

Dear colleague,

Firstly, we would like to thank you (reviewer 1) for this careful review of our paper and the relevance of your comments and suggestions, notably regarding the literature proposed. This has considerably improved the manuscript. Below, presented are your remarks (in black), and our responses and the location of the modifications brought to the text (in blue).

#### General comments

First of all I would like to thank the Associate Editor in charge for the opportunity to review the present manuscript entitled 'Silicon cycle in a temperate forest ecosystem: role of fine roots and litterfall recycling and influence of soil types'. The authors (Turpault et al.) analyzed silicon (Si) cycling in three temperate forest ecosystems with different soil types (Dystric Cambisol, Eutric Cambisol, Rendzic Leptosol). In this context, Turpault et al. aimed to unravel the specific role of fine roots and soil properties on Si cycling. The authors found that fine roots potentially play an important role in Si cycling as their Si concentration seems to be comparable to the Si concentration of leaves. Furthermore, Turpault et al. found the Si concentrations in fine roots and leaves to be dependent on the concentration of dissolved Si in the soils. Turpault et al. concluded from their results that biological processes play a predominant role in Si cycling of the studied sites. In my opinion the article of Turpault et al. generally is of interest for the readers of BIOGEOSCIENCES. However, I identified several shortcomings of the manuscript which should be addressed before potential publication.

In general, the authors should:

- Use units following the rules of the 'International System of Units' (e.g., g kg<sup>-1</sup> and not g.kg<sup>-1</sup>; Please check the whole manuscript on that because in almost all units these dots were used)

The units were modified in the whole revised version of the manuscript to follow the rules of the 'International System of Units'.

- add some literature that is most relevant to their article from my point of view and will help to present a more appropriate discussion of their results (please see my specific comments to the single sections below)

Some relevant literature, including the references proposed by both reviewers, was added in the manuscript. Besides the introduction was considerably modified.

See below the detail.

- reconsider the presentation of their results (in the current form I found reading of some subsections of the results section quite exhausting as the authors only repeat the data one-on-one as given in the Tables; I also miss a 'joining' of data, e.g., by some simple correlation analyses).

The whole result section was rewritten to improve its reading.

See an example in the result section.

- rework some subsections (in the current manuscript there are some redundant passages in different subsections; Additionally, specific paragraphs should be displaced to corresponding subsections, e.g., methods should be given only in the Materials and Methods section)

Some subsections or paragraphs were deleted or displaced in the appropriate sections. See below the detail.

Please find corresponding details on the different subsections listed below. I am really looking forward to reading the revised manuscript.

#### Abstract

I.16: Actually, there is at least one publication where Si pools of fine roots were determined (Maguire, T. J., Templer, P. H., Battles, J. J., & Fulweiler, R. W. (2017). Winter climate change and fine root biogenic silica in sugar maple trees (*Acer saccharum*): Implications for silica in the Anthropocene. *Journal of Geophysical Research: Biogeosciences*, 122(3), 708-715). So, please relativize your statement ('rare is known. . .', for example).

Thanks for this remark. We thus modified the sentence in the abstract. The main results and conclusions of the work of Maguire et al. (2017) was introduced in the discussion section.

Please refer to line 21: However, to date, rare is known about the specific role of fine roots.

Please refer to line 540: The Si content in beech fine roots was very higher (2 to 6 times) than that measured by Maguire et al. (2017) for another deciduous species, i.e. sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) but in a cooler environment. Besides Maguire et al. (2017) demonstrated in this study that increased soil freezing significantly lowers the Si content of sugar maple fine roots.

I.21: I would recommend using DC, EC and RL for Dystric Cambisol, Eutric Cambisol and Rendzic Leptosol, respectively, instead of S1, S2, S3. If you follow my recommendation, please change this within the whole manuscript (and figures and tables).

DC, EC, and RL are now used in the manuscript (text, tables and figures) instead of Dystric Cambisol, Eutric Cambisol and Rendzic Leptosol and instead of S1, S2, and S3.

#### Introduction

As suggested by reviewer 2, the introduction was rewritten to focus on forest ecosystems and on the main objective of the study.

Please refer to line 45: 1 Introduction:

It has recently been shown that intense biogeochemical cycling of Si occurs in the different terrestrial ecosystems, i.e., wetlands (Struyf et al., 2007; Emsens et al., 2016), grasslands (Blecker et al., 2006; White et al., 2012), tropical forests (Lucas et al., 1993, Alexandre et al., 1997) and temperate forests (Bartoli, 1983; Watteau and Villemin, 2001; Gerard et al, 2008; Cornelis et al., 2010a; Cornelis et al., 2011a; Sommer et al., 2006; Sommer et al., 2013). Several review papers well described that soil DSi is taken up by vascular plants and translocated into biogenic Si (BSi) under opal form which is deposited into the cell walls, cell lumina and intercellular spaces (Jones and Handreck, 1965; Conley et al., 2002; Cornelis et al, 2011b; Struyf and Conley, 2012). These structures are called phytoliths. Other important

producers of biogenic Si are animals especially diatoms, sponges and testate amoebae. (Struyf and Conley, 2012; Sommers et al., 2006; Puppe et al., 2014; Puppe et al., 2015).

According to Conley (2002), the annual fixation of DSi into terrestrial ecosystems has been estimated to range from 60 to 200 Tmoles. That represents 10 to 40 times more than yearly export DSi and suspended biogenic Si from the terrestrial geobiosphere to the coastal zone (Conley, 2002). Vegetation can thus be considered as a factory of BSi which returns to the soil as organic matter through biological recycling. Because BSi in general is more soluble than silicate minerals, BSi strongly contributes to the DSi pool (Frayssé et al., 2009 ; Cornelis and Delvaux, 2016).

Based on the assumption that the storage of Si is limited in roots (Bartoli and Souchier, 1986) and because fine root sampling and cleaning before analyses are long and tedious processes, studies in forest ecosystems mainly focus on the importance of litterfall recycling on the Si biogeochemical cycle without quantifying Si in the roots (Gérard et al., 2008; Cornelis et al., 2010a; Sommer et al., 2013).

However, Krieger et al (2017) recently showed that Si in deciduous trees (European beech, *Fagus sylvatica* and sycamore maple, *Acer pseudoplatanus*) generally precipitates as a thin layer (< 0.5 µm) around the cells, especially in roots and bark. These small-scale phytogenic Si was demonstrated to influence various soil and plant processes (Meunier et al., 2017 ; Puppe et al., 2017).

Considering the large amount of Si precipitates in roots (Krieger et al., 2017) and the rapid turnover of fine roots in forest ecosystems (approximately one year in beech forests in Europe; Brunner et al., 2013), we hypothesized that fine roots could significantly contribute to the input of BSi into the soil.

To test this hypothesis, we quantified during a four-year observation period (i) the total and annual accumulations of Si in stand belowground and aboveground biomasses while distinguishing annual and perennial compartments, ii) the Si input fluxes in the forest floor (litterfall and small woods, aboveground exploitation residues) and in the soil (fine roots and belowground exploitation residues). The study was led in a lowland (low lateral transfer of material) deciduous temperate forest developed on three soils, ranging from a shallow calcic soil to a deep acidic soil, with mull to acid mull humus. These humus forms quickly degrades, contain few soil particles and no root thus allowing to determine the DSi issued from the degradation of organic layers contrary to mor or moder humus forms (Sommer et al., 2006; Cornelis et al., 2010a). In addition, we monthly quantified in these ecosystems the Dsi inputs and outputs, i.e., rainfall, foliar leaching and drainage, in order to assess the seasonal dynamics of these fluxes induced by biological activities.

I.48: Please change '...Si in soils also had a biogenic origin...' to '...Si in soils can also be of biogenic origin...'.

This sentence was deleted.

I.58: Please change '...transpiration have also influenced...' to '...transpiration also influence...'.

This sentence was deleted.

I.65: I would recommend using the classification of BSi pools as given in Puppe et al. (2015) (Puppe, D., Ehrmann, O., Kaczorek, D., Wanner, M., & Sommer, M. (2015). The protozoic Si pool in temperate forest ecosystems – Quantification, abiotic controls and interactions with earthworms. *Geoderma*, 243, 196-204), i.e., zoogenic, phytogenic, microbial and protistic Si pools.

This sentence was deleted.

I.70: From my point of view you should add Meunier et al. (2017) (Meunier, J. D., Barboni, D., Anwar-ul-Haq, M., Levard, C., Chaurand, P., Vidal, V., Grauby, O., Huc, R., Laffont-Schwob, I., Rabier, J., and Keller, C.: Effect of phytoliths for mitigating water stress in durum wheat, *New Phytol.*, 215, 229–239, <https://doi.org/10.1111/nph.14554>, 2017) and Puppe et al. (2017) (Puppe, D., Höhn, A., Kaczorek, D., Wanner, M., Wehrhan, M., & Sommer, M. (2017). How big is the influence of biogenic silicon pools on short-term changes in water-soluble silicon in soils? Implications from a study of a 10-year-old soil–

plant system. Biogeosciences, 14(22), 5239-5252) here as these articles also show the importance especially of small-scale phytogenic Si.

We agree that this literature is of importance so we added it in the revised version of the manuscript.

Please refer to line 65: However, Krieger et al (2017) recently showed that Si in deciduous trees (European beech, *Fagus sylvatica* and sycamore maple, *Acer pseudoplatanus*) generally precipitates as a thin layer (< 0.5  $\mu\text{m}$ ) around the cells, especially in roots and bark. These small-scale phytogenic Si was demonstrated to influence various soil and plant processes (Meunier et al., 2017 ; Puppe et al., 2017).

I.76: I guess you mean 'sap' instead of 'soap' here, right?

This sentence was deleted.

I.93: Please change '. . .soil conditions differ between. . .' to '. . .soil conditions differ, whereas climate conditions, . . .'.

This sentence was deleted.

I.95-102: From my point of view this paragraph belongs to the Material and Methods section.

This sentence was deleted.

I.104: Please replace 'where' by 'because'.

This sentence was deleted.

Materials and Methods

I.107: Please change 'referred' to 'referred to'. I.108: Please add 'located' after 'is'.

These were modified.

Please refer to line 149: The experimental site, hereafter referred to as the Montiers site (<http://www.nancy.inra.fr/en/Outils-et-Ressources/montiers-ecosystem-research>), is located in the Montiers-sur-Saulx beech forest in northeastern France (Meuse, France, latitude 48° 31' 54" N, longitude 5° 16' 08" E).

I.113: I would recommend giving the meanings of these abbreviations here.

The meanings of these abbreviations were added.

Please refer to line 154: The Montiers site is part of different national and international research networks, i.e., SOERE (Long-lasting observation and experimentation for the research on environment)-OPE (Perennial Environment Observatory) and F-ORE-T (Functioning of Forest Ecosystems), and AnaEE (Analysis and Experimentations on Ecosystems).

I.114: Please change 'are' to 'were' and add 'calculated' before 'from'.

This was modified.

Please refer to line 159: The mean annual rainfall and temperature over the last twenty years were 1069 mm and 9.8°C, respectively (calculated from Météo-France data).

I.117: Please add the scientific name of sycamore maple (*Acer pseudoplatanus*?).

This was added.

Please refer to line 166: The stand was mainly composed of beech (89%) and 11% of other deciduous species, i.e., sycamore maple (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur* L.), European hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus* L.), and wild cherry (*Prunus avium*).

I.142: Please add 'at 130 cm height' after 'circumferences'.

This was added.

Please refer to line 193: Trees were chosen to cover most of the range of stem circumferences at 130 cm height (C130) in each plot.

I.154/155: Do you mean: 'Subsequently, the branches were separated. . .'?

Yes, the sentence was modified.

Please refer to line 205: Subsequently, the branches latter were separated into different classes, i.e., < 4, 4-7 and > 7 cm diameter, according to Henry et al. (2011).

I.155: Please add 'in' before 'diameter'.

This was added.

Please refer to line 206: the branches latter were separated into different classes, i.e., < 4, 4-7 and > 7 cm in diameter, according to Henry et al. (2011).

I.160: I would recommend deleting '(at least fifty kg of soil sample)'.

This was deleted.

Please refer to line 211: A two-step procedure was applied to accurately assess the fine root biomass (Bakker et al., 2008), without having to transport soil to the laboratory.

I.169: I guess you mean '20 cm depth', right?

Right so we modified the text.

Please refer to line 219: Roots with a diameter > 2 cm (small and coarse roots) were collected in February 2017 in three soil pits (approximately 0.4 m wide) for each plot where soil material was cut and extracted at approximately 20 cm depth.

I.171/172: Do you mean 'element concentration' instead of 'mineral content'?

Yes, this was modified.

Please refer to line 224: An aliquot of each root sample (fine, small and coarse) was then collected to determine element concentration.

I.172: Please add the magnification used for microscopical analyses.

This was added.

Please refer to line 226: The absence of soil particles was carefully checked under a binocular microscope with a magnification of 10x.

I.174: Did you check these samples, e.g., by SEM-EDX, to ensure that you removed all soil particles (especially the ones on a  $\mu\text{m}$ -scale)?

All samples were observed with binocular microscope but only some samples of fine roots were observed by SEM-EDX (see part 2.3.4. Microscopic analysis).

I.216: Please change 'spectroscopy' to 'spectrometer'.

This was changed.

Please refer to line 267: The samples were examined at the GeoRessources laboratory (University of Lorraine) for biomineral occurrence and composition, using a Hitachi S-4800 scanning electron microscope (SEM) equipped with an energy-dispersive X-ray spectrometer (EDX), containing a lithium-drifted Si detector.

I.232: Please add 'Titanium' before 'Ti' and set 'Ti' in brackets.

This was added.

Please refer to line 285: The percentage of soil mixed with the organic horizons was determined through the use of titanium (Ti).

I.243: You already introduced 'C130' as abbreviation before (l. 142).

This was corrected.

Please refer to line 296: To transform the stemflow volumes to a water flux, C130 was assumed to explain the inter-individual stemflow volume variability within a species.

I.265: Please replace 'D(X)' by 'DSi'.

This was replaced.

Please refer to line 318: where  $D_{Si}$  is the drainage flux of Si,  $D_G$  is the water drainage via rapid gravitational transfer,

I.278 & I.279: Please change 'C1.30' to 'C130'.

This was changed.

Please refer to lines 332: It included four steps, (i) the circumference of all trees was measured at 1.30 m height,  $C_{130}$ , in 2011 and 2015; (ii) eight trees in each plot, representing the range of  $C_{130}$ , stem bark and wood and 0-4, 4-7 and > 7 cm diameter branches were sampled; (iii) the weighed allometric equations fitted for each ecosystem compartment were calculated according to Calvaruso et al. (2017); and (iv) tree biomass (stem bark and wood and 0-4, 4-7 and > 7 cm diameter branches) was quantified per hectare by applying fitted equations to the stand inventories.

I.310: Please replace 'are' by 'were'.

This was replaced.

Please refer to line 364: The roots were not exported

I.318 & I.320 & I.326: Please replace 'kg of Si by ha<sup>-1</sup>.y<sup>-1</sup>' by 'kg Si ha<sup>-1</sup> y<sup>-1</sup>'.

This was replaced in the whole manuscript.

I.332: How did you analyze the amorphous Si fraction (alkaline extraction?)? I cannot find it in the M&M section.

The data of the amorphous Si fraction are not presented in this manuscript. This was deleted.

Please refer to line 383: The normality of the distribution was checked, using the Shapiro-Wilk test. As our data did not follow a normal distribution, the non-parametrical Kruskal-Wallis test was performed to compare the different soil types, biomass pools, biomass increments, Si content, Si pools, and Si fluxes for each tree compartment, and the total soil Si at the threshold level of 0.05.

I.335: Why did you use 'year' as a factor here? You generally assume Si pools, in- and outputs to be more or less equal each year (otherwise you would not calculate means for the analyzed period 2012-2015), so you should not expect any time-related effects, right?

This was a mistake. The term "year" was deleted.

Please refer to line 389: We used the R version 3.3.1 statistical software (R Development Core Team, 2016) and specifically, the R package nlme to test the effect of soil type on annual Si fluxes, by means of a mixed linear analysis of variance (ANOVA) with soil type and their interaction as fixed effects.

I.337: If your data are not normally distributed (as you said before) you should use nonparametric tests only (i.e., the Mann-Whitney U test instead of the Student's test).

We do not agree, the Kruskal-Wallis test is also a non-parametric test used to test at least three samples. I join the procedure of selection of the statistical test for this study at the end of this document.

## Results

I.348: Do you mean 'Aged' instead of 'Altered'? I.348 & I. 349: I would recommend using 'testate amoebae' instead of 'amoebae'.

Yes, this was corrected.

Please refer to line 402: Aged leaves in the organic horizon were colonized by hyphae and amoebae (Figure 1c) and presented large voids. The Si deposits disappeared from the plant cells but were present in the observed testate amoebae.

I.373: The numbers did not change after calculation? Please check again your calculations.

Sorry for the mistake. This was modified.

Please refer to line 427: The Si pools in the fine roots were important and ranged from 61.2 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> in the RL to 98.7 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> in the DC. Based on the turnover rate of fine roots, as determined by Brunner et al. (2013) for beech trees, i.e.,  $1.11 \pm 0.21 \text{ y}^{-1}$ , we calculated that the annual Si fluxes resulting from fine root decomposition ranged from  $67.9 \pm 14.3 \text{ kg ha}^{-1}$  in the RL to  $109.5 \pm 23.0 \text{ kg ha}^{-1}$  in the DC.

Results: I know the results section of a paper often is not like a thriller. However, you should try to make it at least easy to read. So please do not only repeat the data as they are already given in the figures and tables because this is quite exhausting to read. Please rework your results section (from my point of view, subsection 3.1.6 is a good example how to present you results in a more appropriate way).

The results section was rewritten to be less exhausting to read.

Please refer to lines 393 to 526:

### **Example : 3.1.2 Si pools and fluxes in aboveground tree biomass**

The calculated standing aboveground biomass in 2011 increased as follows: RL < DC < EC with significant differences between EC and RL (factor 1.4). (Table 2). The stem bark had the highest Si concentration in the three plots, and the Si pool in this compartment represented approximately 40% of the total Si pool in the aboveground tree biomass. The younger the structures were, the higher Si concentration. Small branches were approximately three times more concentrated than coarse branches in the three soils (Table 2). The amount of Si immobilized in the standing aboveground biomass ranged from 20.1 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> on the RL to 26.2 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> on the EC. The annual biomass production between 2011 and 2015 increased as follows: RL < EC < DC with significant differences between DC

and RL (factor 1.7). As a result, the amount of Si immobilized in the aboveground biomass each year between 2011 and 2015 ranged from 0.98 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> on the RL to 1.82 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> on the DC.

I.414: Please use powers of 10 for such big numbers.

This was modified.

Please refer to line 477: The total Si pools in the first 90 cm of soil overpassed 2.4.10<sup>6</sup> kg ha<sup>-1</sup> in the DC and EC as opposed to approximately 7.2.10<sup>5</sup> kg ha<sup>-1</sup> in the RL.

II.451-454: Please avoid to give redundant information (see 3.2.2) and to 'jump' between your figures (try to refer to every figure only one time).

We agree that it is not the optimal mean, but in this specific case, we have to make reference a second time to the figure 3 to make the link with the observations resulting from figure 5.

II.456-459: Where can I find this information (Fig., Table?)?

This information is presented in the synthesis figure 6.

## Discussion

II.461-464: I would recommend deleting this paragraph.

We agree, this paragraph was deleted.

I.473: You should discuss your results in the context of the results of Maguire et al. (2017) here.

This was added.

Please refer to line 540 : This Si content in beech fine roots was very higher (2 to 6 times) than that measured by Maguire et al. (2017) for another deciduous species, i.e. sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) in a cooler environment. Besides Maguire et al. (2017) demonstrated in this study that increased soil freezing significantly lowers the Si content of sugar maple fine roots.

I.484: Do you mean 'Sommer et al. (2013)' instead of 'Sommer et al. 2003'?

Yes, sorry for the mistake.

Please refer to lines 555: As demonstrated by Sommer et al. 2013, only a small fraction (approximately 1%; from 1.0 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> in plot S3 to 1.8 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> in plot S1) of the Si taken up by the tree stand accumulated each year in the perennial tree compartments, i.e., the stem, branch and coarse roots (Figure 6, Table 2).

I.497: I would recommend using 'Mineral soil content' instead of 'Soil pollution'.

This was changed.

Please refer to line 569 : 4.2.1 Mineral soil content in organic horizons

I.502: Please give an example for biological activities (e.g., bioturbation by earthworms).

This was added.

Please refer to line 573: The higher rate of soil pollution in the study of Cornelis et al. (2010a) can be explained by the presence of a thick Oh layer in the moder that was in direct contact with the superficial soil layer and was characterized by an intense mixing of degraded organic matter with soil



particles, induced by biological activities, mainly bioturbation by earthworms in these soils (Lavelle, 1988).

I.503: Please replace 'Si pollution' by 'Si input'.

This was replaced.

Please refer to line 575: The Si input by dust deposits in the organic horizons was negligible, with a maximum value of  $6.0 \text{ kg ha}^{-1} \text{ y}^{-1}$  (no stand interception) against 151 to  $246 \text{ kg ha}^{-1}$ .

I.505: What did they study, dust deposits or Si in the litterfall? Please be more precise.

This was clarified.

Please refer to line 577: Lequy et al. (2014), who studied the mineralogy of the dust deposits of the Montiers site, observed that the Si deposits in throughfall was mainly quartz.

I.507: A space is missing between 'et al.' and '2017'.

This was corrected.

Please refer to line 581: The main phytogenic Si input into the organic horizons was opal phytoliths (Krieger et al., 2017), which dissolve slowly (Frayse et al., 2009) in comparison to the rate of organic matter mineralization.

I.509: Please add 'that of' after 'than' and give references for these data.

This was added.

Please refer to line 582: The residence time of Si in the organic horizons is higher than that of carbon ( $5.3 \pm 0.8$  vs  $1.9 \pm 0.4$  y).

I.510: Diverse taxa of testate amoebae synthesize  $\text{SiO}_2$ -platelets for shell construction, but they do not possess a skeleton. I.511: Actually, testate amoeba shells represent the protozoic Si pool in soils and not the zoogenic one (which is represented by sponge spicules) (see Puppe et al. 2015).

This was corrected.

Please refer to line 583: In addition, the presence of testate amoebae, organisms rich in Si (Figure 1; Sommer et al., 2013), in the organic horizons suggests that a part of the Si from the phytoliths belonged to the protozoic Si pool.

I.512: I would recommend changing 'zoogenic pool could represent half. . .' to 'testate amoebae may use half . . . for shell synthesis'. I.513: I would recommend deleting 'in Europe' as Sommer et al. (2013) only analyzed one site (in Germany).

This was changed.

Please refer to line 585: Sommer et al. (2013) estimated that testate amoebae may use half of the Si input by litterfall in beech organic horizons ( $17 \text{ kg ha}^{-1}$  vs  $34 \text{ kg ha}^{-1}$ ) for shell synthesis.

I.518: Another output flux is only likely if you assume balanced in- and outputs in general. From my point of view your data clearly indicate an accumulation of BSi in the organic layers. Please give some more references here to support your findings. I.520-522: Please give some references to support your assumption.

This paragraph was modified to be clearer, and some relevant literature was added to support our assumptions.

Please refer to lines : During the study period (2012-2015), the Si input in the organic horizons via litterfall were primarily higher than the Si output via soluble transport (assessed in ZTL solutions under

the forest floor) for the three soils. This net flux of Si should have induced the accumulation of Si in the organic horizons, what we did not observe in the four years of the study. This suggests that another output flux existed but was not quantified in our study. This flux is likely the solid particulate migration toward the topsoil layer, as demonstrated by Ugolini et al. (1977). These authors observed that organic particles containing notably silicon were predominant in the migrant material in the upper soil horizons. In our study, the solid particulate migration from the organic horizons to the topsoil may consist of the colloid transport of amoebae (Harter et al., 2000) or the transport of phytoliths (Fishkis et al. 2010). These latter observed, though a field study using fluorescent labelling, that the downward transport distance of phytoliths after one year was  $3.99 \pm 1.21$  cm for a Cambisol with a preferential translocation of small-sized phytoliths.

I.524: In general, the amorphous Si fraction includes pedogenic and biogenic Si. I.525: I would recommend adding Puppe et al. (2015) here as they analyzed testate amoebae and corresponding Si pools in detail.

The sentence was modified to integrate these remarks.

Please refer to lines : The Si production (source) in the soil mainly results from pedogenic Si from soil mineral dissolution and from biogenic Si from plant tissues and testate amoebae (Cornelis et al., 2011; Sommer et al., 2013; Puppe et al., 2015).

I.527: What do you mean with 'Si-amorphous'?

The sentence was modified to be more specific.

Please refer to line 606 : The immobilization (sink) of dissolved Si in the soil is due to plant and organism immobilization and precipitation of secondary minerals, such as phyllosilicates or Si-bearing short range organization minerals or allophane, immogolite (Dahlgren and Ugolini, 1989; Ma and Yamaji, 2006; Sommer et al., 2013; Tubana et al., 2016; Kabata-Pendias and Mukherjee, 2007).

I.529: Please replace 'until' by 'down to'.

"Until" was replaced by "down to"

Please refer to line 612: A net production of dissolved Si in the soils was observed on the three studied plots down to a depth of 60 cm, showing a positive production/immobilization budget.

I.532: Do you show these relationships in the results section? If not, you should do so.

The correlation coefficient was added in the text.

Please refer to line 615: This is corroborated by the strong relationship between annual Si production in the 10-60 cm soil layers and fine root content (data not shown,  $r^2 = 0.94$ ).

I.534/535: Do you have data on this? If yes, you should present them in your paper. If not, please give some references to support your assumption. Do you have data on this: where testate amoebae and phytoliths accumulated after being transferred from the organic horizons.

We do not have data on this so we deleted this speculative part.

I.541: What do you mean with 'biogenic origin'? Please clarify.

This part of the sentence was deleted to avoid misunderstandings.

Please refer to line 622: At our site, this period was also characterized by a maximum concentration of Si in the bound waters and a negative budget in the 10-cm and 60-cm soil layers, resulting from the precipitation of secondary minerals.

542: Please change 'plant' to 'plants'.

This was changed.

Please refer to line 625: As a result, a drastic decrease of Si production was observed in the surface layer during the vegetation period, where Si uptake by plants occurred (Figure 3).

I.550: I would recommend starting here that BSi in general is more soluble than soil minerals (Frayse and co-workers did some nice experiments on this).

The sentence was modified as suggested.

Please refer to line 638: Because biogenic Si in general is more soluble than lithogenic or pedogenic Si (Frayse et al., 2009 ; Cornelis and Delvaux, 2016), very few of the Si leached within the soil profile directly results from the dissolution of soil minerals, as demonstrated in other studies in temperate forests (Bartoli, 1983; Watteau and Villemin, 2001; Gerard et al, 2008; Cornelis et al., 2010a; Cornelis et al., 2011a; Sommer et al., 2006; Sommer et al., 2013).

I.552: What about deforestation as an important Si output (anthropogenic desilicification)? Please also discuss this important factor and give corresponding literature.

This information was introduced in the manuscript.

Please refer to line 647 : Silicon inputs and outputs have minor contributions to the global Si budget in our forest ecosystems, and the Si cycle is mainly driven by internal fluxes, especially recycling of biogenic Si. However, Struyf et al. (2010) observed that land use is the most important controlling factor of Si mobilization in European watersheds. These authors showed that deforestation and conversion to agricultural land or other land uses leads to a twofold to threefold decrease in baseflow delivery of Si.

I.563: Please replace 'amoebae' by 'testate amoebae'. Do you have an idea about the population size of testate amoebae at your site (individual numbers)?

"Amoebae" was replaced by "testate amoebae". We do not assess the population size of testate amoebae in our study sit.

Please refer to line 661: In the organic horizons and in the soil, mainly in the 0-10 cm layer, we observed a high net Si production, likely resulting from the decomposition of litter leaves and testate amoebae in the organic horizons and of fine roots in the soil (Figure 6).

I.564-566: Please avoid to give redundant information.

We think that this information is partially redundant but important here.

II.571/572: Please change '...strong influence of biological partners, mainly fine roots, and processes in the Si cycle' to '...strong biological influence mainly of fine roots.'

This was changed.

Please refer to line 668: The assessment of Si fluxes and pools in the different compartments of our forested site coupled with a seasonal dynamic follow-up reveal a rapid and almost total recycling of Si in our site and show the strong biological influence, mainly fine roots, and processes in the Si cycle.

I.576-579: Please avoid redundant information.

This sentence was deleted.

I.577 & I.578: Do you mean '3 x 10<sup>3</sup>' and '0.7 x 10<sup>3</sup>' here?

This sentence was deleted.

II.580-583: It is known that the concentration of dissolved Si is a key factor for Si concentrations of plant components (as you also write in your introduction). So please give corresponding literature here and do not highlight this result as a new one. Furthermore, there is also a phylogenetic factor, i.e., phytolith production is probably more influenced by the phylogenetic position of a plant than by environmental factors like temperature or Si availability. In this context, you should also discuss and cite, for example, Hodson et al. (2005) (Hodson, M. J., P. J. White, A. Mead & M. R. Broadley (2005). Phylogenetic variation in the silicon composition of plants. *Annals of Botany* 96, 1027-1046).

Thank you for this interesting remark and paper. This information was added in the manuscript.

Please refer to line 681: The concentration of dissolved Si in the soil is known to influence opal formation in plants (Cornelis et al., 2010b) but phytolith production seems to be more affected by the phylogenetic position of a plant than by environmental factors (Hodson et al., 2005). For example, these authors demonstrated through meta-analysis of the data, that in general ferns, gymnosperms and angiosperms accumulated less Si in their shoots than non-vascular plant species and horsetails.

I.583: Please add 'in soils' after 'concentrations'.

This was added.

Please refer to line 679: This is in agreement with the observations of Heineman et al. (2016) in tropical forests, which demonstrated that nutrient concentrations in wood and leaves correlated positively with soil Ca, K, Mg and P concentrations in soils.

I.584. Why Si concentrations are higher especially in these plant components (leaves: transpiration termini; Roots: special protection of relatively fast growing fine roots)? Please give a more detailed discussion here and add corresponding literature.

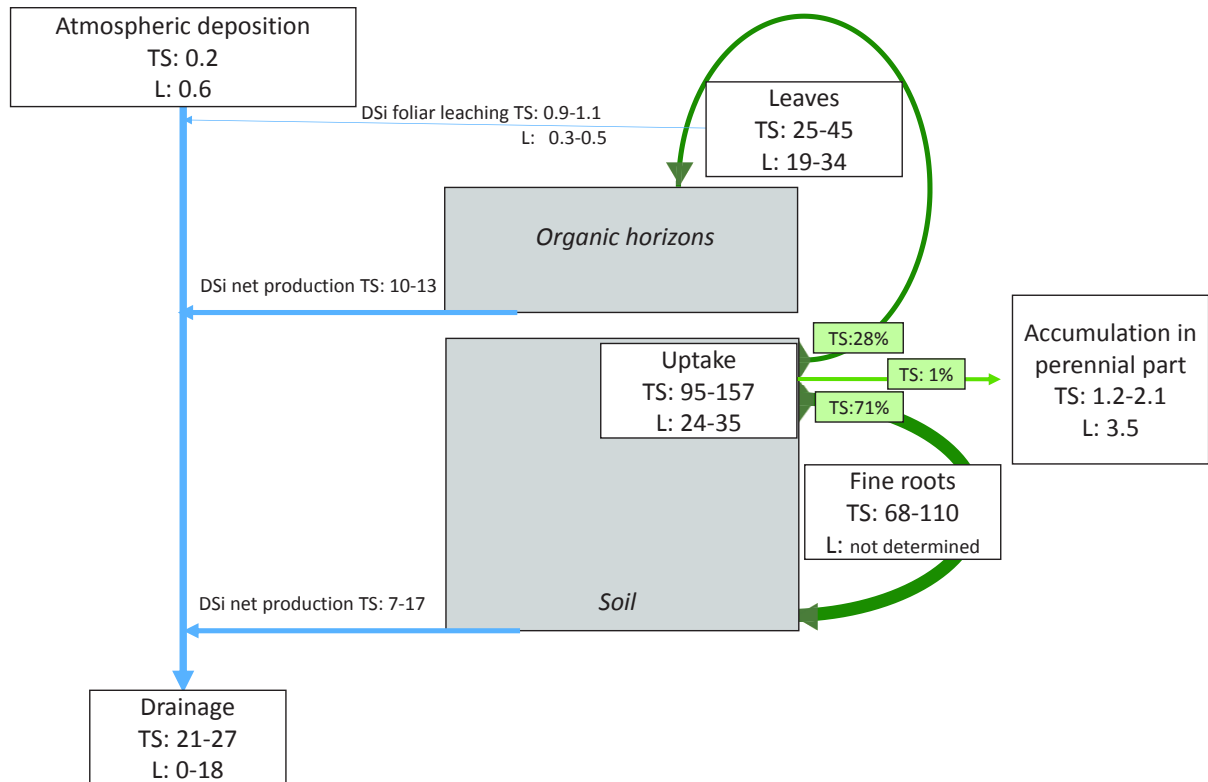
A paragraph dealing with the importance of Si in leaves and roots was added.

Please refer to line 687: Silicon plays several physiological and ecological functions in leaves and roots, such as an involvement in the detoxification of aluminum, oxalic acid, and heavy metals, in the regulation of ion balance, in the reduction of hydric, salt, and temperature stresses (Currie and Perry, 2007; Meunier et al., 2017). They also contribute to the optimization of photosynthesis by gathering and scattering light in the leaves, confer mechanical support and tissue rigidity, and facilitate pollen release, germination, and tube growth (Bauer, Elbaum, & Weiss, 2011; Currie and Perry, 2007; Gal et al., 2012). In addition to these physiological functions, Si has also ecological significance by protecting plants against herbivores and phytopathogens (Currie and Perry, 2007; Lins et al., 2002).

## Conclusions

A synthesis figure was added in the manuscript to summarize the main findings and compare with the data of other studies in similar stand conditions.

Please refer to line 951: **Fig. 7:** Summary scheme of the main findings of this study (TS) and comparison with other studies (L).



I.596: Please be careful with statements like ‘the complete Si cycle’. I would recommend using ‘the Si cycle’ instead.

We agree and thus modified.

Please refer to line 703: By coupling different approaches (annual budget in solid vegetal and solution phases and monthly dynamics of solutions) and methods (direct *in situ* measurements and standard and site specific modelling) to quantify Si pools and fluxes in the different ecosystem compartments, our study allowed us to assess the Si cycle at the forest stand scale.

I.601: Please replace ‘to give dissolved Si’ by ‘in the form of dissolved Si’.

This was replaced.

Please refer to line 709: This suggests that Si cycle is almost closed during the vegetation period; dissolved Si is taken up by vegetation then Si returned to the soil mainly through root and leaf decomposition in the form of dissolved Si, which is again taken up by vegetation.

I.603: Please add ‘on a decadal time scale’ after ‘biogeosystem’.

This was added.

Please refer to line 711: This observation is consistent with the observation of Sommer et al. (2013), who demonstrated a low contribution of geochemical weathering processes to the Si cycle in a forest biogeosystem on a decadal time scale.

I.606: Please add ‘concentrations’ after ‘Si’.

This was added.

Please refer to line 715: The plant compartments were Si-enriched in the soil with higher Si concentration, i.e., DC (plot S1) compared to plant compartments in the RL (plot S3), resulting in 1.6-times higher recycling in plot S1 compared to plot S3.

I.608/609: I would recommend using 'release' or 'instead of 'production'.

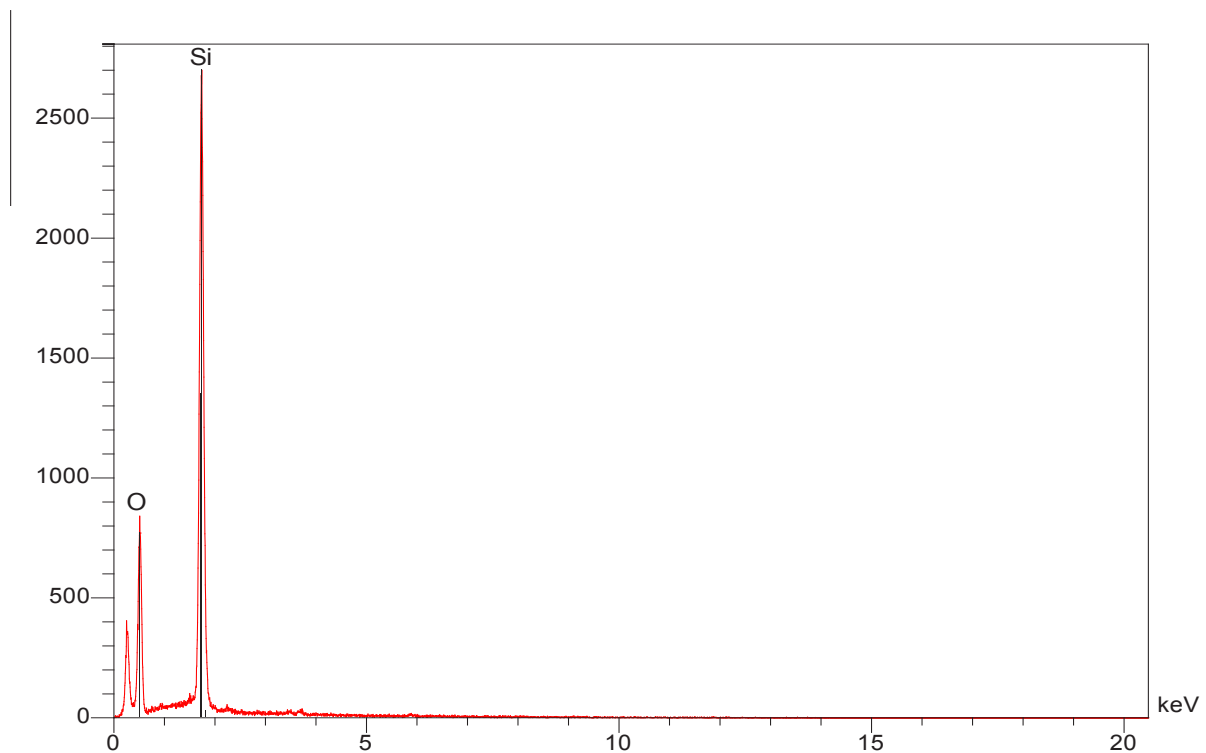
This was changed.

Please refer to line 718: While Si release was relatively similar in the organic horizons for the three plots, its production in the soil, mainly in the 0-10 cm layer, was twice higher in plot S3 and richer in clays than plot S1

Figure captions

Fig. 1: Did you use EDX for elemental analyses?

Yes, the presence of Si was confirmed by EDX for each point with arrows. I join below one of the spectrum carried out on fine roots.



I.760: Please replace 'amoebae' by 'testate amoebae'. I.761: Please change 'altered' to 'aged' and replace 'testate amoebae' by 'testate amoeba shells'.

This was replaced.

Please refer to line 916 : **Fig. 1:** Si in biological tissues of beech trees observed through Scanning Electron Microscopy. (a) Si precipitates in the intercellular space of fresh leaves, forming phytoliths (white arrow). Deposits of Si (vertical white arrows) in the inner cell walls of fruit capsules (b), stem bark (d and e), bud scales (f), and roots (g, h, and i). (c) Hyphae, testate amoebae and large voids in aged litter leaves. Si deposits only present in the testate amoeba shells (horizontal white empty arrows). The presence of Si was confirmed with EDX (analyzed zones indicated by white vertical arrows).

I.774: Please replace 'Histograms' by 'Bars'.

This was replaced.

Please refer to line 935: Bars with an asterisk are significantly different from 0, according to a Kruskal-Wallis test at the threshold P value level of 0.05.

#### Tables

I.792: Please replace 'Are presented the mean values. . .' by 'Presented are the mean values. . .'

This was modified.

Please refer to line 953: **Table 1:** Physicochemical properties of the three studied soils in the Montiers site (plot S1 – DC; plot S2 – EC; plot S3 – RL). Presented are the mean values for bulk density ( $\text{g cm}^{-3}$ ), textural distribution ( $\text{g kg}^{-1}$ ), total rock volume (RV), soil water holding capacity (SWHC), soil water pH, organic matter content (OM), cation exchange capacity (CEC;  $\text{cmol}^+ \text{kg}^{-1}$ ) and base-cation saturation ratio (S/CEC, with S = sum of base cations). Standard deviation values are given in italic. Table adapted from Kirchen et al. (2017).

I.798: Please specify which differences were evaluated (DC vs. EC vs. RL?).

This was specified.

Please refer to line 960: **Table 2:** Mean Si contents, pools and fluxes in the biomass of the three soils of the Montiers site. Standard deviation values are given in brackets. Values with different letters are significantly different according to a Kruskal-Wallis test at the threshold P value level of 0.05 (soil effect, DC vs. EC vs. RL).

Table 3: Why did you test only the total soil depth on statistical significance? Interestingly, the upper compartments are quite comparable at the three sites, only in the deeper soils (30-90 cm) there seem to be significant differences.

Statistical significance was added for each depth.

Please refer to line 965.

Table 4: I cannot find any letters marking statistical significances. Better use 'Si concentration' for Si in  $\text{g kg}^{-1}$  or  $\text{mg l}^{-1}$  instead of 'Si content'. What about the mineral composition of the different soils? It would be nice to have also data on this.

Letters marking statistical significances were added and Si concentration was used.

Please refer to line 970.

Information regarding the geology and the mineralogy of the site was also added but details were already presented in Calvaruso et al. (2017)

Please refer to line 160: The geology of the Montiers site consists of two overlapping soil parent materials: an underlying Tithonian limestone surmounted by detrital acidic Valanginian sediments. The calcareous bedrock contains mainly calcium carbonate and ~3.4% clay minerals. The overlying detrital sediments are complex, as they result from various depositions and are composed of silt, clay, coarse sand and iron oxide nodules (for more details, see Calvaruso et al., 2017).

#### Figures

Fig. 1: What are the black arrows pointing at (micrograph c)? Please specify or give uniform arrows.

The empty horizontal white arrows indicate the location of testate amoebae. This was added in the legend of Figure 1.

Please refer to line 916: **Fig. 1:** Si in biological tissues of beech trees observed through Scanning Electron Microscopy. (a) Si precipitates in the intercellular space of fresh leaves, forming phytoliths

(vertical white arrow). Deposits of Si (white arrows) in the inner cell walls of fruit capsules (b), stem bark (d and e), bud scales (f), and roots (g, h, and i). (c) Hyphae, testate amoebae and large voids in aged litter leaves. Si deposits only present in the testate amoeba shells (horizontal empty white arrows). The presence of Si was confirmed with EDX (analyzed zones indicated by white vertical arrows).

Fig. 2 & 3: Why do you use single data of four years in one diagram (Fig. 2) and means with standard deviations in another one (Fig. 3)? I would recommend unifying the presentation of your results.

The objectives of the two figures are different. In the Figure 2, we want to show the seasonal and inter-annual variations (on four years) of the dissolved Si in the throughfall solution. In the figure 3, we want to show the seasonal variations over four years of the dissolved Si in the different soil compartments.

Fig. 5: Please correct the unit of dissolved Si.

This was corrected.

Fig. 6: As you can go full color in this journal I would recommend using different colors for data of the different sites.

Good idea so we did it.

Please refer to line 944: **Fig. 6:** ...For each pool and flux, values presented are those of the plots S1 (in green), S2 (in orange), and S3 (in blue), respectively...

Fig. 6: Please correct the values of soil Si pools (x103).

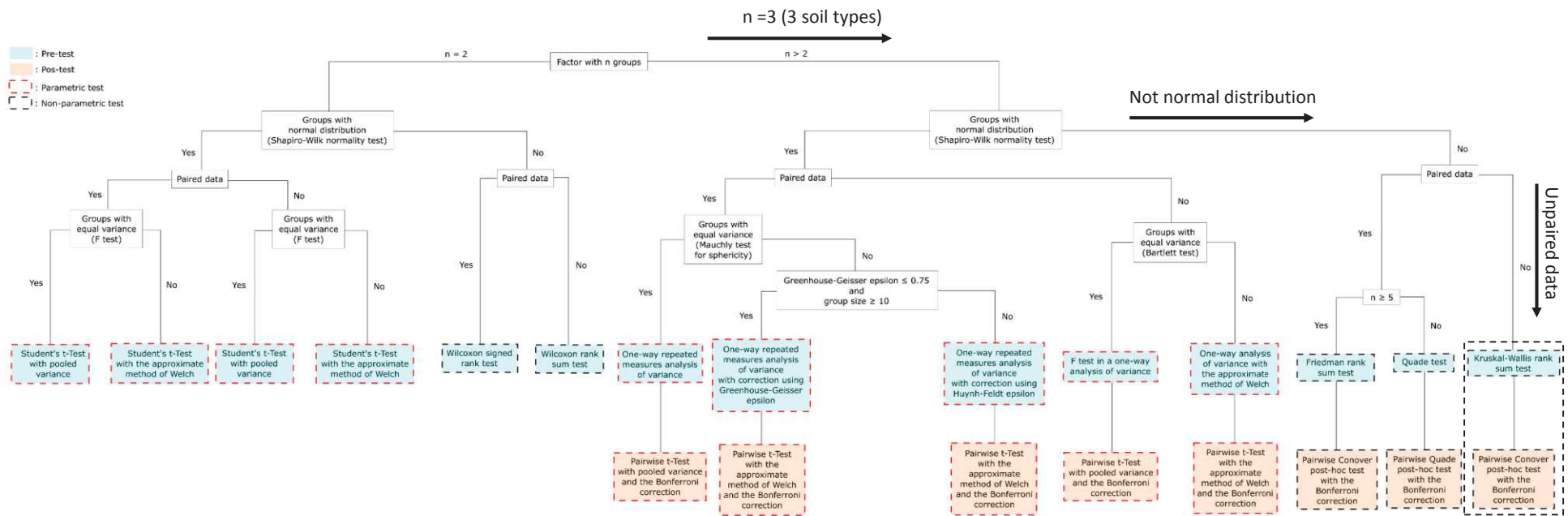
This was corrected.

Fig. 6: What about soil pH effects? I especially wonder at Si drainage values of S3 (0-10 cm). You should also give a more detailed discussion on this aspect.

Interesting suggestion, however too much soil parameters, mainly soil texture/structure, affect the drainage and it is complicated to discriminate the influence of each one. So we prefer to do not deal with the effect of pH on drainage in this paper. Maybe in another one. However we added a part in the discussion where we compare the drainage flux in our study site with other data in the literature, and we succinctly present the possible origin of the differences observed.

Please refer to line 916: The annual drainage flux ranged from 21 to 27 kg Si ha<sup>-1</sup> y<sup>-1</sup> in the three soils of the Montiers site which is higher than those measured in other beech forests by Bartoli (1983; 0 kg Si ha<sup>-1</sup> y<sup>-1</sup>), Cornelis et al. (2010b, 6 kg Si ha<sup>-1</sup> y<sup>-1</sup>), Sommer et al. (2013; 14 kg Si ha<sup>-1</sup> y<sup>-1</sup>), and Clymans et al. (2011; 18 kg Si ha<sup>-1</sup> y<sup>-1</sup>). The differences can result from multiple factors, i.e., topography, soil properties (texture, structure, pH), rainfall (level and intensity) and other climatic factors, and stand characteristics (tree species and age, stem density, ground vegetal cover...).





Dear colleague,

First of all we would like to thank you (reviewer 2) for the relevance of your comments. In addition with those of the reviewer 1, this has considerably improved the quality of the manuscript. Notably, from your comments, we realized that some important parts of the manuscript were not enough clear (we shall be taking a closer look on this aspect below) and that some relevant literature was missing (as also specified by reviewer 1). In consequence we did important modifications in the manuscript to clarify our approach and objectives, as well as to introduce the relevant literature. Please find below, our responses (in blue) to each of your remark (in black), and the location of the modifications brought to the text (in blue).

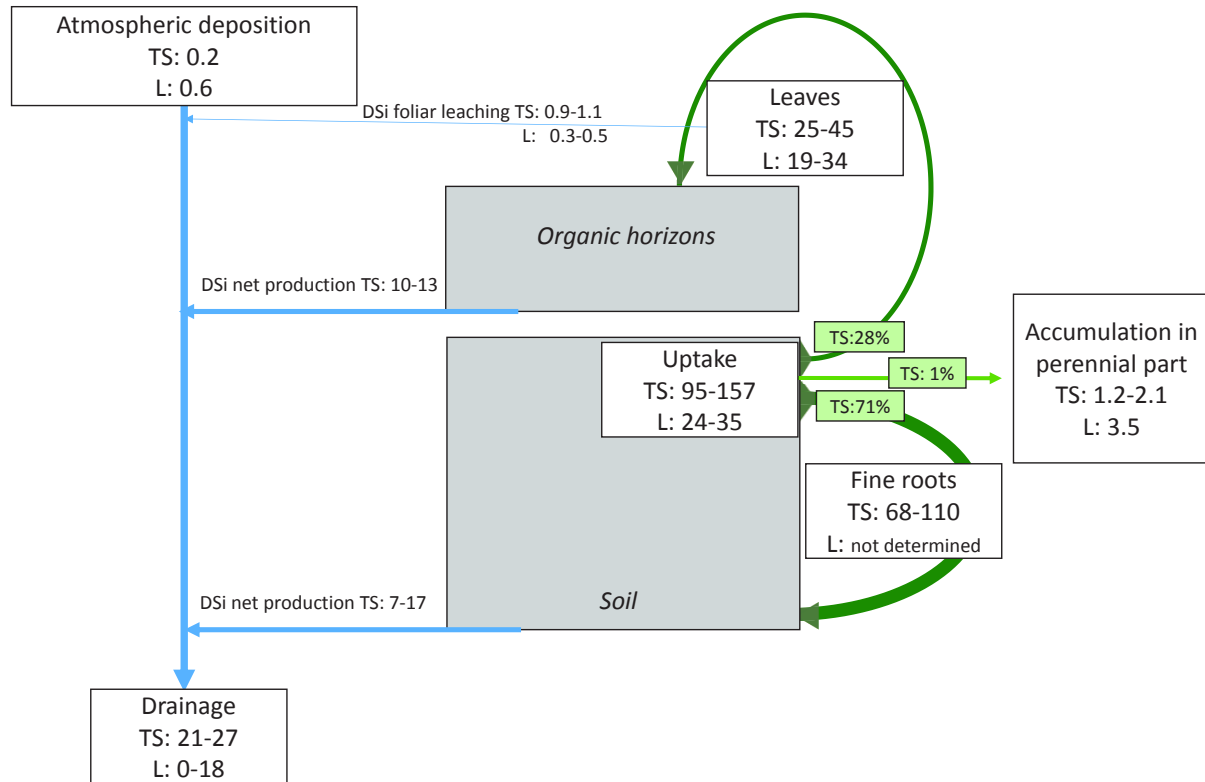
In this manuscript, Marie-Pierre Turpault et al. address the role of fine roots, litterfall and soil type on Si cycling in a temperate forest system. The main and surprising novelty of this manuscript lies in the observation that fine roots actually are a large Si reservoir in forest soils. To my knowledge, no other authors have ever performed a similarly detailed exercise to quantify the amount of Si in the forest root system. Quantifying root biomass is difficult, and these authors have done a tremendous effort to take on this challenge. While this is a finding worth publishing in itself, I have strong reservations regarding the mass balance the authors have made for the whole forest ecosystem. These reservations are mainly related to the applied methodology to analyse for Si in the soil system, which is inadequate to assess the complicated Si cycle in the soil, as it does not distinguish any pedogenic nor biogenic Si fractions from the abundant mineral fractions. This prevents to make any major conclusions on the role of soil type in the Si mass balance, and also makes it difficult to assess the cycling of litterfall Si in soils, once dissolved. Multiple secondary pedogenic fractions are accumulated deeper in the soil. In conclusion, I am impressed with the root Si quantification the authors have performed, and I think that a focused manuscript emphasizing the importance of roots in the forest Si cycle is worthy of publication. I also think that a more focused manuscript would have a larger impact on the interested scientific community. The authors should either improve methodology if they want to address the full Si cycle in the forest, or far better emphasize the methodological shortfalls in their discussion, that prevent to make any statement on the full forest Si cycle, and focus on the interesting story of the roots. I will make more detailed comments below.

We agree with your remarks, the methodologies used in our study prevent to conclude on the whole Si budget in the ecosystem. But this was not the objective of our study and we understand by reading your review that our manuscript was not enough clear. In consequence, we drastically modified several sections to focus on the interesting findings of our study, as you suggested. The main changes made on the revised version of the manuscript are:

- i) The title was modified as follows: "Contribution of tree fine roots to the silicon cycle in a temperate forest ecosystem developed on three soil types"
- ii) The introduction was rewritten to focus on the Si cycle in forest ecosystems and on the possible contribution of fine roots to the Si cycle which introduce our study (see below in details).
- iii) The discussion was partially rewritten to focus on the interesting results and discuss them in comparison with the literature (see below in details). Some speculative interpretations were deleted.
- iv) A new paragraph was added at the end of the conclusion to introduce succinctly some future challenges necessary to approach the whole Si cycle in forests (see below).

v) A figure summarizing the main findings of our study with comparisons with other studies was added in the conclusion. This clearly reveals the contribution of our study.

Please refer to line 951: **Fig. 7: Summary scheme of the main findings of this study (TS) and comparison with other studies (L).**



The approaches used in our study allow us to:

- To determine that a mean of 71% of the Si accumulated by trees returns to the soil via fine root decomposition, widely overpassing the contribution of litterfall (28%). That reveals that almost all the Si accumulated in trees is recycled.
- To assess the Si drainage in the soil: between 20 and 27 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> y<sup>-1</sup> for the three soil types with a great part in the organic horizons (biological origin), between 10 and 13 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> y<sup>-1</sup>,
- To compare the two soil outputs, the leaching and the tree uptake (between 157 and 95 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> y<sup>-1</sup> for the three soil types. On average 78% to 88% of the Si produced in the soil were taken up by trees
- To discriminate the net Si production and consumption in each soil horizon and the seasonal dynamics of these fluxes in relation with biological activities,

These results coupled with other studies provide evidence to develop a strategy aiming to assess the whole Si budget in terrestrial ecosystems. In another paper...

Line 45: I am becoming a bit annoyed by all Si manuscripts starting with the same statement. Can we just accept that it is now common knowledge that there is a lot of Si in the Earth's crust, and that minerals dissolve. This manuscript is about forest Si cycling, and the role of biological processes in the Si cycle. This has been well described in several review papers over the last years (e.g. Conley, GBC, 2002, Volume 16; Cornelis et al., Biogeosciences, 2011, Volume 8; Struyf Conley, 2012, Biogeochemistry, Volume 107).

We agree with this remark and drastically modified the introduction to take into account all remarks of both reviewers. Some relevant literature was added.

Please refer to line 45: 1 Introduction:

It has recently been shown that intense biogeochemical cycling of Si occurs in the different terrestrial ecosystems, i.e., wetlands (Struyf et al., 2007; Emsens et al., 2016), grasslands (Blecker et al., 2006; White et al., 2012), tropical forests (Lucas et al., 1993, Alexandre et al., 1997) and temperate forests (Bartoli, 1983; Watteau and Villemin, 2001; Gerard et al., 2008; Cornelis et al., 2010a; Cornelis et al., 2011a; Sommer et al., 2006; Sommer et al., 2013). Several review papers well described that soil DSi is taken up by vascular plants and translocated into biogenic Si (BSi) under opal form which is deposited into the cell walls, cell lumina and intercellular spaces (Jones and Handreck, 1965; Conley et al., 2002; Cornelis et al., 2011b; Struyf and Conley, 2012). These structures are called phytoliths. Other important producers of biogenic Si are animals especially diatoms, sponges and testate amoebae (Struyf and Conley, 2012; Sommers et al., 2006; Puppe et al., 2014; Puppe et al., 2015).

According to Conley (2002), the annual fixation of DSi into terrestrial ecosystems has been estimated to range from 60 to 200 Tmoles. That represents 10 to 40 times more than yearly export DSi and suspended biogenic Si from the terrestrial geobiosphere to the coastal zone (Conley, 2002). Vegetation can thus be considered as a factory of BSi which returns to the soil as organic matter through biological recycling. Because BSi in general is more soluble than silicate minerals, BSi strongly contributes to the DSi pool (Frayse et al., 2009 ; Cornelis and Delvaux, 2016).

Based on the assumption that the storage of Si is limited in roots (Bartoli and Souchier, 1986) and because fine root sampling and cleaning before analyses are long and tedious processes, studies in forest ecosystems mainly focus on the importance of litterfall recycling on the Si biogeochemical cycle without quantifying Si in the roots (Gérard et al., 2008; Cornelis et al., 2010a; Sommer et al., 2013).

However, Krieger et al (2017) recently showed that Si in deciduous trees (European beech, *Fagus sylvatica* and sycamore maple, *Acer pseudoplatanus*) generally precipitates as a thin layer (< 0.5 µm) around the cells, especially in roots and bark. These small-scale phytogenic Si was demonstrated to influence various soil and plant processes (Meunier et al., 2017 ; Puppe et al., 2017).

Considering the large amount of Si precipitates in roots (Krieger et al., 2017) and the rapid turnover of fine roots in forest ecosystems (approximately one year in beech forests in Europe; Brunner et al., 2013), we hypothesized that fine roots could significantly contribute to the input of BSi into the soil.

To test this hypothesis, we quantified during a four-year observation period (i) the total and annual accumulations of Si in stand belowground and aboveground biomasses while distinguishing annual and perennial compartments, (ii) the Si input fluxes in the forest floor (litterfall and small woods, aboveground exploitation residues) and in the soil (fine roots and belowground exploitation residues). The study was led in a lowland (low lateral transfer of material) deciduous temperate forest developed on three soils, ranging from a shallow calcic soil to a deep acidic soil, with mull to acid mull humus. These humus forms quickly degrades, contain few soil particles and no root thus allowing to determine the DSi issued from the degradation of organic layers contrary to mor or moder humus forms (Sommer et al., 2006; Cornelis et al., 2010a). In addition, we monthly quantified in these ecosystems the DSi inputs and outputs, i.e., rainfall, foliar leaching and drainage, in order to assess the seasonal dynamics of these fluxes induced by biological activities.

We also added a new paragraph in the conclusion to present some future challenges on the basis of our findings.

Please refer to line 721: Further research is needed in the mid-term (i) to assess the mineralisation speed of fine roots in the soil and the speed of transformation of the BSi of roots into DSi, (ii) determine the annual and seasonal fate of the DSi issued from roots, between uptake, mineral precipitation, drainage, fixation by organisms, and (iii) quantify the vertical transfer of solid particulates between organic horizons and topsoil.

Line 57 and beyond: I really don't see why this is important to this manuscript. The division between accumulators, excluders and neutrals is anyway arbitrary, if based on concentration. The Si uptake of plants is also governed by external Si factors, such as its availability.

We agree, this sentence was deleted.

Line 62: Why also? You have not referred to forests before, so 'also' seems out of place here. What about wetlands, one of the most studied system in the biological Si cycle? If you provide a list, wetlands should be there.

We agree so this sentence was modified and expanded.

Please refer to line 46: It has recently been shown that intense biogeochemical cycling of Si occurs in the different terrestrial ecosystems, i.e., wetlands (Struyf et al., 2007; Emsens et al., 2016), grasslands (Blecker et al., 2006; White et al., 2012), tropical forests (Lucas et al., 1993, Alexandre et al., 1997) and temperate forests (Bartoli, 1983; Watteau and Villemin, 2001; Gerard et al, 2008; Cornelis et al., 2010a; Cornelis et al., 2011a; Sommer et al., 2006; Sommer et al., 2013).

Line 67: Here comes the first reference to later methodological issues. This statement is untrue. In recent years, methodologies have been developed that allow to distinguish pedogenic, reactive mineral and biogenic Si phases in soils (e.g. Barao et al. 2014, European Journal of Soil Science, 65, Barao et al., LO Methods, 13, 2015; Georgiadis et al., 2015, Soil Research 52).

This sentence was deleted.

Line 76: soap? Probably sap is meant.

Sorry for the mistake, the sentence was rewritten.

Please refer to line 61: Based on the assumption that the storage of Si is limited in roots (Bartoli and Souchier, 1986) and because fine root sampling and cleaning before analyses are long and tedious processes, studies in forest ecosystems mainly focus on the importance of litterfall recycling on the Si biogeochemical cycle without quantifying Si in the roots (Gérard et al., 2008; Cornelis et al., 2010a; Sommer et al., 2013).

Line 90: the second hypothesis is not really novel, Cornelis (et al.) (see also reference list of paper) has already published multiple papers on this issue. In these papers, he shows that methodology is quintessential in addressing the complicated soil type-Si cycling coupling, and the applied method that does not distinguish any secondary soil Si fractions from minerals is inadequate to address the hypothesis. Line 104: Why? If you want to address the whole forest Si cycle, the soil is of the essence. If you do not apply best available methods (see above) here, then you start with a strong handicap. Line 209: total fusion is unable to provide sufficiently detailed results for assessing soil Si cycling, where multiple secondary Si fractions form that are actually essential in the whole ecosystem Si balance.

We agree with all of these remarks. See our general explanation above and the changes made to the manuscript.

Line 93-95: awkward wording, consider revising

This sentence was deleted.

Line 113: without any reference to these networks, their relevance is not clear.

This sentence was expanded.

Please refer to line 154: The Montiers site is part of different national and international research networks, i.e., SOERE (Long-lasting observation and experimentation for the research on environment)-OPE (Perennial Environment Observatory; <http://www.andra.fr/ope/index.php?lang=en&Itemid=127>) and F-ORE-T (Functioning of Forest Ecosystems; <http://www.gip-ecofor.org/f-ore-t/>), and AnaEE (Analysis and Experimentations on Ecosystems; <https://www.anaee.com/>).

General: ceramic cups? Why not plastic? Can ceramic cups potentially add Si to solution? Has this been tested?

This material is used for many decades in our different experimental forest sites and was of course experimentally tested to ensure the absence of release of elements including Si by the ceramic. Cornelis et al. used the same equipment.

General: I miss any comparison with recent studies that have also made forest Si efflux quantifications. How do your fluxes compare to e.g. Struyf et al. (2010, Nature Communications, 1 and Clymans et al. 2013, Biogeochemistry, 11). I think a section putting the observed effluxes in the context of other literature, would be far more interesting than the attempt to discuss the role of soil Si processes in the forest Si cycle, given the flawed methodology here. The suction cups do provide an idea of the leakage, and focus should be on how this compares to root turnover and forest Si uptake. In general, I have the impression that Si efflux in this paper is rather low compared to other studies. Is this maybe because these are young forests? Or due to management?

- We agree that these remarks and thus written a new paragraph dedicated to compare our drainage flux with tree uptake, and with drainage in other studies in similar conditions.

Please refer to line 630: The annual drainage flux ranged from 21 to 27 kg Si ha<sup>-1</sup> y<sup>-1</sup> in the three soils of the Montiers site which is higher than those measured in other beech forests by Bartoli (1983; 0 kg Si ha<sup>-1</sup> y<sup>-1</sup>), Cornelis et al. (2010b, 6 kg Si ha<sup>-1</sup> y<sup>-1</sup>), Sommer et al. (2013; 14 kg Si ha<sup>-1</sup> y<sup>-1</sup>), and Clymans et al. (2011; 18 kg Si ha<sup>-1</sup> y<sup>-1</sup>). The differences can result from multiple factors, i.e., topography, soil properties (texture, structure, pH), rainfall (level and intensity) and other climatic factors, and stand characteristics (tree species and age, stem density, ground vegetal cover...). In our study, the Si leached out of the soil profile was negligible compared to the Si taken up by trees, i.e., ratios of 1:4 to 1:7 in RL and DC, respectively. If we deduce the part of Si leached from the organic horizons, these ratios rise to about 1:5 to 1:22 in RL and DC. Because biogenic Si in general is more soluble than lithogenic or pedogenic Si (Frayse et al., 2009 ; Cornelis and Delvaux, 2016), very few of the Si leached within the soil profile directly results from the dissolution of soil minerals, as demonstrated in other studies in temperate forests (Bartoli, 1983; Watteau and Villemin, 2001; Gerard et al, 2008; Cornelis et al., 2010a; Cornelis et al., 2011a; Sommer et al., 2006; Sommer et al., 2013).

- In addition, the interesting results of Struyf et al. (2010) was also discussed, in another section, dealing with the influence of forest deforestation on Si cycle, an important point that we neglected in the original version of the manuscript.

Please refer to line 648: However, Struyf et al. (2010) observed that land use is the most important controlling factor of Si mobilization in European watersheds. These authors showed that deforestation and conversion to agricultural land or other land uses leads to a twofold to threefold decrease in baseflow delivery of Si.

- Finally, other relevant literature was added in the different sections to support our assumption or compare our data with other studies.

Please refer to line 65: However, Krieger et al (2017) recently showed that Si in deciduous trees (European beech, *Fagus sylvatica* and sycamore maple, *Acer pseudoplatanus*) generally precipitates as a thin layer (< 0.5 µm) around the cells, especially in roots and bark. These small-scale phytogenic Si was demonstrated to influence various soil and plant processes (Meunier et al., 2017 ; Puppe et al., 2017).

Please refer to line 540: The Si content in beech fine roots was very higher (2 to 6 times) than that measured by Maguire et al. (2017) for another deciduous species, i.e. sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) but in a cooler environment. Besides Maguire et al. (2017) demonstrated in this study that increased soil freezing significantly lowers the Si content of sugar maple fine roots.

Please refer to line 572: The higher rate of soil pollution in the study of Cornelis et al. (2010a) can be explained by the presence of a thick Oh layer in the moder that was in direct contact with the superficial soil layer and was characterized by an intense mixing of degraded organic matter with soil particles, induced by biological activities, mainly bioturbation by earthworms in these soils (Lavelle, 1988).

Please refer to line 592: This flux is likely the solid particulate migration toward the topsoil layer, as demonstrated by Ugolini et al. (1977). These authors observed that organic particles containing notably silicon were predominant in the migrant material in the upper soil horizons. In our study, the solid particulate migration from the organic horizons to the topsoil may consist of the colloid transport of amoebae (Harter et al., 2000) or the transport of phytoliths (Fishkis et al. 2010). These latter observed, though a field study using fluorescent labelling, that the downward transport distance of phytoliths after one year was  $3.99 \pm 1.21$  cm for a Cambisol with a preferential translocation of small-sized phytoliths.

Please refer to line 681: The concentration of dissolved Si in the soil is known to influence opal formation in plants (Cornelis et al., 2010b) but phytolith production seems to be more affected by the phylogenetic position of a plant than by environmental factors (Hodson et al., 2005). For example, these authors demonstrated through meta-analysis of the data, that in general ferns, gymnosperms and angiosperms accumulated less Si in their shoots than non-vascular plant species and horsetails.

Please refer to line 687: Silicon plays several physiological and ecological functions in leaves and roots, such as an involvement in the detoxification of aluminum, oxalic acid, and heavy metals, in the regulation of ion balance, in the reduction of hydric, salt, and temperature stresses (Currie and Perry, 2007; Meunier et al., 2017). They also contribute to the optimization of photosynthesis by gathering and scattering light in the leaves, confer mechanical support and tissue rigidity, and facilitate pollen release, germination, and tube growth (Bauer, Elbaum, & Weiss, 2011; Currie and Perry, 2007; Gal et al., 2012). In addition to these physiological functions, Si has also ecological significance by protecting plants against herbivores and phytopathogens (Currie and Perry, 2007; Lins et al., 2002).

Line 451: Consumption during autumn? Rather contradictory to forest growth in spring and summer? Pedogenic processes at play? Also in apparent contrast to later references to a net Si efflux in fall (Line 536)?

The term “consumption” does not necessarily implies tree uptake. As you suggested this Si consumption in fall was probably induced by pedogenic processes such as precipitation of secondary minerals as explained in line 626: In the deeper layer, the dissolved Si budget was significantly negative and likely corresponded to mineral precipitation, induced by a decrease of Si drainage with the depth, as observed by Sommer et al. (2013).

To avoid misunderstandings, the term “consumption” was replaced in the whole manuscript by the

term “immobilization”. In addition, the term “accumulation” is now used for the elements immobilized in tree biomass (instead of immobilization).

Line 451 (in the first version of the manuscript) refers to the deeper soil layer “In the 60-90 cm layer of plot S1, we observed the immobilization of dissolved Si (Figure 5)” while line 536 (in the first version of the manuscript) refers to all soil layers except the deeper one. This last sentence was modified to be clearer.

Please refer to line 619: A peak of net Si production was observed during fall (except in the deeper soil layer ; Figure 3), which was probably due to an increase in Si production through the decomposition of dead roots.

Line 462: I would not use “global” in this local ecosystem context

We agree. This paragraph was completely deleted.

Line 515-522: I don’t understand. First a significant accumulation is discussed, but a few lines below limited accumulation is mentioned?

We agree that this paragraph was not clear so we rewritten it and added some relevant literature to support our assumptions.

Please refer to line 589: During the study period (2012-2015), the Si input in the organic horizons via litterfall were primarily higher than the Si output via soluble transport (assessed in ZTL solutions under the forest floor) for the three soils. This net flux of Si should have induced the accumulation of Si in the organic horizons, what we did not observe in the four years of the study. This suggests the existence of another output flux which was not quantified in our study. This flux is likely the solid particulate migration toward the topsoil layer, as demonstrated by Ugolini et al. (1977). These authors observed that organic particles containing notably silicon were predominant in the migrant material in the upper soil horizons. In our study, the solid particulate migration from the organic horizons to the topsoil may consist of the colloid transport of amoebae (Harter et al., 2000) or the transport of phytoliths (Fishkis et al. 2010). These latter observed, though a field study using fluorescent labelling, that the downrard transport distance of phytoliths after one year was  $3.99 \pm 1.21$  cm for a Cambisol with a preferential translocation of small-sized phytoliths.

Line 547: I don’t understand how you can state the biological origin, if you apply total fusion.

This sentence was not clear so we deleted it.



**Contribution of tree fine roots to the Silicon cycle in a temperate forest ecosystem developed on three soil types: rôle of fine roots and litterfall recycling and influence of soil types**

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## Abstract

The role of forest vegetation in the silicon (Si) cycle has been widely examined. However, to date, ~~no study has investigated~~ ~~rare is known about~~ the specific role of fine roots. The main objectives of our study were to assess the influence of fine roots ~~as well as the impact of soil properties~~ on the Si cycle in a temperate forest in northeastern France. Silicon pools and fluxes in ~~vegetal~~ solid and solution phases were quantified within each ecosystem compartment, i.e., the atmosphere, aboveground and belowground tree tissues, forest floor, and different soil horizons, on three plots, each with different soil types, i.e., Dystric Cambisol (~~DC~~ ~~(plot S1)~~), Eutric Cambisol (~~EC~~ ~~(plot S2)~~), and Rendzic Leptosol (~~RL~~ ~~(plot S3)~~). In this study, we took advantage of a natural soil gradient, from shallow calcic soil to deep moderately acidic soil, with similar climates, atmospheric depositions, species composition and management. Soil solutions were measured monthly for four years to study the seasonal dynamics of Si fluxes. A budget of dissolved Si was also determined for the forest floor and soil layers. Our study highlighted the major role of fine roots in the Si cycle in forest ecosystems for all soil types. Because of the abundance of fine roots mainly in the superficial soil horizons, their high Si concentration (equivalent to that of leaves and two orders higher than that of coarse roots) and their rapid turnover rate (approximately one year), the mean annual Si fluxes in fine roots in the three plots ranged from 68 to 110 ~~kg-ha<sup>-1</sup>kg ha<sup>-1</sup>-y<sup>-1</sup>~~ for the ~~Rendzic Leptosol~~ ~~RL~~ and the ~~Dystric Cambisol~~ ~~DC~~, respectively. The turnover of fine roots and leaves was approximately 71% and 28% of the total Si taken up by trees each year, respectively, demonstrating the importance of biological recycling in the Si cycle in forests. Less than 1% of the Si taken up by trees each year accumulated in the perennial tissues. This study also demonstrated the influence of soil type on the concentration of Si in the annual tissues and therefore on the Si fluxes in forests. The concentrations of Si in leaves and fine roots were approximately 1.5-2.0 times higher in the “Si-rich” ~~Dystric Cambisol~~ ~~DC~~ compared to the “Si-poor” ~~Rendzic Leptosol~~ ~~RL~~. In terms of the dissolved Si budget, there were large amounts of dissolved Si in the three plots on the forest floor (9.9 to 12.7 ~~kg-ha<sup>-1</sup>kg ha<sup>-1</sup>-y<sup>-1</sup>~~) and in the superficial soil horizon (5.3 to 14.5 ~~kg-ha<sup>-1</sup>kg ha<sup>-1</sup>-y<sup>-1</sup>~~), and Si decreased with depth in plot ~~S1~~ ~~DC~~ (1.7 ~~kg-ha<sup>-1</sup>kg ha<sup>-1</sup>-y<sup>-1</sup>~~). The amount of Si leached from the soil profile was relatively low compared to the annual uptake by trees (13% in plot ~~S1~~ ~~DC~~ to 29% in plot S3). The monthly measurements demonstrated that the seasonal dynamics of the dissolved Si budget were mainly linked to biological activity. Notably, the peak of dissolved Si production in the superficial soil horizon was during the winter and probably resulted from fine root decomposition. Our study reveals that biological processes, particularly those of fine roots, play a predominant role in the Si cycle in temperate forest ecosystems, while the geochemical processes appear to be limited.

It has recently been shown that intense biogeochemical cycling of Si occurs in the different terrestrial ecosystems, i.e., wetlands (Struyf et al., 2007; Emsens et al., 2016), grasslands (Blecker et al., 2006; White et al., 2012), tropical forests (Lucas et al., 1993, Alexandre et al., 1997) and temperate forests (Bartoli, 1983; Watteau and Villemin, 2001; Gerard et al, 2008; Cornelis et al., 2010a; Cornelis et al., 2011a; Sommer et al., 2006; Sommer et al., 2013).

50 Several review papers well described that soil DSi is taken up by vascular plants and translocated into biogenic Si (BSi) under opal form which is deposited into the cell walls, cell lumina and intercellular spaces (Jones and Handreck, 1965; Conley et al., 2002; Cornelis et al, 2011b; Struyf and Conley, 2012). These structures are called phytoliths. Other important producers of biogenic Si are animals especially diatoms, sponges and testate amoebae. (Struyf and Conley, 2012; Sommers et al., 2006; Puppe et al., 2014; Puppe et al., 2015).

55 According to Conley (2002), the annual fixation of DSi into terrestrial ecosystems has been estimated to range from 60 to 200 Tmoles. That represents 10 to 40 times more than yearly export DSi and suspended biogenic Si from the terrestrial geobiosphere to the coastal zone (Conley, 2002). Vegetation can thus be considered as a factory of BSi which returns to the soil as organic matter through biological recycling. Because BSi in general is more soluble than silicate minerals, BSi strongly contributes to the DSi pool (Frayse et al., 2009 ; Cornelis and Delvaux,

60 2016).

Based on the assumption that the storage of Si is limited in roots (Bartoli and Souchier, 1986) and because fine root sampling and cleaning before analyses are long and tedious processes, studies in forest ecosystems mainly focus on the importance of litterfall recycling on the Si biogeochemical cycle without quantifying Si in the roots (Gérard et al., 2008; Cornelis et al., 2010a; Sommer et al., 2013).

65 However, Krieger et al (2017) recently showed that Si in deciduous trees (European beech, *Fagus sylvatica* and sycamore maple, *Acer pseudoplatanus*) generally precipitates as a thin layer (< 0.5 µm) around the cells, especially in roots and bark. These small-scale phytogenic Si was demonstrated to influence various soil and plant processes (Meunier et al., 2017 ; Puppe et al., 2017).

Considering the large amount of Si precipitates in roots (Krieger et al., 2017) and the rapid turnover of fine roots in forest ecosystems (approximately one year in beech forests in Europe; Brunner et al., 2013), we hypothesized that fine roots could significantly contribute to the input of BSi into the soil.

70 To test this hypothesis, we quantified during a four-year observation period (i) the total and annual accumulations of Si in stand belowground and aboveground biomasses while distinguishing annual and perennial compartments, ii) the Si input fluxes in the forest floor (litterfall and small woods, aboveground exploitation residues) and in the soil (fine roots and belowground exploitation residues). The study was led in a lowland (low lateral transfer of material) deciduous temperate forest developed on three soils, ranging from a shallow calcic soil to a deep acidic soil, with mull to acid mull humus. These humus forms quickly degrades, contain few soil particles and no root thus allowing to determine the DSi issued from the degradation of organic layers contrary to mor or moder humus forms (Sommer et al., 2006; Cornelis et al., 2010a). In addition, we monthly quantified in these ecosystems the

75 Dsi inputs and outputs, i.e., rainfall, foliar leaching and drainage, in order to assess the seasonal dynamics of these fluxes induced by biological activities.

80

~~Silicon (Si) is ubiquitous in the earth's crust (Her, 1979) and in the soil (McKeague and Cline, 1963), where it plays an important role in soil processes through the dissolution of silicate minerals and the precipitation of~~

85 secondary minerals such as clay minerals or poorly crystalline and amorphous siliceous compounds (Dixon and  
Weed, 1989). In the 1980s and 1990s, several studies showed that Si in soils also had can also be of biogenic  
origin (Bartoli and Wilding, 1980; Lucas et al., 1993). Monosilicic acid in pore soil solution is taken up by vascular  
plants and is deposited as opal into the cell walls, cell lumina and intercellular spaces (Jones and Handreck, 1965).  
90 Plants contain between 0.1 and 15% Si (Mitani and Ma, 2005), and solid hydrated amorphous Si is mainly  
incorporated in leaves, stems and roots (Piperno, 1988; Drees et al. 1989). Si biomineralization in plant organs  
enhances plant resistance against insects and pathogenic microorganisms by acting as a physical barrier to prevent  
penetration and by inducing plant defence responses (Cai et al., 2008; Ma and Yamaji, 2006; Massey and Hartley,  
2009). Silicon also plays a role in plant detoxification by co-precipitating with aluminium and heavy metals (He  
et al., 2013). Depending on the mechanism of Si uptake, i.e., exclusive, passive and active, plants belong to three  
95 main categories referred to as Si excluders, Si intermediate types and Si accumulators (Takahashi et al., 1990).  
The Si concentration of pore water solution in soils and plant transpiration have also influenced opal formation in  
plants (Cornelis et al., 2010b). Thus, Si recycling by plants is influenced by soil type when the soil develops from  
contrasting bedrocks (rich in silicate and poor in silicate, such as limestone).  
The relevance of biological Si cycling, namely, through the biogenic pool of Si in soils induced by organic matter  
100 decomposition, also has been demonstrated for other numerous terrestrial ecosystems, i.e., grasslands (Bleeker et  
al., 2006; White et al., 2012), wetlands (Struyf et al., 2007; Emsens et al., 2016) tropical forests (Lucas et al., 1993;  
Alexandre et al., 1997) and temperate forests (Bartoli, 1983; Watteau and Villemin, 2001; Gerard et al., 2008;  
Cornelis et al., 2010a; Cornelis et al., 2011a; Sommer et al., 2006; Sommer et al., 2013). Biogenic Si pools in  
soil can be subdivided into protozoic zoogenic Si, microbial Si and phytogenic, microbial and protistic  
105 Si pools (Sommer et al., 2006; Puppe et al., 2015), but the phytogenic Si pool is very difficult to quantify for two  
main reasons. First, amorphous Si extraction methods (Biermans and Baert, 1977; Kodoma and Ross, 1991) are  
not specific and extract not only biogenic Si but also pedogenic Si. Second, the phytolith separation method was  
only developed for soil fractions larger than clay ( $> 2 \mu\text{m}$ ) (Kelly et al. 1990; Alexandre et al., 1997), and  
phytogenic Si cannot be determined in the clay fraction. However, Krieger et al (2017) recently showed that Si in  
110 deciduous trees (European beech, *Fagus sylvatica* and sycamore maple, *Acer pseudoplatanus*) generally  
precipitates as a thin layer ( $< 0.5 \mu\text{m}$ ) around the cells, especially in roots and bark. These small scale phytogenic  
Si was demonstrated to influence various soil and plant processes (Meunier et al., 2017; Puppe et al., 2017). This  
The recent observation of Krieger et al. (2017) may indicate that phytogenic Si in soils of a beech forest is dominant  
in the clay fraction and that rapid turnover of fine roots could significantly contribute to the biogenic Si in forest  
115 ecosystems, as already demonstrated for other elements (Gordon and Jackson, 2000). An abundance of Si in the  
root system, however, is contradictory to the theory that the storage of Si is limited in roots because this element  
is quickly transferred through soap flow to the leaves (epidermis, apex, and stomata) where it accumulates (Bartoli  
and Souchier, 1986). Based on this assumption and because fine root sampling and cleaning before analyses are  
long and tedious processes, studies in temperate forest ecosystems mainly focus on the importance of litterfall  
120 recycling on the Si biogeochemical cycle without quantifying Si in the roots (Gérard et al., 2008; Cornelis et al.,  
2010a; Sommer et al., 2013). In addition, the studies carried out in acidic soils, with mor or moder humus forms,  
present two main constraints. First, the slow decomposition rate of the organic layer increases the chance that  
litterfall fluxes are non-stationary (succession of vegetation, Sommer et al., 2013), which makes it difficult to  
identify the factors controlling the Si cycle. Second, the large organic layer at the basis of the mor or moder humus

125 forms is mixed with soil particles from the superficial layer, making the assessment of the contribution of the organic horizons to Si recycling difficult (Cornelis et al., 2010a).

Based on the recent observation that a large amount of Si precipitates in roots (Krieger et al., 2017) and on the rapid turnover of fine roots in forest ecosystems (approximately one year in beech forests in Europe; Brunner et al., 2013), we hypothesized that fine roots could significantly contribute to the input of phytogenic Si into the soil.

130 In addition, because the Si concentration of the soil solution was demonstrated to affect Si uptake by roots, we hypothesized that soil type could influence the Si cycle.

The aim of this work was to establish and compare the Si cycle in a temperate forest ecosystem in three different soils, and to determine the respective contribution of the different ecosystem compartments, including the roots and litterfall, on the Si cycle. The study area was chosen to ensure that only soil conditions differ between modalities, whereas climate conditions, atmospheric deposition and stand characteristics (age, species, stem density, distribution, and management) being are similar on the study zone. The Si pools were assessed in the tree biomass by compartment for the aboveground and belowground parts, in the forest floor and in the soil at different layers. During a four year observation period (January 2012 to December 2015), Si inputs through dust deposition and outputs through drainage and immobilization in trees, as well as Si recycling through root and litter turnover, were assessed in a mature beech forest on three different soil types, ranging from a shallow calcic soil to a deep acidic soil. The rate of Si recycling was then compared to the Si inputs and outputs and to the Si pools in the ecosystem. An input-output budget, layer by layer in the soil including the soil solution Si fluxes, was done to accurately determine the Si cycle. As most Si precipitates in very thin layers in tree compartments (Krieger et al., 2017), we decided to quantify the total Si in the different ecosystem compartments without specifically assessing the Si in phytoliths, where because the clay fraction is not collected by the current separation methods (Saccione et al., 2007).

## 2 Materials and Methods

### 2.1 Experimental site

150 The experimental site, hereafter referred to as the Montiers site (<http://www.nancy.inra.fr/en/Outils-et-Ressources/montiers-ecosystem-research>), is located in the Montiers-sur-Saulx beech forest in northeastern France (Meuse, France, latitude 48° 31' 54'' N, longitude 5° 16' 08'' E). The site is 73 ha and has been managed jointly by the INRA-BEF (French National Institute for Agricultural Research – Biogeochemical cycles in Forest Ecosystems research unit) and by the ANDRA (French National Radioactive Waste Management Agency) since 2012. The different steps of site establishment are described in detail in Calvaruso et al. (2017). The Montiers site is part of different national and international research networks (SOERE-OPE, SOERE F-ORE-T and AnaEE), i.e., SOERE (Long-lasting observation and experimentation for the research on environment)-OPE (Perennial Environment Observatory; <http://www.andra.fr/ope/index.php?lang=en&Itemid=127>) and F-ORE-T (Functioning of Forest Ecosystems; <http://www.gip-ecofor.org/f-ore-t/>), and AnaEE (Analysis and Experimentations on Ecosystems; <https://www.anaee.com/>). The mean annual rainfall and temperature over the last twenty years are were 1069 mm and 9.8°C, respectively (calculated from Météo-France data). The geology of the Montiers site consists

of two overlapping soil parent materials: an underlying Tithonian limestone surmounted by detrital acidic Valanginian sediments. The calcareous bedrock contains mainly calcium carbonate and ~3.4% clay minerals. The overlying detrital sediments are complex, as they result from various depositions and are composed of silt, clay, coarse sand and iron oxide nodules (for more details, see Calvaruso et al., 2017). The site is covered by a homogeneous, same-aged stand (approximately 50 years old in 2010) with the same management approaches. The stand was mainly composed of beech (89%) and 11% of other deciduous species, i.e., sycamore maple (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur* L.), European hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus* L.), and wild cherry (*Prunus avium*). The site was also composed of three different soil types, i.e., Dystric Cambisol (DC), Eutric Cambisol (EC), and Rendzic Leptosol (RL) (FAO, 2016). A schematic representation of the soil profiles and their location are presented in Kirchen et al. (2017). Table 1 presents the main characteristics of these different soil types, ranging from acidic and deep soils to calcic and superficial soils, developed on acidic Valanginian and detritic sediments and Portlandian limestone, respectively. Humus type is a eutrophic mull for the Rendzic Leptosol RL and EC sediments and an acidic mull for the Dystric Cambisol DC sediments.

Three experimental plots (S1, S2 and S3) were built on the three different soils to monitor water and element fluxes as well as tree growth, over four years. Each plot was composed of three subplots (replicates), equipped with the same monitoring devices designed for the sampling of aboveground and belowground solutions at different depths, soil at different depths, organic horizons, litterfall, and four subplots equipped for standing aboveground and belowground biomasses as well as tree growth. In addition, a 45-m high flux tower was placed within the site (close to plot S1+DC) to collect rainfall and atmospheric deposits.

## 2.2 Sampling

### 2.2.1 Solutions and dust deposits

Solutions and dust deposits were sampled every four weeks between January 2012 and December 2015, representing four years of monitoring.

Rainfall was collected on top of the flux tower by three polyethylene collectors (0.24 m<sup>2</sup> opening) to obtain dust deposition. The procedure of dust deposit sampling is described in Lequy et al. (2014). Briefly, rainfall was centrifuged for 40 minutes at 3500 tr.min<sup>-1</sup> to separate the solid phase from the solution (the solid phase consists of the dust deposits). Rainfall volumes were obtained from a Météo-France weather station located in Biencourt-sur-Orge (Meuse, France), which is 4.3 km from the Montiers site.

The throughfall was collected in each replicate by 4 polyethylene gutters (0.39 m<sup>2</sup> opening), placed 1.2 m above the forest ground.

The stemflow was collected in each replicate on 6 trees of different sizes, using polyethylene collars attached horizontally to the stem at 1.50 m. Trees were chosen to cover most of the range of stem circumferences at 130 cm height (C130) in each plot. To prevent the solution from freezing, the stemflow was collected in underground storage containers during the winter.

The gravitational soil solutions (zero-tension lysimeters, ZTL) were collected beneath the forest floor and at different soil depths, -10 and -30 cm (in S1+DC, S2+EC and S3), -60 cm (in S1+DC and S2+EC) and -90 cm (in S1+DC), with large plate lysimeters (40 cm \* 30 cm, 0.12 m<sup>2</sup>; 3 repetitions per soil depth and per replicate) or thin rod-like lysimeters (0.07 m<sup>2</sup>; in clusters of 8; 3 repetitions per soil depth and per replicate).

200 The bound soil solutions (tension lysimeters, TL) were collected by ceramic cups inserted in the soil at different depths, -10 and -30 cm (in [S4DC](#), [S2EC](#) and S3), -60 cm (in [S4DC](#) and [S2EC](#)) and -90 cm (in [S4DC](#)), with 4 repetitions per depth and per replicate. These ceramic cups were connected to an electric vacuum pump that maintained a constant depression between -0.5 and -0.6 bar.

### 2.2.2 Tree compartments

205 Three beech trees were harvested in each plot in 2009 to collect stem wood and bark and branches. [Subsequently](#), ~~the~~ branches latter were separated into different classes, i.e., < 4, 4-7 and > 7 cm [in](#) diameter, according to Henry et al. (2011). The detailed procedure for collecting stem wood and bark and branches is described in Calvaruso et al. (2017).

210 The fine roots (< 2 mm diameter) were collected during March-April 2011 in three soil pits (approximately 0.4 m wide) for each replicate, where the soil material was cut and extracted by layer ( 0-5, 5-15, 15-30, 30-45, 45-60 cm, and 60-90 cm, when possible). A two-step procedure was applied to accurately assess the fine root biomass (Bakker et al., 2008), without having to transport soil to the laboratory ~~(at least fifty kg of soil sample)~~. The first step involved collecting, *in situ*, the fine roots from the block of soil extracted from each soil layer. Then, a part of the soil block (approximately 2 kg) was collected. The second step, at the laboratory, consisted of using a  
215 tweezer to collect all the remaining fine roots in this soil aliquot. This second step allowed for the assessment of the fraction of fine roots uncollected during the first step. The fine roots collected during the two steps were washed at the laboratory, dried in a stream air-drier for three days and then weighed. For each layer, the total biomass of fine roots was obtained by summing the fine root biomass collected during the first step and the fine root biomass collected during the second step, multiplied by the ratio total soil block mass / soil aliquot mass. Roots with a  
220 diameter > 2 cm (small and coarse roots) were collected in February 2017 in three soil pits (approximately 0.4 m wide) for each plot where soil material was cut and extracted at approximately 20 cm [depth](#). This method does not allow quantification of small and coarse root biomass, which were determined through allometric equations (Le Goff and Ottorini, 2001). An aliquot of each root sample (fine, small and coarse) was then collected to determine ~~mineral content~~[element concentration](#). Each aliquot was carefully washed under a binocular microscope with distilled water, using tweezers and an ultrasound gun. The absence of soil particles was carefully checked under a  
225 binocular microscope [with a magnification of 10x](#). The operation was repeated until all soil particles were removed to prevent soil pollution in the root analyses.

The litterfall was collected in 6 litter traps (0.34 m<sup>2</sup> each) per replicate. The litter was harvested seven times per year, avoiding litter degradation in the litter traps. During the harvest, the litter was separated into three  
230 compartments, i.e., (i) leaves and (ii) buds, beechnuts, fruit capsules (annual compartments), and (iii) small branches falling from the trees (perennial compartment). The leaves, buds, beechnuts, and fruit capsules belong to annual tree compartments (recycling each year) while small branches belong to perennial compartments.

### 2.2.3 Forest floor

We defined the forest floor by the set of organic horizons (Oln, Olv, Of and Oh) above the organo-mineral horizon  
235 (Ah), and the small dead wood at the soil surface.

Organic horizons were collected in June 2010 in a calibrated metal frame (surface area of 0.1 m<sup>2</sup>). Nine samples were collected in each replicate. Because the lower organic horizons were in direct contact with the superficial soil

horizon, it was very difficult to sample them without soil contamination. The presence of soil particles, very rich in Si, mixed with the organic horizons, can induce a drastic overestimation of the Si pool in this compartment. As a result, we decided to carefully sample, on site, six organic horizon samples without the fraction contacting the soil, called “pure organic horizons”. These “pure organic horizons” were used to determine the soil fraction in the organic horizon collected on the three plots (see the method in part 2.4.2).

Small dead wood from the previous thinning (winter 2009-2010) was harvested in June 2010 at the three stations in a calibrated metal frame (surface area of 0.6084 m<sup>2</sup>). Nine samples were collected in each replicate, according to a grid.

#### **2.2.4 Soil**

Nine soil samples were collected in June 2010 in each replicate, along a 15 x 15 m grid. At each point, samples were extracted through an auger, by layer, 0-5, 5-15, 15-30, 30-45, and 45-60 cm, and 60-90 cm when possible.

### **2.3 Analytical methods**

#### **2.3.1 Si content in solutions**

Solutions of rainwater, stemflow, throughfall, forest floor and soil were filtered at 0.45 µm, stored at 4°C and analysed during the week following the sampling. The Si content in the solutions was measured by inductively coupled plasma-atomic emission spectrometry (ICP-AES Agilent Technologies 700 type ICP-OES, Santa Clara, USA).

#### **2.3.2 Si content in biomass**

Samples from the aboveground and belowground compartments of the trees, litterfall and forest floor were dried in a stream air-drier (at 65°C), then ground and encapsulated for analysis. The total Si content in the biomass was assessed by X fluorescence, using an X Fluorescence sequential spectrometer S8 TIGER 1kW (Bruker, Marne la vallée, France).

#### **2.3.3 Si content in soil and dust deposits**

The total Si content in soil organo-mineral and mineral layers (preliminarily sieved at 2 mm) and in dust deposits were determined by inductively coupled plasma-atomic emission spectrometry (700 Series ICP-OES, AGILENT TECHNOLOGIES) after alkaline fusion in LiBO<sub>2</sub> and in HNO<sub>3</sub>.

#### **2.3.4 Microscopic analysis**

Samples of fine roots, stem and branch bark, fruit capsules, bud scales and fresh and altered leaves (from organic horizons) of beech tree samples were mounted on glass plates, using double-coated carbon conductive tabs and covered with carbon. The samples were examined at the GeoRessources laboratory (University of Lorraine) for biomineral occurrence and composition, using a Hitachi S-4800 scanning electron microscope (SEM) equipped with an energy-dispersive X-ray [spectroscopy-spectrometer](#) (EDX), containing a lithium-drifted Si detector. The SEM analyses were carried out using an acceleration voltage of 10 or 15 kV.



## 2.4 Calculation of Si pools and fluxes in solutions and solids

In each plot, Si fluxes and pools were obtained by multiplying the amount of solution or solid by the concentration of Si in the given compartment. All monthly Si fluxes were calculated on a one-hectare basis and were summed over calendar years to compute the annual fluxes. The dissolved Si budget was also calculated for forest floor and soil layers by the difference between input and output fluxes.

In the following sections (2.4.1 to 2.4.10), we will only present the Si fluxes or pools for which the method of calculation differs from the calculation of multiplying the amount of solution or solid by the concentration of Si in the compartment.

### 2.4.1 Dust deposits

To take into account the loss of particles during the collection of dust deposits from rainfall, a test using standard minerals was done to assess the efficiency of the procedure (Lequy et al., 2014). The efficiency was estimated at 72%. Thus, the total weight of dust deposits per year was determined as the weight of dust deposits collected on site, divided by a correction factor of 0.72.

### 2.4.2 Organic horizons

The percentage of soil mixed with the organic horizons was determined through the use of [titanium \(Ti\)](#). This element is a good tracer of soil pollution in the collected organic horizons because Ti is in very low abundance in pure organic horizons ( $< 0.3 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{kg}^{-1}$ ), while it is more abundant in soils ( $> 4 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{kg}^{-1}$ ). We measured Ti content in the soil surface layer (0-5 cm), in the pure organic horizons and in the organic horizons collected on the three plots. The percentage of soil in the organic horizons was assessed following Eq. (1):

$$\text{Soil \%} = [(T_{\text{IHb}} - T_{\text{IHp}}) / (T_{\text{IS}} - T_{\text{IHp}})] \quad (1)$$

where  $T_{\text{IHb}}$  is the concentration of Ti in the organic horizons,  $T_{\text{IHp}}$  is the concentration of Ti in the pure organic horizons, and  $T_{\text{IS}}$  is the mean concentration of Ti in the 0-5 cm horizon of soil for each plot. The mean soil fraction represented less than five percent of the total organic horizon mass in our study. The fraction of Si brought by soil contamination was deducted to obtain the Si content in the organic horizons.

### 2.4.3 Stemflow and stand deposition

To transform the stemflow volumes to a water flux, [stem circumference at 1.30 m height \(C130\)](#) was assumed to explain the inter-individual stemflow volume variability within a species. Thus, all the trees in each plot were separated into several C130 classes, and the correlation between the stemflow volume and the C130 was verified for the entire sampling period. Using a trend line equation, a mean monthly stemflow volume was then assigned to each C130 class. The stemflow at the plot scale for a given C130 class ( $SF_z$ ; in mm) is given by following Eq. (2):

$$SF_z = V_z \cdot \left(\frac{N_z}{A}\right) \quad (2)$$

where  $z$  is the C130 class,  $V_z$  is the mean stemflow volume per tree in the given C130 class (in l),  $N_z$  is the number of trees in the given C130 class and  $A$  is the plot area (in  $\text{m}^2$ ). Total stemflow at the plot scale was obtained by summing the stemflow fluxes of all C130 classes.

The Si stand deposition, i.e., the amount of Si ( $\text{kg ha}^{-1} \text{kg ha}^{-1} \text{y}^{-1}$ ) reaching the soil after crossing over the canopy, was determined as the sum of the Si fluxes in throughfall and stemflow.

#### 2.4.4 Drainage flux

310 The BILJOU© model (Granier et al., 1999) was applied in the three plots at the Montiers site to assess the water drainage flux for the different soil layers. The detailed procedure and the data are presented in Kirchen et al. (2017). The gravitational water flux was determined for each soil layer and date from the collected gravitational volume. The bound water flux was obtained by subtracting the water gravitational flux from the modelled water drainage flux. In this study, we determined that the water gravitational flux/water bound flux ratio was approximately 80/20, which is similar to the measurement from a Cl tracer in a beech temperate forest in Fougères in Legout et al. (2009).

315 Thus, the monthly elements drainage fluxes were calculated at each depth following Eq. (3):

$$D_{\text{Si}} = D_{\text{G}} \times C_{\text{SiG}} + D_{\text{B}} \times C_{\text{SiB}} \quad (3)$$

320 where  $D_{\text{Si}}$  is the drainage flux of Si,  $D_{\text{G}}$  is the water drainage via rapid gravitational transfer,  $C_{\text{SiG}}$  is the concentration of Si in the gravitational soil solution collected by zero-tension lysimeters,  $D_{\text{B}}$  is the water drainage via slow bound transfer, and  $C_{\text{SiB}}$  is the concentration of Si in the bound soil solution collected by ceramic cups.

325 The element mass balances were calculated for the following soil layers, according to the installation depths of the lysimeters in the three plots: forest floor (FF), from the forest floor to -10 cm (soil layer L1), between -10 and -30 cm (L2), between -30 and -60 cm (L3) and between -60 and -90 cm (L4). For each soil layer, the mass balance of the elements was calculated as the difference between the drainage at the bottom of the layer and the drainage entering the layer (Eq. 4):

$$MB_{\text{Si}} = D_{\text{Si2}} - D_{\text{Si1}} \quad (4)$$

where  $MB_{\text{Si}}$  is the mass balance of Si in a given soil layer,  $D_{\text{Si1}}$  is the incoming drainage flux of Si and  $D_{\text{Si2}}$  is the drainage flux at the bottom of the soil layer.

#### 2.4.5 Aboveground tree biomass

330 The evaluation of aboveground tree biomass was calculated according to procedures described in Saint-André et al. (2005). It included four steps, (i) the circumference of all trees was measured at 1.30 m height,  $C_{1-30}$ , in 2011 and 2015; (ii) eight trees in each plot, representing the range of  $C_{1-30}$ , stem bark and wood and 0-4, 4-7 and > 7 cm diameter branches were sampled; (iii) the weighed allometric equations fitted for each ecosystem compartment were calculated according to Calvaruso et al. (2017); and (iv) tree biomass (stem bark and wood and 0-4, 4-7 and > 7 cm diameter branches) was quantified per hectare by applying fitted equations to the stand inventories. Annual aboveground biomass production and Si immobilization in aboveground biomass were calculated as the difference between the biomass or Si amount in the biomass calculated for 2015 and 2011, divided by four.

#### 2.4.6 Fine root flux

340 The fine root turnover rate is dependent on the fine root biomass and the annual production but also on the various methods and calculations used to determine the rate (Jourdan et al., 2008; Gaul et al., 2009; Finer et al., 2011; Yuan and Chen, 2010). In this study, the annual fine root production was calculated by using the mean fine root

turnover rate of  $1.11 \pm 0.21 \text{ y}^{-1}$ , issued from the last available European data compilation for beech forests (Brunner et al., 2013). The turnover rate corresponds to the ratio between the production of fine roots during the growing season and the mean biomass of living fine roots during the year. The Si flux from fine roots was calculated by multiplying the annual fine root production by the Si concentration in the fine roots.

#### 2.4.7 Small and coarse roots

The small and coarse root biomass as well as the annual root increment were determined using allometric equations, linking the stem diameter at breast level and root biomass of beech trees (Le Goff and Ottorini, 2001). The pools and fluxes of Si in small and coarse roots were calculated by multiplying the total biomass or the annual root increment by the Si concentration in small and coarse roots.

#### 2.4.8 Exploitation residuals and harvest

To take into account the influence of forestry practices after 2010 on the Si cycle, we simulated a stand thinning based on the forestry practices applied in the Montiers massif by the French National Forestry Office. At this stage of stand development, the National Forestry Office carries out a thinning every seven years, with an aboveground biomass cut of approximately  $40 \text{ t ha}^{-1}$ . Because the amount of biomass cut is dependent on the stand aboveground biomass, we integrated this parameter into our calculation of exploitation residuals and harvest.

We determined that the aboveground biomass that will be cut during the next thinning (winter 2017-2018) will be approximately 40.0, 44.3, and  $35.0 \text{ t ha}^{-1}$  in plots [S4DC](#), [S2EC](#), and [S3RL](#), respectively. The root biomass remaining from this thinning will represent approximately 7.9, 9.6, and  $6.9 \text{ t ha}^{-1}$  in plots [S4DC](#), [S2EC](#), and [S3RL](#), respectively.

From the data regarding the proportion of the different tree compartments in the total aboveground biomass at the Montiers site (stem wood and bark, < 4 cm, 4-7 cm and > 7 cm diameter branches; Calvaruso et al. 2017), we determined the biomass of residuals (< 4 cm, and 4-7 cm diameter branches) and exports (> 7 cm diameter branches, stem wood and bark) issued from this thinning for each station. The roots ~~are~~ were not exported.

Because thinning in this region is generally done every seven years, we obtained the annual Si amounts restituted to the soil and exported by dividing the total exploitation residuals by seven.

#### 2.4.9 Foliar leaching

The amount of Si released in foliar leachates throughout the year ( $\text{Si}_{\text{FL}}$ , in  $\text{kg of Si by ha}^{-1} \cdot \text{y}^{-1}$ ) was assessed following Eq. 5:

$$\text{Si}_{\text{FL}} = \text{Si}_{\text{SD}} - \text{Si}_{\text{R}} \quad (5)$$

where  $\text{Si}_{\text{SD}}$  is the amount of Si in the stand deposition throughout the year, and  $\text{Si}_{\text{R}}$  is the amount of Si in annual rainfall. All these parameters are assessed in  $\text{kg of Si by ha}^{-1} \cdot \text{y}^{-1}$ .

#### 2.4.10 Tree uptake

The amount of Si taken up by trees throughout the year ( $\text{Si}_{\text{Up}}$ , in  $\text{kg of Si by ha}^{-1} \cdot \text{y}^{-1}$ ) was assessed following Eq. 6:

$$\text{Si}_{\text{Up}} = \text{Si}_{\text{AG}} + \text{Si}_{\text{BG}} + \text{Si}_{\text{RFL}} \quad (6)$$

where  $Si_{I_{AG}}$  is the amount of Si immobilized in the total aboveground biomass of trees (stem bark and wood, branches, leaves and buds, beechnuts and fruit capsules) throughout the year,  $Si_{I_{BG}}$  is the amount of Si immobilized in the total belowground biomass of trees (coarse, small and fine roots) throughout the year, and  $Si_{R_{FL}}$  is the amount of Si released in foliar leachates throughout the year. All these parameters were assessed in  $kg\ of\ Si\ by\ ha^{-1}\cdot y^{-1}$ .

## 2.5 Statistical analysis

The descriptive statistical parameters (e.g., mean, standard deviation, variation coefficient) were performed using XLSTAT 2017 software. The normality of the distribution was checked, using the Shapiro-Wilk test. As our data did not follow a normal distribution, the non-parametrical Kruskal-Wallis test was performed to compare the different soil types, biomass pools, biomass increments, Si content, Si pools, and Si fluxes for each tree compartment, and the total ~~and amorphous~~ soil Si at the threshold level of 0.05. The post hoc Bonferroni correction was used for the pairwise comparison. We used the R version 3.3.1 statistical software (R Development Core Team, 2016) and specifically, the R package nlme to test the effect of soil type on annual Si fluxes, by means of a mixed linear analysis of variance (ANOVA) with soil type, ~~year~~ and their interaction as fixed effects. The significance of differences in element content between the gravitational and bound solutions and between plots was tested by the Student's t-test. Confidence intervals were established at the 0.05 probability level for all statistical tests.

## 3 Results

### 3.1 Si in solids

#### 3.1.1 Microscopic observations of Si deposits in vegetation and the forest floor

In fresh leaves, Si precipitates in cell walls but also in intercellular spaces, generally forming Si deposits called phytoliths, which are several micrometres (Figure 1a). In all tree compartments, except wood, these Si deposits mostly occurred as fine coating layers thinner than  $0.3\ \mu m$  in the inner cell walls of fruit capsules (Figure 1b), stem bark (Figures 1d and 1e), bud scales (Figure 1f) and roots (Figures 1g, 1h and 1i). The cells covered with Si deposits were in the external parts of the roots and the branch and stem bark (Figures 1d and 1g). Occasionally, Si was present on cell lumina (Figure 1e).

~~Altered-Aged~~ leaves in the organic horizon were colonized by hyphae and amoebae (Figure 1c) and presented large voids. The Si deposits disappeared from the plant cells but were present in the observed ~~testate~~ amoebae.

#### 3.1.2 Si pools and fluxes in aboveground tree biomass

The calculated standing aboveground biomass in 2011 ~~was significantly higher~~ increased as follows:  $RL < DC < EC$  with significant differences between EC and RL (factor 1.4). ~~on the Eutric Cambisol than on the Rendzie Leptosol (164.2 and 115.2  $t\cdot ha^{-1}$ , respectively), and the aboveground biomass on the Dystric Cambisol is between the values for the other two soils at 125.8  $t\cdot ha^{-1}$  (Table 2).~~ The stem bark had the highest Si concentration in the three plots, and the Si pool in this compartment represented approximately 40% of the total Si pool in the aboveground tree biomass. The younger the structures were, the higher Si concentration. Small branches were approximately three times more concentrated than coarse branches in the three soils (Table 2). The amount of Si immobilized in the standing aboveground biomass ranged from  $20.1\ kg\cdot ha^{-1}$  to  $kg\ ha^{-1}$  on the ~~Rendzie Leptosol~~ RL to

26.2  $\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$  on the Eutric CambisolEC. The annual biomass production between 2011 and 2015 increased as follows: RL < EC < DC with significant differences between DC and RL (factor 1.7) was significantly higher on the Dystric Cambisol than on the Rendzie Leptosol (10.0 and 5.8  $\text{t}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}\cdot\text{year}^{-1}$ , respectively), while biomass production was between these two values for the Eutric Cambisol (8.0  $\text{t}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}\cdot\text{year}^{-1}$ ). As a result, the amount of Si immobilized in the aboveground biomass each year between 2011 and 2015 ranged from 0.98  $\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$  on the Rendzie LeptosolRL to 1.82  $\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$  on the Dystric CambisolDC.

### 3.1.3 Si pools and fluxes in belowground tree biomass

The fine root biomass measured for the entire soil profile was calculated as between 7.3  $\text{t}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$  for the Dystric CambisolDC (90 cm thickness), 8.7  $\text{t}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$  for the Rendzie Leptosol (30 cm thickness), and 10.6  $\text{t}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$  for the Eutric CambisolEC (90 cm thickness) (Table 2). However, the fine root density (in  $\text{t}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$  for one cm of soil) in the RL was the higher. Regardless of the soil type, fine root biomass decreased with depth. No significant difference in fine root biomass was observed for any soil layer between the three soils. The concentrations of Si in fine roots were high in the three soils but were significantly higher in the and increased as follows: RL < EC < Dystric Cambisol (between 12.3 and 15.0  $\text{g}\cdot\text{kg}^{-1}$  of dry matter) compared to in the Rendzie Leptosol (between 4.9 and 7.8  $\text{g}\cdot\text{kg}^{-1}$  of dry matter). The Si pools in the fine roots were important and ranged from 67.9  $\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$  in the Rendzie Leptosol to 109.5  $\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$  in the Dystric Cambisol, reaching almost 100  $\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$  in the DC. Based on the turnover rate of fine roots, as determined by Brunner et al. (2013) for beech trees, i.e.,  $1.11 \pm 0.21 \text{ y}^{-1}$ , we calculated that the annual Si fluxes resulting from fine root decomposition ranged from 67.9  $\pm 14.3 \text{ kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$  in the Rendzie Leptosol to 109.5  $\pm 23.0$  overpassed 100  $\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$  in the Dystric CambisolDC.

The calculated small and coarse root biomass was three times higher than that of the fine roots, representing thus approximately 75% of the total root biomass in the three plots, but the 24.4  $\text{t}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$  for the Dystric Cambisol, 26.0  $\text{t}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$  for the Rendzie Leptosol, and 32.3  $\text{t}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$  for the Eutric Cambisol (90 cm), representing approximately 75% of the total root biomass in the three plots. The coarse root biomass in the Dystric Cambisol was higher than in the Eutric Cambisol and Rendzie Leptosol. The concentrations of Si in coarse roots (from 0.05  $\text{g}\cdot\text{kg}^{-1}$  DM in S3 to 0.11  $\text{g}\cdot\text{kg}^{-1}$  DM in S1) were two orders of magnitude lower than the concentration in fine roots. As observed for fine roots, the Si concentrations in coarse roots were higher in the Dystric CambisolDC compared to the Rendzie LeptosolRL. The annual immobilization of Si in coarse roots was very low for the three soils, 0.19 to 0.31  $\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$ , and was negligible in comparison to the flux induced by fine root functioning.

### 3.1.4. Si fluxes in exploitation residues and harvests

The biomass of belowground and aboveground exploitation residues, expressed on an annual basis overpassed, ranged from 2.04  $\text{t}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}\cdot\text{y}^{-1}$  on the Rendzie Leptosol to 2.8  $\text{t}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}\cdot\text{y}^{-1}$  on the Eutric Cambisol (Table 2), with a 1:1 ratio belowground / aboveground. The aboveground exploitation residues were three to six times more concentrated in Si than the belowground ones. The mean concentration of the aboveground exploitation residues ranged from 0.24  $\text{g}\cdot\text{kg}^{-1}$  DM for S3 to 0.33  $\text{g}\cdot\text{kg}^{-1}$  DM for S1. The mean concentration of the belowground exploitation residues ranged from 0.06  $\text{g}\cdot\text{kg}^{-1}$  DM for S3 to 0.11  $\text{g}\cdot\text{kg}^{-1}$  DM for S1. The total concentration amount of Si returning to the soil through exploitation residues was lower than of exploitation residues represented between 0.33 and than 0.50  $\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}\cdot\text{y}^{-1}$  of Si returning to the soil, respectively. This value was of very close to the

450 [amount of Si exported from the ecosystem through harvests induced by a dynamic forestry practice on the study site.](#)

[The biomass of the harvests ranged from 3.9 t.ha<sup>-1</sup>.y<sup>-1</sup> on the Rendzie Leptosol to 4.9 t.ha<sup>-1</sup>.y<sup>-1</sup> on the Eutric Cambisol. These values represented between 0.57 and 0.72 kg.ha<sup>-1</sup> of Si exported from the ecosystem each year.](#)

### 3.1.5 Si pool in forest floor

455 In 2010, the forest floor biomass [drastically differed between the different soil types, about two times more important on the DC \(acid mull\) compared to the ~~ranged from 10.9 t.ha<sup>-1</sup> on the Rendzie Leptosol~~RL](#) (eutrophic mull) ~~to 19.0 t.ha<sup>-1</sup> on the Dystric Cambisol (acid mull)~~. The part of small wood (residuals from the previous thinning) was higher in the [Dystric Cambisol](#)DC compared to the other two soil types, making up approximately 40% and 20% of the total forest floor, respectively (Table 2). The Si pools in the forest floor ranged from [about 150](#)~~154.3 kg.ha<sup>-1</sup>kg ha<sup>-1</sup>~~ on the [Rendzie Leptosol](#)RL to [252.9](#)~~about 250 kg.ha<sup>-1</sup>kg ha<sup>-1</sup>~~ on the [Dystric Cambisol](#)DC. Because organic horizons have higher concentrations of Si than small woods ~~(13.2 vs 0.8 g.kg<sup>-1</sup>g kg<sup>-1</sup> DM, 8.5 vs 1.8 g.kg<sup>-1</sup>g kg<sup>-1</sup> DM, 9.8 vs 1.2 g.kg<sup>-1</sup>g kg<sup>-1</sup> DM for the Dystric Cambisol~~DC, [Eutric Cambisol](#)EC, and [Rendzie Leptosol](#)RL, respectively), organic horizons represented more than 95% of the Si pools in the forest floor.

### 3.1.6 Si fluxes in litterfall

465 The annual litterfall between 2012 and 2015 ranged from 5.2 and 6.0 t.ha<sup>-1</sup> (Table 2). No significant difference was observed between the three plots, regardless of the tree compartment. Dead leaves represented approximately 70% of the total annual litterfall, while branches and twigs represented 10%, and buds, beechnuts and fruit capsules represented 20%. Regardless of the soil type, the Si content of leaves was higher than the other litterfall compartments, measuring 9-10 times higher than branches/twigs and 2-5 times higher than buds, beechnuts, fruit capsules. Because of their high biomass and Si concentration compared to the other litterfall compartments, leaves were the main fraction of the Si pool (> 90%) in the litterfall in the three plots. Litter leaves collected in [Dystric Cambisol](#)DC were twice as concentrated in Si than litter leaves collected in [Rendzie Leptosol](#)RL (11.3 against 5.6 ~~g.kg<sup>-1</sup>g kg<sup>-1</sup>~~), meaning that the annual Si flux from litterfall was significantly higher on the [Dystric Cambisol](#)DC (44.8 ~~kg.ha<sup>-1</sup>kg ha<sup>-1</sup>~~) compared to the [Rendzie Leptosol](#)RL (25.2 ~~kg.ha<sup>-1</sup>kg ha<sup>-1</sup>~~).

### 475 3.1.7 Si pool in soils and flux of dust deposits

The total Si content and pools in the fine earth fraction were significantly lower in the [Rendzie Leptosol](#)RL compared to the [Dystric Cambisol](#)DC and to the [Eutric Cambisol](#)EC (Table 3). The total Si pools in the first 90 cm of soil overpassed ~~2.400.000~~[2.4.10<sup>6</sup> kg.ha<sup>-1</sup>kg ha<sup>-1</sup>](#) in the [Dystric Cambisol](#)DC and [Eutric Cambisol](#)EC as opposed to approximately ~~7.2.10<sup>5</sup>0.000~~ [kg.ha<sup>-1</sup>kg ha<sup>-1</sup>](#) in the [Rendzie Leptosol](#)RL.

480 The dust deposit annual flux between 2012 and 2015, collected on the flux tower of the [S+DC](#) plot above the canopy, ~~was approximately 40.5 kg.ha<sup>-1</sup>.y<sup>-1</sup> with a Si content of 140 mg.kg<sup>-1</sup> of dry matter,~~ representing an annual Si [flux input](#) of approximately 6.0 ~~kg.ha<sup>-1</sup>kg ha<sup>-1</sup>~~ (Table 4).

## 3.2 Si in solution: Dissolved Si

### 3.2.1 Si flux in aboveground solutions

485 The mean annual Si concentration in the rainfall was very low (~~0.04 ± 0.08 mg.l<sup>-1</sup>~~; Table 4) compared to stand deposition (Table 4), representing an annual Si flux of approximately 0.2 ~~kg.ha<sup>-1</sup>kg ha<sup>-1</sup>~~. Consequently, the stand deposition and foliar leaching did not significantly differ between the three plots, i.e., ~~1.2 to 1.4 kg.ha<sup>-1</sup>.y<sup>-1</sup> and 0.9 to 1.1 kg.ha<sup>-1</sup>.y<sup>-1</sup>~~ (Table 4). In the three plots, the throughfall solution was enriched in Si (~~annual mean 0.14 ± 0.16 mg.l<sup>-1</sup>~~; Table 4), and its maximum concentration (0.3 to 1 mg.l<sup>-1</sup>) occurred during the leafed period, especially during the senescence period (Figure 2). Although the stemflow solution was more concentrated in dissolved Si (~~annual mean 0.44 ± 0.37 mg.l<sup>-1</sup>~~; Table 4) than the throughfall (Table 4), throughfall contributed a large amount (up to 85%) to the Si stand deposition.

### 3.2.2 Si fluxes in the forest floor

495 Over the study period (2012-2015), the solution collected under the forest floor was ~~mainly~~ enriched in Si compared to the aboveground ~~solution one~~ (approximately one order of magnitude; Table 4) ~~and was equivalent on the three soil types. The mean annual concentration varied from 1.4 ± 0.8 mg.l<sup>-1</sup> in plot S3 to 1.7 ± 0.8 mg.l<sup>-1</sup> in plot S1.~~ The net Si production in the forest floor was highest between September and January and was at a minimum in April, particularly in plot ~~S3RL~~ (Figure 3). The mean annual dissolved Si production in the forest floor ranged between 12.4 to 9.5 ~~kg.ha<sup>-1</sup>kg ha<sup>-1</sup>.y<sup>-1</sup>~~ in plots ~~S4DC~~ and ~~S3RL~~, respectively (Table 4).

### 3.2.3 Si fluxes in the soil profile

Regardless of the soil type, the mean annual dissolved Si concentration generally increased with soil depth for both kinds of solutions, except in the deeper soil layers where the Si concentration remained constant (Figure 4a). 505 The dissolved Si concentrations in the gravitational solution (ZTL) in the 0 to 30 cm soil layers and in the bound-solutions (TL) in the 0-60 cm soil layers increased less than in the forest floor. Regardless of the soil type and depth, the TL solutions were more concentrated in dissolved Si than the ZTL solutions (approximately 1.1 to 1.8 times more; Figure 4a). No matter the depth and the soil type, dissolved Si concentrations in TL solutions showed seasonal variations, with high concentrations between August and December 510 and low concentrations between February and June, which was not the case for ZTL concentrations (Figure 4b). The maximum concentration of dissolved Si did not depend on the drainage fluxes (data not shown).

The Si budget revealed a net annual production of dissolved Si in the 0-10 cm and 10-30 cm layers, ranging from 5.3 ~~kg.ha<sup>-1</sup>kg ha<sup>-1</sup>.y<sup>-1</sup>~~ in plot ~~S4DC~~ to 14.5 ~~kg.ha<sup>-1</sup>kg ha<sup>-1</sup>.y<sup>-1</sup>~~ in plot ~~S3RL~~ and from 2.3 ~~kg.ha<sup>-1</sup>kg ha<sup>-1</sup>.y<sup>-1</sup>~~ in plot ~~S4DC~~ to 5.4 ~~kg.ha<sup>-1</sup>kg ha<sup>-1</sup>.y<sup>-1</sup>~~ in plot ~~S2EC~~, respectively (Figure 5). The production of dissolved Si drastically decreased with the depth. In the 60-90 cm layer of plot ~~S4DC~~, we ~~even~~ observed ~~the consumption~~ a decrease of ~~the amount of~~ dissolved Si (Figure 5), resulting from ~~its consumption~~ ~~immobilization~~ during the autumn (Figure 3). In addition, we observed high seasonal variations of the dissolved Si budget, which were more marked in the top soil layers (Figure 3). The lowest net production in 520 these horizons was between June and August, while the maximum production rates were observed between September and February.

### 3.3 Si flux taken up by trees

By adding amounts of the Si immobilized each year in the different tree compartments, i.e., perennial aboveground biomass, leaves, bud scales, beechnuts and fruit capsules, small and coarse roots, and fine roots and the foliar leachate, we determined that the annual uptake of Si by the stand was approximately 157, 141, and 95  $\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}\cdot\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$  in plots [S4DC](#), [S2EC](#), and [S3RL](#), respectively.

## 4 Discussion

~~In the following sections, the pools and fluxes of Si in the different compartments of the ecosystem (tree stand, forest floor, and soil) are discussed, a global cycle of Si at the stand scale is proposed, and the influence of soil type on the Si cycle is assessed. Figure 6 was created to integrate and summarize the different pools and fluxes of Si in the different compartments, allowing a comprehensive view of the Si cycle at the stand scale.~~

### 4.1 Si ~~immobilization~~ accumulation and internal fluxes in trees

Perennial tissues, such as stem, branches and coarse roots, whose biomass represented more than 90% of the total tree biomass, contained between 15% (plot [S4DC](#)) and 20% (plot [S3RL](#)) of the Si accumulated in the stand. Annual tissues, such as fine roots and litterfall, contained more than approximately half (from 56% in plot [S3RL](#) to 58% in plot [S4DC](#) for fine roots) and a quarter (from 23% in plot [S3RL](#) to 26% in plot [S4DC](#) for litterfall) of the Si contained in the stand. High Si deposition in plant tissues enhances their strength and rigidity but also improves their resistance to plant diseases by stimulating defence reaction mechanisms (Epstein, 1999; Richmond and Sussman, 2003). The high amount of Si accumulated in beech fine roots resulted not only from a higher Si concentration in this compartment (4.9 to 15.0 g kg<sup>-1</sup>) but also from an important ~~type of~~ biomass. ~~Thee~~ Si content ~~in fine roots ranged between 4.9 to 15.0 g kg<sup>-1</sup>, while approximately 0.1 g kg<sup>-1</sup> Si content was in coarse roots in beech fine roots was very higher (2 to 6 times) than that measured by Maguire et al. (2017) for another deciduous species, i.e. sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) but in a cooler environment. Besides Maguire et al. (2017) demonstrated in this study that increased soil freezing significantly lowers the Si content of sugar maple fine roots. The use of a rigorous protocol of root cleaning and control prevented soil pollution of the roots.~~ The beech fine root biomass ranged from 7.3 to 10.6 t.ha<sup>-1</sup> on the Montiers site. These values correspond to the upper part of the range of 2.4 to 9.6 t.ha<sup>-1</sup> reported in the literature for beech stands in Europe (Hendrik and Bianchi, 1995; Le Goff and Ottorini 2001; Schmid, 2002, Claus and George 2005; Bolte and Villanueva, 2006) and are in agreement with the fine root biomass determined for another beech forest located in the northeastern France (7.4 to 9.8 t.ha<sup>-1</sup>; Bakker et al., 2008).

Because most of the Si accumulated in leaves and fine roots with rapid turnover (annual for leaves and estimated at  $1.11\pm 0.21\text{ y}^{-1}$  for beech fine roots; Brunner et al., 2013), the main part of the Si taken up by trees returned to the soil each year via litterfall degradation (28%, from 25.2  $\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}\cdot\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$  in plot [S3RL](#) to 44.9  $\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}\cdot\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$  in plot [S4DC](#)) and via the decomposition of fine root necromass (approximately 71%, from 67.9  $\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}\cdot\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$  in plot [S3RL](#) to 109.5  $\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}\cdot\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$  in plot [S4DC](#)) (Figure 6, Table 2). As demonstrated by Sommer et al. ~~2003~~2013, only a small fraction (approximately 1%; from 1.0  $\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}\cdot\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$  in plot [S3RL](#) to 1.8  $\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}\cdot\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$  in plot [S4DC](#)) of the Si taken up by the tree stand accumulated each year in the perennial tree compartments, i.e., the stem, branch and coarse roots (Figure 6, Table 2). As a consequence, approximately 99% of the Si taken up by the stand each



560 year returned to the soil via recycling of fine roots and leaves. The Si amount accumulated in the tree stand and  
returning to the soil (without considering the exploitation residuals) in the Montiers site ranged from 93  $\text{kg ha}^{-1} \text{y}^{-1}$   
565 to 154  $\text{kg ha}^{-1} \text{y}^{-1}$ . The Si accumulated is higher than in other beech ecosystems previously studied,  
i.e., 20  $\text{kg ha}^{-1} \text{y}^{-1}$  (Cornelis et al, 2010a) and 34  $\text{kg ha}^{-1} \text{y}^{-1}$  (Sommer et al. 2013), mainly because  
the role of fine roots in the Si cycle was underestimated in previous studies. For example, Gérard et al. (2008),  
who modelled the cycle of Si in the soil of a temperate forest, estimated that the Si amount accumulated in Douglas  
fir roots was less than 1% of the total uptake.

## 4.2 Si residence time and budget in the forest floor

Because the amount of Si in the small wood was negligible in the three plots in comparison to the organic horizons  
( $< 3\%$  of the Si contained in the forest floor), only the organic horizons will be discussed below.

### 4.2.1 ~~Soil pollution~~ Mineral soil content in organic horizons

570 Cornelis et al. (2010a) estimated that the proportion of soil with a moder humus type was approximately 40% for  
a deciduous temperate forest. In our study, we determined that the fraction of soil mixed in the organic horizons,  
i.e., mull form, did not surpass 5%. The higher rate of soil pollution in the study of Cornelis et al. (2010a) can be  
explained by the presence of a thick Oh layer in the moder that was in direct contact with the superficial soil layer  
and was characterized by an intense mixing of degraded organic matter with soil particles, induced by biological  
575 activities, mainly bioturbation by earthworms in these soils (Lavelle, 1988). The Si ~~pollution-input~~  
in the organic horizons was negligible, with a maximum value of 6.0  $\text{kg ha}^{-1} \text{y}^{-1}$  (no stand interception) in  
comparison with a stock of 151 to 246  $\text{kg ha}^{-1}$  of Si in the organic horizons. Lequy et al. (2014),  
who studied the mineralogy of the dust deposits of the Montiers site, observed that the Si deposits in  
the throughfall/litterfall was mainly quartz.

### 580 4.2.2 Si residence time in organic horizons

The main phytogenic Si input into the organic horizons was opal phytoliths (Krieger et al., 2017), which dissolve  
slowly (Frayse et al., 2009) in comparison to the rate of organic matter mineralization. The residence time of Si  
in the organic horizons is higher than that of carbon ( $5.3 \pm 0.8$  vs  $1.9 \pm 0.4$  y). In addition, the presence of testate  
amoebae, organisms with a skeleton that is rich in Si (Figure 1; Sommer et al., 2013), in the organic horizons  
585 suggests that a part of the Si from the phytoliths belonged to the zoogenic-protzoic Si pool. Sommer et al. (2013)  
estimated that testate amoebae may use the zoogenic pool could represent half of the Si input by litterfall ( $17 \text{ kg ha}^{-1}$   
vs 34  $\text{kg ha}^{-1}$ ) in beech organic horizons in Europe ( $17 \text{ kg ha}^{-1}$  vs  $34 \text{ kg ha}^{-1}$ ) for shell synthesis.

### 4.2.3 Si budget in organic horizons

590 During the study period (2012-2015), the Si input in the organic horizons via litterfall were primarily higher than  
the Si output via soluble transport (assessed in ZTL solutions under the forest floor) for the three soils. This net  
flux of Si should have induced the accumulation of Si in the organic horizons, what we did not observe in the four  
years of the study. This suggests the existence of another output flux which was not quantified in our study. This  
flux is likely the solid particulate migration toward the topsoil layer, as demonstrated by Ugolini et al. (1977).

595 These authors observed that organic particles containing notably silicon were predominant in the migrant material  
in the upper soil horizons. In our study, the solid particulate migration from the organic horizons to the topsoil  
may consist of the colloid transport of amoebae (Harter et al., 2000) or the transport of phytoliths (Fishkis et al.  
2010). These latter observed, though a field study using fluorescent labelling, that the downward transport distance  
of phytoliths after one year was  $3.99 \pm 1.21$  cm for a Cambisol with a preferential translocation of small-sized  
phytoliths. This observation suggests an accumulation of Si in the organic horizons during the study (which may  
600 double the amount of Si in the organic horizons in eight years) and/or the existence of another output flux not  
quantified in our study. If the accumulation of Si occurs in the organic horizons, it is likely limited on our site  
compared to the loss of Si in the organic horizons, induced by solid particulate migration toward the topsoil layer.  
In our study, the solid particulate migration from the organic horizons to the topsoil may consist of the transport  
of amoebae or the sedimentation of phytoliths or testate amoebae, which are denser than organic matter.

#### 605 4.3 Si budget and origin in soil

The Si production (source 51 6) in the soil mainly results from ~~the dissolution of soil minerals-pedogenic Si from~~  
soil mineral dissolution and ~~amorphous from biogenic Si from as well as from~~ plant tissues and testate amoebae  
(Cornelis et al., 2011; Sommer et al., 2013; Puppe et al., 2015). The immobilization (sink) of dissolved Si in the  
soil is due to plant and organism immobilization and precipitation of secondary minerals, such as phyllosilicates  
610 or ~~Si-amorphous-Si-bearing short range organization minerals or allophane, immogolite~~ (Dahlgren and Ugolini,  
1989; Ma and Yamaji, 2006; Sommer et al., 2013; Tubana et al., 2016; Kabata-Pendias and Mukherjee, 2007).

A net production of dissolved Si in the soils was observed on the three studied plots ~~until down to~~ a depth of 60  
cm, showing a positive production/immobilization budget. The net production of Si in the soil, ranging from 7.0  
to 16.7 ~~kg ha<sup>-1</sup> kg ha<sup>-1</sup>~~ y<sup>-1</sup>, was mainly located in the 0-10 cm layer, which probably accumulated amorphous Si  
615 from organic horizons that contained a large portion of fine roots from the soil. This is corroborated by the strong  
relationship between annual Si production in the 10-60 cm soil layers and fine root content (data not shown,  $r^2 =$   
0.94). The contribution of fine roots to the production of dissolved Si was higher in the superficial layer and  
decreased in the deep soil layers, ~~where testate amoebae and phytoliths accumulated after being transferred from~~  
~~the organic horizons~~. A peak of net Si production was observed during fall (except in the deeper soil layer; Figure  
620 3), which was probably due to an increase in Si production through the decomposition of dead roots. This finding  
is consistent with the studies of Meier and Leuschne (2008) and Konopka (2009), who demonstrated that fine root  
necromass is highest at the end of the summer, when the soil is the driest, favouring root mortality. At our site,  
this period was also characterized by a maximum concentration of Si in the bound waters and a negative budget  
in the 10-cm ~~and to~~ 60-cm soil layers, resulting from the precipitation of secondary minerals, ~~likely of biogenic~~  
625 ~~origin~~. As a result, a drastic decrease of Si production was observed in the surface layer during the vegetation  
period, where Si uptake by plants occurred (Figure 3). In the deeper layer, the dissolved Si budget was significantly  
negative and likely corresponded to mineral precipitation, induced by a decrease of Si drainage with the depth, as  
observed by Sommer et al. (2013).

The Si produced in the soils was mainly leached out of the soil profile by drainage during winter. The annual  
630 drainage flux ranged from 21 to 27 kg Si ha<sup>-1</sup> y<sup>-1</sup> in the three soils of the Montiers site which is higher than those  
measured in other beech forests by Bartoli (1983; 0 kg Si ha<sup>-1</sup> y<sup>-1</sup>), Cornelis et al. (2010b, 6 kg Si ha<sup>-1</sup> y<sup>-1</sup>), Sommer  
et al. (2013; 14 kg Si ha<sup>-1</sup> y<sup>-1</sup>), and Clymans et al. (2011; 18 kg Si ha<sup>-1</sup> y<sup>-1</sup>). The differences can result from multiple

factors, i.e., topography, soil properties (texture, structure, pH), rainfall (level and intensity) and other climatic factors, and stand characteristics (tree species and age, stem density, ground vegetal cover...). This In our study, the Si leached out of the soil profile was negligible compared to the Si drainage flux represented only a small fraction of the Si taken up by trees, i.e., ratios of 1:4 to 1:74%, 10% and 18% in plots S1, S2 and S3RL and DC, respectively. If we deduce the part of Si leached from the organic horizons, these ratios rise to about 1:5 to 1:22 in RL and DC. In addition, our data suggest that the Si produced in the soil mainly originated from the biological cycle. Because biogenic Si in general is more soluble than lithogenic or pedogenic Si (Fraysse et al., 2009 ; Cornelis and Delvaux, 2016). As already demonstrated in other studies in temperate forests (Bartoli, 1983; Watteau and Villemin, 2001; Gerard et al., 2008; Cornelis et al., 2010a; Cornelis et al., 2011a; Sommer et al., 2006; Sommer et al., 2013), very few of the Si leached into within the soil profile directly results from the dissolution of soil minerals. As already demonstrated in other studies in temperate forests (Bartoli, 1983; Watteau and Villemin, 2001; Gerard et al., 2008; Cornelis et al., 2010a; Cornelis et al., 2011a; Sommer et al., 2006; Sommer et al., 2013), in addition, our data suggest that the Si produced in the soil mainly originated from the biological cycle.

#### 4.4 Si cycle at stand scale

Silicon inputs and outputs have minor contributions to the global Si budget in our forest ecosystems, and the Si cycle is mainly driven by internal fluxes, especially recycling of biogenic Si. However, Struyf et al. (2010) observed that land use is the most important controlling factor of Si mobilization in European watersheds. These authors showed that deforestation and conversion to agricultural land or other land uses leads to a twofold to threefold decrease in baseflow delivery of Si.

As explained above, the main part of the Si taken up by trees was allocated to annual compartments, i.e., 28% to leaves, buds, beechnuts and fruit capsules and 71% to fine roots (Figure 6). Only 1% of the Si taken up by trees was allocated to perennial tissues, i.e., stem and branches, coarse roots (Figure 6). In addition, about half of the Si accumulated in the perennial tree compartments returned each year to the soil via branch falls and exploitation residues (< 7 cm diameter branches left on the floor and small/coarse roots left in the soil) and approximately 40% was exported out of the site (stem and > 7 cm diameter branches). As a result, the amount of Si immobilized in trees remained almost constant over time at the stand scale (mean Si immobilization for the three plots,  $0.1 \text{ kg ha}^{-1} \text{ y}^{-1}$ ).

In the organic horizons and in the soil, mainly in the 0-10 cm layer, we observed a high net Si production, likely resulting from the decomposition of litter leaves and testate amoebae in the organic horizons and of fine roots in the soil (Figure 6). The seasonal dynamics of net Si production during the year suggest a relationship between biological activities and Si production, i.e., high net Si production at the end of the summer is linked to fine root decomposition and lower net Si production during spring/summer is induced by tree uptake. Net Si production decreased with depth, and a consumption/immobilization of Si was observed in the deeper soil horizon in plot S4DC (Figure 6). This likely resulted from both a decrease in Si production (less root and clay) and the precipitation of Si through the formation of secondary minerals, resulting from reduced drainage flux.

The assessment of Si fluxes and pools in the different compartments of our forested site coupled with a seasonal dynamic follow-up reveal a rapid and almost total recycling of Si in our site and show the strong biological influence of biological partners, mainly fine roots, and processes in the Si cycle.

#### 4.5 Soil influence in [the soil Si cycle](#)—[inputs/outputs](#)

In this study, we took advantage of a natural soil gradient, from shallow calcic soils to deep acidic soils all with similar climates, atmospheric depositions, species composition, and management, to assess the influence of soil type on the Si cycle in a beech temperate forest ecosystem. We hypothesized that soil characteristics, including soil depth ( $> 200$  cm for plot S1 to  $< 30$  cm for plot S3) and a large range of Si content ( $> 3 \cdot 10^3$  t $\cdot$ ha $^{-1}$  for plot S1 to  $0.7 \cdot 10^3$  t $\cdot$ ha $^{-1}$  for plot S3), and their influence on stand growth and functioning could influence the Si pools and fluxes between the different compartments of the ecosystem.

We showed that the Si content of plant compartments (leaves, organic horizons, aboveground and belowground biomasses) were higher in the Si rich soils (plots [S1DC](#) and [S2EC](#)) compared to plot [S3RL](#). This is in agreement with the observations of Heineman et al. (2016) in tropical forests, which demonstrated that nutrient concentrations in wood and leaves correlated positively with soil Ca, K, Mg and P concentrations [in soils](#). [The concentration of dissolved Si in the soil is known to influence opal formation in plants \(Cornelis et al., 2010b\) but phytolith production seems to be more affected by the phylogenetic position of a plant than by environmental factors \(Hodson et al., 2005\). For example, these authors demonstrated through meta-analysis of the data, that in general ferns, gymnosperms and angiosperms accumulated less Si in their shoots than non-vascular plant species and horsetails.](#) Moreover, the annual tree compartments (leaves and fine roots) were more concentrated [in Si](#) than the perennial compartments (branches, stem and coarse roots). [Silicon plays several physiological and ecological functions in leaves and roots, such as an involvement in the detoxification of aluminum, oxalic acid, and heavy metals, in the regulation of ion balance, in the reduction of hydric, salt, and temperature stresses \(Currie and Perry, 2007; Meunier et al., 2017\). They also contribute to the optimization of photosynthesis by gathering and scattering light in the leaves, confer mechanical support and tissue rigidity, and facilitate pollen release, germination, and tube growth \(Bauer, Elbaum, & Weiss, 2011; Currie and Perry, 2007; Gal et al., 2012\). In addition to these physiological functions, Si has also ecological significance by protecting plants against herbivores and phytopathogens \(Currie and Perry, 2007; Lins et al., 2002\).](#) The variations of Si content in the annual tree compartments induced by the soil type significantly affected the Si fluxes in the ecosystem. The annual uptake and Si recycling (leaves + buds, beechnuts, fruit capsules + fine roots) were 127.2 and 154.0 [kg \$\cdot\$ ha \$^{-1}\$ kg ha \$^{-1}\$](#) , respectively, in plot [S1DC](#), as opposed to 94.8 and 92.7 [kg \$\cdot\$ ha \$^{-1}\$ kg ha \$^{-1}\$](#) , respectively, in plot [S3RL](#). In return, the bound solutions were more concentrated in plot [S3RL](#) compared to plot [S1DC](#). This is partly due to the higher clay content in plot [S3RL](#) compared to plot [S1DC](#) (clay was two times higher in plot [S3RL](#)). This considerably increases the specific surface area of minerals and improves their weatherability and water retention capacity (Carroll and Starkey, 1971; De Jonge et al., 1996).

#### 5 Conclusion

By coupling different approaches (annual budget in solid [vegetal](#) and solution phases and monthly dynamics of solutions) and methods (direct *in situ* measurements and standard and site specific modelling) to quantify Si pools and fluxes in the different ecosystem compartments, our study allowed us to assess the [complete](#)-Si cycle at the forest stand scale. Interestingly, our study highlights the main contribution of fine roots and, to a lesser extent, of leaves in the Si cycle ([Figure 7](#)). Almost all the dissolved Si was taken up by trees at any given time (very weak leaching out of the soil profile) and was recycled each year (approximately 99%, only 1% immobilized in perennial

tissues). This suggests that Si cycle is almost closed during the vegetation period; dissolved Si is taken up by vegetation then Si returned to the soil mainly through root and leaf decomposition ~~to give in the form of~~ dissolved Si, which is again taken up by vegetation. This observation is consistent with the observation of Sommer et al. (2013), who demonstrated a low contribution of geochemical weathering processes to the Si cycle in a forest biogeosystem on a decadal time scale. The seasonal dynamics of dissolved Si confirmed the key role of biological processes in the Si cycle, notably through the production of dissolved Si during the decomposition of fine roots. Our study also revealed that soil type influences the Si ~~cycle at different levels~~ accumulation in tree and the Si production in the soil. The plant compartments were Si-enriched in the soil with higher Si concentration, i.e., ~~Dystric Cambisol~~DC (plot S+DC) compared to plant compartments in the ~~Rendzic Leptosol~~RL (plot S3RL), resulting in 1.6-times higher recycling in plot S+DC compared to plot S3RL. While Si ~~production-release~~ was relatively similar in the organic horizons for the three plots, its production in the soil, mainly in the 0-10 cm layer, was twice higher in plot S3RL and richer in clays than plot S+DC.

Further research is needed in the mid-term ~~to~~ (i) to assess the mineralisation speed of fine roots in the soil and the speed of transformation of the BSi of roots into DSi, (ii) determine the annual and seasonal fate of the Dsi issued from roots, between uptake, mineral precipitation, drainage, fixation by organisms, and (iii) quantify the vertical transfer of solid particulates between organic horizons and topsoil.

~~improve our understanding of processes governing the fluxes of Si in forest ecosystems. Notably, it will be interesting to quantify the flux of Si resulting from the migration of solid particulates from the forest floor to the topsoil as well as the contribution of clay dissolution in Si production in the soil profile.~~

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The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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## Figure caption

915 **Fig. 1:** Si in biological tissues of beech trees observed through Scanning Electron Microscopy. (a) Si precipitates  
in the intercellular space of fresh leaves, forming phytoliths (vertical white arrow). Deposits of Si (white arrows)  
in the inner cell walls of fruit capsules (b), stem bark (d-and e), bud scales (f), and roots (g, h, and i). (c) Hyphae,  
testate amoebae and large voids in aged litter leaves. Si deposits only present in the testate amoeba shell  
(horizontal empty white arrows). The presence of Si was confirmed where horizontal and vertical arrows with  
920 EDX (analyzed zones indicated by white vertical arrows). Vertical = Si biogenic d'origine végétale. Si biogenic  
d'origine animale.

**Fig. 2:** Seasonal dynamics on four years (January 2012 to December 2015) of dissolved Si concentration in  
throughfall solution for the three plots S1DC, S2EC, and S3RL.

**Fig. 3:** Seasonal dynamics over four years (January 2012 to December 2015) of the dissolved Si budget in the  
925 different layers (forest floor: FF; soil 0-10 cm: L0-10; soil 10-30 cm: L10-30; soil 30-60 cm: L30-60; and soil 60-  
90 cm: L60-90) for the three plots S1DC, S2EC, and S3RL.

**Fig. 4:** a. Mean dissolved Si concentration over four years (January 2012 to December 2015) in a zero-tension  
lysimeter (ZTL) and tension lysimeter (TL) with soil solutions at different depths (0-10 cm, 10-30, 30-60, and 60-  
90 cm) in plots S1DC and S3RL. B. Seasonal dynamics over four years (January 2012 to December 2015) of Si  
930 concentrations in ZTL and TL soil (TL) in the layers 0-10 cm (L0-10) and 10-30 cm (L10-30) of plot S3RL.

**Fig. 5:** Mean annual dissolved Si budget in the different layers of the forest floor, FF; soil 0-10 cm: L0-10; soil  
10-30 cm: L10-30; soil 30-60 cm: L30-60; and soil 60-90 cm: L60-90) for the three plots S1DC, S2EC, and S3RL.  
Bars represent the standard deviations. Positive and negative values represent the production or  
consumption/immobilization of dissolved Si in the given layer. Histograms-Bars with an asterisk are significantly  
935 different from 0, according to a Kruskal-Wallis test at the threshold P value level of 0.05.

**Fig. 6:** Summary scheme of Si cycling on the plots S1DC, S2EC and S3RL of our study forest site, including (i)  
pools of Si in the biomass, (ii) internal fluxes, i.e., in the soil-plant system, (iii) external fluxes entering or leaving  
the soil-plant system, and (iv) the dissolved Si budget in the different layers of the ecosystem. Pools are presented  
by rectangular boxes (tree annual and perennial parts, organic horizons and small dead wood, and soil). Internal  
940 fluxes (solid form from the tree to the soil, i.e., fine roots, litterfall including leaves, buds and branches, and  
exploitation residues; and in solution from the soil to the plant, i.e., the tree uptake) are presented in boxes with  
rounded edges. Grey/black arrows indicate the direction and the intensity of the internal fluxes. The external fluxes  
(inputs: rainfall and dust deposits, and outputs: drainage and biomass harvest) are presented in flag boxes. For each  
pool and flux, values presented are those of the plots S1DC (in green), S2EC (in orange), and S3RL (in blue),  
945 respectively. The dissolved Si budget in the different layers (forest floor and different soil horizons) are represented  
with white arrows, which indicate the direction and the intensity of the fluxes. Arrows leaving the layer indicate  
the production of dissolved Si in this layer. In contrast, arrows entering the layer indicate the  
consumption/immobilization of dissolved Si in this layer. Values presented in each box and arrow are annual mean  
values for plots S1DC, S2EC, and S3RL, respectively (except for atmosphere values which are similar for the  
950 three plots). The AG and BG correspond to aboveground and belowground tree compartments.

Fig. 7: Summary scheme of the main findings of this study (TS) and comparison with other studies (L).

**Table 1:** Physicochemical properties of the three studied soils in the Montiers site (plot [S1—Dystric Cambisol<sub>DC</sub>](#); plot [S2—Eutric Cambisol<sub>EC</sub>](#); plot [S3—Rendzic Leptosol<sub>RL</sub>](#)). [P](#) are presented [are](#) the mean values for bulk density ( $\text{g}\cdot\text{cm}^{-3}$ ), textural distribution ( $\text{g}\cdot\text{kg}^{-1}$ ), total rock volume (RV), soil water holding capacity (SWHC), soil water pH, organic matter content (OM), cation exchange capacity (CEC;  $\text{cmol}\cdot\text{kg}^{-1}$ ) and base-cation saturation ratio (S/CEC, with S = sum of base cations). Standard deviation values are given in *italic*. Table adapted from Kirchen et al. (2017).

Depth cm	B. density $\text{g}\cdot\text{cm}^{-3}$	Clay			F. silt		C. silt		F. sand		C. sand		RV %	SWHC mm	pH <sub>water</sub>	OM $\text{g}\cdot\text{kg}^{-1}$	CEC $\text{cmol}\cdot\text{kg}^{-1}$	S/CEC %	
		g $\text{kg}^{-1}$	F. silt	C. silt	F. sand	C. sand	F. sand	C. sand											
S1 Dystric Cambisol	0.98	255	281	160	185	121	1.4	8.2	4.9	68	6.7	64							
	<i>0.12</i>	25	24	17	36	19													
	0.94	245	276	162	184	131	1.4	16.5	4.8	43	4.2	35							
	<i>0.17</i>	26	29	17	40	24													
	1.23	268	280	161	170	115	1.8	22.7	4.8	26	3.5	26							
	<i>0.22</i>	28	31	21	44	31													
S2 Eutric Cambisol	1.36	306	262	150	161	119	2.3	22.6	4.9	15	4.3	36							
	<i>0.18</i>	65	45	27	47	32													
	1.45	355	229	126	166	141	3.6	18.1	5.1	10	5.7	55							
	<i>0.15</i>	100	45	31	49	39													
	1.03	242	242	143	290	83	2.3	9.2	5.4	73	10.1	83							
	<i>0.11</i>	52	16	13	36	24													
S3 Rendzic Leptosol	0.93	241	246	145	287	82	3.1	18.2	5.2	45	7.8	59							
	<i>0.13</i>	65	17	13	45	24													
	1.23	294	234	136	273	64	7.6	19.1	5.3	27	7.7	61							
	<i>0.19</i>	83	23	17	55	11													
	1.35	420	188	107	214	71	29.0	14.7	5.3	17	13.2	68							
	<i>0.18</i>	141	43	31	63	20													
S3 Rendzic Leptosol	1.32	523	154	85	176	63	40.3	10.3	5.4	11	17.8	76							
	<i>0.23</i>	136	42	32	57	31													
	0.88	449	227	123	119	41	2.3	9.8	5.7	109	24.9	98							
	<i>0.14</i>	80	54	26	39	15													
	0.98	430	224	114	123	59	4.9	19.2	5.7	71	20.0	94							
	<i>0.12</i>	82	56	36	37	21													
S3 Rendzic Leptosol	1.06	516	169	77	102	63	36.4	12.5	6.0	42	23.2	99							
	<i>0.22</i>	81	50	38	42	24													

**Table 2:** Mean Si contents, pools and fluxes in the biomass of the three soils of the Montiers site. Standard deviation values are given in brackets. Values with different letters are significantly different according to a Kruskal-Wallis test at the threshold P value level of 0.05 (soil effect DC vs. EC vs. RL).

Plot	Compartment	Biomass pools (t DM ha <sup>-1</sup> )	Biomass increment (t DM ha <sup>-1</sup> yr <sup>-1</sup> )	Si content (g kg <sup>-1</sup> )	Si pools (kg ha <sup>-1</sup> )	Si fluxes (kg ha <sup>-1</sup> yr <sup>-1</sup> )
S1: Dystric Cambisol	Leaves	3.8 (0.4) <sup>a</sup>	3.8 (0.4) <sup>a</sup>	11.3 (1.8) <sup>b</sup>	42.7 (4.3) <sup>b</sup>	42.7 (4.3) <sup>b</sup>
	Branches/twigs with bark	0.3 (0.2) <sup>a</sup>	0.3 (0.2) <sup>a</sup>	1.1 (0.3) <sup>a</sup>	0.3 (0.2) <sup>a</sup>	0.3 (0.2) <sup>a</sup>
	Buds, beechnuts, fruit capsules	1.1 (1.1) <sup>a</sup>	1.1 (1.1) <sup>a</sup>	2.4 (1.0) <sup>a</sup>	1.8 (0.9) <sup>a</sup>	1.8 (0.9) <sup>a</sup>
	<b>Total litterfall</b>	5.2 (1.1) <sup>a</sup>	5.2 (1.1) <sup>a</sup>		44.8 (5.1) <sup>b</sup>	44.8 (5.1) <sup>b</sup>
	Organic horizons	11.5 (2.0) <sup>a</sup>		21.4 (1.6) <sup>a</sup>	246.4 (53.1) <sup>a</sup>	
	Small wood	7.5 (1.9) <sup>a</sup>		0.8 (0.3) <sup>a</sup>	6.5 (3.5) <sup>a</sup>	
	<b>Forest floor</b>	19.0 (2.7) <sup>a</sup>			252.9 (53.1) <sup>a</sup>	
	Stem bark	5.5 (0.7) <sup>a</sup>	0.5 (0.0) <sup>b</sup>	1.70 (0.33) <sup>a</sup>	9.4 (1.2) <sup>a</sup>	0.65 (0.03) <sup>b</sup>
	Stem wood	84.8 (11.7) <sup>ab</sup>	6.4 (0.3) <sup>b</sup>	0.05 (0.00) <sup>a</sup>	4.0 (0.5) <sup>a</sup>	0.30 (0.02) <sup>a</sup>
	Small branches (B+W)	18.7 (2.5) <sup>ab</sup>	1.2 (0.1) <sup>b</sup>	0.40 (0.05) <sup>a</sup>	7.4 (1.0) <sup>a</sup>	0.49 (0.03) <sup>b</sup>
	Medium branches (B+W)	10.2 (1.8) <sup>ab</sup>	1.1 (0.1) <sup>b</sup>	0.26 (0.04) <sup>a</sup>	2.6 (0.5) <sup>ab</sup>	0.29 (0.02) <sup>b</sup>
	Coarse branches (B+W)	5.1 (1.1) <sup>ab</sup>	0.8 (0.1) <sup>ab</sup>	0.13 (0.04) <sup>a</sup>	0.7 (0.1) <sup>ab</sup>	0.10 (0.01) <sup>b</sup>
	<b>Aboveground biomass</b>	125.8 (17.9) <sup>ab</sup>	10.0 (0.5) <sup>b</sup>		24.1 (3.3) <sup>ab</sup>	1.82 (0.10) <sup>b</sup>
	Fine roots (0-10 cm)	3.2 (0.8) <sup>a</sup>	3.5 (0.9) <sup>a</sup>	12.8 (2.3) <sup>b</sup>	39.5 (7.5) <sup>a</sup>	43.9 (8.3) <sup>a</sup>
	Fine roots (10-30 cm)	2.9 (1.1) <sup>a</sup>	3.2 (1.2) <sup>a</sup>	15.0 (2.3) <sup>c</sup>	43.9 (6.6) <sup>b</sup>	48.8 (7.3) <sup>b</sup>
	Fine roots (30-60 cm)	0.9 (0.6) <sup>a</sup>	1.0 (0.7) <sup>a</sup>	12.3	10.5	11.7
	Fine roots (60-90 cm)	0.4 (0.1) <sup>a</sup>	0.4 (0.1) <sup>a</sup>	12.7	4.7	5.2
	<b>Total fine roots (0-90 cm)</b>	7.3 (1.8) <sup>a</sup>	8.0 (2.0)		98.7 (13.5) <sup>b</sup>	109.5 (15.0) <sup>b</sup>
	<b>Total coarse roots</b>	24.4 (3.5) <sup>a</sup>	2.83 (0.47) <sup>a</sup>	0.11 (0.15) <sup>a</sup>	2.66 (0.39) <sup>b</sup>	0.31 (0.05) <sup>b</sup>
	Exploitation residues AG		1.3	0.33		0.42
Exploitation residues BG		1.1	0.11 (0.15) <sup>a</sup>		0.12	
<b>Total exploitation residues</b>		2.4			0.54	
<b>Harvests</b>		4.4	0.16		0.71	
S2: Eutric Cambisol	Leaves	4.1 (0.5) <sup>a</sup>	4.1 (0.5) <sup>a</sup>	8.9 (1.6) <sup>ab</sup>	35.4 (2.8) <sup>ab</sup>	35.4 (2.8) <sup>ab</sup>
	Branches/twigs with bark	0.6 (0.4) <sup>a</sup>	0.6 (0.4) <sup>a</sup>	0.9 (0.2) <sup>a</sup>	0.4 (0.2) <sup>a</sup>	0.4 (0.2) <sup>a</sup>
	Buds, beechnuts, fruit capsules	1.3 (1.1) <sup>a</sup>	1.3 (1.1) <sup>a</sup>	3.4 (1.9) <sup>a</sup>	3.0 (0.5) <sup>b</sup>	3.0 (0.5) <sup>b</sup>
	<b>Total litterfall</b>	6.0 (1.1) <sup>a</sup>	6.0 (1.1) <sup>a</sup>		38.7 (3.1) <sup>ab</sup>	38.7 (3.1) <sup>ab</sup>
	Organic horizons	9.6 (1.4) <sup>a</sup>		17.6 (0.8) <sup>a</sup>	174.2 (32.8) <sup>ab</sup>	
	Small wood	2.6 (1.2) <sup>a</sup>		1.8 (1.1) <sup>a</sup>	3.9 (1.3) <sup>a</sup>	
	<b>Forest floor</b>	12.5 (0.6) <sup>a</sup>			178.1 (32.6) <sup>ab</sup>	
	Stem bark	6.1 (0.2) <sup>a</sup>	0.4 (0.0) <sup>ab</sup>	1.53 (0.28) <sup>a</sup>	9.3 (0.3) <sup>a</sup>	0.39 (0.04) <sup>a</sup>
	Stem wood	109.9 (3.8) <sup>b</sup>	5.0 (0.6) <sup>ab</sup>	0.05 (0.00) <sup>a</sup>	5.1 (0.2) <sup>a</sup>	0.23 (0.02) <sup>a</sup>
	Small branches (B+W)	20.8 (0.7) <sup>b</sup>	0.8 (0.1) <sup>ab</sup>	0.38 (0.08) <sup>a</sup>	7.9 (0.3) <sup>a</sup>	0.31 (0.04) <sup>ab</sup>
	Medium branches (B+W)	15.2 (0.6) <sup>b</sup>	1.0 (0.1) <sup>ab</sup>	0.23 (0.05) <sup>a</sup>	3.5 (0.1) <sup>b</sup>	0.23 (0.02) <sup>ab</sup>
	Coarse branches (B+W)	9.8 (0.6) <sup>b</sup>	0.9 (0.1) <sup>b</sup>	0.10 (0.03) <sup>a</sup>	1.0 (0.1) <sup>b</sup>	0.09 (0.01) <sup>ab</sup>
	<b>Aboveground biomass</b>	164.2 (5.7) <sup>b</sup>	8.0 (0.9) <sup>ab</sup>		26.9 (0.9) <sup>b</sup>	1.25 (0.13) <sup>ab</sup>
	Fine roots (0-10 cm)	4.6 (2.1) <sup>a</sup>	5.1 (2.4) <sup>a</sup>	9.6 (2.9) <sup>ab</sup>	44.5 (13.9) <sup>a</sup>	49.4 (15.4) <sup>a</sup>
	Fine roots (10-30 cm)	4.5 (1.8) <sup>a</sup>	5.0 (1.9) <sup>a</sup>	8.2 (1.6) <sup>b</sup>	37.0 (7.1) <sup>b</sup>	41.1 (7.8) <sup>b</sup>
	Fine roots (30-60 cm)	1.2 (0.7) <sup>a</sup>	1.3 (0.8) <sup>a</sup>	7.5	8.7	9.7
	Fine roots (60-90 cm)	0.4 (0.1) <sup>a</sup>	0.5 (0.1) <sup>a</sup>	-	-	-
	<b>Total fine roots (0-90 cm)</b>	10.6 (4.1) <sup>a</sup>	11.7 (4.5)		90.2 (20.8) <sup>b</sup>	100.1 (23.1) <sup>b</sup>
	<b>Total coarse roots</b>	32.3 (1.2) <sup>b</sup>	4.08 (0.16) <sup>b</sup>	0.05 (0.08) <sup>a</sup>	1.51 (0.05) <sup>a</sup>	0.19 (0.01) <sup>a</sup>
	Exploitation residues AG		1.4	0.31		0.43
Exploitation residues BG		1.4	0.05 (0.08) <sup>a</sup>		0.06	
<b>Total exploitation residues</b>		2.8			0.50	
<b>Harvests</b>		4.9	0.15		0.72	
S3: Rendzic Leptosol	Leaves	4.0 (0.4) <sup>a</sup>	4.0 (0.4) <sup>a</sup>	5.6 (1.3) <sup>a</sup>	22.2 (3.1) <sup>a</sup>	22.2 (3.1) <sup>a</sup>
	Branches/twigs with bark	0.5 (0.3) <sup>a</sup>	0.5 (0.3) <sup>a</sup>	0.7 (0.1) <sup>a</sup>	0.3 (0.2) <sup>a</sup>	0.3 (0.2) <sup>a</sup>
	Buds, beechnuts, fruit capsules	1.2 (0.9) <sup>a</sup>	1.2 (0.9) <sup>a</sup>	3.2 (1.6) <sup>a</sup>	2.6 (0.5) <sup>ab</sup>	2.6 (0.5) <sup>ab</sup>
	<b>Total litterfall</b>	5.7 (1.0) <sup>a</sup>	5.7 (1.0) <sup>a</sup>		25.2 (3.4) <sup>a</sup>	25.2 (3.4) <sup>a</sup>
	Organic horizons	8.8 (1.5) <sup>a</sup>		16.9 (1.4) <sup>a</sup>	151.3 (22.6) <sup>b</sup>	
	Small wood	1.9 (2.4) <sup>a</sup>		1.3 (0.7) <sup>a</sup>	4.4 (5.7) <sup>a</sup>	
	<b>Forest floor</b>	10.9 (2.8) <sup>a</sup>			154.3 (25.3) <sup>a</sup>	
	Stem bark	6.8 (0.6) <sup>a</sup>	0.3 (0.0) <sup>a</sup>	1.34 (0.27) <sup>a</sup>	9.1 (0.8) <sup>a</sup>	0.41 (0.05) <sup>ab</sup>
	Stem wood	80.1 (8.3) <sup>a</sup>	3.9 (0.5) <sup>a</sup>	0.06 (0.03) <sup>a</sup>	5.0 (0.5) <sup>a</sup>	0.24 (0.03) <sup>a</sup>
	Small branches (B+W)	15.0 (1.4) <sup>a</sup>	0.6 (0.1) <sup>a</sup>	0.29 (0.04) <sup>a</sup>	4.3 (0.4) <sup>a</sup>	0.18 (0.02) <sup>a</sup>
	Medium branches (B+W)	8.6 (1.4) <sup>a</sup>	0.6 (0.1) <sup>a</sup>	0.19 (0.04) <sup>a</sup>	1.6 (0.3) <sup>a</sup>	0.11 (0.02) <sup>a</sup>
Coarse branches (B+W)	4.6 (1.0) <sup>a</sup>	0.4 (0.1) <sup>a</sup>	0.10 (0.03) <sup>a</sup>	0.5 (0.1) <sup>a</sup>	0.04 (0.01) <sup>a</sup>	

<b>Aboveground biomass</b>	115.2 (12.8) <sup>a</sup>	5.8 (0.8) <sup>a</sup>		20.5 (2.1) <sup>a</sup>	0.98 (0.13) <sup>a</sup>
Fine roots (0-10 cm)	5.1 (1.4) <sup>a</sup>	5.6 (1.6) <sup>a</sup>	7.8 (2.2) <sup>a</sup>	43.5 (14.1) <sup>a</sup>	48.3 (15.6) <sup>a</sup>
Fine roots (10-30 cm)	3.6 (1.6) <sup>a</sup>	4.0 (1.8) <sup>a</sup>	4.9 (0.8) <sup>a</sup>	17.6 (3.0) <sup>a</sup>	19.6 (3.3) <sup>a</sup>
Fine roots (30-60 cm)	NS	NS	-	-	-
Fine roots (60-90 cm)	NS	NS	-	-	-
<b>Total fine roots (0-30 cm)</b>	8.7 (3.0) <sup>a</sup>	9.6 (3.3)		61.2 (16.0) <sup>a</sup>	67.9 (17.7) <sup>a</sup>
<b>Total coarse roots</b>	26.0 (3.0) <sup>a</sup>	3.09 (0.44) <sup>a</sup>	0.06 (0.05) <sup>a</sup>	1.62 (0.19) <sup>a</sup>	0.19 (0.03) <sup>a</sup>
Exploitation residues AG		1.1	0.24		0.27
Exploitation residues BG		1.0	0.06 (0.05) <sup>a</sup>		0.06
<b>Total exploitation residues</b>		2.1			0.33
<b>Harvests</b>		3.9	0.15		0.57

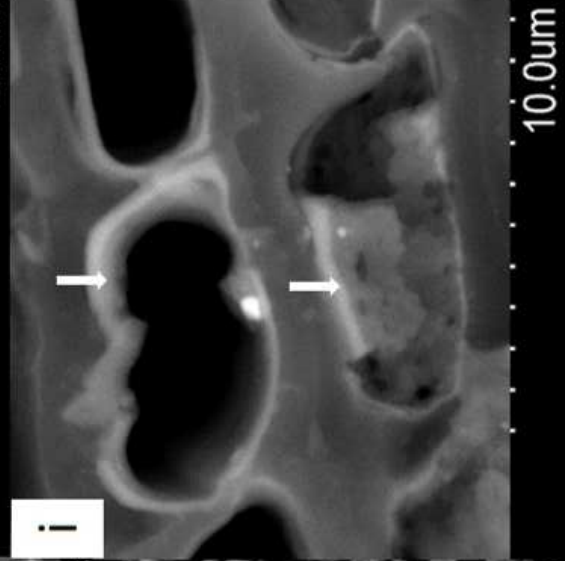
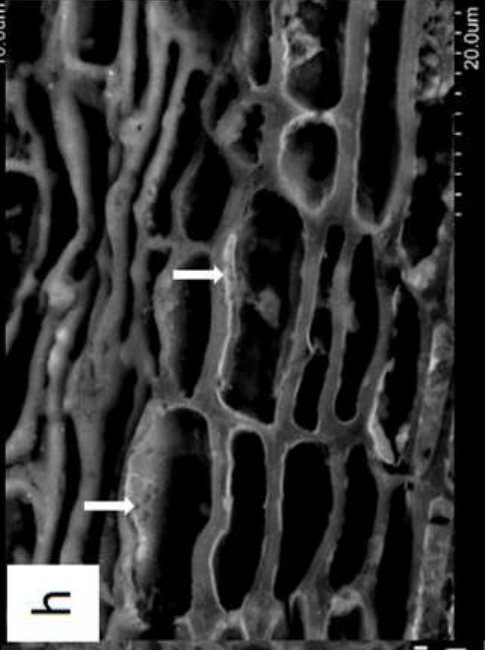
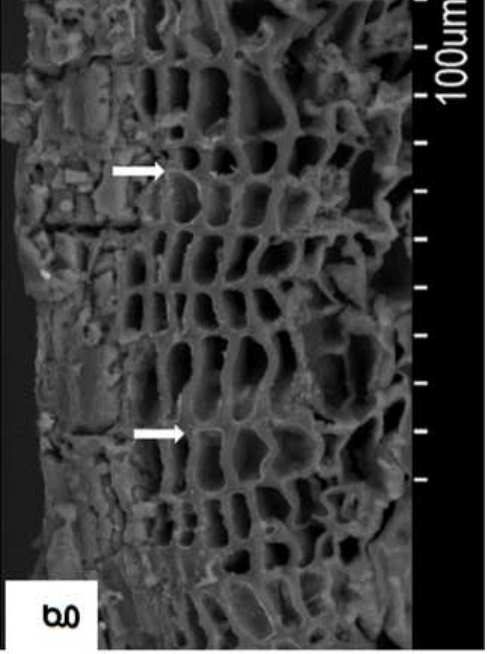
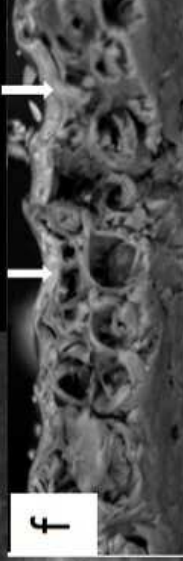
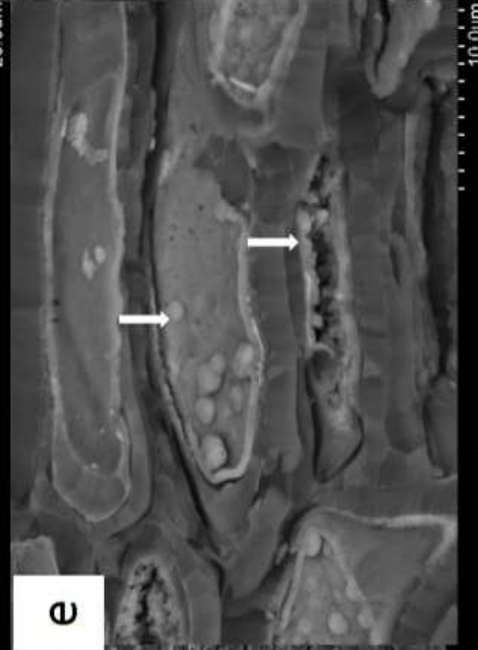
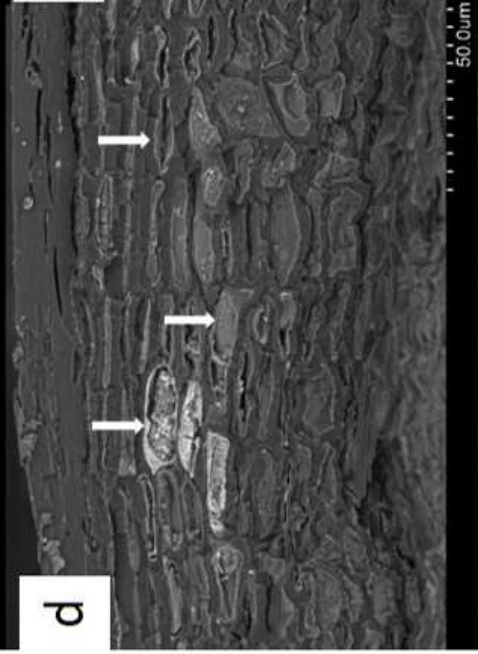
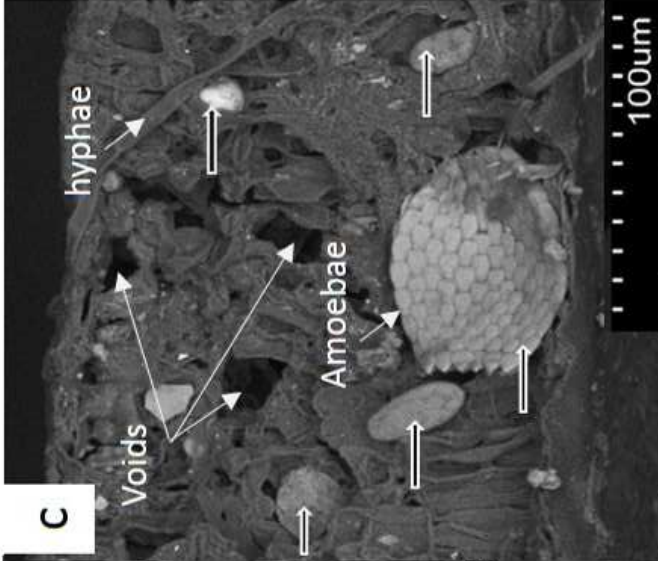
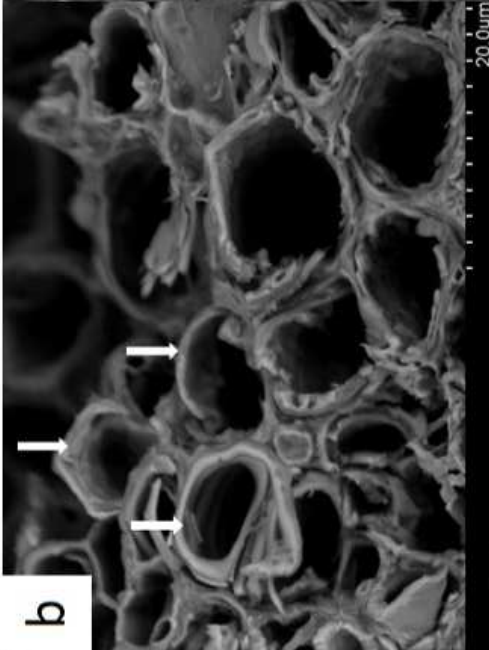
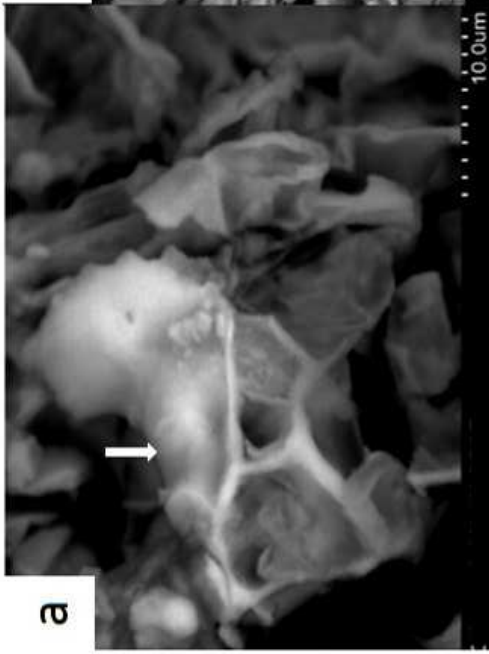
965 **Table 3:** Mean total Si content and pool in the fine earth fraction of the three soils of the Montiers site at different depths. Standard deviation values are given in brackets. Values with different letters are significantly different according to a Kruskal-Wallis test at the threshold P value level of 0.05 (soil effect).

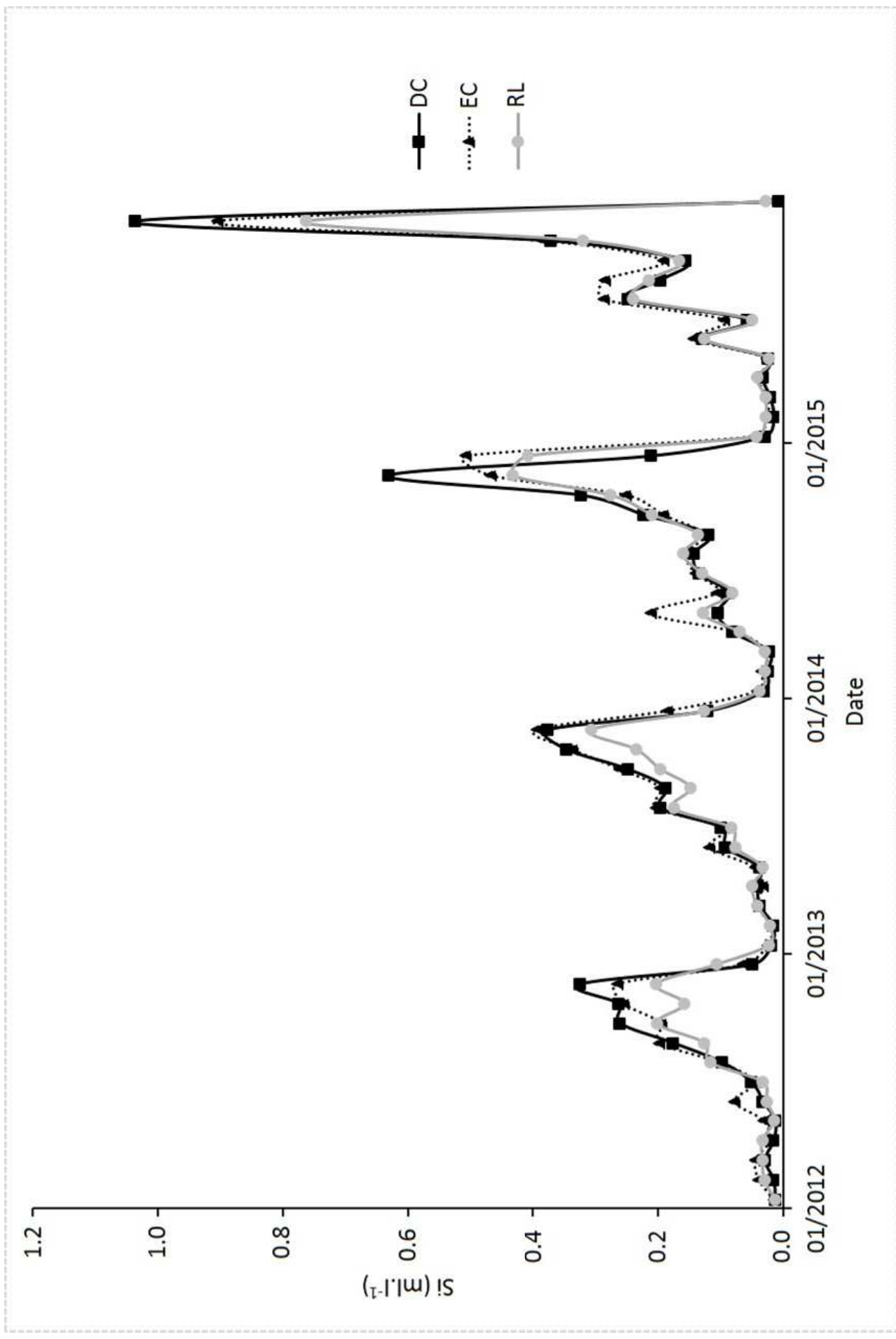
Soil type	Compartment	Total Si content (g kg <sup>-1</sup> )	Total Si pool (t ha <sup>-1</sup> )
<b>S1:</b>	0-10 cm	305 (13) <sup>a</sup>	297 (33) <sup>b</sup>
Dystric	10-30 cm	313 (9) <sup>a</sup>	708 (50) <sup>b</sup>
Cambisol	30-60 cm	296 (18) <sup>b</sup>	1 301 (422) <sup>b</sup>
	60-90 cm	230 (28) <sup>b</sup>	858 (80) <sup>c</sup>
	<b>Total 0-90 cm</b>		<b>3 164 (487)<sup>b</sup></b>
<b>S2:</b>	0-10 cm	361 (11) <sup>b</sup>	411 (30) <sup>c</sup>
Eutric	10-30 cm	360 (13) <sup>b</sup>	791 (127) <sup>b</sup>
Cambisol	30-60 cm	295 (62) <sup>b</sup>	871 (290) <sup>b</sup>
	60-90 cm	224 (28) <sup>b</sup>	348 (117) <sup>b</sup>
	<b>Total 0-90 cm</b>		<b>2 421 (410)<sup>b</sup></b>
<b>S3:</b>	0-10 cm	287 (27) <sup>a</sup>	233 (18) <sup>a</sup>
Rendzic	10-30 cm	276 (23) <sup>a</sup>	427 (27) <sup>a</sup>
Leptosol	30-60 cm	175 (37) <sup>a</sup>	42 (27) <sup>a</sup>
	60-90 cm	144 (39) <sup>a</sup>	27 (8) <sup>a</sup>
	<b>Total 0-90 cm</b>		<b>720 (38)<sup>a</sup></b>

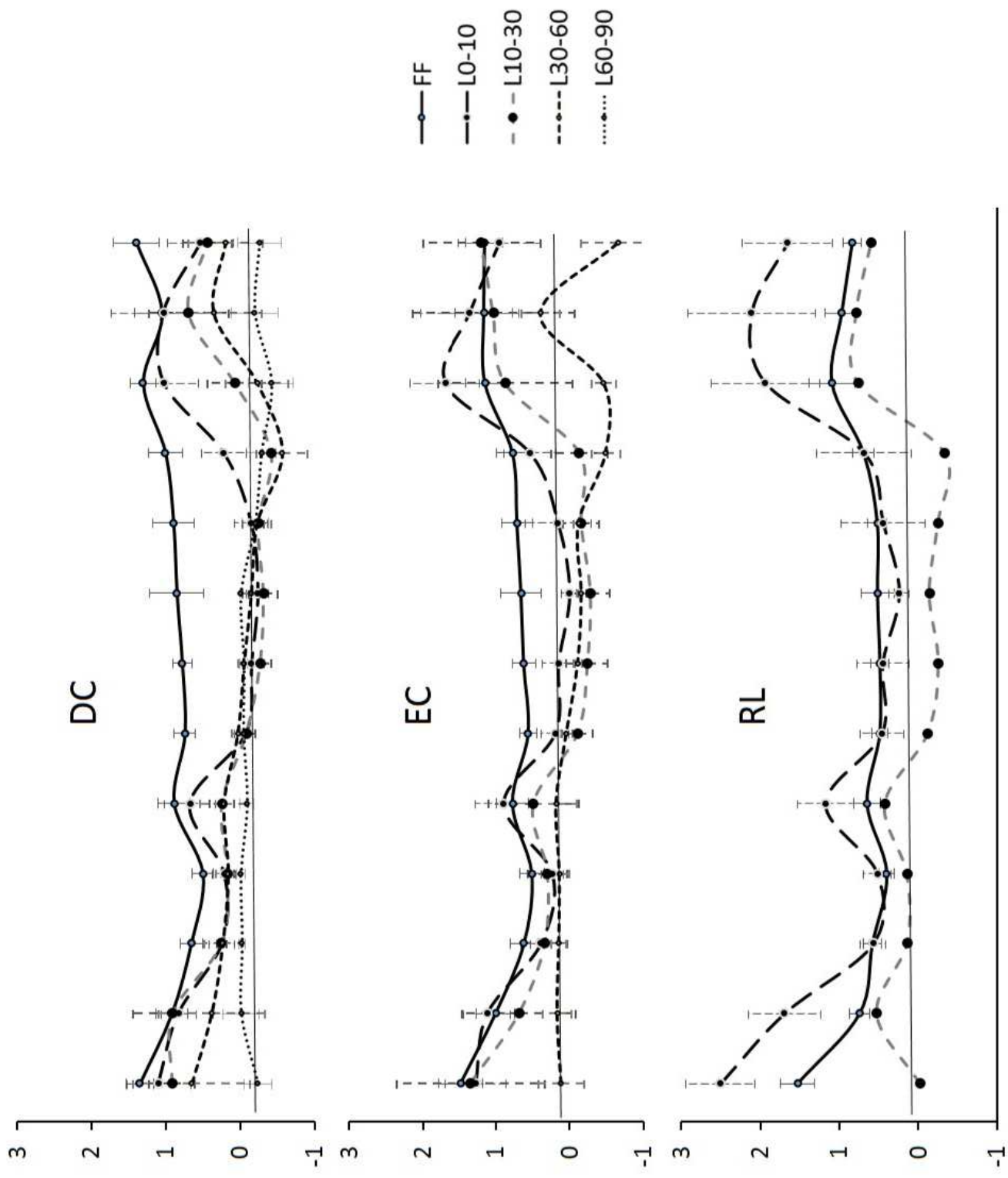
970 **Table 4:** Si content and fluxes in the ZTL (Zero Tension Lysimeters) and TL (Tension Lysimeters) solutions of the three soils of the Montiers site. Standard deviation values are given in brackets. Values with different letters are significantly different according to a Kruskal-Wallis test at the threshold P value level of 0.05 (soil effect).

Plot	Level	Si <sub>ZTL</sub> content (mg l <sup>-1</sup> )	Si <sub>TL</sub> content (mg l <sup>-1</sup> )	Si fluxes (kg ha <sup>-1</sup> y <sup>-1</sup> )
S1- Dystric Cambisol	Rainfall	0.04 (0.08)		0.2 (0.1)
	Throughfall	0.15 (0.18) <sup>a</sup>		1.2 (0.6) <sup>a</sup>
	Stemflow	0.38 (0.32) <sup>a</sup>		0.1 (0.5) <sup>a</sup>
	Stand deposition			1.3 (0.3) <sup>a</sup>
	Forest floor	1.7 (0.8) <sup>a</sup>		13.7 (2.7) <sup>a</sup>
	L-10 cm	2.0 (0.7) <sup>a</sup>	2.9 (1.0) <sup>a</sup>	19.0 (5.6) <sup>a</sup>
	L-30 cm	2.6 (0.4) <sup>a</sup>	3.5 (1.1) <sup>a</sup>	21.4 (8.3) <sup>a</sup>
	L-60 cm	2.6 (0.5) <sup>a</sup>	4.1 (1.4) <sup>a</sup>	22.4 (9.8) <sup>a</sup>
	L-90 cm	2.5 (0.3)	3.7 (0.6)	20.7 (7.4)
S2- Eutric Cambisol	Rainfall	0.04 (0.08)		0.2 (0.1)
	Throughfall	0.16 (0.16) <sup>a</sup>		1.2 (0.6) <sup>a</sup>
	Stemflow	0.53 (0.38) <sup>a</sup>		0.2 (0.6) <sup>a</sup>
	Stand deposition			1.4 (0.6) <sup>a</sup>
	Forest floor	1.5 (0.6) <sup>a</sup>		12.6 (4.2) <sup>a</sup>
	L-10 cm	2.1 (0.7) <sup>a</sup>	3.2 (1.1) <sup>a</sup>	21.6 (4.8) <sup>a</sup>
	L-30 cm	3.5 (1.6) <sup>a</sup>	4.0 (1.1) <sup>a</sup>	25.5 (5.9) <sup>a</sup>
	L-60 cm	2.8 (0.6) <sup>a</sup>	4.5 (1.1) <sup>a</sup>	26.2 (6.6) <sup>a</sup>
S3- Rendzic Leptosol	Rainfall	0.04 (0.08)		0.2 (0.1)
	Throughfall	0.13 (0.14) <sup>a</sup>		1.0 (0.5) <sup>a</sup>
	Stemflow	0.42 (0.41) <sup>a</sup>		0.1 (0.4) <sup>a</sup>
	Stand deposition			1.2 (0.5) <sup>a</sup>
	Forest floor	1.4 (0.8) <sup>a</sup>		10.7 (1.4) <sup>a</sup>
	L-10 cm	2.1 (1.1) <sup>a</sup>	3.8 (1.2) <sup>a</sup>	25.2 (9.9) <sup>a</sup>
	L-30 cm	2.3 (1.0) <sup>a</sup>	4.2 (1.2) <sup>a</sup>	27.4 (9.0) <sup>a</sup>









Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

