

1           **Unraveling the role of polysaccharide-goethite associations on**  
2           **glyphosate' adsorption-desorption dynamics and binding**  
3           **mechanisms**

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22   **Keywords**

23   organo-mineral associations, organic-organic interactions, polysaccharide-goethite complex,  
24   adsorption, desorption, kinetics, *in-situ* ATR-FTIR, XPS, inner- and outer-sphere complexes,  
25   noncovalent interactions

28 **Abstract**

29 *Hypothesis*

30 Glyphosate retention at environmental interfaces is strongly governed by adsorption and  
31 desorption processes. In particular, glyphosate can react with organo-mineral associations  
32 (OMAs) in soils, sediments, and aquatic environments. We hypothesize mineral-adsorbed  
33 biomacromolecules modulate the extent and rate of glyphosate adsorption and desorption where  
34 electrostatic and noncovalent interactions with organo-mineral surfaces are favored.

35 *Experiments*

36 Here we use *in-situ* attenuated total reflectance Fourier-transform infrared, X-ray photoelectron  
37 spectroscopy, and batch experiments to characterize glyphosate's adsorption and desorption  
38 mechanisms and kinetics at an organo-mineral interface. Model polysaccharide-goethite OMAs  
39 are prepared with a range of organic (polysaccharide, PS) surface loadings. Sequential  
40 adsorption-desorption studies are conducted by introducing glyphosate and background  
41 electrolyte solutions, respectively, to PS-goethite OMAs.

42 *Findings*

43 We find the extent of glyphosate adsorption at PS-goethite interfaces was reduced compared to  
44 that at the goethite interface. However, increased polysaccharide surface loading resulted in  
45 lower relative glyphosate desorption. At the same time, increase PS surface loading yielded  
46 slower glyphosate adsorption and desorption kinetics compared to corresponding processes at the  
47 goethite interface. We highlight that adsorbed PS promotes the formation of weak noncovalent  
48 interactions between glyphosate and PS-goethite OMAs, including the evolution of hydrogen  
49 bonds between (i) the amino group of glyphosate and PS and (ii) the phosphonate group of

50 glyphosate and goethite. It is also observed that glyphosate's phosphonate group preferentially  
51 forms inner-sphere monodentate complexes with goethite in PS-goethite whereas bidentate  
52 configurations are favored on goethite.

53

## 54 **1. Introduction**

55 Glyphosate (*N*-(phosphonomethyl)glycine) is applied to agricultural crops, side roads, and  
56 individuals' home gardens and lawns. Upon application, glyphosate interacts with mineral and  
57 organic-coated mineral surfaces potentially affecting its mobility and efficacy as an herbicide.  
58 Since the mobility and distribution of herbicides in soil is generally mediated by water transport,  
59 adsorption-desorption processes at these interfaces are deemed important. Glyphosate is the  
60 world's most heavily applied herbicide [1] and its widespread use has raised concerns about its  
61 effects on human health and the environment [2-4].

62 Glyphosate is a polar organic molecule and a zwitterion at relevant environmental conditions,  
63 with a tridentate character due to its amino, carboxylic, and phosphonic functional groups [5, 6].  
64 A large number of studies show that glyphosate can strongly interact with metal ions in solution  
65 and at water-mineral interfaces [4, 5, 7-10], particularly with iron (hydr)oxides through its  
66 phosphonic group [7-9, 11-15]. The role of organic-coated mineral surfaces (i.e., organo-mineral  
67 associations, OMAs) on the retention, mobility and distribution of glyphosate in soils is far less  
68 studied and understood. A few studies have shown that OMAs may inhibit, hinder or enhance the  
69 mobility of glyphosate in the environment [12, 16]. For example, humic acid-goethite  
70 associations have been shown to increase glyphosate mobility, presumably a result of  
71 electrostatic repulsion due to the negative charge conferred by sorbed humic acid and by a  
72 reduction in the availability of active mineral surface sites [12]. Conversely, a more recent study

73 [16] demonstrated that a humic acid-kaolinite association can adsorb higher amounts of  
74 glyphosate than kaolinite alone. In the latter study, the authors suggest a ternary adsorption  
75 system in which glyphosate binds to the interfacial hydroxyl groups in humic acid-kaolinite  
76 associations via hydrogen bonds involving carboxyl, amino, and phosphonyl functional groups  
77 of glyphosate. Based on these disparate results, we are unable to conceptualize or predict the  
78 effect OMAs might have on glyphosate retention. Besides, previous studies have failed to  
79 consider desorption dynamics when assessing glyphosate behavior at these heterogeneous  
80 organo-mineral interfaces and have used humic acids as model organic coatings. Humic acids  
81 (together with fulvic acids) are an operationally defined organic fraction extracted from soils and  
82 do not represent the biomolecules present in soils [17].

83 To address this void in knowledge, we present a series of molecular-scale, time-resolved, and  
84 surface-sensitive adsorption-desorption studies using goethite and polysaccharide-goethite  
85 associations as model interfaces. A clear understanding of the molecular structure of an OMA is  
86 essential to accurately probe glyphosate behavior and fate. We used goethite ( $\alpha$ -FeOOH) as the  
87 model mineral in experiments because it is commonly present in soils and frequently used in  
88 glyphosate sorption studies [9, 12, 14, 18-21]. We chose a polysaccharide (i.e., a naturally  
89 occurring biomacromolecule present in plant cell walls and therefore a major component of  
90 organic matter in soils) as the model organic molecule present in OMAs. Polysaccharides (PS)  
91 are ubiquitous in soils and potentially act as binding agents in the soil matrix [22, 23]. Unlike  
92 humic and fulvic acids, the structure of the chosen PS (pectin) is well-known: a linear polymer  
93 composed of  $\alpha$ -1,4-linked galacturonic acid units. The galacturonic acid units could be  
94 methoxylated and/or amidated to various degrees [24, 25].

95 In this study, we determine the extent, kinetics and mechanisms of interaction of glyphosate at  
96 PS-goethite and goethite interfaces and investigate the effect increasing polysaccharide surface  
97 loading might have on these processes. All experiments were conducted at pH = 5.0 to simulate  
98 agricultural soils of humid climates where the affinity of glyphosate for soil particles is high and  
99 where soils are rich in iron (hydr)oxides and organic matter [26-28]. Experimentally, we use *in-*  
100 *situ* time-resolved attenuated total reflectance Fourier transform infrared (ATR-FTIR)  
101 spectroscopy to obtain adsorption-desorption kinetic parameters and to decipher glyphosate's  
102 mechanisms of interaction. The capabilities of ATR-FTIR to obtain kinetic information of  
103 environmentally relevant systems has been demonstrated in several studies [12, 29, 30]. Batch  
104 and X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS) experiments are conducted to further characterize  
105 the extent of glyphosate adsorption-desorption dynamics at PS-goethite interfaces. The use of  
106 XPS to acquire surface coverage and chemical bonding information at glyphosate-mineral and  
107 biomolecule-mineral interfaces has been established [9, 31, 32]. In addition, a homonuclear  
108 proton saturation transfer difference nuclear magnetic resonance (STD-NMR) experiment [33]  
109 was conducted to learn whether glyphosate and PS molecules interact in solution.

110 Furthermore, we decipher the contribution of each functional group of glyphosate (amino,  
111 carboxylate, phosphonate) to its interaction with goethite and with polysaccharide-goethite  
112 associations during adsorption and desorption processes. To the best of our knowledge, this is the  
113 first study highlighting glyphosate's adsorption-desorption dynamics at polysaccharide-goethite  
114 interfaces at the molecular-scale, in solution and in real time. These studies provide new  
115 knowledge that further our understanding of glyphosate's sorption-desorption dynamics at  
116 heterogeneous organo-mineral interfaces.

117

## 118 2. Materials and Methods

### 119 2.1. Materials

120 Glyphosate (96 % purity) was purchased from Sigma-Aldrich (Milwaukee, USA). Amidated  
121 high methoxyl pectin was acquired from Sigma-Aldrich. This pectin, a polysaccharide (PS), is  
122 used as the model biomacromolecule in our study and it has a  $MW$  of  $\approx 71100 \text{ g mol}^{-1}$  [34-36],  
123 and a  $pK_{a(\text{COOH})} = 3.3 - 4.5$  [37]. The galacturonic acid (GalA), methoxy and amide contents  
124 were calculated as 37.1, 58.7, 4.2 %, respectively (see SM1 in supplementary information (SI)  
125 for details). All solutions and suspensions were made with deionized water (18.2 M $\Omega$  resistance),  
126 boiled and purged with N<sub>2</sub> gas to remove dissolved CO<sub>2</sub>. In all experiments, a 10 mM KCl  
127 background electrolyte was used to approximate the low ionic strength of soil solutions. Goethite  
128 ( $\alpha$ -FeOOH) was synthesized by the method of Schwertmann and Cornell [38]. Details of mineral  
129 synthesis and characterization can be found in SI (SM2 and Figure S1). The pH at the point of  
130 zero charge ( $\text{pH}_{\text{pzc}}$ ) of the synthesized goethite was  $8.4 \pm 0.2$  (Figure S2 in SI).

131

### 132 2.2. <sup>1</sup>H Saturation-transfer difference (STD) NMR experiment

133 Saturation transfer difference (STD) NMR experiments were used to probe potential  
134 interactions between glyphosate and the PS in solution. For the most sensitive STD-NMR  
135 spectra, a 20  $\mu\text{M}$  PS solution was prepared in D<sub>2</sub>O (99.9 atom % D, Cambridge Isotope  
136 Laboratories Inc.). Then, 0.35 mg glyphosate was dissolved in 2 mL of the PS solution  
137 ([glyphosate] = 1.0 mM) to yield a 50-fold excess glyphosate to ligand (PS) ratio [39]. The pH  
138 was adjusted to 5 using potassium deuterioxide (40 wt % in D<sub>2</sub>O,  $\geq 99$  atom % D, Sigma) and  
139 deuterium chloride (35 wt % in D<sub>2</sub>O,  $\geq 99$  atom % D, Sigma). <sup>1</sup>H STD-NMR experiments were  
140 conducted on a 600 MHz Varian Inova NMR spectrometer at 25 °C. STD parameters were

141 selected based on values reported in a previous study [33]. Spectra were processed in MNova  
142 software (v. 14.3, Mestrelab Research S.L.).

143

### 144 **2.3. Batch experiments, XPS and zeta potential analyses**

145 Batch adsorption-desorption studies were conducted to quantify glyphosate adsorption and  
146 desorption from experimental surfaces, and to obtain qualitative and quantitative information  
147 about the surface characteristics and bonding environment of complexes using zeta potential and  
148 X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS) measurements. Procedural details of the batch  
149 experiments are described in SI, SM3). Briefly, a series of PS-goethite OMAs were synthesized  
150 with varying PS surface loading (i.e., Phases 1 and 2). Then, glyphosate adsorption and  
151 desorption experiments were conducted at pH 5 by addition of a 1 mM glyphosate solution to the  
152 prepared PS-goethite OMAs (adsorption, Phase 3), followed by desorption (Phase 4) using a 10  
153 mM KCl background solution. The supernatants were filtered (0.2  $\mu\text{m}$ ) and analyzed using a  
154 TOC-L analyzer (Shimadzu Scientific Instruments) along with standard polysaccharide  
155 solutions. Glyphosate concentrations were also measured using a colorimetric approach after  
156 derivatization in 2 mM fluorenyl orthochloroformate and 20 mM borate buffer solutions [40, 41].  
157 XPS analyses were conducted on selected pellets and required standards. Details of XPS  
158 analyses are presented in SI, SM4. For zeta potential measurements, all of the pellets were  
159 resuspended in background solution and measured with a Zetasizer (Nano ZS90, Malvern  
160 instruments Ltd., UK). BET surface area ( $\text{N}_2$  adsorption) and scanning electron microscopy  
161 (SEM) images were obtained with an ASAP2460 instrument (Micromeritics Instrument Corp.)  
162 and a Zeiss Gemini 500 FE-SEM, respectively.

163

#### 164 **2.4. *In-situ* time-resolved ATR-FTIR Adsorption-desorption Experiments**

165 The workflow of *in-situ* ATR-FTIR (attenuated total reflectance Fourier transform infrared)  
166 experiments (Figure S3) and methodological details are reported in SI (SM5 and SM6). The  
167 formation of PS-goethite complexes was initiated by introducing PS solutions over a hydrated  
168 layer of goethite on the surface of the ATR crystal. A range of surface loadings were obtained by  
169 passing different initial concentrations of PS ([PS] = 0, 4, 8, 14, 28, 42, and 56  $\mu\text{M}$ ) over goethite  
170 films for a fixed time (coating, Phase 1  $\approx$  180 min). Adsorbed PS was stabilized by passing 10  
171 mM KCl background electrolyte to remove any loosely bound PS. Stability of PS-goethite  
172 complexes was considered attained when no changes were observed in interfacial spectra  
173 collected during background solution flow (stabilization, Phase 2  $\approx$  60 min). At this point, a  
174 background spectrum was collected, and adsorption of glyphosate was initiated by exchanging  
175 the background solution with a fixed 4.0 mM glyphosate solution (adsorption, Phase 3  $\approx$  86 min).  
176 Glyphosate adsorption was followed by a desorption experiment using the same background  
177 solution until equilibrium (desorption, Phase 4  $\approx$  72 min). Solutions with a pH of 5.0 were used  
178 for all experiments, which model environmentally relevant conditions representative of  
179 agricultural soils of humid regions ( $I=10$  mM and pH = 5.0). The pH was maintained within  
180 0.05 pH units by regulated additions of 0.005 M HCl or KOH with a pH controller. Experiments  
181 were repeated 4 times on freshly prepared films under identical conditions. All the *in-situ*  
182 experiments were conducted under ambient atmosphere and using a close flow through system at  
183 a rate of  $0.85 \pm 0.05$  mL  $\text{min}^{-1}$  (flow velocity =  $4.5 \times 10^{-3}$  m  $\text{s}^{-1}$ ) using a peristaltic pump (Cole-  
184 Parmer, IL). Bulk solution spectra of glyphosate and polysaccharide were collected at  
185 concentrations of 0.10 M and 8.0 mg  $\text{mL}^{-1}$ , respectively, in a 10 mM KCl background solution at  
186 pH = 5.0. All spectra were collected by subtracting the spectrum of the background electrolyte

187 from the spectrum of each sample. In this way, the difference spectrum contains only the  
188 absorption bands of interfacial species, including inner- and outer- sphere species and bands of  
189 free or uncomplexed species in the bulk solutions.

190

## 191 **2.5. ATR-FTIR Data Processing for Analyses**

192 Two regions, the phosphonate frequency region ( $1100 - 950 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ ,  $\nu(PO)$ ) and the carboxylate-  
193 amine frequency region ( $1700 - 1500 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ ,  $\nu(CAc)$ ), were cut and further processed. The integral  
194 of the baseline-corrected IR peaks of the phosphonate region was used to probe total glyphosate  
195 adsorption and desorption kinetics and P-O band coordination to Fe(III). The spectral features in  
196 the  $1700-1500 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  range were deconvoluted in order to determine potential hydrogen bonding  
197 and the contribution of carboxylate ( $\nu_{as}(COO^-)$ ) and amine ( $\delta(NH_2^+)$ ) functionalities in interfacial  
198 complex formation and subsequent dynamicity of adsorbed glyphosate. Deconvolution of the  
199  $\nu(CAc)$  band at the goethite and PS-goethite interfaces is fully explained in SI, SM7. Peak fitting  
200 of the spectra was carried out using a second derivative deconvolution algorithm using PeakFit  
201 package v.4.12 (Systat Software Inc., San Jose, CA).

202

## 203 **2.6. Glyphosate Adsorption-desorption Kinetic Models**

204 Integral of FTIR bands ( $A(\tilde{\nu}_i)$ ) of glyphosate moieties during adsorption and desorption  
205 experiments were fitted with two commonly used kinetic models, the Lagergren's pseudo-  
206 second-order (PSO) and pseudo-first-order (PFO) models, respectively [42, 43]. The PSO model  
207 for adsorption processes can be described by the following equation [44]:

$$A(\tilde{\nu}_i)_{t,ads} = \frac{k_{2,ads} A(\tilde{\nu}_i)_{e,ads}^2 t}{1 + k_{2,ads} A(\tilde{\nu}_i)_{e,ads} t} \quad (\text{Eq. 1})$$

208 where  $A(\tilde{\nu}_i)_{t,ads}$  is the integral absorption intensity of the glyphosate band (a.u.) at adsorption time  
 209  $t$  (min),  $k_{2,ads}$  is the PSO rate constant ( $\text{min}^{-1} \text{ a.u.}^{-1}$ ), and  $A(\tilde{\nu}_i)_{e,ads}$  is the integral absorption  
 210 intensity of the glyphosate band at equilibrium (a.u.).

211 Desorption of glyphosate was described by a modified PFO model represented by the  
 212 following equation [30]:

$$A(\tilde{\nu}_i)_{t,des} = (\alpha - A(\tilde{\nu}_i)_{e,des}) e^{-k_{1,des} t} + \alpha \quad (\text{Eq. 2})$$

213 where  $A(\tilde{\nu}_i)_{t,des}$  is the integral absorption intensity of the glyphosate band (a.u.) at desorption time  
 214  $t$  (min),  $k_{1,des}$  is the PFO rate constant ( $\text{min}^{-1}$ ),  $A(\tilde{\nu}_i)_{e,des}$  is the integral absorption intensity of the  
 215 glyphosate band at the end of the desorption phase (a.u.), and  $\alpha$  is a dimensionless constant that  
 216 locates the desorption curve that follows just after the adsorption curve at equilibrium. The PFO  
 217 model was also applied to describe PS's adsorption and desorption kinetics at the goethite  
 218 interface during formation and stabilization of PS-goethite OMAs (see SI, SM8 for details). All  
 219 fitting was completed with the nonlinear curve fitting GraphPad Prism v.9.0 software (GraphPad  
 220 Inc, San Diego, CA).

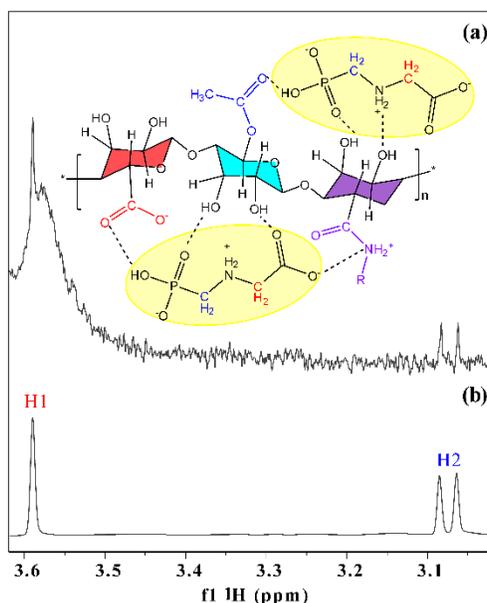
221

## 222 **3. Results and Discussion**

### 223 **3.1 Glyphosate attaches to polysaccharide chains.**

224 The  $^1\text{H}$  STD-NMR spectra of glyphosate with and without PS are shown in Figure 1. The  
 225 singlet peak (H1) corresponds to protons next to the glyphosate carboxyl group, while the  
 226 doublet (H2) derives from proton splitting due to geminal coupling with the P nucleus [33, 45].

227 Weak STD correlations were observed for the PS sample, indicating reversible association in  
228 bulk solution. In fact, both H1 and H2 protons were visible in STD difference spectra indicating  
229 glyphosate attach to hydrophilic moieties of PS chains through noncovalent interactions (Figure  
230 1-a). As previously suggested, this result provides evidence of a host-guest complex formation  
231 between glyphosate and PS, similar to that observed with other natural macromolecules [33, 46].



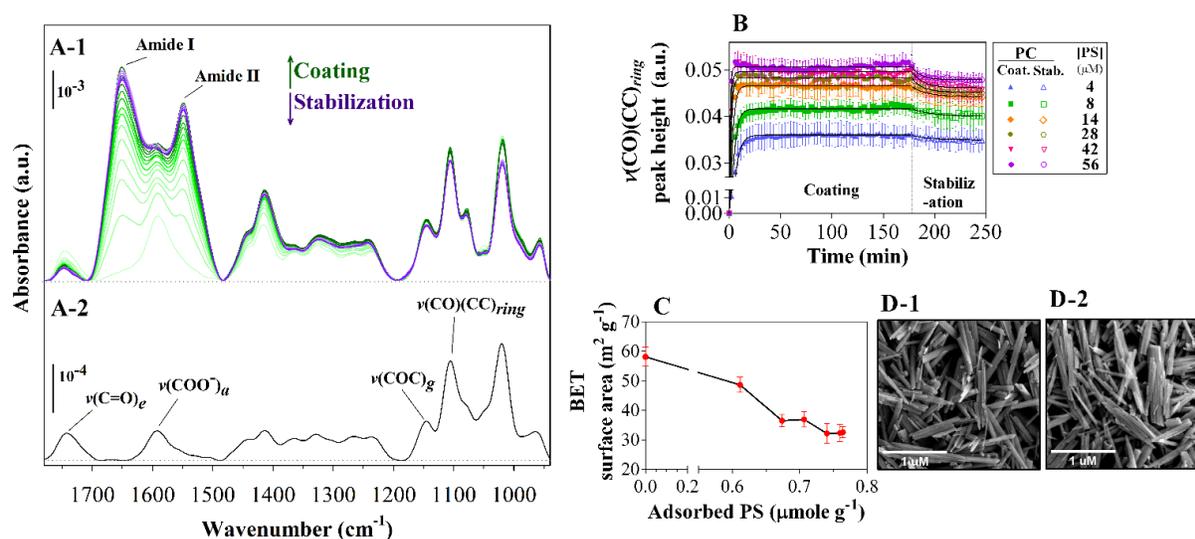
232  
233 **Figure 1.**  $^1\text{H}$  STD-NMR spectra at pH 5. (a) STD difference spectrum of a sample containing 0.1  
234 mM glyphosate and 20  $\mu\text{M}$  polysaccharide, together with a proposed structure for the PS-  
235 glyphosate complex, and (b) reference  $^1\text{H}$  spectrum of 1 mM glyphosate. Black dashed lines in  
236 (a) represent noncovalent bonds. The full-range  $^1\text{H}$  STD-NMR spectrum of the PS-glyphosate  
237 complex is shown in Figure S4.

238

### 239 3.2. Polysaccharide and goethite form organo-mineral associations.

240 Interfacial ATR-FTIR spectra (Figure 2 A-1) indicate the progression of PS adsorption through  
241 increasing signals of skeletal bands of the pyranose rings (e.g.,  $\nu(\text{CC})(\text{CO})_{ring}$ ) and  $\alpha$ -1,4

242 glycosidic bonds (e.g.,  $\nu_{as}(\text{COC})_g$ ) from 1200 – 950  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  [47-49]. Intense peaks within the 1780  
 243 – 1200  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  range are also observed and are assigned to diverse band types, including  
 244 methylester (e.g.,  $\nu(\text{C}=\text{O})_e$ ), amide (e.g., amide I and II) and carboxylate (e.g.,  $\nu_{as}(\text{COO}^-)$ ) of  
 245 residual groups in GalA rings [25, 37, 49-54]. A complete list of peak assignments is shown in  
 246 SI, Table S1. Kinetic data (Figure 2B), monitored using the  $\nu(\text{CO})(\text{CC})_{ring}$  peak height, indicates  
 247 stable OMAs formed between PS and goethite with only a small fraction of adsorbed PS  
 248 removed from the surface at the end of the stabilization phase (4.8 – 9.6%). The kinetics of PS  
 249 coating and stabilization are well described by a PFO model (Figure 2B, and Table S2).  
 250 Furthermore, estimated  $k_{1,ads}$  and  $k_{1,des}$  values indicate PS-goethite formation and stabilization are  
 251 faster with increasing PS concentration. As shown by identical surface morphology (texture) of  
 252 SEM images (imaging resolution of  $\approx 5$  nm), the PS seems to form evenly distributed coatings  
 253 on synthesized PS-goethite OMAs that result in significant reduction of BET surface area  
 254 (Figure 2C – D).



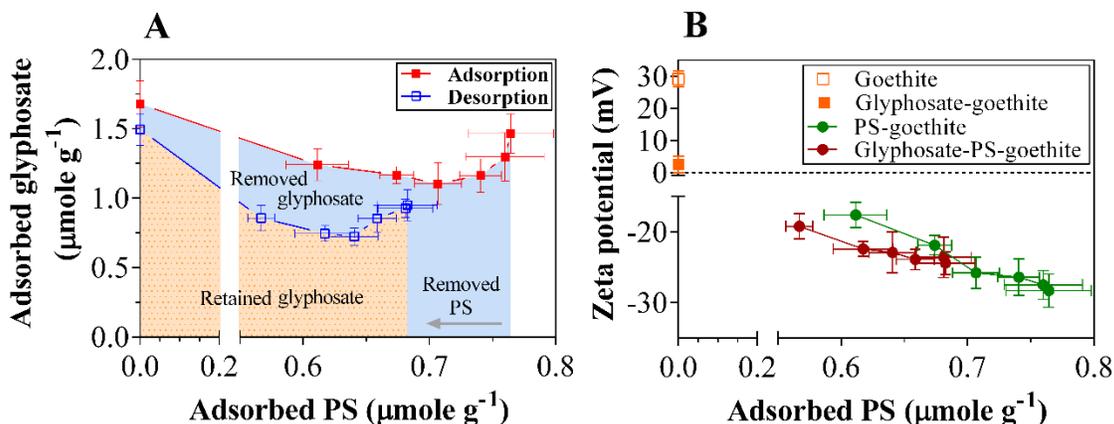
255 **Figure 2.** Formation and stability of PS-goethite OMAs. (A-1) Representative set of *in-situ*  
 256 ATR-FTIR spectra collected during PS's coating (green lines) and stabilization (purple lines)  
 257

258 over a goethite film ( $[PS] = 28 \mu M$ ). Spectra collected every  $\approx 8$  minutes. (A-2) The solution  
259 state spectrum for polysaccharide ( $112 \mu M$  in  $10 \text{ mM KCl}$  at  $\text{pH } 5.0$ ). (B) Evolution of  
260  $\nu(\text{CO})(\text{CC})_{ring}$  ( $1106 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ ) vibrations during coating and stabilization. (C) BET surface area of  
261 PS-goethite OMAs as a function of adsorbed PS. (D) SEM image of (D-1) goethite and (D-2) a  
262 PS-goethite OMA ( $PS \approx 0.8 \mu\text{mole g}^{-1}$ ).

263

### 264 **3.3. Glyphosate retention by PS-goethite organo-mineral associations**

265 Batch studies indicate glyphosate adsorption is diminished ( $52 - 37 \%$ , Table S3) by adsorbed  
266 PS (Figure 3A). The amount of glyphosate retained after desorption is also lower in PS-goethite  
267 OMAs compared to goethite ( $\% 30 - 13$  decrease). However, a reversal to this trend is observed  
268 at the highest PS loadings. Zeta potential measurements (Figure 3B) indicate PS-goethite and  
269 glyphosate-PS-goethite complexes developed a negative surface charge whereas goethite ( $\approx 30$   
270  $\text{mV}$ ) and glyphosate-goethite ( $\approx 3 \text{ mV}$ ) are positively charged. Results also indicate the zeta  
271 potential of PS-goethite and glyphosate-PS-goethite complexes decreases with increasing PS  
272 loading. Decreased adsorption of glyphosate by PS-goethite OMAs relative to goethite can then  
273 be explained by electrostatic repulsion between two negatively charged entities. Furthermore,  
274 increases in PS surface loading, and corresponding decreases in SA (Figure 2C), limits the  
275 surface available for adsorption of glyphosate on PS-goethite OMAs. Still, the trend reversal in  
276 adsorbed and retained glyphosate corresponds to the extent of PS association on goethite (Figure  
277 3A). As previously shown in STD difference spectra (Figure 1-a), the weak attachment of  
278 glyphosate to PS may facilitate the retention of glyphosate molecules within adsorbed PS that  
279 subsequently leads to this trend reversal. The mechanisms involved in these interactions are  
280 discussed in the following sections.



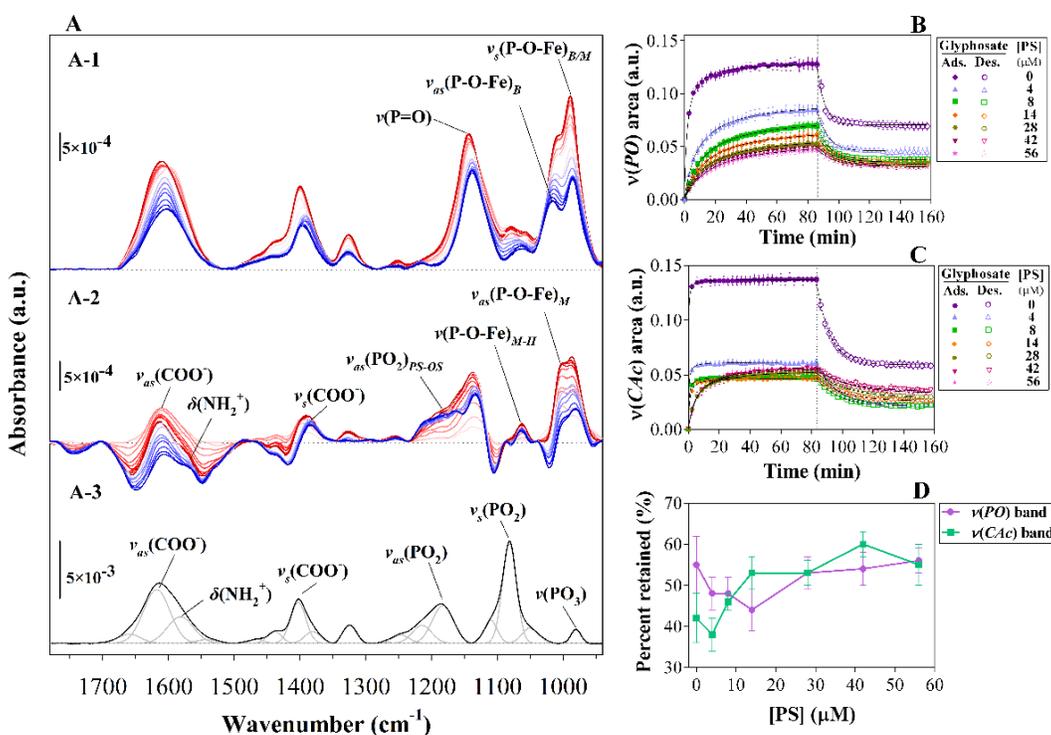
281  
 282 **Figure 3.** Results of batch experiments. Influence of adsorbed PS on (A) glyphosate's adsorption  
 283 and desorption dynamics and (B) zeta potential measurements. Blue and orange areas in A  
 284 represent the amount of glyphosate removed and retained at equilibrium, respectively. Error bars  
 285 represent standard deviation values from replicates ( $n = 3$ ).

286  
 287 **3.4. Contribution of glyphosate's functional groups to interfacial adsorption-desorption**  
 288 **and kinetics.**

289 Representative *in-situ* time-resolved ATR-FTIR spectra of glyphosate's retention dynamics at  
 290 the PS-goethite and goethite interface highlight the progression of glyphosate adsorption and  
 291 desorption through increases and decreases in intensity of the phosphonate, carboxylate, and  
 292 amine bands of the spectra (Figure 4A-1 and A-2). In our study, phosphonate ( $\nu(PO)$ , 1050 – 950  
 293  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) and carboxylate-amine ( $\nu(CAc)$ , 1700 – 1500  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) integrated band areas are considered a  
 294 measure of glyphosate's surface-associated species [8, 12]. Vibrational modes within the  $\nu(PO)$   
 295 band area include inner-sphere (*IS*) (e.g., P-O-Fe) and outer-sphere (*OS*) (e.g.,  $(\text{PO}_3)_{OS}$  or

296 (PO<sub>2</sub>)<sub>OS</sub>) species [8, 9, 12, 14]. The carboxylate-amine  $\nu(CAc)$  integrated band area includes  
 297 surface-associated  $\nu_{as}(\text{COO}^-)$  and  $\delta(\text{NH}_2^+)$  vibrational modes [7, 8, 21].

298 Increased PS loading in PS-goethite OMAs impacts glyphosate's adsorption-desorption  
 299 kinetics and the contribution of observed surface-associated bands (Figure 4). Consistent with  
 300 batch experiments, interfacial ATR results show a decrease in intensity of  $\nu(PO)$  and  $\nu(CAc)$   
 301 bands upon glyphosate interaction with PS-goethite OMAs compared to goethite (Figures 4B –  
 302 D). These results are in good agreement with Arroyave *et al* [12] where glyphosate adsorption  
 303 onto humic acid-goethite OMA was hindered, but it is contrary to the results of Guo *et al.* [16]  
 304 where higher amounts of glyphosate were adsorbed onto humic acid-kaolinite OMA. Variability  
 305 in the results might be explained by the stability of the OMAs, where humic acid and PS bind  
 306 strongly onto goethite whereas weak interactions dominate in humic acid-kaolinite OMA.



307

308 **Figure 4.** Representative time-resolved *in-situ* ATR-FTIR spectra collected during glyphosate  
309 adsorption and desorption experiments at pH 5 on (A-1) goethite and (A-2) PS-goethite OMA  
310 ([PS] = 14  $\mu$ M). Red and blue lines indicate the evolution of interfacial spectra collected every  $\approx$   
311 8 minutes. (A-3) Solution state ATR-FTIR spectrum of 0.1 M glyphosate in 10 mM KCl at pH  
312 5.0; gray lines show deconvoluted IR components. Evolution of integrated (B) phosphonate  
313 ( $\nu(PO)$ ) and (C) carboxylate-amine ( $\nu(CAc)$ ) bands of glyphosate with increased PS surface  
314 loading. (D) shows the percentage of  $\nu(CAc)$  and  $\nu(PO)$  bands retained at the end of the  
315 desorption phase (percentage retained =  $[A(\tilde{\nu}_i)_{e,des} / A(\tilde{\nu}_i)_{e,ads}] \times 100$ ).

316  
317 Adsorption-desorption kinetics for  $\nu(PO)$  and  $\nu(CAc)$  bands were described by the PSO and  
318 PFO kinetic models, respectively (Figure 4B – C). The estimated PSO and PFO kinetic  
319 parameters can be found in SI, Table S4. The  $\nu(PO)$ - and  $\nu(CAc)$ -associated adsorption rate  
320 constants ( $k_{2(PO),ads}$  and  $k_{2,(CAc)ads}$ ) decreased with increasing PS surface loading on PS-goethite  
321 although higher PS loadings had less of an effect. These results suggest glyphosate's access to  
322 the active sites on goethite was diminished by the primary layer of PS adsorbed at the goethite  
323 surface [12]. For the first time, our kinetic modeling shows the carboxylate-amine groups of  
324 glyphosate interact with faster kinetics compared to the phosphonate group, particularly at PS  
325 surface loadings  $\leq 14 \mu$ M (Table S4). The fact that different IR bands of the same molecule (i.e.,  
326 glyphosate) evolve at different rates indicates the presence of more than one interfacial species or  
327 it might be caused by interaction with different sites on these heterogeneous surfaces [30, 55]. As  
328 shown in Figure 4D, the fraction of  $\nu(CAc)$  IR bands retained after desorption increased with  
329 increasing PS loading whereas that of  $\nu(PO)$  decreased initially but then increased to a value  
330 similar to goethite ( $\geq 28 \mu$ M). This behavior suggests PS-goethite associations may hinder

331 desorption of glyphosate at higher PS loading and is in agreement with retained glyphosate  
 332 values in batch experiments (Figure 3A). Still, desorption rate constants ( $k_{I,(PO)des}$  and  $k_{I,(CAc)des}$ )  
 333 show similar kinetic trends, with the carboxylate-amine groups presenting slower desorption  
 334 rates at low PS loadings (Table S4). Moreover, adsorbed PS was reduced by 8.5 – 23.5 % upon  
 335 introduction of glyphosate at the stabilized PS-goethite interface (Figure S5) whereas no  
 336 significant changes to the ATR-FTIR spectra of PS-goethite were observed in control  
 337 experiments after the introduction of 10 mM KCl background solution (Figure S6). These results  
 338 suggest glyphosate, and potentially other low molecular weight organics, might have a  
 339 destabilizing effect on OMAs present in soils [56, 57].

340 The most striking results were found when the  $\nu(CAc)$  bands were deconvoluted across all  
 341 experiments (Figure S7, Figure 5). The carboxylate-amine band ( $\nu(CAc)$ ) of glyphosate (1700 –  
 342 1550  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) originates mainly from asymmetrical stretching vibration modes of  $\text{COO}^-$  and its  
 343 coupling with deformation modes of the  $\text{NH}_2^+$  group [7, 8, 21, 58]. The carboxylate-amine  
 344 coupling ( $\nu(CAc)$ ) can therefore be deconvoluted into four tentative vibrational modes, including  
 345 two  $\text{COO}^-$  stretching and two  $\text{NH}_2^+$  deformation vibration modes [8]:

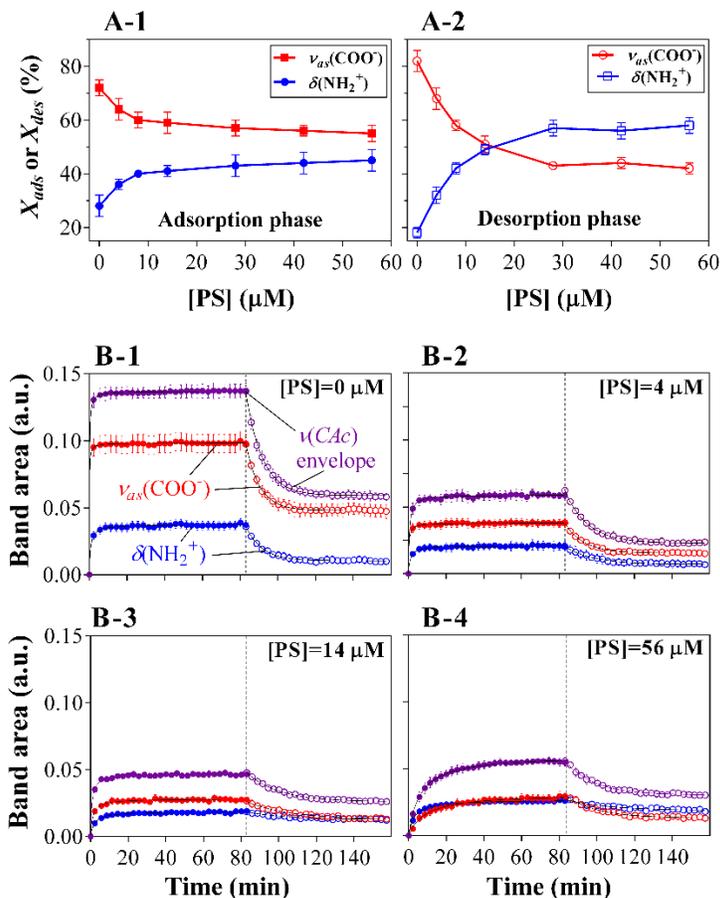
$$\nu(CAc) = \left( \nu_{as}(\text{COO}^-)_I + \nu_{as}(\text{COO}^-)_{II} + \delta(\text{NH}_2^+)_I + \delta(\text{NH}_2^+)_{II} \right) \quad (\text{Eq. 3})$$

346 After deconvolution of the  $\nu(CAc)$  band, individual contributions to surface-associated  
 347 glyphosate,  $X$ , at the end of adsorption and desorption phases were calculated using the following  
 348 equation:

$$X = \left( \frac{A_e(\tilde{\nu}_i)}{A_e(CAc)} \right) \times 100 \quad (\text{Eq. 4})$$

349 where,  $A_e(CAc)$  is the integral  $\nu(CAc)$  band and  $A_e(\tilde{\nu}_i)$  is the integral of deconvoluted components  
 350 of  $\nu_{as}(\text{COO}^-)$  (i.e.,  $[\nu_{as}(\text{COO}^-)_I + \nu_{as}(\text{COO}^-)_{II}]$ ) or  $\delta(\text{NH}_2^+)$  (i.e.,  $[\delta(\text{NH}_2^+)_I + \delta(\text{NH}_2^+)_{II}]$ ) bands.

351 We found glyphosate's  $\delta(\text{NH}_2^+)$  band contribution to adsorption ( $X(\delta(\text{NH}_2^+)_{ads})$ ) increased as a  
352 function of PS surface loading, from 28 % to 45 % (Figure 5A-1). Conversely, glyphosate  
353  $\nu_{as}(\text{COO}^-)$  band contribution to adsorption ( $X(\nu(\text{COO}^-)_{ads})$ ) diminished with increasing PS surface  
354 loading, from 72 % to 55 %. Although similar trends were observed during the desorption phase  
355 (Figure 5A-2), the remaining surface-associated  $X(\delta(\text{NH}_2^+))$  increased with increasing PS surface  
356 loading ( $[\text{PS}] \geq 28 \mu\text{M}$ ) to  $\approx 60$  %. The remaining surface-associated  $X(\nu(\text{COO}^-)_{des})$  diminished to  
357  $\approx 40$  % at PS loadings  $\geq 28 \mu\text{M}$ . Furthermore, Figure 5B-1 to B-4 and Table S5 indicate surface-  
358 associated  $\delta(\text{NH}_2^+)$  adsorption bands of glyphosate evolved faster than corresponding  $\nu_{as}(\text{COO}^-)$   
359 bands at higher PS surface loadings ( $\text{PS} \geq 28 \mu\text{M}$ ). This can be explained by the interfacial  
360 electrostatic potential, which is expected to increase for a positive functional group with  
361 increasing PS surface loading due to the increased number of carboxylate functionalities  
362 available in PS chains (PS used in experiments had an estimated  $\approx 37\%$  carboxylate content; see  
363 SM1). Interactions between glyphosate- $\text{NH}_2^+$  and O-containing residues in PS chains are  
364 therefore deemed favorable through hydrogen bonding and electrostatic interactions [16, 49, 59,  
365 60].



366

367 **Figure 5.** Contribution ( $X_{ads}$  and  $X_{des}$ ) of deconvoluted  $\nu(CAc)$  band components of glyphosate at  
 368 (A-1) adsorption ( $t_{e,ads} = 80.0$  min) and (A-2) desorption ( $t_{e,des} = 157.5$  min) equilibrium as a  
 369 function of PS loading. (B) shows the evolution of  $\nu(CAc)$  glyphosate band components during  
 370 adsorption and desorption for (B-1) goethite and (B-2 to B-4) PS-goethite OMAs with increased  
 371 PS loading. Black lines in B represent PSO and PFO kinetic fits for adsorption and desorption,  
 372 respectively. Dashed vertical lines split glyphosate's adsorption and desorption phases.

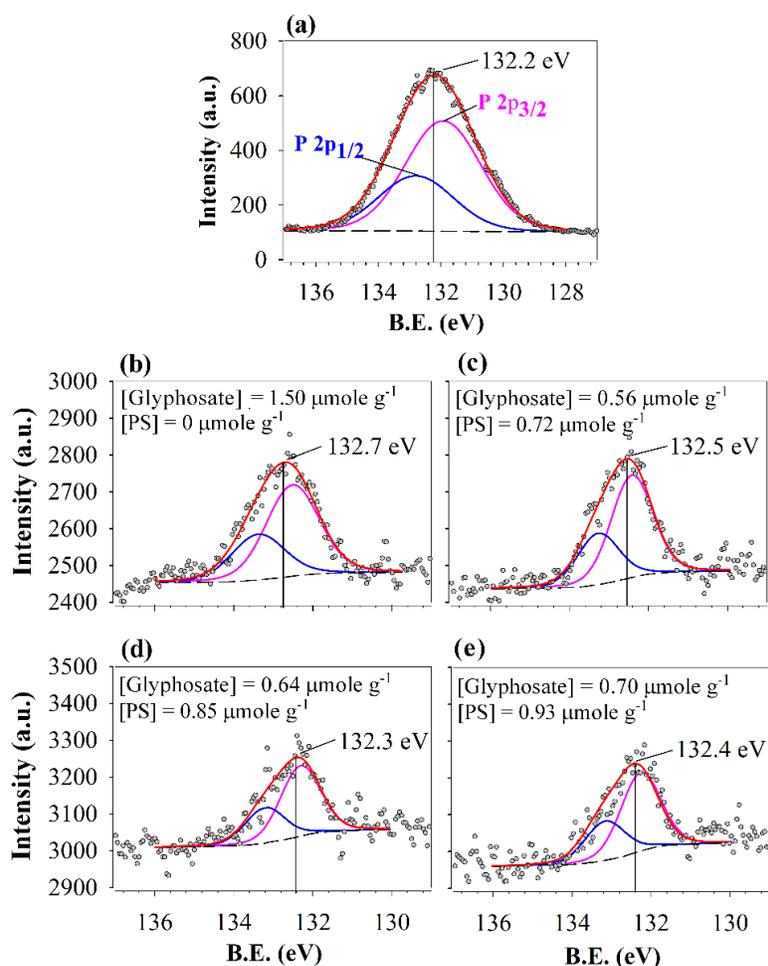
373

### 374 3.5. Mechanisms of interaction

#### 375 3.5.1. Phosphonate-mediated binding

376 The predominant species of glyphosate at pH 5.0 and  $I = 10$  mM is the monoanion [ $^-$   
377  $\text{OOCCH}_2\text{N}^+\text{H}_2\text{CH}_2\text{-HPO}_3^-$ ] (69.78 %), with lesser contributions from its dianion [ $^-$   
378  $\text{OOCCH}_2\text{N}^+\text{H}_2\text{CH}_2\text{-PO}_3^{2-}$ ] (30.09 %) and trianion [ $^-$  $\text{OOCCH}_2\text{NHCH}_2\text{-PO}_3^{2-}$ ] (0.13 %) species  
379 ( $\text{p}K_{\text{a}2} = 2.3$ ,  $\text{p}K_{\text{a}3} = 5.5$  and  $\text{p}K_{\text{a}4} = 11.0$ ) [19, 61, 62]. Therefore, glyphosate has the capacity to  
380 interact with goethite and PS-goethite interfaces through various functionalities to form surface-  
381 associated species of different geometries (Figure 4A-1 and A-2, and Table S6) [4, 7-9, 12, 14,  
382 20, 21, 63]. The interfacial ATR spectra indicate that Fe-O-P bonds (i.e., *IS* complex) formed at  
383 the goethite interface ( $1050 - 950 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ ). It has been suggested that under slightly acidic  
384 conditions (e.g., pH=5) the phosphonate group of glyphosate forms *IS* complexes with goethite,  
385 more favorably bidentate (*B*) and monodentate with proton (*M-H*), through ligand-exchange  
386 reactions [8, 9, 14]. At pH = 5.0, the electrostatic attraction potential at the goethite surface  
387 ( $\text{pH}_{\text{pzc}} = 8.4 \pm 0.2$ ) increases the energetic favorability to form bidentate complexes through  
388 phosphonate groups. Furthermore, our study indicates that an *IS* monodentate complex without  
389 proton (*M*) most likely forms due to the contribution of glyphosate's dianion species [8, 14].  
390 Besides reducing the number of available surface sites, adsorption of PS diminishes the  
391 electrostatic interaction energy between glyphosate's phosphonate group and the goethite surface  
392 [64] thus promoting the formation of *IS* monodentate complexes over bidentate. In addition,  
393 increase PS loading on PS-goethite OMAs increases the surface negative charge that favors the  
394 formation of monodentate complexes [8, 9, 14]. Since the phosphonate anion is a strong acceptor  
395 of hydrogen bonds [65], the downshift for unbonded  $\nu(\text{P}=\text{O})$  ( $\approx 8 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ ) in PS-goethite OMAs  
396 (Figure 4A-2, Table S6) is expected to result from intermolecular hydrogen bonds formed  
397 between glyphosate's phosphonate group and PS residues in OMAs. Moreover, a new IR feature  
398 is observed in ATR-FTIR spectra of PS-goethite OMAs at  $1160 - 1164 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ . We tentatively

399 assign this new feature to outer-sphere (*OS*) complexes ( $v_{as}(\text{PO}_2)_{\text{PS-OS}}$ ; i.e.,  $\text{R-PO}_3^-(\text{H}) \cdots \text{O/N-}$   
 400 PS) which split at lower energies due to hydrogen bonding (Figure 4A-2). These results are in  
 401 agreement with high-resolution P 2p XPS spectra (Figure 6) where increases in binding energy  
 402 (B.E.) of the P atom 2p envelop upon glyphosate adsorption on goethite (+0.5 eV) and PS-  
 403 goethite OMAs (+0.5 – +0.1 eV) are observed. Increases in B.E. result from decreases in  
 404 electron density in the P atom of the phosphonate group that occur upon formation of mixed  
 405 bidentate-monodentate Fe-O-P bonds [66-68]. Greater shifts in P 2p binding energy are  
 406 associated with bidentate configuration, as is the case for phosphonate group binding on goethite  
 407 [69].



408

409 **Figure 6.** High resolution P 2p XPS spectra for (a) standard glyphosate salt, (b) glyphosate  
410 adsorbed on goethite, and (c – e) glyphosate adsorbed on PS-goethite OMAs. The P 2p spectrum  
411 of glyphosate presents two component peaks centered at 131.9 ( $2p_{3/2}$ ) and 132.8 ( $2p_{1/2}$ ) eV,  
412 which are associated with the spin-orbit splitting of the P 2p level, with a separation of  $\approx 0.9$  eV  
413 [70]. Solid vertical lines indicate the B.E. of the P 2p XPS spectra envelope.

414

### 415 **3.5.2. Carboxylate and amine-mediated binding**

416 Changes in peak position of the carboxylate ( $\nu_{as}(\text{COO}^-)$  and  $\nu_s(\text{COO}^-)$ ) and amine ( $\delta(\text{NH}_2^+)$ )  
417 vibrational modes of glyphosate are used to decipher carboxylate- and amine-mediated  
418 molecular interactions at the goethite and PS-goethite interface [7, 8, 21, 58]. At the goethite  
419 interface, both asymmetric and symmetric vibrational modes of the carboxylate group of sorbed  
420 glyphosate were subjected to downward shifts (6 –15  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) (Figure 4, A-1, and Table S6). Albeit  
421 to a lesser extent, downward shifts in  $\nu(\text{COO}^-)$  were also observed at the PS-goethite interface  
422 (Figure 4, A-2, and Table S6). A reduction in  $\nu(\text{COO}^-)$  vibrational energy suggest glyphosate's  
423 carboxylate group primarily contributes to the formation of OS complexes via intermolecular  
424 hydrogen bonding that occurs among glyphosate molecules at the goethite surface. These  
425 observations are in agreement with previous studies where the adsorption modes of carboxylate-  
426 containing organic anions and zwitterions (including glyphosate) on goethite have been  
427 investigated [8, 9, 12, 21, 58, 71-73].

428 As in previous studies [9, 14], we found no evidence for the participation of the  $\text{NH}_2^+$  group of  
429 glyphosate in surface complexation at the goethite interface (Figure 4, A-1, and Table S6).  
430 Interfacial  $\delta(\text{NH}_2^+)$  vibrational modes of glyphosate however shifted to higher energies (by 7-27  
431  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) at the PS-goethite interface (Figure 4, A-2, and Table S6). These bands also gained

432 intensity relative to interfacial  $\nu_{as}(\text{COO}^-)$  bands as a function of PS surface loading (Figure 5 and  
433 Table S5). The abovementioned observations imply glyphosate forms amine-associated  
434 hydrogen bonds with PS-goethite OMAs since hydrogen bonds stabilize charged resonance  
435 structures [74] and the strength of hydrogen bonds is related to the integrated absorbance of  
436 amine bands [60]. Therefore, the corresponding upshifts with increasing PS surface loading  
437 denote the involvement of the amine group through stronger hydrogen bonds with carbonyl-  
438 containing functional groups of the polysaccharide. Although glyphosate  $\text{NH}_2^+$  group is expected  
439 to encounter a repulsive force from the mostly positive-charged goethite surface that establish a  
440 barrier for amine-mediated hydrogen bonding, the presence of PS associations may facilitate  
441 these interactions due to the development of a negative charge at the surface of PS-goethite  
442 OMAs (Figure 3B).

443

#### 444 **4. Conclusions**

445 Studies of glyphosate retention dynamics at organo-mineral interfaces, as presented in this  
446 work, are environmentally relevant since surface soils contain minerals that are mostly, if not  
447 completely, coated with organic molecules. While the fate of glyphosate in soils is strongly  
448 influenced by organic-organic interactions (e.g., glyphosate-polysaccharide) that occur with  
449 organo-mineral associations (e.g., polysaccharide-goethite), research in this area is still limited  
450 and the results inconclusive. Our work contributes to the narrowing of this considerable  
451 knowledge gap [8, 12, 16].

452 Using model organo-mineral associations (i.e., polysaccharide-goethite OMAs), our  
453 experiments indicate the amount of mineral-adsorbed organic matter modulates the extent,  
454 kinetics, and mechanisms of interaction of glyphosate under conditions relevant to agricultural

455 soils of humid regions. The extent of glyphosate retention at polysaccharide-goethite interfaces  
456 was reduced compared to that at the goethite interface. At the same time, increased  
457 polysaccharide surface loading resulted in slower glyphosate adsorption and desorption kinetics  
458 compared to corresponding processes at the goethite interface. Mechanistically, increases in PS  
459 surface loading resulted in the successive disappearance of glyphosate inner-sphere bidentate  
460 configurations on goethite while promoting the formation of inner-sphere monodentate  
461 configurations. Furthermore, the adsorbed polysaccharide promoted the formation of outer-  
462 sphere surface species through intermolecular hydrogen bonds between the functional groups of  
463 glyphosate and functional groups at goethite and polysaccharide-goethite interfaces. Based on  
464 the results of this investigation, we suggest studies with bare mineral surfaces [9, 32, 75-77] are  
465 likely to underestimate glyphosate mobility and transport in soils since organo-mineral  
466 associations can reduce both the adsorption capacity and kinetics, in addition to promoting the  
467 formation of presumably weaker mechanisms of interaction.

468 The results of these studies highlight the impact organo-mineral associations might have on  
469 glyphosate's mobility and retention at heterogeneous interfaces present in soils. But since the  
470 proportion of organo-mineral to mineral interfaces is higher in surface soils, our work provides  
471 insights as to the extent, kinetics and mechanisms that might be involved during glyphosate  
472 downward transport. Ultimately, this knowledge and further molecular-scale studies with a  
473 variety of organo-mineral interfaces could lead to better predictions of glyphosate occurrence in  
474 natural systems and risk assessments.

475

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489

#### 490 **Author contributions statement**

491 B.A. conceptualized and led the laboratory work, produced, and interpreted data and led  
492 manuscript writing. C.E.M. conceptualized research and secured the funding, supervised the  
493 project, and provided critical revision of the manuscript.

494

#### 495 **Declaration of competing interest**

496 The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal  
497 relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

498

#### 499 **Appendix A. Supplementary information**

500

501 **Data availability**

502 Data will be made available on request.

503

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