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# Assessing temporal variability and controlling factors of the sediment budget of a small agricultural catchment in Northern France (the Pommeroye).

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## Abstract

A high-frequency monitoring station was implemented at the outlet of the small catchment of the Pommeroye (0.54 km<sup>2</sup>) in Northern France to study erosion by runoff and hydro-sedimentological responses to heavy rainfall events in the context of Quaternary loess deposits. The aim of this experimental work is to assess the temporal variability of sediment yield and to identify the factors controlling the hydro-sedimentary response. To achieve this goal, statistical and hydro-sedimentary dynamic analyses were performed. During two years of monitoring (April 2016 – April 2018), 48 flood events were recorded. The specific sediment yield (SSY) is highly variable and was evaluated to 29.4-70 t km<sup>-2</sup> yr<sup>-1</sup> which is conventional for the study region. Most of the sediment yield was produced in winter (55%) and autumn (42%). Only 3% of SSY were produced during spring and summer periods. According to our results, only 6% of the erosive events are responsible for the

transport of more than 40% of the sediment flux recorded at the outlet. This underlines the temporal variability of the hydro-sedimentary production in small agricultural catchments for which most of the hydro-sedimentary flux is produced during a limited number of events. The results of statistical analyses show that the total amount of rainfall and the duration of a rainfall episode are the main controlling factors on the hydro-sedimentary response. Our results also suggest that the rainfall kinetic energy better reflects the sediment detachment, and that the 48 h-antecedent rainfall is not linked to the hydro-sedimentary response.

## 1 **1 Introduction**

2           In the North-Western European loess plateau and in particular in the North of the Paris Basin,  
3 erosion of agricultural land is a serious environmental issue (Evrard et al., 2007; Delmas et al., 2012).  
4 Every year, numerous natural disasters occur due to various erosion processes which result in on-site  
5 and off-site problems including the loss of fertile soils, the silting of riverbeds and dams, as well as  
6 infrastructure and property damage by muddy floods (Capra, 1993). The most common type of soil  
7 erosion pattern observed in these territories are (i) sheet erosion, (ii) rills, (iii) interrills, (iv) classical  
8 gullies, and (v) ephemeral gullies (Foster, 1986). So far, the focus was drawn to rill/interrill erosion,  
9 but recently a growing interest has focused on ephemeral gullies (Poesen, 1993; Nachtergaele et al.,  
10 2002; Valentin et al., 2005; Castillo and Gomez, 2016), since they have been recognized as a major  
11 contributor to sediment yield in small agricultural catchments in the European loess belt (Poesen et  
12 al., 1996). Classical survey methods to evaluate sediment production on small catchments are aerial  
13 photography (Nachtergaele and Poesen, 1999; Marzloff et al., 2011), terrestrial photography (Frankl  
14 et al., 2011), terrestrial laser scanning (Li et al., 2017), airborne laser scanning (Goodwin et al., 2017),  
15 or direct measurements of channel volumes (Valcárcel et al., 2003). However, these methodologies  
16 are not suitable for quantifying the sediment yield at the catchment scale (Vandaele and Poesen,  
17 1995). Understanding and quantifying the dynamics of suspended sediment transport is essential for  
18 controlling soil erosion and implementing effective mitigation practices to reduce stream suspended  
19 matter and associated pollutants discharge. Currently, catchment monitoring was successfully used

20 by several authors (Nadal-Romero et al., 2008; Estrany et al., 2009; Nu-Fang et al., 2011; Giménez et  
21 al., 2012; Sherriff et al., 2015) to quantify erosion processes in agricultural catchments and to assess  
22 the relationships between hydro-sedimentological parameters. These studies have reported on  
23 sediment transfer that show high temporal and spatial variabilities, and the fact that only few erosive  
24 events are responsible for the majority of the sediment export (Gay et al., 2014; Bagarello et al.,  
25 2017; Grangeon et al., 2017). They also report on complex correlations between rainfall  
26 characteristics and the hydro-sedimentary response. Some attempts have been made to evaluate the  
27 variability of the hydro-sedimentary response at larger scale in the context of agricultural plains of  
28 North-Western Europe (Cerdan et al., 2010; Vanmaercke et al., 2011), but according to Poesen  
29 (2018), very few studies have measured the water erosion dynamic on relatively small catchments  
30 (0.01 - 1000ha). At this scale range, there is a shift in the dominance of particular erosion processes.  
31 As reported by Vanmaercke et al. (2011), small headwater lowland catchments may exhibit  
32 significant sediment export. According to Grangeon et al. (2017), the spatial and temporal dynamics  
33 of sediment fluxes must be further studied to improve our understanding of the possible  
34 connection/disconnection between the water and the sediment transport pathways, in particular for  
35 areas where intensive agriculture is predominant and runoff can be generated by soil saturation (Gay  
36 et al., 2016). Some recent studies already point out that connectivity between sediment sources and  
37 rivers is essential for soil redistribution (Landemaine et al., 2015; Foucher et al., 2015; Heckmann et  
38 al., 2018). Sediment flux data for such small catchments are therefore essential for better  
39 understanding the linkages between soil erosion processes and suspended sediment transport of  
40 larger rivers (Verstraeten and Poesen, 2001). However, quantification of the sediment yield at this  
41 scale might be challenging, especially if there is a lack of a perennial hydrographic network in the  
42 studied catchment.

43 Generally, the characterization and quantification of sedimentary flow is limited to experimental data  
44 of spot samples at the outlet of the watershed and therefore does not necessarily take into account  
45 the internal dynamics of the basin (Foucher, 2015).

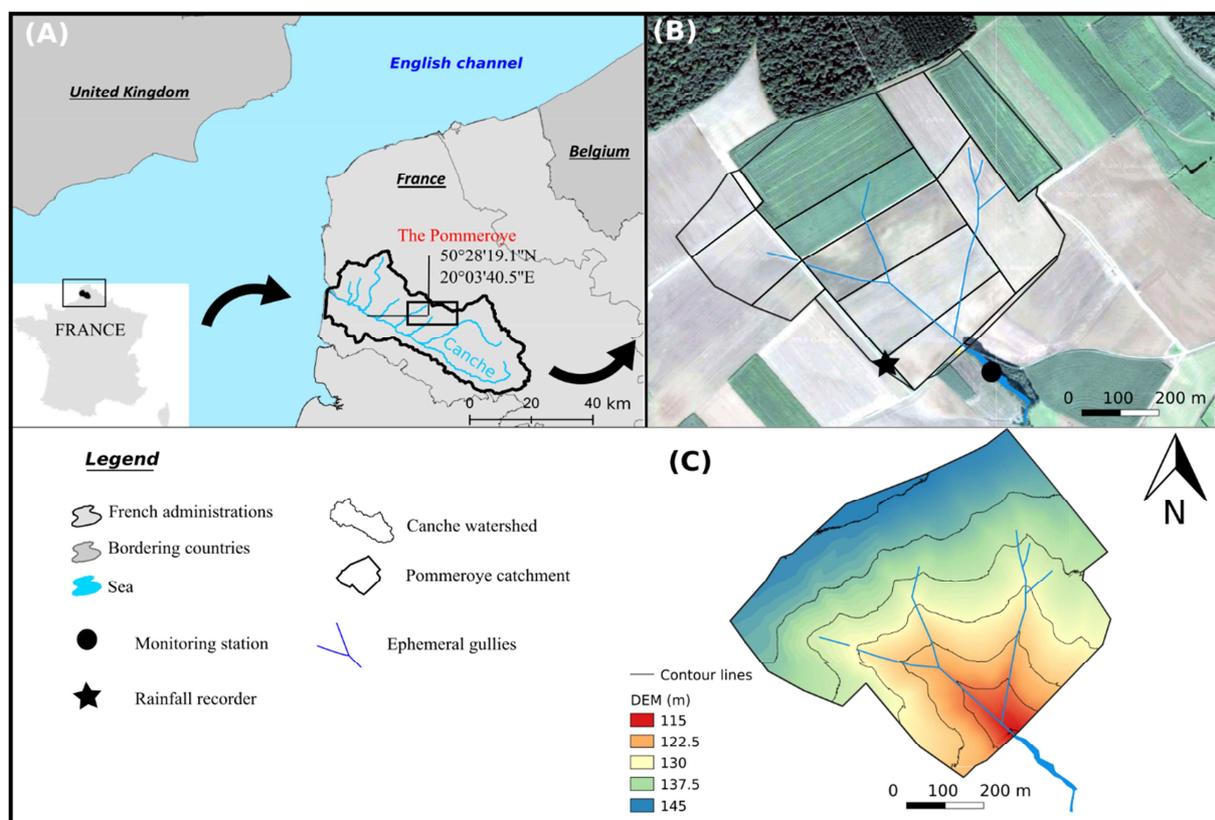
46 In the context of the Canche River watershed (Northern France), erosion of agricultural lands  
47 may lead to particularly devastating muddy flows that generate an important export of sediments  
48 and a high material costs for the local communities. Since 1983, 1100 municipalities were stroke by  
49 heavy muddy flows. So far, any systematic study was conducted to better understand the genesis of  
50 these phenomena. Thus, the local Water Agency expressed the clear need for high-resolution data on  
51 the Canche River watershed, to be able to quantify the sediment exported by mudflows, to define  
52 their respective temporal variability, and to identify the main controlling factors.

53 Nevertheless, the understanding of the hydro-sedimentary fluxes variability and the  
54 associated factors on the Canche River watershed first requires the monitoring and understanding of  
55 processes at the scale of the experimental catchment. The goal of this study was to deploy a high-  
56 frequency monitoring station in a challenging context since the small studied catchment (0.54 km<sup>2</sup>) is  
57 lacking a perennial hydrographic network. The hydro-sedimentary behavior was characterized with a  
58 high-temporal resolution (6 min). To this end, runoff events are monitored over two hydrological  
59 years (April 2016 to April 2018). This allows to: (i) quantify short-term changes between different  
60 runoff events, (ii) identify the main controlling factors, and (iii) determine the temporal variability.  
61 These results are crucial to be able to better address the existing soil erosion problems in northern  
62 France related to rain events runoff.

## 63 **2 Study area**

64 The Pommeroye catchment (0.54 km<sup>2</sup>) is situated in the European loess belt in Northern  
65 France (Fig. 1A). It is a sub-catchment of the Canche River watershed (1274 km<sup>2</sup>). The dominant  
66 climate is oceanic and the average annual temperature in this region is 11°C. The thermal amplitude  
67 is low, with soft winters and cool summers. The annual rainfall amount is 1000 ± 150 mm yr<sup>-1</sup>. An  
68 ephemeral gully network is well-established and recurrent, resulting from the junction of rills that  
69 form a dendritic channel pattern (Fig. 1B). The elevation of the study area ranges from 115 to 145 m  
70 and the average slope is 4.2% (Fig. 1C). The soil is constituted of Pleistocene silt which overlays the

71 chalky soil of the Seno-Turonian (Beckelynck, 1981). Grain size analyzes carried out by Patault (2018),  
 72 on 22 agricultural soil samples, in the Canche watershed, show that agricultural soils are composed  
 73 of clay (5%), silts (54%), and fine sands (41%). The medium-textured soils (loamy soils) tend to be  
 74 most erodible because they have high amounts of silts and very fine sand. These soils tend to have  
 75 the highest soil erodibility factor in Europe ( $K > 0.055 \text{ t ha h a}^{-1} \text{ MJ}^{-1} \text{ mm}^{-1}$ ; Panagos et al., 2014). The  
 76 study site is exclusively occupied by arable land, divided into 14 fields. The dominant crops here are  
 77 cereals, winter and spring barley, rape seed, and mustard.



78  
 79 **Fig. 1: (A) Overview on the study region, (B) map of the Pommeroye catchment showing the location of the**  
 80 **ephemeral gullies and instruments used in this study, (C) Digital Elevation Model (DEM) of the study site (cell size:**  
 81 **50 cm).**

## 82 **3 Material & Methods**

### 83 *3.1 The monitoring station*

84 A monitoring station consisting of an exponential Venturi channel and an approach channel  
 85 has been installed on March 31, 2016 at the outlet of the Pommeroye catchment to record the flow

86 discharge and suspended sediment concentration (SSC). The hypothetical maximum flow discharge  
87 was estimated using the rational equation for peak discharge (Thompson, 2006). The rational  
88 method is a simple technique for estimating a design discharge from a small catchment. The method  
89 is based on the simple equation that relates the runoff-producing potential of the catchment, the  
90 average intensity of rainfall for a particular length of time (the time of concentration), and the  
91 catchment area (Eq.1):

$$Q = C \times i \times A \quad (1)$$

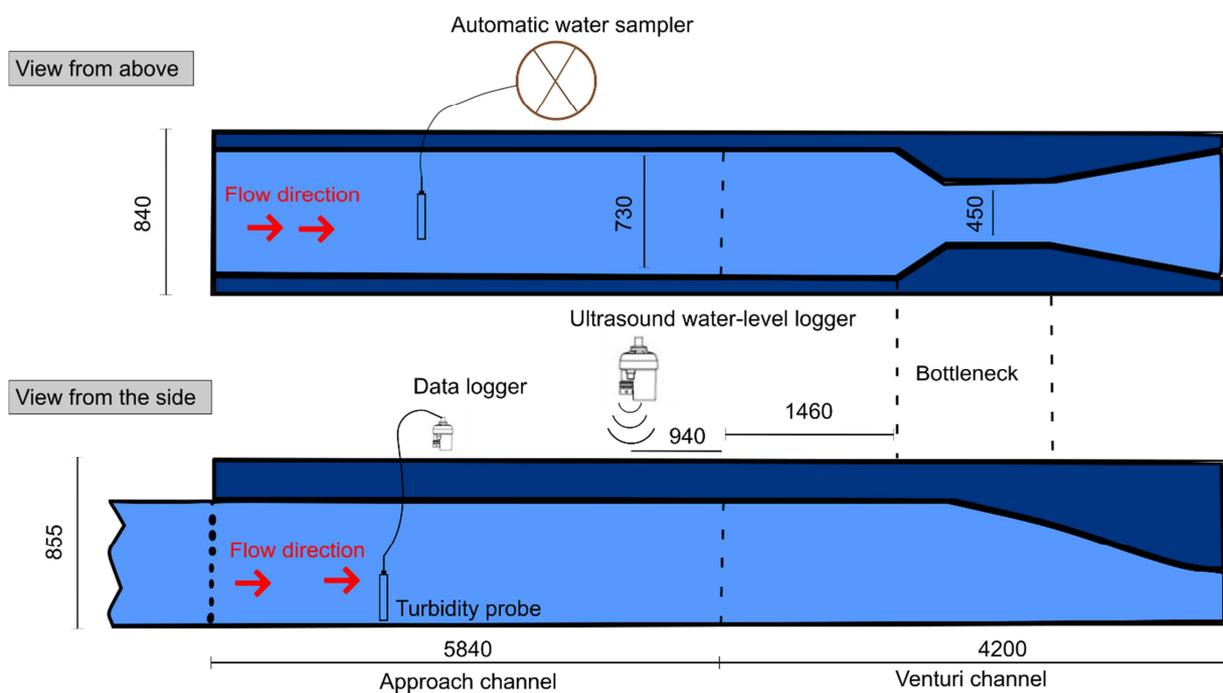
Where  $Q$  is the design discharge ( $\text{m}^3 \text{s}^{-1}$ ),  $C$  is the runoff coefficient (between 0 and 1; a value of 0.1 is usually applied for agricultural lands),  $i$  is the design rainfall intensity ( $\text{mm h}^{-1}$ ), and  $A$  is the catchment drainage area (ha). The design rainfall intensity is defined using the Montana coefficients (Eq.2):

$$i = a \times t^{-b} \quad (2)$$

Where  $t$  is the concentration time ( $t = 0.34 \text{ h}$ ),  $a$  and  $b$  are the Montana coefficients at the closest meteorological station. Here, the closest station for which the coefficient are available was the station of Le Touquet-Paris-Plage ( $a = 23.3$  and  $b = 0.67$ ). Using the rational method, the design discharge was evaluated to  $0.72 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$ , which is slightly over-evaluated considering that the station of Le Touquet-Paris-Plage is located in an area that is affected by slightly higher rainfall than the study area. The Venturi channel VII provided by ISMA allowed a maximum discharge of  $0.40 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$ , which was considered in adequacy with the objectives of our study.

92 According to the calculated maximum flow discharge, a Venturi channel (*Venturi channel*  
93 *ISMA VII*) of suitable dimensions for measuring the hypothetical discharge has been selected (Fig.2).  
94 The length of the approach channel was established considering the *ISO 4359 standard* (AFNOR,  
95 1986) that requires an approach length of at least 5 times the width of the channel approach,

96 upstream of the load measurement zone. This corresponds to three to four times the maximum  
 97 height to be measured, upstream of the Venturi's contraction. The approach channel assures the  
 98 passage of the torrential flow generated by the various constraints of ground, to a river regime at the  
 99 entrance of the Venturi channel, necessary for the validity of an adapted monitoring. The Venturi and  
 100 the approach channel are positioned horizontally, without any slope, in the longitudinal and  
 101 transversal direction. They are perfectly aligned and are thus not affected by any profile changes. An  
 102 ultrasound water-level logger (*Ijinus LNU 300-X*) records the water height in the Venturi channel.



103

104 **Fig. 2: Schema and picture of the monitoring station at the outlet of the Pommeroye catchment viewed from**  
 105 **different perspectives (the dimensions are given in mm).**

106 Runoff discharge is calculated for each time step in the Venturi channel using the following  
 107 equation (Eq.3) and a conversion table (Table 1) provided by the manufacturer (*ISMA; www.isma.fr*)  
 108 of the Venturi channel. The relation between height and flow discharge was defined by the  
 109 manufacturer and validated using in-situ experimentation and 3-D modelling (Dufresne et al., 2010):

$$Q = -7,223 \times h + 2873,2 \times h^2 - 766 \times h^3 + 770 \times h^4 \quad (3)$$

110

111 Where  $Q$  is the flow discharge in the Venturi channel ( $\text{m}^3 \text{h}^{-1}$ ) and  $h$  the water height (m).

**Table 1 : Conversion table of height (mm) and flow discharge ( $\text{m}^3 \text{h}^{-1}$ ) for the Venturi channel *ISMA VII*, provided by the manufacturer.**

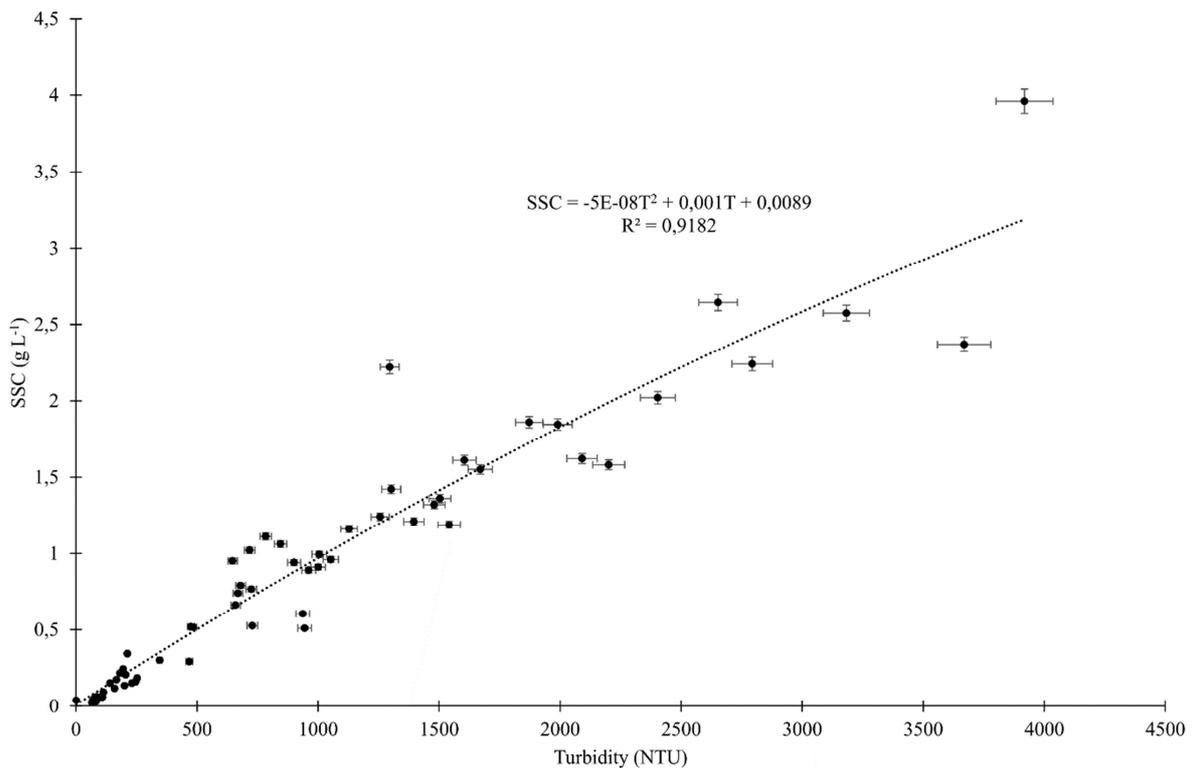
$h$ (mm)	$Q$ ( $\text{m}^3 \text{h}^{-1}$ )	$h$ (mm)	$Q$ ( $\text{m}^3 \text{h}^{-1}$ )
73	14.51	410	448.99
80	17.45	425	482.22
95	24.65	440	516.68
110	33.06	455	552.39
125	42.68	470	589.34
140	53.50	485	627.56
155	65.50	500	667.06
170	78.69	515	707.86
185	93.05	530	749.97
200	108.59	545	793.41
215	125.29	560	838.19
230	143.17	575	884.35
245	162.20	590	931.88
260	182.41	605	980.83
275	203.77	620	1031.20
290	226.31	635	1083.02
305	250.01	650	1136.32
320	274.88	665	1191.12
335	300.92	680	1247.44
350	328.15	695	1305.31
365	356.56	710	1364.76
380	386.17	725	1425.82
395	416.97	732	1454.87

112

113 The range of the ultrasound water-level is 0 to 792 mm in the channel and the resolution is  
 114 2 mm. The SSC is estimated using a turbidity probe (*Odeon/Aqualabo*); its accuracy is lower than 5%  
 115 NTU. Regular cleaning of the probe head is carried out after each flood event. An automatic water  
 116 sampler (*ISCO 3700; 24 x 1 L*) is used to collect water samples during flood events. The sampler is  
 117 coupled to the water-level sensor and only operates when water flows through the Venturi channel.  
 118 All sensors are connected to a data logger (*Ijinus Log0500*). The measured parameters are recorded

119 every 6 min. Information is downloaded every two weeks on a laptop computer  
 120 (Software Avelour 6.0.4). A tipping-bucket rain gauge (*Précis mécanique; model: 303x*; resolution:  
 121 0.2 mm) was also installed in the catchment close to the station (see star symbol in Fig. 1B).

122 To estimate the SSC over time, 61 water samples were sampled using the automatic water  
 123 sample. 100 mL of water are filtered in the laboratory using dehydrated cellulose nitrate filters,  
 124 previously dried in an oven (70°C during 48 h; pore size 0.45 µm). Subsequently, the filters were  
 125 dried again (70°C during 48 h) and weighed. The weight difference allows evaluating the  
 126 concentration of the material in the sample. A correlation curve is defined between  $T$  the turbidity  
 127 data (NTU) measured in the field and  $SSC$  corresponding to the suspended sediment concentration  
 128 ( $\text{g L}^{-1}$ ) obtained in the laboratory (Fig. 3).



129 **Fig. 3: Correlation curve between turbidity (NTU) and suspended sediment concentration ( $\text{g L}^{-1}$ ) for the water**  
 130 **samples sampled in the Venturi channel.**

131 Suspended sediment flux (SSF) is then calculated using Eq. 4:

$$SSF = Q \times SSC \times 10^3 \quad (4)$$

132

133 With  $Q$  the flow discharge in  $\text{m}^3 \text{s}^{-1}$  and  $SSF$  the instant suspended sediment flux in  $\text{g s}^{-1}$ . The  
134 sediment yield ( $SY$ ; in  $\text{g}$ ) is evaluated for each event as (Eq. 5):

$$SY = \int_{t_0}^{t_f} SSF dt \quad (5)$$

135 With  $t_0$  and  $t_f$  corresponding to the beginning and the end of the event considered. Then,  
136 the  $SY$  is converted in  $\text{kg}$  to facilitate the comparison.

### 137 3.2 Analysis of variables

138 During the two years of monitoring (April 2016 – April 2018), a total of 48 runoff events were  
139 recorded. For each event, multiple variables were extracted, related to : (i) duration rainfall event  
140 ( $R_{\text{time}}$ , min), (ii) rainfall amount ( $R_a$ , mm), (iii) maximum 6 min rainfall intensity ( $Ri_{\text{max}}$ ,  $\text{mm h}^{-1}$ ), (iv)  
141 rainfall amount 48 h before the beginning of the investigated event ( $R_{a_{48}}$ , mm), (v) mean flow and  
142 peak flow ( $Q_{\text{mean}}$ ,  $Q_{\text{max}}$ ,  $\text{m}^3 \text{h}^{-1}$ ), (vi) mean and maximum SSC concentration ( $SSC_{\text{mean}}$ ,  $SSC_{\text{max}}$ ,  $\text{g L}^{-1}$ ), (viii)  
143 sediment yield ( $SY$ ,  $\text{kg}$ ), and (ix) total runoff ( $R_{\text{tot}}$ ,  $\text{m}^3$ ). According to Morgan and Duzant (2008) rainfall  
144 detachment is better reflected by rainfall kinetic energy ( $RKE$ ,  $\text{J m}^{-2} \text{mm}^{-1}$ ) than by rainfall intensity,  
145 thus the  $RKE$  was derived from the  $Ri_{\text{max}}$  value using the equation of Brandt (1989; Eq. 6), that was  
146 tested in the similar environmental context of the Loire River watershed in France (Grangeon et al.,  
147 2017):

$$RKE = 8.95 + 8.44 \times \log_{10} Ri_{\text{max}} \quad (6)$$

148

149 The rainfall erosivity index ( $EI_{30}$ ) was also considered as it measures both rainfall's kinetic  
150 energy and intensity to describe the effect of rainfall on sheet and rill erosion (Wischmeier and  
151 Smith, 1978). It is a product of kinetic energy of a rainfall event ( $E$ ) and its maximum 30-min intensity  
152 ( $I_{30}$ ). The rainfall erosivity index ( $EI_{30}$ ;  $\text{MJ mm ha}^{-1} \text{h}^{-1}$ ) was calculated for each event using the Eq. 7  
153 given by Brown and Foster (1987):

$$EI_{30} = \left( \sum_{r=1}^m e_r \times v_r \right) \times I_{30} \quad (7)$$

154

155 Where  $e_r$  is the unit rainfall energy ( $\text{MJ ha}^{-1} \text{mm}^{-1}$ ) and  $v_r$  is the rainfall volume (mm) during  
 156 the  $r$ -th period, divided into  $m$  parts.  $I_{30}$  is the maximum rainfall intensity during a 30-min period of  
 157 the rainfall event ( $\text{mm h}^{-1}$ ).  $I_{30}$  is evaluated using the high-resolution rainfall data (6 min) which  
 158 provides better  $EI_{30}$  values according to Panagos et al. (2015b).

159 The unit rainfall energy  $e_r$  is calculated for each time interval as follows (Brown and Foster,  
 160 1987):

$$e_r = 0.29 \times [1 - (0.72 \times e^{-0.05 \times i_r})] \quad (8)$$

161

162 Where  $i$  is the rainfall intensity during the time interval ( $\text{mm h}^{-1}$ ).

### 163 3.3 Pearson correlation matrix and Principal Component Analysis (PCA)

164 Statistical analyses were performed using the statistical software  $R^1$  and the following  
 165 packages: *FactoMiner*<sup>2</sup> and *Corrplot*<sup>3</sup>. Pearson correlation matrix is used to evaluate the linear  
 166 dependency between multiple variables simultaneously. The result is given using the Pearson  
 167 correlation coefficient  $r$  which reflects the linear correlation between two variables. The coefficient is  
 168 calculated using the covariance of two variables divided by the product of their standard deviations  
 169 (Eq. 9):

$$r = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \bar{x})^2} \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^n (y_i - \bar{y})^2}} \quad (9)$$

170

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<sup>1</sup> R Core Team (2016). R: A Language and Environment for Statistical Computing. R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria. URL <https://www.R-project.org/>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/FactoMineR/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/corrplot/index.html>

171           Where  $n$  is the sample size;  $x_i$  and  $y_i$  are the values of the sample;  $\bar{x}$  and  $\bar{y}$  are the mean  
172 values of the sample. A value of 1 implies that a linear equation describes the perfect relationship  
173 between  $x_i$  and  $y_i$ , with all data points lying on a line for which  $y_i$  increases as  $x_i$  increases. A value  
174 of  $-1$  implies that all data points lie on a line for which  $y_i$  decreases as  $x_i$  increases. A value of 0  
175 implies that there is no linear correlation between the variables.

### 176 *3.4 General characteristics of runoff events*

#### 177 *3.4.1 First year of monitoring*

178           Between April 2016 and April 2017, 22 runoff events were recorded: seven occurred in  
179 spring, three in summer, four in autumn, and eight in winter. The main characteristics of these  
180 events are summarized in Table 2 and are described in detail in the following text:

- 181           i.   The duration of runoff events ranged from 126 to 7200 min in total with a median  
182 value of 534 min. Five events (22%) showed a duration longer than 1000 min, and  
183 five events (22%) correspond to shorter period (less than 360 min), one event  
184 exceeded 2000 min.
- 185           ii.   The rainfall amount ranged from 6 to 103.8 mm with a median value of 16.1. Eight  
186 events (36%) exceeded 20 mm, and five events (22%) had values lower than 10 mm.
- 187           iii.   The maximum 6 min rainfall intensity ranged from 3 to 76 mm h<sup>-1</sup>, and three events  
188 (13%) exceeded 20 mm h<sup>-1</sup>. The amount of precipitation 48 h before the beginning of  
189 an event ranged from 0.2 to 25.4 mm. Seven events (32%) showed a rainfall amount  
190 48 h before the beginning of an event that was higher than 10 mm.
- 191           iv.   The peak flow ranged from 0.6 to 378.3 m<sup>3</sup> h<sup>-1</sup> and the mean flow ranged from 0.11  
192 to 94.5 m<sup>3</sup> h<sup>-1</sup>. Ten events (45.5%) showed values of a peak flow exceeding 100 m<sup>3</sup> h<sup>-1</sup>.  
193 <sup>1</sup>.
- 194           v.   The maximum SSC ranged from 0.15 to 5 g L<sup>-1</sup> and the mean SSC ranged from 0.06 to  
195 1.6 g L<sup>-1</sup>. Eleven events (50%) showed values of maximum SSC exceeding 3 g L<sup>-1</sup>.

- 196 vi. The sediment yield values ranged from 0.07 to 7131.9 kg and were extremely  
197 variable. Three events (13.6%) exceeded 1500 kg and one event exceeded 2500 kg.  
198 This event represents 44.8% of the total sediment discharge for the first year of  
199 monitoring.
- 200 vii. The total runoff ranged from 0.57 to 8630.5 m<sup>3</sup>. Four events (18.2%) exceeded  
201 1000 m<sup>3</sup> and one event exceeded 2500 m<sup>3</sup>.
- 202 viii. The rainfall kinetic energy ranged from 13 to 24.8 J m<sup>-2</sup> mm<sup>-1</sup>. Events with a high RKE  
203 (> 20) are mainly observed during the spring season, and do not correspond to the  
204 events with the highest sediment yield recorded at the outlet.
- 205 ix. The rainfall erosivity index (EI<sub>30</sub>) ranged from 0.7 to 236.2 MJ mm ha<sup>-1</sup> hr<sup>-1</sup> with a  
206 mean value of 25.3 MJ mm ha<sup>-1</sup> hr<sup>-1</sup>. Highest value of EI<sub>30</sub> is observed in May (236.2  
207 MJ mm ha<sup>-1</sup> hr<sup>-1</sup>) during an intensive rainfall event where Ri<sub>max</sub> reached 76 mm h<sup>-1</sup>.  
208 The sum of EI<sub>30</sub> during the first year of monitoring round up to 557.45 MJ mm ha<sup>-1</sup> hr<sup>-1</sup>  
209 <sup>1</sup>.

**Table 2: Main characteristics of the 22 flood events recorded in the Pommeroye catchment between April 2016 and April 2017.**

Date	R <sub>time</sub> (min)	R <sub>a</sub> (mm)	R <sub>i</sub> <sub>max</sub> (mm h <sup>-1</sup> )	R <sub>a</sub> <sub>48</sub> (mm)	Q <sub>mean</sub> (m <sup>3</sup> h <sup>-1</sup> )	Q <sub>max</sub> (m <sup>3</sup> h <sup>-1</sup> )	SSC <sub>mean</sub> (g L <sup>-1</sup> )	SSC <sub>max</sub> (g L <sup>-1</sup> )	SY (kg)	R <sub>tot</sub> (m <sup>3</sup> )	RKE (J m <sup>-2</sup> mm <sup>-1</sup> )	El <sub>30</sub> (MJ mm ha <sup>-1</sup> hr <sup>-1</sup> )
12-Apr-16	192	8.1	9	5.8	15	42	1.2	4.1	71.2	31.4	17	4.3
15-Apr-16	366	13.8	12	0.6	5.9	10.8	0.4	2.1	5.8	8.2	18.1	6.5
11-May-16	288	32.6	76	7.2	22.2	150.8	1.6	5	652.7	186.5	24.8	236.2
22-May-16	204	9.8	6	2.8	0.25	0.6	0.06	0.15	0.07	0.8	15.5	3.5
31-May-16	1110	30.6	14	0.2	22.6	147	0.7	3	235.8	106.2	18.6	9.7
3-Jun-16	126	6	12	1.4	1.91	6.24	0.13	0.8	1.4	4.6	18.1	4.8
20-Jun-16	372	8.7	3	3.4	3.7	9.14	0.1	0.27	4.3	23.3	13	5.2
23-Jun-16	245	12.9	21	5.3	13.6	60.7	0.5	2.69	80.2	69.3	20.1	42
2-Aug-16	1968	68.6	10	18.4	12.4	108.6	0.32	4.58	590.9	407.5	17.4	39.1
9-Sep-16	324	27	24	0.2	4.5	6.2	0.5	2.7	6.8	12.2	20.6	50.8
20-Oct-16	390	16.6	4	11.4	3.08	12.9	1.06	4.03	30.4	20.3	14	3.9
7-Nov-16	1434	17.5	8	0.9	0.11	0.99	0.5	3.02	0.6	0.57	16.6	8.2
16-Nov-16	540	9.7	3	1.2	0.34	2.54	0.38	1.63	1.86	3.7	13	3.8
17-Nov-16	7200	103.8	18	10.9	75.2	378.3	0.41	4.02	7131.9	8630.5	19.5	83.5
12-Jan-17	528	22	12	2	55.18	190.9	1.35	4.9	1597.6	772.6	18.1	16.1
4-Feb-17	432	6.8	6	11.8	1.96	13.7	0.12	0.89	8.99	16.2	15.5	1.32
5-Feb-17	702	25.2	6	11.8	94.5	235.8	0.74	3.7	2119.7	1767.4	15.5	8.43
7-Feb-17	804	10.6	8	25.4	34.4	209.8	0.37	3.4	627.3	561.3	16.6	4.8
27-Feb-17	852	15.6	8	1	3.9	37.5	0.42	3.7	87.9	57.9	16.6	0.7
28-Feb-17	1002	21.6	8	17	68.4	221.8	0.35	1.59	991.3	1957.1	16.6	9.4
5-Mar-17	1050	16.8	10	11.4	36.1	227.9	0.35	3.82	1059.5	1274.6	17.3	10.5
8-Mar-17	894	14.6	4	0.6	50.8	189.5	0.19	1.27	595.1	2031.8	14	4.7
Mean	955.6	22.7	12.8	6.9	23.9	102.9	0.54	2.8	722.8	815.6	17.1	25.3
Std dev.	1467.2	22.6	15.2	7	28	108.4	0.42	1.5	1544.9	1873.3	2.7	51.4

211 3.4.2 Second year of monitoring

212 Between April 2017 and April 2018, 26 runoff events were recorded: twelve events occurred  
213 in autumn and fourteen in winter. The main characteristics of these events are summarized in  
214 Table 3 and are described in detail in the following text:

- 215 i. The duration of runoff events ranged from 72 to 4098 min in total with a median  
216 value of 522 min. Eight events (30%) showed a duration longer than 1000 min, and  
217 seven events (27%) correspond to shorter flooding (less than 360 min).
- 218 ii. The rainfall amount ranged from 2 to 55.2 mm with a median value of 12.2 mm. Eight  
219 events (30%) show values over 20 mm, and eleven events (42%) were lower than  
220 10 mm.
- 221 iii. The maximum 6 min rainfall intensity ranged from 1 to 32 mm h<sup>-1</sup> and five events  
222 exceeded 20 mm h<sup>-1</sup>. 48 h-antecedent rainfalls ranged from 0 to 31.8 mm and twelve  
223 events (46%) showed 48 h-antecedent rainfalls higher than 10 mm.
- 224 iv. The peak flow ranged from 60.4 to 348.6 m<sup>3</sup> h<sup>-1</sup> and the mean flow ranged from 14.7  
225 to 110.1 m<sup>3</sup> h<sup>-1</sup>. 24 events (92%) showed a value of peak flow exceeding 100 m<sup>3</sup> h<sup>-1</sup>.
- 226 v. The maximum SSC range from 0.5 to 5 g L<sup>-1</sup> and the mean SSC ranged from 0.08 to  
227 1.31 g L<sup>-1</sup>. Twelve events (46%) showed values of maximum SSC exceeding 3 g L<sup>-1</sup>.
- 228 vi. The sediment yield values ranged from 54.8 to 7577.5 kg. Nine events (34%)  
229 exceeded 1500 kg and three main events (11%) exceeded 3000 kg.
- 230 vii. The total runoff ranged from 141 to 5255.5 m<sup>3</sup>. Eleven events exceeded 1000 m<sup>3</sup> and  
231 two main events exceeded 2500 m<sup>3</sup>.
- 232 viii. The rainfall kinetic energy ranged from 8.9 to 21.7 J m<sup>-2</sup> mm<sup>-1</sup> and show a biggest  
233 variability than the previous year. Highest RKE are principally observed between  
234 October and December 2017.
- 235 ix. The rainfall erosivity index (EI<sub>30</sub>) ranged from 0.9 to 81.8 MJ mm ha<sup>-1</sup> hr<sup>-1</sup> with a mean  
236 value of 12.5 MJ mm ha<sup>-1</sup> hr<sup>-1</sup>. The sum of EI<sub>30</sub> during the first year of monitoring

237 round up to  $314.15 \text{ MJ mm ha}^{-1} \text{ hr}^{-1}$ , which is considerably lower than the previous  
238 year.

**Table 3: Main characteristics of the 26 flood events recorded in the Pommeroye catchment between April 2017 and April 2018.**

Date	R <sub>time</sub> (min)	R <sub>a</sub> (mm)	R <sub>i</sub> <sub>max</sub> (mm h <sup>-1</sup> )	R <sub>a</sub> <sub>48</sub> (mm)	Q <sub>mean</sub> (m <sup>3</sup> h <sup>-1</sup> )	Q <sub>max</sub> (m <sup>3</sup> h <sup>-1</sup> )	SSC <sub>mean</sub> (g L <sup>-1</sup> )	SSC <sub>max</sub> (g L <sup>-1</sup> )	SY (kg)	R <sub>tot</sub> (m <sup>3</sup> )	RKE (J m <sup>-2</sup> mm <sup>-1</sup> )	El <sub>30</sub> (MJ mm ha <sup>-1</sup> hr <sup>-1</sup> )
20-Oct-17	600	4.8	6	1.3	16.9	74.6	0.11	1.3	54.8	211	15.5	0.9
22-Oct-17	600	28.9	32	7.8	20	170	0.17	2.2	167.1	210	21.7	11.8
23-Oct-17	966	7.1	1	28.9	14.7	60.4	0.08	0.5	55.7	461	8.9	1.3
14-Nov-17	2292	5.6	6	0.5	17.7	144.8	0.12	1.8	200.5	670	15.5	1.7
18-Nov-17	72	15.2	10	0.8	27.5	183.1	0.24	2.4	137.3	184	17.4	8.7
20-Nov-17	822	23.2	8	19	33.3	140	0.26	2.3	300.9	786	16.6	12
27-Nov-17	2238	54.8	24	0.2	56.5	308.5	0.59	4.1	3529	2234	20.6	81.8
29-Nov-17	1158	14.6	10	6.8	36	153	0.3	5.0	354.8	659	17.4	8.95
7-Dec-17	498	8.8	6	0.6	24.8	177.2	0.22	3.2	120.2	141	15.5	1.4
10-Dec-17	1338	14.4	10	0	46.6	348.6	0.48	4.0	1799	961	17.4	5.4
11-Dec-17	1218	20.4	6	14.4	28	285	0.23	4.2	1064.2	1186	15.5	6.6
13-Dec-17	4098	55.2	8	20.6	64.9	325.9	0.67	4.3	7577.5	5255.5	16.6	25.5
27-Dec-17	372	5.2	4	6	48.1	117.7	0.45	3.4	311.3	442.5	14	0.9
29-Dec-17	420	15	22	3	91.2	321.5	1.03	4.3	2239.8	1177.1	20.3	25.6
30-Dec-17	366	6.2	4	15.4	54.5	172	0.52	2.2	677.7	807	14	1.3
31-Dec-17	2694	37.2	30	21.4	80.8	335.7	0.89	3.8	6919.7	4245.1	21.4	62.6
3-Jan-18	192	10.4	10	17.2	110.1	294.4	1.31	3.1	3084.4	1357.3	17.4	6.9
4-Jan-18	336	21.2	6	13.6	86.9	239.5	0.99	3.2	2353.1	1286.9	15.5	7.8
5-Jan-18	360	8	20	31.8	73.1	328.3	0.79	4.3	1886.5	1104.8	19.9	13
6-Jan-18	330	7.4	14	29.8	55.8	235.9	0.56	1.9	796.6	725.9	18.6	7
15-Jan-18	546	14	6	0.2	98.7	229	1.11	3	874.7	622.3	15.5	4.7
18-Jan-18	408	10	4	3	91.1	178.5	0.99	2.9	645.2	573.6	14	2.2
21-Jan-18	1062	26	6	11.4	71.4	258.7	0.77	3.5	2096.7	1435.7	15.5	9
23-Jan-18	408	2	2	4.8	35.5	156.9	0.31	2.8	161.3	230.7	11.5	0.4

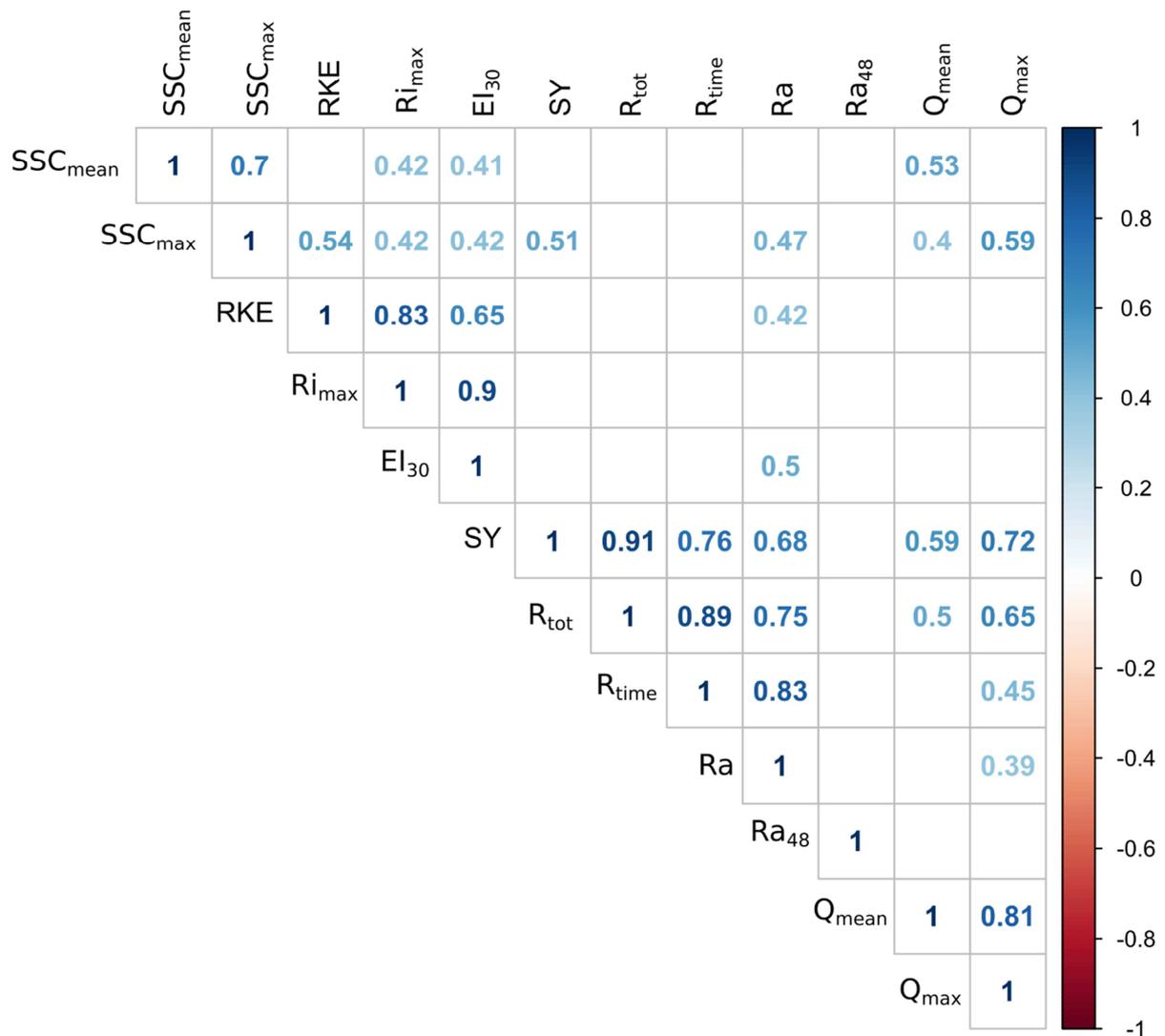
31-Jan-18	306	5.8	8	7.6	72.3	265.4	0.79	2.3	823.8	571.3	16.6	5.3
1-Feb-18	174	4.2	6	12.4	45.71	91.4	0.39	1.9	99.1	196.5	15.5	1.4
Mean	918.2	16.3	10.3	10.7	53.9	215.3	0.55	2.99	1474.2	1066.7	16.5	12.5
Std dev.	944.6	14.2	8.3	9.8	28.1	86.9	0.35	1.08	1970.2	1198.4	2.9	18.9

---

## 240 **4 Results**

### 241 *4.1 Relationships between variables*

242 To identify the factors that may explain the measured hydro-sedimentological response at  
243 the outlet of the Pommeroye catchment, a Pearson correlation matrix was generated from all  
244 collected parameters. The results show significant correlations between the rainfall variables and the  
245 hydro-sedimentary response of the catchment area (Fig. 4). The highest relationship was found  
246 between the sediment yield (SY) and the total runoff ( $R_{tot}$ ;  $r = 0.91$ ). Strong correlations were  
247 observed between the duration time of the event ( $R_{time}$ ), rainfall amount (Ra), and sediment yield  
248 ( $r = 0.76$ ;  $r = 0.68$ ). Reasonable correlations exist between the discharge variables ( $Q_{mean}$ ,  $Q_{max}$ ),  
249 sediment yield (SY) and total runoff ( $R_{tot}$ ) ( $r = 0.72$ ;  $r = 0.65$ ;  $r = 0.59$ ;  $r = 0.5$ , respectively). A  
250 relationship between rainfall kinetic energy (RKE), rainfall erosivity index ( $EI_{30}$ ) and the maximum  
251 suspended sediment concentration ( $SSC_{max}$ ) is also observed ( $r = 0.54$ ;  $r = 0.42$ ).

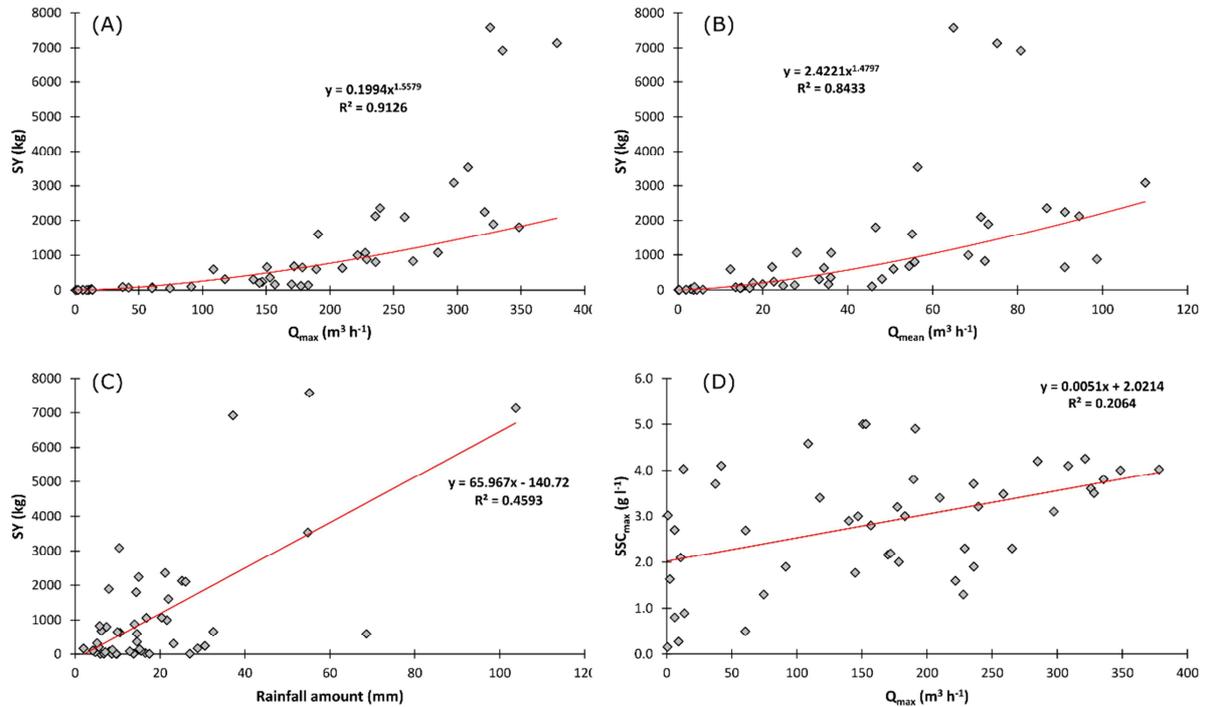


252

253 **Fig. 4: Pearson correlation matrix between all variables (n=48 events). Coefficient r is considered significant at**  
 254 **p = 0.01.**

255 Excellent correlations were found between sediment yield and the maximum and mean flow  
 256 discharge ( $r^2 = 0.91$  and  $r^2 = 0.84$ , respectively; Fig. 5A and B) even with a dispersion for the biggest  
 257 runoff events. The relationship between sediment yield and rainfall amount is statistically significant  
 258 ( $r^2 = 0.46$ ), although it shows a wide scatter in the data (Fig. 5C). The maximum sediment yield at the  
 259 outlet is observed when the rainfall amount exceeds 36 mm, except for one event occurring in  
 260 summer 2016. Below the threshold of 36 mm, rainfall amount results in a more variable sediment  
 261 yield at the outlet. For example, a rainfall amount of 15 mm results in a sediment yield varying  
 262 between 50 and 2300 kg. The relationship between the peak flow and the maximum suspended

263 sediment concentration was not statistically significant ( $r^2 = 0.20$ ). For a  $4 \text{ g L}^{-1}$  suspended sediment  
 264 concentration the resulting peak flow varied between  $10$  and  $380 \text{ m}^3 \text{ h}^{-1}$  suggesting that the  
 265 relationships between these two variables is more complex (Fig. 5D). The 48 h-antecedent rainfall  
 266 does not show significant statistical relationships with the hydro-sedimentary response.



267

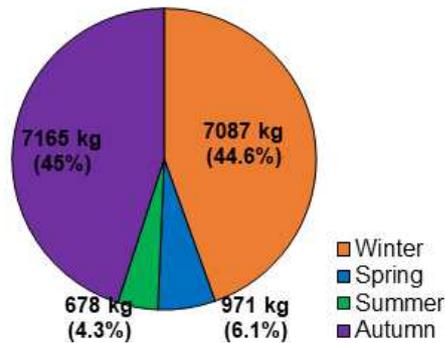
268 **Fig. 5: Relationship between (A) sediment yield (kg) and the maximum flow discharge ( $\text{m}^3 \text{ h}^{-1}$ ), (B) sediment**  
 269 **yield (kg) and the mean flow discharge ( $\text{m}^3 \text{ h}^{-1}$ ), (C) sediment yield (kg) and the rainfall amount (mm), and (D) the**  
 270 **maximum suspended sediment concentration ( $\text{g L}^{-1}$ ) and the maximum flow discharge ( $\text{m}^3 \text{ h}^{-1}$ ) after two years of**  
 271 **monitoring in the Pommeroye catchment.**

272 **4.2 Sediment production variability**

273 **4.2.1 First year of monitoring**

274 From April 2016 to April 2017, the total SY recorded at the monitoring station reached  
 275  $15901 \text{ kg}$  (Fig. 6 and Fig. 7). The cumulated rainfall reached  $827.1 \text{ mm}$ , which is relatively low for the  
 276 area (mean annual cumulative rainfall =  $1000 \pm 150 \text{ mm yr}^{-1}$ ). Normalized to the catchment area  
 277 ( $0.54 \text{ km}^2$ ), the specific sediment yield (SSY) reached  $29.4 \text{ t km}^{-2} \text{ yr}^{-1}$ . The sediment yield shows a high  
 278 heterogeneity between the different seasons. The seasonal SY, compared to annual SY in % is: (i)

279 971 kg in spring (6.1%), (ii) 678 kg in summer (4.3%), (iii) 7165 kg in autumn (45%), and (iv) 7087 kg in  
280 winter (44.6%).



281

282 **Fig. 6 : Seasonal distribution of the sediment export (%) at the outlet of the Pommeroye catchment for the first**  
283 **year of monitoring (April 2016 – April 2017).**

284 In spring 2016, seven events contributed to the SY. Over this period, the total rainfall was  
285 191 mm. The event of May 11, 2016 had the highest impact with a SY of 658 kg following a  
286 cumulative rainfall of 32.6 mm. This event contributed to 68% of the seasonal SY for spring. This may  
287 be explained by the fact that high rainfall intensities were measured, reaching up to  $76 \text{ mm h}^{-1}$  and  
288 high value for the RKE ( $24.8 \text{ J m}^{-2} \text{ mm}^{-1}$ ). For this event, maximum SSC was observed with a value of 5  
289  $\text{g L}^{-1}$ .

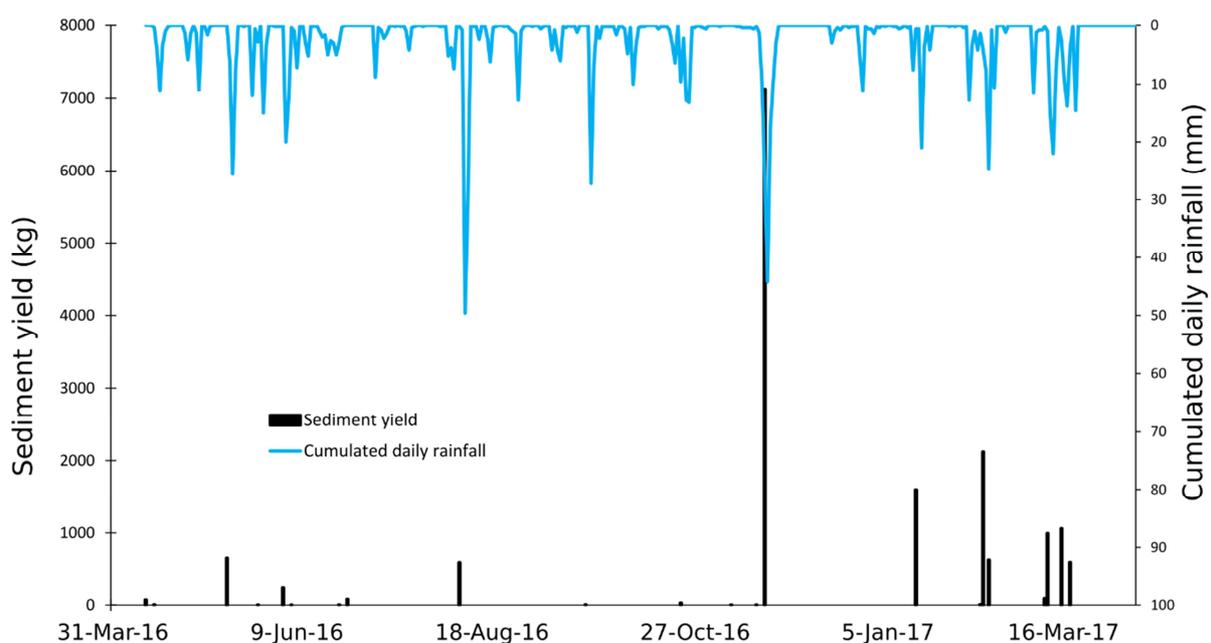
290 In summer 2016, three events were recorded. Over this period, the total rainfall was  
291 201.2 mm. On August 02, 2016 a SY of 591 kg and high cumulative rainfall (68.6 mm) was observed.  
292 This event contributed to 87% of the seasonal SY for summer 2016. Unlike during the spring season,  
293 rainfall intensities observed in summer were much lower. They reached  $21 \text{ mm h}^{-1}$  for the event on  
294 August 02, 2016. This explains why the observed SY is different between these two seasons.

295 In autumn 2016, four events were recorded including a peak event. Over this period, the  
296 total rainfall was 195.9 mm. The event of November 17, 2016 was due to a cumulative rainfall of  
297 103.8 mm over five days. The SY for this event reached 7132 kg, equivalent to 45% of the total SY for

298 the entire year. The maximum rainfall intensity was relatively high ( $18 \text{ mm h}^{-1}$ ) but lower than in the  
299 previous seasons.

300 Winter 2016/2017 was the season with the highest frequency of rainfall events. A total of  
301 eight events were reported. Over this period, the total rainfall was 239 mm. The events of  
302 January 15, 2017 and February 02, 2017 contributed to 3717 kg (52.5%) of the total SY for winter  
303 season. These two events are the result of cumulative rainfalls of 22 and 25.2 mm, respectively. Four  
304 other events contributed to 3273 kg (46%) of the total SY in winter season. These events correspond  
305 to cumulative rainfall that ranged from 10.6 to 21.6 mm. During this period, lower heterogeneity  
306 between the events was observed, due to an almost equivalent cumulative rainfall for the different  
307 events and rainfall intensities that are generally low (between  $4$  to  $12 \text{ mm h}^{-1}$ ).

308 Over the entire first year of monitoring, it is noteworthy that during spring period, the  
309 highest sediment concentration was observed at the outlet. The autumn and winter seasons  
310 contributed equally to the total SY measured but strong heterogeneities between rainfall events was  
311 observed.

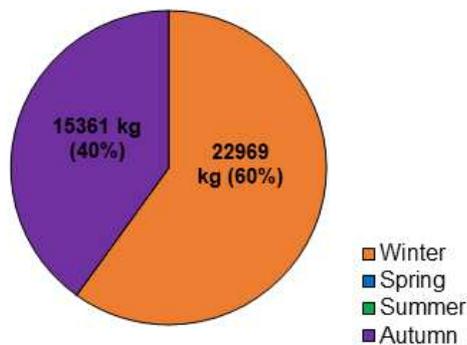


312

313 Fig. 7: Sediment yield (kg) and cumulative daily rainfall (mm) recorded at the outlet of the Pommeroye  
314 catchment during the first year of monitoring (April 2016- April 2017).

#### 315 4.2.2 Second year of monitoring

316 From April 2017 to April 2018, the total SY recorded at the monitoring station reached  
317 38330 kg (Fig. 8 and Fig. 9). The cumulated rainfall reached 965.8 mm which is higher than previous  
318 year. Normalized by the catchment area (0.54 km<sup>2</sup>), the SSY reached 70 t km<sup>-2</sup> yr<sup>-1</sup>. The seasonal SY,  
319 compared to annual SY in % is: (i) 15361 kg in autumn (40%) and (ii) 22969 kg in winter (60%). The  
320 two other seasons are not represented here as no events were recorded at the monitoring station.



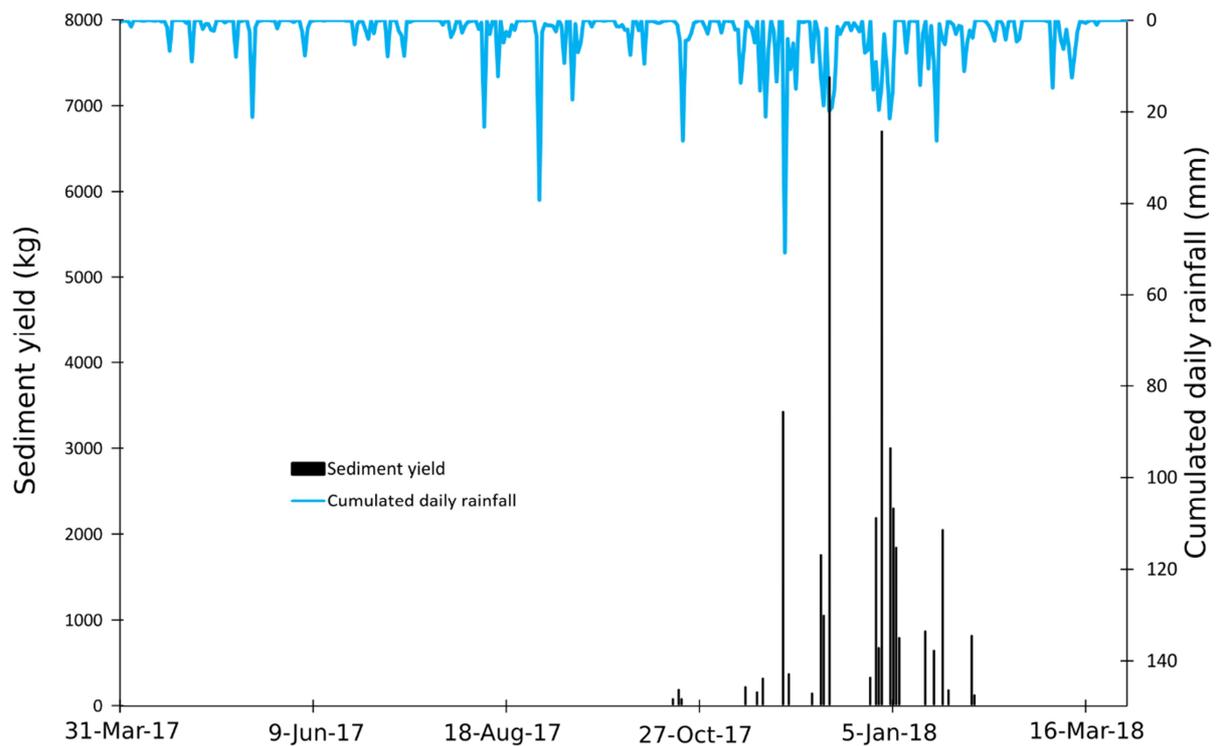
321

322 Fig. 8: Seasonal distribution of the sediment export (%) at the outlet of the Pommeroye catchment for the  
323 second year of monitoring (April 2017 – April 2018).

324 In autumn 2017, twelve events were recorded for a total rainfall of 367.5 mm, thus  
325 171.6 mm more than during the previous year for the same season. Two events contributed to 72%  
326 of the seasonal SY for autumn 2017. For the event of November 27, 2017, the measured SY can be  
327 explained by a high rainfall amount (54.8 mm) and the highest maximum rainfall intensity recorded  
328 for this season (24 mm h<sup>-1</sup>). For the event on December 13, 2017, the rainfall amount was similar  
329 (55.2 mm) but the maximum rainfall intensity was lowest (8 mm h<sup>-1</sup>). The observed SY can be  
330 explained by a long duration of the rainfall event (3 days) and a high amount of 48 h-antecedent  
331 rainfall (20.6 mm).

332 In winter 2017/2018, fourteen events were recorded for a total rainfall of 323.2 mm, thus  
333 84.2 mm more than in the previous year for the same season. 74% of the seasonal SY was produced

334 between December 29, 2017 and January 5, 2018. The main event of December 31, 2017 which  
 335 contributed to 30% showed the longest duration of rainfall event (2694 min). The rainfall amount  
 336 was 37.2 mm with a high maximum rainfall intensity ( $30 \text{ mm h}^{-1}$ ) and a high amount of 48 h-  
 337 antecedent rainfall (21.4 mm). The events following this main event were of relatively short rainfall  
 338 event duration between 192 and 420 min. The rainfall amount was variable and comprised values  
 339 between 5.2 and 21.2 mm, just as the maximum rainfall intensity, which varied between 4 and  
 340  $22 \text{ mm h}^{-1}$ . Five events were characterized by a high amount of 48 h-antecedent rainfall varying  
 341 between 13.6 and 29.8 mm. After January 15, 2018, six more events were recorded. They  
 342 contributed to 20% to the seasonal SY with a rainfall amount ranges from 2 to 26 mm and durations  
 343 between 174 and 1062 min. Rainfall intensity were relatively low from 2 to  $8 \text{ mm h}^{-1}$  and the 48 h-  
 344 antecedent rainfall ranged from 0.2 to 12.4 mm.



345

346 **Fig. 9: Sediment yield (kg) and cumulative daily rainfall (mm) recorded at the outlet of the Pommeroye**  
 347 **catchment during the second year of monitoring (April 2017 - April 2018).**

348 *4.3 Seasonal variability*

349 The eigen-values (Table 4) provide the percentage of the explained variance and the  
 350 cumulative variance of the principal dimensions. The first three dimensions explain 79.2% of the total  
 351 variance: dimension 1 accounts for 44.2%, dimension 2 for 20.5%, and dimension 3 for 14.5%. The  
 352 square cosines of variables indicate the best-described variables on each principal dimension.  
 353 Dimension 1 is correlated to  $R_{\text{time}}$  (0.48),  $R_a$  (0.59),  $Q_{\text{max}}$  (0.59),  $SSC_{\text{max}}$  (0.54),  $SY$  (0.76), and  $R_{\text{tot}}$  (0.66).  
 354 Dimension 2 is correlated to  $R_{i_{\text{max}}}$  (0.61),  $RKE$  (0.40), and  $El_{30}$  (0.40). Dimension 3 is correlated to  
 355  $Q_{\text{mean}}$  (0.40) and  $SSC_{\text{mean}}$  (0.36).  $R_{a_{48}}$  is correlated to Dimension 4 (0.72) which represented only 7.2%  
 356 of the total variance. The bi-plot graphs (Fig. 10 and Fig. 11) allow visualizing the information on  
 357 both, individual samples and variables.

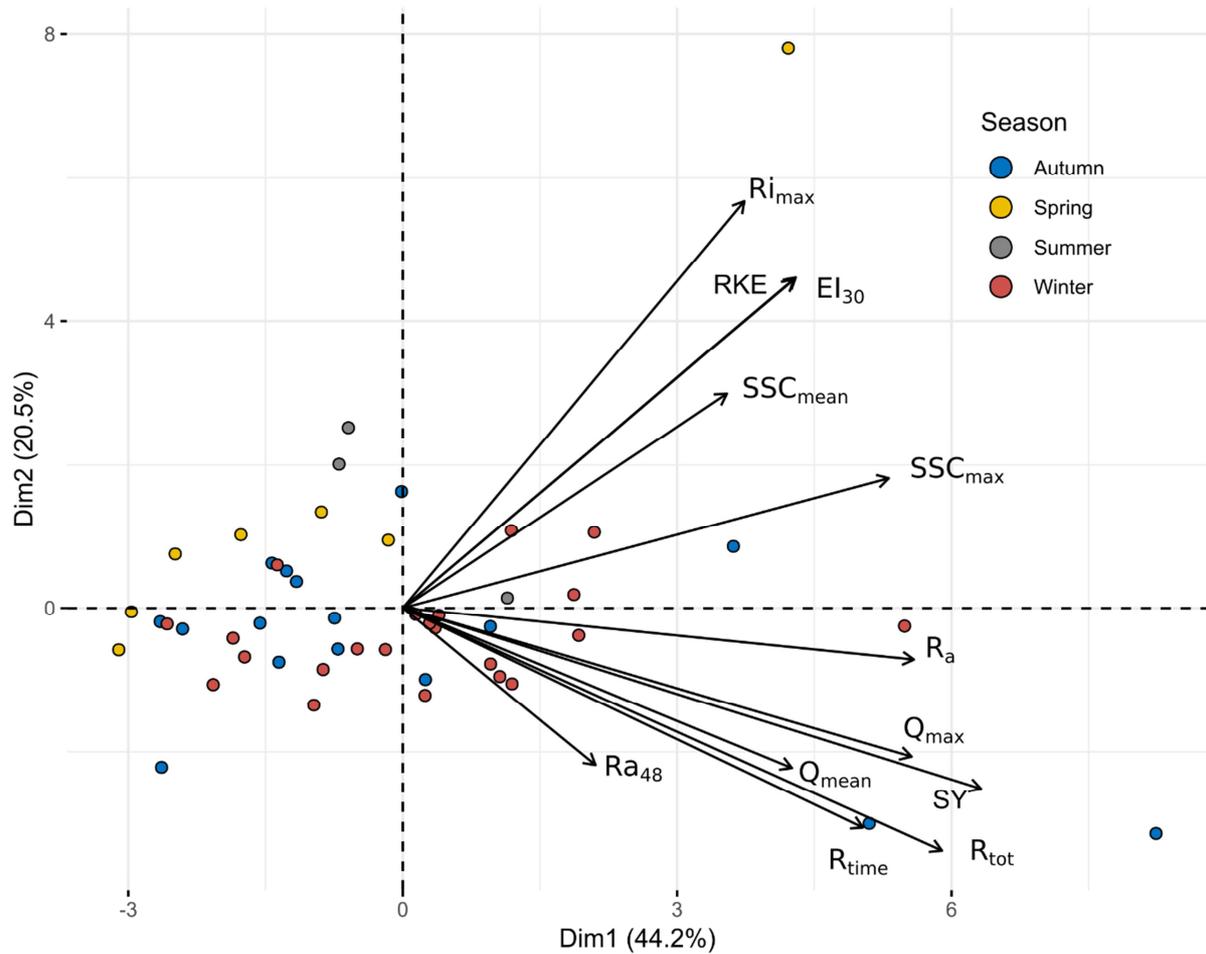
358 **Table 4: Eigen-values, percentages of variance explained, and cumulative variance of principal dimensions for**  
 359 **the principal component analysis.**

	Eigen-value	Percentage of explained variance (%)	Cumulative percentage of explained variance (%)
Dim 1	5.3	44.2	44.2
Dim 2	2.46	20.5	64.7
Dim 3	1.75	14.5	79.2
Dim 4	0.87	7.2	86.4
Dim 5	0.57	4.8	91.2
Dim 6	0.45	3.8	95
Dim 7	0.24	2	97
Dim 8	0.19	1.5	98.5
Dim 9	0.08	0.7	99.2
Dim 10	0.04	0.4	99.6
Dim 11	0.03	0.2	99.8
Dim 12	0.02	0.2	100

360

361 In the first space Dim1-Dim2, we observe a classification between the different events  
 362 (Fig. 10). On  $Dim1^+/Dim2^+$ , a minority of events are represented and are those characterized with the  
 363 highest values of the following parameters:  $R_{i_{\text{max}}}$ ,  $RKE$ ,  $El_{30}$ ,  $SSC_{\text{mean}}$ ,  $SSC_{\text{max}}$ . These events are the most  
 364 erosive and occurred in the four seasons. The event of May 11, 2016 seems to have a high influence  
 365 on the projection of the principle component analysis (PCA) due to a high value of climatic

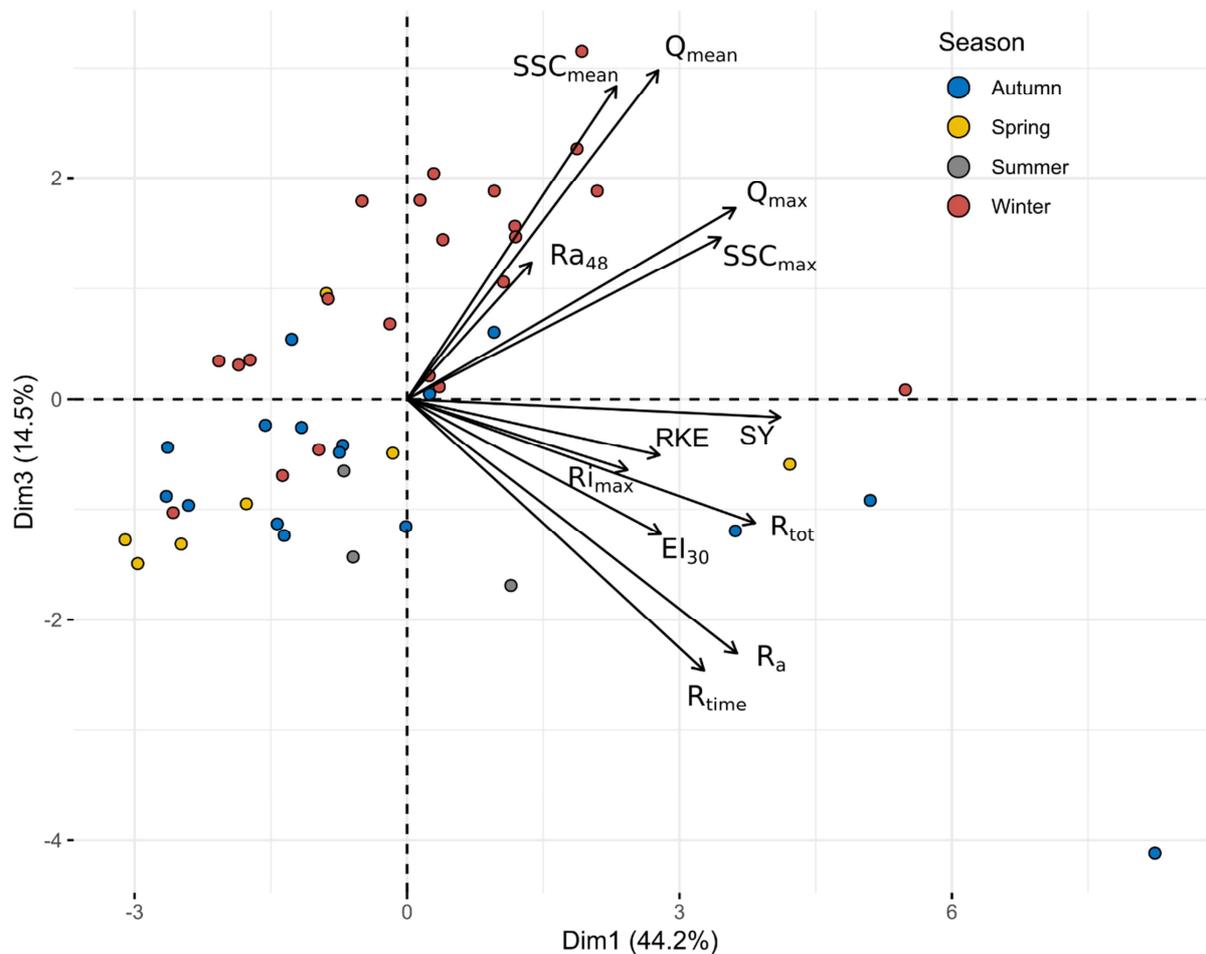
366 parameters. This event was the most erosive with very high rainfall intensities ( $76 \text{ mm h}^{-1}$ ) and a  
367 strong erosivity power ( $\text{RKE} = 24.8 \text{ J m}^{-2} \text{ mm}^{-1}$ ;  $\text{EI}_{30} = 236.2 \text{ MJ mm ha}^{-1} \text{ h}^{-1}$ ), which results on a high  
368 suspended sediment concentration at the outlet of the catchment. Nevertheless, these events are  
369 not characterized by the highest sediment yield at the outlet. Events with the highest values for flow  
370 discharge and sediment yield are represented in  $\text{Dim1}^+/\text{Dim2}^-$  and occurred mostly in autumn and  
371 winter. These events are characterized by the highest values of sediment yield induced by highest  
372 values of rainfall characteristics ( $R_a$ ,  $R_{\text{tot}}$ ,  $R_{\text{time}}$ ). In the two other spaces ( $\text{Dim1}^-/\text{Dim2}^+$ ;  $\text{Dim1}^-/\text{Dim2}^-$ ),  
373 the events occurred mainly in winter, spring, and autumn. As there is no discriminating parameter on  
374 this side, these events are characterized by the lowest values of the different parameters previously  
375 cited.



376

377 **Fig. 10: Bi-plot of PCA results on dimensions 1-2 for the 48 events and their hydro-sedimentary parameters: (i)**  
 378 **duration of the rainfall event ( $R_{time}$ , min), (ii) rainfall amount ( $R_a$ , mm), (iii) max 6 min rainfall intensity ( $R_{i_{max}}$ ,  $mm\ h^{-1}$ ),**  
 379 **(iv) 48 h-antecedent rainfall ( $R_{a_{48}}$ , mm), (v) mean flow and peak flow ( $Q_{mean}$ ,  $Q_{max}$ ,  $m^3\ h^{-1}$ ), (vi) mean and maximum SSC**  
 380 **concentration ( $SSC_{mean}$ ,  $SSC_{max}$ ,  $g\ L^{-1}$ ), (viii) sediment yield (SY, kg), (ix) total runoff ( $R_{tot}$ ,  $m^3$ ), (x) rainfall kinetic energy**  
 381 **(RKE,  $J\ m^{-2}\ mm^{-1}$ ), and (xi) rainfall erosivity index ( $EI_{30}$ ,  $MJ\ mm\ ha^{-1}\ h^{-1}$ ).**

382 In the second space Dim1/Dim3, the classification of the events shows some additional  
 383 information (Fig. 11). A major part of the winter events is represented in the Dim1<sup>+</sup>/Dim3<sup>+</sup> space and  
 384 is characterized by high values of  $Q_{mean}$ ,  $Q_{max}$ ,  $SSC_{mean}$ , and  $SSC_{max}$ . In this space, the parameter  $R_{a_{48}}$   
 385 appears to be discriminating. In Dim1<sup>+</sup>/Dim3<sup>-</sup>, few events of the season autumn, spring, and summer  
 386 are represented. They are characterized by the highest values of SY,  $EI_{30}$ ,  $R_{i_{max}}$ ,  $R_a$ , RKE, and  $R_{time}$ .  
 387 However, most of the events occurring in these three seasons are represented in the space Dim1<sup>-</sup>  
 388 /Dim3<sup>-</sup> and are largely influenced by the value of the previously cited parameters.



389

390 Fig. 11: Bi-plot of PCA results on dimensions 1-3 for the 48 events and their hydro-sedimentary parameters: (i)  
 391 duration of the rainfall event ( $R_{time}$ , min), (ii) rainfall amount ( $R_a$ , mm), (iii) max 6-min rainfall intensity ( $R_{i_{max}}$ ,  $\text{mm h}^{-1}$ ),  
 392 (iv) 48 h-antecedent rainfall ( $R_{a_{48}}$ , mm), (v) mean flow and peak flow ( $Q_{mean}$ ,  $Q_{max}$ ,  $\text{m}^3 \text{h}^{-1}$ ), (vi) mean and maximum SSC  
 393 concentration ( $SSC_{mean}$ ,  $SSC_{max}$ ,  $\text{g L}^{-1}$ ), (viii) sediment yield (SY, kg), (ix) total runoff ( $R_{tot}$ ,  $\text{m}^3$ ), (x) rainfall kinetic energy  
 394 (RKE,  $\text{J m}^{-2} \text{mm}^{-1}$ ), and (xi) rainfall erosivity index ( $EI_{30}$ ,  $\text{MJ mm ha}^{-1} \text{h}^{-1}$ ).

## 395 5 Discussion

396 A high intra-annual variability of the hydro-sedimentary response is observed at the outlet of  
 397 the Pommeroye catchment. The experimental station measured a specific sediment yield between  
 398 29.4 and  $70 \text{ t km}^{-2} \text{yr}^{-1}$  over two years of monitoring while the intra-annual variability of cumulative  
 399 rainfall is low with a difference of 138.7 mm. The high variability of the hydro-sedimentary response  
 400 is explained by the 48 erosive events recorded which show a strong heterogeneity. Sediment flux for  
 401 a single event ranges from 0.6 to 7131.8 kg, with an average of 722.8 kg. The total runoff between  
 402 discrete events also shows strong variations ranging from 0.57 to  $8630.5 \text{ m}^3$ . This variability of the

403 hydro-sedimentary response can be mainly explained by different types of rainfall events.  
404 Cumulative rainfall for a single event shows a high variability (i.e. from 2 to 103.8 mm) as well as the  
405 recorded maximum rainfall intensities (i.e. from 2 to 76 mm h<sup>-1</sup>).

406 The amount of exported sediment is consistent with values observed in similar studies areas.  
407 The specific sediment yield is higher than those observed by Grangeon et al. (2017) across the main  
408 Louroux subcatchments (France) where sediment fluxes varied from 1 to 38 t km<sup>-2</sup> yr<sup>-1</sup>. Our results on  
409 SY are also higher than those published by Lefrançois (2007) for the French catchments of the  
410 Moulinet and the Violettes (i.e. 25.4 and 36 t km<sup>-2</sup> yr<sup>-1</sup>; catchment area = 4.53 and 2.24 km<sup>2</sup>,  
411 respectively) and those observed by Laignel et al. (2006) and Landemaine (2016) in larger catchments  
412 in Normandy, France (Austreberthe: 16 t km<sup>-2</sup> yr<sup>-1</sup> and Andelle: 21 t km<sup>-2</sup> yr<sup>-1</sup>). On the other hand, the  
413 SY results for the two years monitoring of the Pommeroye catchment are lower than those measured  
414 by Walling et al. (2002) in UK catchments (Belmont, Jubilee, and Lower Smisby; catchment area = 1.5,  
415 0.3, and 2.6 km<sup>2</sup>, respectively) with a specific sediment yield between 70.6 and 181.1 t km<sup>-2</sup> yr<sup>-1</sup>.

416 A strong variability is observed between the two years of monitoring at the Pommeroye  
417 catchment with a difference of 40.6 t km<sup>-2</sup> yr<sup>-1</sup>. Supplemental years of monitoring on the Pommeroye  
418 catchment would be useful to increase the representativeness of the measured sediment yield.  
419 Nevertheless, similar observations were made by Walling et al. (2002) for the catchment of Jubilee  
420 and New Cliftonthorpe (NC) in UK where the specific sediment yield varied from 81.1 to 181.1 t km<sup>-2</sup>  
421 yr<sup>-1</sup> over two years of monitoring for the Jubilee, and from 0.6 to 122.4 t km<sup>-2</sup> yr<sup>-1</sup> for the NC.  
422 Comparable approaches in Belgium have also shown that hydro-sedimentary responses were highly  
423 variable between two distinct hydrologic years (Vandaele and Poesen, 1995; Poesen et al., 1996).  
424 Walling et al. (2002) also point out that this variability is not only due to the variability of rainfall  
425 amount but also to the temporal variability of the rainfall during the year. This is particularly true in  
426 the Pommeroye catchment where rainy events were spread out in time during the first year whereas

427 they mainly grouped over a shorter period during the second year. This succession of rainy events  
428 during a short time interval may cause a saturation of the infiltration capacity of the soil and the  
429 creation of a slaking crust in loess environments (Le Bissonnais et al., 2002).

430         Because of the heterogeneity of the rainfall events, only 6% of the erosive events exported  
431 21 t of sediment, i.e. 40% of the sediment flux transported over the two years. Some authors also  
432 observed that a few numbers of erosive episodes were responsible for a large part of the exported  
433 sediment. Indeed, Nu-Fang et al. (2011) showed that 90% of the hydro-sedimentary flux could be  
434 produced by only nine erosive events for a hydrological year in the Wangjiaqiao catchment near the  
435 Three Gorges dam in China. Estrany et al. (2009) also observed for the Mediterranean catchment  
436 that 90% of the hydro-sedimentary flux was transported during only 0.13% of the time over the  
437 studied period. Similar observations were made by Lana-Renault and Regüés, (2009) in Spain where  
438 75% of the hydro-sedimentary flux were produced by only 15% of the erosive events over the  
439 studied period. These results clearly underline the variability of the hydro-sedimentary production in  
440 small agricultural catchments for which most of the hydro-sedimentary fluxes are produced by a  
441 small number of events. Strong seasonal variability was identified over the two years of monitoring  
442 at the Pommeroye catchment. Most of the hydro-sedimentary transfer was produced in winter (55%)  
443 and autumn (42%). Only 3% of the sediment flux is produced during the spring and summer periods  
444 although the rainfall intensities are the most important. This can be mainly explained by the state of  
445 the soil surface, more particularly by a better crop cover on the agricultural plots which plays an  
446 important role of protection against the rainfall impact.

447         The employed statistical analyses showed that SSY and  $Q_{max}$  have the best correlation ( $r^2 =$   
448 0.91). It is reasonable to expect a high degree of correlation between these two variables considering  
449 that runoff is produced by rainfall excess in Hortonian environments, and where  $Q_{max}$  is a function of  
450 rainfall intensity and duration. It has been noticed in the literature that  $Q_{max}$  is a meaningful variable

451 because it exerts influence on both the production and the transfer functions of sediment dynamics  
452 (Duvert et al., 2012). Positives correlations between sediment and rainfall variables were also  
453 observed (SY vs.  $R_{time}$ , and SY vs.  $R_a$ ), but not as robust as the relationships between SSY and  
454 discharge variables. The correlation between the amount of rainfall and the sediment yield shows a  
455 threshold at 36 mm for which the erosive events are the most important. Below this threshold, a  
456 dispersion of the data cloud is observed, which seems to indicate that other forcing parameters must  
457 be considered, such as the surface state of the soils. As emphasized by Evrard et al. (2010), the state  
458 of the soil surface result from rainfall conditions and the vegetation growing system in place. In  
459 addition, agricultural operations modify the state of the soil surface and are practiced at different  
460 times of the year. Depending on the temporal variability of soil surface conditions (soil erodibility,  
461 roughness, crop cover) in the catchment, it can be assumed that the erosion processes will show  
462 significant spatial and temporal variability throughout the year (Cerdan et al., 2002). To better assess  
463 the impact of these parameters on the hydro-sedimentary response, monitoring of the soil surface  
464 conditions over time, with an adapted spatio-temporal resolution, could give further valuable  
465 information. The consideration of cultural practices and soil quality is therefore a continuation of this  
466 work, which is presented in further detail in Patault (2018).

467 Surprisingly, the amount of 48 h-antecedent rainfall is not correlated with the hydro-  
468 sedimentary response. Thus, the parameter cannot be considered as an explanatory factor even  
469 though this parameter is commonly used in runoff erosion models developed for catchments located  
470 on the European loess belt: i.e. *STREAM* and *WATERSED* models (Cerdan et al., 2002; Souchère et al.,  
471 2003; Landemaine, 2016). In addition, maximum rainfall intensities are not correlated with the  
472 hydro-sedimentary response (except for the suspended sediment concentration). These results are  
473 contradictory with those published by Nu-Fang et al. (2011) and suggest that the modification of  
474 farming practices and the farmer's efforts to get an important crop cover over the plots throughout  
475 the year allows a reduction in the impact of the rain splash effect. In addition, the rainfall kinetic

476 energy seems to be a more representative parameter of detachment and transport of suspended  
477 particulate matter than the rainfall intensity in our study site and shows a reasonably good  
478 correlation with the maximum suspended sediment concentration observed at the outlet of the  
479 Pommeroye catchment.

480         The correlation between the maximum sediment concentration and the peak flow was found  
481 as not statistically significant, indicating that the relationship is more complex between these two  
482 variables. As pointed out by Williams (1989), hysteresis effects can be observed during erosive  
483 episodes and multiple sediment sources can be mobilized. Sources that cause sediment  
484 remobilization may include diffuse erosion on plots or concentrated erosion through ephemeral  
485 gullies. In the Pommeroye catchment, the hydro-sedimentary response is complex, and it is difficult  
486 to identify the exact sediment sources responsible of the sediment transfer via the flood  
487 hydrographs. An alternative approach could be to quantify the contribution of these different  
488 sources via the use of a GIS model. These approaches have been successfully used by Cerdan et al.  
489 (2002) and Stolte et al. (2003). For example, the *STREAM* model (Cerdan et al., 2001; Souchère et al.,  
490 2003) and more recently the *WATERSED* model (Landemaine, 2016) allow the prediction of diffuse  
491 and concentrated erosion in catchments. These models considered the catchment morphology, the  
492 rainfall characteristics, and the soil surface conditions to quantify the hydro-sedimentary response  
493 for a specific rain event and to evaluate the spatial variability of sediment remobilization. We  
494 consider this future particularly suitable for the Pommeroye catchment, intending to allow the  
495 identification of the spatial variability of the sediment sources during an erosive episode and to  
496 quantify their respective contributions.

497         These two years of experimental monitoring are a first step for an on-going erosion reduction  
498 project (Patault, 2018) and will be used to calibrate the *WATERSED* erosion model. Moreover, this  
499 will allow to evaluate the efficiency of hypothetical erosion control measures (fascines, hedges, grass

500 strips) on the studied catchment. The observations on the Pommeroye catchment and the  
501 *WATERSED* modelling also should allow to upscale to larger areas (Canche catchment) which have  
502 the same erosion problems (e.g. Patault et al., 2019) but not the same logistics in terms of  
503 monitoring.

## 504 **6 Conclusion**

505 This study reports on a detailed record of the hydro-sedimentary response to rainfall events  
506 in the small agricultural catchment of the Pommeroye in Northern France. The research was based  
507 on a high-frequency (6 min) monitoring of rainfall, runoff, and suspended sediment transport over a  
508 period of two hydrological years (April 2016 – April 2018), in a challenging context where the studied  
509 catchment is lacking a perennial hydrographic network. A high inter-annual variability of the  
510 sediment yield has been observed. Over two years, the specific sediment yield ranges from 29.4 to  
511  $70 \text{ t km}^{-2} \text{ yr}^{-1}$  suggesting a large heterogeneity of the erosive events. Most of the sediment was  
512 transported in winter (55%) and autumn (42%) whereas it was less significant in summer and spring  
513 (3%). At the event scale, the results showed high variability in their hydro-sedimentary response. A  
514 small number of events (6%) were responsible for a large proportion of the sediment yield (40%). The  
515 multivariate statistical analyses showed that the best correlation is observed between SSY and  $Q_{\max}$   
516 and that the rainfall variables:  $R_a$  and  $R_{\text{time}_e}$ , are the most relevant factors controlling the hydro-  
517 sedimentary response. Rainfall intensity and rainfall kinetic energy explained the highest values of  
518 suspended sediment at the outlet, while the 48 h-antecedent rainfall is not statistically significant  
519 with the hydro-sedimentary parameters. These results confirm the high variability of the hydro-  
520 sedimentary response to rainfall events, the complexity of the erosion processes in the agricultural  
521 plains of North-Western Europe, and improve our understanding of the possible connections or  
522 disconnections between the water and the sediment transport pathways. The findings are important  
523 for watershed stakeholders, as it enhances our understanding on the spatio-temporal variability of  
524 sediment fluxes induced by mudflows and their main controlling factors.

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