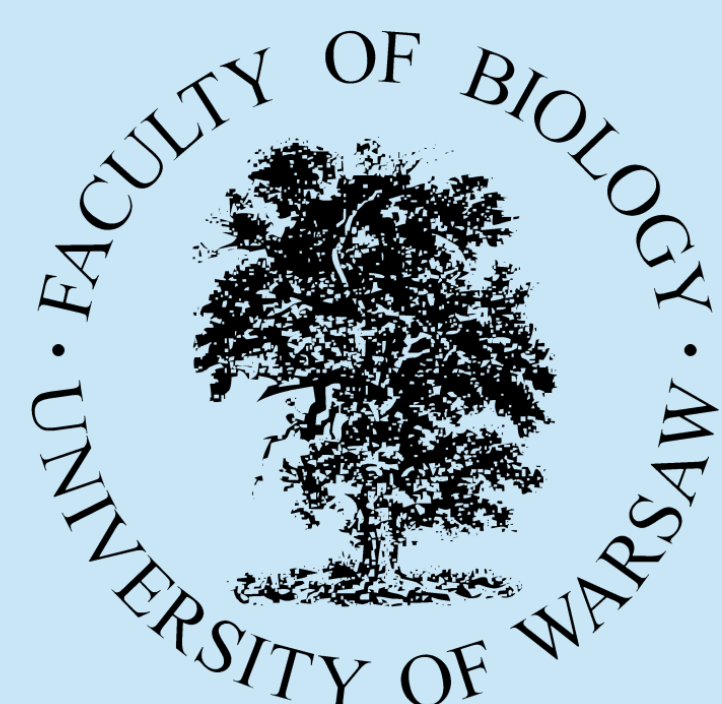


Identification of *Prototheca* species isolated from mastitis cases in Poland



Zofia Bakula¹, Alicja Ratajczyk¹, Henryk Krukowski², Henryka Lassa³, Mariola Bochniarz⁴

Andrzej Lisowski², Władysław Wawron⁴, Jacek Bielecki¹, and Tomasz Jagielski¹

¹Department of Applied Microbiology, Institute of Microbiology, Faculty of Biology, University of Warsaw, I. Miecznikowa 1, 02-096 Warsaw, Poland

²Department of Animal and Environmental Hygiene, University of Life Sciences in Lublin, Akademicka 13, 20-950 Lublin, Poland

³Milk Testing Laboratory, Chodkiewicza 15 Street, 85-065 Bydgoszcz, Poland

⁴Department and Clinic of Animal Reproduction, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Life Sciences, Głęboka 30, 20-612 Lublin, Poland

Introduction and Aim

Algae of the genus *Prototheca* are unicellular, achlorophyllic yeast-like organisms, ubiquitously distributed in the environment [1]. Four of the six currently postulated species, namely *P. zopfii* (genotype 1 and genotype 2), *P. wickerhamii*, *P. blaschkeae*, and *P. cutis* are pathogenic to humans and animals, being the causative agents of protothecosis. The most prevalent form of animal protothecosis is bovine mastitis (mainly caused by *P. zopfii* genotype 2 and *P. blaschkeae*).

The aim of this study was to investigate the distribution of *Prototheca* species/genotypes among strains isolated from protothecal mastitis cases in dairy cows in Poland.

Materials and Methods

One hundred of *Prototheca* sp. strains isolated between 2004 and 2015 from bovine mastitis cases in Poland (originated from 29 different dairy herds and 9 voivodeships) were included in the study. All strains were collected and classified to the genus level using phenotype-based approaches, including micromorphological criteria (FIG. 1). The investigated *Prototheca* strains were cultured aerobically on Sabouraud Dextrose Agar plates for 72 h at 25°C. Genomic DNA was extracted using Bacterial & Yeast Genomic DNA Purification Kit (EURx). Species identification was carried out using genotype-specific PCR assays for *P. zopfii* genotype 1, *P. zopfii* genotype 2, and *P. blaschkeae* (formerly *P. zopfii* genotype 3) as described previously by Roesler et al. [2].

Results

Among the strains tested, 97 showed indistinguishable patterns characteristic for *P. zopfii* genotype 2. Two isolates exhibited the *P. zopfii* genotype 1 specific pattern. Only one isolate presented with a pattern specific for *P. blaschkeae* (formerly *P. zopfii* genotype 3) (FIG. 2).

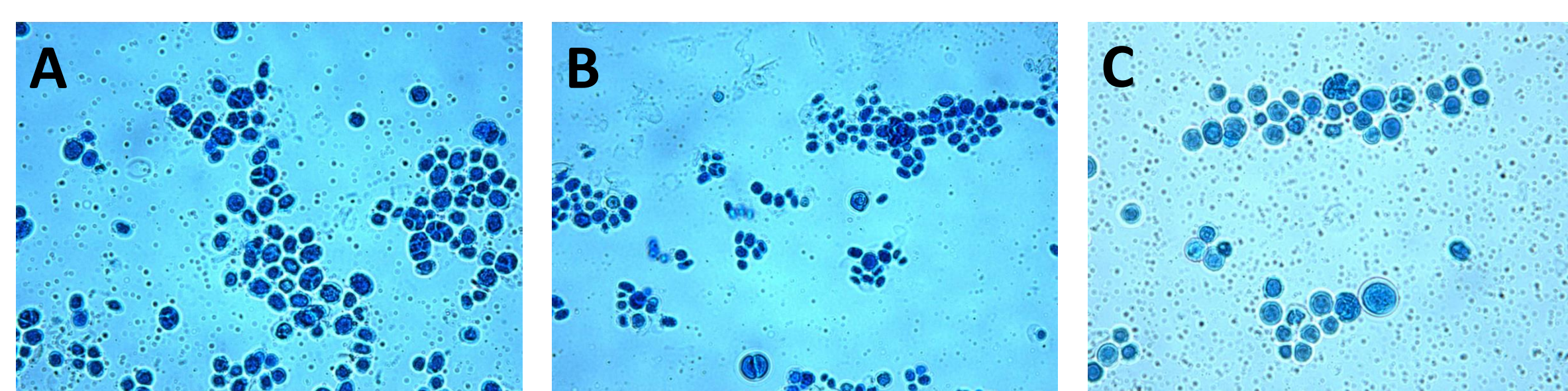


FIG. 1. *P. zopfii* genotype 1 (A), *P. zopfii* genotype 2 (B) and *P. blaschkeae* (C) stained with Lactophenole cotton blue (LCB).

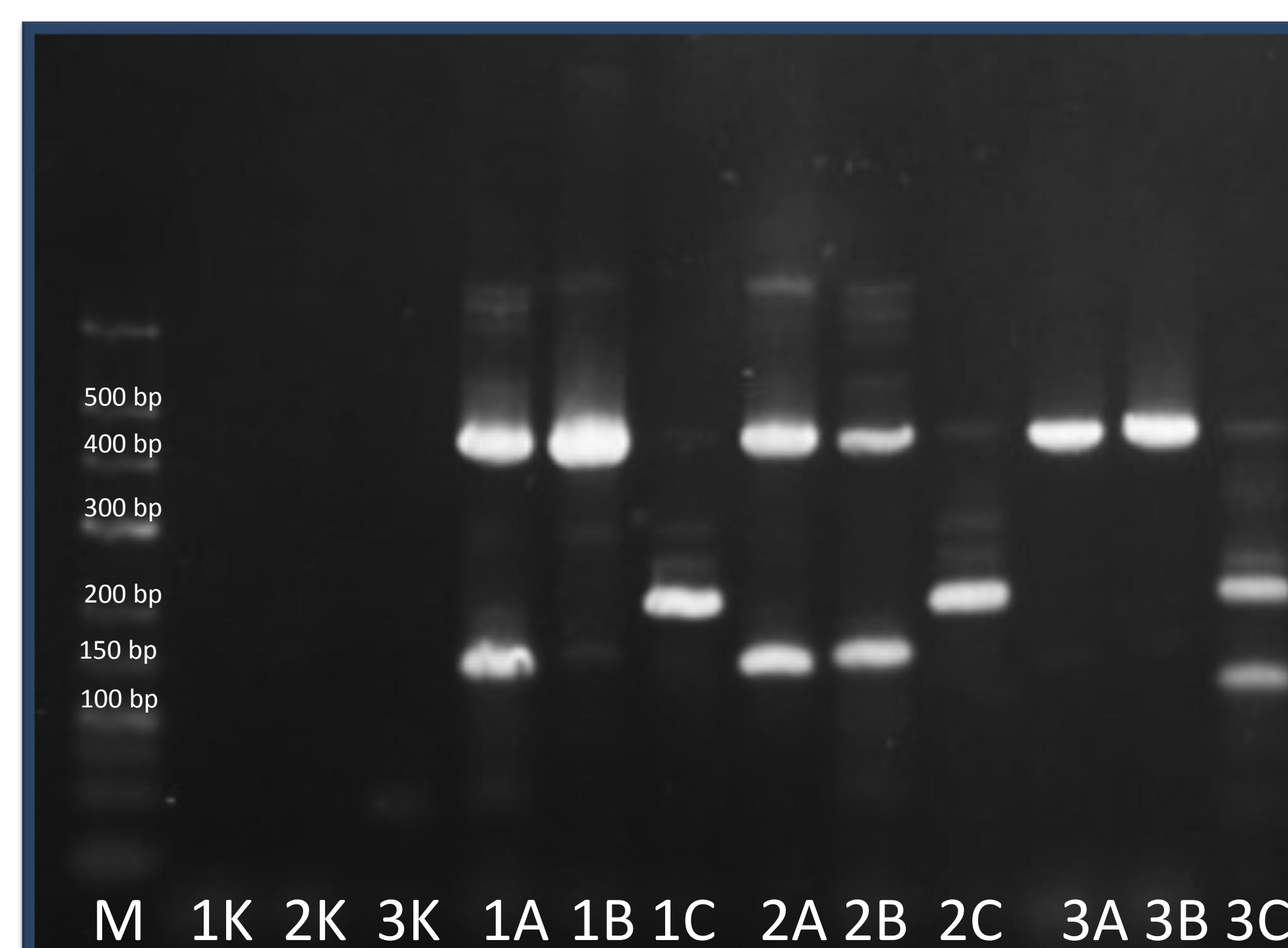


FIG. 2. Differentiation of *Prototheca* strains by PCR. Amplified products were visualised on agarose gel. Lanes A for *P. zopfii* genotype 1 (BO-4), B for *P. zopfii* genotype 2 (POL-1), C for *P. blaschkeae* (POL-20). Lane K – control lanes; M – molecular weight marker.

Conclusions

This study demonstrates that *Prototheca* strains isolated from mastitis cases in dairy cows from Poland are almost exclusively *P. zopfii* genotype 2. The high detection rate of *P. zopfii* genotype 2 in clinical samples support previous observations that protothecal bovine mastitis is mainly caused by this genotype [3-5]. This is probably due to a particular ability of *P. zopfii* genotype 2 for colonization and/or infection of the dairy cows.

References

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