

Faecal biomarkers can distinguish specific mammalian species in modern and past environments

Loïc Harrault, Karen Milek, Emilie Jardé, Laurent Jeanneau, Morgane

Derrien, David G. Anderson

► To cite this version:

Loïc Harrault, Karen Milek, Emilie Jardé, Laurent Jeanneau, Morgane Derrien, et al.. Faecal biomarkers can distinguish specific mammalian species in modern and past environments. PLoS ONE, 2019, 14 (2), pp.e0211119. 10.1371/journal.pone.0211119. insu-02013794

HAL Id: insu-02013794 https://insu.hal.science/insu-02013794

Submitted on 11 Feb 2019

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers. L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



Distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License



Faecal biomarkers can distinguish specific mammalian species in modern and past environments

Loïc Harrault , Karen Milek , Emilie Jardé, Laurent Jeanneau, Morgane Derrien, David G. Anderson

Published: February 7, 2019 • https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211119

Abstract

Identifying the presence of animals based on faecal deposits in modern and ancient environments is of primary importance to archaeologists, ecologists, forensic scientists, and watershed managers, but it has proven difficult to distinguish faecal material to the species level. Until now, four 5 β -stanols have been deployed as faecal biomarkers to distinguish between omnivores and herbivores, but they cannot distinguish between species. Here we present a database of faecal signatures from ten omnivore and herbivore species based on eleven 5 β -stanol compounds, which enables us to distinguish for the first time the faecal signatures of a wide range of animals. We validated this fingerprinting method by testing it on modern and ancient soil samples containing known faecal inputs and successfully distinguished the signatures of different omnivores.

Citation: Harrault L, Milek K, Jardé E, Jeanneau L, Derrien M, Anderson DG (2019) Faecal biomarkers can distinguish specific mammalian species in modern and past environments. PLoS ONE 14(2): e0211119. https://doi.org/<u>10.1371</u> /journal.pone.0211119

Editor: Juan J. Loor, University of Illinois, UNITED STATES

Received: June 5, 2018; Accepted: January 8, 2019; Published: February 7, 2019

Copyright: © 2019 Harrault et al. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the <u>Creative Commons</u> <u>Attribution License</u>, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Data Availability: All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

Funding: This research is part of the HUMANOR project funded by the JPI Climate Consortium by the Economic and Social Reasearch Council (ESRC, ES/M011054/1) obtained by D. A. and K. M. and by the European Reasearch Council (ERC) Advanced Grant 295458 Arctic Domus obtained by D. A., both based at the University of Aberdeen. ESRC: https://esrc.ukri.org/ ERC: https://esrc.ukri.org/ ESC: <a href="https://esrc.u

Competing interests: The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

Introduction

The signatures of animals in the environment, or on an archaeological site, can be detected by the faecal material they leave behind. Archaeologists, forensic scientists, ecologists, watershed managers and others make use of the organic residues derived from faecal inputs in the environment to determine the presence of animals and/or human activities [1-10] or to pinpoint whether animal faeces were a source of organic nutrients (e.g. in arable soils, [11-18]) or pollutants in catchment basins (e.g. a source of pathogenic bacteria, viruses and protozoa, [19-31]).

Particularly useful are a class of lipids known as 5 β -stanols, which are direct biomarkers of animal faeces, and have the important advantage of long-term preservation in soils and sediments due to their low solubility in water and their ability to bind to particulate organic matter [25]. Their distribution in faecal material, called a stanol fingerprint, identifies a particular mammalian species on the basis of its diet (main sterol uptake), its ability to biosynthesize endogenous sterols (secondary sterol uptake) and the way it biohydrogenates sterols and converts them into stanols with the help of digestive tract bacteria (intestinal flora) [19]. The most common techniques used for stanol fingerprinting are currently able to identify whether faeces belong to carnivores, omnivores or herbivores, but do not allow identification of the genus or species. Mainly because of their respective diets, cholesterol-derived 5 β -stanols are found in high proportions in the faeces of omnivores and carnivores (coprostanol and epicoprostanol), while 5 β -stanols derived from β -sitosterol, a phytosterol (plant sterol), are found in high proportions in herbivore faeces (24-ethylcoprostanol and 24-ethylepicoprostanol) [1]. In order to improve the distinction between the faecal signature of different mammal species in modern [16, 17, 20, 21, 24, 28, 29] and ancient [2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11–15, 18, 32–34] environments, efforts have been made to develop the technique of faecal steroid biomarker analysis, mainly focused on the ratios of the four above-mentioned important 5 β -stanols, sometimes in combination with the analysis of another group of faecal steroids, bile acids. However, the use of ratios calculated from four compounds has significant limitations. Ratio thresholds can and frequently do overlap, making it impossible to distinguish between species [22]. The recent introduction of new 5 β -stanol ratios, used in combination with bile acids, has improved the ability to identify some species have potentially mingled [10].

A small number of previous studies have applied multivariate analyses of a wider range of steroids, including sterols, 5α - and 5β stanols and stanones, to deepen the investigation of variations between the faecal fingerprints of different species [4, 19, 23, 26, 27, 31]. However, the sterols and 5α -stanols used in these studies are naturally found in the environment. Sterols and to a lesser extent 5 α -stanols may be direct components of soil fauna and vegetation, and 5α -stanols and stanones can also be microbiallymediated degradation products of sterol precursors, which limits their use for faecal fingerprinting [10]. On the other hand, 5β stanols found in soils almost entirely come from the endogenous biohydrogenation of sterols within the gastrointestinal tract of higher animals, making them useful as biomarkers to identify faecal inputs in soils ([10] and references therein). For faecal fingerprinting with stanols, it is therefore important to restrict the analysis to 5β -stanols alone. We hypothesized that including the analysis of other 5 β -stanol compounds, even though they are present in lower quantities in animal faeces, would significantly improve our ability to derive species-specific faeces fingerprints using multivariate statistics. To test this hypothesis, we analysed the concentrations of eleven faecal stanols in 90 reference samples of animal faeces collected from ten domestic and wild mammalian species (humans, pigs, dogs, cows, horses, goats, sheep, reindeer, lemmings, moose; <u>S1</u> and <u>S2</u> Figs, <u>S1</u> and <u>S2</u> Tables). We then used multi-variate statistics to develop a faecal fingerprint 'reference library'. Then, we validated this faecal reference database by testing it on modern and ancient soil contexts with known faecal inputs, where wild and domestic animals and humans intermingled. These were an ethnoarchaeological pastoral site in the Saian Mountains, south-central Siberia, and an archaeological site on the IAmal peninsula, north-west Siberia. At the Saian Mountains site, the intention of the lipid study was to confirm and distinguish the presence of *Rangifer* and *Canine* (and thereby depositing their faecal matter), on the wide flat plain behind the habitation site as partial confirmation of the hypothesis that this site was an early site of reindeer domestication.

Finally, we compared the diagnostic signature obtained with eleven faecal compounds and multivariate statistic models with models including only the four main faecal stanols commonly used in the literature (coprostanol, epicoprostanol, 24-ethylcoprostanol and 24-ethylepicopropstanol) and related diagnostic ratios. This comparison aimed to pinpoint the relevance of including new faecal compounds and diverse statistical tools in studies designed to identify and distinguish between animal signatures at the species level.

Study areas

A Tofa hunting camp in the Saian Mountains

Tofas are an indigenous people living in southern Siberia within that portion of the Saian Mountains that intersects with Irkutsk oblast'. Traditionally, they hunt ungulates and fur-bearers in the forests with the use of a variety of domestic animals including horses, domestic reindeer and dogs [35]. Tofa multi-species forest adaptations are considered a "classic case" in models of the origin of animal domestication in Eurasia. Several authors, as far back as the 19th century, have identified Tofa pastoralism as a possible origin point of animal domestication in Eurasia [36–39].

The test site was a winter hunting camp in the eastern Saian Mountains on the upper Dugul'ma River (N 53°27.158', E 098°38.985') at an elevation of 1458 m. In use since 2000, it consisted of a clearing located on two stepped alluvial terraces, surrounded by dense taiga forest. On the lower alluvial terrace, there was a furnished wooden cabin built for the winter hunting season. The clearing was used for making outdoor cooking fires and congregating reindeer and horses, and there was a wooden shelter for dogs. There were a couple of boulders used as salt licks for reindeer and horses, and the area around these boulders was heavily trampled. On the upper alluvial terrace there was a foundation for a round tent (including the tent poles) used every spring and autumn by the mobile herders who monitor the domestic reindeer herds for the nearby village of Alygdzher.

Hunters based in Alygdzher come to this hunting camp on horseback every autumn and use it as a base camp while they fetch their riding reindeer (male castrates) from their lichen-rich autumn pastures at higher elevations, in preparation for the winter hunting season. This takes each hunter a number of days/weeks, and anywhere between two and six hunters may use the cabin at any one time. When the riding reindeer have been caught, they are brought back to the camp and tied to trees and cut logs on the edges of the clearing. They are taken back up to lichen-rich pastures every day for a couple of hours of grazing, but otherwise remain at the camp until their owner has finished fetching the 15–25 reindeer he will use for the winter hunting season. Occasionally the reproductive reindeer herd (females, calves, and a reproductive bull) also moves through the clearing, attracted by the salt put out by the hunters. While the hunters are engaged with finding and feeding reindeer, their horses are hobbled and left to free-range forage, but they do not stray far, and frequently come back to the clearing for salt. Thus, for approximately two to three weeks every autumn, humans, horses, reindeer, and dogs co-mingle at the site.

An archaeological site on the ÎAmal peninsula

The archaeological site known as IArte 6 is located at co-ordinates $68^{\circ}54'21.3"$ N, $69^{\circ}57'36.8"$ E on a terrace 20m above the IUribeĭ River, within the IAmal county of the IAmalo-Nenets Autonomous District of Tiumen' oblast', Russian Federation. The site was first documented in 1988 by an archaeological expedition led by the Tobol'sk State Pedagogical Institute and has since been excavated six times by a number of Russian and international teams between 1992 and 2015 [40–43]. It forms part of a chain of habitation sites along the river associated with the Tiuteï Sale archaeological culture, distinguished by its ceramics. Initial dendrochronological dates put the time of occupation at the end of the 11th century AD (1071–1106) [44]. The IArte 6 site was distinguished by the foundations of semi-subterranean dwellings visible at the surface, a significant ditch interpreted at the time as a defensive structure, and significantly deep and rich cultural layers made up from the accumulation of over 30,000 animal bones and bone fragments, the majority of which came from migratory and/or domestic reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus*). Other significant species represented were Arctic fox (*Vulpus*), birds, and a number of dog and/or wolf skeletons. Among the artefacts found well-preserved in permafrost were large collections of bone tools, many of which were designed for the working of *Rangifer* and dogs today. The artefacts at this site, along with those at three others in the region, were prominently advertised by Natal'ia Fedorova as evidence of a far Northern origin point for domesticated reindeer husbandry [45, 46].

The entire terrace is still intensively used today by Nenets reindeer herders. Today's herders often camp for several weeks on the south bank of the IUribeĭ River in the early spring, if they cannot cross on ice, and wait for the ice to break and the river to subside before crossing to move to their summer pastures on the far north of the peninsula. Nenets folklore associates the site with a former encampment of a previous metal-working nomadic people known as Sikhirtia, who also harnessed domesticated animals and worked with dogs [47].

The dominant archaeological interpretation of the site is that it was a seasonal hunting camp for slaughtering and processing migratory wild *Rangifer*, which once frequented the peninsula [43]. By contemporary analogy to modern Nenetses, it is thought that around 20 people stayed at the site seasonally, and that they were supported by up to 250 head of domesticated reindeer and a small number of domesticated dogs [42].

Materials and methods

Reference sample collection

Ninety faecal samples from ten different species were collected for this study and other environmental research projects. Most of these samples were collected directly from the ground and represented a composite sample of several individuals of the same

species (<u>S2 Table</u>). Wastewater samples from wastewater treatment plants (WWTP) were sampled and considered as human faecal samples. Faecal samples originating from Scotland and France were freeze-dried before pre-treatment and lipid extraction. Samples originating from Fennoscandia and Russia were air-dried before pre-treatment and lipid extraction due the lack of freezedrying facilities while conducting remote fieldwork. Air-drying was conducted by putting samples in aluminium trays and letting them dry in a field laboratory tent over several days, during which temperatures ranged between 5 and 15°C during the night and from 10–30°C during the day. The field studies did not involve any protected species. Permission is not required to sample gather faeces for reference samples from domestic or wild animals in the Russian Federation.

Soil sampling

At the Tofa hunting camp, seven soil samples were collected at a 5m- interval on a 30m-long east-west transect through a part of the camp used frequently by horses and reindeer attracted by a salt lick. The soils were sampled during the autumn of 2014 by excavating a 10x10 cm hole and removing the top 3 cm of the surface soil, producing a soil sample of around 100 g. At the Nenets site, we systematically mapped the soils next to the site on a 5–10 m grid using 0.5x0.5 m test pits. Two to four buried soils were found in each test pit, which had been buried by layers of windblown sand. 100 g soil samples were taken for 5 β -stanol analysis, and charcoal found in the buried soils was radiocarbon dated to confirm the contemporaneity of the soils with the IArte 6 site (S2 and S3 Tables).

For both sites, once sampled, soils were air-dried as previously described for the faecal reference samples due to the lack of freeze-drying facilities in the field. The soil from the plain behind the archaeological site Arte 6 was samples under Discover Licence (oktrytyĭ list) No.647 of 19 June 2015 from the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation within the excavation organized by Andreĭ Vladimirovich Plekhanov. The soil survey at the Saian site was conducted with the permission of the lead Tofa hunter and herder to which the hunting camp was registered.

Dating method

Charred wood was recovered from dried and sieved (2mm) soil samples taken from four buried soil horizons adjacent to the ÎArte 6 site (see <u>S2</u> and <u>S3</u> Tables). The wood was identified as Salix and Betula roundwood, suitable for radiocarbon dating. AMS radiocarbon assays were conducted by the Poznań Radiocarbon Laboratory, Poland, and were calibrated using OxCal 4.2.4 [48, 49] using the IntCal 13 calibration atmospheric curve [50].

5β-stanol analysis

Faeces and soil samples were analysed according to four different methods. The method used for each sample can be found in <u>S2</u> <u>Table</u>. All solvents used were HPLC-grade.

The ASE-SIM-QP2010 method was performed following the published method [22]. Briefly, lipids of freeze-dried samples were extracted with dichloromethane (DCM) using an Accelerated Solvent Extractor (ASE 200, Dionex). Lipids were fractionized by solid-liquid chromatography to isolate polar compounds, containing 5 β -stanols. The polar fraction was derivatized with a mixture of N,O-bis-(trimethylsilyl)trifluoroacetamide and trimethylchlorosilane (BSTFA + TMCS, 99/1, v/v, Supelco) after addition of 5 α -cholestane (CDN isotope) as an internal standard (IS). Derivatized samples were analysed by a combined gas chromatograph-mass spectrometer (GC-MS), Shimadzu QP2010plus. The capillary column used was 60 m-long with an inner diameter of 0.25 mm (SLB-5ms, Supelco). Analyses were carried out in selective ion monitoring (SIM) mode (main fragments can be found in <u>S1 Table</u>). Identification of compounds was made by retention time and mass spectra comparison with those of available standards or data in the literature (<u>S1 and S2 Figs, S1 Table</u>). Quantification was achieved with 5-point internal calibration curves of available standards with relevant fragments, and comparison with a constant IS concentration added prior to analysis. The limit of quantification was 30 ppb.

The SPE-SIM-QP2010 method was performed on waste water treatment plant effluents (for the human reference samples) as previously described [24]. Briefly, lipids from filtered samples were extracted by solid phase extraction (SPE) through ENVY disks (Supelco) and analysed and quantified by GC-MS according to the ASE-SIM-QP2010 method. The limit of quantification was 30 ppb of water sample.

The sonication-SIM-QP2010 method is adapted from previous methods [26, 51, 52]. Soil and faecal samples were dried, crushed and then 1-mm sieved. 2 g of soil sample or 0.2 g of faecal sample were put in 20 ml Pyrex centrifugation tubes, then a known amount of 5β-cholan-24-ol (Chiron) was added as a recovery standard (0.5 µg for soils samples and 10 µg for faecal samples). Lipids were extracted in an ultrasonic bath at 30°C for 15 min with 15 ml of a DCM/MeOH mixture (2/1, v/v). Suspensions were centrifuged at 1500 rpm and 10°C for 10 min and filtered in glass columns through DCM-washed and packed cotton wool. Extractions were repeated two times and the three extracts pooled together. The volume of pooled extracts was reduced under a slight nitrogen stream at 40°C before further centrifugation at 3500 rpm and 10°C for 10 min. Then, suspensions were filtered in glass columns through DCM-washed and packed cotton wool and nitrogen-dried. Dried lipid extracts were saponified in 20 ml Pyrex tubes with 1.5 ml of a 1 M KOH/MeOH mixture (KOH from Sigma) at 90°C overnight (ca. 14 h). Saponified extracts were transferred into a 10 ml separatory funnel for liquid-liquid extraction. 1.5 ml of deionised water was removed from neutral fractions by filtration through glass columns packed with anhydrous sodium sulphate Na₂SO₄ (Sigma). Neutral fractions were nitrogen-dried and re-dissolved in *n*-heptane. Neutral fractions were separated into a polar (containing 5β-stanols) fractions by solid-liquid chromatography in glass columns with silica gel (in *n*-heptane). Apolar fractions were eluted with 3 x 2 ml of a *D*/MeOH mixture (2/1, v/v), then polar fractions were eluted with 4 x 1 ml of a DCM/MeOH mixture (2/1, v/v). Then, polar fractions were entred and re-dissolved in DCM. Except for the GC oven temperature program, derivatization and analyses of polar fractions were carried by GC-MS as described in the ASE-SIM-QP2010 method. GC oven temperature program started at 80°C for 1.5 min, then increased to 275°C at 12°C min⁻¹

The saponification-TIC-TRACE DSQ method was performed as previously described [20]. Briefly, 5 β -cholan-24-ol (Chiron) was added to ca. 0.1 g of dried sample as IS. Both lipid extraction and hydrolysis of ester functions were achieved in the meantime by saponification with ethanolic KOH (VWR). The fraction containing 5 β -stanols was isolated by successive liquid-liquid extraction and solid-liquid chromatography. After derivatization with a mixture of BSTFA-pyridine, 5 β -stanols were analysed by GC-MS on a Trace GC (Thermo Fisher Scientific) equipped with a ZB-5HT capillary column (Phenomenex, 30 m × 0.25 µm film thickness) coupled to a Trace DSQ MS (Thermo Fisher Scientific) running in full scan mode. Quantification was achieved by comparison of targeted compound total ion current (TIC) area with those of the IS added before lipid extraction. The limit of quantification was 100

ppb.

Statistical analysis

To compare data generated from different methods and to compare faeces to soil samples, 5 β -stanol concentrations were transformed into their relative abundance (%) compared to their sum (Fig 1). Prior to statistical analyses, 5 β -stanol relative abundances were arcsine ($\sqrt{}$ %)-transformed to normalize distributions and increase homoscedasticity as previously recommended [53]. Multivariate analyses were performed with open-source R [54] and RStudio Desktop [55] software, using the FactoMineR package and the related Rcmdr graphical interface [56]. To investigate the differences between 5 β -stanol fingerprints in herbivore faecal samples, principal component analysis (PCA) was performed on the transformed relative abundance of each compound (or variable, <u>S4 Table</u>) followed by a hierarchical clustering on principal components (HCPC, <u>Fig 2A–2C</u>) using Euclidian distances and Ward's method.



Fig 1. Distributions of 5β -stanols in herbivore and omnivore faecal material.

Compound information can be found in <u>S1 Table</u> and <u>S2 Fig.</u> Mean ± SE. Individuals: n(reindeer) = 23, n(lemming) = 6, n(goat) = 9, n(sheep) = 12, n(horse) = 7, n(moose) = 5, n(cattle) = 9, n(dog) = 4, n(human) = 8, n(pig) = 7. Individual sample information and 5 β -stanol distributions can be found in <u>S2 Table</u>. <u>https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211119.g001</u>



Fig 2. Mammal fingerprints.

(A) PCA score plot of 5 β -stanol distributions in reindeer (R), lemming (L), goat (G), sheep (S), horse (H), moose (M), cattle (C), pig (P), dog (D) and human (Hu) faecal samples. Colours represent the main clusters obtained by HCPC (C). PC 1 and PC 2 represent respectively principal components 1 and 2; numbers in brackets show the variance explained by each PC. (B) PCA correlation circle. (C) HCPC dendrogram of all species fingerprints built on PCs from the PCA. The main variables/compounds responsible for the distinction between the main clusters are hierarchized (from the more important + to the less import -) according to <u>S4 Table</u>. More details of the PCA/HCPC models can be found in <u>S4 Table</u> and sample information is in <u>S2 Table</u>.

https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211119.g002

This fingerprinting model was tested on the modern Saian Mountain site where known species used to be and are present. To do so, predictive PCA and HCPC were performed with the transformed 5 β -stanol distributions of dog, horse, human and reindeer faecal samples as other domestic species from our fingerprint library (cows, pigs, goats, and sheep) were not present in the study area, and were therefore excluded from the PCA and HCPC models (Fig 3A-3C, S5 Table). To determine whether a soil sample had a fingerprint similar to one of the species present, their 5 β -stanol distribution was added to the previous predictive PCA and HCPC models as supplementary individuals. To do so, faecal samples were treated as active variables by weighting their transformed 5 β -stanol distributions with 1, while soil samples were treated as supplementary individuals by weighting their transformed 5 β -stanol distributions with 10⁻²⁰.



Fig 3. Identification of soil faecal fingerprints from the contemporary Tofa (Saian Mountains) camp by multivariate analyses on eleven 5β-stanol distributions.

(A) PCA score plot of 5 β -stanol distributions from the reference library of faeces of dogs, horses, humans and reindeer, together with soil samples from the site. PC 1 and PC 3 represent principal components 1 and 3 respectively. The numbers in brackets show the variance explained by each PC. (B) PCA correlation circle. (C) HCPC dendrogram of dog (D), horse (H), human (Hu), reindeer (R) and soil sample (Saian) fingerprints. The main variables/compounds responsible for the distinction between the main clusters are hierarchized (from the more important + to the less import -) according to <u>S5 Table</u>. More details of the PCA/HCPC models can be found in <u>S5 Table</u> and sample information is in <u>S2 Table</u>.

This fingerprint methodology was then applied to the IAmal peninsula site context, with the exception that faecal reference fingerprints from horses, cows, pigs, sheep, and goats, species which one would not expect to find in high-latitude tundra environment, were removed from the predictive PCA model and HCPC. The faecal signatures of transitory Arctic fox and birds were excluded from the model, since people likely brought them to the site as carcasses, and their faecal input in the soils was likely to be insignificant or non-existent. As a consequence, according to the site context (see <u>Study areas</u> section), dog, human, reindeer and wild lemming (potential input of faecal material in Siberian soils) were the four species considered in the site PCA/HCPC models (Fig 4A–4C and S6 Table).



Fig 4. Identification of soil faecal fingerprints from the archaeological site of $\widehat{IArte VI}$ by multivariate analyses on eleven 5 β -stanol distributions. (A) PCA score plot of 5 β -stanol distributions from the reference library of faeces of dogs, lemmings, humans and reindeer, together with the 5 β -stanol distributions in the soil samples. PC1 and PC2 represent respectively principal components 1 and 2. The numbers in brackets show the variance explained by each PC. (B) PCA correlation circle. (C) HCPC dendrogram of dog (D), lemming (L), human (Hu), reindeer (R) and soil sample (Iamal) fingerprints. The main variables/compounds responsible for the distinction between the main clusters are hierarchized (from the more important + to the less import -) according to <u>S6 Table</u>. More details of the PCA/HCPC models can be found in <u>S6 Table</u> and sample information is in <u>S2 Table</u>.

https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211119.g004

In both of our case studies, soil samples were judged to have faecal material present when the ratio of the sum of 5β -stanols compared to those collected from an off-site control sample was greater than 10 (S2 Table). The samples that satisfied this faecal stanol concentration requirement were then analysed using PCA and HCPC to determine their 5β -stanol fingerprint and the species-specific sources of the faecal input in the soil were determined by comparison with the reference library of faecal fingerprints.

Finally, we tested the relevance of our fingerprint method using eleven faecal stanols by comparing soil sample fingerprints from the two sites identified with eleven 5 β -stanols to those identified with PCA/HCPC models based on only the four main 5 β -stanols commonly used in the literature (coprostanol, epicoprostanol, 24-ethylcoprostanol and 24-ethylepicoprostanol) and also four stanol ratios used in the literature as diet or species identification index (Figs 5 and 6, S7 Table):

- R1 = Coprostanol / (Coprostanol + 24-Ethylcoprostanol); with herbivore = 0.38 < R1 < 0.73 = human [20]
- R2 = (Coprostanol + Epicoprostanol) / (24-Ethylcoprostanol + 24-Ethylepicoprostanol); with omnivore > 1 [7]
- R3 = Epicoprostanol / (Cholestanol + Coprostanol); with human = 0.01 < R3 < 0.1 = cattle and horse [21]
- R4 = (24-Ethylepicoprostanol / 24-Ethylcoprostanol) + (Epicoprostanol / Coprostanol); with no horse = 0.8 < R4 < 1.2 = horse [10]



Fig 5. Summary comparison of diet and species identification using ratios and multivariate analyses for soil samples taken from the Tofa site (Saian Mountains).

More details are presented in <u>S7 Table</u>. R1 refers to the ratio of distributions of coprostanol/(coprostanol + 24ethylcoprostanol) used to discriminate the herbivore fingerprint from human (herbivore = 0.38 < R1 < 0.73 = human, [20]). R2 refers to the ratio of distributions of (coprostanol + epicoprostanol)/(24-ethylcoprostanol + 24-ethylepicoprostanol) used to identify the omnivore fingerprint (R2 > 1, [7]). R3 refers to the ratio of distributions of epicoprostanol/(cholestanol + coprostanol) used to discriminate the herbivore fingerprint from human (human = 0.01 < R3 < 0.1 = cattle and horse, [21]). R4 refers to the ratio of distributions of (24-ethylepicoprostanol/24-ethylcoprostanol) + (epicoprostanol/coprostanol) used to discriminate the horse fingerprint from other herbivores (No horse = 0.8 < R4 < 1.2 = horse, [10]). PCA-4 refers to the predictive PCA and its corresponding HCPC built with the distribution of the four main 5β-stanols (coprostanol, epicoprostanol, 24-ethylcoprostanol and 24-ethylepicoprostanol) in the human, dog, horse and reindeer reference samples from our database. PCA-11 refers to the predictive PCA and its corresponding HCPC built with the distribution of eleven 5βstanols in the human, dog, horse and reindeer reference samples from our database. Reindeer and horses are herbivores so diagnostics between ratios and multivariate analyses can be compared. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211119.g005



Fig 6. Summary comparison of diet and species identification using ratios and multivariate analyses for \widehat{A} mal soil samples. More details are presented in ST Table. R1 refers to the ratio of distributions of coprostanol/(coprostanol + 24ethylcoprostanol) used to discriminate the herbivore fingerprint from human (herbivore = 0.38 < R1 < 0.73 = human, [20]). R2 refers to the ratio of distributions of (coprostanol + epicoprostanol)/(24-ethylcoprostanol + 24-ethylepicoprostanol) used to identify the omnivore fingerprint (R2 > 1, [2]). R3 refers to the ratio of distributions of epicoprostanol/(cholestanol + coprostanol) used to discriminate the herbivore fingerprint from human (human = 0.01 < R3 < 0.1 = cattle and horse, [21]). R4, the diagnostic ratio for the horse fingerprint, is "not applicable" (NA) because no horses were present on this high Arctic site (see Text). PCA-4 refers to the predictive PCA and its corresponding HCPC built with the distribution of the four main 5βstanols (coprostanol, epicoprostanol, 24-ethylcoprostanol and 24-ethylepicoprostanol) in the human, dog, lemming and reindeer reference samples from our database. PCA-11 refers to the predictive PCA and its corresponding HCPC built with the distribution of eleven 5β-stanols in the human, dog, lemming and reindeer reference samples from our database. Reindeer and horses are herbivores so diagnostics between ratios and multivariate analyses can be compared. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211119.g006

The four-compound PCA/HCPC models were run with the arcsine ($\sqrt{\%}$)-transformed relative abundances of these four compounds (sum = 100%) for the relevant species for each site (Saian site: <u>Fig 7A–7C</u>, <u>S8 Table</u>; and IAmal site: <u>Fig 8A–8C</u>, <u>S9 Table</u>).



Fig 7. Multivariate analyses to identify the faecal fingerprints of soil samples from the Tofa site (Saîan Mountains) based on only the four compounds commonly used in the literature: coprostanol, epicoprostanol, 24-ethylcoprostanol and 24-ethylepicoprostanol. PCA and HCPC of the four main 5β -stanols distribution (arcsine-root transformed) of reference faecal material from dog (D), horse (H), human (Hu) and reindeer (R) and soil samples (Saian). Reference and soil samples nomenclature can be found in <u>S2 Table</u>. (A) PCA score plot of PC1 and PC2. The high variance explained by the first two PCs is due to the low number of variables (four). (B) PCA correlation circle of PC1 and PC2. (C) Dendrogram obtained by HCPC from the first two PCs of the PCA.

https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211119.g007



Fig 8. Multivariate analyses to identify the faecal fingerprints of soil samples from the ÎAmal peninsula site based on only the four compounds commonly used in the literature: coprostanol, epicoprostanol, 24-ethylcoprostanol and 24-ethylepicoprostanol.

PCA and HCPC of the four main 5β -stanol distribution (arcsine-root transformed) of reference faecal material from dog (D), human (Hu), lemming (L) and reindeer (R) and soil samples. Reference and soil sample nomenclature can be found in <u>S2</u> <u>Table</u>. (A) PCA score plot of PC1 and PC2. The high variance explained by the first two PCs is due to the low number of variables (four). (B) PCA correlation circle of PC1 and PC2. (C) Dendrogram obtained by HCPC calculated from the first two PCs of the PCA.

https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211119.g008

Results and discussion

Diet and species fingerprints

Omnivore versus herbivore fingerprints.

The analysis of 90 faecal samples from 10 mammal species allowed us to identify and quantify eleven 5 β -stanols (Fig 1, S2 Table), in cases when usually no more than six compounds were detected [4, 19, 22, 31, 34]. On average for all the species studied here, the five main 5 β -stanols in faeces were 24-ethylcoprostanol, 24-ethylepicoprostanol, coprostanol, epicoprostanol and 5 β -campestanol. Other compounds, 5 β -epicampestanol, 5 β -stigmastanol and 5 β -epistigmastanol accounted for less than 5% of the distribution. In addition, three previously unreported compounds were present in noticeable quantities: 5 β -lichestanol (S2A Fig), 5 β -brassicastanol and 5 β -epibrassicastanol and 5 β -epibrassicastanol and 5 β -epibrassicastanol (S2B Fig). On average, 5 β -lichestanol, believed to come from lichesterol provided by a diet based on lichen [57], represented around 22% of the total 5 β -stanols in reindeer faecal samples and less than 2% in other species faecal samples, which do not feed on lichesterol-rich lichen (Fig 1, S2 Table). 5 β -Brassicastanol constituted on average less than 2% of 5 β -stanols for all species and 5 β -epibrassicastanol less than 1% (Fig 1, S2 Table).

According to previous findings [1, <u>19</u>, <u>23</u>, <u>33</u>], the faeces of omnivores (humans, pigs and dogs) contained a higher relative abundance of coprostanol compared to herbivores (cattle, horses, goats, sheep, reindeer, lemmings, moose), which showed a high relative abundance of both 24-ethylcoprostanol and 24-ethylepicoprostanol (<u>Fig 1</u>). This trend is confirmed when calculating the commonly used R1 ratio (coprostanol / (coprostanol + 24-ethylcoprostanol); herbivore = 0.38 < R1 < 0.73 = human, [<u>20</u>]) and R2 ratio ((coprostanol + epicoprostanol) / (24-ethylcoprostanol + 24-ethylepicoprostanol); omnivore > 1, [<u>7</u>]) of our faecal samples (<u>S2</u> <u>Table</u>). This omnivore/herbivore fingerprint distinction, mainly driven by coprostanol, epicoprostanol, 24-ethylcoprostanol and 24-ethylepicoprostanol distribution, is also confirmed by the numerical outputs of the HCPC model run on the eleven 5 β -stanol distribution for all 10 species (<u>Fig 2C</u>, <u>S4 Table</u>): the four main explaining variables used to build the hierarchical tree and clustering species fingerprint are coprostanol > 24-ethylcoprostanol > 24-ethylepicoprostanol and 24-ethylepicoprostanol (and sitostanol). The same trend was noticed by Leeming et al. [<u>19</u>] whose pioneering PCA model, built on the concentration of steroidal compounds (including sterols, stanones, 5 α - and 5 β -stanols) from various species, made it possible to distinguish omnivore signatures (mainly humans and pigs) from herbivore signatures (mainly cattle, sheep and horses). In their model, omnivore faeces contained high concentration of C₂₇ steroidal compounds (i.e. cholesterol and its transformation products 5 α -sitostanol, 24-ethylcoprostanol etc.), while herbivore faeces were dominated by C₂₉ compounds (i.e. sitosterol and its transformation products 5 α -sitostanol, 24-ethylcoprostanol etc.). In a similar study, Shah et al. [4] were able to distinguish a human faecal fingerprint from omnivores (dogs and dingos), herbivores (pig, lamb, cow, donkey, horse, water buffalo, rabbit,

In agreement with the literature, our findings confirm that the distribution of the four main 5 β -stanols derived from the main zoosterols and phytosterols (i.e. cholesterol-derived coprostanol and epicoprostanol, and sitosterol-derived 24-ethylcoprostanol, 24-ethylepicoprostanol) in faeces provide sufficient information to distinguish human/omnivore fingerprints from herbivore fingerprints. Nevertheless, these four compounds, as well as non-faecal compounds (sterols and 5 α -stanols) may be inadequate to distinguish faecal fingerprints at the species level within a diet group (omnivore, carnivore and/or herbivore).

Omnivore species fingerprints

Among omnivores, the distinction between species, or at least between humans and others (pigs and dogs), has already been studied using stanol ratios [7, 10, 20, 21, 33, 58] or with multivariate analyses [4, 19, 23, 24, 27, 28, 31].

According to these studies, there is a clear distinction between human and pig faecal fingerprints, which is mainly explained by their differences in coprostanol, epicoprostanol, 24-ethylcoprostanol and 24-ethylepicoprostanol (Figs <u>1</u> and <u>2C</u>, <u>S4 Table</u>).

We found that dog faeces contained a large amount of coprostanol (ca. 56%) associated with a significant amount of 24ethylcoprostanol (ca. 19%) and 5β-campestanol (Fig 1, S2 Table). Dog faecal lipid biomarkers have only rarely been studied previously, because they are not of prime importance in water management, or the fertilization of ancient agricultural soils. The two studies in which dog faecal biomarkers were analysed had opposite results. While Leeming et al. [19] found mainly coprostanol (5β stanols considered: coprostanol, epicoprostanol, 5β-stigmastanol, 5β-epistigmastanol, 24-ethylcoprostanol, 24 ethylepicoprostanol), Shah et al. [4] found that coprostanol represented only ca. 1% of the total 5β -stanols (coprostanol, epicoprostanol (0%) and 24-ethylcoprostanol (99%). Diet being one of the main factors explaining faecal biomarker distribution in faeces [19], the differences observed here and in Leeming's study are likely to be due to the different diets of the dogs studied. This kind of plasticity is illustrated in <u>Fig 2C</u>, where the faecal dog sample D2 is in the same cluster as human faecal samples. Compared to the three other dog faecal samples, which were sampled from non-remote Scandinavian areas, this sample was collected from a dog owned by a Nenets family living far in Northern Siberia, and Nenets people are known to roughly share the same diet as their dogs-who are fed scraps of fish and meat not consumed by humans [59]. Having a similar diet to humans, even without the same metabolism and intestinal flora, it is not surprising that this dog had faeces rich in coprostanol, as humans do. Another important factor for the faecal biomarker distribution in faeces [19], the composition of the intestinal flora, might also explain the different results observed here and in Leeming et al. [19], as microbial gut communities can differ among dog breeds [59, 60]. Despite the poor ability of dogs to convert cholesterol to faecal stanols (mainly coprostanol, [19]) compared to humans (S2 Table), their faecal stanol fingerprint is specific enough to be distinguished from those of humans and pigs (Fig 2C). Interestingly, the distribution of the four main 5β-stanols (coprostanol, epicoprostanol, 24-ethylcoprostanol and 24-ethylepicoprostanol) in dog faeces is quite similar to those of humans, which highlights the importance of the other 5β-stanols (e.g. 5β-epibrassicastanol, 5βepicampestanol and 5 β -stigmastanol; Fig 1) to distinguish between the faeces of these two species, even if they are present in lower concentrations

Herbivore species fingerprints

Among herbivore species, we found large differences in the relative abundance of various 5 β -stanols, dominated by 24ethylcoprostanol and 24-ethylepicoprostanol (Fig 1), as expected from phytosterol-based diets (mainly sitosterol). Thanks to multivariate analyses (PCA and HCPC), the distinctive distributions of 5 β -stanols of the seven different herbivore species observed in Fig 1 made it possible to distinguish between several herbivore species' fingerprints (Fig 2A-2C, S4 Table). The analysis showed two main fingerprint groups distinguished on principal component 1 (PC1, Fig 2A and 2C) mainly by the relative abundances of 24ethylcoprostanol, 5 β -epistigmastanol, 5 β -brassicastanol and 5 β -epibrassicastanol (Fig 2B, S4 Table): one group with horses, cattle and winter-diet reindeer (lichen-based diet), and a second one with lemmings, sheep, moose, goats and summer-diet reindeer (i.e. a more diverse diet based on lichen, grass and shrubs).

Within the first group, winter-diet reindeer fingerprints were well separated from horse and cow mainly by the PC3 (mainly 5β-lichestanol, epicoprostanol and 5β-brassicastanol (Fig 2C, S4 Table). Previous studies unsuccessfully tried to identify reindeer-specific faecal lipid biomarkers due to their unique lichen-rich diet during winter [61], but reindeer faeces were never analysed for faecal stanol biomarkers so comparable data are lacking. Nevertheless the high 5β-lichestanol content found in reindeer faeces, most probably derived from their lichen-rich diet, especially during winter [62], is the main variable allowing such a distinct fingerprint (Fig 1, S2 Table).

Horse and cow fingerprints were separated well into two distinctive sub-clusters, mainly by epicoprostanol, 5 β -lichestanol and 5 β -campestanol (Fig 1, S4 Table). Interestingly, even if the number of 5 β -stanols considered here is different from the study of Gill et al. [34] (coprostanol, epicoprostanol, 5 β -campestanol, 5 β -epicampestanol, 24-ethylcoprostanol and 24-ethylepicoprostanol), the trends observed in the distribution of faecal stanols from cows and horses are similar. On the contrary, Leeming et al. [19] observed different trends compared to ours when considering six faecal stanols (coprostanol, epicoprostanol, 5 β -stigmastanol, 5 β -epistigmastanol, 24-ethylcoprostanol and 24-ethylepicoprostanol, 5 β -epistigmastanol, 24-ethylcoprostanol and 24-ethylepicoprostanol), but these differences might be due to the fact that they did not find any 24-ethylepicoprostanol in cow and horse faeces.

Within the second group, the faecal fingerprints of lemmings were well separated from those of sheep, summer-diet reindeer, goats and moose (Fig 2C). This distinction is mainly due to the near absence of 24-ethylepicoprostanol in lemming faeces (Fig 1). Within the cluster comprising sheep, summer-diet reindeer, goats and moose, the species fingerprints were less distinguished. Nevertheless, summer-diet reindeer and sheep fingerprints were well separated from other species, in the case of reindeer faeces because of their higher $\beta\beta$ -lichestanol content, and in the case of sheep faeces because of their higher epicoprostanol content (Fig 1). In this ten-species HCPC model including seven herbivores, goats have the least specific fingerprint and individual fingerprints are clustered together with both moose and sheep. This lack of specificity could be the result of different faecors. Firstly, goats are known to graze on a greater variety of plants compared to other herbivores [63] and as diet is a key faecor in faecal stanol fingerprinting [19], the different diets inherent in different goat samples could partly explain their heterogeneity [64]. Secondly, from a purely statistical point of view, this HCPC model and inherent clustering was built to maximize the explained variance between ten species, including omnivores with a very different stanol fingerprint compared to those of herbivores, and not to maximize the explained variance between particular species relevant to a specific context (i.e. including less species fingerprints).

This lack of specificity of the PCA model to distinguish species fingerprints at a certain level highlights the importance of prescreening when trying to apply this database to specific case studies in order to narrow the database used to only the species that have the potential to be present on a site [10]. For ecologists, watershed managers, and soil forensic scientists, this pre-screening step would necessarily involve a survey of local wild and domestic species, to make the database context-specific. Pre-screening has already been successfully applied to distinguish the main sources of faecal contamination in recent water and sediment studies [23, 29, 27, 31]. This pre-screening study is more complex for archaeological studies since archaeological (faunal remains, artefacts) ethnographical (written and oral history), palynological (climate and vegetation reconstruction) or geochemical (elemental and isotopic analyses) clues are not necessarily available to identify the potential species present on site during its occupation period. Including too many species in the faecal HPCP model could lead to an enhanced and misleading variance to explain and artificially create a variance noise decreasing the efficiency of species distinction. In comparison, not including a species, could lead to a model underestimating potential faecal source inputs to the site context and mislead results and interpretations. It is therefore crucial, when possible, to gather as much information as possible on the potential faecal inputs at a particular site to properly use faecal stanols as biomarkers to identify species from environmental samples [6, 10, 18].

However, the current model shows that the 5β -stanol fingerprints of different mammals can be clearly distinguished at the species level, even among herbivores, using the distribution of eleven faecal stanols combined with multivariate statistics. In addition, for a species with large seasonal variations in diet such as reindeer, this fingerprinting method also makes it possible to distinguish a winter-diet fingerprint from a summer diet fingerprint, when diets are more varied.

Application and validation of the faecal fingerprint reference library to modern and archaeological sites

Contemporary test case: A Tofa hunting camp in the Saian mountains.

In the PCA model built based for the Tofa hunter camp context from the Saîan Mountains, omnivores (human and dogs) were clearly distinguished from herbivores (reindeer and horse) by PC1 (Fig 3A), whose main contributions came from coprostanol, 24-ethylepicoprostanol, 5 β -epicampestanol and 5 β -lichestanol (Fig 3B and S5 Table). As in the PCA/HCPC models including all ten species (Fig 2A–2C, S4 Table), there was a degree of overlap between the human and dog faecal fingerprints in the PCA model, probably due to the special diet of the dog D2 sample (see previous discussion) and perhaps due to the intra-species variabilities involved when fingerprinting on single individuals (see [65–67] for humans). PCA results are confirmed and further refined by the further HCPC which shows a clear distinction between omnivore and herbivore fingerprints mainly according to coprostanol, 24-ethylcoprostanol, 3 β -lichestanol, 24-ethylcoprostanol and epicoprostanol (Fig 3C, S5 Table). As discussed previously and in agreement to earlier studies ([19, 33] and references therein) the main cholesterol- and phytosterol-derived faecal stanols make it possible to distinguish diet-related fingerprint differences (omnivores versus herbivores).

Among herbivores, the species fingerprints of reindeer with contrasted diets (summer diet) are clearly separated from each other and from those of horses mainly due to 5 β -lichestanol and epicoprostanol distributions (Figs <u>1</u> and <u>3A-3C</u>, <u>S5 Table</u>). Surprisingly, 5 β -lichestanol is not the main variable allowing the distinction between the faecal fingerprint of reindeer with a diet dominated by lichen (winter diet) and those with a more various diet (summer diet, <u>S2</u> and <u>S5</u> Tables). This discrepancy might be explained by the fact that reindeer do not follow a strict seasonal diet, but instead vary the proportion of lichens they eat in cold and warm seasons, with up to 70% of their diet being made up of lichens in the winter [<u>68</u>]. As lichen is most probably the main source of lichesterol for reindeer [<u>57</u>], the abundance of its transformation product 5 β -lichestanol in reindeer faeces might not be as season-dependent as we first hypothesized.

When the concentrations of the 5 β -stanols of the soil samples from the camp were compared to the PCA/HCPC models built from the reference library of dog, human, reindeer and horse faecal stanols, it was clear that none of the soil samples contained faecal signatures matching those of humans or dogs (Fig 3A-3C). One soil sample (Saian2) had a horse fingerprint, while all other soil samples had reindeer fingerprints. Significantly, the soil samples with reindeer faecal fingerprints closely matched the faecal reference samples of reindeer with a lichen-based, winter diet (Fig 3C). These results show that the PCA/HCPC models built using our eleven-stanol reference library were able to distinguish the faecal fingerprints of the two species–horses and reindeer–that frequented the part of the site from which the soil samples were taken, and also successfully identified the dominant season of use.

Archaeological test case: ÎArte 6, on the ÎAmal peninsula.

In the PCA/HCPC models built for the IAmal archaeological site, there was a clear distinction between reindeer and lemming fingerprints along PC1, whose main contributing variables were 5β-epistigmastanol, 5β-lichestanol, 24-ethylepicoprostanol, 5β-epibrassicastanol and 24-ethylcoprostanol relative abundances (Fig 4A and 4B, S6 Table). In accordance with our ten-species PCA model (Fig 2A–2C, S4 Table), omnivore (humans and dogs) and herbivore (reindeer and lemmings) fingerprints were mainly differentiated by the relative concentrations of coprostanol and 24-ethylcoprostanol along PC2. As previously discussed, there was a slight overlap between the human and dog faecal fingerprints.

Soil samples from the buried soils adjacent to the site, which were radiocarbon dated to the 5th-11th century AD (<u>S3 Table</u>), were analysed for faecal fingerprints using the PCA model and corresponding HCPC generated from the relative concentrations of 5 β -stanols in the human, dog, reindeer and lemming faecal reference library (<u>Fig 4A and 4C</u>). We found that one soil sample (lamal4) had an omnivore fingerprint closely linked to the faecal fingerprints for dogs, and the remaining six soil samples had a winter-diet reindeer fingerprint (lamal2, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9). No sample presented a lemming fingerprint, which suggested the low contribution of these rodents to the background level of 5 β -stanols in this area. Using the PCA model alone, one soil sample (lamal3) appeared to contain a faecal fingerprint that was a mixture of omnivore (human or dog) and reindeer (<u>Fig 4A</u>). However, this apparent mixture was resolved using HCPC, which clearly showed the closer link between this sample's faecal fingerprint and that of winter-diet reindeer (Fig 4C) and highlighted the importance of analyzing data beyond the PCA level.

The PCA/HCPC models we built using our eleven 5β -stanol reference library clearly demonstrated that reindeer eating an early spring/late autumn/winter diet predominantly based on lichen had indeed been congregating in close proximity to the human camp of IArte 6 in the 5th-11th century AD–a behaviour that would not have been exhibited by migratory wild reindeer. This result has important implications for our understanding of early reindeer domestication, and the ongoing debate about where and when this relationship developed. This case study highlights the potential of our 5 β -stanol fingerprinting technique to contribute to the interpretation of human-animal relations in the past.

Relevance of the method compared to currently-used ones

To compare the different approaches more closely, for each soil sample analysed, we compared the faecal sources determined using four stanol ratios widely used in the literature (R1, R2, R3 and R4, see <u>Material and Methods</u> section and <u>S7 Table</u>), the PCA/HCPC models built using only the relative abundances of the four 5 β -stanol compounds normally used in the aforementioned ratios (coprostanol, epicoprostanol, 24-ethylcoprostanol and 24-ethylepicoprostanol), and the PCA/HCPC models built using the eleven 5 β -stanol distributions used in this study.

For the Saian Mountains site, the fingerprints given by the four diagnostic ratios were generally in good agreement, and identified a predominantly herbivore faecal input in soil samples (S7 Table, Fig 5). Nevertheless, for sample Saian8, the R1 ratio, which is only based on two compounds (coprostanol and 24-ethylcoprostanol), identified an omnivore fingerprint while the three other ratios identified an herbivorous one (horse = herbivore for R4 ratio [10]). The limits of this two-compound ratio has already been raised by Derrien et al. [22] when applied to the distinction between pig and cow fingerprints and is confirmed in the present study by its comparison with other diagnostic ratios. While R2 and R3 ratios gave similar herbivore fingerprints for Saian soil samples, their diagnosis was different for two samples from the IAmal peninsula archaeological site (lamal3 and lamal4, <u>S7 Table, Fig 6</u>). As these two ratios are based on different compound distributions (coprostanol, epicoprostanol, 24-ethylcoprostanol and 24- ethylepicoprostanol for R2; coprostanol, epicoprostanol for R3), this discrepancy highlights the fact that diagnostic

ratios are compound-dependent and that the faecal source input attributed to a soil sample is dependent on the ratio, and thus compounds, chosen.

The failure to attribute a faecal fingerprint based only on the four main faecal stanols (coprostanol, epicoprostanol, 24ethylcoprostanol and 24-ethylepicoprostanol) can also be read into the PCA/HPCP models based on their relative abundances for both sites. For the Saian Mountains site, the four-compound PCA/HPCP models do not allow a clear distinction between horse and reindeer fingerprints. Neither are dog and human fingerprints clearly separated (Figs 5 and 7, <u>S7</u> and <u>S8</u> Tables). Therefore this method cannot be used to identify the main faecal input sources to soil samples. The lack of distinction between dog and human fingerprints follows from the fact that the distribution of the four main compounds in their respective faeces is quite similar, as previously discussed. The same issue occurs with the four-compound PCA/HCPC model of the IAmal peninsula archaeological site since the human and dog fingerprints are not well separated and therefore the identification of the main faecal input source for omnivore-related soil samples cannot be done to the species level (Figs <u>6</u> and <u>8</u>, <u>S7</u> and <u>59</u> Tables). This methodological limitation is confirmed by the discrepancy observed between faecal source identification achieved by the four-compound PCA/HCPC models and those from ratios for 53% of our soil samples (Saian8 and lamal3 to 9).

By contrast, the method which uses eleven compounds (PCA-11, Figs <u>2C</u>, <u>5</u> and <u>6</u>, <u>S4</u> and <u>S7</u> Tables) makes it possible to clearly distinguish the fingerprints at the species level (see above) with little overlap. As a consequence, the main faecal input sources attributed to soil samples can be achieved at the species level with more confidence than when using diagnostic ratios or four-compound PCA/HCPC models. It has to be noted that for each case-specific model, the compounds (or variables) allowing the distinction between species fingerprints are not necessarily always the same. Their respective weights will depend on the context. Thus, the five main compounds which allow the clear separation of species for the Saian Mountains site are coprostanol > 24-ethylepicoprostanol > 5β-lichestanol > 24-ethylcoprostanol > 6β-lichestanol > 24-ethylcoprostanol > 6β-lichestanol > 24-ethylcoprostanol > 5β-lichestanol > 24-ethylcoprostanol > 5β-stigmastanol, followed by the six remaining compounds (Fig <u>3C</u>, <u>S5</u> <u>Table</u>). Similarly, for the IAmal peninsula archaeological site, these compounds are coprostanol > 24-ethylcoprostanol > 5β-stigmastanol, followed by the six remaining compounds (Fig <u>4C</u>, <u>S6</u> <u>Table</u>). If we turn to the model built from ten species fingerprints for both case-studies (Fig <u>2C</u>, <u>S4</u> <u>Table</u>), we would need three of the four main faecal stanols (coprostanol, 24-ethylepicoprostanol and 24-ethylcoprostanol) to distinguish between omnivore and herbivore fingerprints. Despite the fact that species determination can be done in some cases with a small set of 5β-stanols does not mean that the other compounds are superfluous. As demonstrated by the case of trying to distinguish between dogs and humans, stanol fingerprinting is much more successful when employing eleven compounds instead of four. Part of this success is due to the fact that these two case studies structured to an unusual degree around 5β-lichestanol, which is the stanol present in higher proportions in reindeer faeces than that of o

These results also highlight the importance of using appropriate statistical techniques and bundles of compounds to improve species fingerprint distinction. Indeed, PCA analysis was first used by Leeming et al. [<u>19</u>] to distinguish the main trends among steroidal compounds to identify specific fingerprints. However, they did not only use 5 β -stanols but also sterols and 5 α -stanols, which can naturally occur in the environment (<u>S2 Table</u> and [<u>10</u>]) and stanones, which are intermediate products in the transformation process of sterols into 5 β - and 5 α -stanols [<u>19</u>]. As a consequence, their PCA model was not based only on pure faecal biomarkers, which could lead to bias when applied to the interpretation of environmental samples. Nevertheless, their pioneering study could also have been improved by using a further hierarchical analysis (canonical, HCPC etc.) following their PCA as PCA distinction is only visually-based on two PCs while hierarchical analyses use more dimensions and therefore take into account more variance observed between samples. Shah et al. [<u>4</u>] also used non faecal steroids in their study (5 α -stanols and sterols in addition to the faecal 5 β -stanols) in combination with canonical analysis and were not able to distinguish between herbivore species. It might have been possible if only using 5 β -stanols. These two previous studies focused on several and diverse species, which also makes it more complex to distinguish species' fingerprints, since there is an increased variance to explain. When focusing on a smaller number of species with contrasted steroid distributions (e.g. human, cattle and pig), it is however possible to distinguish between species fingerprints using both 5 β - and 5 α -stanols and 5 α -stanols and to successfully apply it to water samples (<u>22-24, 27, 28, 31</u>] without using further hierarchical analysis after PCA. Importantly, the occurrence of 5 α -stanols in large amounts in soils, especially sitostanol (<u>S2 Table</u>), and their lack of specificity as faecal bi

Finally, in contrast to the analysis of other faecal lipid biomarkers like bile acids (e.g. [3, 11]), the analysis and quantification of the eleven 5 β -stanols considered here can be achieved on a single GC-MS injection, since these compounds are part of the same fraction. As a consequence, it is neither more expensive nor more time consuming to improve the accuracy of faecal fingerprinting by switching from four to eleven compounds when only considering 5 β -stanols.

Conclusions

Our results call into question the validity of using simple ratios and even multivariate statistics based on only four 5 β -stanols for species-specific faecal fingerprinting. The faecal fingerprint reference library used here, and the use of PCA and HCPC models built using eleven 5 β -stanols, provide much more precise faecal source attributions. The fingerprinting method employed here overcomes the limitations of using simple ratios involving only four 5 β -stanol compounds (coprostanol and epicoprostanol, 24-ethylepicoprostanol) to determine the main sources of faecal inputs in environmental and archaeological samples. For the two cases studied here, the model used confirmed the past presence of horses and reindeer on the Saian Mountains site and reindeer and dogs on the IAmal peninsula archaeological site.

As more faecal reference samples from a larger number of mammalian species consuming different diets are added to our faecal reference library, species identification and the breadth of its applications will continue to improve.

Supporting information

S1 Fig. Example GC-MS chromatogram (total ion current) from a reindeer sample (R12, see S2 Table).

Retention times correspond to the analytical method used for this sample as described in Materials and Methods and <u>S2 Table</u>. Trivial names of the eleven 5 β -stanols considered in this study are labelled black (<u>S1 Table</u>). Trivial names of 5 α -stanols and sterol precursors are labelled grey.

https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211119.s001 (TIF)

S2 Fig. Mass spectra and summarised fragmentation patterns of TMSi ether derivatives of eleven 5β-stanols found in faecal samples.

M+ = molecular fragment. SC = side chain. TMSiOH = trimethylsilanol fragment. Me = methyl. Identification of 5β-lichestanol was made by comparison with the mass spectra of the TMSi ether derivative of stellasterol (24-methyl-5α-cholesta-7,22E-dien-3β-ol), which is structurally similar except for the B-ring double bond location [69]. Identification of both 5β-brassicastanol and 5β-

epibrassicastanol was made by comparison with the mass spectra of the TMSi ether derivative of the 5α -brassicastanol (24-methyl- 5α -cholest-22E-en-3 β -ol, [70]). The mass spectra of the TMSi ether derivative of 5 β -epibrassicastanol is similar to the one of 5 β -brassicastanol, therefore we did not present it here. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211119.s002

(TIF)

S1 Table. 5β-stanol names and GC-MS properties.

5β-stanols considered in this study and common 5α-stanols and sterols found in samples analyzed. Chromatographic and massspectrometric properties for identification and quantification of listed compounds are also presented. <u>https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211119.s003</u> (XLSX)

<u>S2 Table.</u> Sample information and 5 β -stanol distribution.

Information relative to sample collection and analytical method as presented in Materials and Methods, 5β -stanol distribution and sum, concentration of main 5α -stanols and recovery efficiency of internal standard when added. <u>https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211119.s004</u>

(XLSX)

S3 Table. AMS dating information for the buried soils at the ÎArte 6 site, ÎAmal peninsula.

Red text indicates outliers. The radiocarbon calibration multiplot provides a graphical summary of the data in the <u>S2 Table</u>. The results show that the buried soils adjacent to IArte 6, which contained faecal lipids, developed between the 6th and early 11th century AD.

<u>https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211119.s005</u> (XLSX)

S4 Table. Characteristics of the first four principal components, variables and species distinction of the PCA built on the distribution of 5β-stanols in all ten species faeces.

Characteristics of the HCPC model built on the PCA. Variables and species loadings on PCs 1, 2, 3 and 4 show which variables contribute the most (absolute value) to distinguish between species as represented by "General distinction" regression coefficient and related relevant significantly distinguished species. For each PC, the more two species have a high loading difference (relative value) the more they are distinguished by this PC. For the HCPC model, the main variables (or compounds) explaining the hierarchical cluster tree building have the highest absolute v.test/Etat2 values. The species fingerprints gathered within the main clusters are identified and the main variables responsible for the distinction between main clusters are given by the highest v.test values.

<u>https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211119.s006</u> (XLSX)

<u>S5 Table.</u> Characteristics of the first four principal components, variables and species distinction of the PCA built on the distribution of 5β-stanols in human, dog, horse and reindeer faeces (selected for the Tofa site context, Saian Mountains).

Characteristics of the HCPC model built on the PCA. Variables and species loadings on PCs 1, 2, 3 and 4 show which variables contribute the most (absolute value) to distinguish between species as represented by "General distinction" regression coefficient and related relevant significantly distinguished species. For each PC, the more two species have a high loading difference (relative value) the more they are distinguished by this PC. For the HCPC model, the main variables (or compounds) explaining the hierarchical cluster tree building have the highest absolute v.test/Etat2 values. The species fingerprints gathered within the main clusters are identified and the percentage of the species samples are given (%). The main variables responsible for the distinction between main clusters are given by the highest v.test values. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211119.s007

(XLSX)

<u>S6 Table.</u> Characteristics of the first four principal components, variables and species distinction of the PCA built on the distribution of 5β-stanols in human, dog, horse and reindeer faeces (selected for the IAmal site context).

Characteristics of the HCPC model built on the PCA. Variables and species loadings on PCs 1, 2, 3 and 4 show which variables contribute the most (absolute value) to distinguish between species as represented by "General distinction" regression coefficient and related relevant significantly distinguished species. For each PC, the more two species have a high loading difference (relative value) the more they are distinguished by this PC. For the HCPC model, the main variables (or compounds) explaining the hierarchical cluster tree building have the highest absolute v.test/Etat2 values. The species fingerprints gathered within the main clusters are given by the highest v.test values. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211119.s008 (XLSX)

<u>S7 Table.</u> Comparison of diet and species identification between ratios and multivariate analyses for both case study sites. <u>https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211119.s009</u> (XLSX)

<u>S8 Table.</u> Characteristics of the first four principal components, variables and species distinction of the PCA built on the distribution of the four main 5β-stanols (coprostanol, epicoprostanol, 24-ethylcoprostanol and 24-ethylepicoprostanol) in human, dog, horse and reindeer faeces (selected for the Tofa site context, Salan Mountains).

Characteristics of the HCPC model built on the PCA. Variables and species loadings on PCs 1, 2, 3 and 4 show which variables contribute the most (absolute value) to distinguish between species as represented by "General distinction" regression coefficient and related relevant significantly distinguished species. For each PC, the more two species have a high loading difference (relative value) the more they are distinguished by this PC. For the HCPC model, the main variables (or compounds) explaining the hierarchical cluster tree building have the highest absolute v.test/Etat2 values. The species fingerprints gathered within the main clusters are identified and the percentage of the species samples are given (%). The main variables responsible for the distinction between main clusters are given by the highest v.test values.

<u>https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211119.s010</u> (XLSX)

<u>S9 Table.</u> Characteristics of the first four principal components, variables and species distinction of the PCA built on the distribution of the four main 5β-stanols (coprostanol, epicoprostanol, 24-ethylcoprostanol and 24-ethylepicoprostanol) 5β-stanols in human, dog, horse and reindeer faeces (selected for the ÎAmal site context).

Characteristics of the HCPC model built on the PCA. Variables and species loadings on PCs 1, 2, 3 and 4 show which variables

contribute the most (absolute value) to distinguish between species as represented by "General distinction" regression coefficient and related relevant significantly distinguished species. For each PC, the more two species have a high loading difference (relative value) the more they are distinguished by this PC. For the HCPC model, the main variables (or compounds) explaining the hierarchical cluster tree building have the highest absolute v.test/Etat2 values. The species fingerprints gathered within the main clusters are identified and the percentage of the species samples are given (%). The main variables responsible for the distinction between main clusters are given by the highest v.test values. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211119.s011

(XLSX)

Acknowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Jasmine Ross, Robert Mayes and Marina Erb in the lab, Julia Kremkova and Gabriela Domene Lopez in the field, and Susan Ramsey with the charcoal identification. We are also grateful to Kjell-Åke Aronsson, Stine Barlindhaug, Anjessica Ericsson, Gillian Green, Timo Kumpula, Mari Kuoppamaa, Louis Lorant, Carol Kyle, Knut Røed, and an anonymous group of farmers close to Vilhelmina (Sweden) and for providing faecal reference samples. Thank you to Benoit Geslin and François Husson for advice on statistical analyses, and to Paul Pettitt for his comments on the manuscript. **Competing interests:** Authors declare no competing interest. **Data and materials availability:** For all samples, 5 β -stanol relative abundances presented in the text are available in <u>S2 Table</u> as well as their summed concentration, concentrations of main 5 α -stanols and recovery efficiency when a recovery standard was used. PCA and HCPC results and plots can be freely reproduced with R software (via FactoMineR and/or Rcmdr packages). R scripts are available on <u>S4</u>, <u>S5</u>, <u>S6</u>, <u>S8</u> and <u>S9</u> Tables. The authors are grateful for the constructive and useful comments of two anonymous reviewers which greatly contributed to improve the manuscript quality.

References

- Bethell PH, Goad LJ, Evershed RP, Ottaway J. The study of molecular markers of human activity: the use of coprostanol in the soil as an indicator of human faecal material. J Archaeol Sci. 1994;21: 619–632.
 <u>View Article ISTEX</u> • <u>Google Scholar</u>
- Evershed RP, Bethell PH, Reynolds PJ, Walsh NJ. 5β-Stigmastanol and related 5β-stanols as biomarkers of manuring: analysis of modern experimental material and assessment of the archaeological potential. J Archaeol Sci. 1997;24: 485–495.
 <u>View Article ISTEX</u> • <u>Google Scholar</u>
- Bull ID, Elhmmali MM, Roberts DJ, Evershed RP. The application of steroidal biomarkers to track the abandonment of a Roman wastewater course at the Agora (Athens, Greece). Archaeometry. 2003;45: 149–161.
 <u>View Article ISTEX</u> • <u>Google Scholar</u>
- Shah VG, Dunstan RH, Geary PM, Coombes P, Roberts TK, Von Nagy-Felsobuki E. Evaluating potential applications of faecal sterols in distinguishing sources of faecal contamination from mixed faecal samples. Water Res. 2007;41: 3691–700. <u>PubMed ID 17614115</u> <u>View Article PANIST</u> • <u>PubMed/NCBI</u> • <u>Google Scholar</u>
- Evershed RP. Organic residue analysis in archaeology: the archaeological biomarker revolution. Archaeometry. 2008;50: 895–924. <u>View Article ISTEX</u> • <u>Google Scholar</u>
- Hjulström B, Isaksson S. Identification of activity area signatures in a reconstructed Iron Age house by combining element and lipid analyses of sediments. J Archaeol Sci. 2009;36: 174–183.
 <u>View Article PANIST</u> • <u>Google Scholar</u>
- 7. Shillito L-M, Bull ID, Matthews W, Almond MJ, Williams JM, Evershed RP. Biomolecular and micromorphological analysis of suspected faecal deposits at Neolithic Çatalhöyük, Turkey. J Archaeol Sci. 2011;38: 1869–1877.
 <u>View Article PANIST</u> • <u>Google Scholar</u>
- 8. von der Lühe B, Dawson LA, Mayes RW, Forbes SL, Fiedler S. Investigation of sterols as potential biomarkers for the detection of pig (S. s. domesticus) decomposition fluid in soils. Forensic Sci Int. 2013;230: 68–73. <u>PubMed ID 23583120</u> <u>View Article PANIST</u> • <u>PubMed/NCBI</u> • <u>Google Scholar</u>
- 9. Bermann J, Lehndorff E, Klinger R, Linzen S, Munkhbayar L, Oczipka M, et al. Biomarkers in archaeology—Land use around the Uyghur capital Karabalgasun, Orkhon Valley, Mongolia. Praehist Zeitschrift. 2014;89: 337–370.
 <u>View Article</u> <u>Google Scholar</u>
- Prost K, Birk JJ, Lehndorff E, Gerlach R, Amelung W. Steroid Biomarkers Revisited–Improved Source Identification of Faecal Remains in Archaeological Soil Material. Bicho N, editor. PLoS One. 2017;12: e0164882. <u>https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0164882</u> PubMed ID 28060808
- Simpson IA, Dockrill SJ, Bull ID, Evershed RP. Early anthropogenic soil formation at tofts Ness, Sanday, Orkney. J Archaeol Sci. 1998;25: 729–746. <u>View Article ISTEX</u> • Google Scholar
- Simpson IA, van Bergen PF, Perret V, Elhmmali MM, Roberts DJ, Evershed RP. Lipid biomarkers of manuring practice in relict anthropogenic soils. The Holocene. 1999;9: 223–229.
 <u>View Article ISTEX</u> • <u>Google Scholar</u>
- Bull ID, van Bergen PF, Poulton PR, Evershed RP. Organic geochemical studies of soils from the Rothamsted Classical Experiments—II, Soils from the Hoosfield Spring Barley Experiment treated with different quantities of manure. Org Geochem. 1998;28: 11–26. <u>View Article ISTEX</u> • Google Scholar
- 14. Bull ID, Simpson IA, Dockrill SJ, Evershed RP. Organic geochemical evidence for the origin of ancient anthropogenic soil deposits at Tofts Ness, Sanday,

Orkney. Org Geochem. 1999;30: 535–556. <u>View Article ISTEX</u> • <u>Google Scholar</u>

- 15. Bull I, Betancourt P, Evershed R. An organic geochemical investigation of the practice of manuring at a Minoan site on Pseira Island, Crete. Geoarchaeology-An Int J. 2001;16: 223–242. <u>View Article</u> • Google Scholar
- 16. Birk JJ, Teixeira WG, Neves EG, Glaser B. Faeces deposition on Amazonian Anthrosols as assessed from 5β-stanols. J Archaeol Sci. 2011;38: 1209–1220.
 <u>View Article PANIST</u> <u>Google Scholar</u>
- Grimalt JO, Fernandez P, Bayona JM, Albaiges J. Assessment of fecal sterols and ketones as indicators of urban sewage inputs to coastal waters. Environ Sci Technol. 1990;24: 357–363.
 <u>View Article</u> • <u>Google Scholar</u>
- Lauer F, Prost K, Gerlach R, Pätzold S, Wolf M, Urmersbach S, et al. Organic Fertilization and sufficient nutrient status in prehistoric agriculture?– Indications from multi-proxy analyses of archaeological topsoil relicts. PLoS One. 2014;9: e106244. <u>PubMed ID 25180911</u> <u>View Article • PubMed/NCBI • Google Scholar</u>
- Leeming R, Ball A, Ashbolt N, Nichols P. Using faecal sterols from humans and animals to distinguish faecal pollution in receiving waters. Water Res. 1996;30: 2893–2900.
 <u>View Article ISTEX</u> • Google Scholar
- 20. Leeming R, Latham V, Rayner M, Nichols P. Detecting and Distinguishing Sources of Sewage Pollution in Australian Inland and Coastal Waters and Sediments. In: Eganhouse RP, editor. Molecular markers in environmental geochemistry. Washinton, DC: American Chemical Society; 1997. pp. 306–319. <u>https://doi.org/10.1021/bk-1997-0671.ch020</u>
- 21. Standley LJ, Kaplan LA, Smith D. Molecular tracers of organic matter sources to surface water resources. Environ Sci Technol. 2000;34: 3124–3130. <u>View Article</u> • Google Scholar
- 22. Derrien M, Jardé E, Gruau G, Pierson-Wickmann A-C. Extreme variability of steroid profiles in cow feces and pig slurries at the regional scale: implications for the use of steroids to specify fecal pollution sources in waters. J Agric Food Chem. 2011;59: 7294–302. <u>PubMed ID 21604805</u> <u>View Article • PubMed/NCBI</u> • <u>Google Scholar</u>
- 23. Derrien M, Jardé E, Gruau G, Pourcher AM, Gourmelon M, Jadas-Hécart A, et al. Origin of fecal contamination in waters from contrasted areas: stanols as Microbial Source Tracking markers. Water Res. 2012;46: 4009–16. <u>PubMed ID 22673347</u> <u>View Article PANIST</u> • <u>PubMed/NCBI</u> • <u>Google Scholar</u>
- 24. Jeanneau L, Jardé E, Gruau G. Influence of salinity and natural organic matter on the solid phase extraction of sterols and stanols: application to the determination of the human sterol fingerprint in aqueous matrices. J Chromatogr A. 2011;1218: 2513–20. PubMed ID 21420686
 <u>View Article PANIST</u> PubMed/NCBI Google Scholar
- 25. Lloyd CEM, Michaelides K, Chadwick DR, Dungait JAJ, Evershed RP. Tracing the flow-driven vertical transport of livestock-derived organic matter through soil using biomarkers. Org Geochem. 2012;43: 56–66.
 <u>View Article PANIST</u> <u>Google Scholar</u>
- 26. Biache C, Philp RP. The use of sterol distributions combined with compound specific isotope analyses as a tool to identify the origin of fecal contamination in rivers. Water Res. 2013;47: 1201–8. <u>PubMed ID 23267530</u> <u>View Article PANIST</u> • <u>PubMed/NCBI</u> • <u>Google Scholar</u>
- 27. Harrault L, Jardé E, Jeanneau L, Petitjean P. Development of the analysis of fecal stanols in the oyster Crassostrea gigas and identification of fecal contamination in shellfish harvesting areas. Lipids. 2014;49: 597–607. <u>PubMed ID 24771549</u>
 <u>View Article PubMed/NCBI</u> <u>Google Scholar</u>
- 28. Harrault L, Jardé E, Jeanneau L, Petitjean P. Are fecal stanols suitable to record and identify a pulse of human fecal contamination in short-term exposed shellfish? a microcosm study. Mar Pollut Bull. 2014; 1–2:40–48.
 <u>View Article PANIST</u> Google Scholar
- 29. Devane ML, Wood D, Chappell A, Robson B, Webster-Brown J, Gilpin BJ. Identifying avian sources of faecal contamination using sterol analysis. Environ Monit Assess. 2015;187: 625. <u>PubMed ID 26370196</u>
 <u>View Article</u> • <u>PubMed/NCBI</u> • <u>Google Scholar</u>
- Leeming R, Stark JS, Smith JJ. Novel use of faecal sterols to assess human faecal contamination in Antarctica: a likelihood assessment matrix for environmental monitoring. Antarct Sci. Cambridge University Press; 2015;27: 31–43.
 <u>View Article</u> • <u>Google Scholar</u>
- 31. Jardé E, Jeanneau L, Harrault L, Quenot E, Solecki O, Petitjean P, et al. Application of a microbial source tracking based on bacterial and chemical markers in headwater and coastal catchments. Sci Total Environ. 2018;610–611: 55–63. <u>PubMed ID 28802110</u>
 <u>View Article PubMed/NCBI</u> <u>Google Scholar</u>
- Knights BA, Dickson CA, Dickson JH, Breeze DJ. Evidence concerning the roman military diet at Bearsden, Scotland, in the 2nd Century AD. J Archaeol Sci. 1983;10: 139–152.
 <u>View Article ISTEX</u> • Google Scholar

- Bull ID, Lockheart MJ, Elhmmali MM, Roberts DJ, Evershed RP. The origin of faeces by means of biomarker detection. Environ Int. 2002;27: 647–654.
 <u>PubMed ID 11934114</u>
 <u>View Article PubMed/NCBI</u> <u>Google Scholar</u>
- 34. Gill FL, Dewhurst RJ, Dungait JAJ, Evershed RP, Ives L, Li C-S, et al. Archaeol–a biomarker for foregut fermentation in modern and ancient herbivorous mammals? Org Geochem. 2010;43: 467–472. <u>View Article PANIST</u> • Google Scholar
- 35. Oehler AC. Being between beings: Soïot Herder-Hunters in a sacred landscape Ph.D. Thesis. Department of Anthropology. University of Aberdeen. 2017. Available: internal-pdf://154.66.23.39/OEHLER Thesis Submission 02_10_2016.pdf
- Shrenk LI, Grube. Reisen und Forschungen im Amur-Lande in den Jahren 1854–56, etc. (Anhang zum III. Bande bearbeitet von Dr. Wilhelm Grube.). St. Petersburg; 1858.
- 37. Wiklund KB. Om renskötselns uppkomst. Ymer. 1918;3:249–273. Available: http://www.suonttavaara.se/dokument/Om renskotselns uppkomst.html
- 38. Vasilevich GM, Levin MG. Tipy olenevodstva i ikh proiskhozhdenie. Sovetskala Etnografila. 1951;1:63–87.
 <u>View Article</u> <u>Google Scholar</u>
- Vainshtein SI. K voprosu o proiskhozhdenii olenevodstva. In: Vinogradov AV, editor. Istorila, arkheologlia i etnografila Sredneĭ Azii. Moskva: Nauka; 1968. pp. 360–362. Available: <u>http://kronk.spb.ru/library/vainshtein-si-1968.htm</u>
- 40. Nomokonova TI, MkIntyre KD, Plekhanov AV, Lozeĭ RD. Ostatki zhivotnykh so srednevekovogo poseleniiâ ÎArte VI, poluostrov ÎAmal (po materialam raskopa 2013 g.). Izvestila Laboratorii drevnikh tekhnologiĩ. 2017;3: 30–43.
 <u>View Article</u> <u>Google Scholar</u>
- 41. Nomokonova TI, Lozeĭ RD, Plekhanov AV. Vidovoĭ sostav i kolichestvennyĭ analiz faunisticheskikh ostatkov so srednevekovogo poselenila ÎArte VI (p-ov ÎAmal). m Evrazila v kaĭnozoe Stratigr paleoėkologila, kul'tury. 2017;6: 320–328.
 <u>View Article</u> <u>Google Scholar</u>
- 42. Plekhanov AV. ÎArte 6 srednevekovoe «gorodishche» na r. ÎUribeĭ (p-ov ÎAmal). Ekaterinburg: Delovaîa pressa; 2014.
- Golovněv AV. Drevnií ÎÂrte v kontekste mifologii i arkheologii. Étnograficheskoe obozrenie. 1998;2: 101–115. <u>View Article</u> • <u>Google Scholar</u>
- 44. Shilatov SG, Khatemirov RM. Dendrokhronoloicheskaia datirovka drevnesiny kustarnikov iz arkheologicheskogo poselenilia lÄrte 6 na polustrove lÄmal. In: Golovnëv AV, editor. Drevnosti lÄmala. Ekaterinburg–Salekhard: YrO RAN; 2000. pp. 112–120. Available: internal-pdf://240.62.128.231/Yamal dendrochronology_EN.docx internal-pdf://2336652591/Shiatov Khatemirov 2000 Dendro Yarte6.pdf
- 45. Fedorova NV. Olen', sobaka, kulaïskiï fenomen i legenda o sikhirtia. In: Golovnëv AV, editor. Drevnosti Amala. Ekaterinburg–Salekhard: YrO RAN; 2000. pp54–66.
- 46. Fedorova NV. Kaslanie dlinoi v dve tysiachi let: chelovek i olen' na severe Zappadnoi Sibiri. In: Alekseev VV, editor. Ekaterinburg: UrO RAN; 2006. pp. 149.
- 47. Laptander RI. Vodnye, podzemnye i nebesnye oleni sikhitria. In: Volodina AP, Kazanskii N, editors. Acta Linguistica Petropolitana Trudy Instituta lingvisticheskikh issledovanii RAN Sbornik statei k 80-letiiu. Nauka, Sankt-Peterburg. 2017.
- 48. Bronk Ramsey C. OxCal. V4.3.2. Oxford; 2017.
- 49. Bronk Ramsey C. Bayesian analysis of radiocarbon dates. Radiocarbon. 2009;51: 337–360.
 <u>View Article</u> <u>Google Scholar</u>
- 50. Reimer PJ, Bard E, Bayliss A, Beck JW, Blackwell PG, Ramsey CB, et al. IntCal13 and Marine13 Radiocarbon Age Calibration Curves 0–50,000 Years cal BP. Radiocarbon. 2013;55: 1869–1887.
 <u>View Article</u> Google Scholar
- 51. Birk JJ, Dippold M, Wiesenberg GLB, Glaser B. Combined quantification of faecal sterols, stanols, stanoles and bile acids in soils and terrestrial sediments by gas chromatography-mass spectrometry. J Chromatogr A. 2012;1242: 1–10. <u>PubMed ID 22560452</u> <u>View Article PANIST • PubMed/NCBI</u> • <u>Google Scholar</u>
- 52. Harrault L, Allard B, Mériguet J, Carmignac D, Huon S, Gauzens B, et al. Bottom-up effects of lake sediment on pelagic food-web compartments: A mesocosm study. Freshw Biol. 2014; 59(8): 1695–1709.
 <u>View Article ISTEX</u> <u>Google Scholar</u>
- 53. Legendre P, Legendre L. Numerical ecology. 3rd Englis. Legendre P, Legendre L, editors. Amsterdam: Elsevier; 2012.
- 54. R Core Team. R: A Language and Environment for Statistical Computing. Vienna: Open Source; 2017. Available: https://www.r-project.org
- 55. RStudio Team. RStudio: Integrated Development for R. Boston: Open-source; 2015. Available: http://www.rstudio.com/
- 56. Lê S, Josse J, Husson F. FactoMineR: An R Package for Multivariate Analysis. J Stat Softw. 2008;25: 1–18. <u>View Article</u>
 <u>Google Scholar</u>
- 57. Huneck S, Yoshimura I. Identification of Lichen Substances [Internet]. Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg; 1996. https://doi.org/10.1007

Faecal biomarkers can distinguish specific mammalian species in mode... https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0211119

/978-3-642-85243-5

- 58. Derrien M., Yang L., & Hur J. (2017). Lipid biomarkers and spectroscopic indices for identifying organic matter sources in aquatic environments: A review. Water Research, 112, 58–71. <u>https://doi.org/10.1016/j.watres.2017.01.023PANIST PubMed ID 28131099</u>
 <u>View Article • PubMed/NCBI</u> • <u>Google Scholar</u>
- 59. Losey RJ, Fleming LS, Nomokonova T, Gusev A V, Fedorova N V, Garvie-Lok S, et al. Human and Dog Consumption of Fish on the Lower Ob River of Siberia: Evidence for a Major Freshwater Reservoir Effect at the Ust'-Polui Site. Radiocarbon. Cambridge University Press; 2018;60: 239–260.
 <u>View Article</u> <u>Google Scholar</u>
- Weber MP, Biourge VC, Nguyen PG. Digestive sensitivity varies according to size of dogs: a review. J Anim Physiol Anim Nutr (Berl). 2017;101: 1–9.
 <u>PubMed ID 27045769</u>
 View Article PubMed/NCBI Google Scholar
- Sundset MA, Barboza PS, Green TK, Folkow LP, Blix AS, Mathiesen SD. Microbial degradation of usnic acid in the reindeer rumen. Naturwissenschaften. 2010;97: 273–8. <u>PubMed ID 20033122</u> <u>View Article ISTEX</u> • <u>PubMed/NCBI</u> • <u>Google Scholar</u>
- 62. Ophof AA, Oldeboer KW, Kumpula J. Intake and chemical composition of winter and spring forage plants consumed by semi-domesticated reindeer (Rangifer tarandus tarandus) in Northern Finland. Anim Feed Sci Technol. 2013;185: 190–195.
 <u>View Article PANIST</u> • Google Scholar
- 63. Lu CD. Grazing behavior and diet selection of goats. Small Rumin Res. Elsevier; 1988;1: 205–216. <u>View Article ISTEX</u> • Google Scholar
- 64. Ferreira LMM, Celaya R, Santos AS, Guedes CM V, Rodrigues MAM, Mayes RW, et al. Evaluation of long-chain alcohols as diet composition markers in goats grazing heathland areas. Animal. Cambridge University Press; 2012;6: 683–92. <u>PubMed ID 22436286</u>
 <u>View Article PubMed/NCBI</u> <u>Google Scholar</u>
- 65. Midtvedt T, Lingaas E, Carlstedt-Duke B, HÖVerstad T, Midtvedt AC, Saxerholt H, et al. Intestinal microbial conversion of cholesterol to coprostanol in man. APMIS. Wiley/Blackwell (10.1111); 1990;98: 839–844. <u>PubMed ID 2223037</u> <u>View Article ISTEX</u> • <u>PubMed/NCBI</u> • <u>Google Scholar</u>
- 66. Benno P, Leijonmarck C-E, Monsén U, Uribe A, Midtvedt T. Functional Alterations of the Microflora in Patients with Ulcerative Colitis. Scand J Gastroenterol. Taylor & Francis; 1993;28: 839–844. <u>PubMed ID 7901893</u> <u>View Article • PubMed/NCBI</u> • <u>Google Scholar</u>
- 67. Veiga P, Juste C, Lepercq P, Saunier K, Béguet F, Gérard P. Correlation between faecal microbial community structure and cholesterol-to-coprostanol conversion in the human gut. FEMS Microbiol Lett. Oxford University Press; 2005;242: 81–86. <u>PubMed ID 15621423</u>
 <u>View Article PANIST</u> <u>PubMed/NCBI</u> <u>Google Scholar</u>
- 68. Podkorytov F. M. 1995. Olenevodstvo IAmala (Leningrad: Tipografija Leningradskoĭ atomnoĭ elektrostantsii).
- 69. Goad LJ, Akihisa T. Analysis of Sterols. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands; 1997. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-009-1447-6
- 70. Mühlebach A, Weber K. Origins and fate of dissolved sterols in the Weddell Sea, Antarctica. Org Geochem. 1998;29: 1595–1607. Available: http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/B6V7P-3VGC60M-1K/2/d855176e683f7c7ff16fbf0912cb8144

 <u>View Article • Google Scholar</u>