  
349 alteration, detoxification and sequestration or altered transport) including 14 cuticle genes and  
350 10 detoxification genes. Only seven candidate genes were over-transcribed in the G5-Mala line,

351 all being associated with detoxification (Figure 3A). This included a microsomal glutathione S-  
352 transferase on chromosome 1 (AAEL006818, 13-fold *versus* G6-NS), the cytochrome P450  
353 *CYP6N17* on chromosome 2 (AAEL010158, 8-fold *versus* G6-NS) and five contiguous *CCE*  
354 genes at ~174 Mb on chromosome 2 (AAEL015304, AAEL019679, AAEL019678,  
355 AAEL005123 and AAEL023844 (formerly *CCEAE3A*, up to 10-fold *versus* G6-NS). A closer  
356 look at this genomic region revealed the presence of an additional *CCE* gene on the 5' side of  
357 the cluster (AAEL005113 *CCEAE1A*) which was not significantly over-transcribed in the  
358 resistant line. Although the *GST* AAEL006818 and the P450 *CYP6N17* were significantly over-  
359 transcribed in the G6-Mala line, these two genes were also found over-transcribed in two other  
360 Laos lines selected with unrelated insecticides (data not shown), and may thus not be specially  
361 associated with malathion resistance.

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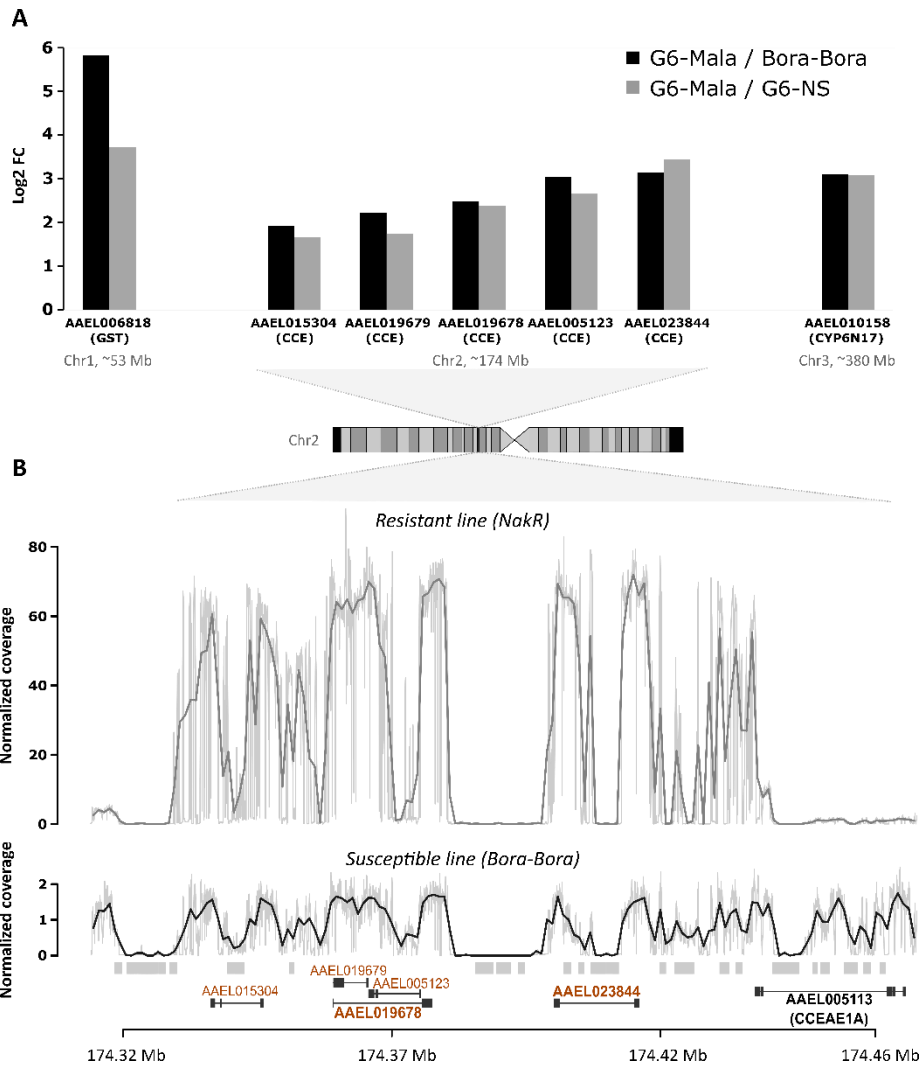
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**FIGURE 3.** Genomic amplification associated with carboxylesterase overexpression. **A:** Detoxification genes over-transcribed in the malathion-resistant line. Transcription levels were quantified by RNA-seq using 4 biological replicates per line. Detoxification genes showing a 3-fold over-transcription and a corrected P value <0.001 in the Malathion-resistant line G6-Mala versus both the unselected line NS (grey) and the fully susceptible line Bora-Bora (black) are shown. The genomic location of each gene is indicated. **B:** Comparison of normalized read coverage profiles at the carboxylesterase locus between a Thai resistant line (Nakh-R) (grey) and the fully susceptible line Bora-Bora (black). Coverage profiles were obtained by divided the raw coverage by the average coverage found on the chromosome 1 and from whole genome DNA-seq performed on pools of 100 individuals. The genomic location of carboxylesterase genes is indicated according to Aeg L5.1 annotation. Genes found overexpressed by RNA-seq are shown in orange. Genes targeted by qPCR are shown in bold. Repeated elements associated with coverage gaps are indicated as grey boxes.

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414 Cross-comparing RNA-seq data with normalized coverage profiles obtained from whole

415 genome sequencing of the Thai resistant population Nakh-R known to over-express these CCE

416 genes (Faucon et al., 2015, 2017) revealed a ~50-fold increased coverage in this genomic region  
417 as compared to the susceptible line (Figure 3B). In addition, this region included multiple low-  
418 coverage sections associated with the presence of repeated elements (mostly due to unresolved  
419 read assembly). The pattern of genomic amplification observed in the Thai resistant population  
420 Nakh-R was in agreement with the expression pattern observed in the Laos resistant line G6-  
421 Mala with the same five first *CCE* genes being amplified, but not *CCEAEIA*.  
422 The occurrence of this genomic amplification in Laos was then confirmed by qPCR (Figure  
423 4A). Before selection (G1), a slight non-significant elevation of gene copy number was  
424 observed for three *CCE* genes belonging to this genomic cluster as compared to the fully  
425 susceptible line Bora-Bora with important variations suggesting a high inter-individual  
426 heterogeneity in the initial line. Although not significant, gene copy number were even lower  
427 after four generations without selection (G5-NS) with less variations observed. Conversely,  
428 four generations of selection with malathion lead to a strong increase in gene copy number for  
429 the *CCE* genes AAEL019678 and AAE023844 in G5-Mala individuals (up to 32-fold). A lower  
430 increase (~8-fold) associated with a higher variance was observed for the gene *CCEAEIA*,  
431 suggesting that not all G5-Mala individuals carry multiple copies of this gene.  
432 Quantification of *CCE* genes copy number in individual mosquitoes by qPCR confirmed the  
433 presence of at least two distinct structural duplication haplotypes in Laos with haplotype A  
434 including the three *CCE* genes and haplotype B not including *CCEAEIA* (Figure 4B). While  
435 the prevalence of these two *CCE* haplotypes was low in the initial composite population (7%  
436 for the haplotype A and 0% for the haplotype B) and in the G5-NS (<4% for each haplotype)  
437 their cumulated frequency reached 84% in G5-Mala individuals with haplotype B being more  
438 frequent (at least 67% of duplicated haplotypes) than haplotype A (33% of duplicated  
439 haplotypes).

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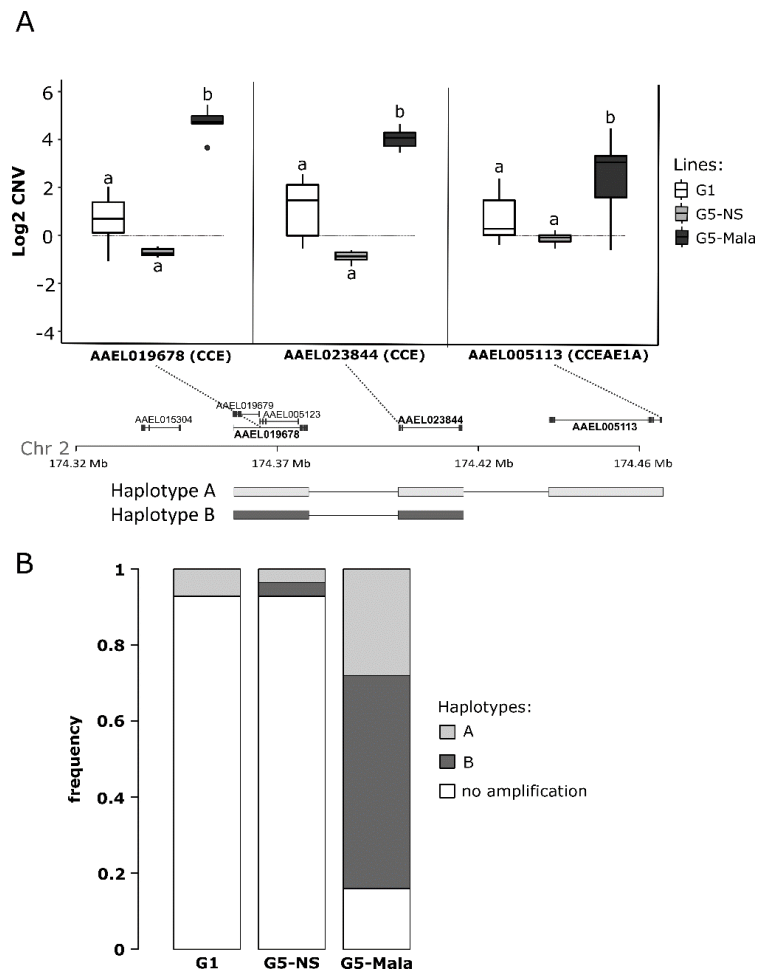
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**FIGURE 4.** Duplication haplotypes at the carboxylesterase locus. A: CNV of three selected CCE genes located in different positions of the carboxylesterase locus. For each gene, the position of the qPCR amplification product is indicated (dashed lines). Mean CNV were estimated by qPCR on pools of mosquitoes and are expressed as gDNA quantity relative to the fully susceptible line Bora-Bora (horizontal grey line). G1: unselected line at generation 1, G5-NS: unselected line at generation 5, G5-Mala: malathion-resistant line after 4 generations of selection. Distinct letters indicate significant mean CNV variations between populations (GLM mixed effects,  $N=7$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ). The two structural duplication haplotypes deduced from CNV data are represented. B: Frequencies of each haplotype in the different lines. Haplotypes frequencies were deduced from individual CNV data obtained by qPCR from 28 mosquitoes per line for the three genes AAEL019678, AAEL023844 (formerly *CCEAE3A*) and AAEL005113 (*CCEAE1A*).

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### 3.4 | Prevalence and copy number polymorphism in SEA

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The spatial dynamics of this genomic amplification event was investigated in field populations

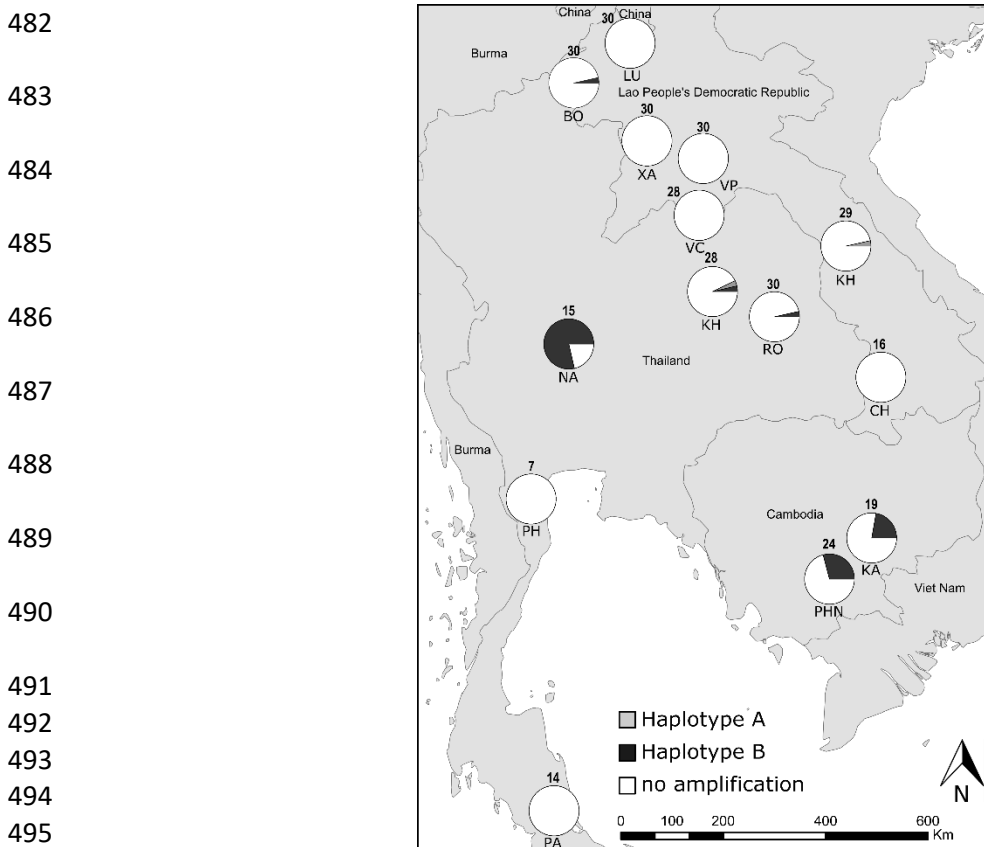
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from Laos, Cambodia and Thailand. A total of 302 mosquitoes belonging to 14 field populations

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were genotyped for the presence of *CCE* amplifications using qPCR. Seven populations

476 distributed across the three countries were found positive with at least one individual carrying  
477 the duplication haplotype A or B (Figure 5). The prevalence of *CCE* amplifications was low in  
478 most studied populations, high in two populations from Cambodia (26% and 29%) and very  
479 high in the Nakh-R Thai population known to be resistant to organophosphates (79 %) (Faucon  
480 et al., 2015). Although both haplotypes were detected through the study area, all positive  
481 individuals from populations showing a high prevalence only carried haplotype B.

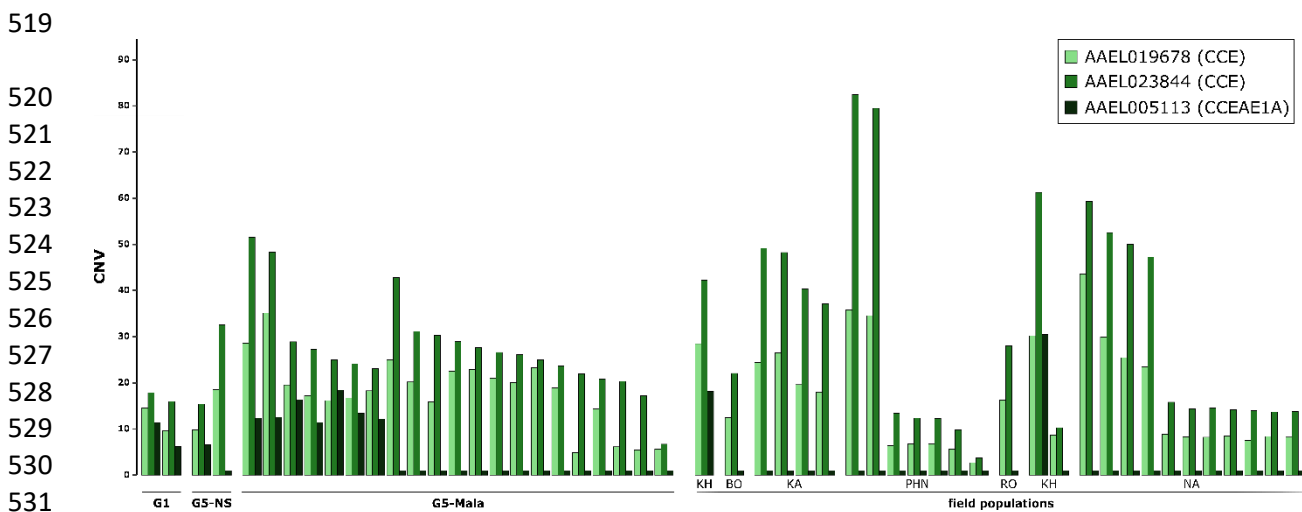


497 **FIGURE 5.** Prevalence of the carboxylesterase gene amplification in South-East Asia. For each  
498 population, the frequency of each haplotype is shown. The number of individuals genotyped is  
499 shown above each pie chart. Haplotypes frequencies were deduced from CNV data obtained by  
500 qPCR on individual mosquitoes for the three genes AAEL019678, AAEL023844 and  
501 AAEL005113 (*CCEAEIA*). Only individuals showing a CNV  $\geq 2.5$ -fold (as compared to the  
502 susceptible line Bora-Bora) for any gene were considered positive. The description of the  
503 studied populations is presented in Table S1.

504

505 Cross comparing CNV data obtained for the *CCE* gene AAEL023844 between standard  
506 Sybgreen qPCR and digital droplet PCR (ddPCR) indicated a good correlation between the  
507 two techniques ( $r=0.85$ ,  $P<0.001$ , Figure S1), suggesting that despite the technical variations

508 inherent to qPCR on single mosquitoes this approach provides a relatively good estimation of  
509 gene copy numbers. Comparing the number of copies of each *CCE* gene between all positive  
510 individuals revealed an important copy number polymorphism in the SEA with estimated copy  
511 numbers ranging from 3 to ~80 copies (Figure 6). No significant differences were observed  
512 between field populations ( $P=0.578$  for AAEL019678;  $P=0.721$  for CCEAE3A) and the  
513 different lines (G1, G5-NS, G5-Mala) ( $P=0.827$  for AAEL019678;  $P=0.845$  for CCEAE3A),  
514 suggesting that insecticide selection rather select for positive individuals than for individuals  
515 carrying a higher number of copies. Overall, the mean copy number observed for the *CCE* gene  
516 AAEL023844 (present in both haplotypes) was significantly higher than for the two other *CCE*  
517 genes AAEL019678 and CCEAE1A ( $P<0.001$  and  $P<0.01$  respectively) possibly reflecting  
518 additional structural haplotypes affecting this gene.



532 **FIGURE 6.** Genes copy number variations in experimental lines and field populations. For  
533 each gene, CNV were estimated by qPCR on individual mosquitoes and are expressed as gDNA  
534 quantity relative to the fully susceptible line Bora-Bora. Only positive individuals showing a  
535 CNV  $\geq 2.5$ -fold for any gene are shown. Names of laboratory lines and field populations are  
536 indicated.

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571 Comparing gene copy numbers estimated from standard qPCR and TaqMan assays revealed a  
572 good correlation between the two techniques ( $r=0.84$ ,  $P<0.001$ ) (Figure 7B) although CNV  
573 levels obtained with the TaqMan assay were lower as compared to those obtained with qPCR  
574 and dd qPCR using amplification primers targeting a different fragment.

575

## 576 **4 | DISCUSSION**

577 Chemical insecticides remain a key component of integrated strategies aiming to prevent the  
578 transmission of mosquito-borne diseases worldwide but the selection and spread of resistance  
579 threatens their efficacy (Moyes et al., 2017). Controlling resistance by alternating selection  
580 pressures is theoretically possible but requires an efficient monitoring of the dynamics of  
581 resistance alleles in the field (Dusfour et al., 2019). Resistance to organophosphate insecticides  
582 is common in the mosquito *Ae. aegypti* and particularly frequent in SEA following their massive  
583 use for decades (Boyer et al., 2018; Marcombe et al., 2019; Pethuan et al., 2007; Ranson et al.,  
584 2008; Vontas et al., 2012). Although several *CCE* genes are known to be involved, the genomic  
585 changes underlying resistance are not fully understood. As a result, no rapid diagnostic assay is  
586 available to monitor the frequency of resistance alleles in the field. Our experimental evolution  
587 and sequencing approaches fully supported the key role of *CCE* amplification in resistance to  
588 organophosphate insecticides in *Ae. aegypti* and allowed to further characterize the associated  
589 genomic event. The prevalence of individuals carrying this amplification was then investigated  
590 in SEA and a TaqMan multiplex qPCR assay allowing its rapid detection in single mosquito  
591 specimens was developed.

592

### 593 **4.1 | *CCE* amplifications play a key role in organophosphate resistance in *Ae. aegypti***

594 Our experimental selection approach confirmed the presence of organophosphate resistance  
595 alleles in *Ae. aegypti* populations in Laos and their rapid selection with malathion. These results

596 are consistent with the continuous use of organophosphates for vector control for 30 years in  
597 Laos and the detection of resistance throughout the country (Marcombe et al., 2019). Bioassays  
598 with other insecticides revealed that resistance alleles selected by malathion also confer cross-  
599 resistance to other organophosphates at both larval and adult stage but not to the pyrethroid  
600 deltamethrin suggesting a resistance spectrum restricted to the organophosphate family. This  
601 confirms previous findings suggesting that the over-production of non-specific  
602 carboxylesterases is a common adaptive response to organophosphates in mosquitoes (Cuany  
603 et al., 1993; Hemingway et al., 2004; Naqqash et al., 2016).

604 RNA-seq analysis identified seven detoxification genes over-transcribed in association with  
605 malathion resistance including five consecutive *CCE* genes on chromosome 2, one microsomal  
606 *GST* on chromosome 1, and one P450 (*CYP6N17*) on chromosome 3. Though their role in  
607 insecticide resistance cannot be excluded, the over-transcription of this *P450* and this *GST* in  
608 two other sister lines selected with insecticides from different families and showing no  
609 increased resistance to malathion does not support their key role in resistance to this insecticide  
610 (data not shown). Conversely, the over-transcription of *CCE* genes was expected as *CCEs* have  
611 often been associated with organophosphate resistance in mosquitoes. In *Cx. pipiens* their  
612 overproduction in response to organophosphate selection is well documented with distinct loci  
613 having spread worldwide (Raymond et al., 1998). In this species, high resistance levels were  
614 associated to the co-occurrence of carboxylesterases over-production through genomic  
615 amplification and the presence of the *ace-1* G119S target-site mutation affecting the  
616 acetylcholinesterase (Raymond et al., 2001). In *Aedes* mosquitoes, the G119S *ace1* mutation is  
617 submitted to a strong genetic constraint (Weill et al., 2004) and has thus not been reported,  
618 suggesting the central role of carboxylesterases over-production in resistance.

619 Whole genome sequencing and quantification of gene copy number supported the role of  
620 genomic amplifications in the over-production of carboxylesterases associated with

621 organophosphate resistance in *Ae. aegypti*, as previously suggested (Faucon et al., 2015, 2017;  
622 Poupardin et al., 2014). In addition, our data revealed the co-existence of at least two distinct  
623 structural duplication haplotypes, one including the three *CCE* genes AAEL019678,  
624 AAEL023844 (formerly *CCEAE3A*) and AAEL005113 (haplotype A) and the other one not  
625 including the *CCE* gene AAEL005113 located at 5' side of the cluster (haplotype B). Structural  
626 polymorphism of genomic amplifications in clustered detoxification genes has been recently  
627 reported in *Anopheles gambiae*, with twelve different alleles identified in a cluster of *P450s*  
628 and eleven in a cluster of *GSTs* (Lucas et al., 2019). In the tiger mosquito *Ae. albopictus*, a  
629 structural polymorphism affecting a similar *CCE* cluster amplification was identified with at  
630 least two distinct haplotypes: one including two *CCE* genes and the second one with only the  
631 gene AALF007796, the best orthologue of *Ae. aegypti* AAEL023844 (Grigoraki et al., 2017).  
632 These striking similarities between *Ae. albopictus* and *Ae. aegypti*, likely resulting from a  
633 convergent adaptation, further supports the key role of *CCE* amplifications in the adaptation of  
634 *Aedes* mosquitoes to organophosphate insecticides.

635 The genetic mechanism underlying the amplification of these orthologous loci has not been  
636 characterized yet. Previous studies suggested the existence of “hot spots” of recombination  
637 favoring structural polymorphisms (Bass & Field, 2011). In insects, the presence of  
638 transposable elements is also known to favor duplication events associated with their rapid  
639 adaptation to insecticides (Bass & Field, 2011; Grigoraki et al., 2017; Schmidt et al., 2010).  
640 Our genomic data confirm the presence of multiple repeated elements in the vicinity of this  
641 locus though further genomic analyses are required to decipher their relative involvement in  
642 this genomic event.

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## 646 **4.2 | Evolutionary dynamics of *CCE* amplifications**

647 The screening of this *CCE* gene amplification by qPCR on field-collected mosquitoes  
648 confirmed its occurrence in *Ae. aegypti* populations from SEA. Its prevalence in natural  
649 populations was globally low except in Cambodia and in one Thai population from which high  
650 organophosphate resistance was previously described (Paeporn et al., 2013; Pethuan et al.,  
651 2007; Poupardin et al., 2014; Saelim et al., 2005). Although our sampling campaign was  
652 restricted to a few populations in Thailand, Laos and Cambodia, the frequent elevated esterase  
653 activities detected in association with temephos resistance in SEA suggests that this *CCE*  
654 amplification is widely spread in the region (Paeporn et al., 2013; Pethuan et al., 2007). Previous  
655 studies also support the occurrence of this *CCE* amplification in the Caribbean region with high  
656 expression levels detected for AAEL023844 from multiple islands and the presence of gene  
657 amplification validated in Guadeloupe and Saint-Martin (Goindin et al., 2017; Marcombe et al.,  
658 2009, 2012). Although this needs to be confirmed, the frequent association between elevated  
659 esterase activities and organophosphate resistance in South-America (i.e. French Guiana,  
660 Brazil, Colombia and Costa-Rica) (Bisset et al., 2013; Gambarra et al., 2013; Melo-Santos et  
661 al., 2010; Paiva et al., 2016) and New Caledonia (Dusfour et al., 2015), suggests that this *CCE*  
662 amplification is distributed worldwide.

663 Despite the low frequency of *CCE* amplifications in most field populations, our experimental  
664 insecticide selection showed that the frequency of these resistance alleles increases rapidly in  
665 populations submitted to insecticide selection pressure. Although the potential role of genetic  
666 drift in the increased frequency of these resistance alleles in the selected Mala line cannot be  
667 fully excluded, their presence in organophosphate-resistant field populations makes it unlikely.  
668 Overall, these findings support the highly beneficial effect of these *CCE* amplifications in the  
669 presence of insecticides but also raises the question of their fitness costs in the absence of  
670 selective pressure. Fitness costs associated with the over-production of detoxification enzymes



671 have been previously described in various insect species (French-Constant & Bass, 2017; Kliot  
672 & Ghanim, 2012). Direct measurement of energetic resources (e.g. lipids, glycogen and  
673 glucose) in *Cx. pipiens* mosquitoes over-expressing carboxylesterases suggested that resistant  
674 individuals carry up to 30% less energetic reserves than their susceptible counterparts (Rivero  
675 et al., 2011). Such high metabolic cost may explain the favored selection of the shorter (less  
676 costly) haplotype B in field populations and laboratory lines showing a high *CCE* amplification  
677 prevalence. Although further studies are required to quantify the relative importance of the  
678 different *CCE* genes included in this genomic amplification in insecticide resistance, the  
679 frequent over-expression of AAEL023844 in resistant populations, its inclusion in both  
680 structural duplication haplotypes and its ability to sequester and metabolize temephos  
681 (Grigoraki et al., 2016) support its central role in organophosphate resistance.

682 In addition to structural polymorphism, our study revealed extensive copy number variations  
683 between resistant individuals in both field populations and laboratory lines with *CCE* gene  
684 copies varying from 3 to ~80 as measured by our TaqMan assay. In addition, no significant  
685 increase in the frequency of individuals carrying high gene copy number was observed after  
686 insecticide selection, supporting the existence of a trade-off between insecticide survival and  
687 metabolic costs associated with the over-production of these enzymes. Such high copy number  
688 polymorphism also supports the occurrence of a single duplication event followed by multiple  
689 amplification events in *Ae. aegypti* as suggested in *Cx. pipiens* and *Ae. albopictus* (Grigoraki et  
690 al., 2017; Guillemaud et al., 1999; Qiao & Raymond, 1995).

691 Though our data supported the role of this *CCE* amplification in organophosphate resistance,  
692 the involvement of other mechanisms cannot be excluded. Allelic variations of  
693 carboxylesterases have also been associated with organophosphate resistance in mosquitoes  
694 (Callaghan et al., 1998; Mouchès et al., 1987). Indeed, both allelic variations and genes  
695 amplifications coexist in natural populations and can be captured by selection depending on

696 fitness-to-environment relationships (Milesi et al., 2016). In *Ae. aegypti*, a few non-  
697 synonymous variations affecting the AAEL023844 gene were associated with temephos  
698 resistance in a Thai population (Poupardin et al., 2014). However, subsequent functional studies  
699 did not support the role of these variations in insecticide sequestration and metabolism  
700 (Grigoraki et al., 2016). More recently, we combined controlled crosses with pool-sequencing  
701 to segregate organophosphate resistance alleles in a multi-resistant population from French  
702 Guiana (Cattel et al., 2019). Such approach identified a strong selection signature associated  
703 with organophosphate resistance at this *CCE* locus. Interestingly, several non-synonymous  
704 variations affecting *CCE* genes were positively associated with insecticide survival while no  
705 CNV were detected, suggesting that the selection of particular variants at this locus may also  
706 contribute to resistance. Further work is required to clarify the interplay between *CCE*  
707 amplifications, sequence polymorphism and their respective roles in insecticide resistance in  
708 *Ae. aegypti*.

709

#### 710 **4.3 | A novel TaqMan assay to track organophosphate resistance in *Ae. aegypti***

711 The present study supported the importance of *CCE* amplifications in insecticide resistance in  
712 *Ae. aegypti*, confirming the usefulness of CNVs for tracking resistance alleles in the field. Our  
713 cross-resistance data together with previous findings (Faucon et al., 2015, 2017; Grigoraki et  
714 al., 2016; Marcombe et al., 2019; Poupardin et al., 2014) support the routine use of this *CCE*  
715 gene amplification marker for the monitoring of resistance alleles to various organophosphate  
716 insecticides. In terms of applicability, such a CNV marker is highly superior to RNA markers  
717 classically used to detect *CCE* genes overexpression because i) genomic DNA can be extracted  
718 from dead specimens of any life stage stored at room temperature, ii) either pools or single  
719 individuals can be used if allele frequency data are required and iii) CNV quantification by  
720 qPCR is fast, easy, affordable and data are not affected by insect physiological state.

721 Genomic amplifications can be detected by PCR in two different ways as illustrated in Weetman  
722 et al., 2018. The first one consists of amplifying the junction between two copies by designing  
723 specific primers toward both sides of the duplicated region. Such presence/absence assay is  
724 cheap and low tech but i) does not quantify copy number, ii) requires the precise identification  
725 of duplication breakpoints, which can be impaired by the high density of repeated elements in  
726 flanking regions, and iii) may generate false negatives if duplication breakpoints vary in  
727 position or sequence. The alternative approach adopted herein consists of comparing the copy  
728 numbers between a target gene and a control gene only present as a single copy. Although this  
729 approach is slightly more expensive and requires the use of a qPCR machine, time-to-result is  
730 even shorter (no gel migration required) and results are not affected by structural  
731 polymorphisms provided an appropriate target is defined. Though multiple *CCE* genes are  
732 located within the amplified region, we selected AAEL023844 as target gene because of its  
733 central position in the genomic amplification, its inclusion in both structural haplotypes, its  
734 over-expression in several resistant populations worldwide (Dusfour et al., 2015; Goindin et  
735 al., 2017; Marcombe et al., 2019; Moyes et al., 2017) and its ability to sequester and metabolize  
736 temephos (Grigoraki et al., 2016). By targeting a coding region showing no homology with  
737 other genomic regions, we ensured a good assay specificity while limiting detrimental effects  
738 potentially caused by polymorphisms variations. Though this approach was successfully used  
739 for CNV detection with standard SybrGreen qPCR, it still required performing two distinct  
740 qPCR amplifications. Time-to-results and specificity were then further improved by the  
741 development of a dual-color TaqMan assay allowing the concomitant quantification of both  
742 target and control genes. This assay still proved to be highly specific and allowed reducing  
743 time-to-results to ~2h for less than 1.5€ /sample including gDNA extraction, qPCR  
744 consumables/reagents, amplification primers and Taqman probes.

745

746 **5 | CONCLUSION**

747 While an increasing number of alternatives to chemical insecticides are being developed for  
748 mosquito control (Achee et al., 2019) their optimization and deployment at a worldwide scale  
749 will take at least a decade. Until then, preserving the efficacy of the few insecticides authorized  
750 in public health by managing resistance is crucial to limit the impact of vector-borne diseases.  
751 However, resistance management is often hampered by insufficient resistance monitoring  
752 capacities, often leading to late or inappropriate implementations of management actions. In  
753 this context, the deep comprehension of the genetic bases of resistance and the development of  
754 molecular tools to track resistance alleles in the field still represent a significant capital gain for  
755 public health. By combining experimental selection and deep sequencing, the present study  
756 supported the key role of a genomic amplification of a carboxylesterase gene cluster in  
757 organophosphate resistance in the mosquito *Ae. aegypti*. The spatial dynamics of this resistance  
758 locus was investigated in SEA and a novel TaqMan assay was developed enabling its high-  
759 throughput monitoring in field mosquito populations. The routine use of this assay in SEA, and  
760 possibly in other tropical areas, should improve the monitoring of organophosphate resistance  
761 alleles in the arbovirus vector *Ae. aegypti*. From an evolutionary perspective, deciphering the  
762 evolutionary history of the genetic events underlying this recent adaptation undoubtedly  
763 deserves further attention.

764

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788

#### 789 **CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE**

790 The authors of this preprint declare that they have no financial conflict of interest with the  
791 content of this article.

792

#### 793 **ETHICAL APPROVAL**

794 Blood feeding of adult mosquitoes was performed on mice. Mice were maintained in the animal  
795 house of the federative structure Environmental and Systems Biology (BEeSy) of Grenoble-

796 Alpes University agreed by the French Ministry of animal welfare (agreement n° B 38 421 10  
797 001) and used in accordance to European Union laws (directive 2010/63/UE). The use of  
798 animals for this study was approved by the ethic committee ComEth Grenoble-C2EA-12  
799 mandated by the French Ministry of higher Education and Research (MENESR).

800

## 801 DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

802 The sequence data from this study have been deposited to the European Nucleotide Archive  
803 (ENA; <http://www.ebi.ac.uk/ena>) under the accession numbers PRJEB37991 (RNA-seq data)  
804 and PRJEB37993 (whole genome pool-seq data). Data and scripts have been deposited to  
805 Zenodo (<http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3895225>). All supplemental data are available in this  
806 link:

807 [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hfgTbDI\\_KvICUxuldKGSq7Pxs7hKUbE?usp=shari](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hfgTbDI_KvICUxuldKGSq7Pxs7hKUbE?usp=sharing)  
808 ng

809

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