



High levels of primary biogenic organic aerosols in the atmosphere in summer are driven by only a few microbial taxa from the leaves of surrounding plants

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1 **Abstract.** Primary biogenic organic aerosols (PBOA) represent a major fraction of coarse organic matter (OM) in
2 air. Despite their implication in many atmospheric processes and human health problems, we surprisingly know
3 little about PBOA characteristics (i.e., composition, dominant sources, and contribution to airborne-particles). In
4 addition, specific primary sugar compounds (SCs) are generally used as markers of PBOA associated with Bacteria
5 and Fungi but our knowledge of microbial communities associated with atmospheric particulate matter (PM)
6 remains incomplete. This work aimed at providing a comprehensive understanding of the microbial fingerprints
7 associated with SCs in PM₁₀ (particles smaller than 10µm) and their main sources in the surrounding environment
8 (soils and vegetation). An intensive study was conducted on PM₁₀ collected at rural background site located in an
9 agricultural area in France. We combined high-throughput sequencing of Bacteria and Fungi with detailed
10 physicochemical characterization of PM₁₀, soils and plant samples, and monitored meteorology and agricultural
11 activities throughout the sampling period. Results shows that in summer SCs in PM₁₀ are a major contributor of
12 OM in air, representing 0.8 to 13.5% of OM mass. SCs concentrations are clearly determined by the abundance of
13 only a few specific airborne Fungi and Bacteria Taxa. These microbial are significantly enhanced in leaf over soil
14 samples. Interestingly, the overall community structure of Bacteria and Fungi are similar within PM₁₀ and leaf
15 samples and significantly distinct between PM₁₀ and soil samples, indicating that surrounding vegetation are the
16 major source of SC-associated microbial taxa in PM₁₀ in rural area.

17 1. Introduction

18 Airborne particulate matter (PM) is the subject of high scientific and political interests mainly because of its
19 important effects on climate and public health (Boucher et al., 2013; Fröhlich-Nowoisky et al., 2016; Fuzzi et al.,
20 2006). Numerous epidemiological studies have significantly related both acute and chronic exposures to ambient
21 PM with respiratory impairments, heart diseases, asthma, lung cancer, as well as increased risk of mortality (Kelly
22 and Fussell, 2015; Pope and Dockery, 2006). PM can also affect directly or indirectly the climate by absorbing
23 and/or diffusing both the incoming and outgoing solar radiation (Boucher et al., 2013; Fröhlich-Nowoisky et al.,
24 2016). These effects are modulated by highly variable physical characteristics (e.g., size, specific surface,
25 concentrations, etc.) and complex chemical composition of PM (Fröhlich-Nowoisky et al., 2016; Fuzzi et al.,
26 2015). PM consists of a complex mixture of inorganic, trace elements and carbonaceous matter (organic carbon
27 and elemental carbon) with organic matter (OM) being generally the major but poorly characterized constituent of
28 PM (Boucher et al., 2013; Bozzetti et al., 2016). A quantitative understanding of OM sources is critically important
29 to develop efficient guidelines for both air quality control and abatement strategies. So far, considerable efforts
30 have been undertaken to investigate OM associated with anthropogenic and secondary sources, but much less is
31 known about emissions from primary biogenic sources (Bozzetti et al., 2016; China et al., 2018; Yan et al., 2019).

32 Primary biogenic organic aerosols (PBOAs) are a subset of organic PM that are directly emitted by processes
33 involving the biosphere (Boucher et al., 2013; Elbert et al., 2007). PBOAs refer typically to biologically derived
34 materials, notably including living organisms (Bacteria, fungal spores, Protozoa, viruses) and non-living biomass
35 (e.g., microbial fragments) and other types of biological materials like pollen or plant debris (Amato et al., 2017;
36 Elbert et al., 2007; Fröhlich-Nowoisky et al., 2016). PBOAs are gaining increasing attention notably because of
37 their ability to affect human health by causing infectious, toxic, and hypersensitivity diseases. For instance, PBOA
38 components, especially fungal spores and bacterial cells, have recently been shown to cause significant oxidative
39 potential (Samaké et al., 2017). However, to date, the precise role of PBOA components and interplay regarding
40 mechanisms of diseases are remarkably misunderstood (Coz et al., 2010; Hill et al., 2017). Specific PBOA
41 components can also participate in many relevant atmospheric processes like cloud condensation and ice
42 nucleation, thereby directly or indirectly affecting the Earth's hydrological cycle and radiative balance (Boucher
43 et al., 2013; Fröhlich-Nowoisky et al., 2016; Hill et al., 2017). These diverse impacts are effective at a regional
44 scale due to the transport of PBOAs (Dommergue et al., 2019; Yu et al., 2016). Moreover, PBOAs are a major
45 component of OM found in particles less than 10 µm in aerodynamic diameter (PM₁₀) (Bozzetti et al., 2016; Coz
46 et al., 2010; Samaké et al., 2019b). For instance, Bozzetti et al. (2016) have shown that PBOAs equal the
47 contribution of secondary organic aerosols (SOAs) to OM in PM₁₀ collected at a rural background site in
48 Switzerland during both the summer and winter periods. However, current estimates of global terrestrial PBOA
49 emissions are very uncertain and range between 50 and 1000 Tg y⁻¹ (Boucher et al., 2013; Coz et al., 2010; Elbert
50 et al., 2007), underlining the critical gap in the understanding of this significant OM fraction.

51 The recent application of fluorescent technics such as ultraviolet aerodynamic particle sizer, wideband integrated
52 bioaerosol sensor (Bozzetti et al., 2016; Gosselin et al., 2016; Huffman and Santarpia, 2017; Huffman et al., 2019),



53 or scanning electron microscopy (Coz et al., 2010) have provided very insightful information on the abundance of
54 size segregated ambient PBOAs. Atmospheric sources of PBOAs are numerous and include agricultural activities,
55 leaf abrasion, and soil resuspension. (Coz et al., 2010; Medeiros et al., 2006; Pietrogrande et al., 2014). To date,
56 the detailed constituents of PBOAs, their predominant sources and atmospheric emission processes as well as their
57 contributions to total airborne particles remain poorly documented and quantified (Bozzetti et al., 2016; Coz et al.,
58 2010; Elbert et al., 2007). Such information would be important for investigating the properties and atmospheric
59 impacts of PBOAs as well as for a future optimization of source-resolved chemical transport models (CTM), which
60 are still generally unable to accurately simulate important OM fractions (Ciarelli et al., 2016; Heald et al., 2011;
61 Kang et al., 2018).

62 Primary sugar compounds (SC, defined as sugar alcohols and saccharides) are ubiquitous water-soluble
63 compounds found in atmospheric PM (Gosselin et al., 2016; Medeiros et al., 2006; Pietrogrande et al., 2014; Jia
64 et al., 2010b). Specific SC species are extensively viewed as powerful markers for tracking sources and estimating
65 PBOA contributions to OM mass (Bauer et al., 2008; Gosselin et al., 2016; Jia et al., 2010b; Medeiros et al., 2006).
66 For example, glucose is the most common monosaccharide in vascular plants and it has been predominantly used
67 as indicator of plant material (such as pollen or plant debris) from several areas around the world (Jia et al., 2010b;
68 Medeiros et al., 2006; Pietrogrande et al., 2014; Verma et al., 2018). Trehalose (aka mycose) is a common
69 metabolite of various microorganisms, serving as an osmoprotectant accumulating in cells cytosol during harsh
70 conditions (e.g., dehydration and heat) (Bougouffa et al., 2014). It has been proposed as a generic indicator of soil-
71 borne microbiota (Jia et al., 2010b; Medeiros et al., 2006; Pietrogrande et al., 2014; Verma et al., 2018). Similarly,
72 mannitol and arabitol are two very common sugar alcohols (also called polyols) serving as storage and transport
73 solutes in fungi (Gosselin et al., 2016; Medeiros et al., 2006; Verma et al., 2018). Their atmospheric concentrations
74 levels have frequently been used to investigate sources and contributions of PBOAs to OM mass in different
75 environments (urban, rural, coastal, and polar) around the world (Barbaro et al., 2015; Gosselin et al., 2016; Jia
76 et al., 2010b; Verma et al., 2018; Weber et al., 2018).

77 Despite the relatively vast literature using the atmospheric concentration levels of SC as suitable markers of
78 PBOAs associated with Bacteria and Fungi, our understanding of associated airborne microbial communities (i.e.,
79 diversity and community composition) remains poor. This is due in particular to the lack of high-resolution (i.e.,
80 daily) data sets characterizing how well the variability of these microbial communities may be related to that of
81 primary sugar species. Such information is of paramount importance to better understand the dominant
82 atmospheric sources of SC (and then PBOAs) as well as their relevant effective environmental drivers, which are
83 still poorly documented (Bozzetti et al., 2016).

84 Our recent works discussed the size distribution features as well as the spatial and temporal variability in
85 atmospheric particulate SC concentrations in France (Golly et al., 2018; Samaké et al., 2019a, 2019b). As a
86 continuation, in this study, we present the first daily temporal concurrent characterization of ambient SC species
87 concentrations and both bacterial and fungal community compositions for PM₁₀ collected at a rural background
88 site located in an intensive agricultural area. The aim of this study was to use a DNA metabarcoding approach
89 (Taberlet et al., 2018) to investigate PM₁₀-associated microbial communities, which can help answering the
90 following research questions: (i) What are the microbial community structures associated with PM₁₀? (ii) Is the
91 temporal dynamics of SC concentrations related to changes of the airborne microbial community compositions?
92 (iii) What are the predominant sources of SC-associated microbial communities at a continental rural field site?
93 Since soil and vegetation are currently believed to be the dominant sources of airborne microorganisms in most
94 continental areas (Bowers et al., 2011; Jia et al., 2010a; Rathnayake et al., 2016), our study focused on these two
95 potential sources.

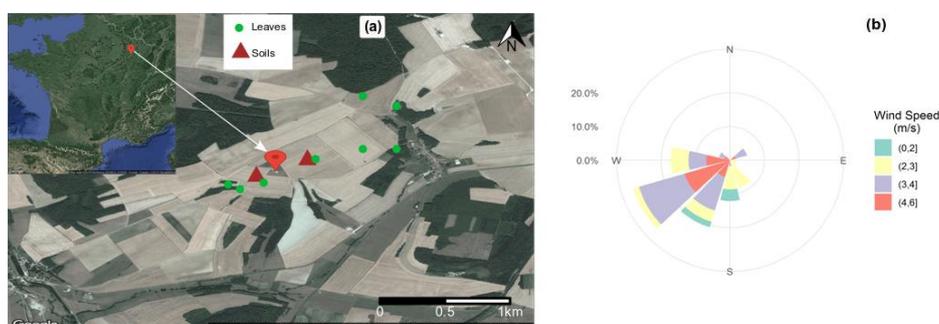
96 2. Material and methods

97 2.1. Site description

98 The Observatoire Pérenne de l'Environnement (OPE) is a continental rural background observatory located at
99 about 230 km east of Paris at an altitude of 392 m (Fig. 1). This French Critical Zone Observatory (CZO) is part
100 of a long term multi-disciplinary project monitoring the state of environmental variables including among other
101 fluxes, abiotic and biotic variables, and their functions and dynamics (<http://ope.andra.fr/index.php?lang=en>, last
102 access: December 10, 2019). It is largely impacted by agricultural activities. It is also characterized by a low



103 population density (less than 22 per km² within an area of 900 km²), with no industrial activities nor surrounding
104 major transport road. The air monitoring site itself lies in a “reference sector” of 240 km², in the middle of a field
105 crop area (tens of kilometers in all directions). This reference sector is composed of vast farmlands interspersed
106 with wooded areas. The area is further defined by a homogeneous soil type, with a predominantly superficial clay-
107 limestone composition. The daily agricultural practices and meteorological data (including wind speed and
108 direction, temperature, rainfall level and relative humidity) within the reference sector are recorded and made
109 available by ANDRA (Agence nationale pour la gestion des déchets radioactifs). The agricultural fields of the area
110 are generally submitted to a 3-year crop-rotation system. The major crops during the campaign period were pea
111 and oilseed rape.
112



113
114 **Figure 1: Overview of the sampling area at the OPE site (France). (A) Location of sampling units and (B) wind**
115 **conditions (speed and direction) during the field sampling campaign period. (© Google)**

116 2.2. Samples collection

117 An intensive field campaign was conducted at this site for the sake of the present study. The aerosol sampling
118 campaign period lasted from June 12th to August 21st, 2017, covering the summer period in France. During this
119 period, ambient PM₁₀ were collected daily (starting at 9 am UTC to 9 am UTC the next day) onto prebaked quartz
120 fiber filters (Tissuquartz PALL QAT-UP 2500, Ø = 150 mm) using high volume samplers (Aerosol Sampler DHA-
121 80, Digitel; 24 h at 30 m³ h⁻¹). All details on the preparation, storage, and handling of these filter samples can be
122 found in Samaké et al. (2019b). A total of 69 samples and six field blanks were collected.

123 Surface soil samples (0-5 cm depth, 15x15 cm area) were simultaneously collected from two fields, within pea
124 and oilseed rape-growing areas, respectively. The fields are located in the immediate vicinity of the PM₁₀ sampler
125 and under the prevailing wind directions (Fig. 1). To represent as closely as possible the local soil microbial
126 communities, we randomly collected five subsamples (about 100g per sampling unit) within each parcel and
127 pooled them. Topsoil sampling took place on a weekly basis along the campaign period. After collection and
128 homogenization, 15g of each subsample were stored in airtight containers (sterile bottles, Schott, GL45, 100ml)
129 containing the same weight of sterile silica gel (around 15g). Such soil desiccation method is a straightforward
130 approach to prevent any microbial growth and change in community over time at room temperature (Taberlet et
131 al., 2018). A total of eight topsoil samples were collected for each parcel.

132 Finally, leaf samples were collected from the major types of vegetables within the reference sector. These include
133 leaf of oilseed rape, pea, oak, maples, beech, and herbs (Fig. 1). A total of eight leaf samples were analyzed. These
134 samples were also stored in airtight containers (sterile bottles, Schott, GL45, 100ml) containing 15g of silica gel.
135 It should be noted that leaf samples were collected only once, four weeks after the end of PM and soil sampling,
136 while the major crops were still on site.

137 2.3. Chemical analyses

138 Daily PM₁₀ samples were analyzed for various chemical species using subsampled fractions of the collection filters
139 and a large array of analytical methods. Detailed information on all the chemical analysis procedures have been
140 reported previously (Golly et al., 2018; Samaké et al., 2019b; Waked et al., 2014). Briefly, SCs (i.e. polyols and
141 saccharides) and water-soluble ions (including Ca²⁺) have been systematically analyzed in all samples, using
142 respectively high-performance liquid chromatography with pulsed amperometric detection (HPLC-PAD) and



143 ionic chromatography (IC, Thermo Fisher ICS 3000). Free-cellulose concentrations were determined using an
144 optimized enzymatic hydrolysis (Samaké et al., 2019a) and the subsequent analysis method of the resultant glucose
145 units with an HPLC-PAD (Golly et al., 2018; Samaké et al., 2019b; Waked et al., 2014). Organic and elemental
146 carbon (OC, EC) have been analyzed using a Sunset thermo-optic instrument and the EUSAAR2 protocol (Cavalli
147 et al., 2010). This analytical method requires high temperature, thereby constraining the choice of quartz as
148 sampling filter material. OM content in PM₁₀ samples were then estimated using a OM-to-OC conversion factor
149 of 1.8: OM = 1.8 × OC (Samaké et al., 2019b, 2019a).

150 **2.4. Biological analyses: DNA extraction in PM₁₀ samples**

151 Aerosol samples typically contain very low DNA concentrations, and the DNA-binding properties of quartz fibers
152 of aerosol collection filters make challenging its extraction with traditional protocols (Dommergue et al., 2019;
153 Jiang et al., 2015; Luhung et al., 2015). In the present study, we were also constrained by the limited available
154 daily collection filter surface for simultaneous chemical and microbiological analyses of the same filters. To
155 circumvent issues of low efficiency during genomic DNA extraction, several technical improvements have been
156 made to optimize the extraction of high-quality DNA from PM₁₀ samples (Dommergue et al., 2019; Jiang et al.,
157 2015; Luhung et al., 2015). These include thermal water bath sonication helping lysis of thick cell walls (e.g.,
158 fungal spores and gram-positive Bacteria), which might not be effectively lysed by means of sole bead beating
159 (Luhung et al., 2015). Some consecutive (2 days at maximum) quartz filter samples with low OM concentrations
160 were also pooled when necessary. Detailed information regarding the resultant composite samples (labeled as A1
161 to A36) are presented in Table S1. Figure S1 presents the average concentration levels of SC species in each
162 sample. The results clearly show that air samples can be categorized from low (background, from A1 to A4 and
163 A21 to A36) to high (peak, from A5 to A20) PM₁₀ SC concentration levels.

164 In terms of DNA extraction, ¼ (about 38.5 cm²) of each filter sample were used. First, filter aliquots were
165 aseptically inserted into individual 50 mL Falcon tubes filed with sterilized saturated phosphate buffer (Na₂HPO₄,
166 NaH₂PO₄, 0.12 M; pH ≈ 8). PM₁₀ were desorbed from the filter samples by gentle shaking for 10 min at 250 rpm.
167 This pretreatment allows the separation of the collected particles from quartz filters thanks to the high competing
168 interaction between saturated phosphate buffer and charged biological materials (Jiang et al., 2015; Taberlet et al.,
169 2018). After gentle vortex mixing, the subsequent resuspension was filtered with a polyethersulphone membrane
170 disc filter (PES, Supor® 47mm 200, 0.2 µm, PALL). We repeated this desorbing step three times to enhance the
171 recovery of biological material from quartz filters. Each collection PES membrane was then shred into small pieces
172 and used for DNA extractions using the DNeasy PowerWater kit (Qiagen, Germantown, MD). The standard
173 protocol of the supplier was followed, with only minor modifications: 30 min of thermal water bath sonication at
174 65°C (EMAG, Emmi-60 HC, Germany; 50% of efficiency), and 5 min of bead beating before and after sonication
175 were added. Finally, DNA was eluted in 50 µl of EB buffer. Such an optimized protocol has been recently shown
176 to produce a 10-fold increase in DNA extraction efficiency (Dommergue et al., 2019; Luhung et al., 2015), thereby
177 allowing high-throughput sequencing of air samples. Note that all the steps mentioned above were performed
178 under laminar flow hoods, and that materials (filter funnels, forceps, and scissors) were sterilized prior to use.

179 **2.4.1. Biological analyses: DNA extraction from soil and leaf samples**

180 The soil samples pretreatment and extracellular DNA extraction were achieved following an optimized protocol
181 proposed elsewhere (Taberlet et al., 2018). Briefly, this protocol involves mixing thoroughly and extracting 15g
182 of soil in 15 ml of sterile saturated phosphate buffer for 15 min. About 2 mL of the resulting extracts were
183 centrifuged for 10 min at 10,000g, and 500 µL of the resulting supernatant were used for DNA extraction using
184 the NucleoSpin Soil Kit (Macherey-Nagel, Düren, Germany) following the manufacturer's original protocol after
185 skipping the cells lysis step. Finally, DNA was eluted with 100 µL of SE buffer.

186 To extract DNA from either endophytic or epiphytic microorganisms, aliquots of leaf samples (about 25–30mg)
187 were extracted with the DNeasy Plant Mini Kit (QIAGEN, Germany) according to the supplier's instructions, with
188 the following minor modifications: after the resuspension of powdered samples in 400 µL of AP1 buffer, the
189 samples were incubated for 45 min at 65°C with RNase A. Finally, DNA was eluted with 100 µL of AE buffer.



190 2.4.2. Biological analyses: PCR amplification and sequencing

191 Bacterial and fungal community compositions were surveyed using respectively the Bact02 (Forward 5'—
192 KGCCAGCMGCCGCGGTAA—3' and Reverse 3'—GGACTACCMGGGTATCTAA—5') and Fung02
193 (Forward 5'—GGAAGTAAAAGTCGTAACAAGG—3' and Reverse 3'—
194 CAAGAGATCCGTTGTTGAAAGTK—5') published primer pairs [see (Taberlet et al., 2018) for details on
195 these primers]. The primer pair Bact02 targets the V4 region of the bacterial 16S rDNA region while the Fung02
196 primer pair targets the nuclear ribosomal internal transcribed spacer region 1 (ITS1). Four independent PCR
197 replicates were carried out for each DNA extract. Eight-nucleotide tags were added to both primer ends to uniquely
198 identify each sample, ensuring that each PCR replicate is labeled by a unique combination of forward and reverse
199 tags. The tag sequence were created with the *oligotag* command within the open-source OBITools software suite
200 (Boyer et al., 2016), so that all pairwise tag combinations were differentiated by at least five different base pairs
201 (Taberlet et al., 2018).

202 DNA amplification was performed in a 20- μ L total volume containing 10 μ L of AmpliTaq Gold 360 Master Mix
203 (Applied Biosystems, Foster City, CA, USA), 0.16 μ L of 20 mg ml⁻¹ bovine serum albumin (BSA; Roche
204 Diagnostics, Basel, Switzerland), 0.2 μ M of each primer, and 2 μ L of diluted DNA extract. DNA extracts from
205 soil and filters were diluted eight times while DNA extracts from leaves were diluted four times. Amplifications
206 were performed using the following thermocycling program: an initial activation of DNA polymerase for 10 min
207 at 95°C; x cycles of 30 s denaturation at 95°C, 30 s annealing at 53°C and 56°C for Bacteria and Fungi,
208 respectively, 90 s elongation at 72°C; and a final extension at 72°C for 7 min. The number of cycles x was
209 determined by qPCR and set at 40 for all markers and DNA extract types, except for the Bact02 amplification of
210 soil and leaf samples (30 cycles), and the Fung02 amplification of filter samples (42 cycles). After amplification,
211 about 10% of amplification products were randomly selected and verified using a QIAxcel Advance device
212 (QIAGEN, Hilden, Germany) equipped with a high-resolution cartridge for separation.

213 After amplification, PCR products from the same marker were pooled in equal volumes and cleaned with the
214 MinElute PCR purification kit (Qiagen, Hilden, Germany) following the manufacturer's instructions. The two
215 pools were sent to Fasteris SA (Geneva, Switzerland; <https://www.fasteris.com/dna/>; last access December 10,
216 2019) for library preparation and MiSeq Illumina 2 \times 250 bp paired-end sequencing. The two sequencing libraries
217 (one per marker) were prepared according to the PCR-free MetaFast protocol (www.fasteris.com/metafast, last
218 access December 10, 2019), which aims at limiting the formation of chimeras.

219 To monitor any potential false positives inherent to tag jumps and contaminations (Schnell et al., 2015), sequencing
220 experiment included both extraction and PCR negatives, as well as unused tag combinations.

221 2.4.3. Bio-informatic analyses of raw reads

222 The Illumina raw sequence reads were processed separately for each library using the OBITools software suite
223 (Boyer et al., 2016), specifically dedicated to metabarcoding data processing. First, the raw paired-ends were
224 assembled using the *illuminapairedend* program, and the sequences with a low alignment score (fastq average
225 quality score < 40) were discarded. The aligned sequences were then assigned to the corresponding PCR replicates
226 with the program *ngsfilter*, by allowing zero and two mismatches on tags and primers, respectively. Strictly
227 identical sequences were dereplicated using the program *obuniq*, and a basic filtration step was performed with
228 the *obigrep* program to select sequences within the expected range length (i.e., longer than 65 or 39 bp for Fungi
229 and Bacteria, respectively, excluding tags and primers), without ambiguous nucleotides, and observed at least 10
230 times in at least one PCR replicate.

231 The remaining unique sequences were grouped and assigned to Molecular Taxonomic Units (MOTUs) with a 97%
232 sequence identity using the *Sumatra* and *Sumaclust* programs (Mercier et al., 2013). The *Sumatra* algorithm
233 computes pairwise similarities among sequences based on the length of the Longest Common Subsequence and
234 the *Sumaclust* program uses these similarities to cluster the sequences (Mercier et al., 2013). Abundance of
235 sequences belonging to the same cluster were summed up and the cluster center was defined as the MOTU
236 representative of the cluster (Mercier et al., 2013).

237 The taxonomic classification of each MOTU was performed using the *ecotag* program (Boyer et al., 2016), which
238 uses full-length metabarcodes as references. The *ecoPCR* program (Ficetola et al., 2010) was used to build the
239 metabarcoding reference database for each marker. Briefly, *ecoPCR* performs an *in silico* amplification within the



240 EMBL public database (release 133) using the Fung02 and Bact02 primer pairs and allowing a maximum of three
241 mismatches per primer. The resultant reference database was further refined by keeping only sequence records
242 assigned at the species, genus and family levels.

243 After taxonomic assignment datasets were acquired, further processing with the open source R software (R studio
244 interface, version 3.4.1) was performed to filter out chimeras, potential contaminants, chimeras and failed PCR
245 replicates. More specifically, MOTUs that were highly dissimilar to any reference sequence (sequence identity <
246 0.95) were considered as chimeras and discarded. Secondly, MOTUs whose abundance was higher in extraction
247 or PCR negatives were also excluded. Finally, PCR replicates inconstantly distant from the barycenter of the four
248 PCR replicates corresponding to the same sample were considered as dysfunctional and discarded. The remaining
249 PCR replicates were summed up per sample.

250 2.5. Data analysis

251 Unless specified otherwise, all exploratory statistical analyses were achieved with R. Rarefaction and extrapolation
252 curves were obtained with the *iNext* 2.0-12 package (Hsieh et al., 2016), to investigate the gain in species richness
253 as we increased the sequencing depth for each sample. Alpha diversity estimators including Shannon and Chao1
254 were calculated with the *phyloseq* 1.22-3 package (McMurdie and Holmes, 2013), on data rarefied to the same
255 sequencing depth per sample type (see Table S2 for details on the rarefaction depths). Non-metric
256 multidimensional scaling (NMDS) ordination analysis was performed to decipher the temporal patterns in airborne
257 microbial community structures (phylum or class taxonomic group) in air samples. These analyses were achieved
258 with the *metaMDS* function within the *vegan* package (Oksanen et al., 2019) with the number random starts set to
259 500. The NMDS ordinations were obtained using pairwise dissimilarity matrices based on Bray Curtis index. The
260 *envfit* function implemented in *vegan* was used to assess the airborne microbial communities that could explain
261 the temporal dynamics of ambient SC species concentrations. Pairwise analysis of similarity (ANOSIM) was
262 performed to assess similarity between groups of PM₁₀ aerosols sample. This was achieved using the *anosim*
263 function of *vegan* (Oksanen et al., 2019), with the number of permutations sets to 999. Spearman's rank correlation
264 analysis was used to investigate further the relationship between airborne microbial communities and SC species.

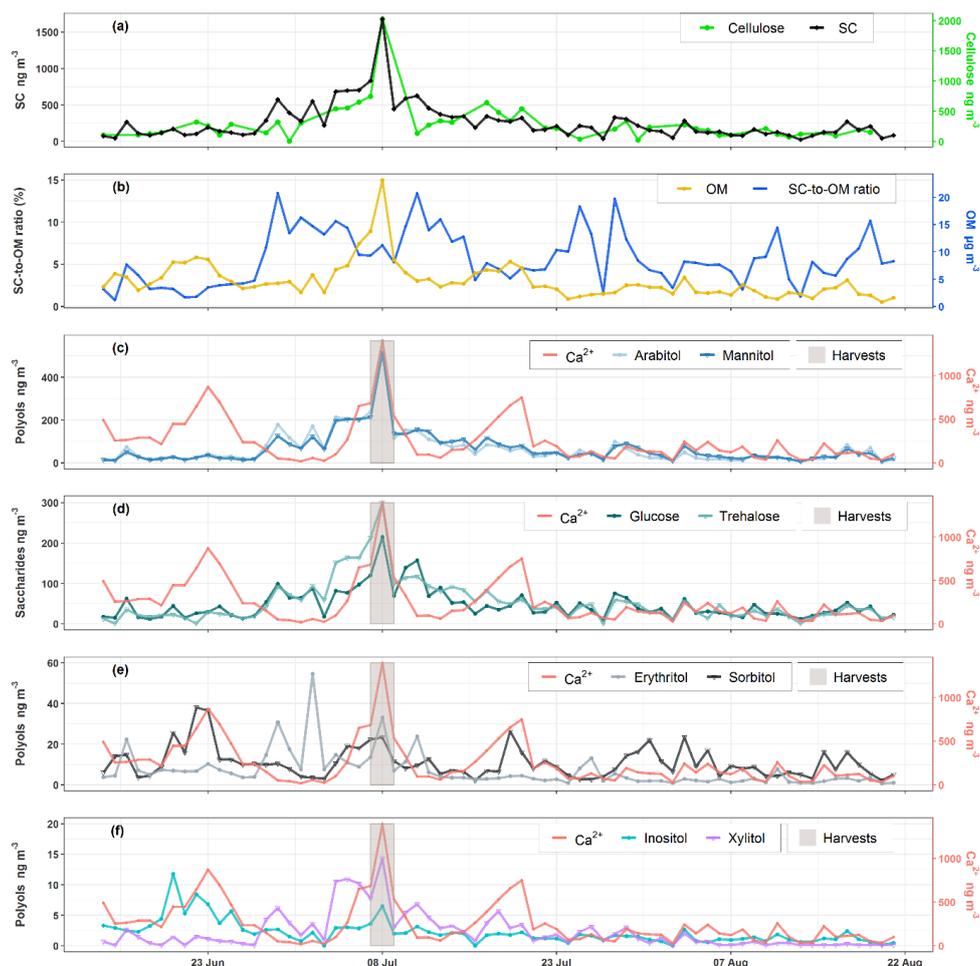
265 To gain further insight into the dominant source of SC-associated microbial communities, NMDS analysis based
266 on Horn distance was performed to compare the microbial community composition similarities between PM₁₀
267 aerosols, soils, and leaf samples.

268 3. Results

269 3.1. Primary sugar compounds (SC), and relative contributions to OM mass

270 Temporal dynamics of daily PM₁₀ carbonaceous components (e.g., primary sugar compounds, cellulose and OM)
271 are presented in Fig. 2. Nine SCs including seven polyols and two saccharide compounds have been quantified in
272 all ambient PM₁₀ collected at the study site. Ambient SC concentration levels peaked on August 8th, 2017, in
273 excellent agreement with the daily harvest activities around the study site (Fig. 2A). The average concentrations
274 of total SCs during the campaign are 259.8 ± 253.8 ng m⁻³, with a range of 26.6 to 1 679.5 ng m⁻³, contributing on
275 average to $5.7 \pm 3.2\%$ of total OM mass in PM₁₀, with a range of 0.8–13.5% (Fig. 2B). The total measured polyols
276 present average concentrations of 26.3 ± 54.4 ng m⁻³. Among all the measured polyols, arabitol (67.4 ± 83.1 ng
277 m⁻³) and mannitol (68.1 ± 75.3 ng m⁻³) are the predominant species, followed by lesser amounts of sorbitol (10.9
278 ± 7.6 ng m⁻³), erythritol (7.0 ± 8.8 ng m⁻³), inositol (2.3 ± 2.0 ng m⁻³), and xylitol (2.3 ± 3.0 ng m⁻³). Glycerol was
279 also observed in our samples, but with concentrations frequently below the quantification limit. The average
280 concentrations of saccharide compounds are 51.2 ± 45.0 ng m⁻³. Threulose (55.8 ± 51.9 ng m⁻³) is the most
281 abundant saccharide species, followed by glucose (46.9 ± 37.1 ng m⁻³). The average concentrations of calcium are
282 251.1 ± 248.4 ng m⁻³.

283 A Spearman's rank correlation analysis based on the daily dynamics was used to examine the relationships between
284 SC species. As shown in Table 1, sorbitol and inositol are well linearly correlated ($R = 0.57$, $p < 0.001$). Herein,
285 sorbitol ($R = 0.59$, $p < 0.001$) and inositol ($R = 0.64$, $p < 0.001$) are significantly correlated to Ca²⁺. It can also be
286 noted that all other SC species are highly correlated with each other ($p < 0.001$) and that they are weakly correlated
287 to the temporal dynamics of sorbitol and inositol (Table 1).



288
 289 **Figure 2: Ambient concentrations of carbonaceous components in PM₁₀. (A; C to F) Daily variations of SCs and calcium**
 290 **concentrations along with daily agricultural activities around the site. (B) Contribution of SCs to organic matter mass.**
 291 **Results for nine-week daily measurements indicate that SCs together represent a large fraction of OM, contributing**
 292 **between 0.8 to 13.5% to OM mass in summer. Glycerol is not presented because its concentration was generally below**
 293 **the quantification limit.**

294

295 **Table 1 : Relationships between SCs and calcium in PM₁₀ from the study site. Spearman's rank correlation analyses**
 296 **are based on the daily dynamics of chemicals species (n= 69).**

	Arabitol	Mannitol	Glucose	Trehalose	Erythritol	Xylitol	Sorbitol	Inositol	Ca ²⁺
Arabitol	1.00								
Mannitol	0.94***	1.00							
Glucose	0.90***	0.90***	1.00						
Trehalose	0.93***	0.96***	0.87***	1.00					
Erythritol	0.69***	0.51***	0.57***	0.56***	1.00				
Xylitol	0.84***	0.84***	0.80***	0.79***	0.65***	1.00			
Sorbitol	0.22	0.26*	0.35**	0.15	0.21	0.24*	1.00		
Inositol	0.39**	0.24	0.34**	0.25*	0.71***	0.39**	0.57***	1.00	
Ca ²⁺	0.12	0.11	0.11	0.09	0.30*	0.27*	0.59***	0.64***	1.00
Note	* p < 0.1 ** p < 0.01 *** p < 0.001								

297



298 3.2. Microbial characterization of samples, richness and diversity

299 The structures of bacterial and fungal communities were generated for the 62 collected samples, consisting of 36
300 aerosol, 18 surface soil, and 8 leaf samples. After paired-end assembly of sequence reads, sample assignment,
301 filtering based on sequence length and quality and discarding of rare sequences, we are left with 2,575,857 and
302 1,647,000 reads respectively for Fungi and Bacteria, corresponding respectively to 4,762 and 5,852 unique
303 sequences, respectively. After the clustering of high-quality sequences, potential contaminants and chimeras, the
304 final data sets (all samples pooled) consist respectively of 597 and 944 MOTUs for Fungi and Bacteria, with
305 1,959,549 and 901,539 reads. The average numbers of reads (average \pm SE) per sample are $31,607 \pm 2,072$ and
306 $14,563 \pm 1,221$, respectively. The rarefaction curves of MOTU diversity showed common logarithmic shapes
307 approaching a plateau in all cases (Fig. S2). This indicates an overall sufficient sequencing depth to capture the
308 diversity of sequences occurring in the different types of samples. To compare the microbial community diversity
309 and species richness, data normalization was performed out by selecting randomly from each sample 4,287 fungal
310 sequences and 2,865 bacterial sequence reads. The Chao1-values of Fungi are higher for aerosol samples than for
311 soil and leaf samples ($p < 0.05$), indicating higher richness in airborne PM₁₀ (Fig. S3A). In contrast, PM₁₀ and soil
312 samples showed higher values of Shannon index ($p < 0.05$), indicating a higher fungal diversity in these
313 ecosystems. The soil harbors higher bacterial richness and diversity than PM₁₀ ($p < 0.05$), which in turns harbors
314 greater richness and diversity compared to leaf samples ($p < 0.05$) (Fig. S3B).

315 3.3. Taxonomic composition of airborne PM₁₀

316 3.3.1. Fungal communities

317 Statistical assignment of airborne PM₁₀ fungal MOTUs at different taxonomic levels reveals 3 phyla, 17 classes,
318 58 orders and 160 families (Fig. 3). Interestingly, fungal MOTUs are dominated by two common phyla:
319 Ascomycota (accounting for an average of $76 \pm 0.6\%$ (average \pm SD)) of fungal sequences across all air samples,
320 followed by Basidiomycota ($23.9 \pm 0.5\%$). The remaining sequences correspond to Mucoromycota ($< 0.01\%$) and
321 to unclassified sequences (approximately 0.03%). As evidenced in Fig. 3, the predominant ($> 1\%$) fungal classes
322 are Dothideomycetes (70.0%), followed by Agaricomycetes (16.0%), Tremellomycetes (5.0%), Sordariomycetes
323 (2.6%), Microbotryomycetes (2.2%), Leotiomycetes (1.8%) and Eurotiomycetes (1.4%). The predominant orders
324 include Pleosporales (35.5 %) and Capnodiales (34.4 %), which belong to Ascomycota. Likewise, the dominant
325 orders in Basidiomycota are Polyporales (7.5%), followed by Russulales (4.2%), Tremellales (2.8%),
326 Hymenochaetales (2.6%) and Sporidiobolales (2.2%). At the genus level, about 327 taxa are characterized across
327 all air samples, among which *Cladosporium* (32.9%), *Alternaria* (15.0%), *Epicoccum* (15.0%), *Peniophora*
328 (2.7%), *Sporobolomyces* (2.2 %), *Phlebia* (2.0%) and *Pyrenophora* (1.9 %) are the most abundant communities.

329 3.3.2. Bacterial communities

330 For bacterial communities, the Bact02 marker allowed identifying 17 phyla, 43 classes, 91 orders and 182 families
331 (Fig. 3). Predominant phyla include Proteobacteria ($55.3 \pm 0.2\%$), followed by Bacteroidetes ($22.1 \pm 0.1\%$),
332 Actinobacteria ($14.2 \pm 0.1\%$), Firmicutes ($6 \pm 0.2\%$), with less than 1.8 % of the total bacterial sequence reads being
333 unclassified. At the class level, the predominant Bacteria are Alphaproteobacteria (29.4%), Actinobacteria
334 (13.8%), Gammaproteobacteria (12.1%), Betaproteobacteria (11.4%), Cytophagia (8.3%), Flavobacteriia (6.3%),
335 Sphingobacteriia (5.9%), Bacilli (3.5%) and Clostridia (2.2%). As many as 392 genera were detected in all aerosol
336 samples, although many sequences (22.8%) could not be taxonomically assigned at the genus level. The most
337 abundant ($> 2\%$) genera are *Sphingomonas* (20.0%), followed by *Massilia* (8.4%), *Hymenobacter* (5.5%),
338 *Pseudomonas* (5.1%), *Pedobacter* (3.3%), *Flavobacterium* (2.8%), *Chryseobacterium* (2.8%), *Frigoribacterium*
339 (2.5%), and *Methylobacterium* (1.9%).

340



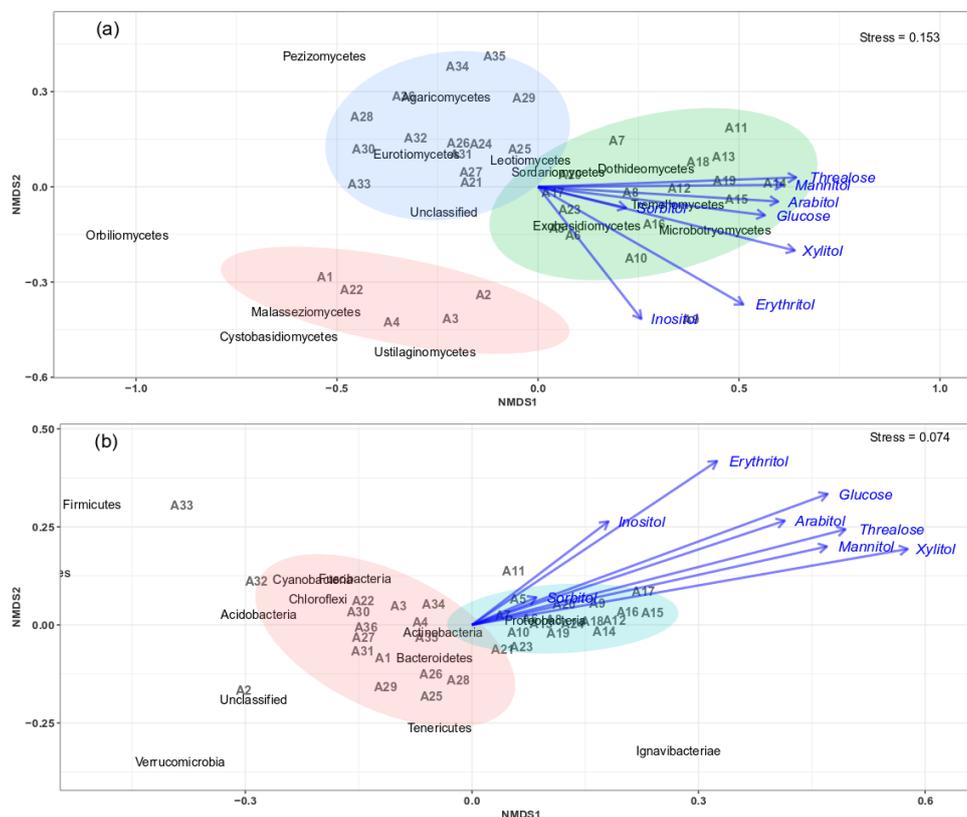
347 3.4. Relationship between airborne microbial community abundances and PM₁₀ SC species

348 The NMDS (non-metric multidimensional scaling) ordination exploring the temporal dynamics of microbial
349 community beta diversity among all PM₁₀ aerosol samples revealed significant temporal shifts of community
350 structure for both Fungi and Bacteria (Fig. 4).

351 An NMDS (two dimensions, stress = 0.15) based on fungal class-level compositions (Fig. 4A) results in three
352 distinct clusters of PM₁₀ samples. With one exception (A23), all air samples with higher SC concentration levels
353 (A5 to A20, see Table S2 and Fig. S1) are clustered together and are distinct from those with background levels
354 of atmospheric SC concentrations. This pattern is further confirmed with the analysis of similarity, which shows
355 a significant separation of clusters of samples (ANOSIM; $R = 0.31$, $p < 0.01$). As evidenced in Fig. 4A, this
356 difference is mainly explained by the NMDS1 axis, which results from the predominance of only a few class-level
357 Fungi in PM₁₀ samples, including *Dothideomycetes*, *Tremellomycetes*, *Microbotryomycetes* and
358 *Exobasidiomycetes*. Vector fitting of chemical time series data to the NMDS ordination plot indicates that the latter
359 four fungal community assemblage best correlates with individual SC species. Mannitol ($R^2 = 0.37$, $p < 0.01$),
360 arabitol ($R^2 = 0.36$, $p < 0.01$), trehalose ($R^2 = 0.41$, $p < 0.01$), glucose ($R^2 = 0.33$, $p < 0.01$), xylitol ($R^2 = 0.45$, p
361 < 0.01), erythritol ($R^2 = 0.40$, $p < 0.01$) and inositol ($R^2 = 0.24$, $p = 0.01$) are significantly positively correlated to
362 the fungal assemblage ordination solution.

363 For bacterial phylum-level compositions (Fig. 4B), an NMDS ordination (two dimensions, stress = 0.07) analysis
364 differentiates the PM₁₀ samples into two distinct clusters according to their SC concentrations levels. All air
365 samples with higher SC concentration levels except two (A23 and A24) are clustered separately from those with
366 ambient background concentration levels. ANOSIM analysis ($R = 0.69$, $p < 0.01$) further confirms the significant
367 difference between the two clusters of samples. Proteobacteria constitutes the most dominant bacterial phylum
368 during the SC peak over the sampling period. Interestingly, changes in individual SC profiles are significantly
369 correlated with bacterial community temporal shifts (Fig. 4B). Mannitol ($R^2 = 0.25$, $p < 0.01$), arabitol ($R^2 = 0.24$,
370 $p < 0.01$), trehalose ($R^2 = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$), glucose ($R^2 = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$), xylitol ($R^2 = 0.38$, $p < 0.01$) and erythritol
371 ($R^2 = 0.27$, $p < 0.01$) are mainly positively correlated to the bacterial community dissimilarity.

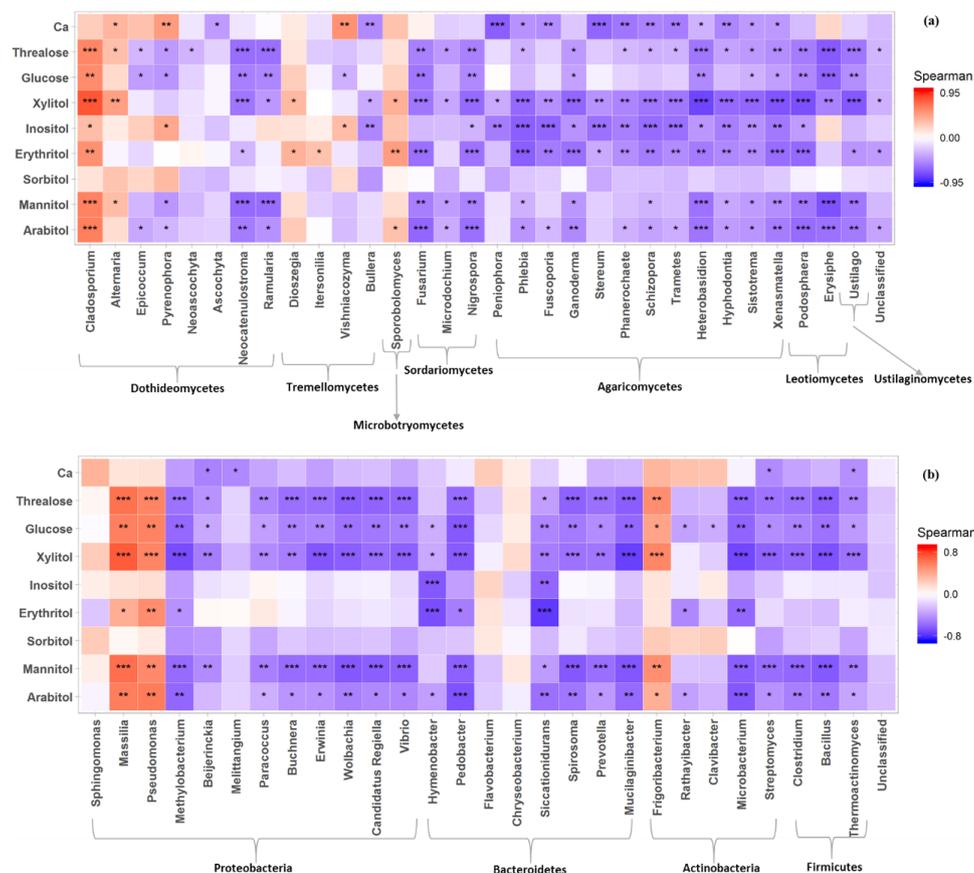
372 Given the distinct clustering patterns of airborne PM₁₀ microbial beta diversity structures according to SC
373 concentration levels, a Pearson's rank correlation analysis has been performed to further examine the relationships
374 between individual SC profiles and airborne microbial community abundance at phylum or class levels. This
375 analysis reveals that for class-level Fungi, the abundances of *Dothideomycetes*, *Tremellomycetes* and
376 *Microbotryomycetes* are highly positively correlated ($p < 0.05$) to the temporal evolutions of the individual SC
377 species concentration levels (Fig. S5A). Likewise, ambient SC species concentration levels are significantly
378 correlated ($p < 0.05$) to the Proteobacteria phylum (Fig. S5B). To gain further insight into the airborne microbial
379 fingerprints associated with ambient SC species, correlation analyses were also performed at a finer taxonomic
380 level. These analyses show that the temporal dynamics of SC species primarily correlates best ($p < 0.05$) with the
381 *Cladosporium*, *Alternaria*, *Sporobolomyces* and *Dioszegia* fungal genera (Fig. 5A). Similarly, the time series of
382 SC species are primarily positively correlated ($p < 0.05$) with *Massilia*, *Pseudomonas*, *Frigoribacterium*, and to a
383 lesser degree (non-significant) with the *Sphingomonas* bacterial genus (Fig. 5B).



384
 385 **Figure 4: Main airborne microbial communities associated with atmospheric concentrations of SC species. NMDS**
 386 **ordination plots are used to show relationship among time series of aerosol samples. The stress values indicate an**
 387 **adequate 2-dimensional picture of sample distribution. Ellipses represent 95% confidence intervals for the cluster**
 388 **centroid. NMDS analyses are performed directly on taxonomically assigned quality-filtered sequences tables at class**
 389 **and phylum level respectively for Fungi (A) and Bacteria (B). Ambient primary sugar concentration levels in PM₁₀**
 390 **appear to be highly influenced by the airborne microbial community structure and abundance. Similar results are**
 391 **obtained with taxonomically assigned MOTU tables, highlighting the robustness of our methodology.**

392

393



394

395 **Figure 5: Heatmap of Spearman's rank correlation between SCs and abundance of airborne communities at the study**
 396 **site. (A) Fungal and (B) bacterial genus, respectively. Only genera with relative abundance ≥ 1 are shown.**

397

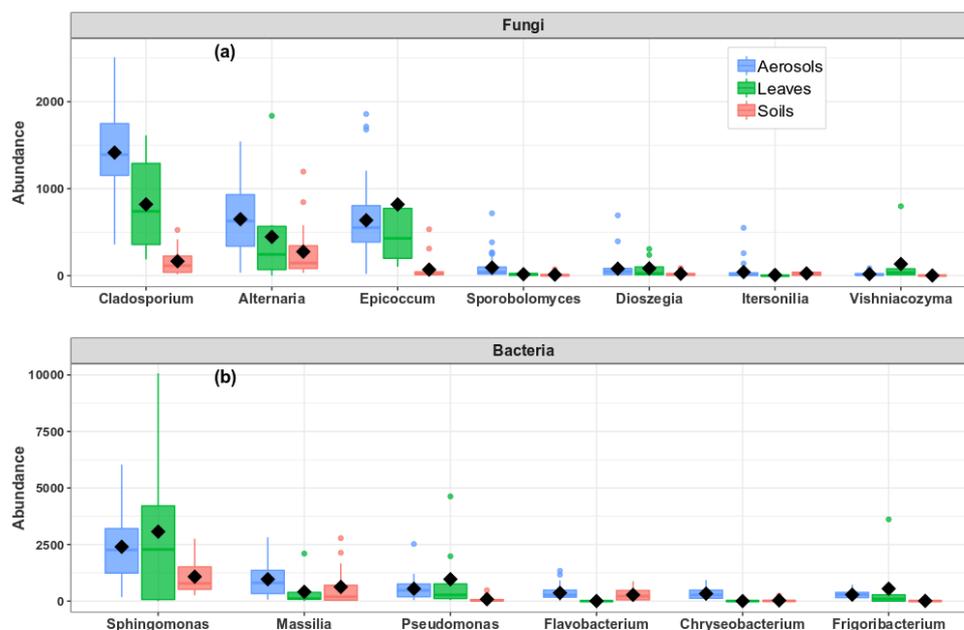
398 3.5. Sources of airborne microbial communities at the study site

399

400 As shown in Fig. 6, the airborne microbial genera most positively correlated with SC species are also distributed
 401 in the surrounding environmental samples of surface soils and leaves. In addition, microbial taxa of PM₁₀
 402 associated with SC species are generally more abundant in the leaves than in the topsoil samples (Fig. 5). In order
 403 to further explore and visualize the similarity of species compositions across local environment types, we
 404 conducted an NMDS ordination analysis (Fig. 6). As evidenced in Fig. 6, the beta diversities of fungal and bacterial
 405 MOTUs are more similar within the same habitat (PM₁₀, plant, or soil) and are grouped across habitats as expected.
 406 Interestingly, the beta diversities of fungal and bacterial MOTUs in leaf samples and those in airborne PM₁₀ are
 407 generally not readily distinguishable, with similarity becoming more prominent during atmospheric peaks of SC
 408 concentration levels (Fig. 6). However, the overall beta diversities in airborne PM₁₀ and in leaf samples are
 409 significantly different from those from topsoil samples (ANOSIM, $R = 0.89$ and 0.80 , $p < 0.01$ for fungal and
 bacterial communities, respectively), without any overlap regardless of whether or not harvesting activities are
 performed around the sampling site.

410

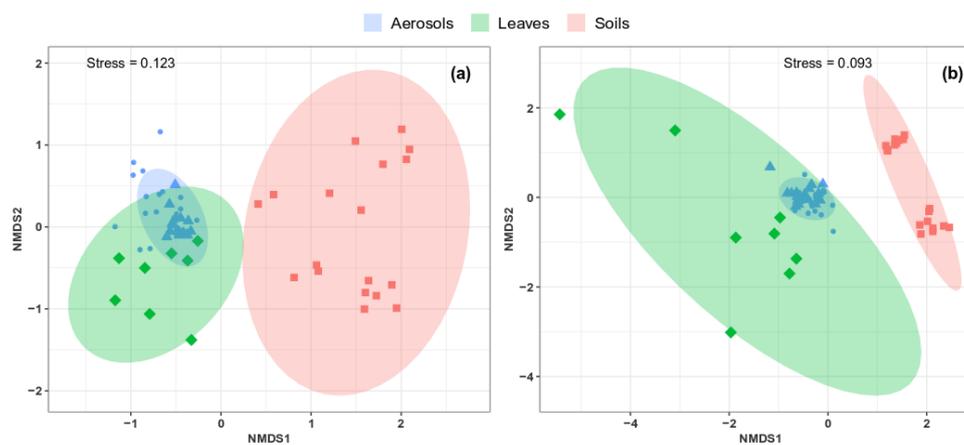
411 This observation is also confirmed by an unsupervised hierarchical cluster analysis, which reveals a pattern similar
 412 to that observed in the NMDS ordination, where taxa from leaf samples and airborne PM₁₀ are clustered together,
 413 regardless of whether ambient concentration levels of SC peaked or not, and they are clustered separately from
 those of topsoil samples (Fig. S7).



414

415 **Figure 6: Abundance of SC species-associated microbial taxa. (A) Fungal and (B) bacterial genera in the airborne PM₁₀**
416 **samples and surrounding environmental samples. Data were rarefied at the same minimum sequencing depth.**

417



418

419 **Figure 7: Compositional comparison of sample types in a NMDS scaling ordination. NDMS plots are constructed from a**
420 **Horn distance matrix of MOTUs abundances for Fungi (A) and Bacteria (B), respectively. Data sets are rarefied at**
421 **the same sequencing depth. The stress values indicate an adequate two-dimensional picture of sample distribution.**
422 **Ellipses represent 95% confidence intervals for the cluster centroids. Circular and triangular shapes highlight air PM₁₀**
423 **samples respectively with background and peak SC concentrations.**

424 4. Discussion

425 Very few studies exist about the interactions between air microbiome and PM chemical profiles (Cao et al., 2014;
426 Elbert et al., 2007). In this study, we used a comprehensive multidisciplinary approach to produce for the first time



427 airborne microbial fingerprints associated with SC species in PM₁₀ and to identify the dominant sources of SCs in
428 a continental rural area extensively cultivated.

429 4.1. SCs as a major source of organic matter in PM₁₀

430 SC species have recently been reported to be ubiquitous in PM₁₀ collected in several areas in France (Golly et al.,
431 2018; Samaké et al., 2019b). In this study, the total SC presented an average concentration of $259.8 \pm 253.8 \text{ ng m}^{-3}$,
432 with a range of 26.6 to 1,679.5 ng m⁻³ in all air samples. These concentration values are on average five times
433 higher than those typically observed in urban areas in France (average values during summer $48.5 \pm 43.6 \text{ ng.m}^{-3}$)
434 (Golly et al., 2018; Samaké et al., 2019a, 2019b). However, these concentration levels are in agreement with a
435 previous study conducted in a similar environments, i.e., continental rural sites located in large crop fields (Yan et
436 al., 2019).

437 The total concentrations of SC quantified in the atmospheric PM₁₀ over our study site accounted for 0.8 to 13.5%
438 of the daily OM mass. This is remarkable considering that less than 20% of total particulate OM mass can generally
439 be identified at the molecular level. Hence, our results for a nine week-long period indicate that SC could be a
440 major identified molecular fraction of OM for agricultural areas during summer, in agreement with several
441 previous studies conducted worldwide (Jia et al., 2010b; Verma et al., 2018; Yan et al., 2019). Further, it has been
442 shown (Samaké et al., 2019a) that the identified polyols most probably represent only a small fraction of the
443 emission flux from this PBOA source, and that a large fraction of the co-emitted organic material remains
444 unknown. Hence, the PBOA source can potentially represent, for part of the year, a major source of atmospheric
445 organic matter unaccounted for in CTM models.

446 4.2. Composition of airborne fungal and bacterial communities

447 In this study, 597 (39-132 MOTUs per sample) and 944 (31-129 MOTUs per sample) MOTUs were obtained for
448 the Fungi and Bacteria libraries, respectively, reflecting the high richness of airborne microbial communities
449 associated with ambient PM₁₀ in a rural agricultural zone in France. Airborne Fungi were dominated by
450 Ascomycota (AMC) followed by Basidiomycota (BMC) phyla, consistent with the natural feature of many
451 Ascomycota, whose single-celled or hyphal forms are fairly small to be rapidly aerosolized, in contrast to many
452 Basidiomycota that are typically too large to be easily aerosolized (Moore et al., 2011; Womack et al., 2015).
453 Many members of AMC and BMC are well known to actively eject ascospores and basidiospores as well as
454 aqueous jets and droplets containing a mixture of carbohydrates and inorganic solutes into the atmosphere (Elbert
455 et al., 2007; Womack et al., 2015). The prevalence of Ascomycota and Basidiomycota is consistent with results
456 from previous studies also indicating that the Dikarya subkingdom (Ascomycota and Basidiomycota) represents
457 about 98% of known species in the biological Kingdom of Eumycota (i.e., Fungi) in atmosphere (Elbert et al.,
458 2007; James et al., 2006; Womack et al., 2015; Xu et al., 2017)

459 Airborne Bacteria in this study belonged mainly to the Proteobacteria, Bacteroidetes, Actinobacteria and
460 Firmicutes phyla, consistent with previous studies (Liu et al., 2019; Maron et al., 2005; Wei et al., 2019b). Gram-
461 negative Proteobacteria constitute a major taxonomic group among prokaryotes (Itävaara et al., 2016; Yadav et
462 al., 2018), which includes bacterial taxa very diverse and important in agriculture, capable of fixing nitrogen in
463 symbiosis with plants (Itävaara et al., 2016; Yadav et al., 2018). Proteobacteria can survive under conditions with
464 very low nutrient content, which explains their atmospheric versatility (Itävaara et al., 2016; Yadav et al., 2018).
465 These results are similar to those observed in previous studies conducted in different environments around the
466 world, where Proteobacteria, Actinobacteria and Firmicutes have also been reported as dominant bacterial phyla
467 (Liu et al., 2019; Maron et al., 2005; Wei et al., 2019a). In particular, the most frequent gram-negative
468 (Proteobacteria and Bacteroidetes) and gram-positive (Actinobacteria and Firmicutes) Bacteria, and filamentous
469 Fungi (Ascomycota and Basidiomycota) have been previously linked to raw straw handling activities. For instance,
470 it has been suggested that straw combustion during agricultural activities could be a major source of airborne
471 microorganisms in PM_{2.5} at the northern plains of China (Wei et al., 2019a, 2019b). However, in our study, SC
472 species are not correlated ($R = -0.03$, $p = 0.82$; Fig. S7) with levoglucosan during the campaign period, indicating
473 that biomass incineration is not an important source of airborne microbial taxa associated with SCs in our PM₁₀
474 series. This point is further discussed in Sect. 4.4.



475 **4.3. Atmospheric concentration levels of SC species in PM₁₀ are associated with the abundance of few**
476 **specific airborne taxa of Fungi and Bacteria**

477 Primary sugar compounds are widely produced in large quantities by many microorganisms to cope with
478 environmental stress conditions (Medeiros et al., 2006). SC species are known to accumulate at high concentrations
479 in microorganisms at low water availability to reduce intracellular water activity and prevent enzyme inhibition
480 due to dehydration (Hryniewicz et al., 2010). In addition, temporal dynamics of ambient polyols concentrations
481 have been suggested as an indicator to follow the general seasonal trend in airborne fungal spore counts (Bauer et
482 al., 2008; Gosselin et al., 2016). Although this strategy has allowed introducing conversion ratios between specific
483 polyols species (i.e., arabinitol and mannitol) and airborne fungal spores in general (Bauer et al., 2008), the structure
484 of the airborne microbial community associated with SC species has not yet been studied. Our results provide
485 culture-independent evidence that the airborne microbiome structure and the combined bacterial and fungal
486 communities largely determine the SC species concentration levels in PM₁₀.

487 Temporal fluctuations in the abundance of only few specific fungal and bacterial genera reflect the temporal
488 dynamics of ambient SC concentrations. For Fungi, genera that show a significant positive correlation ($p < 0.05$)
489 with SC species includes *Cladosporium*, *Alternaria*, *Sporobolomyces* and *Dioszegia*. *Cladosporium* and
490 *Alternaria*, and these fungal genera contribute on average to 47.9% of total fungal sequence reads in our air
491 samples series. These are asexual fungal genera that produce spores by dry-discharge mechanisms wherein spores
492 are detached from their parent colonies and easily dispersed by the ambient air flow or other external forces (e.g.,
493 raindrops, elevated temperature, etc.), as opposed to actively discharged spores with liquid jets or droplets into the
494 air (Elbert et al., 2007; Wei et al., 2019b; Womack et al., 2015). Our results are consistent with the well-known
495 seasonal behavior of airborne fungal spores, with levels of *Cladosporium* and *Alternaria* which have been shown
496 to reach their maximum from early to midsummer in a rural agricultural area of Portugal (Oliveira et al., 2009).

497 Similarly, bacterial genera positively correlated with SC species are *Massilia*, *Pseudomonas*, *Frigoribacterium*,
498 and *Sphingomonas*. Although it is the prevalent bacterial genus at the study site, *Sphingomonas* is indeed not
499 significantly positively correlated with SC species. The genus *Sphingomonas* is well-known to include numerous
500 metabolically versatile species capable of using carbon compounds usually present in the atmosphere (Cáliz et al.,
501 2018). The atmospheric abundance of species affiliated with *Massilia* has already been linked to the change in the
502 stage of plant development (Ofek et al., 2012), which can be attributed to the capacity of *Massilia* to promote plant
503 growth, through the production of indole acetic acid (Kuffner et al., 2010), or siderophores (Hryniewicz et al.,
504 2010), and to be antagonist towards *Phytophthora infestans* (Weinert et al., 2010).

505 As far as we know, this is the first study evaluating microbial fingerprints with SC species in atmospheric PM,
506 hence it is not possible to compare our correlation results with that of previous works. However, it has already
507 been suggested that types and quantities of SC species produced by Fungi under culture conditions are specific to
508 microbial species and external conditions such as carbon source, drought and heat, etc. (Hryniewicz et al., 2010).
509 In future studies, we intend to apply a culture-dependent method to directly characterize the SC contents of some
510 species amongst the dominant microbial taxa identified in this study after growth under several laboratory
511 chambers reproducing controlled environmental conditions in terms of temperature, water vapor or carbon sources.

512 **4.4. Local vegetation as major source of airborne microbial taxa of PM₁₀ associated with SC species**

513 There are still many challenging questions on the emission processes leading to Fungi and Bacteria being
514 introduced into the atmosphere, together with their chemical components. In particular, the potential influence of
515 soil and vegetation and their respective roles in structuring airborne microbial communities is still debated
516 (Lymperopoulou et al., 2016; Rathnayake et al., 2016; Womack et al., 2015), especially since this knowledge is
517 particularly essential for the precise modeling of PBOA emissions processes to the atmosphere within Chemical
518 Transport Models. .

519 Characterization of the temporal dynamics of SC species concentrations could provide important information on
520 PBOA sources in terms of composition, environmental drivers and impacts. The results obtained over a nine week-
521 period of daily PM₁₀ SC measurements clearly show that the temporal dynamics of sorbitol ($R = 0.59$, $p < 0.001$)
522 and inositol ($R = 0.64$, $p < 0.001$) are well correlated linearly with that of calcium, a typical inorganic water-soluble
523 ion from crustal material. This indicates a common atmospheric origin for these chemicals. Sorbitol and inositol
524 are well-known reduced sugars that serve as carbon source for microorganisms when other carbon sources are
525 limited (Ng et al., 2018; Xue et al., 2010). In microorganisms, sorbitol and inositol are mainly produced by the



526 reduction of intracellular glucose by aldose reductase in the cytoplasm (Ng et al., 2018; Welsh, 2000; Xue et al.,
527 2010). Moreover, significant concentrations of both sorbitol and inositol have already been measured in surface
528 soil samples from five cultivated fields in the San Joaquin Valley, USA (Jia et al., 2010b; Medeiros et al., 2006).
529 Therefore, sorbitol and inositol are most likely associated with microorganisms from soil resuspension.

530 With the exception of sorbitol and inositol, all other SC species measured in air samples at our sampling site are
531 highly correlated with each other, indicating a common origin. Daily calcium concentration peaks are not
532 systematically associated with those of these other SC species. Interestingly, the highest atmospheric levels of
533 these SC species occurred on August 8th 2017, coinciding well with daily harvesting activities around the site. This
534 is also consistent with a multi-year monitoring of the dominant SCs in PM₁₀ at this site, where ambient SCs showed
535 a clear seasonal trend with higher values recorded in early August and in good agreement with harvesting activities
536 around the study area every year from 2012 to 2017 (Samaké et al., 2019a). This suggests that the processes
537 responsible for the dynamics of atmospheric concentrations of SCs are replicated annually and most likely
538 effective over large areas of field crop (Golly et al., 2018; Samaké et al., 2019a). Interestingly, glucose—the most
539 common monosaccharide present in vascular plants and microorganisms— has already been proposed as
540 molecular indicator of biota emitted into the atmosphere by vascular plants and/or by the resuspension of soil from
541 agricultural land (Jia et al., 2010b; Pietrogrande et al., 2014). Therefore, all other SC species measured in our series
542 can be considered to be most likely the result of the mechanical resuspension of crop residues (e.g., leaf debris)
543 and microorganisms attached to them. Other confirmations of this interpretation stem from the excellent daily co-
544 variations observed in the PM₁₀ between SC species levels and ambient cellulose, widely considered as a reliable
545 indicator of the plant debris source in PM studies (Bozzetti et al., 2016; Hiranuma et al., 2019).

546 Microbial abundance and community structure in samples from the surrounding environment can provide further
547 useful information on sources apportionment and importance. Our data indicates that the airborne microbial genera
548 most positively correlated to SC species are also distributed in surrounding environmental samples from both
549 surface soils and leaves, suggesting a dominant influence of the local environments for microbial taxa associated
550 with SC species, as opposed to long-range transport. This observation makes sense since actively discharged
551 ascospores and basidiospores are generally relatively large airborne particles with short atmospheric residence
552 time (Elbert et al., 2007; Womack et al., 2015), limiting the possibilities of long-range dissemination. Accordingly,
553 the majority of previous studies investigating the potential sources of air microbes identified the local surface
554 environments (e.g., leaves, soils, etc.) to have more important effects on airborne microbiome structure in field
555 crop areas (Bowers et al., 2011; Wei et al., 2019b; Womack et al., 2015). This is all the more the case in our study,
556 with homogeneous crop activities for 10's to 100's of km around the site.

557 In the present study, microbial diversity and richness observed in the surface soils are generally higher than those
558 in leaf surfaces. Microbial taxa most positively correlated with PM₁₀ SC species are generally more abundant in
559 leaf than in topsoil samples. These results were unexpected and show the possible importance of leaf surfaces in
560 structuring the airborne taxa associated with SC species. Considering the general grouping of leaf samples and
561 airborne PM₁₀ regardless of harvesting activities around the study site in addition to the separate assemblies of
562 rarefied MOTUs in airborne PM₁₀ and topsoil samples, it can be argued that aerial parts of plants are the major
563 source of microbial taxa associated with SC species. Such observation is most likely related to increased vegetative
564 surface (e.g., leaves) in summer that provides sufficient nutrient resources for microbial growth (Rathnayake et
565 al., 2016). By reviewing previous studies, *Alternaria* and *Epicocum*, which made 30% of total fungal sequence
566 reads in all air samples in this study, have been shown to be common saprobes or weak pathogens of leaf surfaces
567 (Andersen et al., 2009). Similarly, *Cladosporium*, which accounted for 32.9% of total fungal genera in all air
568 samples, have also been shown to be a common saprotrophic fungi inhabiting in decayed tree or plant debris (Wei
569 et al., 2019b). The high relative abundance of *Sphingomonas* and *Massilia*, accounting for 28.4% of total bacterial
570 genera in all air samples, is also noticeable. These two phyllosphere inhabiting bacterial genera are well-known
571 for their plant protective potential against phytopathogens (Aydogan et al., 2018; Rastogi et al., 2013).

572 Altogether, these observations support our interpretation that leaves are the major direct source of airborne Fungi
573 and Bacteria during the summer months at this site of large agricultural activities. Endophytes and epiphytes can
574 be dispersed in the air and transported vertically as particles by the air currents, much faster and more widely than
575 by other mechanisms, such as direct dissemination from surface soil, which is generally controlled by soil moisture
576 (Jocteur Monrozier et al., 1993). The most wind-dispersible soil constituents are indeed the smallest soil particles
577 (i.e. clay-size fraction), which contain the largest number of microorganisms (Jocteur Monrozier et al., 1993) and
578 can only be released into the atmosphere under conditions of prolonged drought. This interpretation is also



579 consistent with previous studies (Bowers et al., 2011; Liu et al., 2019; Lympelopoulou et al., 2016; Mhuireach et
580 al., 2016), which also show the extent to which endophytes and epiphytes can serve as quantitatively important
581 sources of airborne microbes during summertime when vegetation density is highest. For example,
582 Lympelopoulou et al. (2016) observed that Bacteria and Fungi suspended in the air are generally two to more than
583 ten times more abundant in air that passed over 50 m of vegetated surface than that is immediately upwind of the
584 same vegetated surface. However, the relatively abundance of taxa associated with SCs in surface soils in this
585 study could also be indicative of a feedback loop in which the soil may serve as sources of microbial endophytes
586 and epiphytes for plants while the local vegetation in turns may serve as sources and sinks of microbes for local
587 soils during leaf senescence.

588 5. Conclusion

589 Primary biogenic organic aerosols (PBOA) affects human health, climate, agriculture, etc. However, the details of
590 microbial communities associated with the temporal and spatial variations in atmospheric concentrations of SC,
591 tracers of PBOA, remain unknown. The present study aimed at identifying the airborne Fungi and Bacteria
592 associated with SC species in PM₁₀ and their major sources in the surrounding environment (soils and vegetation).
593 To that end, we combined high-throughput sequencing of Bacteria and Fungi with detailed physicochemical
594 characterization of PM₁₀ soils and leaf samples collected at a continental rural background site located in a large
595 agricultural area in France.

596 The main results demonstrate that the identified SC species are a major contributor of OM in summer, accounting
597 together for 0.8 to 13.5% of OM mass in air. The atmospheric concentration peaks of SC are coincident the daily
598 harvest activities around the sampling site, pointing towards direct resuspension of biological materials, i.e. crop
599 residues and associated microbiota as an important source of SC in our PM₁₀ series. Furthermore, we have also
600 discovered that the temporal evolutions of SC in PM₁₀ are associated with the abundance of only few specific
601 airborne Fungi and Bacteria taxa. These microbial taxa are significantly enhanced in the surrounding
602 environmental samples of leaves over surface soils. Finally, the excellent correlation of SC species and cellulose,
603 a marker of plant materials, implies that local vegetation is likely the most important source of Fungi and Bacteria
604 taxa associated with SC in PM₁₀ at rural locations directly influenced by agricultural activities in France.

605 Our findings is a first step in the understanding of the processes leading to the emission of these important chemical
606 species and large OM fraction of PM in the atmosphere, and to the parametrization of these processes for their
607 introduction in CTM models. They could also be used for planning efforts to reduce both the PBOA source
608 strengths and the spreading of airborne microbial and derivative allergens such as endotoxins, mycotoxins, etc.
609 However, it remains to investigate how-well different climate patterns and sampling site specificities, in terms of
610 land use and vegetation cover, could affect our main conclusions.

611

612 **Data and materials availability:** The sequencing data will be made available on <https://datadryad.org/> as soon as
613 the article will be accepted for publication. The chemical data will be available upon request.

614 **Competing interests:** The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

615 **Author contributions:** J.-L.J., J.-M.F.M., G.U. supervised the thesis of A.S. and J.-L.J., J.M.F.-M., G.U and A.S.
616 designed the research project. P.T. gives advice for soils and leaves sampling. S.C. supervised the sample
617 collections and provided the agricultural activity records. V.J. developed the analytical techniques for SC species
618 and cellulose measurements. A.S. and A.B. performed the experiments. A.B. performed the bioinformatic
619 analyses. A.S. performed statistical analyses and wrote the original manuscript draft. S.W. produced the circular
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