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4500 years of morphological diversification in Western Europe wild boars (*Sus scrofa*) and the consequences of the Neolithic transition

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21 ABSTRACT

Evolutionary biologists have recently solicited archaeologists to help document and understand 22 the morphological evolution of animals in response to human activities and, more generally, to 23 help reconstruct the history and significance of the anthropogenic impact on worldwide 24 ecosystems. Artificial selection associated with domestication is the best-known example of a 25 major anthropogenic morphological evolution preserved in the archaeological record. However, 26 the impact of the domestication process and dispersal on the morphological evolution of 27 animals has been far less explored. To fill this gap, we focused on 4500 years of evolution in 28 Western Europe Sus scrofa, covering the Neolithic transition – a major anthropogenic 29 ecological disturbance involving landscape modification and the translocation of domestic 30 31 mammals. Using geometric morphometrics on key phenotypic markers preserved in the archaeological record, associated with isotopic studies, we explored how, and in response to 32 which cultural drivers the Neolithic niche construction has influenced the morphological 33 34 evolution of Western European wild boars (Sus scrofa scrofa). The decoupling of size and shape components from bone morphological variation has facilitated the identification of several 35 processes of phenotypic diversification of Sus s. scrofa in response to human behaviour during 36 the Neolithic transition in Western Europe. 37

39 INTRODUCTION

40 Over the last few centuries, the human niche construction (Odling-Smee et al., 2003) has 41 become "the world's greatest evolutionary force" (Palumbi, 2001), generating a change in the ecological and evolutionary dynamics of species on a global scale (Hendry et al., 2017). The 42 human engineering of ecosystems with habitat fragmentation (Cheptou et al., 2017), 43 urbanisation (Alberti et al., 2017; McDonnell and Hahs, 2015) and the disruption of natural 44 45 dynamics (Colautti et al., 2017) has induced rapid microevolutionary changes through strong directional selection, resulting in rapid diversification (Hendry et al., 2017, 2008, 2007). With 46 the emergence of agriculture and, more generally speaking, the Neolithic transition, the human 47 niche construction caused a major ecological disturbance, with the opening and fragmentation 48 49 of the landscape, the emergence and spread of domesticated animals and plants from several independent centres across Eurasia, the protection of livestock from predators and competitors, 50 and the dispersal of invasive species and pathogens (Ellis et al., 2021; Sullivan et al., 2017). To 51 date, the influence of the Neolithic niche construction has been mainly explored through 52 human-induced species distribution (Boivin et al., 2016; Cucchi et al., 2020; Vigne, 1999), and 53 54 over the temporal depth of the direct human influence over species during the process of animal 55 domestication (Ameen et al., 2019; Brassard et al., 2022; Clutton-Brock, 1992; Cucchi et al., 56 2021; Fages et al., 2019; Frantz et al., 2020; Larson and Fuller, 2014; Zeder, 2015). Yet, its consequences on non-domestic species evolution remain to be fully documented and 57 understood (Erlandson et al., 2016; Sarrazin and Lecomte, 2016). 58

To contribute to this research avenue, this study explores the influence of the Neolithic 59 transition in Western Europe on the phenotypic diversification of an indigenous species: the 60 wild boar (Sus scrofa). Emerging in the Near East around 9500 BCE, the Neolithic dispersal 61 reached central-western Europe by 5850 BCE through demic and cultural diffusion via the 62 Danube River and the northern Mediterranean coasts, with the adaptation of technoeconomic 63 strategies to different ecological conditions along the way (Manen et al., 2019, 2018). Sus s. 64 scrofa was present in North Western Europe since the Middle Pleistocene, and was evidenced 65 66 in MIS 7 by 250 ka BCE (Auguste, 2009). These animals were common and widespread from France to Belarus from the early Holocene onwards, varying in body size according to 67 Bergman's rule, with northern individuals from north-eastern Germany being larger than 68 southern ones from Spain and Italy (Albarella et al., 2009a). Despite the recent intensification 69 or reintroduction and introgression with domestic pigs on the genetic make-up of wild boar 70 populations in Europe (Goedbloed et al., 2013), their deep genetic structure across Europe 71 72 remains mainly determined by the post glacial dispersal from southern refuges located in Spain, Italy for Western Europe, and the Balkans for Central Europe (de Jong et al., 2023; 73 74 Niedziałkowska et al., 2021), with a loss of genetic diversity towards the northern range of the 75 species (Vilaça et al., 2014).

The earliest anthropogenic influence over the genetic diversity of European *Sus scrofa* has been

documented by paleogenetics with the introduction of domestic pigs of Near East ancestry by

78 Neolithic stock-herders along the two dispersal waves mentioned previously (Larson et al.,

79 2007). These pigs stemmed from the long domestication process of Near Eastern Sus scrofa

populations between 9500 and 8000 BCE (Price and Hongo, 2019), from intensive hunting to

first evidence of body size reduction compared to their wild relatives by 8000 BCE (Price and 81 Evin, 2019). These small pigs, entered Europe by 6500 BCE, arriving in Central Western 82 Europe around 5400 BCE (Evin et al., 2015; Larson et al., 2007; Ottoni et al., 2013). By 5000 83 BCE, the Near Eastern lineage no longer existed in the European pig genome, which, after this 84 date, had 96% of its genetic variants coming from European wild boars. The extent of this 85 86 genomic replacement is considered to have stemmed from introgressive hybridization 87 facilitated by the small population size of Near Eastern pigs and a lack of barrier between them and the local wild boar populations (Frantz et al., 2019). 88

The introduction of domestic pigs into Europe by successive waves of newcomers from the 89 90 Near East induced the co-occurence of several lineages of Sus scrofa during part of the Neolithic period : the indigenous wild boar populations in their natural habitat, the domestic pig 91 populations of Near Eastern origin reared by Neolithic people and their feralized populations. 92 93 Indeed, thanks to paleogenetics, we know that hybridization and gene flow between wild, domestic and feral Sus scrofa populations, occurred all along the Neolithic (Frantz et al., 2019). 94 This gene flow can be highlighted by traditional pig husbandry still undertaken in Papua New 95 Guinea, where interbreeding is part of the rearing practices, with sows being left to fray with 96 wild male boars (Dwyer, 1996), or in Mediterranean Europe (Albarella et al., 2011; 97 Hadjikoumis, 2012; Halstead and Isaakidou, 2011). This does not exclude likely presence of 98 99 commensal wild boars for which there is no genetic evidence. This co-habitation of several 100 lineages of Sus scrofa produced new hybrid communities, with different ranges of interactions between suids and humans societies in Neolithic Europe (Albarella et al., 2011; Balasse et al., 101 2019), where boundaries between wild and domestic populations were not as tight as those 102 103 currently engraved in the industrial and zootechnical views on animal domestication (Bogaard et al., 2021; Stépanoff and Vigne, 2018). 104

105 Considering the new ecological and evolutionary forces introduced into Europe by the Neolithic transition, we wanted to explore the extent of its influence on the morphological diversification 106 of Sus s. scrofa in Western Europe, over 4500 years or archaeological record. The remains are 107 dated from the Middle Mesolithic, by 7500 BCE, i.e. before the spread of farmers and their 108 domestic pigs, until the Late Neolithic 3000 BCE, when the new social and economic 109 organization of the Bronze Age emerged. During this timeframe, we attempt to (1) understand 110 whether the Neolithic transition influenced the phenotypic evolution of the autochtonous wild 111 boars, (2) define the phenotypic diversity of the several lineages of Sus scrofa present in Europe 112 at that period and (3) determine to what extent Neolithic societies of Europe have intentionally 113 altered the phenotypic traits of domestic Sus scrofa. To track these intraspecific changes in bone 114 115 morphology, we had to comprehensively capture enough organismal complexity using high resolution phenotypic data with three dimensional coordinate points analyzed via geometric 116 morphometrics (Bardua et al., 2019; Goswami et al., 2019) and morphometric mapping 117 (Bondioli et al., 2010a; Morimoto et al., 2011). To track the morphological evolution across the 118 archaeological record, we relied on three skeleton bones (calcaneus, humerus and mandible) 119 chosen for their good preservation in the archaeological record, following an experimental 120 research program on the effects of captivity over skeletal development in European wild boars 121 (http://anr-domexp.cnrs.fr/). This experimental research showed that functional changes due to 122 mobility reduction and changes due to directional selection induced different morphological 123

trajectories from the wild norm of variation, in both the calcaneus form (Harbers et al., 2020a)
and the humerus shaft microanatomy (Harbers et al., 2020b). Likewise, the change in feeding
behaviour with captivity induced functional responses in the skull and mandible, different from
morphological changes induced by the last 200 years of selective breeding (Neaux et al., 2022,
2021, 2020). All this evidence supports the use of these phenotypic markers to disentangle,

129 functional changes due to a cultural control of the individual's environment (Hecker, 1982),

- 130 from selective breeding at a population scale, during the Neolithic transition. Such approach
- 131 has already proven useful to identify the local domestication of the feral populations of wild
- boars by PPNB Neolithic people of Cyprus (Cucchi et al., 2021).
- 133 For this study, Sus scrofa from Mesolithic contexts will provide the baseline (T0) for the variation norm of Sus scrofa prior to the Neolithic transition in Europe. The Sus scrofa bones 134 from Neolithic contexts were not divided beforehand into a wild or domestic category using a 135 bone size criterion, as is usually done in zooarchaeological and paleogenetic studies, for three 136 main reasons. First, as previously said, the wild and domestic boundaries might not be a relevant 137 concept to approach these interactions during the Neolithic. Then, these preliminary categories 138 based on bone size differences are too subjective and might introduce interpretation biases. 139 Third, size changes are not easily related to any clear biotic or abiotic factors. We have therefore 140 chosen to assess the extent of Neolithic anthropogenic influence over Sus scrofa morphological 141 diversity by confronting the archaeological specimen to a gradient of phenotypic variation 142 representing (1) the reaction norms of Sus scrofa populations (Mesolithic and current) living in 143 their natural habitat or (2) in contexts of controlled locomotion and feeding behaviours and (3) 144 the phenotypic divergence induced by selective breeding over the last centuries. The relatedness 145 146 of the Neolithic specimens to this anthropogenic gradient of phenotypic diversification in Sus scrofa was assessed using predictive and machine learning approaches. We also investigated 147 the relationship between Neolithic suids and humans using stable carbon (δ^{13} C) and nitrogen 148 $(\delta^{15}N)$ isotope ratios in bone collagen, as a greater proximity to humans may have induced 149 changes in the feeding environment and diet of suids (Balasse et al., 2019, 2016; Brusgaard et 150 al., 2022; Cucchi et al., 2016; Maring and Riede, 2019). 151
- 152

153 MATERIAL

From 101 archaeological *Sus scrofa* bones collected, we could analyze 73: calcanei (41), humeri (19) and mandibles (13) from adults and sub-adults (Supplementary Table S1). We analysed calcanea with epiphysis known to fuse around 2 years in wild boars (Bridault et al., 2000). The humeri all had a complete distal shaft with a fused distal epiphysis, occurring in wild boar by 19–23 months (Bull and Payne, 1982). The mandibles belonged to specimens between 12 and 60 months old, according to both the tooth eruption (Legge, 2013) and wear stages (Horard-Herbin, 1997) of the premolars and molars.

- 161 These bones were collected from 13 archaeological sites in France, Switzerland and Germany
- 162 (Figure 1). Within the *Sus scrofa* specimens, 28 came from five hunter-gatherer contexts dated
- from the Middle and Late Mesolithic between 8700 and 5000 BCE, and 45 specimens from eight Neolithic settlements between 5500 and 3000 BCE (Supplementary Table S1 and Text

S2). The latter includes 30 specimens of Sus scrofa (25 calcanei and 5 humeri) from the 165 Neolithic site of Chalain, on which stable isotope analysis was performed and compared with 166 the stable isotope analyses on large wild and domestic herbivores found at the same site, 167 including 14 deer (Cervus elaphus), 5 aurochs (Bos primigenius) and 9 cattle (Bos taurus) 168 (Supplementary Table S2). All Mesolithic specimens were considered as hunted wild boars, 169 170 representative of the phenotypic variation of wild boars before the Neolithic transition. To 171 assess the amount of anthropogenic diversification in Neolithic Sus scrofa, we used a comparative approach from a collection of Sus scrofa covering the phenotypic continuum from 172 wild boars hunted in their natural habitat to highly selected domestic breeds, whose 173 environment and reproduction was fully controlled by humans (SI3). The hunted wild boars 174 included a sample of 28 Mesolithic specimens from Western Europe contexts (Figure 1) and a 175 sample of 32 specimens from current populations hunted in France and Switzerland. We have 176 also included 24 captive wild boars from an experiment undertaken at a zoological reserve of 177 the Natural History Museum of Paris (see details of the experiment in (Harbers et al., 2020a)). 178 179 They were collected from a control population of wild boars (sampled by 8 specimens) and raised in captivity from the age of 6 months to 2 years. These 24 specimens were randomly split 180 into two groups with the same male to female sex ratio. One group was raised in a 3000 m² pen 181 and the second in a 100 m^2 stall where males and females were separated. Modern pig samples 182 included 23 specimens from traditional European landraces including 5 free-ranging Corsican 183 landrace pigs and 9 specimens of industrial breeds. A sample of five hybrids (crossed between 184 wild boars and pigs of different breeds) is also included. 185



186

Figure 1: a. Geographical location of the modern wild boars (grey filled circles) and 187 archaeological Sus crofa (red filled circles) samples in western Europe: Ranchot (RAN), 188 Arconciel (ARC), Gazel (GAZ), Chalain (CHA), Fontbrégoua (FON), Roquemissou (ROO), 189 Grotte de l'Aigle (AIG), Camprafaud (CAM), Roucadour (ROU) Téviec (TEV), Noyen (NOY), 190 Vaihingen (VAI) and Bercy (BER). b. Chronological and cultural contexts of the Sus scrofa 191 archaeological samples. c. Position of the phenotypic markers selected for the study of the Sus 192 193 scrofa skeleton with their respective protocol of morphometric digitization: 3D surface and curve landmarks and semilandmarks respectively of mandible's symphysis and ramus (see 194 Neaux et al. 2020 for methodological details), 3D surface semilandmarks of the calcaneus (see 195 Harbers et al. 2020a for methodological details) and the 3D morphometric mapping and Cross 196 Section Area (CSA) of the humeral shaft (See Harbers et al. 2020b for methodological details). 197 The topography of the shaft cortical thickness is rendered by a standardized morphometric map 198 with chromatic scale from thinnest (dark blue) to thickest (red). Red areas represent area of 199 muscular insertions (see Harbers et al. 2020b for further methodological details). 200

201

202 METHODS

203 Geometric Morphometrics

The morphometric study associate the 3D surface semilandmarks geometric morphometrics 204 205 (3D GM) of the calcaneus and mandible (Bardua et al., 2019; Mitteroecker et al., 2013) and the 3D morphometric mapping of the humerus shaft cortical thickness (Bondioli et al., 2010a, 206 2010b). The 3D models of the calcaneus were reconstructed from medical CT scans and 207 photogrammetry after segmentation in Avizo v.8.0 or reconstruction using Agisoft Photoscan 208 209 1.2.6.2834. Mandible 3D models were reconstructed from medical CT and laser scanning using 210 an ARTEC Space Spider. All three acquisitions methods were compared using a common 3D GM framework without statistical biases (Waltenberger et al., 2021). The humeri were scanned 211 using a medical CT and reconstructed to generate the external (periosteum) and internal 212 213 (endosteum) 3D surfaces of the bone used to compute cortical thickness.

214

3D GM analyses were performed on 3D models using landmark and semilandmark protocols 215 216 on curves and surfaces previously detailed for the calcaneus (Harbers et al., 2020a) and the mandible (Neaux et al., 2020). For the mandibles, the protocol was adapted to the symphysis 217 and ramus, which are the most common anatomical parts of the mandibles in the archaeological 218 219 record. The acquisition and standardisation protocol for 3D morphometric mapping of the humeral shaft cortical thickness follows (Harbers et al., 2020b). We adjusted the protocol to 220 ensure its applicability to archaeological humeri missing the proximal end of the diaphysis by 221 mapping only the distal half of the shaft (3-50%). Despite this reduction, all the entheses 222 distinguishing free-ranging wild boars, captive wild boars and pigs are observable (Figure 1, 223 Harbers et al., 2020b). We used the cross-sectional area (CSA) at the distal end of the diaphysis 224 (Figure 1c) as a proxy of the humerus size. The Pearson correlation coefficient showed that this 225 variable was almost perfectly correlated ($\rho = 0.965$) with the bone volume. Since the latter is 226 also strongly correlated to body mass (Campione and Evans, 2020; Harbers et al., 2020b), we 227 228 used the cross-sectional area as a body mass proxy of archaeological Sus scrofa.

229

Size variation differences between the nine subgroups of wild boars and domestic pigs, in the humeral CSA and calcaneus and mandible centroid sizes, were tested using a factorial ANOVA and visualised with boxplots. To assess the structuration of size variation and identify the occurrence of several populations within Neolithic *Sus scrofa*, we performed model-based Gaussian mixture analyses using density estimation on size variables.

235

The differences in humeral cortical thickness topography and calcaneus shape variation 236 between the nine subgroups of wild boars and domestic pigs were tested with factorial 237 MANOVAs. Patterns of morphological differentiation (in a morphospace) among wild boars 238 and pig samples were visualised using canonical variate analyses (CVA). CVA morphospaces 239 were performed after principal component analysis (PCA) computed on Procrustes coordinates 240 241 in Mesolithic and modern Sus scrofa, retaining 95% of variance for data dimensionality 242 reduction to prevent artificial group discrimination (Mitteroecker and Bookstein, 2011). Neolithic Sus scrofa are projected into this canonical morphospace, using a generic function 243 (predict) which will get fitted values according to the multiple linear model computed for the 244 Mesolithic and modern data. To assess the interaction mode (hunting, control or reproductive 245 246 isolation) with human Neolithic societies for each Neolithic Sus scrofa, we used a k-nearest

neighbor (kNN) classification in the two first canonical axes of the morphospace via a training 247 model of three groups representing each of these interaction modes: (1) modern and Mesolithic 248 wild-caught wild boars, (2) modern captive wild boars, and (3) modern pigs including industrial 249 breeds and landraces. The value of "k" was chosen as the square root of the number of 250 specimen's "n" in the comparative material following (Lall and Sharma, 1996); therefore, k =251 252 9 for the humerus dataset (n = 86), k = 10 for the calcaneus dataset (n = 95) and k = 7 for the 253 mandible dataset (n = 43). To check for the reliability of the kNN classification we assessed its congruence with the prediction obtained by fitting their values with the multiple linear 254 discriminant model (CVA) performed for the three groups described previously. 255

256

To visualise calcaneus and mandible shape deformations along the canonical axes, we calculated the theoretical minimum and maximum shapes for each axis, then associated them, using a heatmap, on the landmarks corresponding to the distance between the minimum and maximum values along the first two canonical axes. To visualise variations in humerus cortical thickness topography along the canonical axes, we calculated the theoretical minimum and maximum morphometric map for each axis.

263

All the statistics were performed using R (R Core Team, 2017). ANOVA and PCA were performed using the R package "stat" (R Core Team, 2017). Model based Gaussian mixture analyses of size univariates were performed with "Mclust 5" (Scrucca et al., 2016). LDA prediction using the package "MASS" (Venables et al., 2002) and visualisations were performed using "geomorph" (Adams and Otárola-Castillo, 2013) and "rgl" (Adler and Murdoch, 2017). The kNN algorithm was performed using the package 'class'(Torgo, 2011).

270 Stable Isotope study

A piece of bone was cut from the diaphysis of the Sus scrofa calcaneus or humerus. Bone 271 surfaces were cleaned by abrasion and reduced to powder. A fraction comprised between 355 272 and 710 µm was used for collagen extraction. The extraction used approximately 150 to 250 273 mg of powder and followed the procedure described in (Bocherens et al., 1991). Coupled 274 measurements of δ^{15} N and δ^{13} C were conducted on 300 to 400 µg of collagen on an elemental 275 276 analyser Thermo Flash 2000 interfaced with a Thermo DeltaVAdvantage IRMS. The analytical precision, estimated from the repeated analysis (N = 8 to 12 within each run) of our laboratory 277 standard (alanine normalised to the IAEA-600 caffeine international standard), was 0.1% for 278 δ^{13} C and δ^{15} N values. Over the course of these analyses, the alanine standard gave mean values 279 of 0.58‰ for $\delta^{15}N$ (expected value: 0.60‰), -22.08‰ for $\delta^{13}C$ (expected value: -22.17‰), 280 40,4 % for C content (expected value: 40.4%) and 15.6% for N content (expected value: 15.7%). 281 The aurochs, deer and cattle bone collagen were extracted within the framework of a previous 282 study, following the same procedure. The δ^{13} C were published (Drucker and Bocherens, 2009) 283 but the δ^{15} N values remain unpublished. 284

285 **RESULTS**

286 Bone size variation in modern and ancient Sus scrofa

All four phenotypic markers displayed a common pattern of size variation (Figure 2), with 287 overall significant differences among the samples of wild, captive and domestic Sus scrofa for 288 the humerus cross section (ANOVA= F:10.81, p<0.0001), the centroid sizes of calcaneus 289 (ANOVA= F:9.302, p<0.0001), the mandible symphysis (ANOVA= F:2.635, p=0.0463) and the 290 ramus (ANOVA=F:3.428, p=0.0251). All four markers displayed (1) an important size decrease 291 292 between Mesolithic and extant wild boar populations of Western Europe (-16% for the 293 calcaneus) and (2) an increase in bone size (+15 % for the calcaneus) in traditional and industrial pig breeds compared to modern hunted or captive wild boars, or even Mesolithic wild boars. 294 Captivity in wild boars does not induce any significant size changes in calcaneum and mandible 295 but it does show an increase in the CSA of the humerus compared to free ranging wild boars 296 297 (Figure 2), suggesting that captivity induce an increase in wild boar body mass but not of their body size. 298

Size variation in Neolithic Sus scrofa calcaneus covers the whole size range from the smallest 299 wild boars to some of the largest industrial pig breeds. Regarding the body mass proxy (humeral 300 shaft cross section area), Neolithic Sus scrofa are within the range of Mesolithic and modern 301 wild boars. According to model-based density estimations, calcaneus size variation is clustered 302 into two groups: a small one, similar in size to current wild boars, and a large one, similar in 303 size to current pigs and Mesolithic wild boars. Current pigs, from landraces to industrial breeds 304 have a larger CSA than extant and Mesolithic wild boars. Density estimations found three 305 306 components of variation in the humeral CSA of Neolithic Sus scrofa: (1) a small one, similar to 307 small extant wild boars, (2) a medium one, similar to large extant wild boars, and (3) a large one, similar to current-day pigs or Mesolithic wild boars. 308



Figure 2: Size variation in modern and archaeological *Sus scrofa* of Western Europe: (a) humerus shaft cross-section area (CSA), centroid size of (b) calcaneus (c) mandible's ramus, (d) mandible's symphysis. Modern samples are presented with notched boxplots. Model-based Gaussian mixture of size variation in archaeological *Sus scrofa* were performed for humerus shaft CSA (a) and calcaneus centroid size (b) with model-based clustering results displayed by different symbols and named accordingly. Abbreviations: WB=wild boars, WB exp=experimental wild boars, DP=domestic pigs.

317 External and structural bone variation in modern and ancient Sus scrofa

The variation in bone shape and humeral cortical thickness in Mesolithic and modern wild and 318 domestic Sus scrofa displayed congruent patterns of diversification in the CVA morphospace, 319 albeit with slight discrepancies (Figure 3). This variation is mainly influenced by human-driven 320 selection between modern wild boars and modern pig breeds (CV1), while a plastic response to 321 322 the human-driven control of mobility in wild boars is aligned with the second canonical axis (CV2), showing the prevalence of artificial selection over anthropogenic behavioural control in 323 the phenotypic diversification of this species. It is worth noting that hybrids between wild boars 324 325 and pigs (which were only available for the calcaneus and humerus) show a different 326 diversification pattern: closer to hunted wild boars for the calcaneal shape variation (Figure 3a) 327 and closer to landrace and industrial pig breeds for the topography humeral shaft cortical thickness, showing the greater influence of heredity in the former (Figure 3b). Finally, one can 328 also note that Mesolithic and extant wild boars display similar humeral cortical topography 329 (Figure 3b) but clear phenotypic divergence in their calcaneal shape variation (Figure 3a). For 330 the mandibular-ramus (Figure 3c) and symphysis (Figure 3d), the divergence due to selection 331 and plasticity is found along both the CV1 and CV2, but also resembles the pattern observed 332

for post-cranial bones (even though the morphospace is rotated).

When projecting the variation of Neolithic Sus scrofa over the pattern of phenotypic 334 335 diversification described previously, we observed that it was centred, albeit greater, within the phenotypic variation of Mesolithic and modern wild boars in their natural habitat; however, 336 patterns differed according to the markers considered. Variability in humeral cortical 337 topography stretches towards the directional selection trajectory of pig breeds and overlaps with 338 the variation of landraces pigs (Figure 3b). On the other hand, the calcaneus shape variation 339 340 spreads towards captive wild boars without overlapping (Figure 3a), the mandible-ramus displays a variation intermediate between hunted and captive wild boars (Figure 3c), while the 341 symphysis reaches the range of captive wild boars (Figure 3d). 342



343

Figure 3: Phenotypic variation of Neolithic *Sus scrofa* compared to Mesolithic, modern wild captive and domestic *Sus scrofa* from Western Europe. Morphospaces and shape deformations from first and second CVA axes were computed from the shape variation of the calcaneus (a), the morphometric mapping of the humeral shaft cortical thickness with the four muscle attachment displayed (b), the mandible-ramus (c) and the mandible's symphysis (d). *Neolithisation and phenotypic diversification in* Sus scrofa

CVA prediction and kNN Classification of the Neolithic *Sus scrofa* according to the hunted, captive or domestic phenotypic comparative models computed separately for each morphospace (Figure 4a, SI4) shows that 92% of the Neolithic *Sus scrofa* have a phenotypic variation aligned with the variability of wild boar living in a natural habitat, suggesting that they behaved like wild boar, in an environment without human ecological disturbance, apart from harvesting. The projection of these morphometric inferences along the timeline from Mesolithic to Late Neolithic (Figure 4c) shows that by 5200 BCE, in Early Neolithic contexts of Southern France, and by 4000 BCE in Middle Neolithic France (Bercy) and Germany (Vaihingen), a new morphotype of small *Sus scrofa* can be observed. This small morphotype is on average 27% smaller than the large morphotype present since the Mesolithic and up to 29% smaller when compared with the large Neolithic *Sus scrofa* populations. Moreover, between the Mesolithic and the Late Neolithic, the large hunted *Sus scrofa* displays a 4% size increase.

362 CVA predictions and kNN algorithm identify only four Neolithic *Sus scrofa* with the 363 phenotypic signature, for the humerus and mandible, of adult wild boars raised in captivity 364 (Figure 4a). These captive specimens are observed around 5200 BCE in Early Neolithic 365 contexts of Fontbrégoua, circa 4750 BCE at Gazel (context of transition between Early and 366 Middle Neolithic) and later, by 4000 BCE, in the Middle Neolithic contexts of Bercy in 367 Northern France.

- 368 Finally, the first phenotype that could be considered under anthropogenic reproductive selection
- 369 was observed in the middle Neolithic site of Noyen-sur-Seine around 3800 BCE and in the late

370 Neolithic site of Chalain around 3000 BCE. These five domesticated phenotypes were only

371 detected via the morphometric mapping of the humeral cortical thickness, in both small and

372 large morphotypes (Figure 4a).



373

Figure 4: a. Pie charts representing the classification of Neolithic specimens according to the 374 375 kNN algorithms in the canonical morphospace of each bone marker (humerus, calcaneus, mandibular ramus and symphysis). The pie charts are spread horizontally along the 376 chronology of the archaeological contexts and vertically according to their latitudinal 377 positions. **b.** Diagram displaying the distribution of the d¹³C and d¹⁵N values obtained from 378 the bone collagen of Sus scrofa specimens from Chalain 3, 4 and 19. Also included are the 379 380 isotopic values for aurochs, red deer and cattle (Drucker and Bocherens, 2009). Sus scrofa individuals are displayed according to their kNN identification and their model-based size 381 clustering (Small=small dot, Large=large dot) c. Phenotypic diversification of Sus scrofa from 382 Mesolithic to Late Neolithic displayed by size variation and kNN identification of each bone 383 384 (CSA=Cross Section Area). The large and small size of the bone pictograms correspond to their size cluster identified by model-based Gaussian Density estimations. 385

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388 *Results from stable isotope analysis at Chalain*

- 389 The collagen extraction yield averaged 136 mg/g (24–199 mg/g) and the collagen carbon and
- 390 nitrogen contents averaged 42.3% (39.5–44.2%) and 15.2% (14.0–16.2%). The C:N atomic
- ratios varied from 3.24 to 3.31 in *Sus scrofa* and 3.17 to 3,25 in the remaining fauna (SI 2).
- 392 These criteria testify to the high preservation of bone collagen at this site and support the
- suitability of all stable isotope data for interpretation.
- The δ^{13} C values measured in *Sus scrofa* vary between -22.3‰ and -19.6‰ (Figure 4b). These 394 values are higher than those measured in aurochs (-24.6% to -23.6%) and red deer (-24.3% to 395 -22.6‰) and partly overlap with those measured in domestic cattle (-23.5‰ to -22.0‰) at the 396 same site (Figure 4). In *Sus scrofa*, the δ^{15} N values vary from 4.2‰ to 8.0‰ and are on average 397 higher (6.4‰,) than those measured in aurochs, red deer and cattle when considered together 398 (mean = 5.8‰, from 4.9‰ to 6.8‰) (Supplementary Table S2 and Figure 4). The δ 13C and 399 δ 15N values of the four suids with a "wild caught" phenotype and a small size do not differ 400 from the large size wild caught Sus. The three suids classified in the "domestic pig" phenotypic 401 category have intermediate δ^{13} C values (-21.3% to -21.1%), two of which have the lowest δ^{15} N 402
- 403 values of this dataset for *Sus scrofa* (4.2‰ and 4.4‰).

404 **DISCUSSION**

- 405 Using wild boars from the Mesolithic, as with the T0 for Sus Scrofa evolution during the Holocene, we first observed that current wild populations of Sus scrofa in the area under study 406 have lost 16% of their body size compared to wild populations living in Western Europe some 407 2500 years before the Neolithic transition. This supports our current understanding of a global 408 409 body mass reduction of large mammals by the end of the Pleistocene (Smith et al., 2018). Considering that body size in wild boars follows Bergman's rule (Albarella et al., 2009b), it has 410 been argued that their body size reduction over the last 10 000 years was mainly due to 411 adaptations to the global temperature increase during the Holocene [52,53]. However, human 412 413 disturbance as the driver of the reduction in the body size of large mammals since the Late 414 Pleistocene is also proposed (Pelletier and Coltman, 2018; Pigeon et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2018; Sullivan et al., 2017), with the unbalanced human harvesting of large prey as a key driver 415 for body size reduction in large mammals (Darimont et al., 2015, 2009). Interestingly, we found 416 a slight increase of wild boar body size during the Neolithic, in agreement with what has been 417 418 found for wild boar populations during the Neolithic and Bronze Age in the Iberian Peninsula (Navarrete Belda and Saña Seguí, 2017). This suggests that the harvesting behaviour inducing 419 420 size-selective harvesting of wild Sus scrofa populations occurred later, probably over the last 421 two centuries, when harvesting pressure accelerated drastically (Coltman et al., 2003; Pigeon 422 et al., 2017).
- With the Neolithic transition in Western Europe by the 6th millennium BCE, we can observe the co-existence of a large and a small morphotype of *Sus scrofa*, with an almost 30% size difference during the whole Neolithic. The occurrence of small-sized *Sus scrofa* from the early Neolithic onward in Europe would be congruent with the well-documented arrival in Western Europe of small populations of *Sus scrofa* domesticated from a Near Eastern population (Evin et al., 2015; Krause-Kyora et al., 2013; Ottoni et al., 2013). The factors explaining this size

difference compared to endemic European wild boar have not been fully investigated yet, but 429 they might be inherited from both the wild ancestral populations in the Near East, considered 430 as a smaller sub-species (Sus scrofa lybicus) (Groves, 2007), with their body size reduction 431 being the process of domestication by 8000 BCE in this area (Price and Evin, 2019). Both 432 genetic legacies have left a strong phenotypic imprint on this population which then dispersed 433 throughout Europe (Evin et al., 2015; Ottoni et al., 2013). Despite their size difference, 434 435 however, both the large and small Neolithic Sus scrofa in our dataset displayed a shape variability within the norm of reaction of wild boars behaving in their natural habitat, without 436 any mobility control. 437

438 The wild behaviour suggested by their bone morphology is not contradicted by their feeding behaviour, assessed through the stable isotopic study of the 30 large and small Sus scrofa from 439 the Late Neolithic site of Chalain (Figure 4b). Here, the δ^{13} C values measured in aurochs and 440 red deer reflect a forested habitat, where the canopy effect results in lower δ^{13} C values in plants 441 (van der Merwe and Medina, 1991) and in the herbivores feeding on them (bone collagen δ^{13} C 442 values in modern deer from deciduous forests average -23.8% and are mostly $\leq -22.6\%$; 443 (Drucker et al., 2008), values corrected for the fossil fuel effect). The higher δ^{13} C values 444 measured in Sus scrofa may not be directly comparable to those measured in herbivores because 445 their diet may have included a significant proportion of fruits (Ballari and Barrios-García, 2014; 446 Schley and Roper, 2003). Fruits have higher δ^{13} C values (by 1‰) compared to leaves in 447 understory vegetation (Roberts et al., 2017), and this difference is inherited in frugivorous 448 species compared to folivorous species (+1-1.5‰ (Krigbaum et al., 2013). Taking this into 449 account, the Sus scrofa found at Chalain would have occupied a wide range of habitats from 450 forests to open environments, while their $\delta^{15}N$ values suggest a low to moderate contribution 451 of animal protein in their diet. Overall, these results are in agreement with the opportunistic 452 omnivorous feeding behaviour and wide foraging habitat observed in modern wild boars 453 (Ballari and Barrios-García, 2014), as well as in Mesolithic European wild boars which were 454 alternatively found foraging in woodlands on a very low animal protein diet (in Denmark 455 (Maring and Riede, 2019)), in a wider range of habitats with varying degree of openness (in the 456 Netherlands; (Brusgaard et al., 2022)) or in an open environment and with a greater animal 457 protein component (in Belgium; (Bocherens et al., 2007)). 458

459 Both morphometric and isotopic signatures suggest that the evolutionary interaction between both large and small Neolithic Sus scrofa populations and the Neolithic societies of Western 460 Europe was mainly driven by harvesting (hunting). This hypothesis is supported by the recent 461 integrated study of Late Mesolithic-Neolithic human-suid interaction in Rhine-Meuse, which 462 463 found no evidence of small suid management during the Neolithic occupation (Brusgaard et al., 2022). However, previous studies from Eastern Europe in Late Neolithic Romania have 464 considered small Sus scrofa as domestic livestock living in close proximity to the Neolithic 465 settlements (Balasse et al., 2019, 2016; Evin et al., 2015), suggesting that suid interactions with 466 Neolithic societies/villagers has differed at both ends of the Neolithic dispersal in Europe. 467 Nevertheless, the co-occurrence of large and small wild morphotypes of Sus scrofa in Neolithic 468 Western Europe raises several questions. Were these small Sus scrofa feral populations, 469 stemming from the domestic Sus scrofa introduced by early Neolithic farmers, roaming free 470 and independently from the care of Neolithic people and hunted throughout the period? If so, 471

can we consider that events of admixture and gene flow between the small and large populations 472 473 were limited in time and space, preventing the morphological homogenisation of the two lineages? Were these small Sus scrofa under the care of Neolithic people and therefore 474 "domestic" (Dwyer, 1996), albeit under an extensive management system as seen in the pre-475 industrial diversity of pig production in New Guinea (see synthesis and references in (Price and 476 477 Hongo, 2019)) where they are considered as livestock but behave freely in a natural habitat, 478 with occasional proximity to the settlement? In these extensive management systems, females are captured (along with the occasional male) and penned for several months for impregnating 479 and then left free to roam in order to be harvested in the wild for pork (Dwyer, 1996). Their 480 481 short period of captive life would not have left a strong enough imprint in their bone variation 482 for our morphometric approach to detect. Whatever the answers, the emergence of this small, wild type of Sus scrofa has produced a new phenotypic and genetic diversity in the Sus scrofa 483 populations of Western Europe. 484

485 Beyond the body-sized diversity of Sus scrofa, fostered by the translocation of domesticated pigs of Near Eastern ancestry, few anthropogenic morphological changes beyond the 486 phenotypic variation of Sus scrofa living freely in its natural habitat can be observed during the 487 Neolithic niche construction in Europe. The first phenotypic change observed during the Early 488 and Middle Neolithic is a plastic response of tarsal and skull bones similar to the variation 489 490 induced by a life in captivity (Harbers et al., 2020a; Neaux et al., 2021, 2020). The rare 491 occurrence of this plastic response to captivity in the Neolithic Sus scrofa suggests that captivity was a rare practice in Neolithic Europe and that wild capture management (Dwyer and 492 Minnegal, 2020), as described above, would have been the main interaction at that time. 493 494 According to this management system, only a few females and occasionally castrated males were kept in captivity, which would explain why so few occurrences are observable in the 495 archaeological record. The limitations of our study, aside from the finite number of individuals 496 to cover such a long time period over such a large geographic area, are therefore double. First, 497 our methodological approach relies on adult and sub-adult specimens, while husbandry 498 practices could necessitate the culling of most males before the age of two. This means that the 499 phenotypic variation of a large proportion of the population may not have been sampled in this 500 study, reducing the possibility to capture phenotypic adaptations to Neolithic habitat 501 502 transformations at a greater scale. Further age-free phenotypic markers, therefore, need to be developed. The second limitation is the reductionist character of a comparative approach 503 relying on a modern referential, even with experimental conditions such as the one presented 504 505 here. The complexity of the potential configuration encompassing the interaction between 506 people and suids during the Neolithic can never be fully covered or deciphered.

Around 6000 years ago, by the Middle and especially the Late Neolithic, the 3D topography of 507 the humeral shaft cortical thickness can pick rare but significant phenotypic changes along the 508 selective trajectory towards modern pig breeds (Figure 3b). To understand the human intention 509 behind these changes, one need to consider first that differences in cortical topography between 510 hunted wild boars and current pig breeds are due to functional changes driven by selection for 511 fast growth and muscle production, altering the gait of the animal (Harbers et al., 2020b). Then, 512 that humeral shaft topography in wild boars is mainly influenced by body mass variation 513 (Harbers et al., 2020b). Accordingly, the similarity in the shaft cortical topography of some 514

Middle and Late Neolithic Sus scrofa with current pig breeds suggests that they might have 515 reached extreme body masses leading to a functional change in their humeral shaft anatomy. 516 Was their diet controlled for extreme weight gain? Are we witnessing the early evidence of 517 selection for fast body growth or greater fat production? It is impossible to answer this question 518 yet; although, in the pre-industrial pig husbandry systems of New Guinea, there are 519 520 ethnographic examples of captured wild boars fattened to the point that they cannot stand on 521 their feet (Dwyer, 1996). The isotopic signature of Late Neolithic specimens of Chalain, where "domestic", "wild" and "captive" phenotypes are present, did not provide any evidence that 522 these "domestic" pigs had a diet richer in animal protein compared to the others (Figure 4b). 523 However, if these special pigs had been fattened with a grain-rich diet, we would not have been 524 525 able to observe it with these isotopic proxies, unless the grains were grown on manured fields (Price and Hongo, 2019). 526

527 CONCLUSION

528 This study has provided strong confirmation that the archaeological record can help track the impact of a millennia of human niche construction on the evolution of animals (Laland and 529 O'Brien, 2011) and contribute to the documentation of their evolutionary trajectory (Sarrazin 530 and Lecomte, 2016). We found that the Neolithic Niche Construction had inceptive but limited 531 532 impact on the phenotypic evolution of Sus scrofa in Western Europe. In the 4500-year timeframe of our study we did not find any evidence of size-selective harvesting, though a 533 strong size decline between Pre-Neolithic and modern wild boar populations was observed, 534 suggesting that harvesting pressures on size in Sus scrofa populations did not happen during 535 536 the Neolithic transition. The main impact was the translocation of allochthonous domestic 537 populations of a smaller size, which increased the local phenotypic diversity of Sus scrofa in Western Europe. The feralisation of these alien populations did not seem to induce a novel 538 539 selective pressure on local populations or a phenotypic homogenization among the local and feral populations. Nevertheless, the greater phenotypic diversity in Western Europe Sus scrofa 540 produced by this introduction could have fostered the local domestication in Europe. A loose 541 rearing model, which would have induced no observable traits for most of the Neolithic Sus 542 scrofa in our dataset, might have been the most common husbandry practice for these animals 543 544 during this period; nonetheless, rare evidence of phenotypic divergence from the variation seen in boars in a natural habitat was documented. The first is observed from the Early Neolithic 545 onwards and is most likely due to major mobility constraints. Later in the Neolithic, phenotypic 546 changes suggest new selective pressures on Sus scrofa populations cared for by Neolithic 547 people, maybe as early evidence of selective breeding for fast growth or fat production. Further 548 549 research is still required, therefore, including paleogenomic and metabolomic studies on relevant and well-dated samples from Mesolithic to modern times in order to document the 550 rapid evolutionary pace of cultural processes. 551

552

553 CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

554 The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or

555 financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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- ⁵⁶⁴ *"For the purpose of Open Access, a CC-BY public copyright licence has been applied by the*
- authors to the present document and will be applied to all subsequent versions up to the *Author Accepted Manuscript arising from this submission.*"

567 SUPPLEMENTARIES

- Table S1. Details for each archaeological *Sus scrofa* bones studied with information on their
 archaeological stratigraphic contexts, anatomical position, lateralisation, ageing and sexing.
- 571 **Text S2:** Description and references for the archaeological contexts from which the
- 572 phenotypic markers of the study have been collected.
- Table S3: Description of the modern corpus of *Sus scrofa* specimens used for the study.
- Figure S4: Display of the phenotypic classification for each archaeological remain of *Sus scrofa* according to both LDA and kNN predictive approaches performed on the shape
 variables. Also included are the results of the model-based clustering approach performed on
 the size variables.
- 579

570

- **Table S5**. Stable isotope extraction yields from *Sus scrofa* remains collected at the
- 581 archaeological site of Chalain (France).
- 582

583 DATA AVAILABILITY

- 584 The morphometric dataset for this study can be found in the Dryad repository following this
- 585 link:
- 586 https://datadryad.org/stash/share/bIB4h5ellfpy2nafCVwhNm3Im1xOIRIX9lCR6Bu08DE.

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