

1 **Effect of biotic and abiotic factors on inter and intra-event variability in stemflow**  
2 **rates in oak and pine stands in a Mediterranean mountain area**

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10 Abstract

11 Stemflow, despite being a small proportion of the gross rainfall, is an important and  
12 understudied flux of water in forested areas. Recent studies have highlighted its  
13 complexity and relative importance for the understanding of soil and groundwater  
14 recharge. Stemflow dynamics offer an insight into the rain water that is stored and  
15 released from the stems of trees to the soil. Different attempts have been made to  
16 understand the variability of stemflow under different types of vegetation, but rather  
17 few have focused on the combined influence of both biotic and abiotic factors that affect  
18 the inter and intra-storm stemflow variability, and none known in Mediterranean  
19 climates. This study presents stemflow data collected at high temporal resolution for  
20 two species with contrasting canopy and bark structures: *Quercus pubescens* Willd.  
21 (downy oak) and *Pinus sylvestris* L. (Scots pine) in the Vallcebre research catchments  
22 (NE of Spain, 42° 12'N, 1° 49'E). The main objective was to understand how the  
23 interaction of biotic and abiotic factors affected stemflow dynamics. Mean stemflow  
24 production was low for both species (~1% of incident rainfall) and increased with

25 rainfall amount. However, the magnitude of the response depended on the combination  
26 of multiple biotic and abiotic factors. Both species produced similar stemflow volumes,  
27 but funneling ratios of some trees diverged significantly. The combined analysis of  
28 biotic and abiotic factors showed that, for events of the same rainfall amount, funneling  
29 ratios and stemflow dynamics in each species were highly controlled by the interaction  
30 of rainfall intensity and tree diameter (DBH).

31 Key words: Stemflow; Funneling ratio; intra-storm; inter-storm; *Pinus sylvestris*;  
32 *Quercus pubescens*

### 33 **1. Introduction**

34 Stemflow, expressed as volume of water per unit area, represents usually a small  
35 proportion of the gross incident precipitation, for this reason it has often been neglected  
36 in hydrological studies. Nonetheless, stemflow is a concentrated point source of water  
37 that reaches the base of trees, playing an important role on spatial soil moisture  
38 variability and groundwater recharge (e.g. Durocher, 1990; Liang et al., 2007; Klos et  
39 al., 2014; Spencer and van Meerveld, 2016). Moreover, stemflow fluxes, due to their  
40 ability to transport nutrients, may enhance soil biogeochemical “hot spots” and “hot  
41 moments” (Levia et al., 2012; McClain et al., 2003; Michalzik et al., 2016). Stemflow  
42 production is highly variable across climate regions; its variability is attributed to the  
43 different climatic conditions and species composition, thereby making the prediction of  
44 stemflow volumes difficult (Levia and Germer, 2015). Stemflow can represent from less  
45 than 0.5 up to 20% of gross precipitation (Johnson and Lehmann, 2006; Levia and  
46 Frost, 2003) and, in the Mediterranean climate, stemflow represents  $3.2 \pm 0.7\%$  for trees  
47 and  $19.2 \pm 5.4\%$  for shrubs (Llorens and Domingo, 2007).

48 Stemflow production is the result of a complex and dynamic interaction of biotic and  
49 abiotic factors. The main biotic factors affecting stemflow production are tree structure  
50 and morphology (including tree size, branch structure, branch angle, leaf shape or bark  
51 texture) and tree water holding capacity (including canopy and stem storage capacity or  
52 epiphyte cover) (Levia and Frost, 2003). Large projected areas and bigger exposed  
53 canopies with upwardly inclined branches have been documented to promote stemflow  
54 (Aboal et al., 1999; Herwitz, 1986); likewise, species with smooth bark tend to hold less  
55 water and enhance stemflow (Carlyle-Moses and Price, 2006; Kuraji et al., 2001; Reid  
56 and Lewis, 2009). Recently, it has been discussed that the smallest trees would have  
57 higher funneling ratios (Levia et al., 2010; Spencer and van Meerveld, 2016) and may  
58 contribute more to the overall stand stemflow, but this relationship seems to be species-  
59 specific (Carlyle-Moses and Price, 2006). The main abiotic factors are rainfall (amount,  
60 intensity, duration) and wind (speed and duration) characteristics (Levia and Germer,  
61 2015). Research showed that stemflow increases with the rainfall amount, in addition,  
62 higher rainfall intensities can result in larger quantities of stemflow (e.g. Aboal et al.,  
63 1999; Spencer and van Meerveld, 2016). At the event scale, rainfall rates also affect the  
64 stemflow production; for example, laboratory experiments by Dunkerley (2014) showed  
65 that intense rainfall could saturate the canopy and the stem storage capacity,  
66 consequently generating early stemflow paths. In addition, rainfall with various high  
67 intensity peaks produced more stemflow than rainfall events of uniform intensity.  
68 Carlyle-Moses and Price (2006) and Staelens et al. (2008) found that high intensity  
69 rainfall tended to reduce stemflow rates in favour of throughfall; the same effect was  
70 suggested by Levia et al. (2010) who found that funnelling ratios decreased as the 5-min  
71 precipitation intensity increased, as a consequence of the stemflow dripping when the

72 maximum transport capacity of stemflow was exceeded. Some authors (Llorens et al.,  
73 1997; Neal et al., 1993; Staelens et al., 2008; Van Stan et al., 2014) also suggest that  
74 high vapour pressure deficits enhance evaporation and diminish the water contributing  
75 to stemflow, therefore, decreasing stemflow rates. On the other hand, precipitation  
76 events with high wind velocities or a major prevailing wind direction would promote  
77 the wetting of the tree crown, thereby generating preferential stemflow paths and  
78 inducing enhanced stemflow production even before reaching the interception storage  
79 capacity (Kuraji et al., 2001; Van Stan et al., 2011; Xiao et al., 2000).

80 The importance of stemflow is not only related to the mean volumes produced in a  
81 specific space or time, but it is also related to the stemflow rates at the intra-storm scale;  
82 different stemflow intensities can produce different infiltration rates into the soil (e.g.  
83 Germer, 2013; Liang et al., 2007, 2011; Spencer and van Meerveld, 2016). As pointed  
84 out by Levia and Germer (2015), until now there are only a few studies that have  
85 measured the intra-storm stemflow production. For instance, Reid and Lewis (2009)  
86 observed a positive correlation between rainfall intensity and water stored in the bark.  
87 Germer et al. (2010) showed the relevance of small trees and palms, their maximum 5-  
88 min stemflow intensities were 15 times greater than rainfall. Levia et al. (2010) showed  
89 the synchronicity between rainfall and stemflow once the bark storage capacity was  
90 filled. And recently, Spencer and van Meerveld (2016), confirmed that stemflow  
91 intensity was highest when high-rainfall intensity occurred later in the event.

92 In this study we use 5-min data to examine stemflow dynamics of two species with  
93 contrasted architecture and largely spread in Mediterranean mountain areas (Roskov Y.  
94 et al, 2017), downy oak (*Quercus pubescens* Willd.) and Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*  
95 L.). Even though there are studies that focuses on stemflow produced by pines or by

96 oaks, a comparison of stemflow dynamics between both species, in the same climatic  
97 conditions, has never been done to the knowledge of the authors. The understanding of  
98 their stemflow dynamics will give some light on the hydrological processes that take  
99 place under both canopies and would help to improve ecohydrological models.  
100 Accordingly, the novelty and main objective of this study is to quantify and analyse the  
101 inter- and intra-storm stemflow dynamics of these two species taking into account the  
102 interaction between biotic and abiotic factors. We specifically aim to answer the  
103 following questions: (i) are stemflow responses and funneling capabilities for Scots pine  
104 and downy oak different, both inter and intra-specifically and inter and intra-event? (ii)  
105 How do Scots pine and downy oak stemflow respond to different abiotic factors? (iii)  
106 What biotic characteristics enhance stemflow inter- and intra-specifically? And (iv) how  
107 does the interaction of biotic and abiotic factors affect stemflow dynamics? These  
108 questions provide the structural sub-headings used in the following data and methods,  
109 results, and discussion sections. Answers to these questions are necessary to better  
110 understand the cycling of water within storm events, especially in Mediterranean areas  
111 due to their strong inter- and intra- event variability in precipitation.

## 112 **2. Study area**

### 113 **2.1. The Vallcebre research catchments**

114 The study area is located in the Vallcebre research catchments (NE Spain, 42° 12'N, 1°  
115 49'E) in the eastern Pyrenees at 1100 m asl (meters above sea level), it has been  
116 monitored with different hydrologic purposes since 1988. Today, the study area consists  
117 of a cluster of nested catchments: Cal Rodó (4.17 km<sup>2</sup>), Ca l'Isard (1.32 km<sup>2</sup>) and Can  
118 Vila (0.56 km<sup>2</sup>). Moreover, in the catchments there are two long-term monitored forest  
119 plots, one covered by Scots pine and the other by downy oaks. The climate is Sub-

120 Mediterranean, with a mean annual temperature of 9.1 °C, a mean annual reference  
121 evapotranspiration, calculated by the Hargreaves-Samani (1982) method, of  $823 \pm 26$   
122 mm, and a mean annual precipitation of  $862 \text{ mm} \pm 206 \text{ mm}$  (1989-2015). Precipitation  
123 is seasonal, with autumn and spring usually being wetter seasons, while summer and  
124 winter are often drier. Summer rainfall is characterized by intense convective events,  
125 while winter precipitation is caused by frontal systems, with snowfall accounting for  
126 less than 5% of the precipitation (Latron et al., 2010a, 2010b).

127 Slopes of the study area were originally vegetated by downy oaks; however, the site was  
128 deforested and terraced in the past for agricultural production. At present, the  
129 abandonment of agricultural activities has led to a spontaneous afforestation by pine  
130 forests (Poyatos et al., 2003). As a result, the forest is predominantly Scots pine,  
131 although isolated populations of the original deciduous downy oak forests remain.

## 132 **2.2. The forest plots**

133 Our study utilized a downy oak and a Scots pine stand, separated by 1 km, to monitor  
134 stemflow. The Scots pine stand has an area of  $900 \text{ m}^2$ , a tree density of  $1189 \text{ trees ha}^{-1}$ , a  
135 basal area of  $45.1 \text{ m}^2 \text{ ha}^{-1}$ , is oriented towards the northeast and has an altitude of 1200  
136 m, whereas the downy oak stand has an area of  $2200 \text{ m}^2$ , a tree density of  $518 \text{ trees ha}^{-1}$ ,  
137 a basal area of  $20.1 \text{ m}^2 \text{ ha}^{-1}$ , is oriented towards the southeast and has an altitude of  
138 1100m. Both species have different biometric characteristics. Scots pine develops a long  
139 and straight trunk with a thick bark topped with a roughly rounded crown and downy  
140 oak is a rough-barked deciduous tree that usually develops several trunks and a broad  
141 and irregular crown. Despite the inter-specific differences of each species, pines trees  
142 presented a more regular pattern regarding to their tree architecture, whereas oak trees  
143 presented more irregular architectures.

144 **3. Data and methods**

145 **3.1. Rainfall and meteorological data**

146 Meteorological data were obtained from two meteorological towers, 15 and 18 m high,  
147 above the oak and pine stands, respectively. The high of the measurements was  
148 approximately 1 m above the canopy. Each station monitored air temperature, relative  
149 humidity, net radiation, wind speed, and wind direction above their respective canopies.  
150 Temperature and relative humidity were used to calculate the vapour pressure deficit  
151 (VPD). Gross rainfall was measured for both stands in a nearby clearing (located less  
152 than 100 m from each stand) by a tipping-bucket rain gauge (Davis Rain Collector II).  
153 All data were measured every 30-seconds and recorded at 5-min intervals by a  
154 datalogger (DT80 Datataker, Datataker Inc, OH, USA).

155 **3.2. Monitored trees**

156 In each monitored stand, seven trees were selected to measure stemflow, representing  
157 the range of diameter at breast height (DBH) distributions. For each tree, the following  
158 biometric parameters were measured: DBH, basal area, height, crown area, crown  
159 volume, branch angle, branch diameter, bark depth and trunk lean (Table 1). Moreover,  
160 stem bark surface and bark storage capacity were estimated. Stem bark surface was  
161 calculated using a logarithmic regression of surface area from DBH (Whittaker and  
162 Woodwell, 1967), and bark storage capacity was estimated following the methodology  
163 described by Llorens and Gallart (2000).

164 < Table 1 here please >

165 **3.3. Stemflow monitoring**

166 A stemflow collector ring constructed from a longitudinally cut funnel was placed  
167 around the trunk at breast height of each selected tree and sealed with silicone. Each

168 stemflow ring drained to tipping-buckets rain gauges (Davis Rain Collector II). Data  
169 were collected at 5-min intervals by a datalogger (DT80 Datataker). Recorded data were  
170 downloaded and the stemflow rings were cleaned and checked for leakage weekly.  
171 Moreover, data were evaluated for potential errors and converted to stemflow volume  
172 through a dynamic calibration of the tipping-buckets (Calder and Kidd, 1978; Iida et al.,  
173 2012). The dynamic calibration was crucial due to the high frequency of the bucket tips  
174 during events when stemflow intensities exceeded 50 tips in 5 minutes and the capacity  
175 of the tipping-bucket mechanism was overwhelmed and the regular calibration  
176 underestimated the measured volume. Moreover, we compared the volumes obtained  
177 with the tipping-buckets with the volumes of 8 additional trees equipped with stemflow  
178 rings and collection bins (60 L); the regression analysis showed a good correlation  
179 between mean volumes without statistically significant differences in the linear  
180 regression parameters.

#### 181 **3.4. Stemflow and funneling ratios calculation**

182 Stemflow data for this study was collected from May to October 2015. To reduce  
183 differences between stands due to significant phenological changes in the oak canopy  
184 over the year, as well as different rainfall patterns in the leafed and leafless periods  
185 (Muzylo et al., 2012a), only the leafed period was considered. Individual rainfall events  
186 were defined according to the time without rainfall between two successive events with  
187 at least 1 mm of rainfall. Following Llorens et al. (2014), to ensure that the canopy was  
188 dry at the beginning of each rainfall event, an interval of six hours was considered for  
189 events occurring during the day and an interval of twelve hours for night events. The  
190 end of the event was established when stemflow finished.

191 Stemflow depth (mm) was calculated by dividing the measured stemflow volume (L) by  
 192 tree basal area (m<sup>2</sup>). Following Levia and Germer (2015), relative stemflow (S<sub>(%R)</sub>) was  
 193 calculated as the stemflow percentage of gross rainfall weighted by the number of trees  
 194 per group of DBH in each stand.

$$195 \quad S_{(\%R)} = \frac{\left( \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k (S_{y,i} \cdot N_{Trees,i})}{A} \right) \cdot 100}{P} \quad (1)$$

196 where S<sub>y</sub> is mean stemflow of all sampled trees (L), N<sub>Trees</sub> is the number of trees per  
 197 area, A is the area (m<sup>2</sup>), P is incident rainfall (mm) and k is the number of groups of  
 198 trunk diameter ranges. In each stand 5 groups of DBH were selected: <15cm, 15-20 cm,  
 199 20-25 cm, 25-30 cm and >30 cm. Finally, funneling ratios were calculated following  
 200 Herwitz (1986).

$$201 \quad F = \frac{V}{B \cdot P} \quad (2)$$

202 where V is the volume of stemflow (L), B is the trunk basal area (m<sup>2</sup>), P is incident  
 203 rainfall (mm), and F is the funneling ratio. Funneling ratios above 1 indicate that trees  
 204 start to concentrate precipitation as stemflow.

205 Analysis of the variance (ANOVA) in conjunction with a Tukey-Kramer *post-hoc*  
 206 analysis was performed to check possible differences between relative stemflow and  
 207 mean funneling ratios between stands; a *p*-value ≤ 0.05 was used as a threshold for  
 208 statistical significance. To ensure data symmetry, only rainfall events which produced  
 209 stemflow were used and all stemflow values were log-transformed to guarantee  
 210 normality of the error distribution and homoscedasticity of the errors.

### 211 **3.5. Abiotic factors affecting stemflow and funneling ratios**

212 To assess the influence of all measured abiotic factors, and to rule out the marked  
 213 correlation between gross rainfall and stemflow, an unrotated principal component

214 analysis (PCA) with normalized data was done with the following variables: maximum  
215 rainfall intensity measured in 30 minutes, event duration, vapour pressure deficit (VPD)  
216 and wind speed. The PCA also permitted the detection of groups of events with similar  
217 stemflow volumes and funneling ratios.

### 218 **3.6. Biotic factors affecting stemflow and funneling ratios**

219 An ANOVA test was conducted to detect statistical differences in stemflow volumes  
220 and funneling ratios between trees of each species. Moreover, to reduce the amount of  
221 factors affecting stemflow and funneling ratios, a PCA with all the normalized  
222 measured biotic factors in each tree (DBH, basal area, height, crown area, crown  
223 volume, branch angle, branch diameter, bark depth, trunk lean, stem bark surface and  
224 bark storage capacity) was performed. From these factors, DBH, crown volume, mean  
225 branch angle, bark storage capacity and tree lean explained most of the variability and  
226 were used to compare and analyse the effect of each factor over each tree.

### 227 **3.7. Interaction of biotic and abiotic factors that affect stemflow dynamics**

228 To analyse the combined effect of biotic and abiotic factors on the stemflow dynamic,  
229 and in order to rule out the influence of the rainfall volume, 12 events of similar  
230 magnitude ( $\approx 30$  mm) but with marked differences in their maximum rainfall intensity  
231 measured in 30 minutes and in their duration were selected. Among the biotic variables  
232 measured, DBH was selected to represent tree biotic factors, because it was found to be  
233 correlated with most of the other biotic factors measured, stronger in pines. Therefore,  
234 in order to generalise and compare results, and keeping in mind the complexity of oak  
235 morphology compared with pines', trees were separated in two DBH classes (<25cm  
236 and >25cm).

## 237 **4. Results**

238 **4.1. Gross rainfall**

239 Total rainfall measured during the study period was 519 mm and 528 mm in the pine  
240 and oak stands, respectively. The study period was the second rainiest year over the last  
241 20 years in the study area. From the 33 rainfall events measured, 66% were smaller than  
242 15 mm, 28% between 15 and 40 mm, and 6% were larger than 40 mm, these  
243 percentages matched with the distribution of rainfall events measured in the medium-  
244 term period in the study site (Latron et al., 2010a). At the event scale, differences in  
245 gross rainfall between the two forested stands were in general less than 1 mm and  
246 differences in maximum intensity were less than  $0.5 \text{ mm h}^{-1}$ , but differences tended to  
247 be larger for rainfall events with a higher intensity. This was the case of the July 23rd  
248 thunderstorm, for which rainfall differed by 14 mm between the two stands. This was a  
249 short duration event (less than 2 hours) with a maximum intensity of 41 mm in 30  
250 minutes and rainfall amounts of 72 mm and 58 mm for the pine and oak stands,  
251 respectively.

252 **4.2. Stemflow and funneling ratios**

253 Relative stemflow ( $S_{(\%R)}$ ) was low in both stands, with mean  $S_{(\%R)}$  values of 1.2% ( $\pm 1.4$ )  
254 for pine and 1.1% ( $\pm 1.4$ ) for oak. Nonetheless, it was highly variable among events, for  
255 example in some events  $S_{(\%R)}$  reached up to 6% of the gross rainfall (Figure 1a). No  
256 statistical significant differences in the relative stemflow were found between forest  
257 stands. For both species, stemflow volumes increased with rainfall (Figure 1b), our data  
258 suggested 3 types of stemflow responses: (1) events with less than 15 mm of rainfall  
259 produced small stemflow volumes, on average  $0.4 \pm 0.7 \text{ L}$ , with the largest coefficient of  
260 variation between trees ( $\sim 100\%$ ); (2) events between 15 and 40 mm of rainfall produced  
261 a mean stemflow volume of  $7.0 \pm 4.1 \text{ L}$ , with coefficient of variation  $\sim 60\%$ ; and (3)

262 events greater than 50 mm of rainfall produced on average  $25 \pm 16$  L of stemflow and  
263 presented the lowest coefficient of variation between trees ( $\sim 50\%$ ) (Figure 1b). At the  
264 intra-event scale, the 5-min data showed that relative stemflow presented a higher  
265 variability under lower intensities and that it decreased with increasing rainfall  
266 intensities (Figure 1d). Besides, it was observed that for intensities lower than 4 mm in  
267 5 minutes ( $48 \text{ mm h}^{-1}$ ), stemflow volumes increased (Figure 1e), beyond this threshold,  
268 stemflow volume no longer increased with increasing rainfall intensity.

269 < Figure 1 here please >

270 Funneling ratios of both species increased with the rainfall amount until a plateau of  
271  $\sim 20$  mm of rainfall. Beyond 20 mm of rainfall, more rainfall did not necessarily equate  
272 with a major concentration of stemflow at the base of the trees (Figure 1c). No statistical  
273 differences were observed between the mean funneling ratios measured of each stand.  
274 On the other hand, examining the 5-min rainfall intensity, we observed that funneling  
275 ratios decreased as the intensity increased (Figure 1f). Mean funneling ratios smaller  
276 than 10 were produced when rainfall intensity was higher than 5 mm in 5 minutes,  
277 below this threshold, mean funneling ratios were generally higher, with values up to 20.  
278 Statistical significant differences between species were found for the lag time, the  
279 rainfall needed to produce stemflow, and the stemflow produced after rainfall. Results  
280 showed that the mean lag time between the start of rainfall and the start of stemflow was  
281 1 h for pine and 1 h 30 min for oak; however median values were 30 min and 48 min  
282 respectively (Figure 2a). The mean amount of gross rainfall needed to produce stemflow  
283 was 4 mm for pine and 6 mm for oak (Figure 2b). Nonetheless, during some rainfall  
284 events, stemflow did not begin until the gross rainfall was approximately 17 mm. Once  
285 the rainfall ceased, the volume of stemflow produced was greater for oak than for pine

286 (Figure 2c), indicating that oak remained wet longer and diverted more stemflow  
287 ( $0.9 \pm 1.2$  L) compared to pine ( $0.5 \pm 0.4$  L) after the rainfall.

288 < Figure 2 here please >

289 The intra-event stemflow dynamics (5-min step) of 4 rainfall events with similar rainfall  
290 volumes, but differing in rainfall duration and intensity revealed that for all kinds of  
291 events and sizes of trees, maximum stemflow intensities were much higher than  
292 maximum rainfall intensities (Table 2, Figure 3). For long duration and low intensity  
293 events (Figure 3 a and b), there was a delay between the beginning of the rainfall and  
294 the start of stemflow. Furthermore, the time series of oaks suggested that stemflow  
295 matched the rainfall pattern better than for pines (e.g. Figure 3a from 15:35 h).  
296 Moreover, for two consecutive periods of similar rainfall intensities, stemflow intensity  
297 was higher during the second period (e.g. first and second peak in Figure 3a, third and  
298 four peaks in Figure 3b). On the other hand, shorter and more intense rainfall events  
299 (Figure 3 c and d) resulted stemflow intensities almost 10 times higher than long  
300 duration-low intensity events (Figure 3 a and b). We also observed that when the peak  
301 of rainfall was at the onset of the event, the lag time was reduced considerably (e.g. in  
302 Figure 3a the lag time was 5h and for the events in Figure 3 b, c and d only 30-45  
303 minutes). In general, during low intensity events ( $< 2$  mm/h), pines and oaks with DBH  
304  $< 25$  cm presented respective peaks of stemflow up to 12 and 9 times greater than larger  
305 trees. For higher rainfall intensities, these figures were up to 80 and 60. However, at the  
306 end of the event, oaks with DBH  $> 25$  cm produced more stemflow.

307 < Table 2 here please >

308 < Figure 3 here please >

309 **4.3. Abiotic factors affecting stemflow and funneling ratios**

310 Stemflow increased linearly with gross rainfall, but the differences between events of  
311 similar magnitude depended on other abiotic factors. The PCA (Figures 4a and 4b)  
312 explained 78.2 and 76.3% of the variance for the pine and oak, respectively. For both  
313 species, the first component contrasted short events, with high VPD and high wind  
314 speeds, against long events, with wet atmospheric conditions and low wind speeds. The  
315 second component was demarcated by rainfall intensity. This analysis generally  
316 suggests that relative stemflow was higher for long rainfall events and for rainfall events  
317 with high rainfall intensities. On the other hand, rainfall events with high wind speed  
318 and with a high VPD tended to produce less stemflow. In the same way, events with the  
319 highest intensity also tended to produce less stemflow. Despite no statistical significant  
320 differences were found between rainfall intensities and stemflow volumes or funneling  
321 ratios, PCA results suggest three types of rainfall events generating different stemflow  
322 responses: (1) events with moderate intensities and long durations greatly increased  
323 stemflow production in oak ( $9 \pm 16$  L) more than in pine ( $3 \pm 6$  L), additionally we  
324 observed funneling ratios of  $\sim 7$  and  $\sim 4$  in oak and pine respectively; (2) events of high  
325 intensity and short duration produced similar stemflow volumes ( $4 \pm 5$  L in pine and  $3$   
326  $\pm 4$  L in oak) and similar funneling ratios ( $\sim 6$ ); and (3) events of low intensity and short  
327 duration produced low stemflow in both stands ( $0.5 \pm 0.4$  L pine and  $1 \pm 2$  L oak) and  
328 higher funneling ratios were measured in the oak stand ( $\sim 6$ ) than the pine stand ( $\sim 2$ ).  
329 < Figure 4 here please >

#### 330 **4.4. Biotic factors affecting stemflow and funneling ratios**

331 The intra-species tree comparison of stemflow volumes and funneling ratios showed  
332 statistical significant differences in funneling ratios among some trees. The PCA of  
333 biotic factors (Figures 4b and 4c) explained 80.7 and 83.4% of the variance for the pine

334 and oak trees, respectively, and suggested that funneling ratios were highly influenced  
335 by the DBH. Moreover, the PCA results along with the comparison of the distribution  
336 of funneling ratios and the biotic factors (Figure 5) showed that pine trees with less than  
337 25 cm DBH and with smaller crown volumes (P1, P2, P3 and P6) presented funneling  
338 ratios statistically significant greater than larger trees (P4, P5 and P7), which had  
339 horizontal or downwards inclined branches and higher bark storage capacities. Tree lean  
340 ( $2^{\circ}$ - $5^{\circ}$ ) increased funneling ratio, however, larger tree lean ( $>5^{\circ}$ ) decreased it. For oaks,  
341 tree Q7 produced the highest funneling ratio, and it was statistically significant different  
342 from the other oaks. This tree had the smallest DBH, a voluminous crown, branch  
343 inclinations between  $20^{\circ}$  and  $25^{\circ}$  and the lowest bark storage capacity. But, on the other  
344 hand, trees Q1, Q2, Q5 and Q6 produced low funneling ratios, compared to Q7, these  
345 trees had higher storage capacities ( $>0.50$  mm). Trees with the lowest funneling ratios  
346 (Q3 and Q4) were moderately sized trees (DBH 24.8 and 20.5 cm) and flow paths were  
347 obstructed (big nodules in the trunk observed *in situ*). Tree Q4 also produced  
348 statistically significantly less volume than the other oaks. A detailed response of each  
349 tree for each rainfall event can be seen in Figure A1 (Supplementary material).

350 < Figure 5 here please >

#### 351 **4.5. Interaction of biotic and abiotic factors that affect stemflow dynamics**

352 The interaction between biotic and abiotic factors was checked for 12 events of similar  
353 magnitude ( $\sim 30$  mm). Among these events, 6 were of low intensity, with mean rainfall  
354 intensity of  $6 \text{ mm h}^{-1}$  and mean duration of 17 hours and the other 6 events were of high  
355 intensity, with a mean rainfall intensity of  $17 \text{ mm h}^{-1}$  and mean duration of 5 hours.  
356 Smaller pines, regardless the rainfall intensity, produced slightly more stemflow than  
357 larger pines. In contrast, larger oaks produced more stemflow than smaller oaks, and

358 higher rainfall intensities increased stemflow volumes for all oaks (Figure 6a). There  
359 were not differences in funneling ratios for oak trees. On the contrary, larger differences  
360 were observed in the funneling ratios of pines depending on their size (i.e. lowest values  
361 for larger trees), especially for low intensity events (Figure 6b). Lag times were longer  
362 during high rainfall intensities for both species; this lag time was higher for oaks  
363 (Figure 6c). Stemflow duration once rainfall had ceased was similar between pines,  
364 although slightly longer for larger pines during low intensity events (on average 30  
365 more minutes). Big oaks produced stemflow over a longer duration, with larger  
366 stemflow volumes stemming from low intensity events (Figure 6d).

367 < Figure 6 here please >

## 368 **5. Discussion**

### 369 **5.1. Stemflow production and funneling ratios**

370 On average, stemflow produced by oak and pine represented only about 1% of the total  
371 gross rainfall over the study period. This percentage agrees with the previous values  
372 reported for *Pinus sylvestris* and *Quercus pubescens* under Mediterranean climate  
373 (Llorens and Domingo, 2007; Muzylo et al., 2012b). In both stands similar stemflow  
374 volumes were produced after each rainfall event, but different dynamics were observed.  
375 The different stemflow dynamics between species was attributed to a complex  
376 interaction of biotic and abiotic factors, similar observations were made by Levia et al.  
377 (2010). However, the largest differences were found within trees of the same species,  
378 with significant differences in their funneling capabilities.

### 379 **5.2. Abiotic factors affecting stemflow and funneling ratios**

380 Our study found that stemflow and funneling ratios were highly influenced by the gross  
381 rainfall, the duration of the rainfall, the rainfall intensity, the vapour pressure deficit and

382 the wind speed. The role of one or several of these factors in stemflow production have  
383 been previously described in other studies (e.g. Dunkerley, 2014; Reid and Lewis, 2009;  
384 Van Stan et al., 2014), but the comparison between species and the high frequency of  
385 the stemflow measurements revealed new insights into some of these factors. As  
386 pointed out by Herwitz (1987), high intensity rainfall events may agitate foliar surfaces,  
387 create splash, disrupt canopy interception and divert more rainfall into throughfall,  
388 resulting in a decrease of stemflow. In this sense, we observed that rainfall intensity  
389 peaks greater than 4 mm in 5 minutes decreased the capacity of trees to funnel water. A  
390 similar effect was observed by Levia *et al.* (2010), who also linked this effect to an  
391 excess of the branches' flow capacity, causing water detachment and resulting in  
392 throughfall. This phenomenon was further reflected by a steady stemflow production  
393 and a decrease of the funneling ratio at increasing rainfall intensities. Moreover, we  
394 detected that stemflow volumes varied greatly depending on the position of the peaks of  
395 high intensity along the event. Similar to Dunkerley (2014) we observed that events  
396 with high intensity peaks produced more stemflow than those of uniform rain and the  
397 lag time was reduced when the maximum peak of intensity was at the onset of the event.  
398 When successive intensity peaks occurred there was an increase of the stemflow volume  
399 and of the funneling ratio, which could be explained by a rapid diversion of water  
400 through the early created stemflow paths. For rainfall events with a high intensity peak  
401 (>5 mm in 5 minutes) stemflow intensities could exceed 100 times the intensity of open  
402 rainfall. As a consequence, and as observed by Spencer and van Meerveld (2016),  
403 during some precise moments of a rainfall event, the amount of water that reached the  
404 base of the tree as stemflow could enhance infiltration rates and groundwater recharge.

405 Unlike Van Stan *et al.* (2011), in this study, we observed that increasing wind speed  
406 resulted in lower stemflow volumes and lower mean funneling ratios. This effect was  
407 attributed to an increase of the VPD linked to higher wind speeds; in these conditions  
408 evaporative demand was enhanced and, as a consequence, interception loss increased  
409 reducing stemflow volumes. Moreover, for the same evaporative demand, the  
410 evaporation of intercepted water in pine is higher because the canopy of pine is  
411 aerodynamically rougher than oak (Jarvis, 1976). Previous studies in the same study site  
412 (Llorens *et al.*, 1997; Muzylo *et al.*, 2012a) observed higher interception losses for pines  
413 (24%) than for oaks (15%). This higher interception loss in pines could explain why the  
414 synchronicity between rainfall and stemflow was weaker for pine than oak.

### 415 **5.3. Biotic factors affecting stemflow and funneling ratios**

416 Likewise, as in other recent studies (Germer *et al.*, 2010; Levia *et al.*, 2010; Siegert and  
417 Levia, 2014; Spencer and van Meerveld, 2016), we observed an effect of the tree size,  
418 where trees with DBH between 15 and 25 cm had higher funneling ratios. The higher  
419 efficiency of small pine trees was attributed to a combination of different biotic factors:  
420 more branches tilted vertically, smaller crown and less bark surface. Smaller oaks, in  
421 general, also presented higher funnelling ratios, but more differences were found. For  
422 example, some small trees presented flow paths obstructions, such as big nodules, or  
423 had a high tree lean, factors that would divert more water as throughfall and would  
424 reduce their funneling ratios. Levia *et al.* (2015) also found that trunk lean was a factor  
425 affecting stemflow amount from European beech saplings.

426 Despite producing similar volumes of stemflow, there were differences in the timing  
427 and dynamics of stemflow for the two species, expressed by different funneling ratios.  
428 One of the factors determining funneling ratios is the canopy architecture; as observed

429 by Reid and Lewis (2009) the canopy represents a dynamic storage where rainfall can  
430 be evaporated or diverted as stemflow during and after rainfall events depending on the  
431 meteorological conditions. We observed higher funneling ratios for pine trees with  
432 smaller canopies. These trees have also fewer branches and more tilted vertically that  
433 could ease the formation of preferential flow paths and reduce the diversion of  
434 stemflow, leading this way to a faster response in stemflow production. Likewise, and  
435 as observed by Liang et al. (2009), we observed that a certain tree lean, between 2° and  
436 5°, favoured the formation of flow paths and therefore increased funneling ratios;  
437 however, tree lean greater than 5° would divert more water to throughfall. When flow  
438 paths are created stemflow can wet the trunk and it can be enhanced or lessen,  
439 depending on the bark storage capacity (Levia and Herwitz, 2005; Van Stan and Levia,  
440 2010), therefore, trees with thicker rough bark would produce less stemflow. In  
441 agreement with these studies, we observed that oak, whose bark storage capacity was  
442 larger than pine, had longer lag times and required more rainfall to trigger stemflow.

#### 443 **5.4. Interaction of biotic and abiotic factors that affect stemflow dynamics**

444 Biotic factors clearly determined the funneling ratio of each tree, but abiotic factors  
445 determined the magnitude of the stemflow response. In our study, biotic factors were  
446 constant; however abiotic factors were variable between and within events. Stemflow,  
447 as described in previous literature (Levia and Frost, 2003), increased with gross  
448 precipitation, even though, we observed that for the same amount of rainfall, the  
449 response was different for small or big trees. Events of high rainfall intensity were  
450 associated to short duration, high wind speed and low VPD; during these events more  
451 splash could be produced (Herwitz, 1987), higher evaporation rates would enhance the  
452 interception losses, and as observed by Reid and Lewis (2009), a higher retention of

453 water in the bark would be possible. These conditions resulted in longer lag times in all  
454 trees regardless their biotic characteristics. However, small pines, in contrast to oaks,  
455 had higher funneling ratios for all ranges of rainfall intensity, which demonstrate that  
456 the architecture of small pines is more efficient at collecting stemflow. On the other  
457 hand, the higher bark water storage capacity of oaks in combination with low intensity  
458 and long duration events increased the content of water stored on their stems that was  
459 released slowly after the rainfall.

## 460 **6. Conclusions**

461 Stemflow produced by pine and oak forests in the Vallcebre research catchments  
462 represented only a small portion of the gross rainfall (~1%), although it may be a  
463 substantial source of water at the tree base (ranging from  $0.5 \pm 0.6$  L to  $25 \pm 16$  L per  
464 event). Stemflow volumes and funneling ratios varied greatly at the intra- and inter-  
465 storm scales and it was the result of a complex combination of biotic and abiotic factors.  
466 Stemflow increased with the event size but its variability depended on the duration of  
467 the event, the evaporative demand of the atmosphere, the rainfall intensity, the  
468 distribution of the rainfall intensity peaks along the event and on the biometric  
469 characteristics of each tree. In general, smaller trees were more efficient in funneling  
470 stemflow per unit area and time. The lag times were longer and more rainfall was  
471 required to initiate stemflow for the oak trees. These differences, between species and  
472 tree size, can partly be explained by the bark storage capacity and the effect of  
473 evaporation on stemflow. Stemflow should be taken into account when analysing  
474 infiltration processes, soil moisture dynamics and groundwater recharge in forested  
475 catchments, because, as presented here, it can be a very large point input/source of  
476 water, but its amount depends on the biotic and abiotic factors. Thus, future work

477 should consider the variability induced by stemflow in hydrological and biogeochemical  
478 processes that occur at the tree base during rainfall events, as well as the relevance of  
479 stemflow as a locally concentrated input source of water at the catchment scale.

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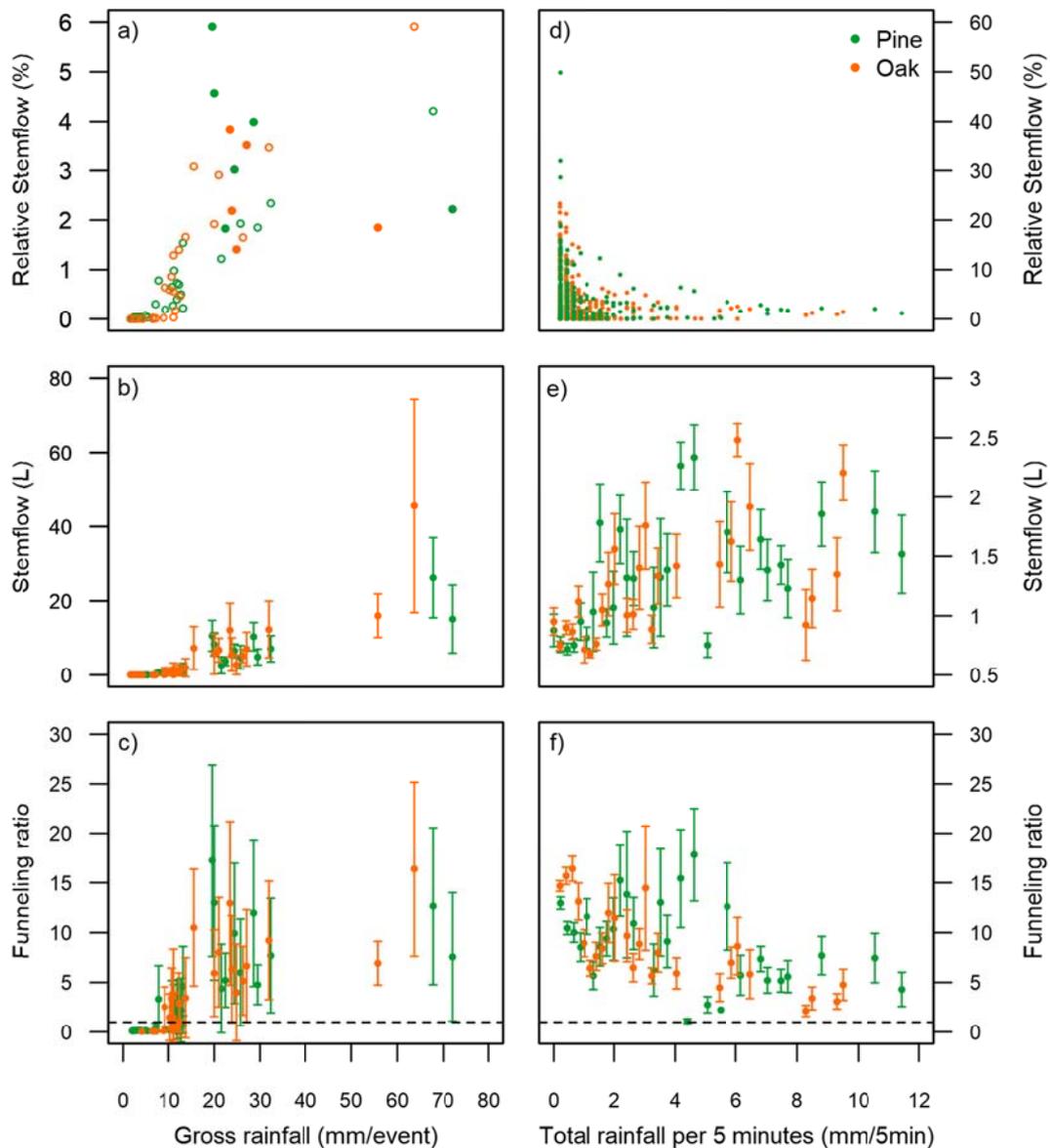
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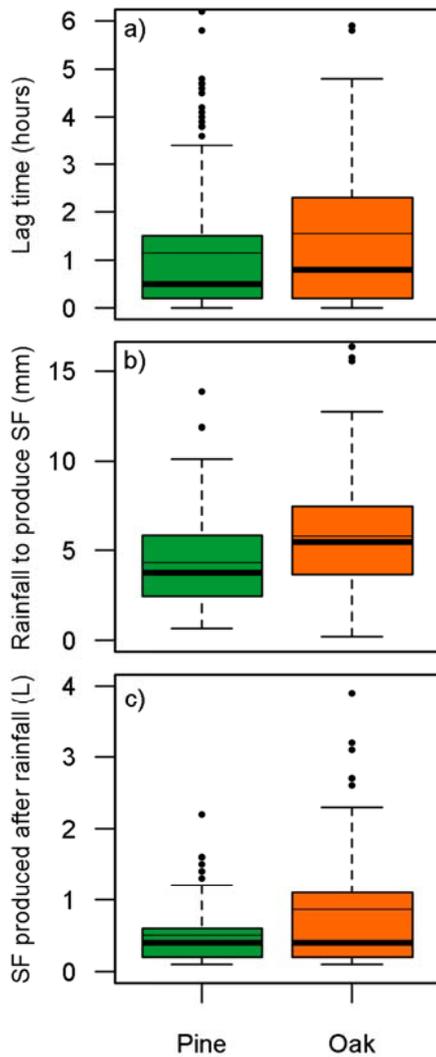
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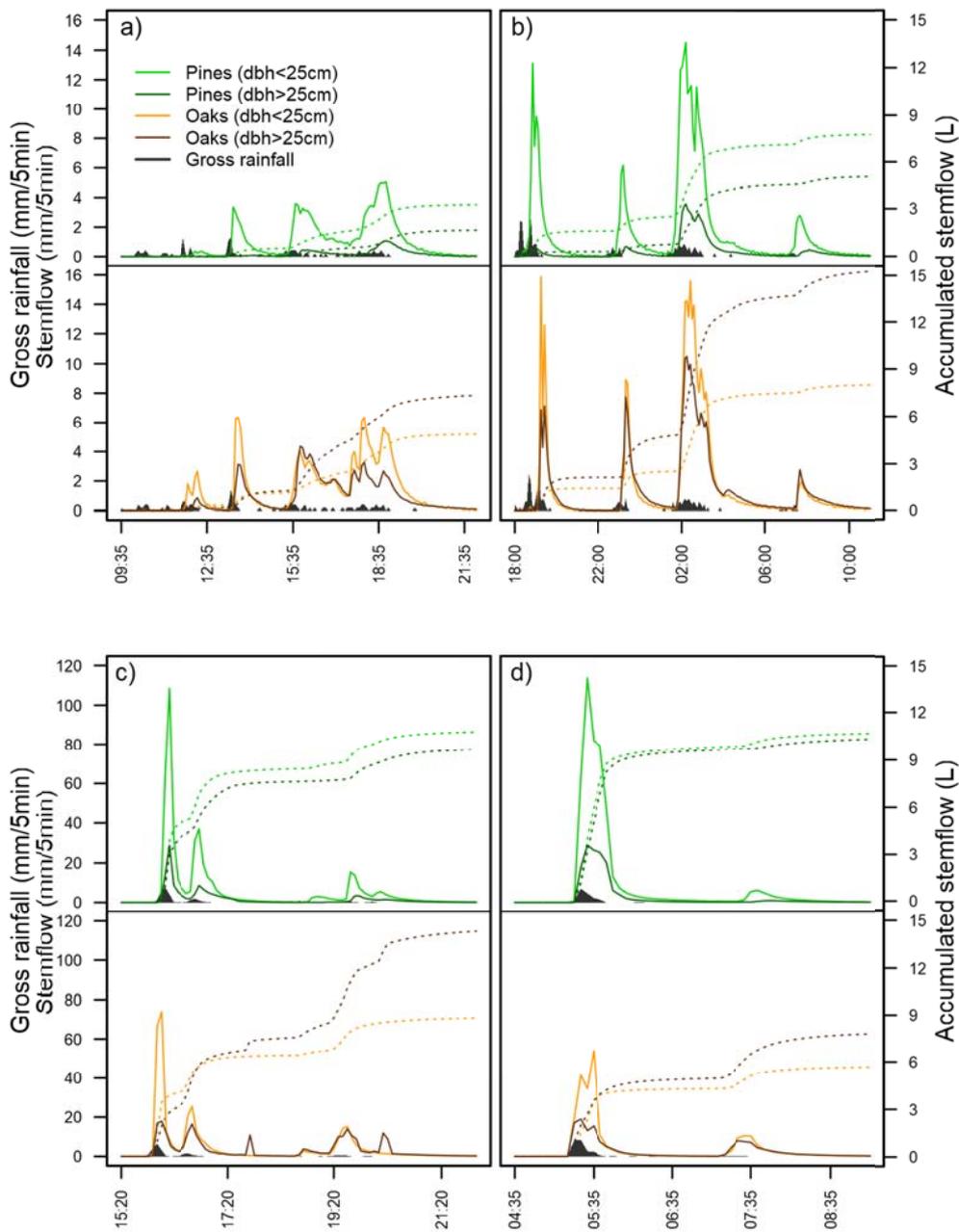
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652 **Figure 1.** (Left) Relationship between gross rainfall and (a) relative stemflow ( $S_{(\%R)}$ ),  
 653 empty dots indicate events with maximum rainfall intensities in 30 minutes below 10  
 654  $\text{mm h}^{-1}$ , and full dots above  $10 \text{ mm h}^{-1}$  (b) stemflow volume (L) and (c) funneling ratio.  
 655 (Right) Relationship between total rainfall at 5 minutes interval and (d) relative  
 656 stemflow ( $S_{(\%R)}$ ) (e) stemflow volume (L) and (f) funneling ratio.



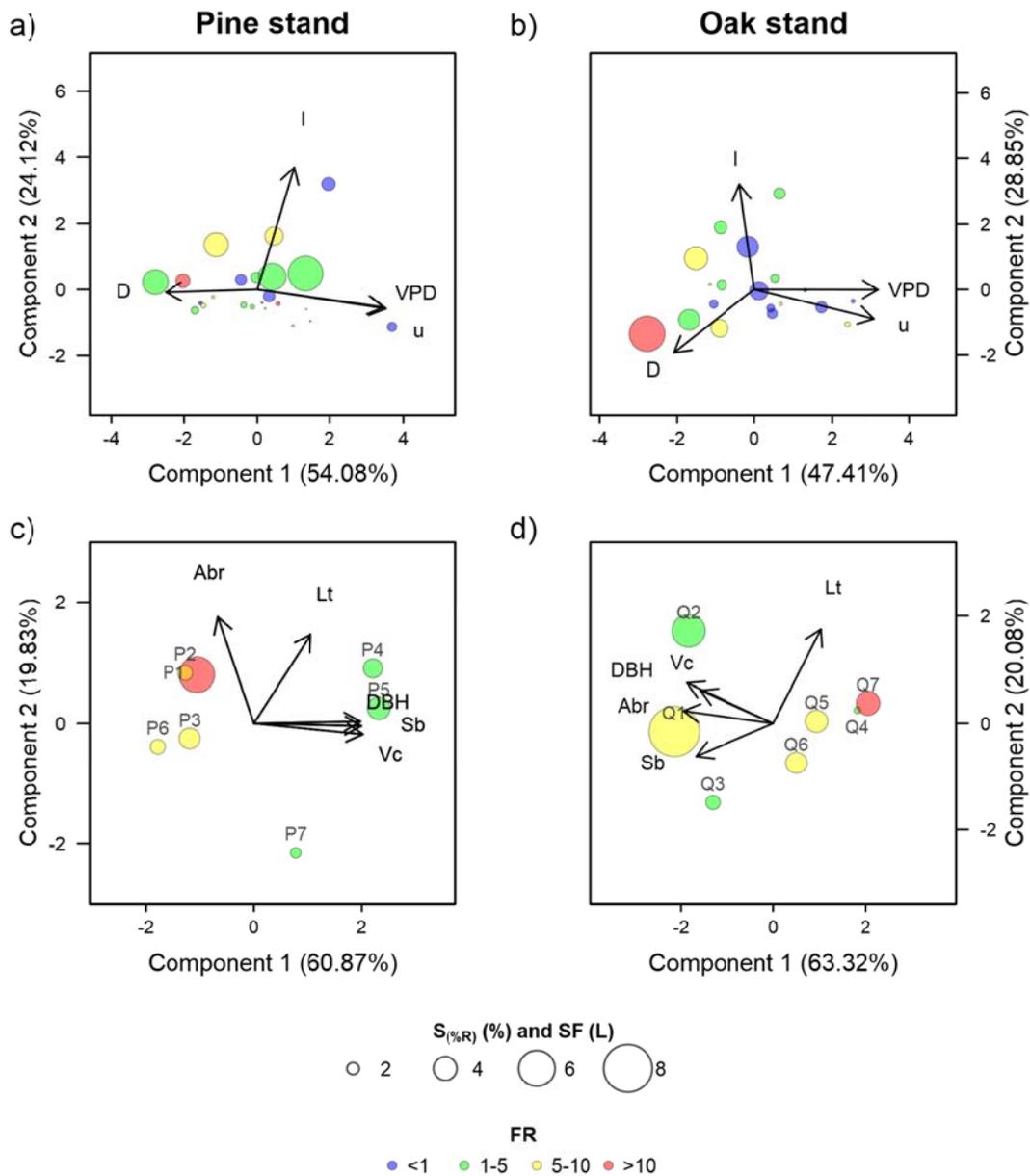
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659 **Figure 2.** Box-plots (a) of the lag time between the beginning of rainfall and the  
 660 beginning of stemflow, (b) of the volume of rainfall needed to produce stemflow and (c)  
 661 of the stemflow produced once rainfall ended. The horizontal thick black line indicates  
 662 the median, boxes correspond to the 25<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentiles, whiskers represent values  
 663 that fall within 1.5 times the interquartile range and circles represent outliers. Mean  
 664 values are represented with the thin black line.



660

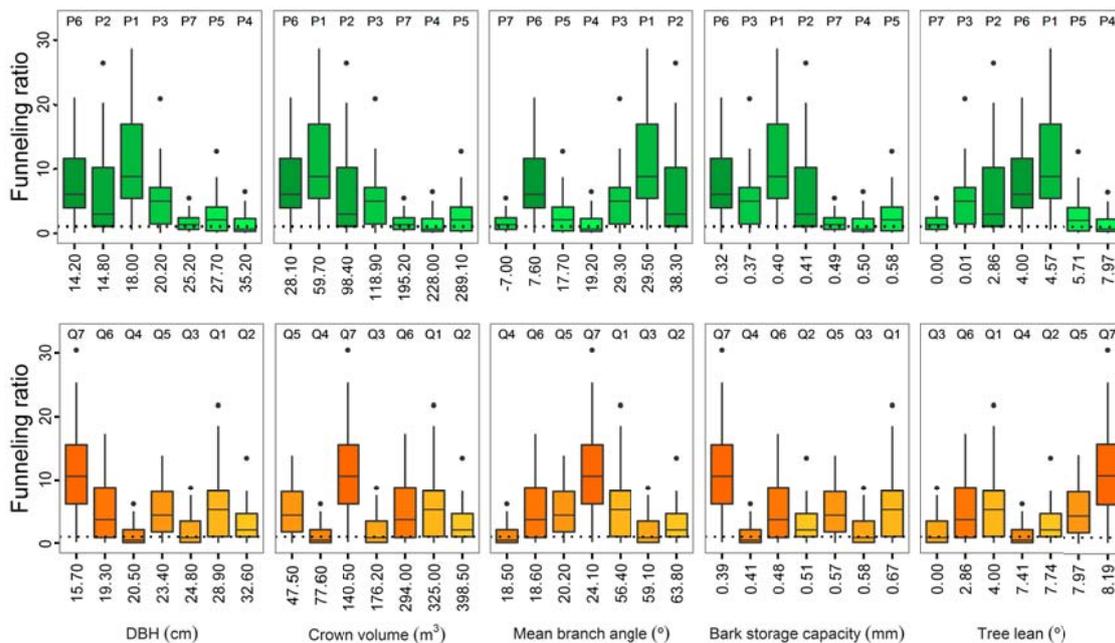
665 **Figure 3.** Time series (5-min interval) of four rainfall events. (a and b) are events of  
 666 long duration and low mean rainfall intensity and (c and d) are events of short duration  
 667 and high intensity. Rainfall depth is represented by a gray area, continuous lines  
 668 represent the stemflow evolution in mm and the dotted lines indicate the accumulated  
 669 stemflow in litres.



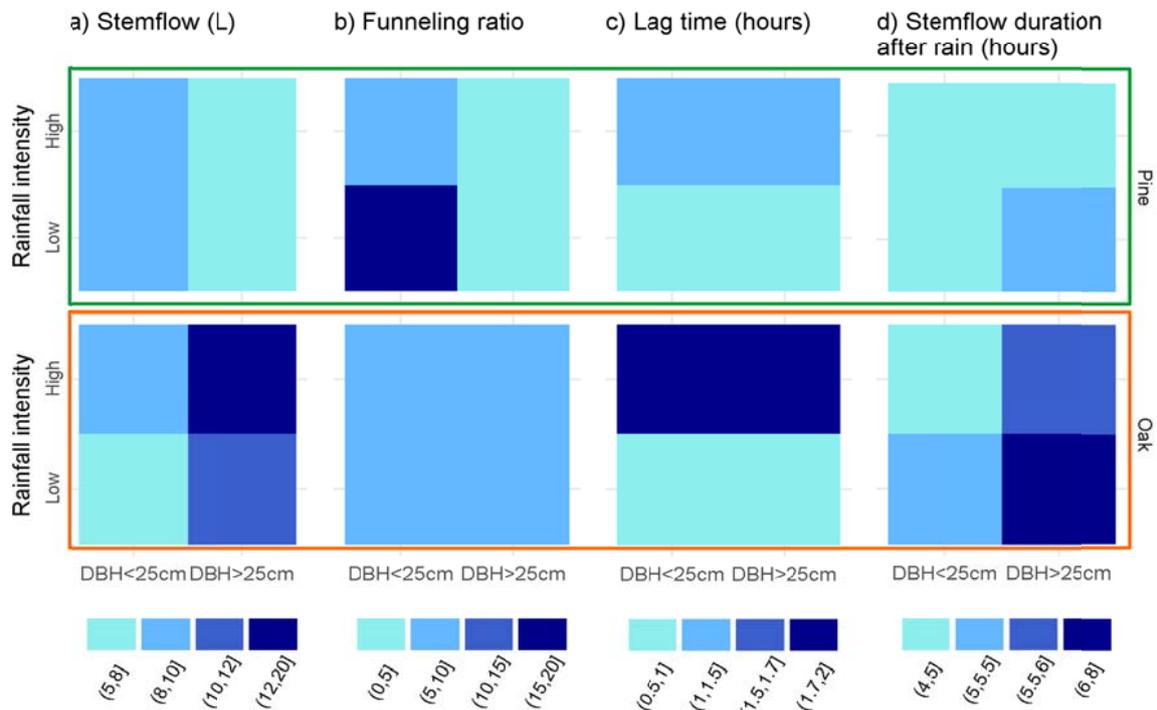
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672 **Figure 4.** Bi-plots of the Principal Component Analysis (PCA). Figures a and b plot the  
 673 PCA performed with the abiotic variables measured in the pine (a) and oak (b)  
 674 stands. Size of circles is proportional to the relative stemflow ( $S_{(R)}$ ). Figures c and  
 675 d plot the PCA performed with the biotic variables measured in the pine (c) and  
 676 oak (d) stands. Size of circles is proportional to mean stemflow volume produced  
 677 by tree ( $Sf(L)$ ). D = event duration, I = maximum rainfall intensity measured in 30

675 minutes, VPD = vapour pressure deficit, and u = wind speed. DBH = diameter at  
 676 breast height, Vc = crown volume, Abr = mean branch angle, Sb = Bark storage  
 677 capacity, and Lt = tree lean.

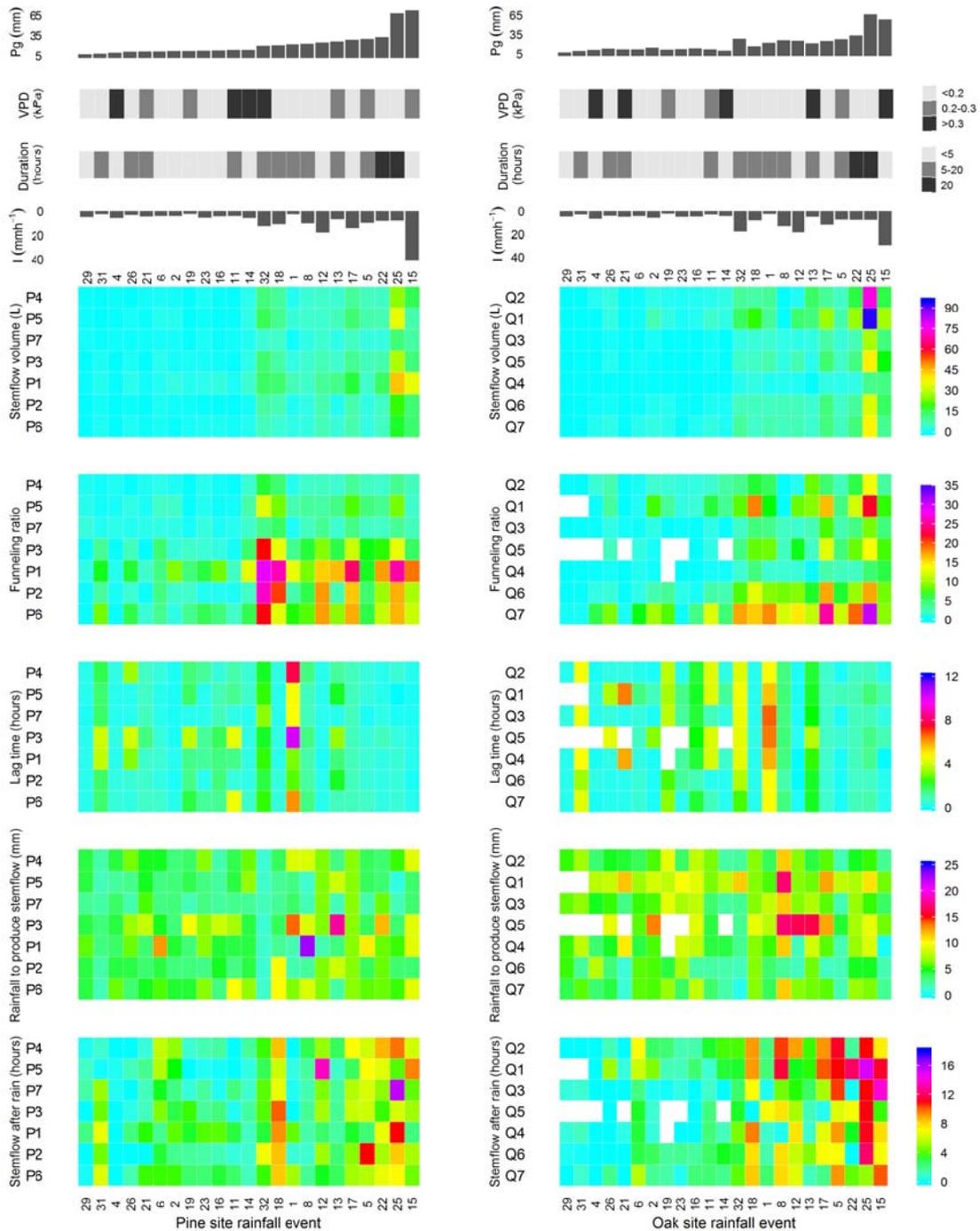


676  
 681 **Figure 5.** Box-plots of funneling ratios in relation to biotic factors for Scots pine (top)  
 682 and downy oak (bottom). The horizontal black line indicates the median, boxes  
 683 correspond to the first and third quartiles (the 25<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentiles), whiskers  
 684 represent values that fall within 1.5 times the interquartile range and circles represent  
 685 outliers. The dotted line indicates FR=1.



687

688 **Figure 6.** Relationship between rainfall intensity (Low/High), and (a) stemflow volume  
 689 (L), (b) funneling ratio, (c) lag time (hours) and (d) stemflow duration after rainfall  
 690 (hours), for small (DBH < 25 cm) and large (DBH > 25 cm) pine and oak trees for  
 691 events of rainfall amount  $\approx 30$  mm. From light to dark, colors represent the increase of  
 692 each stemflow variable studied (volume, FR, lag time and duration).



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693 **Figure A1.** Tile plots for all trees and events with more than 6 mm of gross rainfall.

694 From top to bottom: gross rainfall (Pg, mm), vapour pressure deficit (VPD, kPa),

695 rainfall duration (hours), rainfall intensity ( $\text{mm h}^{-1}$ ), stemflow volume (L), funneling

696 ratio, lag time between rainfall and stemflow (hours), rainfall volume necessary to

697 produce stemflow (mm) and stemflow duration after rainfall ceased (hours). Trees are

693 ordered by DBH and events by the rainfall volume measured in the pines stand. White  
694 colours represent NA values.

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697 **Table 1.** Biometric characteristics of the monitored trees.

Species	Tree number	DBH (cm)	Basal area (cm <sup>2</sup> )	Height (m)	Crown area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Crown volume (m <sup>3</sup> )	Mean branch angle (°)	Mean branch diameter (cm)	Bark depth (cm)	Stem bark surface (m <sup>2</sup> )	Bark storage capacity (mm)	Tree lean (°)
Scots pine	P1	18.0	254.5	17.5	7.5	59.7	29.5	3.1	1.5	6.3	0.40	4.6
	P2	14.8	172.0	16.9	10.8	98.4	38.3	3.3	1.5	4.9	0.41	2.9
	P3	20.2	320.5	21.2	11.9	118.9	29.3	2.8	2.1	7.3	0.37	0.0
	P4	35.2	973.1	22.3	17.3	228.0	19.2	4.4	3.3	15.0	0.50	7.9
	P5	27.7	602.6	18.3	23.8	289.1	17.7	5.6	2.9	11.0	0.58	5.7
	P6	14.2	158.4	15.5	4.7	28.1	7.6	2.1	1.0	4.7	0.32	4.0
	P7	25.2	498.8	18.1	20.1	195.2	-7.0	4.3	2.6	9.8	0.49	0.0
	<b>Mean (+/-1 SD)</b>	<b>22.2</b> +/-8	<b>425.7</b> +/-292	<b>18.5</b> +/-2	<b>13.7</b> +/-7	<b>145.3</b> +/-95	<b>19.2</b> +/-15	<b>3.7</b> +/-1	<b>2.1</b> +/-1	<b>8.4</b> +/-4	<b>0.44</b> +/-0.1	<b>3.6</b> +/-3
Downy oak	Q1	28.9	656.0	11.7	28.0	325.0	56.4	6.2	1.8	11.6	0.67	4.0
	Q2	32.6	834.7	13.2	39.9	398.5	63.8	4.4	1.0	13.6	0.51	7.7
	Q3	24.8	483.1	15.6	13.1	176.2	59.1	5.2	0.9	9.6	0.58	0.0
	Q4	20.5	330.1	10.6	7.5	77.6	18.5	3.3	1.0	7.5	0.41	7.4
	Q5	23.4	430.1	11.2	9.1	47.5	20.2	5.1	1.1	8.9	0.57	7.9
	Q6	19.3	292.6	13.3	22.3	294.0	18.6	4.1	1.1	6.9	0.48	2.8
	Q7	15.7	193.6	10.8	13.5	140.5	24.1	3.1	0.8	5.3	0.39	8.2
	<b>Mean (+/-1 SD)</b>	<b>23.6</b> +/-6	<b>460.0</b> +/-222	<b>12.3</b> +/-2	<b>19.0</b> +/-12	<b>208.5</b> +/-133	<b>37.2</b> +/-21	<b>4.5</b> +/-1	<b>1.1</b> +/-0.3	<b>9.1</b> +/-3	<b>0.52</b> +/-0.1	<b>5.5</b> +/-3

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700 **Table 2.** Rainfall characteristics and stemflow production at 5-min interval of 4 rainfall  
 701 events. Mean Pg = mean gross rainfall, Mean I = mean rainfall intensity,  $I_{\max}$  =  
 702 maximum peak of rainfall intensity, Duration = rainfall duration, VPD = vapour  
 703 pressure deficit,  $S_{(\%R)}$  = relative stemflow, DBH = diameter at breast height, Mean S =  
 704 mean stemflow volume,  $S_{\max}$  = maximum peak of stemflow intensity, Mean FR =  
 705 mean funnelling ratio. P refers to Scots pine and Q refers to Downy oak.

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Event	Mean Pg (mm)	Mean I (mm h <sup>-1</sup> )	$I_{\max}$ (mm 5min <sup>-1</sup> )	Duration (h)	VPD (kPa)	$S_{(\%R)}$		DBH (cm)	Mean S (L)		$S_{\max}$ (mm 5min <sup>-1</sup> )		Mean FR	
						P	Q		P	Q	P	Q	P	Q
a	22	1.2	1.3	18	0.12	1.2	2.9	<25	3.3	4.9	5.0	6.3	6.7	10.0
									>25	1.7	7.3	1.1	4.4	1.2
b	33	1.3	2.5	25	0.07	2.3	3.4	<25	7.7	8.0	14.5	15.9	11.5	10.8
									>25	5.1	15.2	3.6	10.5	2.5
c	26	5.2	7.7	5	0.07	3.9	3.8	<25	10.8	8.8	108.6	73.9	17.1	15.8
									>25	9.7	14.3	29.0	17.9	5.1
d	24	4.0	8.1	6	0.30	5.9	3.5	<25	10.7	5.7	113.9	54.0	24.4	9.2
									>25	10.3	7.8	29.0	19.0	7.7

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