Tracking long-term human and pig relationship in Southwest Asia using geometric morphometrics

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Abstract

The first evidence of pig domestication appeared ∼8,500 BC in Southwest Asia, and the long history of pig domestication in the region has been the subject of growing attention. An increasing number of studies are using morphometrics and especially geometric morphometrics to explore the differences between wild and domestic populations or to track temporal and/or geographic variation of the domestic pig stock. Here we analysed the chrono-cultural and geographic variation of ancient pig remains corresponding to ∼500 archaeological teeth (upper and lower second and third molar) recovered at ∼30 sites dating from the early Neolithic to the Roman period and located in modern-day Turkey, Syria, Iran, and northern Iraq. We used 2 dimensional geometric morphometrics approach to explore subtle variation within and between sites in order to better understand the long-term relationships between human and pigs in Southwest Asia.