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Hugues Thouin, Marie-Paule Norini, Lydie Le Forestier, Pascale Gautret, Mikael Motelica-Heino, et al. Microcosm-scale biogeochemical stabilization of Pb, As, Ba and Zn in mine tailings amended with manure and ochre. *Applied Geochemistry*, 2019, 111 (Article 104438), 11 p. 10.1016/j.apgeochem.2019.104438 . insu-02308558

HAL Id: insu-02308558

<https://insu.hal.science/insu-02308558v1>

Submitted on 8 Oct 2019

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Journal Pre-proof

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PII: S0883-2927(19)30241-0

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apgeochem.2019.104438>

Reference: AG 104438

To appear in: *Applied Geochemistry*

Received Date: 22 May 2019

Revised Date: 30 August 2019

Accepted Date: 1 October 2019

Please cite this article as: Thouin, H., Norini, M.-P., Le Forestier, L., Gautret, P., Motelica-Heino, M., Breeze, D., Gassaud, C., Battaglia-Brunet, F., Microcosm-scale biogeochemical stabilization of Pb, As, Ba and Zn in mine tailings amended with manure and ochre, *Applied Geochemistry* (2019), doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apgeochem.2019.104438>.

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1 **Microcosm-scale biogeochemical stabilization of Pb, As, Ba and Zn in mine**
2 **tailings amended with manure and ochre**

3

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12

13 **Abstract:**

14 Mine tailings are major sources of metals and metalloids in the environment, making the
15 physical and geochemical stabilization of tailings a serious environmental challenge. With a
16 view to facilitate the development of covering vegetation and of decreasing the mobility of Pb
17 in the acid tailings of a former Ag-Pb mine, laboratory microcosm experiments were
18 performed to enable comparison of the effectiveness of several treatments. Tailings were
19 mixed with 5 % by weight of ochre, an iron-rich material produced during the treatment of a
20 coal mine water, and with cow manure (0, 0.15, 1 and 2 % by weight), either solely or in
21 combination. They were then submitted to weekly watering over 84 days. All treatments
22 raised the pH values from 4 to values between 7 and 8 and induced a strong decrease in the
23 total dissolved Pb concentration in the percolating water (from 13–15 mg.L⁻¹ to less than 0.5
24 mg.L⁻¹). Several processes seemed to be involved in the immobilization of Pb by the
25 amendments: precipitation as hydroxide, sulfate, carbonate and phosphate, and adsorption on
26 iron hydroxides. A transient increase was observed in both Pb mobility and functional
27 microbial diversity with 1% and 2% manure, with a peak after 28 days of incubation. This
28 peak corresponded to an Average Well Color Development (AWCD) in BiologTM Ecoplates
29 increase from 0.5 to 0.8 with 1% manure and from 0.6 to 1.5 with 2% manure. However, at
30 the end of experiment, Pb immobilization was strengthened by 2% manure and microbial

31 functional biodiversity fell back, with AWCD values of 0.5 and 0.8 for 1 % and 2% manure,
32 respectively. Other toxic elements present in the tailings, namely As, Zn and Ba, were not
33 strongly mobilized by the treatments, although cow manure slightly increased the leaching of
34 Ba and As, which maximum concentrations in the leaching water reached $65 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ Ba and 9
35 $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ As. All amendments improved the growth of ryegrass, which maximum dry biomass
36 ranged from 38 mg/microcosm without amendment to 155 mg/microcosm with 0.15%
37 manure. The results provide key information about the biogeochemical processes driving the
38 mobility of Pb, As, Zn and Ba in acid mine tailings during the first 84 days following their
39 amendment with iron-rich ochre and manure.

40 **Key words:** mine tailings, metals, arsenic, amendments, iron oxide-hydroxide, cow manure,
41 microbial processes

42

43 **Introduction**

44 Mining activities have generated massive amounts of solid wastes throughout the world and
45 every year the sector continues to mobilize some 50×10^9 tons of rocks. Huge amounts of
46 solid waste, known as tailings, are produced when the valuable fractions of these materials are
47 processed to extract the desired mining resources (Douglas and Lawson, 2000). For example,
48 the extraction of metals such as Cu, Ni or Au can produce up to 1,000 tons of tailings for one
49 kilogram of pure element. These wastes are usually stored behind tailings dams close to the
50 extraction sites, often with inadequate management, especially on older mining sites. Tailings
51 may contain large fractions of sulfide materials that are subject to oxidation when exposed to
52 air and water. Their leaching by rainwater often induces the mobilization of metals and
53 metalloids towards the surrounding environmental compartments, including groundwater,
54 surface water, soils and sediments (Fuge et al., 1993; Paulson, 1997). Moreover, runoff water
55 can carry downstream metal-rich solid particles that may become soluble if the water
56 characteristics or redox conditions change.

57 Stabilization of mine tailings is facilitated by amendments that adsorb, complex or (co)-
58 precipitate inorganic pollutants (Kumpiene et al., 2008) and metals and metalloids can be
59 rendered less mobile by amendment of tailings with organic or inorganic materials. In general,
60 amendments not only decrease the leachability of pollutants but also stimulate plant growth,
61 and the resulting covering vegetation contributes to stabilizing tailing particles. Amendments
62 have the additional advantage of being inexpensive and readily available in large quantities,
63 since they derive from agricultural or industrial by-products (Guo et al., 2006). Chemical and
64 inorganic amendments that have been used widely include alkaline and phosphate materials
65 (Hooda and Alloway, 1996; Derome, 2000; Le Forestier et al., 2017). Alkaline materials have
66 been shown to reduce the solubility of divalent metals such as Pb and Cu by increasing pH
67 and phosphate materials to efficiently stabilize Pb by ionic exchange and precipitation of
68 pyromorphite-type minerals $[\text{Pb}_5(\text{PO}_4)_3\text{X}]$; X = F, Cl, B or OH] (Mc Gowen et al., 2001;
69 Kumpiene et al., 2008). Organic amendments improve soil agronomic properties and can
70 contribute to reduced mobility of metals by pH buffering (Zeng et al., 2011). A number of
71 organic materials have been tested as amendments for polluted soils: compost, municipal
72 biosolids, peat, chipped wood, composted sewage sludge, manure (Basta and Sloan, 1999; Li
73 et al., 2000; Brown et al., 2003; Hattab et al., 2015), and biochars (Oustrière et al., 2016;
74 Lebrun et al., 2016; Lahori et al., 2017; Norini et al., 2019). However, while alcalinization
75 reduces the mobility of divalent metals, it may also induce the mobilization of As, a toxic

76 metalloid frequently present in mine tailings. As pH increases, the efficiency of the adsorption
77 of arsenate (As(V)) by iron oxides is reduced (Dixit and Hering, 2003). The difference in
78 chemical behavior between metal cations and oxi-anions such as As(V) must therefore be
79 taken into account in the initial choice of amendments to stabilize mine tailings. An
80 alternative is amorphous iron hydroxide (ferrihydrite), which can be an effective sorbent for
81 both cation and anion pollutants (Kumpiene et al., 2008). In fact, Martin and Ruby (2003)
82 have observed efficient stabilization of both Pb and As in a smelter-contaminated soil by 5 %
83 ferrihydrite together with 0.5 % of calcium phosphate. Iron oxides are produced as waste
84 materials, sometimes in huge amounts, during the treatment of mine waters such as those
85 from coal mines. Doi et al. (2005) have shown that iron-oxide rich sludge materials from
86 mining sites, containing 24 % to 62 % of total iron, could be effective in stabilizing As in
87 polluted soils. Treatments not only decreased soil As leachability but also reduced the uptake
88 of As by radishes planted in amended soils. Nielsen et al. (2011) showed a significant, long-
89 term decrease of As concentration in the pore water of a soil polluted by As and Cr and
90 amended with 5 % of an iron-rich water-treatment residue, mainly composed of ferrihydrite.
91 More recently, Olimah et al. (2015) tested four different iron-rich wastes produced in mine
92 water treatment plants for the remediation of As-polluted soils. Their results suggest that this
93 treatment is efficient in decreasing As mobility in water. However, the benefits in terms of
94 uptake of As by plants and plant growth were not significant. The prime focus of these
95 previous studies was As as the main target pollutant of the remediation strategy. In addition,
96 chemical data alone do not take account of the effects of pollutants on the soil's habitat
97 function. The microbiological status of a soil, considered as an indicator of its potential to
98 sustain microbiological activity, can be used to assess the effectiveness of chemical
99 stabilization of metals and metalloids by amendment (Pérez de Mora et al., 2006).

100 The work reported here investigated the potential for and mechanisms of biogeochemical
101 stabilization of mine tailings of which the principal pollutant was Pb, associated mainly with
102 As, Zn, and Ba. The tailings were amended with iron oxides from a coal mine water treatment
103 plant, combined or not with different doses of cow (*Bos taurus*) manure to improve the
104 agronomic properties of the material. Laboratory microcosm leaching experiments simulating
105 percolation of rainwater were designed to evaluate the efficiency of stabilization of the main
106 pollutants in relation to the biogeochemical evolution of the amended tailings.

107

108 **Material and methods**

109 **Characteristics of the mine tailings**

110 Tailings samples were taken from the site of a former Ag and Pb mine at Pontgibaud (Puy de
111 Dôme, France; 45°47'29"N 2°49'18"E) operating since antiquity but with a peak of activity
112 in the second half of the XIXth century (Cottard, 2010). The mine is located in a medium-
113 altitude mountainous area (altitude 750 m). Mine residues (3 m³) were recovered over a depth
114 of 0–60 cm from a mine waste dump, using a power shovel. Residues were taken from seven
115 discrete zones within a 25 m² area. The material was coarsely mixed with the shovel and
116 transported to the laboratory for the stabilization experiments.

117 The details on all characterization and analytical methods (detection limits, analytical quality
118 controls) are given in the chemical analysis section below and in the SM1. The grain size
119 distribution of the tailings was determined by wet processing sieving. Only 7 % (by weight)
120 of the material was less than 60 µm, and that 76 % was in the 315 µm to 2 mm range. The
121 > 2 mm fraction represented 2 %, and the remaining fraction (15 %) was in the 60–315 µm
122 range. The pH of the tailings – consisting mainly of quartz, orthoclase and phyllosilicate –
123 was 4.9 (measured in water according to ISO 10390). Pb bearing phases were detected by X-
124 ray diffraction (XRD): anglesite (PbSO₄) and beudantite ((PbFe₃(AsO₄)(SO₄)(OH)₆); a solid
125 solution between plumbojarosite, pure SO₄ pole, and segnitite, pure AsO₄ pole). Anglesite
126 and beudantite had already been detected in tailings from the same mine district (Pascaud et
127 al., 2014). The concentrations of the main constituents were: 26,432 mg.kg⁻¹ Pb, 265 mg.kg⁻¹
128 Zn, 1,063 mg.kg⁻¹ Ba, 1,134 mg.kg⁻¹ As, 820 mg kg⁻¹ P₂O₅, 1.5 % Fe₂O₃, 81 % SiO₂ and 1.54
129 wt% SO₄. CaO and MgO concentrations were less than 1 %. Characteristics of organic matter
130 are given in Table 1. Standard leaching testing in demineralized water (ISO/TS 21268-2)
131 resulted in 19.6 mg.L⁻¹ Pb, 2.3.µg.L⁻¹ As, and 0.17 mg.L⁻¹ Zn (Fe and Ba concentrations, were
132 below the detection limits, respectively 0.1 mg.L⁻¹ and 10 µg.L⁻¹).

133 **Amendments**

134 The ochre – iron oxide-hydroxide, mainly composed of goethite – was produced in a coal
135 mine water treatment plant in France, by cascade aeration and sedimentation of the iron
136 precipitates generated in a settling pond. Samples of concentrated sludge taken from the
137 settling pond were dried gently at 30 °C and then ground in a mortar and sieved at 100 µm.
138 The initial water content was 92 %. Size particle distribution before drying was analyzed with
139 a laser granulometer (Malvern); it showed 86.5 % of particles smaller than 10 µm, 98 %

140 smaller than 89 μm and 100% smaller than 200 μm . The particle fraction most present was
141 the 2–6 μm group. The pH in water (measured according to ISO 10390) of the dried ochre
142 was 8.1. The concentrations of the main constituents were: 1.99 % C, 1.81 % H, 0.69 % S
143 0.66 % TOC, 1.39 % MinC, 261,232 mg.kg^{-1} Fe, 10.1 mg.kg^{-1} Pb, 505.7 mg.kg^{-1} As, 14,717
144 mg.kg^{-1} Zn and 69.8 mg.kg^{-1} Ba. N was not detected. Standard leaching testing in
145 demineralized water (ISO/TS 21268-2) resulted in 0.4 mg.L^{-1} Fe, 0.23 mg.L^{-1} Pb, 2.5 $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$
146 As, 44.1 mg.L^{-1} dissolved organic carbon (DOC) and 4.4 mg.L^{-1} dissolved organic nitrogen
147 (DON) in the leachate. Zn was below the quantification limit, i.e. 0.01 mg.L^{-1} .

148 Cow manure was collected from a farm near Orléans (France); its pH in water (measured
149 according to ISO 10390) was 9.9. The manure was dried gently at 30°C, ground in a mortar
150 and sieved at 2 mm. The concentrations of the main constituents were: 35.40 % C, 4.51 % H,
151 2.48 % N, 0.18 % S, 28.95 % TOC, 2.17% MinC, 2.82 mg.kg^{-1} Pb, 0.75 mg.kg^{-1} As,
152 53.8 mg.kg^{-1} Zn and 78.2 mg.kg^{-1} Ba. Standard leaching testing (ISO/TS 21268-2) gave
153 0.33 mg.L^{-1} Pb, 7 $\mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ As, 0.33 mg.L^{-1} Zn, 0.27 mg.L^{-1} Ba, 1,130 mg.L^{-1} DOC and
154 131 mg.L^{-1} DON in the leachate.

155 **Microcosm leaching experiments**

156 Microcosms were prepared in 200 mL polystyrene pots (50 mm diameter) of which the
157 bottoms were perforated with a 0.9 mm needle, 13 holes for each pot. To retain soil particles
158 in the pots, a fine layer of glass wool was laid at the bottom and covered with 10 cm^3 of clean
159 Fontainebleau sand. Both glass wool and sand were cleaned prior to use in 10 % HNO_3 ,
160 rinsed with demineralized water and dried before use.

161 The pots were watered to simulate rainwater, all watering being performed with Mont
162 Roucoux mineral water (pH 5.85, 3.1 mg.L^{-1} Na^+ , 2.4 mg.L^{-1} Ca^{2+} , 0.5 mg.L^{-1} Mg^{2+} , 2.0 mg.L^{-1}
163 SO_4^{2-} , 6.3 mg.L^{-1} HCO_3^- , 3.0 mg.L^{-1} NO_3^-).

164 Each microcosm contained 150 g of air-dried material sieved at 2 mm. The different
165 amendment conditions tested were as follows: tailings without amendment (T); tailings +
166 5 wt% ochre (TO); tailings +5 wt% ochre + 0.15 wt% manure (TOM 0.15%); tailings +5 wt%
167 ochre + 1 wt% manure (TOM 1%); tailings +5 wt% ochre + 2 wt% manure (TOM 2%). These
168 proportions were chosen based on the results of preliminary tests in slurries, that were
169 performed to determine the minimum amendments concentrations allowing immobilization of
170 both Pb and As (data not shown). The material for each condition was prepared by mixing the

171 dry amendments with the tailings in a rotating agitator for 2 hours. Nine microcosms of each
172 condition were then prepared.

173 For the first watering, 30 mL of water were sprinkled carefully onto the soil surface. Then,
174 72 h later, the microcosms were watered again with 25 mL of water (solid/liquid ratio of 6).
175 The quantity of water added and draining out was recorded by weighing. Global aerobic non-
176 saturated conditions were maintained. Microcosms were incubated in a Plant Growth
177 Chamber (MEMMERT HPP750 IPP PLUS) at 25°C, in the dark, with 80 % of air-water
178 saturation. The soils were never dried during incubation.

179 Watering with 25 mL (solid/liquid ratio of 6) water was then performed once a week. The
180 percolated water was filtered at 0.45 µm. A sample was acidified with a drop of concentrated
181 HNO₃ for total As and Pb analyses. The remaining filtered solution was stored in a
182 refrigerator for complementary analyses.

183 Three microcosms of each of the amendment test conditions were sacrificed for analysis after
184 incubation periods of 7, 28, and 84 days. When the microcosms were sacrificed, their contents
185 were carefully mixed in sterile bags with a spatula and samples were taken to determine the
186 moisture and for biological and molecular analyses (0.5 g of soil in sterile tubes stored at -20
187 °C). The remaining soil was stored at 5°C. Each time microcosms were sacrificed, As, Ba, Pb
188 and Zn were analyzed in the percolated water.

189 **Chemical analyses**

190 The details on all analytical methods (detection limits, analytical quality controls) are given in
191 SM1.

192 Metals and metalloids in the tailings were determined by ICP/AES (Ameteck Spectro
193 apparatus, Arcos model) after dissolution according to NF X31-147. Sulfate concentration in
194 the tailings was determined as per NF ISO 11048. Metals and metalloids in the ochre were
195 determined by ICP-MS (Agilent 8900-Triple Quad apparatus) after complete dissolution by
196 hydrofluoric acid attack (HNO₃ 65 %, HCl 37 % and HF 40 %) (US-EPA 3052 method
197 modified). Metals and metalloids in the manure were determined by ICP-MS after complete
198 mineralization (heating at 600 °C for 3 h, followed by mineralization in 65 % HNO₃ and 37 %
199 HCl) (US-EPA 3015A method).

200 Different chemical analyses were carried out on the solutions from leaching tests and on the
201 filtered percolated water (0.45 µm) from microcosms. As, Pb and Ba were analyzed by oven

202 AAS (Varian AA220Z), and Zn by flame AAS (Varian AA22FS). pHs of percolated water
203 were measured. Ion chromatography (IC), using a 940 Professional IC Vario instrument
204 (Metrohm) equipped with conductivity detectors, was used to quantify major ions (Li^+ , Na^+ ,
205 NH_4^+ , K^+ , Ca^{2+} , Mg^{2+} , F^- , Cl^- , NO_2^- , Br^- , NO_3^- , SO_4^{2-} , PO_4^{2-}). Anions were separated with a
206 Metrosep A Supp 16 ionic resin column (150 mm \times 4 mm) and cations with a Metrosep C6
207 (150 mm \times 4 mm). Only certain ions were detected: Cl^- , Br^- , NO_3^- , SO_4^{2-} , Li^+ , Na^+ , NH_4^+ , K^+ ,
208 Ca^{2+} , Mg^{2+} . DOC and DON concentrations were determined using a TOC 5050/SSM 5000-A
209 elemental analyzer (Shimadzu).

210 Measurements of total carbon (C), nitrogen (N), hydrogen (H) and sulfur (S) were obtained
211 using an elemental flash pyrolyser analyzer (Flash 2000, Thermo Fischer Scientific). Total
212 organic carbon (TOC) and mineral carbon (MinC) were determined by Rock-Eval pyrolysis
213 (Rock-Eval 6 Turbo, Vinci Technologies). The moisture content of the samples was evaluated
214 according to NF ISO 11465.

215 **Biological analyses**

216 The functional diversity of soil microbial communities was assessed using BiologTM
217 Ecoplates community-level substrate utilization assay. This method enables study of the
218 metabolic capability of soil microbial communities to utilize a variety of individual carbon
219 sources, as well as of the communities' physiological properties (Insam and Goberna, 2004).
220 Each BiologTM Ecoplates contained three replicate wells of 31 different carbon sources,
221 including carbohydrates, carboxylic acids, amino acids, amines, polymers, phenolic acids, and
222 a control. Soil samples were suspended in a (1:4 ratio) sterile saline solution (0.85 % w/v
223 NaCl), agitated (60 rpm) for 30 min at 25 °C, sonicated at 45 kHz twice for 20 s, and agitated
224 (60 rpm) again at 25 °C overnight. The soil suspensions were then centrifuged at 3,000 x g for
225 10 min.

226 Triplicates of each treatment were pooled taking 200 μL of each triplicate, and resuspended in
227 17.4 mL of the sterile saline solution (0.85 % w/v NaCl). Each BiologTM Ecoplates well was
228 filled with 150 μL of the suspension. The BiologTM Ecoplates were incubated at 25 °C and
229 color development in each well was recorded as optical density (OD) at 590 nm, according to
230 the protocols described by Garland (1997). The absorbance values of the samples were
231 monitored using an Omega SPECTROstar (BMG Labtech) microplate spectrophotometer at
232 $t=0$ and 168 h (7 days). The well absorbance values were adjusted by subtracting the average
233 absorbance of the control well (water only) from the absorbance measured at $t=0$. A well was

234 considered as positive when OD_{590nm} in well – OD_{590nm} in the control well > 0.25 .
235 Negative readings ($OD < 0$) were set to zero for all subsequent analyses. The potential
236 metabolic diversity from the Biolog™ Ecoplates was evaluated by functional richness S' ,
237 expressed as the number of substrates used on each plate (i.e. number of positive well
238 numbers); microbial activity was expressed according to the Garland and Mills method (1991)
239 as Average Well Color Development (AWCD), as follows: $AWCD = \sum ODi/31$, where ODi is
240 the optical density value for each well. The Shannon-Weaver index (H') was calculated as
241 follows: $H' = -\sum Pi \times \ln Pi$, where Pi is the ratio of activity for a particular carbon source
242 ($ODi=OD_{590nm}$ in each well- OD_{590nm} in the control well) to the sum of activities on all
243 substrates ($\sum ODi$).

244 As-transforming microorganisms were enumerated by the Most Probable Number (MPN)
245 method, detailed in Thouin et al. (2016) for As(III)-oxidizing and in Thouin et al. (2018) for
246 As (V)-reducing bacteria, modified as follows: the weight of soil dispersed in 10 mL of sterile
247 saline solution was 2.5 g instead of 0.25 g.

248 Total soil DNA was extracted in triplicate from 0.5 g of wet weight of each soil sample, using
249 the FastDNA® SPIN Kit for soil (MP Biomedicals) according to the manufacturer's protocol.
250 Extracted dsDNA was quantified by fluorimetry using a Quantus Fluorometer (Promega) with
251 the Promega Quantifluor®, per the manufacturer's recommendation.

252 Bacterial communities were estimated by real-time quantitative PCR using universal primer
253 sets 341F (5'-CCTACGGGAGGCAGCAG-3') and 515R (5'-
254 ATTACCGCGGCTGCTGGCA-3'). Real-time quantitative PCR was run in a CFX Connect
255 (BioRad) and was performed in 20 μ L reaction volumes containing 10 μ L of 2 \times iQSYBR
256 Green SuperMix (Bio-Rad), supplemented with 0.16 μ L of each primer (50 μ mol. μ L⁻¹),
257 0.2 μ L of T4 bacteriophage gene 32 Product (500 ng. μ L⁻¹) (MP Biomedicals), and 2 μ L of
258 template DNA (10 times dilution series of plasmid standard of *Pseudomonas putida*
259 (KT2440) and environmental samples DNA). Positive control *Pseudomonas putida* (KT2440)
260 quantified gene copy or water served as positive and negative controls, respectively. The
261 amplifications were carried out with the following temperature profiles: step one heated to
262 95°C (3 min), followed by 35 cycles (30 s of denaturation at 95 °C, 30 s at the primers
263 specific annealing temperature (60 °C), 30 s of post-elongation at 72 °C and 30 s at 80 °C for
264 plate read). Finally, at the end of amplification, a melting curve analysis was performed by

265 measurement of the SYBR Green signal intensities during a 0.5 °C temperature increment
266 every 10 s from 65 °C to 95 °C.

267 **SEM observations**

268 The structure and elemental composition material samples were analyzed by scanning
269 electron microscopy (SEM) coupled with energy dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (EDS) using a
270 TM 3000 (Hitachi) unit, operating at 15 kV accelerating voltage, coupled to a Swift ED 3000
271 X-Stream module (Hitachi). The samples were air dried, deposited on a carbon adhesive and
272 directly analyzed. The acquisition time for EDS point analyses was 300 s and between 15 and
273 30 minutes for maps with a resolution of 512 x 384 pixels. The AZtecEnergy Analyser
274 Software displays and interprets X-ray data to provide accurate and reliable analysis without
275 standard (Burgess et al., 2007).

276 **Plant growth test**

277 Plant growth tests were performed with rye-grass (*Lolium perenne* L.). The content of the
278 three replicates of microcosms sacrificed after 28 days of experiment was pooled and then re-
279 distributed in three 200 mL polystyrene pots. Twelve *Lolium perenne* L. seeds were placed
280 onto the soil surface of each pot and the soils were watered with 20 mL of Mont Roucoux
281 mineral water. The pots were incubated in a phytotron of which the parameters were adjusted
282 as follows: 60 % air-water saturation, 16 h of light (white fluorescent light 500–600 $\mu\text{m m}^{-2} \text{s}^{-1}$)
283 ¹) at 25 °C alternating with 8 h of darkness at 18 °C). The pots were watered each time surface
284 drying was observed. After 51 days of incubation, the number of surviving plants was counted
285 for each microcosm and plant biomass was evaluated after plant drying (roots and shoots
286 separately).

287 **Statistics**

288 All statistical tests were conducted with R 3.2.3 (R Development Core Team, 2014). Inter-
289 species averages were used to analyze these data. ANOVA and a post-hoc test for
290 homogeneity of variance were performed. Multiple comparisons were performed by a post-
291 hoc Tukey-HSD test at different levels, to compare the five test microcosm conditions
292 between samples for a given duration (7, 28 or 84 days) with 95 % confidence level. Different
293 letters in tables and in figures indicate the significant differences between samples according
294 to the test.

295 To facilitate interpretation of the large dataset, a multivariate statistical analysis was
296 performed by principal component analysis (PCA) applied to the data matrix formed by 23
297 variables, namely total metal and metalloid concentrations and major ions in the percolation
298 water, constituents of organic matter, pH, and measured biological parameters of the five
299 amendment conditions tested, at 7, 28 and 84 days.

300

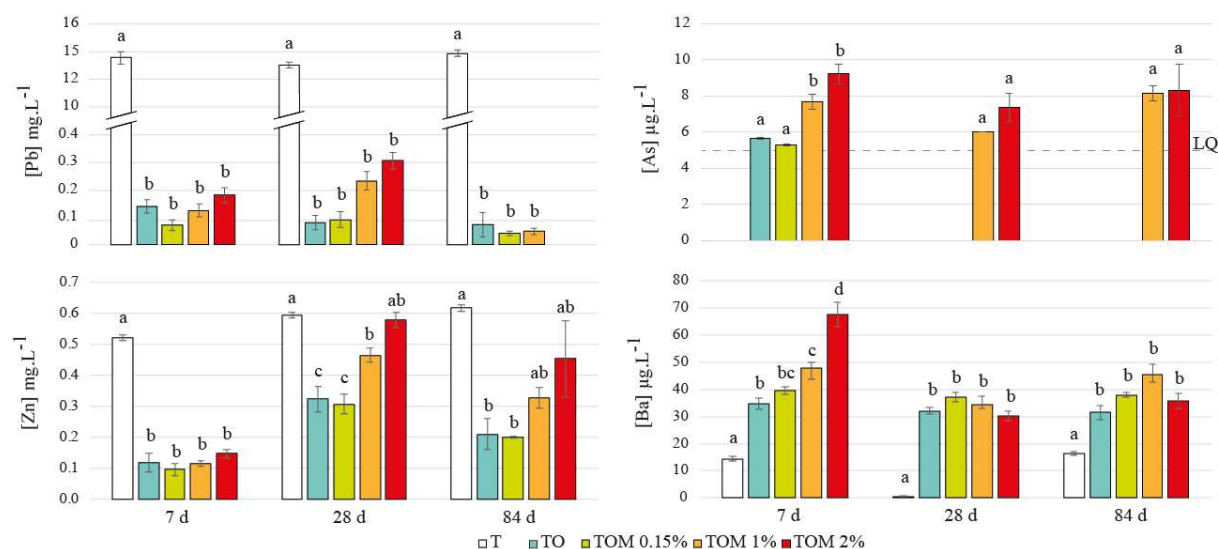
301 **Results**

302 **Percolated water composition**

303 In the non-amended tailings, the pH value was low and stable after 28 days (4.26 ± 0.08 ;
304 $n=13$; SM.2). In the amended conditions, pH remained close to neutral over the 84 days of the
305 experiment. pH values in TO, TOM 0.15%, TOM 1% and TOM 2% were respectively $7.49 \pm$
306 0.12 , 7.67 ± 0.04 , 7.46 ± 0.04 and 7.37 ± 0.06 ($n=39$; SM.2).

307 The ion composition of tailings percolation water was dominated by sulfate, potassium,
308 nitrate and sodium (SM.3). Microcosms with ochre (TO, TOM 0.15%, TOM 1%, and TOM
309 2%) were characterized by high concentrations of sulfate, nitrate, sodium, calcium and
310 magnesium, with respective values above 2 g.L^{-1} , 40 mg.L^{-1} , 400 mg.L^{-1} , 450 mg.L^{-1} , and
311 80 mg.L^{-1} . Percolation water from the pots containing manure was also characterized by
312 higher chloride, ammonium and potassium concentrations. After 7 days, $[\text{Cl}^-]$, $[\text{NH}_4^+]$, and
313 $[\text{K}^+]$ in TOM 2% reached, respectively, $581.6 \pm 38.2 \text{ mg.L}^{-1}$, $12.5 \pm 1.1 \text{ mg.L}^{-1}$, and $894.8 \pm$
314 46.5 mg.L^{-1} .

315 Total dissolved concentrations of As, Zn and Ba were determined respectively at 7, 28 and 84
316 days and every week for Pb for the five tested conditions. Pb concentrations decreased
317 significantly, from 15 mg.L^{-1} in the tailings to $< 0.4 \text{ mg.L}^{-1}$ in the amended samples (Fig. 1
318 and Fig. 2). While, for TO and TOM 0.15%, Pb concentration always remained in the 50–
319 $100 \text{ } \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ range, in the presence of 1% and 2% manure, Pb concentration increased to 300–
320 $40 \text{ } \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$ during the first 28 days of the experiment. It then decreased and even dropped
321 below the detection limit with 2% manure (Fig. 2).

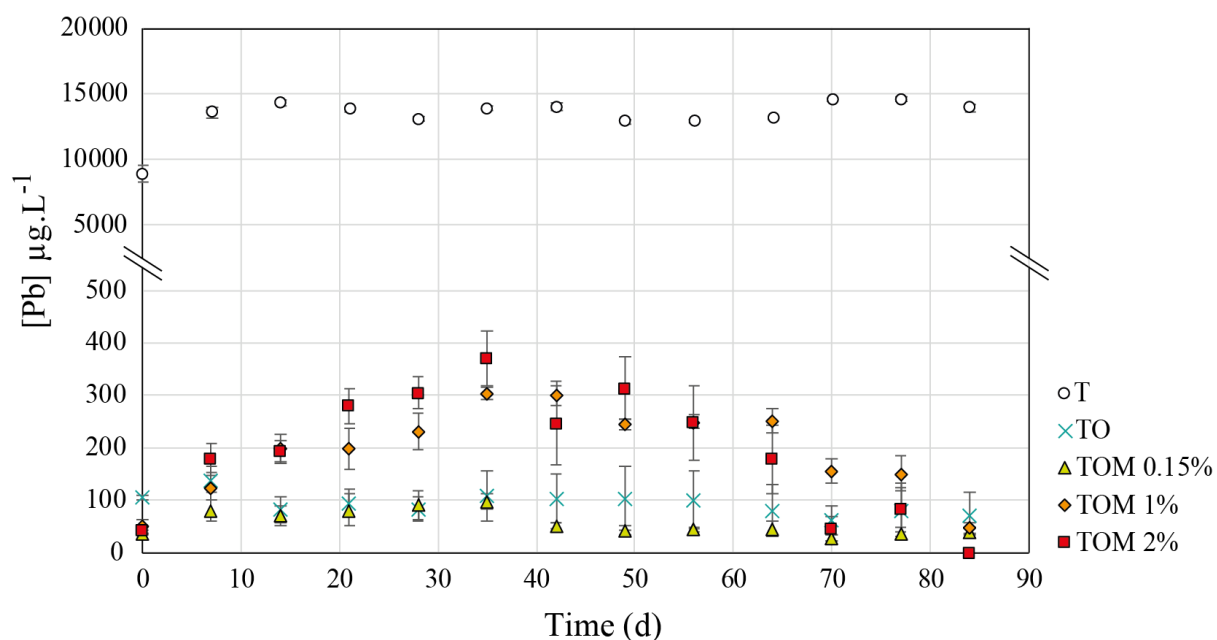


322

323 **Figure 1:** Total dissolved concentrations of Pb, As, Zn and Ba in the percolation water of the
 324 five test-condition microcosms after 7, 28 and 84 days of experiment.. Multiple comparisons
 325 were performed by a post-hoc Tukey-HSD test at different levels $P < 0.05$ ($n=3$), to compare
 326 the five test microcosm conditions between samples for a given duration (7, 28 or 84 days)
 327 with 95% confidence level. Different letters indicate significant differences between samples
 328 according to the test.

329 T: tailings without amendment. TO: tailings + 5% ochre. TOM 0.15%: tailings + 5% ochre + 0.15% manure.
 330 TOM 1%: tailings + 5% ochre + 1% manure. TOM 2%: tailings + 5% ochre + 2% manure. Error bars indicate
 331 the standard error ($n=3$).

332 Zn concentrations decreased significantly in the percolated water from amended tailings after
 333 7 days (Fig. 1). However, later in the experiment, and particularly for the TOM 1% and TOM
 334 2% conditions, Zn concentrations tended to increase. As was not detectable in the percolation
 335 water from the non-amended tailings ($<0.5 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$), whereas with 1% and 2% of manure As
 336 concentration was in all cases $>0.5 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$. All the amendments induced a significant increase
 337 in concentration of Ba in percolation water. Maximum Ba concentration, $67.6 \pm 4.39 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$,
 338 was observed in TOM 2% after 7 days, whereas after 28 and 84 days of incubation, no
 339 difference was observed between amended conditions.



340

341 **Figure 2:** Temporal evolution of Pb total dissolved concentration in the percolation water of
 342 the five test-condition microcosms during experiment (in days, d). Error bars indicate the
 343 standard error with $n=3$.

344 T: tailings without amendment. TO: tailings + 5% ochre. TOM 0.15%: tailings + 5% ochre + 0.15% manure.
 345 TOM 1%: tailings + 5% ochre + 1% manure. TOM 2%: tailings + 5% ochre + 2% manure.

346 Soil chemical and morpho-chemical characterization

347 Total C, TOC, MinC, total N, H and S in the soil of the five test microcosm conditions at 7,
 348 28 and 84 days were measured by elemental flash pyrolyser analyzer and Rock-Eval pyrolysis
 349 (Table 1). C and N contents were very low in the tailings throughout the experiment. S
 350 content did not increase with the addition of ochre or manure. C, H, and N levels were higher
 351 in the samples amended with manure, and increased proportionally with the proportion of
 352 manure. These parameters did not evolve during the experiment.

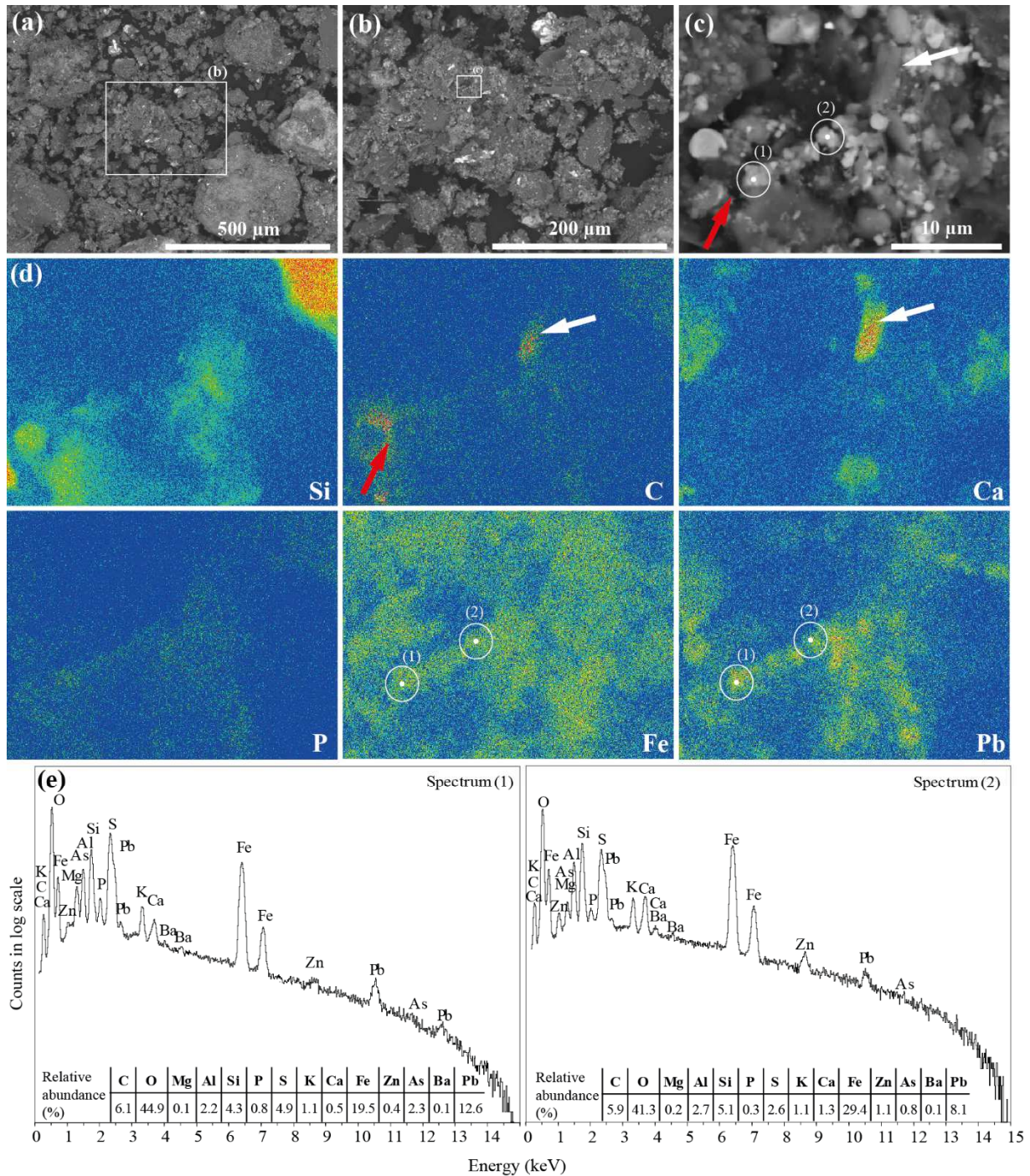
353 **Table 1 :** Concentrations of the main constituents of organic matter analyzed in the five test-
 354 condition microcosms at days 7, 28 and 84 (d) by ^aFlash pyrolyser analyzer and ^b Rock-Eval
 355 6.

356 TOC: total organic carbon. MinC: mineral carbon. T: tailings without amendment. TO: tailings + 5% ochre.
 357 TOM 0.15%: tailings + 5% ochre + 0.15% manure. TOM 1%: tailings + 5% ochre + 1% manure. TOM 2%:
 358 tailings + 5% ochre + 2% manure.

	%	T	TO	TOM 0.15%	TOM 1%	TOM 2%
0 d	C^a	0.05	0.16	0.20	0.53	1.22
	H^a	0.18	0.17	0.21	0.29	0.34
	N^a	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.03	0.08
	S^a	0.56	0.59	0.56	0.76	0.76

	TOC^b	0.09	0.05	0.07	0.20	0.62
	MinC^b	0.04	0.13	0.17	0.44	0.44
7d	C^a	0.05	0.20	0.53	0.66	0.69
	H^a	0.15	0.23	0.29	0.26	0.31
	N^a	0.62	0.41	0.76	0.48	0.60
	S^a	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.04	0.04
	TOC^b	0.07	0.13	0.17	0.37	0.45
	MinC^b	0.04	0.12	0.13	0.29	0.32
28d	C^a	0.15	0.32	0.46	0.46	0.74
	H^a	0.22	0.30	0.25	0.25	0.30
	N^a	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.05
	S^a	0.53	0.78	0.56	0.56	0.51
	TOC^b	0.09	0.16	0.17	0.27	0.44
	MinC^b	0.04	0.12	0.13	0.20	0.26
84d	C^a	0.03	0.22	0.34	0.60	0.66
	H^a	0.15	0.22	0.25	0.25	0.25
	N^a	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.04
	S^a	0.54	0.41	0.51	0.43	0.33
	TOC^b	0.05	0.14	0.18	0.34	0.64
	MinC^b	0.03	0.12	0.16	0.22	0.21

359 Ochre and manure were first observed with SEM, to identify their micro-morphological
360 characteristics and chemistry. A selection of samples from the microcosms was studied in
361 detail: tailings +5% iron hydroxide (TO), tailings +5% iron hydroxide +2% manure (TOM
362 2%) at 7 days (Fig. 3), 28 days and 84 days of incubation. For these samples, the most
363 outstanding result was the high amount of Pb tied to iron hydroxides brought by the ochre, in
364 all TO and TOM conditions.



365

366 **Figure 3:** SEM observations from TOM 2% at 7 days (a, b and c). (d) Elemental maps from
 367 backscattered electron image (c). Maps show small iron-rich particles, which were Pb carriers
 368 (targets (1) and (2)). White arrow show CaCO_3 without Pb and red arrow show carbon
 369 fragments. (e) EDS point analyses of two Pb-rich particles represented by the targets (1) and
 370 (2). (The acquisition time for EDS point analyses was 300 s and 15 s for maps).

371 In the tailings amended with ochre only (TO), the few sludge iron-rich particles larger than
 372 $10\ \mu\text{m}$ (less than 15 % of the mud according to the laser granulometer) did not fix Pb
 373 efficiently (SM.4), unlike the vast majority of the sludge particles (SM.4), smaller than

374 10 μm , which contained on average 9 % Pb (Standard Deviation (SD) = 2.96; n = 15) and also
375 1.5 % of As (SD = 0.75; n = 15).

376 Locally, concentrations reached 12.6 % for Pb and 2.3 % for As (Fig. 3c and e, spectrum 1).
377 This sludge, rich in Pb and As, also contained S: 4.9 % and 2.6 % in the analyses presented in
378 Fig. 3e, and 3.5 % as an average of 15 point analyses (SD = 1.5; n = 15).

379 Carbon fragments identifiable with certainty as manure particles were not found in the
380 microcosm amended with manure, even in the microcosm incubated for 7 days only. Particles
381 evoked possible morphologies or textures of manure fragments (arrangements reminiscent of
382 alignments of cells in plant tissues) but contained very low amounts of carbon not allowing
383 direct comparison with intact manure. Nevertheless, these pieces, enriched in phosphorus
384 compared to the other components (soil, ochre), were rich in varied Pb-rich minerals also
385 containing S, P and As. The loosely packed agglutinate shown in Fig. 3 was a commonly
386 found situation, with carbonaceous matter mixed intimately with iron-rich ochre and fine soil
387 particles. Carbon in such agglutinates reached 40 % locally (Fig. 3d, red arrow), but the
388 distribution of Pb clearly matched with Fe.

389 Scarce Pb-Ca rich particles were present in microcosms amended with manure, even after 7
390 days of incubation. Ochre contained CaCO_3 rod-like particles that remained easily
391 recognizable in the TO and TOM samples but, unlike the Ca-rich particles, they did not
392 contain any trace of Pb, as shown in Fig. 3d (C and Ca maps, white arrows).

393 **Biological characterization**

394 Total microbial biomass, measured by the total double-strand DNA (Table 2), showed that the
395 addition of 2% of manure significantly increased the microbial biomass present in the
396 microcosms after 7 and 28 days of incubation ($p < 0.05$). Even if, overall, the data are not
397 significant, the addition of amendment induced an increase in the amount of dsDNA,
398 regardless of incubation time. However, after 84 days of incubation, the TOM 1% and TOM
399 2% conditions showed a significantly higher microbial biomass ($p < 0.05$).

400 The proportion of bacteria in the microbial community is expressed as 16S rDNA gene copies
401 (Table 2). Bacteria were significantly influenced by addition of 1% of cow manure in samples
402 after 7 days of incubation ($p < 0.05$). The variations were not significant in the other
403 conditions, but amendments did tend to increase the amount of bacteria. After 28 days, the
404 amount of bacteria quantified increased with the amount of amendment. After 84 days, all

405 samples contained an equivalent amount of 16S rDNA gene copies, with the T sample having
406 more bacteria than at the beginning of the experiment.

407 The abundance of As(III)-oxidizing microbes in the solid phases after 84 days (Table 2),
408 tended to decrease with amendment, the decrease being significant for the highest manure
409 concentration (2%). Conversely, the abundance of As(V)-reducing microorganisms tended to
410 increase with the addition of amendments. This increase was not significant for the conditions
411 with manure because of large differences between the samples. However, a significant
412 increase was observed between the T and TO amendment conditions.

413 **Table 2** : Total soil DNA, bacterial communities quantification, and As(III)-oxidizing and
414 As(V)-reducing bacteria enumerated by the Most Probable Number (MPN) method in the five
415 test-condition microcosms after 7, 28 and 84 days of experiment (d). Analysis of variance was
416 by post-hoc Tukey-HSD test at different levels $P < 0.05$ ($n=3$). Different letters indicate the
417 differences between samples for a given time.

418 T: tailings without amendment. TO: tailings + 5% ochre. TOM 0.15%: tailings + 5% ochre + 0.15% manure.
419 TOM 1%: tailings + 5% ochre + 1% manure. TOM 2%: tailings + 5% ochre + 2% manure.

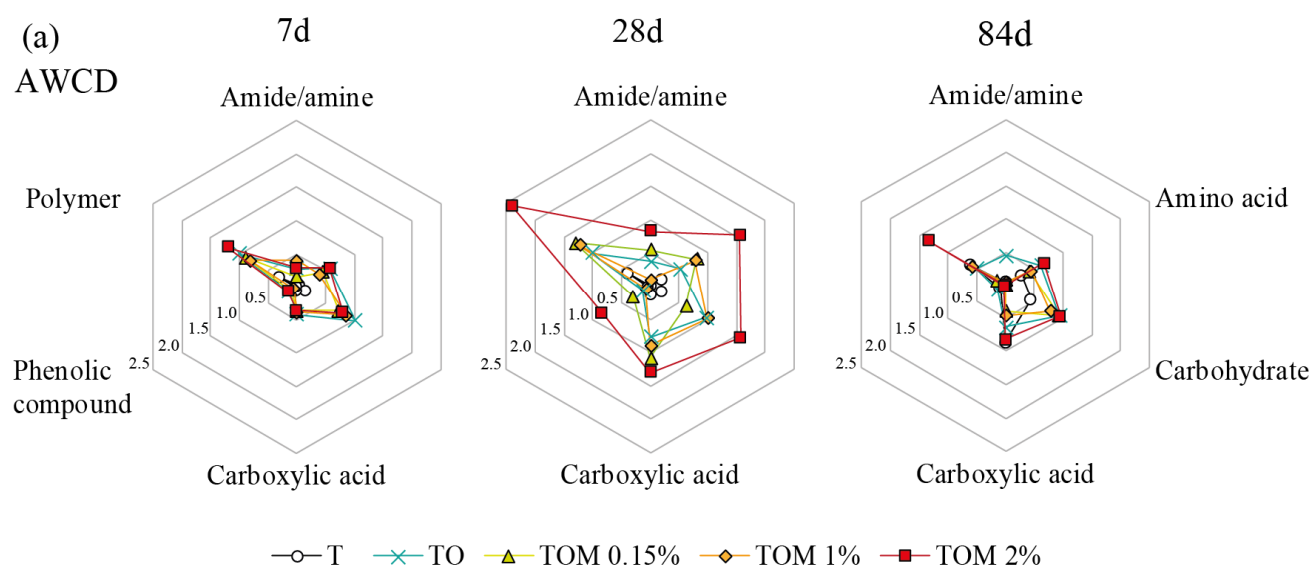
	T	TO	TOM 0.15%	TOM 1%	TOM 2%
7 d Total dsDNA ng.dw soil ⁻¹	298 b	497 b	1282 b	3687 ab	9273 a
16S rDNA gene copies.g dw soil ⁻¹	8.9E+6 b	1.5E+7 ab	1.6E+7 ab	2.3E+7 a	1.0E+7 ab
28 d Total dsDNA ng.dw soil ⁻¹	123 b	558 b	1746 b	4722 b	13,485 a
16S rDNA gene copies.g dw soil ⁻¹	4.2E+6 c	1.0E+7 bc	1.6E+7 b	2.5E+7 a	2.4E+7 a
84 d Total dsDNA ng.dw soil ⁻¹	90 b	304 b	1100 b	5907 a	7396 a
16S rDNA gene copies.g dw soil ⁻¹	1.1E+7 a	2.5E+7 a	7.5E+7 a	1.9E+7 a	2.3E+7 a
MPN of As(III)-oxidizing microorganisms microorganisms.g ⁻¹ dw soil	1.7E+5 a	1.3E+5 ab	1.4E+4 ab	1.9E+4 ab	1.5E+4 b
MPN of As(V)-reducing microorganisms microorganisms.g ⁻¹ dw soil	1.2E+1 b	5.9E+4 a	1.4E+4 ab	1.1E+4 b	1.1E+4 b

420

421 **Average well color development (AWCD) and diversity of the microbial communities in** 422 **the solid phases**

423 The ability of fast growing heterotrophs present in the samples (mainly composed of rapid
424 growing gram-negative bacteria) to utilize different C substrates are presented with the
425 functional richness (S'), the AWCD calculated per substrate and for the whole Biolog™
426 Ecoplates, and with the Shannon-Weaver diversity index (H') (Fig. 4, SM.5). The AWCD is
427 an expression of the microbial activity in the sample and integrates cell density and diversity

428 in substrate utilization, while H' expresses the diversity of the microbial communities and S'
 429 the number of degraded compounds. The measurements of S' provide information about
 430 microbial activities without providing any information on the type of substrate used. The
 431 community-level physiological profile (CLPP) demonstrates changes in the structure and
 432 function of microbial communities with the addition of amendments, and with time.



433

434 **Figure 4:** (a) Radar diagrams of the bacterial average well color development (AWCD) of all
 435 classes of carbon substrates, identified by Biolog™ EcoPlates for the five test-condition
 436 microcosms after 7, 28 and 84 days of experiment ($n=3$). (b) Metabolic profiling of samples
 437 using Biolog™ EcoPlates based on pattern of utilization based on average functional richness
 438 (S'), mean of AWCD, and Shannon-Weaver diversity index (H') of substrates and on
 439 functional diversity.

440 T: tailings without amendment. TO: tailings + 5% ochre. TOM 0.15%: tailings + 5% ochre + 0.15% manure.
 441 TOM 1%: tailings + 5% ochre + 1% manure. TOM 2%: tailings + 5% ochre + 2% manure.

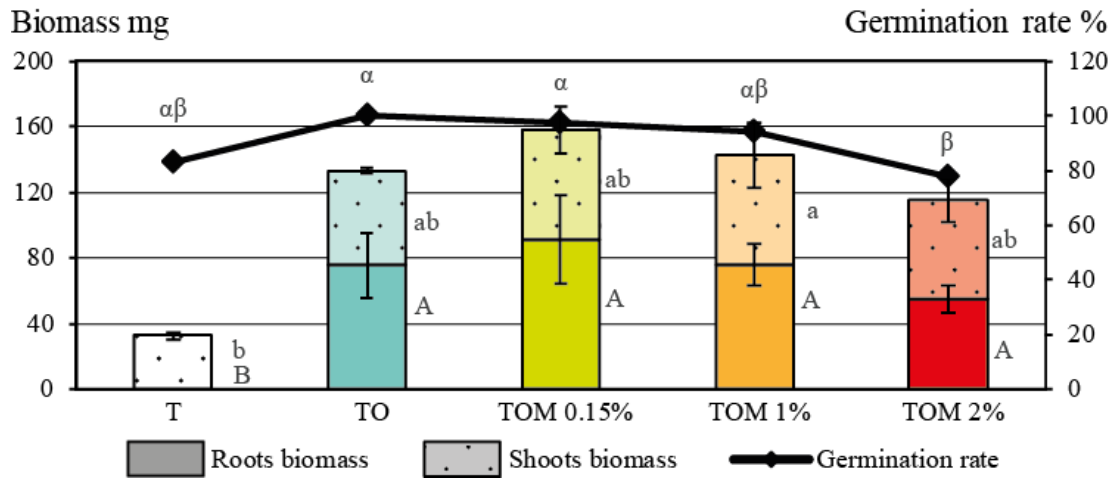
442 Over time, only a few substrates supported the growth of microbial communities, especially
 443 those belonging to the carbohydrates and polymers chemical groups, while amides/amines
 444 and phenolic compounds were not (or were only slightly) degraded by the bacteria that
 445 catabolize the C-sources of the Biolog™ EcoPlates (Fig. 4, SM.5).

446 After 7 days of incubation, the relative abundance based on AWCD for each substrate (Fig. 4,
447 SM.5) indicated quantitative differences in the use of 31 carbon sources between the samples
448 without amendment and those amended with iron hydroxide sludge and cow manure. The
449 AWCDs of the tailings amended with iron hydroxide and iron hydroxide-cow manure were
450 greater than those of the tailings without amendments. These samples also showed the highest
451 values for functional richness S' and Shannon diversity index H' . This indicates a greater rate
452 of substrate utilization (catabolic potential) by the microbial community and a greater
453 functional diversity in the amended tailings than in the non-amended tailings. Even though the
454 functional richness value for the TOM 0.15% sample was not the highest, its Shannon-Weiner
455 diversity index and its AWCD value were the highest from amongst the amended samples.
456 After 28 days of incubation, TOM 2% differed from the other samples with greater values for
457 S' , AWCD (for each substrate and for the whole BiologTM Ecoplates) and H' (Fig. 4, SM.5).
458 The S' , AWCD, and H' values were greater for the T sample at day 28 than at day 7. After 84
459 days of incubation, the AWCD (for each substrate and for the whole BiologTM Ecoplates) had
460 decreased for all amended samples.

461 The CLPPs indicated by BiologTM Ecoplates data were affected by amendment and by
462 incubation time. Again, the diversity parameters of T increased (Fig. 4, SM.5). The TO
463 sample appeared to have the greatest microbial community-level substrate utilization diversity
464 with the highest S' and H' values. The TO samples stood out at this time step with
465 communities able to catabolize amides/amines. The AWCD remained highest for the TOM
466 2% sample.

467 **Phytotoxicity test**

468 Ryegrass survival was improved by amendment but a concentration of 1% and 2% manure
469 tended to reduce plant germination (Fig. 5). The highest survival rate for ryegrass was for the
470 TO and TOM 0.15% amended samples. The addition of ochre and cow manure contributed to
471 the development of roots, since the plants did not develop roots (or did so poorly) when they
472 grew on tailings without amendment. There were significant differences in total plant biomass
473 between plants growing on tailings without amendment and the other samples (statistical data
474 not shown). TO and TOM 0.15% amendments favored higher plant biomasses, while
475 TOM 1% and TOM 2% were least favorable for the development of ryegrass shoots (Fig. 5).



476

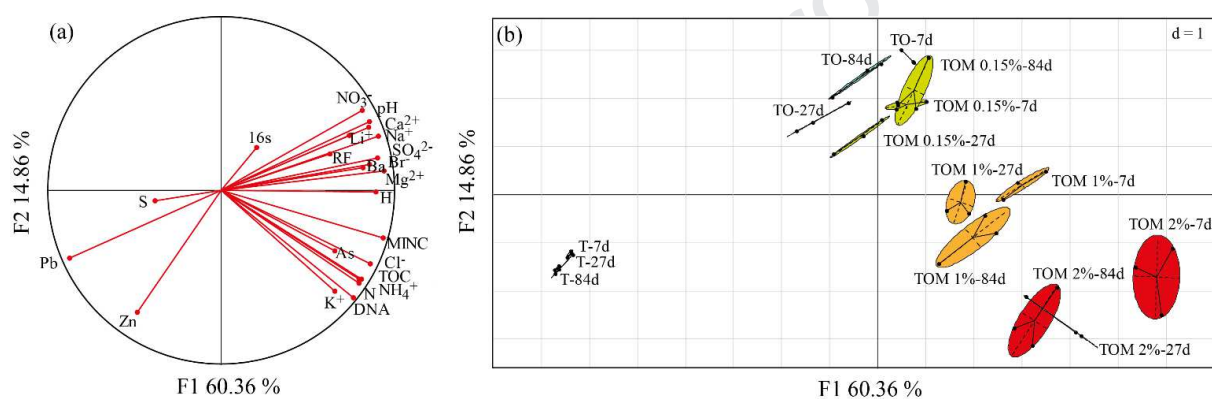
477 **Figure 5:** Germination rate (n=12) and average biomass dry weight (DW) of ryegrass (mg)
 478 (n=3). Multiple comparisons were performed by a post-hoc Tukey-HSD test at different levels
 479 $P < 0.05$ (n=3), to compare the five microcosm conditions with a 95% confidence level.
 480 Different letters indicate significant differences between samples for each parameter
 481 according to the test (capital letters for roots biomass, minuscule letters for shoots biomass
 482 and Greek letters for germination rate).

483 T: tailings without amendment. TO: tailings + 5% ochre. TOM 0.15%: tailings + 5% ochre + 0.15% manure.

484 TOM 1%: tailings + 5% ochre + 1% manure. TOM 2%: tailings + 5% ochre + 2% manure

485 Discussion

486 The tailings sample from the Pontgibaud mine used for the experiment was characterized by
 487 relatively high content of metals and metalloids with Pb, As and Ba at respectively
 488 26,432 mg.kg⁻¹; 1,134 mg.kg⁻¹; and 1,063 mg.kg⁻¹. These were higher contents than those
 489 found in other tailings from the Pontgibaud mine (Pascaud et al., 2014) but were of the same
 490 order of magnitude as those from other former mines in the Massif Central (Bodénan et al.,
 491 2004; Courtin-Nomade et al., 2016). Tailings from the Pontgibaud mine, like other mining
 492 wastes, were acidic (pH=4) (SM.2) (Pascaud et al., 2014), a condition that contributed to the
 493 high mobility of Pb (Fig.6), with concentrations reaching 14,000 µg.L⁻¹ in percolation water
 494 in the microcosms (Fig. 2). Sulfates and Pb were the major chemical species in solution. It
 495 seems that these species solubility were controlled by the stability of anglesite and beudantite,
 496 the Pb sulfates detected in the initial material.



497
 498 **Figure 6:** Correlation circle (a) and principal component analysis (PCA) (b) applied to the data
 499 matrix formed by 23 variables, namely: total metals and metalloid (Pb, Zn, Ba, and As) concentrations
 500 and major ions (Cl⁻, Br⁻, NO₃⁻, SO₄²⁻, Li⁺, Na⁺, NH₄⁺, K⁺, Ca²⁺, Mg²⁺) in the percolation water,
 501 constituents of organic matter (TOC, MinC), pH, DNA quantification, bacterial abundance (16S), and
 502 parameters from BiologTM EcoPlates (RF,H⁺) of the five test-condition microcosms after 7, 28 and 84
 503 days of experiment.
 504 T: tailings without amendment. TO: tailings + 5% ochre. TOM 0.15%: tailings + 5% ochre + 0.15% manure.
 505 TOM 1%: tailings + 5% ochre + 1% manure. TOM 2%: tailings + 5% ochre + 2% manure.

506 The tailings had low microbial biomass and both microbial functional richness and diversity
 507 were poor. Moreover, the germination of *Lolium perenne L.* was greatly inhibited by this
 508 material. The characteristics of the tailings – very low pH, low content of nutrients (organic
 509 carbon content between 0.05 and 0.09 %) and severe inorganic contamination – seemed to
 510 contribute to their specific biological properties. Londry and Sherriff (2005) have shown that
 511 microbial activities are limited by carbon availability in this type of material, and that
 512 revegetated areas can provide a source of organic matter. The current geochemical state of the
 513 tailings limits the development of both microorganism activity and vegetation cover.

514 Pb was the most concentrated pollutant in the tailings and in the pore water of this mine site.
515 Immobilization of Pb was the first aim of the amendments. Phosphate amendments are often
516 used to reduce the mobility of Pb by ionic exchange and precipitation of pyromorphite
517 (Brown et al., 2005; Kumpiene et al., 2008). Such amendments were not tested because of the
518 high As content of the tailings, phosphate being able to compete with arsenate for sorption
519 sites (Manning and Goldberg, 1996; Darland and Inskeep, 1997). However, the manure may
520 have introduced some phosphate that contributed to the precipitation of a minor fraction of the
521 mobile As whereas, in our microcosms, Pb immobilization seemed to be mainly linked to the
522 ochre amendment (Fig.6). The addition to soils of iron oxide-hydroxide wastes (ochres) from
523 water treatment facilities is known to induce immobilization of Pb as a result of pH increase
524 (Doi et al., 2005; Nielsen et al., 2011; Olimah et al. 2015). In the experiment, the ochre
525 induced a rise in pH to neutral values in the amended microcosms. This phenomenon,
526 together with the efficient sorption capacity of goethite (Wu et al., 2003, Rahimi et al., 2015),
527 was beneficial for the stabilization of Pb. SEM observations of Pb associated with iron-rich
528 particles of ochre supported this hypothesis. In order to evaluate the proportion of Pb
529 precipitation in the amended tailings, the geochemical PHREEQC 3.0.6.7757 code was used
530 with the minteq.v4 thermodynamic database, by integrating the complete chemistry of the
531 percolation water (SM.6). Simulation performed with the data from the amended conditions
532 indicated no precipitation of Pb minerals. However, when Pb concentration was adjusted to
533 that of the non-amended tailings, the simulation predicted the Pb hydroxide and Pb sulfate
534 precipitation. This phenomenon, made possible by the high quantity of sulfate brought with
535 ochre, could also contribute to the immobilization of Pb, this hypothesis being in line with the
536 observation by SEM-EDS of relatively high S concentrations associated with Pb.

537 One process that may control soluble Ba is the precipitation of barite in the case of high
538 sulfate content (Ippolito and Barbarick, 2006). The PHREEQC simulation sustained the
539 occurrence of this phenomenon with the addition of ochre (SM.6). Also, barite had already
540 been detected in the Pontgibaud mine tailings (Pascaud et al., 2014). A second process was
541 linked to the presence of As, which favored the formation of $BaHAsO_4^-$ and $Ba_3(AsO_4)_2$ (Lu
542 and Zhu, 2011).

543 Although all amendments induced a strong decrease in Pb concentration in the water phase,
544 the evolution of Pb concentration differed with the composition of amendments. In the
545 presence of 1% and 2% manure, Pb concentration increased during the first 28 days of the
546 experiment. It then decreased and even dropped below the detection limit with 2% manure

547 (Fig. 2). In parallel, the maximum of metabolic potential for degradation of organic molecules
548 was observed after 28 days of incubation (Fig. 4, SM.5). These results suggest a relationship
549 between the dynamics of mobile Pb and the evolution of the organic amendment. Previous
550 studies have shown that the solubility of Pb is at a minimum at pH 6, and that at higher pH
551 values soil organic matter is more soluble, inducing the release of organo-Pb complexes
552 (Wang and Benoit, 1996; Sauvé et al., 1998). This type of soluble complex may have been
553 produced in our manure-amended microcosms, as they both had pH higher than 6 (between 7
554 and 8) and had the highest organic matter concentration for this experiment. In addition to
555 these dissolved species, the formation of Pb-bearing colloids is expected in this pH range:
556 Klitzke et al. (2008) observed an increase of both colloidal and dissolved Pb when they raised
557 the pH of a highly polluted forest soil that was rich in organic matter. The effect of pH on the
558 mobility of colloids is linked to the change of soil surface charge, decreasing inter-particle
559 attraction. Colloidal soil minerals are mobilized by changes in charges and stabilized by
560 organic coating. During the microcosm experiment, the more mobile fraction of organic
561 matter from manure may have been released during the first 28 days of experiment, inducing
562 the mobilization of both Pb-organic molecule complexes and organic-coated Pb colloids.
563 Bacterial activity may have contributed to these processes through the biodegradation of
564 insoluble molecules with high molecular weights into more soluble small metabolites. The
565 assumed kinetics of manure biodegradation in our experiment fitted well with those observed
566 in previous laboratory studies: Bernal and Kirchmann (1992) observed a maximum rate of
567 mineralization of pig manure in soil during the first month of incubation, and Calderon et al.
568 (2005) showed that the maximum degradation rate of cow manures occurred during the first 8
569 weeks of contact with soil.

570 Immobilization of As by ochre in soils polluted with As has already been observed (Doi et al.,
571 2005; Nielsen et al., 2011; Olimah et al. 2015). However, the experiment described here was
572 able to show that ochre can simultaneously decrease Pb and As leachability. As was not
573 greatly mobilized during the experiment, its concentration in the percolated water always
574 remaining lower than the standard for drinking water ($10 \mu\text{g.L}^{-1}$). However, in every case, As
575 concentration was higher in the manure-amended conditions than in T and TO conditions
576 (Fig. 1). In parallel, the range of concentration of As(III)-oxidizing microorganisms tended to
577 be lower in the manure-amended microcosms. Previous studies have shown that organic
578 matter can negatively influence microbial As(III)-oxidizing activities (Challan-Belval et al.,
579 2009; Bachate et al., 2012; Lescure et al. 2016). The abundance of As(V)-reducing organisms

580 was highest in TO and TOM 0.15% manure, and of the same (lower) range in the other
581 conditions. The increase in pH appeared to stimulate growth of microorganisms able to reduce
582 As(V). Taking into account that As(V) adsorption on iron oxides is optimum at pHs lower
583 than 6, whereas As(III) adsorption is favored at pHs above 7, the evolution of As-
584 transforming communities with amendments was quite positive in terms of As adsorption on
585 solid phases. Globally, the total number of As-transforming microbes was higher in the
586 conditions without manure, i.e. when As was found in lower concentration in the percolating
587 water, suggesting that they were involved in biogeochemical processes favoring As stability.

588 Quantification of microorganisms by measuring the total DNA and 16S rDNA gene copies
589 number showed that tailings without cow manure and iron hydroxide sludge had lower
590 microbial biomass than tailings with amendment whatever the time step. Similarly, microbial
591 diversity, evaluated by average functional richness (S'), AWCD and Shannon-Weaver
592 diversity index (H'), was lower for tailings without amendment. These results are not
593 surprising since, typically, tailings are known to have low diversity of microbial species and
594 functions and low microbial biomass and activity. Thus, Chen et al. (2005) considered that
595 microbial metabolic activity in tailings is lower than in soils. Tailings can therefore be
596 considered as an extreme and geochemically dynamic environment exerting a strong selection
597 pressure on microbial communities that are suited to stressful conditions and considered as
598 extremophiles, since the microorganisms rely on chemical energy from minerals in tailings
599 due to the lack of organic matter (Schimel et al., 2007). Therefore, it is not surprising that the
600 microbial communities in this experiment strongly metabolized complex and more
601 recalcitrant C sources such as Tween 80, Tween 40, α -cyclodextrin, and glycogen.

602 Organic matter is a crucial component of the soil sorption complex that immobilizes toxic
603 metals and metalloids and increases the soil's capacity to store and supply nutrients.
604 Increasing organic matter content of tailings by supplying cow manure may contribute to
605 increasing biomass and microbial activity. In this experiment, after 7 days of incubation, the
606 cow manure and the ochre input provided the tailings with more biomass and diverse
607 microbial communities. Microorganisms were thus shown to respond rapidly to
608 environmental changes. The ability of the microbial communities to use substrates seems to
609 have been increased by the ochre supply alone, since there was little or no difference between
610 the TO and TOM samples. Amendments may induce shifts in the soil microbial communities
611 (Pérez de Mora et al., 2006). In a long-term fertilization study of a soil completely eroded and
612 with a very low organic matter content, Zhong et al. (2010) showed that amendment with

613 manure led to shifts in C utilization patterns and increased soil microbial functional diversity.
614 The differences in AWCD for each substrate observed on day 7 between microcosms with or
615 without amendment may be partially due to nutrients (i.e. major ions) brought by the
616 amendments and consumed by microorganisms. However, according to Bolan et al. (2017),
617 microbial diversity increases with increase in pH in the tailings, as neutrophilic
618 microorganisms are more diverse than acidophilic ones. The application of cow manure and
619 ochre increased pH and major ion content while improving the carbon and hydrogen status of
620 the mine tailings, thus increasing the biomass of microorganisms and their activities. It has
621 already been shown that the C/N ratio of soil also has an impact on microbial community
622 dynamics (Wang et al., 2015).

623 The greater richness and diversity of microbial communities on day 28 for the TOM 2%
624 sample may be due to the higher percentage of amendment of this sample. Thus, 2%
625 amendment led to a greater supply of major ions and possibly of viable microorganisms. The
626 reduction in the activity of microorganisms over time in the other amended microcosms may
627 be due to the decrease of nutrients available for the microflora. This is in agreement with a
628 study on the composting of cow manure, the organic matter contained in the manure being
629 gradually decomposed by microorganisms (Wang et al., 2018). The tailings without
630 amendments remained at the lowest community-level substrate utilization level.

631 Amendments should contribute to decreasing the availability of metals and metalloids and
632 should enhance microbial biomass and diversity, but they must also allow revegetation of the
633 tailings. This is why a test of *Lolium perenne* L. (perennial ryegrass) growth was conducted to
634 evaluate the effect of cow manure and ochre sludge on the phytotoxicity of the tailings.
635 Ryegrass is one of the highest quality forage grasses and its primary use is for pasturing cattle
636 and sheep. This herbaceous plant is also routinely used to investigate plant growth responses
637 (germination, root and shoot growth) to changing environmental conditions (Gregory et al.,
638 2014). While ryegrass roots had serious difficulties in growing in the tailings without
639 amendments – probably because of acidity, toxicity of metals and metalloids and/or nutrient
640 deficiency – amendments appeared to facilitate plant growth. However, ryegrass seemed to
641 prefer the test condition with 0.15% of cow manure. This result highlights that an excess of
642 nutrients might not be beneficial, and that organic amendment dose should be optimized for
643 the specific plant species selected for the remediation strategy.

644 **Conclusion**

645 The results of the microcosm experiments indicate the efficiency of combining ochre and cow
646 manure amendments to greatly decrease Pb solubility in acidic mine tailings while avoiding
647 any dramatic mobilization of other elements, namely As, Zn and Ba. Stabilization of As-rich
648 mine tailings may be an interesting way to make use of the sludge produced during the
649 treatment of the iron-containing coal mine waters. Short-term monitoring of the amended
650 tailings revealed a transient increase in both Pb leaching and functional microbial diversity,
651 both phenomena linked to the maturation of manure. However, 84 days after the amendment
652 event, Pb immobilization was strengthened by 2% manure, whereas the benefits of this
653 amendment on functional microbial biodiversity were greatly attenuated. This latter result
654 shows that amendments alone are not sufficient to induce an enduring improvement in the soil
655 microbial biodiversity necessary for the development of its functions. However, the
656 amendments were shown to stimulate the growth of ryegrass, and the colonization of tailings
657 by plants should contribute to improving their structure and functions. Further experiments
658 could throw light on the long-term biogeochemical evolution of amendments in the context of
659 plant cover development. In addition, it will be necessary to take account of on-site
660 management practices since, as the amendments would be applied only at the surface of the
661 tailings dumps, there is a strong need to investigate the evolution of the underlying material.
662 With future upscaling of the process in mind, this study provides key information about the
663 biogeochemical processes that drive the dynamics of inorganic pollutants in acidic mine
664 tailings amended with iron-rich ochre and organic matter.

665 **Acknowledgements**

666 We thank Ms Ingrid Girardeau, Mr Louis de Lary de Latour and Mr Stéphane Vaxelaire from
667 the Prevention and Safety in Mines Department of BRGM and Mr Mikael Beaulieu, from the
668 BRGM Laboratory, for their kind help in sampling tailings and iron sludge. This research
669 work was performed within the framework of the Phytoselect project funded by the Région
670 Centre - Val de Loire, contract N°2016-00108485, and by the Labex Voltaire (ANR-10-
671 LABX-100-01). The authors gratefully acknowledge the financial support provided to the
672 PIVOTS project by the Région Centre – Val de Loire: ARD 2020 program, CPER 2015 -
673 2020, and the European Union, which invests in Centre-Val de Loire via the European
674 Regional Development Fund.

675 The authors wish to thank Ms Marielle Hatton (ISTO) for measurements of CHNS obtained
676 with an elemental flash pyrolyser analyzer, Ms Rachel Boscardin (ISTO) for Rock-Eval

677 measurements and Ms Nathalie Lottier (ISTO) for measurements of DOC and DON obtained
678 with a TOC elemental analyzer.

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- Ochre from coal mine water treatment increases pH of acid tailings
- Pb is stabilized and As is not mobilized in tailings by ochre and manure amendment
- Manure induces mobilization of Pb for 35 days then its stabilization
- Microbial functional biodiversity is transiently increased by amendment
- Ochre favors short-term growth of ray-grass on tailings

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