

*We thank the reviewer for her/his comments and suggestions on our manuscript. We agree with most comments and modified/updated the manuscript accordingly. Below is a point-by-point reply, our answers appear in italics.*

This is an interesting study that compares 4 different methods for quantifying calcification rates under high and low pH conditions. The authors conclude that that alkalinity anomaly, Ca anomaly, and  $^{45}\text{Ca}$  methods are all in close agreement, but the  $^{13}\text{C}$  method is not. This is a helpful study for researchers that are trying to calculate calcification rates of individual corals. The methods are rigorous. However, I personally have only done the TA anomaly technique so hopefully the other reviewers have hands-on experience with the other 3 methods. My comments below are minor. I believe this will make a nice contribution to the coral biogeochemistry literature.

### Abstract

Line 27: add a comma after calcification

*Done*

Line 41: This is a bit of a meta comment, but what if the  $^{13}\text{C}$  method is accurate and the other 3 are highly correlated, but wrong. How do we know which of these methods are “true” net calcification?

*Interesting comment. The reason why we reject the  $^{13}\text{C}$  method (as applied in our study) is not only because  $^{13}\text{C}$  based rates are not correlated to the other methods but also because calcification rates based on this technique are much higher and much more variable than rates based on the other methods. As mentioned in the text, it is very unlikely that dissolution was a significant process during our incubations as nubbins were fully covered with tissue, therefore there is no distinction between net and gross calcification. Now, calcification (net or gross) consumes 1 mole of carbon and 1 mole of calcium to produce 1 mole of calcium carbonate. The fact that  $\Delta[\text{Ca}]$  and  $\Delta[A_T]$  and highly correlated following a 1:2 ratio fully confirms this. We should therefore have a 1:1 ratio between C and Ca fluxes, the fact that higher rates were obtained with the  $^{13}\text{C}$  technique is problematic. Finally, several studies have shown that most of the calcium used by the calcification process comes from seawater, a significant proportion of the carbon used comes from the metabolism of the organism, suggesting that rates based on C incorporation ( $^{14}\text{C}$  or  $^{13}\text{C}$ ) must significantly underestimate true net calcification.*

### Introduction

Line 77: You can account for changes in nutrients (by measuring nitrate, phosphate, and ammonium and incorporating into the delta TA) as well as evaporation (normalize to salinity) in the alkalinity anomaly technique.

*The reviewer is correct. We have added this small paragraph to deal with this comment: “This method assumes, however, that calcification is the only biological process influencing  $A_T$  (Smith and Key, 1975). Nitrogen assimilation through photosynthetic activities, nitrification as well as aerobic and anaerobic remineralization of organic matter are known to impact  $A_T$  through the consumption or release of nutrients (ammonium, nitrate and phosphate) and protons (Wolf-*

*Gladrow et al. 2007). While for some group of species (e.g. bivalves, sea urchins), corrections appear necessary to take into account the effect of nutrient release on  $A_T$ , changes in nutrient concentrations during incubations of isolated corals are too low (i.e. several orders of magnitude lower than changes in  $A_T$ ) to introduce a significant bias in the calculations (Gazeau et al. 2015)."*

*Furthermore, ammonium concentrations have been measured at the start and end of selected incubations (only at ambient pH) that confirmed this assumption ( $D [NH_4]$  were at least 2 orders of magnitude lower than  $DA_T$ ).*

*We do not discuss here the need to correct for evaporation as this is discussed in details later in the text.*

Line 96: Replace comma with semi-colon and add comma after "therefore".

*Done*

Line 113 – 114: Incorporate this sentence into the last paragraph

*Done*

## Methods

Line 147: replace "a" with "and"

*Done*

Line 180: remove "a"

*Done*

Line 265 states that initial levels are not necessary to compute calcification and only final values with and without corals are used, but line 269 says that  $T_1$  are concentrations are the start of the incubations. This is a bit confusing. Please clarify.

*Equations 3 and 4 present the calculation procedure showing that initial levels are not necessary to compute calcification rates as stated in the text above the equations. We believe it is important to detail these equations and do not believe this is confusing as presented. However, to make sure there is no misunderstanding we added: "where  $A_{T1}$  and  $Ca_1$  are  $A_T$  and  $Ca^{2+}$  concentrations at the start of the incubations (in  $\mu\text{mol kg}^{-1}$ ; not used in the computations), ..."*

Line 275 – 276: Please explain the parameters in the equations.

*Done.*

Line 280: There is an empty box on the equation.

*Corrected.*

I think it is worth discussing why different incubation times were used. Why not do them all at the same time to reduce error with changing carbonate chemistry in the background (i.e. the longest time needed to get a result from all 4 methods)?

*We did not have this information before starting this study. Incubation times have been chosen based on practical aspects (access to the lab etc...). The fact that they differ between different incubations is not in conflict with our objective which was*

*to compare changes in various parameters during the same incubation, not to compare different incubations between each other. A sentence has been added in the Material and Method section: “Incubation times were not fixed based on scientific considerations and differed between the different incubations due to practical constraints (i.e. access to the lab etc...).”*

Please add incubation temperatures to table 1 or 2

*As temperature was maintained constant and at the same level for all incubations, the temperature level is now mentioned in the legend of both tables.*

Results section throughout: Instead of saying X and Y are presented in Figures 1 and 2, make a statement about the result and cite the figure and table after. (For example, see like 368).

*Modified accordingly.*

*We thank the reviewer for her/his comments and suggestions on our manuscript. We agree with most comments and modified/updated the manuscript accordingly. Below is a point-by-point reply, our answers appear in italics.*

This is a nice study comparing 4 different methods to measure short-term calcification rates in corals. The comparison of three less commonly used methods (calcium anomaly,  $^{45}\text{Ca}$ ,  $^{13}\text{C}$ ) with the commonly used alkalinity anomaly technique adds to the existing literature of method comparisons for estimating coral calcification. Furthermore, the current study has the benefit that the different methods were measured during the same incubation, minimizing the risk of other factors confounding the results. The authors show that two of the three methods are highly correlated and not significantly different from the alkalinity anomaly technique, and further provide useful recommendations on minimum and maximum incubation times for various volume to biomass ratios and techniques. Overall, this will be a useful addition to the existing literature on coral calcification methods. As a note of caution, I do not have experience with the calcium anomaly,  $^{45}\text{Ca}$  and  $^{13}\text{C}$  methods, therefore I cannot judge the experimental protocol used for these methods.

I only have one concern regarding the data: since there was no pH control during the incubations and some incubation times were rather long, especially when conducted in the dark, significant changes in carbonate chemistry did occur over the course of these incubations. For example, pH decreased from 8.05 to 7.62 under ambient conditions in the dark due to respiration and calcification. While this is clearly stated in the Results, the Discussion on acceptable changes in carbonate chemistry largely focuses on changes in  $\Delta C_T$  rather than pH but I don't think such a change is acceptable in studies that actually aim to detect the impacts of low pH on coral calcification. Similarly, Riebesell et al. (2010) also recommend that changes in  $A_T$  during incubations should be within 10% of starting  $A_T$ , yet changes in this study were typically larger than this, except under low pH. Furthermore, there is no discussion whatsoever regarding changes in dissolved oxygen and this was also not measured, despite hypoxia/hyperoxia potentially stressing the corals. Again, while this may be less relevant for a method comparison, it is certainly relevant when making recommendations for general incubation times. I would therefore encourage the authors to discuss these aspects in more detail in the Discussion.

*Many thanks for these very constructive comments. As stated in the manuscript (but clarified in the revised version), our study was designed to compare different techniques to estimate calcification rates and not to define the best experimental approach to study the effects of ocean acidification on coral species using these different approaches. As such, the chosen experimental protocol (e.g. incubation times) was not optimal and led, in some cases, to significant changes in the carbonate chemistry during incubations. We fully agree with the reviewer that the method we used to estimate maximal incubation times (i.e. only implying a change in  $C_T < 10\%$ ) is not acceptable. Indeed, as stated by the reviewer, one should not only focus on  $C_T$  but on pH and  $A_T$  as well in order to make sure that carbonate chemistry is maintained under an acceptable range (as compared to starting conditions). While we could find in the literature some estimates of "acceptable" changes in  $C_T$  and  $A_T$  (respectively Langdon et al., 2010 and Riebesell et al., 2010), it is more difficult to estimate what changes in pH are acceptable. As such, we have arbitrarily decided to consider a maximal change in pH set to 0.06 which is the minimal change in global surface ocean pH projected for 2100. Therefore, the new estimated  $t_{\max}$  corresponds to the lowest value between  $t_{\max\_pH}$  ( $\Delta pH_T < 0.06$ ),  $t_{\max\_C_T}$  ( $\Delta C_T < 10\%$ ) and*

$t_{max} A_T$  ( $\Delta A_T < 10\%$ ). Except in the light under ambient pH conditions,  $t_{max}$  is always set to the maximal incubation time allowed to keep pH levels under an acceptable range ( $\Delta pH_T < 0.06$ ).

Regarding oxygen levels, as pointed out by the reviewer, oxygen levels were not measured. However, our incubations were conducted in continuously mixed open systems, allowing equilibration with the atmosphere. Exchange at the air-sea interface is considerably faster for  $O_2$  than for  $CO_2$ . Furthermore, we have unpublished data from an other experiment that confirm that under the same experimental setup, where we also tracked the dissolved oxygen concentration over time, we did not observe any significant deviation from saturation.

The new paragraph now reads:

“Our study was designed to compare different techniques to estimate calcification rates and not to define the best experimental approach to study the effects of ocean acidification on coral species using these different approaches. As such, the chosen experimental protocol (e.g. incubation times) was not optimal and led, in some cases, to significant changes in the carbonate chemistry during incubations. However, our results provide some insights that we further discuss in the following section. Measuring and comparing calcification rates of organisms under varying pH conditions requires the careful choice of a volume and a time interval such that the precision of the calcification rate measurement is large enough to observe significant signals and that the change in carbonate chemistry parameters between the beginning and end of the incubation is small compared to the range of these parameters in the different treatments (Langdon et al. 2010). Table 5 illustrates the incubation time necessary to obtain measurable changes for each method ( $t_{min}$ ) considering the ratio between incubation volume and coral size chosen for our study. As the  $^{13}C$  incorporation method did not provide reliable rates, this technique was not considered in this analysis. The threshold for significant signals was set at 10-fold the analytical precision of the instruments (Langdon et al. 2010) for  $A_T$  and  $Ca^{2+}$  measurements (1.2 and  $2.9 \mu mol kg^{-1}$ , respectively) and above the detection limit of 15 cpm for  $^{45}Ca$  activity estimated. Maximum incubation times are more difficult to estimate. Langdon et al. (2010) and Riebesell et al. (2010) recommend considering incubation times short enough to maintain  $A_T$  and  $C_T$  within an acceptable range ( $\Delta A_T$  and  $\Delta C_T < 10\%$ ). As it is more difficult to estimate what changes in pH are acceptable, we have arbitrarily considered a maximal change in pH of 0.06, corresponding to the lowest change in global surface ocean pH projected for 2100 (IPCC, 2014). Maximal incubation times, as presented in Table 5 ( $t_{max}$ ), correspond then to incubation times that should not be exceeded in order to maintain acceptable conditions of the carbonate chemistry ( $\Delta pH_T < 0.06$  and  $\Delta A_T < 10\%$  and  $\Delta C_T < 10\%$ ).

Under light and ambient pH conditions, even if the ratio between incubation volume and nubbin size is much higher than for previous similar studies (e.g. Cohen et al. 2017), all methods would allow a precise estimation of calcification rates over very short incubation times (~15 min to 1 h, depending on the method) while leading to moderate changes in carbonate chemistry. In the dark, and under ambient pH conditions, in the absence of pH increase due to photosynthesis, the decrease of pH due to respiration, narrows the possible incubation period to 1.3 h. While this is still larger than the incubation time allowing to obtain a significant signal with alkalinity

*anomaly technique (~20 min), the other two methods necessitate longer incubation times to obtain precise estimates (> 1.5 h). At lower pH, both under light and dark conditions, and using open systems without a continuous pH regulation as in our study, it is obvious that all techniques are not well adapted to this experimental protocol. Indeed, as a consequence of lower calcification rates at lower pH and significant CO<sub>2</sub> degassing, incubation times necessary to obtain significant signals using these techniques are too large to maintain the carbonate parameters within an acceptable range. This is not insurmountable as a continuous regulation of pH using for instance pure CO<sub>2</sub> bubbling or incubations performed in a closed container (i.e. without contact to the atmosphere) would alleviate these problems.*

## **Specific Comments**

### Abstract

L32: please state the respective pH values instead of ambient and low  
*Added*

### Introduction

L61: please also cite here other studies that recently compared various calcification methods, such as (Gazeau et al. 2015), (Schoepf et al. 2016) and (Cohen et al. 2017)  
*References added.*

L84: “solid agreement” – this is rather colloquial and should be rephrased, e.g. “good agreement”  
*Modified*

L114: you could add here that this was done under different pH and light conditions  
*Added*

### Methods

L124-138: Please provide more information on how water motion/flow was provided in the aquaria, how big the tanks were, rate of seawater renewal etc  
*Now provided.*

L127: please provide more information on how many branches from how many different parent colonies were collected for each experiment.  
*It now reads: “In June 2017, 40 terminal portions branches of *S. pistillata*, free of boring organisms, were cut from four different parent colonies (10 branches per parent colony) and suspended by nylon lines to allow tissues to fully cover the exposed skeleton for at least five weeks (Tambutté et al., 1995; Houlbrèque et al., 2015).”*

L130: what was the concentration of Artemia fed during experiment 1? This info is only provided for experiment 2

*Added.*

L137: please change to “biometrics parameters of the biological material”

*Modified.*

L146: looking at Fig. 1, I wonder whether the rod to which the nylon line was attached shaded the coral from light coming from above?

*The thickness of the holder was only 4 mm. The position of the lights and water movement inside the incubation chamber allowed nubbins to slowly move inside the chamber and ensured no significant shading.*

L147: should be “and low pH”

*Corrected.*

L273: a description of how coral skeletal dry weight was measured is missing from the Methods. Please add.

*This was mentioned in the text, we added the apparatus used to weigh the samples: “Tissues were then dissolved completely in 1 mol L<sup>-1</sup> NaOH at 90 °C for 20 min. The skeleton was rinsed twice in 1 mL NaOH and twice in 5 mL in MilliQ water. It was then dried for 72 h at 60 °C, precisely weighed at ± 0.01 g using a Sartorius BP 310S (referred thereafter to as skeleton dry weight), and dissolved in 12 N HCl.”*

L309: It’s good to see that model II regressions were used for the analyses.

*Thanks, this is indeed appropriate when both variables are associated to experimental errors.*

## Results

L313: Table 2: why was the seawater activity much higher in experiment 2 than 1?

*Added in the text (line 170): As we anticipated lower calcification rates during the set of experiments conducted at low pH, initial nominal activity was set to ~30 Bq mL<sup>-1</sup>.*

L316: please state whether this is SD or SE

*Since we present SD values for all environmental conditions (as opposed to SE when we refer to estimated rates), a sentence has been added at the start of the Results section: “All values in Table 2 as well as in the text below correspond to the average between replicates (or incubations) ± standard deviation (SD).”*

L328: was this change in pH during incubation similar for the different methods?

*Indeed, as mentioned in the text, changes in pH were similar for the different incubations. Final pH levels were:*

- *In the light*
  - *<sup>45</sup>Ca: pH<sub>T</sub> (8.05 ± 0.03; n = 6)*
  - *<sup>13</sup>C: pH<sub>T</sub> (8.06 ± 0.04; n = 6)*
- *In the dark*
  - *<sup>45</sup>Ca: pH<sub>T</sub> (7.61 ± 0.1; n = 6)*
  - *<sup>13</sup>C: pH<sub>T</sub> (7.63 ± 0.04; n = 6)*

L336: should be “were similar”

*Corrected*

L361: there are also some other data with asterisks in Table 3 – I assume they are also outliers but this is not explicitly discussed. Please clarify.

*Clarified: “These estimates (n = 4) have been considered as outliers, marked with an asterisk in Table 3 and not included in the following analyses.”*

### Discussion

L443: please replace “that” with “why”

*Replaced.*

L461: should be “was” x2

*Modified.*

L492: should be “importantly”

*Modified to “significant”.*

L514: would be necessary for what? Please add.

*Modified to: “Conducting similar comparison studies with other coral species as well as other major calcifying groups widely studied in the context of ocean acidification (e.g. coralline algae, molluscs etc...) would be necessary **for a better understanding of ocean acidification impacts on ecosystem services provided by calcifying organisms.**”*

### Figures and Tables

Table 3 is very long. I think this information could be better represented in a figure showing both the average of all six replicates per treatment/method and the individual data points spread around the average.

*We respectfully disagree and prefer keeping the table as it is, as we believe it is important to provide the actual numbers to the reader. Individual data points are further shown in Figures 2-4.*

Also, the legend does not currently explain what the asterisk next to some data means. Please add.

*Added.*

Table 4: please add the p-value for the regressions to the table.

*Added.*



1 **Intercomparison of four methods to estimate coral calcification under various**  
2 **environmental conditions**

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19

20 Keywords: Calcification; Coral; Alkalinity anomaly; Calcium anomaly; <sup>45</sup>Ca incorporation;

21 <sup>13</sup>C incorporation

Field Code Changed

22 **Abstract**

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23 Coral reefs are constructed by calcifiers that precipitate calcium carbonate to build  
24 their shells or skeletons through the process of calcification. Accurately assessing coral  
25 calcification rates is crucial to determine the health of these ecosystems and their response to  
26 major environmental changes such as ocean warming and acidification. Several approaches  
27 have been used to assess rates of coral calcification, but there is a real need to compare these  
28 approaches in order to ascertain that high quality and intercomparable results can be  
29 produced. Here, we assessed four methods (total alkalinity anomaly, calcium anomaly, <sup>45</sup>Ca  
30 incorporation and <sup>13</sup>C incorporation) to determine coral calcification of the reef-building coral  
31 *Stylophora pistillata*. Given the importance of environmental conditions on this process, the  
32 study was performed under two starting pH levels (ambient: 8.05 and low: 7.2) and two light  
33 (light and dark) conditions. Under all conditions, calcification rates estimated using the  
34 alkalinity and calcium anomaly techniques as well as <sup>45</sup>Ca incorporation were highly  
35 correlated. Such a strong correlation between the alkalinity anomaly and <sup>45</sup>Ca incorporation  
36 techniques has not been observed in previous studies and most probably results from  
37 improvements described in the present paper. The only method which provided calcification  
38 rates significantly different from the other three techniques was <sup>13</sup>C incorporation.  
39 Calcification rates based on this method were consistently higher than those measured using  
40 the other techniques. Although reasons for these discrepancies remain unclear, the use of this  
41 technique for assessing calcification rates in corals is not recommended without further  
42 investigations.

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## 48 1. Introduction

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49 Calcification is the fundamental biological process by which organisms precipitate  
50 calcium carbonate. Calcifying organisms take up calcium and carbonate or bicarbonate ions to  
51 build their biomineral structures (aragonite, calcite and/or vaterite) which have physiological,  
52 ecological and biogeochemical functions. Moreover, calcium carbonate plays a major role in  
53 the services provided by ecosystems to human societies.

54 The ocean has absorbed large amounts of anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub> since the start of the  
55 industrial revolution and is currently sequestering about 22% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (average  
56 2008-2017; Le Quéré et al., 2018). This massive input of CO<sub>2</sub> in the ocean impacts seawater  
57 chemistry with a decrease in seawater pH, carbonate ion concentrations [CO<sub>3</sub><sup>2-</sup>] and an  
58 increase in CO<sub>2</sub> and bicarbonate concentrations [HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>]. These fundamental changes to the  
59 carbonate system are referred to as “ocean acidification” (OA; Gattuso and Hansson, 2011).  
60 Models project that the average surface water pH will drop by 0.06 to 0.32 pH units by the  
61 end of the century (IPCC, 2014).

62 The effect of OA is currently the subject of intense research with particular attention  
63 to organisms producing CaCO<sub>3</sub>. For instance, coral communities have already proven to be  
64 particularly vulnerable to rapidly changing global environmental conditions (e.g. Albright et  
65 al., 2018). In order to help project the future of coral reefs, accurate estimates of calcification  
66 rates during realistic perturbation experiments are necessary in order to produce high quality  
67 and intercomparable results (Cohen et al., 2017; Gazeau et al., 2015; Langdon et al., 2010;  
68 Riebesell et al., 2010; Schoepf et al., 2017).

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69 Several methods are available to quantify rates of coral calcification. Calcification can  
70 be measured as the increase of CaCO<sub>3</sub> mass (e.g. the buoyant weight technique; Jokiel et al.,

73 1978) or following the incorporation of radio-labelled carbon or calcium in the skeleton  
74 (Goreau, 1959), but also through the quantification of changes in a seawater constituent that is  
75 stoichiometrically related to the amount of CaCO<sub>3</sub> precipitated. For instance, the alkalinity  
76 anomaly technique (Smith and Key, 1975) has been widely used to estimate net calcification  
77 of organisms and communities, especially of corals and coral reef environments (e.g. Smith  
78 and Kinsey, 1978; Gazeau et al., 2015; Albright et al., 2016; Cyronak et al., 2018). Total  
79 alkalinity ( $A_T$ ) is directly influenced by bicarbonate and carbonate ion concentrations together  
80 with a multitude of other minor compounds (Wolf-Gladrow et al., 2007). Calcification  
81 consumes carbonate or bicarbonate, following the reversible reaction:



83 Calcification consumes two moles of HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>, hence decreasing  $A_T$  by two moles per  
84 mole of CaCO<sub>3</sub> produced (eq. 1). It is possible to derive the rate of net calcification (gross  
85 calcification - dissolution) by measuring  $A_T$  before and after incubating an organism or a  
86 community. This method assumes, however, that calcification is the only biological process  
87 influencing  $A_T$  (Smith and Key, 1975). Nitrogen assimilation through photosynthetic  
88 activities, nitrification as well as aerobic and anaerobic remineralization of organic matter are  
89 known to impact  $A_T$  through the consumption or release of nutrients (ammonium, nitrate and  
90 phosphate) and protons (Wolf-Gladrow et al., 2007). While for some group of species (e.g.  
91 bivalves, sea urchins), corrections appear necessary to take into account the effect of nutrient  
92 release on  $A_T$ , changes in nutrient concentrations during incubations of isolated corals are too  
93 low (i.e. several orders of magnitude lower than changes in  $A_T$ ) to introduce a significant bias  
94 in the calculations (Gazeau et al., 2015).

95 In contrast to  $A_T$ , the concentration of calcium (Ca<sup>2+</sup>) in seawater is only biologically  
96 influenced by net calcification and a 1:1 relationship can be used to derive net calcification

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100 rates (eq. 1). The depletion of  $A_T$  and  $Ca^{2+}$  needs to be corrected for gains of  $A_T$  and  $Ca^{2+}$   
101 resulting from evaporation. These corrections can be applied through the incubation of  
102 seawater in the absence of coral (Schoepf et al., 2017). Both the alkalinity anomaly and  
103 calcium anomaly methods are non-destructive and typically show a good agreement  
104 (Chisholm and Gattuso, 1991; Murillo et al., 2014; Gazeau et al., 2015).

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105 The  $^{45}Ca$  incorporation technique has been used since the 1950's (Goreau and Bowen,  
106 1955; Goreau, 1959). While earlier techniques showed low reproducibility, methodological  
107 improvements led to a significant reduction of the deviations between replicates (see  
108 Tambutté et al., 1995, for more details). The strength of this method is that it is extremely  
109 sensitive for measuring short-term variations in gross calcification rates. However, in contrast  
110 to the  $A_T$  and  $Ca^{2+}$  anomaly techniques, it is a sample-destructive method.

111 Previous studies designed to compare calcification rate estimates using the  $^{45}Ca$   
112 incorporation and  $A_T$  anomaly methods revealed subtle discrepancies. For example, Smith and  
113 Roth in Smith and Kinsey (1978) reported an overestimation of rates based on the  $^{45}Ca$   
114 method. In contrast, Tambutté et al. (1995) and Cohen et al. (2017) reported a decrease in  $A_T$   
115 without concomitant incorporation of  $^{45}Ca$ , therefore, suggesting an overestimation of  
116 calcification derived from  $A_T$  measurements. However, during these studies, in order to avoid  
117 radioactive contamination of laboratory equipment, estimates of calcification were not  
118 performed during the same incubations, but rather during incubations performed over two  
119 consecutive days.

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120 In contrast to the  $^{45}Ca$  incorporation method, to the best of our knowledge, no studies  
121 have used carbon-based incorporation techniques to estimate coral calcification rates in the  
122 framework of ocean acidification. Past studies that compared carbon and calcium  
123 incorporation rates in coral skeletons based on a double labelling technique with  $H^{14}CO_3$  and

126 <sup>45</sup>Ca showed that only a minor proportion of the labelled seawater carbon is incorporated in  
127 the skeleton (e.g. Marshall and Wright, 1998) and that the major source of dissolved inorganic  
128 carbon for calcification is metabolic CO<sub>2</sub> (70–75% of the total CaCO<sub>3</sub> deposition; Furla et al.,  
129 2000). Consequently, under both light and dark conditions, the rate of <sup>45</sup>Ca deposition appears  
130 greater than the rate of <sup>14</sup>C incorporation (Furla et al., 2000). To the best of our knowledge,  
131 only one study estimated calcification rates of a benthic calcifier (coralline algae) using a  
132 stable carbon isotopic technique through addition of <sup>13</sup>C-labelled bicarbonate (McCoy et al.,  
133 2016). The present study aimed at comparing calcification rates measured using the alkalinity  
134 and calcium anomaly methods, as well as the <sup>45</sup>Ca and <sup>13</sup>C incorporation techniques, under  
135 different pH and light conditions.

Moved (insertion) [1]

Moved up [1]: The present study aimed at comparing calcification rates measured using the alkalinity and calcium anomaly methods, as well as the <sup>45</sup>Ca and <sup>13</sup>C incorporation techniques.

## 141 2. Material and Methods

142 Colonies of the reef-building coral *Stylophora pistillata* were incubated in the  
143 laboratory, both in the light and dark, under ambient and lowered pH conditions. At ambient  
144 pH (experiment conducted in July-August 2017), two sets of incubations were performed  
145 using either <sup>45</sup>Ca or <sup>13</sup>C additions and calcification rates based on these techniques were  
146 compared to those derived, during the same incubations, by the alkalinity and calcium  
147 anomaly techniques. At lowered pH (experiment conducted in August 2018), no incubations  
148 with <sup>13</sup>C addition were conducted and only the three other techniques were compared.

### 149 2.1. Biological material and experimental set-up

150 Specimens used in this experiment originated from colonies of the coral *Stylophora*  
151 *pistillata* (Esper 1797) initially sampled in the Gulf of Aqaba (Red Sea, Jordan) and  
152 transferred to the Scientific Centre of Monaco where they were cultivated under controlled  
153 conditions for several years. In June 2017, ~~40~~ terminal ~~portions~~ branches of *S. pistillata*, free  
154 of boring organisms, were cut ~~from four different parent colonies (10 branches per parent~~  
155 ~~colony) and suspended by nylon lines to allow tissues to fully cover the exposed skeleton for~~  
156 ~~at least five weeks~~ (Tambutté et al., 1995; Houlbrèque et al., 2015). The nubbins were fed  
157 with rotifers (once a day) and ~~A~~ *Artemia* nauplii (twice a week: ~~ca. 1 nauplius mL<sup>-1</sup>~~) and kept ~~in~~  
158 ~~70 L aquaria (water renewal: 2 L min<sup>-1</sup>)~~ under an irradiance of 200 μmol photons m<sup>-2</sup> s<sup>-1</sup>  
159 (12:12 light:dark photoperiod, light banks: HQI 250W Nepturion - BLV (Germany) / 200  
160 μmol photons m<sup>-2</sup> s<sup>-1</sup>), a seawater temperature of 25 ± 0.5 °C and a salinity of 38 ± 0.5. ~~Water~~  
161 ~~motion was provided by a submersible pump (Minijet MN 606; RENA©)~~. Before the start of  
162 the experiment, specimens were transferred to the International Atomic Energy Agency

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Deleted: four different parent colonies and suspended with a nylon line to allow tissues to fully cover the exposed skeleton for at least five weeks

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175 (IAEA). For the second set of experiments in 2018, nubbins were prepared in June 2018 and  
176 cultured, under the conditions described above, at IAEA except that colonies were fed twice a  
177 week with newly hatched brine shrimp nauplii (ca. 1 nauplius mL<sup>-1</sup>). Biometrics parameters  
178 (size, weight) of the biological material are shown in Table 1.

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179 Different types of incubations were conducted. In July-August 2017, one set of  
180 incubations was performed under ambient pH conditions with the addition of radioactive  
181 calcium dichloride (<sup>45</sup>CaCl<sub>2</sub>). During the same period, another set of incubations was  
182 performed, under ambient pH conditions, with addition of labelled <sup>13</sup>C-sodium bicarbonate  
183 (<sup>13</sup>C-NaHCO<sub>3</sub> 99%). Finally, in August 2018, one set of incubations was performed under  
184 lowered pH conditions (see thereafter for more details) with the addition of <sup>45</sup>CaCl<sub>2</sub>. For all  
185 sets of incubations, organisms were incubated for 5 to 11 hours (Table 1), both in the light  
186 and dark, in 500 mL polyethylene beakers equipped with a magnetic stirrer (Fig. 1). Six and  
187 five replicates were used, respectively, at ambient and low pH. Furthermore, for all sets of  
188 incubations, one beaker was incubated, under the same conditions as the other beakers,  
189 without coral and served as a control.

190 For each set of incubations, 2.4 L of seawater, pumped continuous from offshore of  
191 the IAEA Monaco premises at 60 m depth, were filtered onto 0.2 µm (GF/F, 47 mm). For  
192 incubations performed at lowered pH condition, pure CO<sub>2</sub> was bubbled in the 2.4 L initial  
193 seawater batch using an automated pH-stat system (IKS Aquastar©) until the target pH was  
194 reached. The pH electrode from the pH-stat system was inter-calibrated using a glass  
195 combination electrode (Metrohm, Ecotrode Plus) calibrated on the total scale using a TRIS  
196 buffer solution with a salinity of 35 (provided by A. Dickson, Scripps Institution of  
197 Oceanography, San Diego). Initial pH<sub>T</sub> (total scale) levels were set to ~7.2. It must be stressed  
198 that pH levels were not regulated during the incubations. For <sup>45</sup>Ca-incubations, this initial

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201 batch was spiked with  $^{45}\text{CaCl}_2$  to reach a nominal activity of  $\sim 15 \text{ Bq mL}^{-1}$ . As we anticipated  
202 lower calcification rates during the set of experiments conducted at low pH, initial nominal  
203 activity was set to  $\sim 30 \text{ Bq mL}^{-1}$ . Before distributing seawater to the experimental beakers, a  
204 one-milliliter aliquot of seawater was removed for the precise determination of the initial  
205 activity. Samples were stored, in the dark, in high-performance glass vials for 24 h before  
206 counting. For  $^{13}\text{C}$ -incubations, to determine seawater background isotopic level ( $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ ) of the  
207 dissolved inorganic carbon pool ( $\delta^{13}\text{C-C}_T$ ), three 27 mL samples were collected and gently  
208 transferred to glass vials avoiding bubbles. Then,  $\sim 8.95 \text{ mg}$  of  $^{13}\text{C-NaHCO}_3$  were added to the  
209 batch of filtered ambient seawater to increase  $\delta^{13}\text{C-C}_T$  to ca. 1,500‰. For the determination  
210 of  $\delta^{13}\text{C-C}_T$  after enrichment, two 27 mL samples were handled as described above. The vials  
211 were then sealed after being poisoned with 10  $\mu\text{L}$  of saturated mercuric chloride ( $\text{HgCl}_2$ ) and  
212 stored upside-down at room temperature in the dark for subsequent analysis.

213 For all sets of incubations, samples for the measurements of  $\text{pH}_T$ ,  $A_T$  (200 mL), and  
214  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  concentrations (50 mL) were taken before distributing seawater to the experimental  
215 beakers. While  $\text{pH}_T$  was measured immediately after sampling, samples for  $A_T$  measurements  
216 were poisoned with 40  $\mu\text{L}$  of 50% saturated  $\text{HgCl}_2$  and stored in the dark at 4 °C pending  
217 analysis less than two weeks later. Samples for  $[\text{Ca}^{2+}]$  measurements were not poisoned and  
218 stored in the dark at 4 °C pending analysis less than two weeks after sampling.

219 Gravimetrically determined amounts of filtered seawater (ca. 300 g) were transferred  
220 to the incubation containers which were placed in a temperature-controlled (IKS Aquastar©)  
221 water bath maintained at  $25 \pm 0.5 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ . Coral nubbins were suspended with a nylon line in the  
222 experimental beakers 5 cm below the water level covered with transparent film to limit  
223 evaporation (Fig. 1). During the low pH incubations conducted in 2018, to avoid  
224 physiological stress, coral nubbins were acclimated by gradually lowering pH to the target

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228 levels during 24 h. This acclimation was performed in an open-flow 20 L aquarium (one full  
229 water renewal per hour) using a pH-stat system as previously described and with a pH  
230 decrease of ca. 0.03 units h<sup>-1</sup>.

231 Incubations in the light were performed at an irradiance of 200 μmol photons m<sup>-2</sup> s<sup>-1</sup>  
232 during daytime whereas dark incubations were conducted at night. Incubation times were not  
233 fixed based on scientific considerations and differed between the different incubations due to  
234 practical constrains (i.e. access to the lab etc...). Before the beginning of the incubations, all  
235 beakers (containing corals) were precisely weighed at ± 0.01 g (Sartorius BP 310S).

236 At the conclusion of the incubations, all beakers were precisely weighed to evaluate  
237 evaporation and seawater samples were analyzed for pH<sub>T</sub>, A<sub>T</sub> and [Ca<sup>2+</sup>] as well as for <sup>45</sup>Ca  
238 activity or δ<sup>13</sup>C-C<sub>T</sub> depending on the type of incubations. pH<sub>T</sub> was measured immediately and  
239 samples for A<sub>T</sub> and [Ca<sup>2+</sup>] determinations were filtered onto 0.2 μm (GF/F, Ø 47 mm),  
240 poisoned with saturated HgCl<sub>2</sub> (only for A<sub>T</sub>) and stored in the dark at 4 °C pending analysis  
241 (within two weeks). The corals were then removed from the beakers for the analysis of  
242 incorporated <sup>45</sup>Ca or <sup>13</sup>C. Three additional corals which were not incubated were processed  
243 for carbon isotopic composition of the previously accreted calcium carbonate (see section  
244 “2.3. Computations and statistics”).

## 245 2.2. Analytical techniques

246 Immediately after sampling, pH<sub>T</sub> was measured on a Metrohm 826 mobile pH-logger  
247 and a glass electrode (Metrohm, Ecotrode Plus) calibrated on the total scale using a TRIS  
248 buffer of salinity 35 (provided by A. Dickson, Scripps University, USA). A<sub>T</sub> was determined  
249 in triplicate 50 mL subsamples by potentiometric titration on a titrator Titrando 888  
250 (Metrohm) coupled to a glass electrode (Metrohm, Ecotrode Plus) and a thermometer

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251 (pt1000). The pH electrode was calibrated before every set of measurements on the total scale  
252 using a TRIS buffer of salinity 35 (provided by A. Dickson, Scripps University, USA).  
253 Measurements were carried out at a constant temperature of 25 °C and  $A_T$  was calculated as  
254 described in Dickson et al. (2007). Certified reference material (CRM; batches 143 and 156)  
255 provided by A. Dickson (Scripps University, USA) were used to check precision (standard  
256 deviation within measurements of the same batch) and accuracy (deviation from the certified  
257 nominal value). Over the six series of  $A_T$  measurements performed during the experiment,  
258 mean accuracy and precision ( $\pm$  SD) were respectively  $7.2 \pm 1.2$  and  $1.2 \pm 0.2 \mu\text{mol kg}^{-1}$ .  
259  $[\text{Ca}^{2+}]$  was determined in triplicate using the ethylene glycol tetra acetic acid (EGTA)  
260 potentiometric titration (Lebel and Poisson, 1976). About 10 g of sampled seawater and 10 g  
261 of  $\text{HgCl}_2$  solution (ca.  $1 \text{ mmol L}^{-1}$ ) were accurately weighed out. Then, about 10 g of a  
262 concentrated EGTA solution (ca.  $10 \text{ mmol L}^{-1}$ , also by weighing) was added to completely  
263 complex  $\text{Hg}^{2+}$  and to complex nearly 95% of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ . After adding 10 mL of borate buffer  
264 ( $\text{pH}_{\text{NBS}} \sim 10$ ) to increase the pH of the solution, the remaining  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  was titrated by a diluted  
265 solution of EGTA (ca.  $2 \text{ mmol L}^{-1}$ ) using a titrator (Titrand 888, Metrohm) coupled to an  
266 amalgamated silver combined electrode (Metrohm Ag Titrode). Following Cao and Dai  
267 (2011), the volume of EGTA necessary to titrate the remaining ca. 5% of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  were obtained  
268 by manually fitting a polynomial function to the first derivative of the titration curve using the  
269 function “loess” of the R software<sup>1</sup>. The EGTA solution was calibrated prior to each  
270 measurement series using International Association for the Physical Sciences of the Oceans  
271 (IAPSO) standard seawater (salinity = 38.005). Mean  $[\text{Ca}^{2+}]$  precision obtained using this  
272 technique was  $2.9 \mu\text{mol kg}^{-1}$  ( $n = 40$ ), corresponding to a coefficient of variation (CV) of  
273 0.026%.

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<sup>1</sup>The R Development Core Team, R.: A language and environment for statistical computing, 2018.

274 To determine the specific activity in radio-labelled seawater, the 1 mL aliquots were  
275 transferred to 20 mL glass scintillation vials and mixed in proportion 1:10 (v:v) with  
276 scintillation liquid Ultima Gold™ XR. According to a method adapted from Tambutté et al.  
277 (1995), at the end of incubation sampled nubbins were immersed for 30 min in beakers  
278 containing 300 mL of unlabelled seawater to achieve isotopic dilution of the <sup>45</sup>Ca contained in  
279 the gastrovascular cavity. Constant water motion was provided in the efflux medium by  
280 magnetic stirring bars. Tissues were then dissolved completely in 1 mol L<sup>-1</sup> NaOH at 90 °C  
281 for 20 min. The skeleton was rinsed twice in 1 mL NaOH and twice in 5 mL in MilliQ water.  
282 It was then dried for 72 h at 60 °C, precisely weighed at ± 0.01 g using a Sartorius BP 310S  
283 (referred thereafter to as skeleton dry weight), and dissolved in 12 N HCl. Three 200 µL  
284 aliquots from each skeleton dissolution were transferred to 20 mL glass scintillation vials and  
285 mixed with 10 mL scintillation liquid Ultima Gold™ XR. Radioactive samples were  
286 thoroughly mixed to homogenize the solution and kept in the dark for 24 h before counting.  
287 The radioactivity of <sup>45</sup>Ca was counted using a Tri-Carb 2900 Liquid Scintillation Counter.  
288 Counting time was adapted to obtain a propagated counting error of less than 5% (maximal  
289 counting duration was 90 min). Radioactivity was determined by comparison with standards  
290 of known activities and measurements were corrected for counting efficiency and physical  
291 radioactive decay.

292 The analyses of seawater δ<sup>13</sup>C-C<sub>T</sub> as well as of the <sup>13</sup>C signature of coral calcified  
293 tissues were performed at Leuven University. For δ<sup>13</sup>C-C<sub>T</sub> analyses, a helium headspace (5  
294 mL) was created in the vials and samples were acidified with 2 mL of phosphoric acid  
295 (H<sub>3</sub>PO<sub>4</sub>, 99%). Samples were left to equilibrate overnight to transfer all C<sub>T</sub> to gaseous CO<sub>2</sub>.  
296 Samples were injected in the carrier gas stream of an EA-IRMS (Thermo EA1110 and Delta  
297 V Advantage), and data were calibrated with NBS-19 and LSVEC standards (Gillikin and

298 Bouillon, 2007). Corals were treated following the same protocol as for  $^{45}\text{Ca}$  incorporation  
 299 measurements and powdered. Triplicate subsamples of carbonate powder ( $\sim 100 \mu\text{g}$ ) were  
 300 placed into gas-tight vials, flushed with helium, and converted into  $\text{CO}_2$  with  $\text{H}_3\text{PO}_4$ . After 24  
 301 h, subsamples of the released  $\text{CO}_2$  were injected into the EA-IRMS system as described  
 302 above. Data were calibrated with NBS-19 and LSVEC. Carbon isotope data are expressed in  
 303 the delta notation ( $\delta$ ) relative to Vienna Pee Dee Belemnite (VPDB) standard and were  
 304 calculated as:

$$305 \quad R_{\text{sample}} = \frac{\delta^{13}\text{C}_{\text{sample}}}{1000 + 1} \cdot R_{\text{VPDB}} \quad (2)$$

### 306 2.3. Computations and statistics

307 The carbonate chemistry was assessed using  $\text{pH}_T$  and  $A_T$  and the R package seacarb<sup>2</sup>.  
 308 Propagation of errors on computed parameters was performed using the new function “error”  
 309 of the package seacarb (Orr et al., 2018) on the R software, considering errors associated to  
 310 the estimation of  $A_T$  as well as errors on dissociation constants.

311 Estimates of coral calcification rates based on changes in  $A_T$  and  $[\text{Ca}^{2+}]$  during  
 312 incubations were computed following equations (3) and (4), respectively. As shown in these  
 313 equations, initial levels of  $A_T$  and  $[\text{Ca}^{2+}]$  are not necessary to compute calcification rates and  
 314 only final values in the incubations with corals and without corals (controls) were used:

$$315 \quad G_{AT} = -\frac{(A_{T2} - A_{T1}) - (A_{T2c} - A_{T1c})}{2t} \cdot \frac{W_w}{W_c} = -\frac{(A_{T2} - A_{T2c})}{2t} \cdot \frac{W_w}{W_c} \quad (3)$$

$$316 \quad G_{Ca} = -\frac{(Ca_2 - Ca_1) - (Ca_{2c} - Ca_{1c})}{t} \cdot \frac{W_w}{W_c} = -\frac{(Ca_2 - Ca_{2c})}{t} \cdot \frac{W_w}{W_c} \quad (4)$$

<sup>2</sup>seacarb: seawater carbonate chemistry with R. Gattuso, J.-P., J. M. Epitalon, H. Lavigne, J. C. Orr, B. Gentili, M. Hagens, A. Hofmann, A. Proye, K. Soetaert and J. Rae, 2018. <https://cran.r-project.org/package=seacarb>

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317 where  $A_{T1}$  and  $Ca_1$  are  $A_T$  and  $Ca^{2+}$  concentrations at the start of the incubations (in  $\mu\text{mol kg}^{-1}$ ;  
 318 **not used in the computations**),  $A_{T2}/A_{T2c}$  and  $Ca_2/Ca_{2c}$  are  $A_T$  and  $Ca^{2+}$  concentrations at the end  
 319 of the incubations, respectively with and without corals,  $t$  is the incubation duration in h,  $W_w$   
 320 and  $W_c$  are respectively the mass of seawater (average between initial and final weights) and  
 321 the coral skeleton dry weight (g; DW).  $G_{AT}$  and  $G_{Ca}$  are therefore expressed in  $\mu\text{mol CaCO}_3 \text{ g}$   
 322  $\text{DW}^{-1} \text{ h}^{-1}$ . Error propagation was used to estimate errors:

$$323 \quad SE_{G_{AT}} = \sqrt{\frac{SE_{AT_2}^2 + SE_{AT_{2c}}^2}{2t}} \cdot \frac{W_w}{W_c} \quad (5)$$

$$324 \quad SE_{G_{Ca}} = \sqrt{\frac{SE_{Ca_2}^2 + SE_{Ca_{2c}}^2}{t}} \cdot \frac{W_w}{W_c} \quad (6)$$

325 where  $SE_{AT_2}/SE_{AT_{2c}}$  and  $SE_{Ca_2}/SE_{Ca_{2c}}$  correspond to standard errors associated with the  
 326 measurement of three analytical replicates per sample for  $A_T$  and  $Ca^{2+}$  at the end of the  
 327 incubations, respectively with and without corals,  $t$  is the incubation duration in h,  $W_w$  and  $W_c$   
 328 are respectively the mass of seawater (average between initial and final weights) and the coral  
 329 skeleton dry weight (g DW).

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330 Coral calcification rates based on  $^{45}\text{Ca}$  incorporation were estimated using measured  
 331 seawater activity and activity recorded in the skeleton digest. Rates were then normalized per  
 332 g skeleton dry weight using the formula:

$$333 \quad G_{^{45}\text{Ca}} = \frac{\text{Activity}_{\text{sample}} \cdot \frac{\text{Ca}}{\text{Activity}_{\text{seawater}}}}{W_c \cdot t} \quad (7)$$

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334 where  $\text{Activity}_{\text{sample}}$  is the average of counts per minute (CPM) of three 200  $\mu\text{L}$   
 335 aliquots from the dissolved skeleton sample,  $\text{Activity}_{\text{seawater}}$  is the total CPM in the 1 mL  
 336 seawater samples,  $\text{Ca}$  is the  $[\text{Ca}^{2+}]$  measured in the corresponding samples (average between  
 337 initial and final values,  $\mu\text{mol kg}^{-1}$ ) and further converted to  $\mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$  considering a

340 temperature of 25 °C and a salinity of 38,  $W_c$  is the skeleton dry weight (in g) and  $t$  the  
341 incubation duration (h).  $G_{45Ca}$  is therefore expressed in  $\mu\text{mol CaCO}_3 \text{ g DW}^{-1} \text{ h}^{-1}$ . The standard  
342 errors for these calcification rate estimates were propagated based on standard errors  
343 associated with the measurements of triplicate samples for both  $\text{Activity}_{\text{sample}}$  and  $[\text{Ca}^{2+}]$ .

344 The precipitation of calcium carbonate minerals ( $G$ ) during the incubation interval was  
345 also estimated using measured  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values and isotope mass balance calculations [eq. (8) and  
346 (9) below]. The  $\text{CO}_2$  released during phosphoric acid digestion is derived from two sources:  
347 new coral  $\text{CaCO}_3$  and previously accreted skeletal carbonate mineral. The new carbon  
348 acquired in each measured nubbins ( $\delta^{13}\text{C}_N$ ) was assumed to have the same carbon isotope  
349 composition as the labelled seawater  $C_T$  (average between initial and final level,  $\delta^{13}\text{C}-C_T \sim$   
350  $1,400\text{-}1,700\text{‰}$ ). The previously accreted skeletal material was assumed to have a  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  value  
351 equal to the measured value for the background sample ( $\delta^{13}\text{C}_P$ ). The  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  value ( $\delta^{13}\text{C}_M$ ),  
352 representing the mixture of new calcified material and previously accreted carbonate mineral,  
353 is then calculated the following mixing equation:

$$354 \quad \delta^{13}\text{C}_M = f_G \cdot \delta^{13}\text{C}_N + (1 - f_G) \cdot \delta^{13}\text{C}_P \quad (8)$$

355 where  $f_G$  is the fraction of the calcium carbonate mineral precipitated during the experiment,  
356 and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_N$  and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_P$  are the carbon isotope compositions of the newly precipitated and  
357 previously accreted calcium carbonate, respectively. Equation (8) was solved for  $f_G$  to  
358 determine the calcium carbonate precipitated during the incubation using:

$$359 \quad G_{13c} = \frac{f_G}{t \cdot M_{\text{CaCO}_3}} \cdot 1e^6 \quad (9)$$

360 where  $M_{\text{CaCO}_3}$  is the molar mass of calcium carbonate ( $\text{g mol}^{-1}$ ) and  $t$  is the incubation  
361 duration in h.  $G_{13\text{C}}$  are therefore expressed in  $\mu\text{mol CaCO}_3 \text{ g DW}^{-1} \text{ h}^{-1}$ . The standard errors for  
362 these calcification rate estimates were calculated based on standard errors associated with the  
363 triplicate measurements of  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_\text{P}$  and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}_\text{N}$ .

364 Model-II linear regressions (Sokal and Rohlf, 1995) were used to compare net  
365 calcification rates obtained with the different methods. All regressions were performed using  
366 function “lmodel2” of the package lmodel2<sup>3</sup> on the R software.

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<sup>3</sup>lmodel2: Model II Regression, Legendre P. and J. Oksanen, 2018. <https://cran.r-project.org/package=lmodel2>



### 367 3. Results

368 Environmental conditions at the start of the different incubations are shown in Table 2.

369 All values in Table 2 as well as in the text below correspond to the average between replicates  
370 (or incubations)  $\pm$  standard deviation (SD). All incubations performed under ambient  $\text{pH}_T$   
371 ( $\sim 8.05$ ) were conducted under carbonate chemistry favorable to calcification with saturation  
372 states with respect to aragonite ( $\Omega_a$ ) well above 1 (average of  $4.0 \pm 0.1$  over the four  
373 incubations). In contrast, during experiments at low  $\text{pH}_T$  (initial  $\text{pH}_T \sim 7.2$ ), seawater was  
374 corrosive with respect to aragonite ( $\Omega_a \sim 0.75$ ). However, as pH was not regulated during the  
375 incubations (see previous section), it increased, at lowered pH, to an average of  $7.75 \pm 0.03$  ( $n$   
376  $= 5$ ) in dark conditions and to an average of  $7.84 \pm 0.03$  in light conditions ( $n = 5$ ). Evolution  
377 of pH in control beakers (final  $\text{pH}_T$  of 7.78 and 7.48;  $n = 1$  for both in the light and in the  
378 dark, respectively) showed that the observed increase in beakers with corals was due to the  
379 additive effects of biological control (photosynthesis minus respiration and calcification) and  
380 exchanges at the interface in the light, and mostly due to  $\text{CO}_2$  exchange with air during the  
381 much longer incubations performed in the dark. Assuming linear variations with time, the  
382 average conditions of the carbonate chemistry in the lowered pH experiments were slightly  
383 favorable to aragonite production ( $\Omega_a = 1.4 \pm 0.2$  in the dark,  $n = 5$  and  $1.6 \pm 0.05$  in the light,  
384  $n = 5$ ). Under ambient pH conditions (both for  $^{45}\text{Ca}$  and  $^{13}\text{C}$  incubations), pH did not change  
385 during incubations in the light (average final  $\text{pH}_T$  of  $8.05 \pm 0.03$ ,  $n = 12$ , data not shown)  
386 while it decreased in the dark, due to respiration and calcification, to reach an average  $\text{pH}_T$   
387 level of  $7.62 \pm 0.07$ ,  $n = 12$ , data not shown). In control beakers under ambient pH,  $\text{pH}_T$   
388 slightly increased in the light ( $8.09$ ,  $n = 2$ ) and did not change in the dark ( $8.05$ ,  $n = 2$ ).

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389  $^{45}\text{Ca}$  activities in seawater did not change during the incubations, reaching a final  
390 activity of  $16.1 \pm 1.2$  (n = 12) and  $28.5 \pm 0.6$  (n = 10) Bq mL<sup>-1</sup> under ambient and lowered pH  
391 conditions, respectively (including both dark and light incubations, data not shown).

392 Furthermore, for all incubations, these values were similar to those measured in beakers  
393 without corals (control, data not shown). Under ambient pH levels (no incubation at lowered  
394 pH), seawater was enriched in  $^{13}\text{C}$  ( $\delta^{13}\text{C}-C_T$ ) from a background level of  $0.26 \pm 0.05\text{‰}$  (n = 3)  
395 to  $1,740 \pm 4.7\text{‰}$  (n = 2) and  $1,634 \pm 11\text{‰}$  (n = 2) in the light and dark, respectively. During  
396 light condition incubations,  $\delta^{13}\text{C}-C_T$  levels decreased to an average of  $1,636 \pm 10\text{‰}$  (n = 6,  
397 data not shown) while they decreased to an average of  $1,466 \pm 24\text{‰}$  in dark conditions (n = 6,  
398 data not shown). Incubations in control beakers (without corals) showed that the majority of  
399  $\delta^{13}\text{C}-C_T$  loss for both types of incubations (light and dark) was due to  $^{13}\text{C}$  incorporation by  
400 corals with a minor effect of gas exchanges at the interface (data not shown).

401 Both  $A_T$  and  $[\text{Ca}^{2+}]$ , declined in all incubations as a consequence of coral calcification  
402 (Table 3). Changes in  $A_T$  during incubations in control beakers (data not shown) were  
403 comprised between 0.1 and 1.1% of the initial level. Similar results were observed for  $[\text{Ca}^{2+}]$   
404 with a relative change comprised between 0.05 and 1.15% of the initial value. These minimal  
405 changes were corroborated with no measurable changes in seawater weight between the start  
406 and the end of all incubations (data not shown), showing that evaporation, if any, was  
407 minimal using our experimental set-up over the considered incubation times. At ambient pH  
408 levels, decreases in  $A_T$  and  $[\text{Ca}^{2+}]$  (average of  $-380 \pm 97$  and  $-194 \pm 51$   $\mu\text{mol kg}^{-1}$  for both  
409 parameters, respectively, n = 24 including both  $^{45}\text{Ca}$  and  $^{13}\text{C}$  incubations) were roughly  
410 similar under light and dark conditions although coral specimen used for dark incubations  
411 were ca. 166% heavier (skeleton dry weight, see Table 1). Incubations performed under  
412 lowered pH levels showed much lower  $A_T$  and  $[\text{Ca}^{2+}]$  net consumption rates than under

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418 ambient pH levels. Under these pH conditions, an extremely high  $A_T$  consumption rate was  
419 observed in one beaker (dark incubation, see Table 3) while no changes in  $[Ca^{2+}]$  was  
420 observed in a total of three beakers (see Table 3). These estimates (n = 4) have been  
421 considered as outliers, marked with an asterisk in Table 3 and not included in the following  
422 analyses.

423  $^{45}Ca$  activities in coral skeleton reached maximum levels under ambient pH and light  
424 conditions (average of  $87.5 \pm 9.1$  Bq, n = 6). Although seawater was more enriched in  $^{45}Ca$  at  
425 the lower pH levels (see above),  $^{45}Ca$  activity in corals incubated under these conditions were  
426 much lower with lowest values measured in the dark (average of  $19.6 \pm 9.1$  Bq, n = 5).  $\delta^{13}C$   
427 levels measured in coral skeletons (-3.69 to 8.92‰) showed significant enrichment as  
428 compared to background levels ( $-3.97 \pm 0.35$ ‰, n = 9).

429 Calcification rates using the different techniques were higher in the light than in the  
430 dark and much lower rates were estimated at lowered pH (Table A1, Figs. 2, 3 and 4). The  
431 rates measured by alkalinity anomaly ( $G_{AT}$ ) and calcium anomaly ( $G_{Ca}$ ) techniques were  
432 highly correlated (Fig. 2;  $R^2 = 0.98$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , n = 34). No significant difference was observed  
433 between rates measured by the two methods (see Table 4 for the 95% confidence intervals of  
434 the slope and intercept). The  $^{45}Ca$  method provided also very similar rates than the two  
435 previous approaches (Fig. 3;  $G_{Ca}$  vs.  $G_{^{45}Ca}$  not shown) although the slope and the intercept of  
436 the geometric regression between  $G_{AT}$  and  $G_{^{45}Ca}$  were significantly different from 1 and 0,  
437 respectively. Finally, the only approach that did not provide similar rates to the others was the  
438  $^{13}C$  incorporation technique. Calcification rates based on this method were systematically  
439 higher than those measured using the other three techniques (see Table 4), and rates were not  
440 always significantly related (e.g.  $R^2 = 0.33$ ,  $p > 0.05$ , n = 12 for  $G_{AT}$  vs.  $G_{^{13}C}$ , see Fig. 4; other  
441 relationships not shown).

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Deleted: Estimated rates of calcification using the different techniques are presented in supplementary Table 1 and are compared in Figs. 2, 3 and 4 as well as in Table 4. Rates were higher in the light than in the dark and much lower rates were estimated at lowered pH

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#### 452 4. Discussion

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453 Under all experimental conditions (ambient pH vs. low pH, light vs. dark), significant  
454 consumption rates of  $A_T$  and  $Ca^{2+}$  as well as significant incorporation rates of  $^{45}Ca$  and  $^{13}C$   
455 were observed in the zooxanthellate coral *Stylophora pistillata*. For all methods, calcification  
456 rates were lower in dark than in light conditions. Such trends are expected as it has long been  
457 established that calcification rates increase in zooxanthellate corals during periods in which  
458 photosynthesis is occurring (Yonge, 1931), a process known as light-enhanced calcification  
459 (e.g. Gattuso et al., 1999). Even under lowered pH conditions, at pH levels far below those  
460 predicted to occur in the next decades (starting  $pH_T$  of ca. 7.2, average  $pH_T$  during incubations  
461 of ca. 7.5), all corals appeared to produce calcifying structures under both light and dark  
462 conditions. The organisms selected for this experiment were fully coated with tissues with no  
463 exposed calcareous structures which can explain the absence of observable net dissolution  
464 such as reported by Cohen et al. (2017) in a similar study. Since our experimental protocol  
465 was not designed to address the potential impact of decreasing pH levels on calcification rates  
466 of this species (no control of carbonate chemistry during incubations, no acclimation of the  
467 organisms etc.), we will not discuss further the observed decrease of calcification rates  
468 identified by the three techniques used at these pH levels.

469 Under all experimental conditions, rates of calcification calculated using the alkalinity  
470 and the calcium anomaly techniques were highly correlated with a slope of 1 and no  
471 significant intercept. These results are consistent with previously published data on colonies  
472 of *Pocillopora damicornis* (Chisholm and Gattuso, 1991), *Cladocora caespitosa* (Gazeau et  
473 al., 2015) and several other coral species (Murillo et al., 2014). Although the precision  
474 obtained on  $Ca^{2+}$  measurements is among the highest reported to date (Gazeau et al., 2015),

475 the alkalinity anomaly technique appears as the most appropriate to estimate calcification  
476 rates of isolated corals (better precision, stronger signals). As observed by Murillo et al.  
477 (2014), this is not true when an entire community including sediment is investigated. The  
478 occurrence of several processes in the sediment that can impact  $A_T$  prevents the use of this  
479 technique. It is therefore recommended to use the calcium anomaly technique when working  
480 in natural settings, assuming that  $Ca^{2+}$  concentrations are measured with an analytical  
481 technique as precise as the one used in our study ( $CV < 0.05\%$ ). Similarly, although  
482 corrections are possible when applying the alkalinity anomaly technique on organisms that  
483 significantly release nutrients (echinoderms, bivalves etc.), the use of the calcium anomaly  
484 technique is highly recommended instead (Gazeau et al., 2015).

485         Calcification rate estimates based on changes of  $A_T$  or  $Ca^{2+}$  were highly correlated  
486 with estimates based on  $^{45}Ca$  incorporation in corals. These results are not consistent to those  
487 reported by Smith and Roth (in Smith and Kinsey, 1978), Tambutté et al. (1995) and Cohen et  
488 al. (2017). These studies revealed discrepancies between the alkalinity anomaly and the  $^{45}Ca$   
489 incorporation techniques. Smith and Roth found that rates measured with the  $^{45}Ca$  method  
490 were higher than those measured using the alkalinity anomaly technique (significant  $^{45}Ca$   
491 incorporation at  $\Delta A_T = 0$ ). Results from both Tambutté et al. (1995) and Cohen et al. (2017)  
492 suggested the opposite with a decrease in  $A_T$  consumption without any concomitant  $^{45}Ca$   
493 incorporation. A number of reasons may explain these discrepancies. First, the present study  
494 is the first one comparing these techniques in the same incubations, in contrast to the other  
495 ones in which incubations for  $A_T$  anomaly and  $^{45}Ca$  incorporation were performed over two  
496 consecutive days (due to radioactive contamination issues). Second, calcification expressed as  
497 absolute changes in  $A_T$  during incubations, measured during our experiment, were at least one  
498 order of magnitude higher than measured during these studies (44,200 to 745,600 nmol vs.

499 less than 4,000 nmol in previous experiments). Cohen et al. (2017) have shown that such  
500 discrepancies were much higher at very low rates and that the ratio between rates estimated  
501 based on  $^{45}\text{Ca}$  incorporation and  $A_T$  consumption were getting closer to 1 with increasing  
502 calcification rates. Nevertheless, even at the highest levels of calcification computed during  
503 these studies,  $^{45}\text{Ca}$ -based rates were still significantly different from  $\Delta A_T$ -based rates, which is  
504 in contrast with our results.

505 As already mentioned, although calcification rates of the present study were lower at  
506 lowered pH levels, there was still a close to perfect agreement between the different  
507 techniques. While the  $^{45}\text{Ca}$  labelling technique is thought to provide rates of gross  
508 calcification, there is no doubt that both the  $A_T$  and  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  anomaly techniques allow the  
509 estimation of net calcification rates (gross calcification – dissolution). A full agreement of  
510 rates computed from these methods further suggest that no dissolution of previously  
511 precipitated  $\text{CaCO}_3$  structures occurred during our study, even under lowered pH conditions.  
512 The corals used in our experiment were fully covered with tissues which is likely the reason  
513 [why](#) no dissolution was measured.

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514 Furthermore, we must note that the protocol for  $^{45}\text{Ca}$  incorporation considered in our  
515 study differed from the one used in the above-mentioned past studies. A much smaller activity  
516 was used ( $0.025 \text{ kBq mL}^{-1}$ ) compared to Tambutté et al. (1995;  $40 \text{ kBq mL}^{-1}$ ) and Cohen et al.  
517 (2017;  $9 \text{ kBq mL}^{-1}$ ). Moreover, in contrast to Cohen et al. (2017), rates were not corrected for  
518  $^{45}\text{Ca}$  incorporation on the skeleton of dead corals. This choice was motivated by the absence  
519 of detectable radioactivity on bare skeletons exposed for 7 h and treated with the same  
520 protocol than one used in our study (Lanctôt, pers. comm.).

521 To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study comparing calcification rates  
522 measured using the  $^{13}\text{C}$  labelling technique to the more widely used alkalinity and calcium

524 anomaly techniques. It shows that  $^{13}\text{C}$ -derived rates were systematically higher and much  
525 more variable (with large uncertainties) than the ones estimated using the two other  
526 techniques. As already mentioned, several studies have shown that most of the carbon  
527 precipitated in the skeleton comes from coral and its symbiotic zooxanthellae (e.g. Erez,  
528 1978; Furla et al., 2000), leading to an underestimation of calcification rates based on  
529 labelled, radioactive carbon incorporation. As there is no reason for  $^{13}\text{C}$  to behave differently,  
530 our results appear inconsistent with a metabolic source of carbon. As the nubbins were treated  
531 following the same protocol as for  $^{45}\text{Ca}$  incorporation measurements, it is unclear why much  
532 stronger  $^{13}\text{C}$  incorporation was obtained and why variability was so high. Before better  
533 insights on such discrepancies can be developed, we recommend to avoid this technique to  
534 estimate coral calcification rates.

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535 Our study was designed to compare different techniques to estimate calcification rates  
536 and not to define the best experimental approach to study the effects of ocean acidification on  
537 coral species using these different approaches. As such, the chosen experimental protocol  
538 (e.g. incubation times) was not optimal and led, in some cases, to significant changes in the  
539 carbonate chemistry during incubations. However, our results provide some insights that we  
540 further discuss in the following section. Measuring and comparing calcification rates of  
541 organisms under varying pH conditions requires the careful choice of a volume and a time  
542 interval such that the precision of the calcification rate measurement is large enough to  
543 observe significant signals and that the change in carbonate chemistry parameters between the  
544 beginning and end of the incubation is small compared to the range of these parameters in the  
545 different treatments (Langdon et al., 2010). Table 5 illustrates the incubation time necessary  
546 to obtain measurable changes for each method ( $t_{\min}$ ) considering the ratio between incubation  
547 volume and coral size chosen for our study. As the  $^{13}\text{C}$  incorporation method did not provide

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554 reliable rates, this technique was not considered in this analysis. The threshold for significant  
 555 signals was set at 10-fold the analytical precision of the instruments (Langdon et al., 2010) for  
 556  $A_T$  and  $Ca^{2+}$  measurements (1.2 and 2.9  $\mu\text{mol kg}^{-1}$ , respectively) and above the detection limit  
 557 of 15 cpm for  $^{45}\text{Ca}$  activity estimated. Maximum incubation times are more difficult to  
 558 estimate. Langdon et al. (2010) and Riebesell et al. (2010) recommend considering incubation  
 559 times short enough to maintain  $A_T$  and  $C_T$  within an acceptable range ( $\Delta A_T$  and  $\Delta C_T < 10\%$ ).  
 560 As it is more difficult to estimate what changes in pH are acceptable, we have arbitrarily  
 561 considered a maximal change in pH of 0.06, corresponding to the lowest change in global  
 562 surface ocean pH projected for 2100 (IPCC, 2014). Maximal incubation times, as presented in  
 563 Table 5 ( $t_{\text{max}}$ ), correspond then to incubation times that should not be exceeded in order to  
 564 maintain acceptable conditions of the carbonate chemistry ( $\Delta\text{pH}_T < 0.06$  and  $\Delta A_T < 10\%$  and  
 565  $\Delta C_T < 10\%$ ).

566 Under light and ambient pH conditions, even if the ratio between incubation volume  
 567 and nubbin size is much higher than for previous similar studies (e.g. Cohen et al., 2017), all  
 568 methods would allow a precise estimation of calcification rates over very short incubation  
 569 times (~15 min to 1 h, depending on the method) while leading to moderate changes in  
 570 carbonate chemistry. In the dark, and under ambient pH conditions, in the absence of pH  
 571 increase due to photosynthesis, the decrease of pH due to respiration, narrows the possible  
 572 incubation period to 1.3 h. While this is still larger than the incubation time allowing to obtain  
 573 a significant signal with the alkalinity anomaly technique (~20 min), the other two methods  
 574 necessitate longer incubation times to obtain precise estimates (> 1.5 h). At lower pH, both  
 575 under light and dark conditions, and using open systems without a continuous pH regulation  
 576 as in our study, it is obvious that all techniques are not well adapted to this experimental  
 577 protocol. Indeed, as a consequence of lower calcification rates at lower pH and significant

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601 CO<sub>2</sub> degassing, incubation times necessary to obtain significant signals using ~~these techniques~~  
602 are too large to maintain the carbonate parameters within an acceptable range. This is not  
603 insurmountable as a continuous regulation of pH using for instance pure CO<sub>2</sub> bubbling or  
604 incubations performed in a closed container (i.e. without contact to the atmosphere) would  
605 alleviate these problems.

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606 In conclusion, the present study is the first one allowing a direct (i.e. during the same  
607 incubations) comparison of three methods used to estimate coral calcification rates, the  
608 calcium and alkalinity anomaly techniques and the <sup>45</sup>Ca incorporation technique. These  
609 methods provided very consistent calcification rates of the coral *Stylophora pistillata*  
610 independently of the conditions set for the incubations (light vs. dark, ambient vs. low pH).  
611 Among these three methods, the alkalinity anomaly and the <sup>45</sup>Ca incorporation techniques  
612 appear to be the most sensitive allowing the quantification of coral calcification rates without  
613 significant changes in targeted environmental conditions. In contrast, the <sup>13</sup>C incorporation  
614 technique did not provide reliable calcification rates and its use is not recommended until  
615 further investigations clarify the discrepancies. Finally, this study was restricted to a single  
616 coral species and used nubbins fully covered with tissues. Conducting similar comparison  
617 studies with other coral species as well as other major calcifying groups widely studied in the  
618 context of ocean acidification (e.g. coralline algae, molluscs etc...) would be necessary [for a  
619 better understanding of ocean acidification impacts on ecosystem services provided by  
620 calcifying organisms.](#)

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754 2007.

755 Table 1. Experimental details for the series of incubations of the coral *Stylophora pistillata* performed under ambient and low pH, and in  
 756 the light and dark following  $^{45}\text{Ca}$  or  $^{13}\text{C}$  labelling. The ratio  $W_w:W_c$  corresponds to the ratio between seawater weight (g) and skeletal dry  
 757 weight (g). Values represent mean  $\pm$  standard deviation (SD); n is the number of true replicates considered for each experiment. All  
 758 incubations were conducted at  $25 \pm 0.5$  °C.

pH conditions	Ambient (n = 6)				Lowered (n = 5)	
	$^{45}\text{Ca}$		$^{13}\text{C}$		$^{45}\text{Ca}$	
Added label						
Light conditions	Light	Dark	Light	Dark	Light	Dark
Coral size (mm)	$33.2 \pm 1.5$	$44.7 \pm 1.5$	$36.3 \pm 2.2$	$50.2 \pm 1.7$	$26.0 \pm 1.6$	$28.9 \pm 1.9$
Coral Skeleton dry weight (g)	$2.5 \pm 0.5$	$3.8 \pm 0.7$	$2.6 \pm 0.5$	$4.7 \pm 0.5$	$2.1 \pm 0.2$	$2.8 \pm 0.4$
Ratio $W_w:W_c$	$126.4 \pm 25.6$	$81.9 \pm 14.7$	$106.9 \pm 24.5$	$67.8 \pm 7.5$	$146.5 \pm 14.3$	$110.0 \pm 12.4$
Incubation time (h)	8	8	9.12	9.12	5	11



761 Table 2. Environmental conditions at the start of incubations of the coral *Stylophora pistillata*. pH on the total scale (pH<sub>T</sub>), partial pressure  
 762 of CO<sub>2</sub> (pCO<sub>2</sub> in μatm), total alkalinity (A<sub>T</sub> in μmol kg<sup>-1</sup>), dissolved inorganic carbon (C<sub>T</sub> in μmol kg<sup>-1</sup>), saturation states with respect to  
 763 aragonite (Ω<sub>a</sub>) and calcite (Ω<sub>c</sub>) as well as calcium concentrations ([Ca<sup>2+</sup>] in μmol kg<sup>-1</sup>) are presented. Labelled seawater <sup>45</sup>Ca activity  
 764 (Activity<sub>seawater</sub> in Bq mL<sup>-1</sup>) and the isotopic level, after enrichment, of the seawater dissolved inorganic carbon pool (δ<sup>13</sup>C-C<sub>T</sub> in ‰) are  
 765 also shown. Means ± standard deviation (SD) of analytical triplicates (duplicates for δ<sup>13</sup>C-C<sub>T</sub>) are shown when available. All incubations  
 766 were conducted at 25 ± 0.5 °C.

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pH conditions Added label Light conditions	Ambient				Lowered	
	<sup>45</sup> Ca		<sup>13</sup> C		<sup>45</sup> Ca	
	Light	Dark	Light	Dark	Light	Dark
pH <sub>T</sub>	8.05	8.05	8.06	8.05	7.21	7.24
pCO <sub>2</sub>	427.6 ± 8.2	438.8 ± 8.5	425.6 ± 8.2	424.1 ± 8.2	3,727.2 ± 66.8	3,460.1 ± 62.1
A <sub>T</sub>	2,556.0 ± 0.5	2,620.0 ± 0.7	2,615.2 ± 0.6	2,535.9 ± 1.8	2,558.4 ± 0.3	2,552.9 ± 2.4
C <sub>T</sub>	2,206.4 ± 7.4	2,264.1 ± 7.6	2,252.9 ± 7.7	2,188.2 ± 7.6	2,597.1 ± 2.5	2,579.8 ± 3.5
Ω <sub>a</sub>	3.9 ± 0.2	4.0 ± 0.2	4.1 ± 0.2	3.9 ± 0.2	0.7 ± 0.0	0.8 ± 0.0
Ω <sub>c</sub>	5.9 ± 0.3	6.1 ± 0.3	6.2 ± 0.3	5.9 ± 0.3	1.1 ± 0.1	1.2 ± 0.1
[Ca <sup>2+</sup> ]	11,179.6 ± 0.0	11,164.0 ± 2.0	11,096.5 ± 13.4	11,098.5 ± 2.8	11,281.2 ± 5.5	11,277.6 ± 0.3
Activity <sub>seawater</sub>	16.6	15.1	-	-	28.5	30.4
δ <sup>13</sup> C-C <sub>T</sub>	-	-	1,740 ± 4.7	1,634 ± 11	-	-

767

769 Table 3. Changes in total alkalinity ( $A_T$ ) and calcium concentrations ( $[Ca^{2+}]$ ) during the different types of incubations as compared to  
 770 control beakers:  $\Delta A_T = A_{T2} - A_{T2c}$ ,  $\Delta[Ca^{2+}] = Ca_2 - Ca_{2c}$ , both expressed in  $\mu\text{mol kg}^{-1}$ . Standard errors (SE) have been calculated as  
 771  $\sqrt{SE_{A_{T2}}^2 + SE_{A_{T2c}}^2}$  and  $\sqrt{SE_{Ca_2}^2 + SE_{Ca_{2c}}^2}$  for  $A_T$  and  $[Ca^{2+}]$ , respectively, where SE correspond to standard errors associated with the  
 772 measurement of three analytical replicates per sample.  $^{45}\text{Ca}$  activity ( $\text{Activity}_{\text{sample}}$  in Bq) and  $^{13}\text{C}$  incorporation ( $\delta^{13}\text{C}_M$  in ‰) of sampled  
 773 corals are also shown. Values of  $^{45}\text{Ca}$  activity and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  are mean  $\pm$  standard error of the mean (SE) associated with the measurement of  
 774 three aliquots for each coral. Outliers (n = 4; see text for details) are identified with an asterisk.

Experiment	Beaker#	$\Delta A_T$	SE $\Delta A_T$	$\Delta[Ca^{2+}]$	SE $\Delta[Ca^{2+}]$	$\text{Activity}_{\text{sample}}$	SE $\text{Activity}_{\text{sample}}$	$\delta^{13}\text{C}_M$	SE $\delta^{13}\text{C}_M$
Ambient pH - $^{45}\text{Ca}$ - Light	1	-343.6	1.3	-166.0	6.0	78.5	1.9	-	-
	2	-368.9	0.9	-174.1	5.1	86.5	2.9	-	-
	3	-336.9	0.9	-181.3	2.7	78.2	2.3	-	-
	4	-364.3	0.9	-190.6	6.3	85.2	0.8	-	-
	5	-406.7	0.7	-225.6	1.4	95.7	2.6	-	-
	6	-407.5	1.2	-175.9	1.1	100.6	3.5	-	-
Ambient pH - $^{13}\text{C}$ - Light	1	-386.3	1.5	-195.0	3.8	-	-	-1.4	2.0
	2	-422.6	1.3	-206.8	4.2	-	-	1.8	3.2

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	3	-405.4	1.9	-200.9	2.1	-	-	3.4	5.1
	4	-481.6	1.3	-253.2	2.0	-	-	1.1	2.0
	5	-498.4	1.3	-260.5	5.7	-	-	0.8	0.7
	6	-618.1	1.8	-317.7	4.4	-	-	0.1	1.8
Ambient pH - <sup>13</sup> C - Dark	1	-300.5	1.4	-168.9	0.6	-	-	-0.3	1.3
	2	-440.8	1.4	-220.7	2.5	-	-	-3.0	0.5
	3	-223.5	1.9	-135.1	0.8	-	-	-3.1	0.6
	4	-347.3	1.1	-185.3	0.2	-	-	0.5	5.4
	5	-571.7	1.3	-301.7	1.2	-	-	0.6	2.1
	6	-434.5	1.3	-224.6	3.7	-	-	0.7	6.1
Ambient pH - <sup>45</sup> Ca - Dark	1	-290.2	1.6	-157.9	2.2	56.44	1.24	-	-
	2	-274.3	1.2	-130.4	4.4	50.1	0.74	-	-
	3	-300.8	1.3	-168.3	0.9	57.17	1.75	-	-
	4	-327.0	2.7	-139.3	5.3	66.24	0.69	-	-
	5	-342.8	1.2	-172.6	3.0	68.37	3.11	-	-
	6	-228.3	1.8	-113.4	2.5	52.36	2.49	-	-

Lowered pH - <sup>45</sup> Ca - Light	1	-59.3	2.2	-1.6*	6.9	20.2	0.7	-	-
	2	-44.2	2.2	-11.0	2.2	15.3	0.4	-	-
	3	-71.3	2.8	-28.0	5.9	22.5	0.3	-	-
	4	-70.2	2.4	-35.7	7.6	23.4	0.4	-	-
	5	-56.4	2.5	-19.6	7.1	20	0.9	-	-
Lowered pH - <sup>45</sup> Ca - Dark	1	-745.6*	13.2	0.8*	0.3	14.5	0.2	-	-
	2	-52.4	2.1	-1.0*	1.0	22.1	0.3	-	-
	3	-50.5	2.1	-22.5	2.8	22.1	0.1	-	-
	4	-54.3	2.1	-30.3	8.5	23.3	0.4	-	-
	5	-99.4	2.1	-32.8	4.1	16.1	0.1	-	-

778 Table 4. Model-II regression results of the comparison between calcification rates estimated using the different methods considered in this  
 779 study: the alkalinity and calcium anomaly techniques ( $G_{AT}$  and  $G_{Ca}$ , respectively) as well as the  $^{45}Ca$  and  $^{13}C$  incorporation techniques  
 780 ( $G_{45Ca}$  and  $G_{13C}$ , respectively). The number of samples (n), the regression coefficient ( $R^2$ ), the slope and intercept (including their 95%  
 781 confidence intervals, 95% CI), **as well as p value** are shown for each comparison. Few identified outliers (n = 4) have been removed from  
 782 the analyses, see Table 3 and Table A1.

Methods compared	n	$R^2$	Slope		Intercept		p value		
			Value	95% CI	Value	95% CI			
			Low	High	Low	High			
$G_{AT}$ vs. $G_{Ca}$	32	0.98	0.95	0.90	1.00	0.09	0.00	0.18	$4.9 e^{-27}$
$G_{AT}$ vs. $G_{45Ca}$	21	0.99	0.94	0.90	0.98	0.09	0.03	0.15	$3.9 e^{-21}$
$G_{Ca}$ vs. $G_{45Ca}$	20	0.97	1.00	0.91	1.09	-0.06	-0.20	0.07	$5.9 e^{-15}$
$G_{AT}$ vs. $G_{13C}$	12	0.33	0.49	0.05	1.2	0.77	-1.2	2.1	0.0506
$G_{Ca}$ vs. $G_{13C}$	12	0.32	0.46	0.03	1.1	0.94	-0.9	2.2	0.0551

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787 Table 5. Incubation times ( $t_{\min}$ ; h) necessary to obtain significant signals using the three methods: the alkalinity anomaly technique ( $A_T$ ),  
 788 the calcium anomaly technique ( $Ca^{2+}$ ) and the  $^{45}Ca$  incorporation techniques ( $^{45}Ca$ ), see text for calculation procedures.  $t_{\max}$  (h) is the  
 789 maximum incubation time to maintain carbonate chemistry within an acceptable range ( $\Delta pH_T < 0.06$  and  $\Delta C_T < 10\%$  and  $\Delta A_T < 10\%$ ). The  
 790 ratios between incubation volume (in mL) and the size of the nubbins (in cm), considered in our study for the different sets of incubations  
 791 (Ambient pH vs. Low pH; Light vs. Dark), are also shown.  $t_{\min}$  values are noted in bold when higher than  $t_{\max}$ .

	Ratio V:S	$t_{\min}$ (h)			$t_{\max}$ (h)
		$A_T$	$Ca^{2+}$	$^{45}Ca$	
Ambient pH – Light	77-95	0.26	1.00	0.6	4.7
Ambient pH – Dark	59-69	0.33	<b>2.10</b>	<b>1.5</b>	1.3
Lowered pH – Light	109-121	<b>1.25</b>	<b>6.15</b>	<b>1.1</b>	0.5
Lowered pH – Dark	95-109	<b>1.60</b>	<b>11.20</b>	<b>3.4</b>	1.3

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797 Table A1. Calcification rates estimated by the different methods considered in this study: the alkalinity and calcium anomaly techniques  
 798 ( $G_{AT}$  and  $G_{Ca}$ , respectively) as well as the  $^{45}Ca$  and  $^{13}C$  incorporation techniques ( $G_{45Ca}$  and  $G_{13C}$ , respectively). All rates are mean  $\pm$   
 799 standard errors of the mean (SE) and are expressed in  $\mu\text{mol CaCO}_3 \text{ g DW}^{-1} \text{ h}^{-1}$ .

Experiment	Beaker#	$G_{AT}$	SE $G_{AT}$	$G_{Ca}$	SE $G_{Ca}$	$G_{45Ca}$	SE $G_{45Ca}$	$G_{13C}$	SE $G_{13C}$
Ambient pH - $^{45}Ca$ - Light	1	3.28	0.01	3.17	0.11	3.41	0.08	NA	NA
	2	3.21	0.01	3.03	0.09	3.29	0.11	NA	NA
	3	2.69	0.01	2.89	0.04	2.77	0.08	NA	NA
	4	3.38	0.01	3.54	0.12	3.48	0.03	NA	NA
	5	2.41	0.00	2.68	0.02	2.53	0.07	NA	NA
	6	2.43	0.01	2.10	0.01	2.65	0.09	NA	NA
Ambient pH - $^{13}C$ - Light	1	3.26	0.01	3.29	0.06	NA	NA	1.92	1.35

	2	3.30	0.01	3.23	0.07	NA	NA	4.27	2.27
	3	3.09	0.01	3.06	0.03	NA	NA	5.47	3.66
	4	2.98	0.01	3.14	0.02	NA	NA	3.74	1.36
	5	2.80	0.01	2.92	0.06	NA	NA	3.49	0.41
	6	2.73	0.01	2.81	0.04	NA	NA	3.00	1.22
Ambient pH - <sup>13</sup> C - Dark	1	1.33	0.01	1.50	0.01	NA	NA	2.58	0.79
	2	1.63	0.01	1.63	0.02	NA	NA	0.68	0.23
	3	0.85	0.01	1.03	0.01	NA	NA	0.61	0.30
	4	1.24	0.00	1.32	0.00	NA	NA	3.14	3.67
	5	1.96	0.00	2.07	0.01	NA	NA	3.21	1.35
	6	1.42	0.00	1.46	0.02	NA	NA	3.28	4.16



Ambient pH - <sup>45</sup> Ca - Dark	1	1.59	0.01	1.72	0.02	1.54	0.03	NA	NA
	2	1.39	0.01	1.32	0.04	1.26	0.02	NA	NA
	3	1.46	0.01	1.64	0.01	1.43	0.04	NA	NA
	4	1.29	0.01	1.10	0.04	1.33	0.01	NA	NA
	5	1.44	0.01	1.45	0.03	1.44	0.07	NA	NA
	6	0.75	0.01	0.75	0.02	0.89	0.04	NA	NA
Lowered pH - <sup>45</sup> Ca - Light	1	1.00	0.04	0.05*	0.23	0.85	0.03	NA	NA
	2	0.66	0.03	0.33	0.07	0.58	0.02	NA	NA
	3	0.96	0.04	0.75	0.16	0.80	0.01	NA	NA
	4	1.04	0.04	1.06	0.23	0.94	0.02	NA	NA
	5	0.75	0.03	0.52	0.19	0.73	0.03	NA	NA

Lowered pH - <sup>45</sup> Ca - Dark	1	4.05*	0.07	-0.01*	0.00	0.20	0.00	NA	NA
	2	0.22	0.01	0.01*	0.01	0.24	0.00	NA	NA
	3	0.25	0.01	0.22	0.03	0.30	0.00	NA	NA
	4	0.30	0.01	0.34	0.10	0.35	0.01	NA	NA
	5	0.48	0.01	0.32	0.04	0.21	0.00	NA	NA

## 801 Figure captions

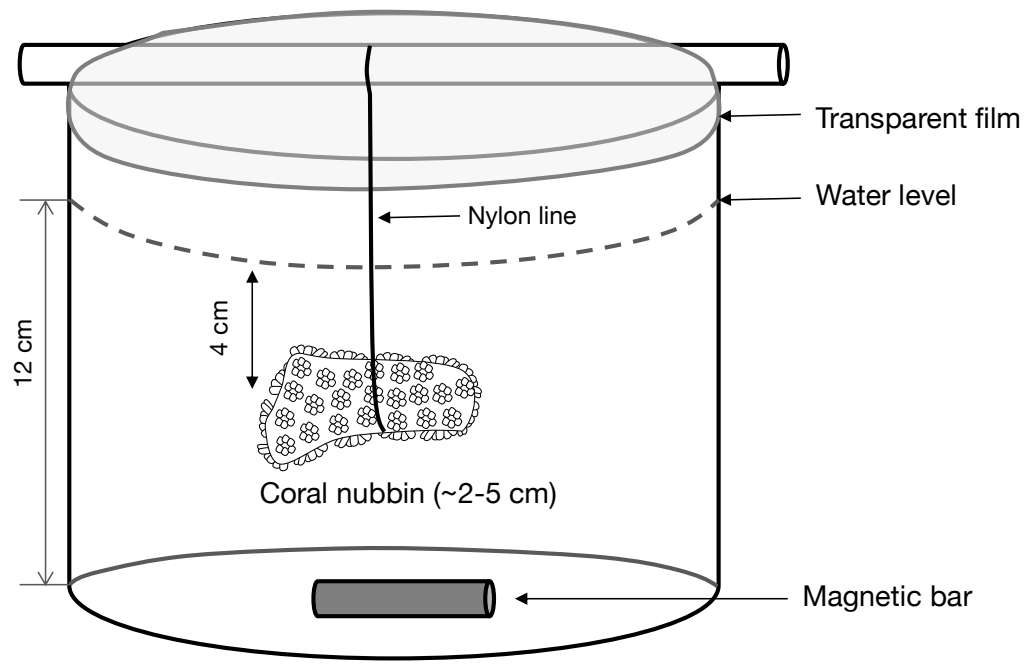
802 Fig. 1. Scheme of the polyethylene container in which a coral nubbin is suspended with a  
803 nylon line and covered with a transparent film.

804 Fig. 2. Calcification rates estimated based on the alkalinity anomaly technique ( $G_{AT}$ ) as a  
805 function of calcification rates estimated based on the calcium anomaly technique ( $G_{Ca}$ ). The  
806 dashed line represents the 1:1 relationship while the full line represents the model-II  
807 regression relationship. Horizontal error bars represent standard errors (SE) associated with  
808 the estimation of  $G_{Ca}$ . Vertical error bars representing SE associated with the estimation of  
809  $G_{AT}$  are too small to be visible. The corresponding dataset can be found in Table A1.

810 Fig. 3. Calcification rates estimated based on the alkalinity anomaly technique ( $G_{AT}$ ) as a  
811 function of calcification rates estimated based on the  $^{45}Ca$  incorporation technique ( $G_{45Ca}$ ).  
812 The dashed line represents the 1:1 relationship while the full line represents the model-II  
813 regression relationship. Horizontal error bars represent standard errors (SE) associated with  
814 the estimation of  $G_{45Ca}$ . Vertical error bars representing SE associated with the estimation of  
815  $G_{AT}$  are too small to be visible. The corresponding dataset can be found in Table A1.

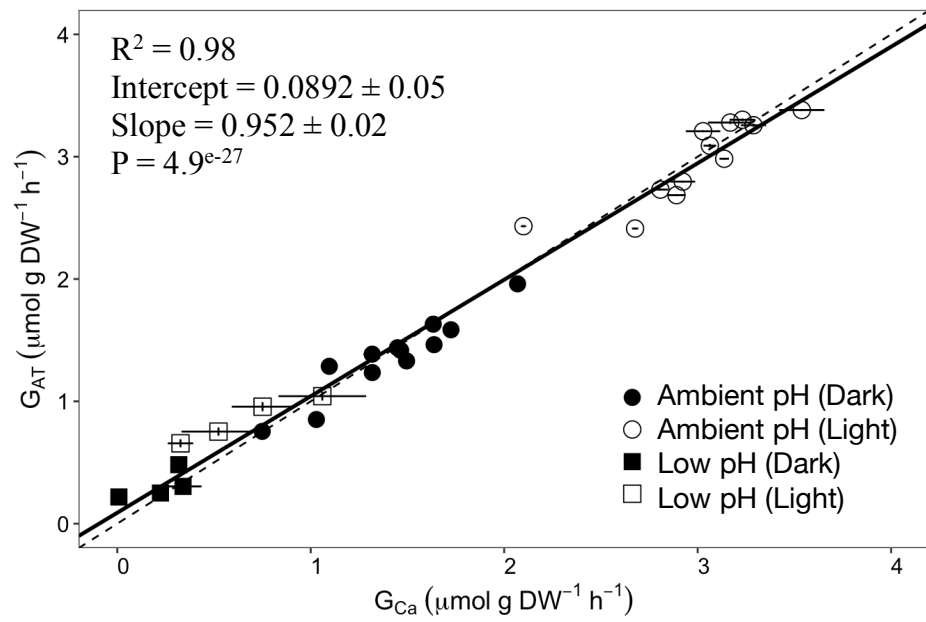
816 Fig. 4. Calcification rates estimated based on the alkalinity anomaly technique ( $G_{AT}$ ) as a  
817 function of calcification rates estimated based on  $^{13}C$  incorporation technique ( $G_{13C}$ ). The  
818 dashed line represents the 1:1 relationship while the full line represents the model-II  
819 regression relationship. Horizontal error bars represent standard errors (SE) associated with  
820 the estimation of  $G_{13C}$ . Vertical error bars representing SE associated with the estimation of  
821  $G_{AT}$  are too small to be visible. The corresponding dataset can be found in Table A1.

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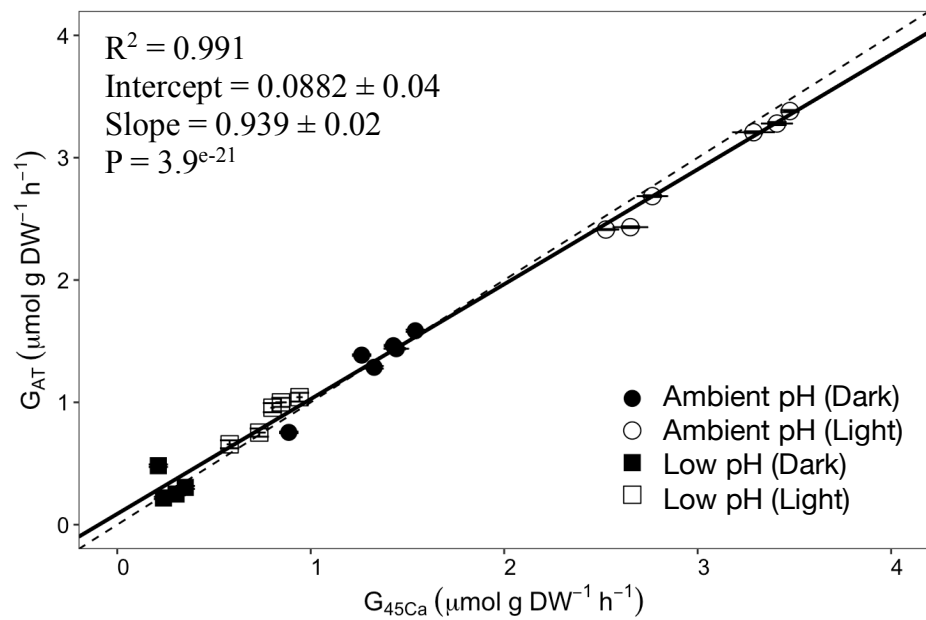
822

823 Fig. 1.



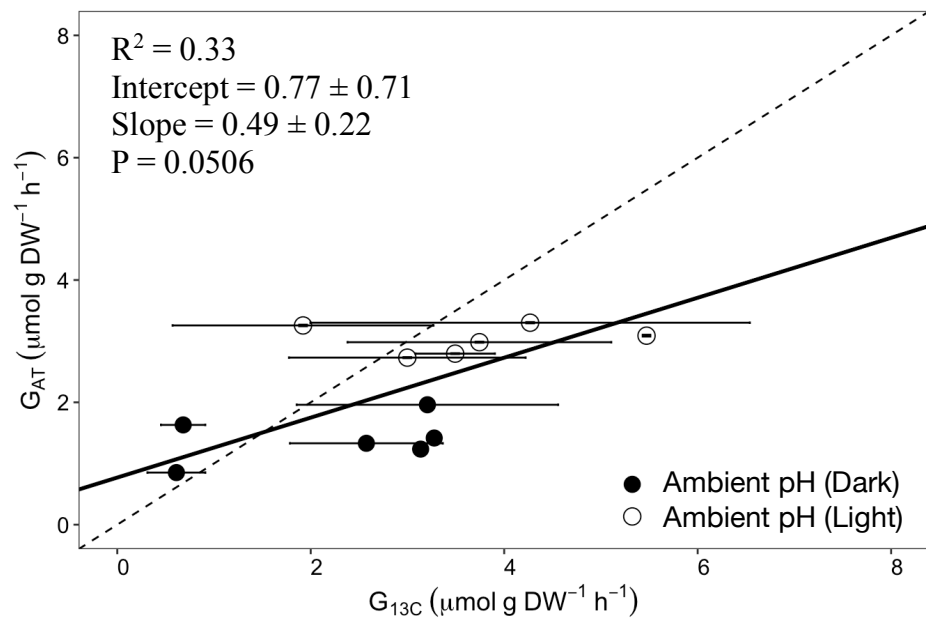
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825 Fig. 2.



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827 Fig. 3.



828

829 Fig. 4.