

**Universidade de São Paulo  
Escola Superior de Agricultura “Luiz de Queiroz”**

**Mineralogia e geoquímica de bioestruturas produzidas pela atividade de  
minhocuços no solo**

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Tese apresentada para obtenção do título de Doutor em  
Ciências. Área de concentração: Solos e Nutrição de  
Plantas

**Piracicaba  
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**Geraldo José Diogo Filho**  
**Geógrafo**

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## RESUMO

### **Mineralogia e geoquímica de bioestruturas produzidas pela atividade de minhocuçus no solo**

O solo é habitat de uma biodiversa comunidade de organismos. A biota é um importante fator de formação do solo nos mais variados ecossistemas. As minhocas estão entre os organismos mais abundantes e com a maior biomassa na pedosfera. Elas desempenham diversas funções no solo, alterando sua morfologia e composição durante o processo de bioturbação. Por terem comportamento alimentar geófago, algumas espécies podem atuar diretamente no processo de alteração dos minerais, influenciando também nas transformações da matéria orgânica. Apesar disso, especialmente no contexto dos solos tropicais e das espécies nativas da pedofauna os efeitos da bioturbação são temas ainda pouco explorados. Neste contexto, o objetivo deste trabalho foi investigar a influência da atividade da espécie do minhocuçú *Glossocolex paulistus* na geoquímica e mineralogia do solo. Foram considerados um ambiente natural onde esta espécie é endêmica no estado de São Paulo, assim como um experimento de laboratório, para coleta de coprólitos sob condições controladas. Observou-se que as minhocas modificam os atributos físicos, químicos e mineralógicos do solo em seus coprólitos. Este efeito é causado tanto pelo processo de alteração dos materiais, quanto da concentração de determinados componentes em suas bioestruturas. Conclui-se que a espécie de minhoca *G. paulistus* é um importante agente transformador tanto da fração mineral quanto da orgânica do solo.

Palavras-chave: *Glossoscolex paulistus*, Intemperismo, Bioturbação, Fósforo, Matéria orgânica do solo

## ABSTRACT

### **Mineralogy and geochemistry of earthworm's biogenic structures on soil**

Soil is the habitat of a biodiverse community of organisms. Biota is an important soil formation factor in the most varied ecosystems. Earthworms are among the most abundant organisms with the highest biomass in the pedosphere. They perform several functions in the soil, changing its morphology and composition during the bioturbation process. Due to their feeding geophage behavior, some species can act directly in the mineral alteration process, also influencing the transformation of organic matter. Despite this, especially in the context of tropical soils and native species of pedofauna, the effects of bioturbation are still little explored. In this context, the objective of this research was to investigate the influence of the large earthworm species *Glossocolex paulistus* on soil geochemistry and mineralogy. A natural environment where this species is endemic in the state of São Paulo was considered as study area, as well as a laboratory experiment, for the collection of casts under controlled conditions. It was found that earthworms modify the physical, chemical, and mineralogical attributes of the soil in their casts. This effect is caused both by the process of altering the materials and by the concentration of certain components in their casts. It is concluded that the earthworm species *G. paulistus* is an important transforming agent for both mineral and organic soil fractions.

Keywords: *Glossoscolex paulistus*, Weathering, Bioturbation, Phosphorus, Soil organic matter

## 1. INTRODUÇÃO

Na segunda metade do século XIX, em datas muito próximas, três autores lançaram trabalhos bastante importantes. Após pesquisas em 1879 e 1884, Peter Erasmus Müller Henry Grandeau publica o resultado de suas pesquisas sobre as formas do húmus e sua relação com a vegetação e com o solo (1889), Charles Darwin escreve “A formação da terra vegetal a partir da ação das minhocas” em 1881, e dois anos depois Vassili Vassilievitch Dokuchaev apresenta sua tese de doutoramento sobre os solos da estepe ucraniana (Johnson & Schaetzl, 2015).

Essas publicações foram fundamentais no contexto do surgimento da pedologia enquanto ciência (Bockheim et al., 2005; Boulaïne, 1997; Legros, 2011). Nelas seus autores apresentam uma visão particular do solo, na medida em que consideram a atividade biológica um fator relevante na pedogênese (Boukharaeva & Marloie, 2013; Boulaïne, 1984; Feller et al., 2005; Pedro, 1984). Apesar desta origem, as pesquisas subsequentes adotaram, na maioria das vezes, visões abióticas do solo, de modo que “após Darwin, o fenômeno da bioturbação só passou a ser investigado de maneira sistemática no final do século XX” (Meysman et al., 2006).

No decorrer desse século, com o avanço da consciência em relação à degradação do solo em escala global, constatou-se a necessidade de utilização mais racional deste recurso natural (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005). Considerando a biota como um importante fator de qualidade do solo, houve um aumento das pesquisas sobre ecologia e zoologia edáficas (Lavelle, 2009; Yan et al., 2012).

Nesse cenário, diversas pesquisas têm focado nas populações da fauna do solo, comparando-se fatores como riqueza, abundância e diversidade sob diferentes condições naturais ou de uso agrícola (Baretta, 2007; Baretta et al., 2010, 2011; Barros et al., 2002; Bartz et al., 2013; Brown & Domínguez, 2010; Decaëns et al., 2004; Geissen & Guzman, 2006; Paoletti, 1999; Schmidt et al., 2013). Porém, a maioria desses estudos restringem-se aos impactos das práticas de manejo nessas populações, ou às questões de taxonomia e ecologia. Abordagens sobre as interações da biota com o solo, em uma perspectiva pedológica, como preconizaram Müller, Darwin e Dokuchaev, são menos frequentes (Bruyn & Conacher, 1990; Johnson, 2002b; Lee, 1992; Meysman et al., 2006; Wilkinson et al., 2009b).

O solo é o habitat de uma diversa e abundante comunidade de organismos. Excetuando-se as plantas e a microflora, essas formas de vida são agrupadas em três

categorias, em função do diâmetro corpóreo: a microfauna (<0,2 mm), a mesofauna (entre 0,2 e 2 mm) e a macrofauna (> 2mm) (Lavelle, 1997; Lavelle et al., 1995). Porém, os limites de tamanho podem variar entre diferentes autores (Anderson, 1988; Bachelier & Georges, 1978; Lavelle et al., 2015; Swift et al., 1979).

A fauna do solo, especificamente, abrange todos os organismos que não são produtores primários (Schaetzl & Anderson, 2005). Ela é responsável pela maior produtividade animal da biosfera e compõe uma biomassa total de 2,5 bilhões de toneladas. Estima-se que em 1 hectare pode haver mais de 10 toneladas destes invertebrados (Bachelier & Georges, 1978; Coleman & Hendrix, 2000). A fauna do solo é mais abundante na região equatorial, diminuindo suas densidades nas latitudes mais elevadas (Lavelle et al., 1997).

A bioturbação caracteriza-se pela reorganização (agregação, transporte e dispersão) de solo ou sedimento por qualquer ser vivo (Johnson, 1990, 2002a; Johnson et al., 1987, 2005). Na zona tropical, os fatores bióticos exercem grande efeito sobre a formação do solo, sendo as plantas, os cupins, as formigas e as minhocas os principais agentes (Miklós, 2012). Estes agentes da bioturbação também são considerados “engenheiros de ecossistema” (Jones et al., 1994), devido à capacidade que têm em transformar habitats e influenciar na disponibilidade de recursos para outras espécies.

A biota interage em maior ou menor grau com a morfologia e composição do solo, podendo exercer uma ação transformadora e modificar sua organização em diferentes escalas espaço-temporais (Hastings et al., 2007). Os ambientes do solo regulados por agentes biológicos específicos, são chamados de “domínios funcionais”, sendo a liteira/rizosfera a zona de influência das plantas, a termitosfera dos cupins, a myrmecosfera das formigas e a drilosfera das minhocas (Lavelle, 1997, 2002).

Contudo, o impacto dos organismos no solo varia conforme as características e o comportamento ecológico, alimentar e construtor de cada grupo taxonômico. Alguns invertebrados somente utilizam o solo como abrigo, exercendo pequena influência sobre sua morfologia, como no caso dos miriápodes, que apenas deslocam partículas do solo indiretamente, enquanto se locomovem através da rede de poros existente (Bachelier & Georges, 1978; Lavelle & Spain, 2002). Por outro lado, a família das formigas, têm um impacto maior no solo, pois escavam câmaras e extensos canais, constroem ninhos e transportam grandes volumes de materiais orgânicos e minerais, além de manipularem novos agregados, ainda que pouco estáveis (Bruyn & Conachera, 1990; Jouquet, Hartmann, et al., 2008; Mora et al., 2005).

Na medida em que processam grandes quantidades de materiais, formigas, cupins e minhocas, tornam-se elementos essenciais para o solo, pois modificam sua estrutura, destruindo e criando constantemente novos agregados (Anderson, 1988; Gabet et al., 2003; Wilkinson et al., 2009b). Esta importância deve-se à construção de câmaras e ninhos que servem de abrigo, local de alimentação e reprodução, de galerias e canais de locomoção que aumentam sua porosidade, e à produção de dejeções que modificam a agregação do solo (Hole, 1981; Lal, 1988; Lavelle, 1997). O constante revolvimento de materiais ainda afeta a dinâmica da matéria orgânica e a ciclagem dos nutrientes, que permanecem preservados por mais tempo no interior de suas bioestruturas, como ninhos e excrementos (Bossuyt et al., 2005; Pulleman et al., 2005).

Os invertebrados com hábito alimentar geófago podem causar transformações mais expressivas no solo. Determinadas espécies de cupins, larvas de besouros e minhocas são consideradas “agentes do intemperismo” (Bottinelli et al., 2015), visto que influenciam nos processos de alteração de minerais primários, além de poderem atuar na gênese de argilominerais (Carpenter et al., 2007a, 2008b; Hodson et al., 2014; Needham et al., 2005b, 2006b).

Estudos prévios já demonstraram a capacidade de larvas de besouro (*Protaetia lugubris*) e de minhocas (*Eisenia fetida*) fragmentarem, mecanicamente, os minerais de quartzo e feldspato potássico enquanto eles passam por seus tratos digestórios (Suzuki et al., 2003). Por difratometria de raios-x, verificou-se o intemperismo de minerais primários e secundários (anortita, biotita, olivina, esmectita e caulinita), analisando-se dejeções da espécie epigeica de minhoca *Eisenia veneta* (Carpenter et al., 2007a). Além das alterações na mineralogia, também foi observada a neoformação de argilas biogênicas a partir da ingestão de sedimentos de ardósia (Needham et al., 2004, 2005a) e de basalto (Worden et al., 2006b) por poliquetas e oligoquetas.

Estes organismos catalisam o intemperismo químico devido a fatores como o pH, o ambiente redutor e a presença de enzimas de bactérias em seus intestinos. Ademais, constatou-se que a velocidade da dissolução de minerais primários é, no mínimo, 100 vezes mais rápida se comparada à alteração puramente inorgânica. Os autores afirmam que as reações químicas de alteração mineral, intermediadas pela atividade biológica, são subestimadas e que os ciclos geofágicos e coprofágicos de alimentação deveriam ser mais considerados pelas pesquisas (Worden et al., 2006b).

No contexto dos solos tropicais e das espécies nativas da pedofauna, os efeitos da bioturbação promovida pelos “agentes do intemperismo” são temas ainda pouco



explorados. Neste sentido, o objetivo deste trabalho foi investigar a influência da atividade da espécie de minhocaçu *Glossocolex paulistus* na geoquímica e mineralogia do solo, sob condições naturais e controladas no laboratório. A hipótese geral do trabalho é que com a ingestão e excreção do solo pelas minhocas, ocorrem processos que modificam as características físicas, químicas e mineralógicas dos excrementos. Após esta breve introdução, que consiste no capítulo 1, são discutidos os atributos físicos, químicos e mineralógicos do solo e dos coprólitos da espécie *G. paulistus* no campo e em condições de laboratório (capítulo 2). No capítulo 3 aborda-se a influência da *G. paulistus* nos estoques de diferentes formas de fósforo no solo.

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## 2. ATRIBUTOS FÍSICOS, QUÍMICOS E MINERALÓGICOS DO SOLO E DOS COPRÓLITOS DE MINHOCUÇUS, SOB CONDIÇÕES NATURAIS E DE LABORATÓRIO

### Resumo

Este trabalho teve como objetivo estudar os efeitos da atividade de uma espécie de minhocaçu (*Glossoscolex paulistus*) no solo sob condições naturais e de laboratório. A área de estudo se localiza no município de Rio Claro, porção centro-leste do Estado de São Paulo, Brasil, onde esta espécie é endêmica e amplamente distribuída. Foi realizada a descrição morfológica de um perfil de solo representativo da área de estudo. Para entender a magnitude do processo de bioturbação no solo, foi feito um levantamento da quantidade de material depositado na superfície na forma de excrementos. Foram conduzidas análises de mineralogia, física, química de rotina e total no solo e nos coprólitos. No campo, observou-se que as minhocas tem zonas preferenciais de bioturbação nos primeiros 30 cm do perfil de solo, contudo em períodos de restrição hídrica elas exploram zonas mais úmidas (>1 metro). Ao ingerir e excretar solo, as minhocas modificam seus atributos físicos e químicos, pois os coprólitos apresentam maiores teores de materiais finos (silte e argila) e nutrientes ( $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Mg}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{K}^+$ , P, C e N). Os resultados obtidos em campo puderam ser parcialmente extrapolados para o laboratório, onde as restrições nas variáveis ambientais diminuem a intensidade dos efeitos da bioturbação no solo.

**Palavras-chave:** bioturbação, drilosfera, engenheiros do ecossistema, agentes do intemperismo, *Glossoscolex paulistus*.



## **2. PHYSICAL, CHEMICAL, AND MINERALOGICAL ATTRIBUTES OF SOIL AND CASTS OF THE BRAZILIAN ENDEMIC LARGE EARTHWORMS UNDER NATURAL AND LABORATORY CONDITIONS**

### **Abstract**

This study aimed to investigate the effects of the Brazilian large earthworm (*Glossoscolex paulistus*) on soil under natural and laboratory conditions. The study area is located in Rio Claro, São Paulo state, southeastern Brazil, where this species is endemic and widely distributed. A morphological description of a representative soil profile from the study area was performed. To understand the magnitude of the soil bioturbation process, a survey of the amount of superficial casts was conducted. Mineralogical, physical, and chemical (total and exchangeable) analyses were carried out on both soil and casts. In the field, it was observed that the earthworms have preferential bioturbation zones in the top 30 cm of the soil profile. However, during periods of water restriction, they explore deeper and moister zones (>1 meter). By ingesting and excreting soil, earthworms modify its physical and chemical attributes, as casts exhibit higher contents of fine materials (silt and clay) and nutrients ( $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Mg}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{K}^+$ , P, C, and N). The field results could be partially extrapolated to the laboratory, where low soil fertility conditions and restrictions in the environmental microcosm decrease the intensity of soil bioturbation effects.

**Keywords:** bioturbation, drilosphere, ecosystem engineers, weathering agents, *Glossoscolex paulistus*.

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### 3. REMOBILIZAÇÃO E TRANSFORMAÇÃO DOS CONTEÚDOS DE FÓSFORO EM UM SOLO TROPICAL PELA ATIVIDADE DO MINHOCUÇU *Glossoscolex paulistus* NO SUDESTE BRASILEIRO

#### Resumo

Neste trabalho foi investigado a influência da espécie de minhocuçú *Glossoscolex paulistus* nos estoques de fósforo do solo sob condições de campo e de laboratório. Foram extraídos os teores de P total e frações (ie., trocável, dos óxidos e hidróxidos de ferro, dos filossilicatos e aluminossilicatos, dos ácidos húmicos, da apatita e da matéria orgânica refratária). No campo, comparou-se os teores total e fracionado desse elemento nos excrementos da *G. paulistus* (COM) com o solo da drilosfera (DRI). Foi realizado um ensaio de laboratório, para a coleta de coprólitos sob condições controladas. Em seguida, avaliou-se as diferenças entre os teores de P nas amostras de coprólito e no solo controle. Correlacionou-se os conteúdos de P com outros atributos físicos (argila, silte e areia) e químicos (pH, capacidade de troca catiônica, carbono orgânico, carbono orgânico dissolvido, e frações de ferro associadas à ferridrita, à lepidocrocida e à goethita e hematita) do solo. Verificou-se que a espécie *Glossocolex paulistus* tem influência na ciclagem do P, afetando suas diferentes formas de ocorrência no solo. Em campo, os excrementos apresentam maiores conteúdos de P total, assim como para quase todas as demais frações. Ao mesmo tempo em que parte do P é utilizado por estes organismos como fonte energética, eles promovem um aumento nos teores deste elemento em suas bioestruturas. Sendo que a mineralização da matéria orgânica do solo nos excrementos transforma e remobiliza parte dos estoques de P do solo.

**Palavras-chave:** fracionamento químico do fósforo, fósforo mineral, fósforo orgânico, disponibilidade do fósforo, solo tropical, drilosfera.

### 3. REMOILIZATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF PHOSPHORUS CONTENTS IN A TROPICAL SOIL UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE LARGE EARTHWORM SPECIES *Glossoscolex paulistus* IN SOUTHEASTERN BRAZIL

#### Abstract

This research investigated the influence of the earthworm species *Glossoscolex paulistus* on soil phosphorus stocks under field and laboratory conditions. Total P and 6 different forms were determined (i.e., exchangeable P, P associated with: iron oxo-hydroxides, associated, phyllosilicates and aluminosilicates, humic acids, apatite and refractory organic matter). In the study area, the total and fractioned casts phosphorus contents (COM) was compared with the contents of the drilosphere (DRI). A laboratory experiment was carried out for the collection of casts under controlled conditions. Then, the comparison of P contents in the casts and control samples was carried out. P contents were also correlated with other soil physical (i.e., clay, silt and sand) and chemical attributes (i.e., pH, cation exchange capacity, organic carbon, dissolved organic carbon, and iron fractions associated with ferrhydrite, lepidocrocida, goethite and hematite). *Glossocolex paulistus* species has influences on P cycling in the soil. At the same time that part of the P content is used by these organisms as an energy source, they increase the levels of this element in their casts, since the mineralization of soil organic matter at casts transforms and remobilizes part of the P stocks in the soil.

**Keywords:** chemical fractionation of phosphorus, mineral P, organic P, P availability, tropical soil, drilosphere.

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#### 4. CONSIDERAÇÕES FINAIS

A partir desta pesquisa, foram constatados importantes efeitos da espécie de minhoca *Glossoscolex paulistus* no solo. No campo, elas atuam em uma área ampla do perfil de solo, mas tem seus efeitos concentrados nos horizontes superficiais, denominados de drilosfera. Com seu comportamento alimentar e construtor, elas modificam os atributos físicos do solo como a agregação, criação de canais e câmara que afetam a circulação atmosférica e hídrica, além de revolverem uma expressiva quantidade de materiais que são depositados em superfície na forma de coprólitos. Estas bioestruturas se diferenciam amplamente do solo não bioturbado, a partir de parâmetros físicos e químicos, orgânicos e minerais. Sob condições laboratório o controle das variáveis ambientais faz com que os efeitos da bioturbação sejam menos intensos. Os resultados obtidos em campo, apesar de apresentar algumas tendências similares, podem ser apenas parcialmente estendidos para o ensaio de laboratório. No microcosmo, as restrições das variáveis ambientais impedem um conjunto de interações que ocorrem sob condições naturais. Ademais, os organismos ficam impedidos de forragearem livremente, buscando recursos mais ricos em nutrientes, o que limita a concentração de determinados componentes do solo em suas bioestruturas, assim como a alteração destes materiais sob condições controladas.