1 Phenotypic plasticity, population structure and adaptation in a young weed species
2 with a worldwide distribution.

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27 **Summary**

28

29 The colonization success of a species depends on phenotypic plasticity, adaptive
 30 potential and population structure. Assessing their relative contributions during a
 31 colonization process is challenging, and a large-scale experiment had yet to be done. In
 32 this study, we attempted to tease apart their effects on the fitness of one of the most
 33 common plant on Earth, the shepherd's purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*), a self-fertilizing
 34 and allopolyploid weed, with a worldwide distribution. The overarching goal is to
 35 eventually understand how the shepherd's purse extensive distribution range was
 36 established so rapidly. To do so, we carried out three common gardens, located in Europe,
 37 Asia and North America, and measured several life-history traits on field-collected
 38 accessions belonging to three distinct genetic clusters (Middle East, Europe, and Asia).
 39 Our experiment showed that (i) the success of *C. bursa-pastoris* is mainly due to its high
 40 degree of phenotypic plasticity; and (ii), genetic cluster effect reflected a classic pattern
 41 observed in core vs marginal populations, with the Middle Eastern cluster (putative core
 42 population) outperforming the European and Asian clusters. This study therefore
 43 revealed, in a model species, different relative contributions of plasticity and adaptation
 44 to fitness, depending on the population and the time since colonization occurred.

45

46

47 **Keywords**

48 **Adaptation, *Capsella bursa-pastoris*, common garden, Finlay-Wilkinson regression,**
 49 **fitness components, phenotypic plasticity, population structure.**

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51

52 Introduction

53 Some species have tiny natural ranges, others very large ones. In the latter, the
54 current size was sometimes reached surprisingly fast something that might have left a
55 strong footprint on the current pattern of genetic and phenotypic variation. In the
56 present study we will focus on such a case, namely the shepherd's purse, *Capsella*
57 *bursa-pastoris* (L.) Medik. (*Brassicaceae*), one of the most common plants on Earth
58 (Coquillat, 1951). Since plants are sessile organisms, the expansion speed mainly
59 depends on their ability to disperse efficiently and establish themselves successfully in
60 new environments. Sometimes the environment will be quite similar to the one in
61 which the parental plants were growing, sometimes it will not. In this latter case,
62 establishment success in the short term may depend on phenotypic plasticity and in the
63 long run on the capacity to adapt to local conditions. Phenotypic plasticity is defined
64 here as the ability of a given genotype to produce different phenotypes in different
65 environments (Bradshaw, 1965; Grenier *et al.* 2016 and references therein), and
66 adaptation as the natural selection process by which a population progressively
67 increases its fitness in a given environment (Linhart & Grant, 1996; Chevin *et al.* 2010
68 and references therein). These two evolutionary mechanisms are not mutually
69 exclusive, so that each successful expansion will likely correspond to a particular
70 combination of both. In any case, when species succeed to extend their distributions to
71 a worldwide scale, granted that they hence face strongly different environmental
72 conditions, signatures of both adaptation and phenotypic plasticity are likely to be
73 observed. We can conjecture that phenotypic plasticity might be more important in
74 newly established populations and adaptation in older ones. Such predictions are
75 fraught with difficulties, since the age of populations is generally hard to estimate and
76 patterns of phenotypic plasticity may vary depending on the time since colonization.
77 Indeed, theoretical models indicate that while adaptation to a new extreme
78 environment may lead to a transient increase in plasticity, this is followed by a second
79 period of genetic assimilation which, on the contrary is associated to decreased
80 plasticity (Lande, 2015). These complex dynamics could explain why different studies
81 on phenotypic plasticity of colonizing species led to divergent conclusion: some recent
82 studies concluded that phenotypic plasticity could play a role during colonization of
83 new environments (e.g., Daehler, 2003) while others did not (e.g., Davidson *et al.*
84 2011, Godoy *et al.* 2011). Likewise, while evolutionary pressures underlying
85 adaptation in populations at equilibrium are fairly well documented, the literature is
86 more limited for recent and marginal populations that are usually characterized by non-

87 equilibrium demographics (Excoffier *et al.*, 2009; Gilbert *et al.*, 2017). As illustrated
88 by Willi *et al.* (2018) determining the respective role of phenotypic plasticity and
89 adaptation during colonization can be challenging.

90 Two prominent properties of plants that might influence a plant's adaptive potential
91 and its phenotypic plasticity are ploidy level and mating system. Both have their own
92 costs and benefits, though arising on a different timescale. Allopolyploidy and its evolu-
93 tionary success can appear paradoxical since its birth will also be accompanied by nu-
94 merous early challenges (Yant & Bomblies, 2015; Pelé *et al.*, 2018). These challenges are
95 first encountered during the initial hybridization event between two divergent genomes,
96 implying, among other things, potential changes of gene expression patterns (Bomblies *et*
97 *al.*, 2016). On the other hand, the increase in chromosome number in polyploids creates
98 genetic redundancy, which potentially allows pattern of expression to diverge, and the
99 evolution of new functions as well as tissue-specific expression of different gene copies
100 (Buggs *et al.*, 2010, 2011). This greater genomic flexibility could lie behind the increased
101 trait plasticity of tetraploids in heterogeneous environments, as was recently observed in
102 strawberries (Wei *et al.*, 2019). As to mating system, the shift from out-crossing to self-
103 fertilization (a.k.a. selfing) confers “reproductive assurance” when the number of mates
104 is limited. Reproductive assurance is expected to favor colonization of new environments
105 as a few individuals can establish a new population (Baker *et al.* 1965; Pannell *et al.*,
106 2015). The benefit of self-fertilization might, however, be short-lived because the lack of
107 genetic mixing is predicted to limit adaptation and to lead to the genome-wide accumula-
108 tion of deleterious mutations (Heller & Smith, 1978; Hollister *et al.*, 2015, Glémin *et al.*,
109 2019). In agreement with these predictions, selfing species tend to have larger ecological
110 ranges (Grossenbacher *et al.*, 2015) but decreasing niche breadth with time (Park *et al.*,
111 2018) compared to their outcrossing congeners, aligned with the “evolutionary dead end”
112 hypothesis (Stebbins 1957; Takeyabashi & Morell, 2001 and references therein). This
113 phenomenon is even more pronounced during a colonization process (Slatkin &
114 Excoffier, 2012; Gonzalez-Martinez *et al.*, 2017 and references therein).

115 *C. bursa-pastoris* is a successful worldwide self-fertilizing colonizer of recent allopol-
116 yploid origin that arose some 100,000 years ago from the hybridization between the self-
117 fertilizing, *C. orientalis* (Fauché & Chaub.) Boiss. and the out-crossing, *C. grandiflora*
118 (Klokov) (Douglas *et al.*, 2015). As opposed to its two parents, which are restricted to
119 specific areas (from Central Asia to eastern Europe for *C. orientalis* and mountains of
120 northwest Greece and Albania for *C. grandiflora*), *C. bursa-pastoris* has an almost
121 worldwide distribution. The rapid expansion of the shepherd's purse did not prevent the

122 emergence of three distinct genetic clusters: Asia (ASI), Middle East and northern Africa
123 (ME), and Europe and the Russian Far East (EUR) (Cornille *et al.*, 2016). Demographic
124 inferences showed that these three clusters are the result from a range expansion that
125 started either from the Middle East or Europe (the starting point is not known with cer-
126 tainty), and was followed by a consecutive colonization event towards Asia. This recent
127 worldwide spread was, in some cases, likely associated to human migrations, as for in-
128 stance the spread to eastern Siberia of western European accessions (Cornille *et al.*,
129 2016), or of southern European and Middle Eastern accessions to North America (Hurka
130 & Neuffer, 1997; Cornille *et al.*, 2016).

131 Given conflicting predictions, it remains challenging to explain the apparent ecologi-
132 cal success of species, such as *C. bursa-pastoris*, that recently expanded their range.
133 Moreover, adopting a “reciprocal transplant” framework to address this question would
134 be hard to implement as it would require numerous transfers to capture the genetic diver-
135 sity and the environmental range of *C. bursa-pastoris*. Instead, in order to investigate the
136 joint role of phenotypic plasticity and adaptation in the colonization success of *C. bursa-*
137 *pastoris*, we implemented an experimental design with three large common gardens lo-
138 cated in three contrasted environments. Firstly, in order to reflect the diversity of envi-
139 ronmental conditions that *C. bursa-pastoris* faced during its range expansion, we in-
140 stalled two common gardens at extreme latitudes in Eurasia, one in East Asia and one in
141 Northern Europe, and a third one in North America, which lies outside of the native range
142 of the species. Secondly, to capture the demographic history of *C. bursa-pastoris*, we
143 used a comprehensive sampling of populations from Europe, Asia, North Africa, the
144 Middle East and North America. And thirdly, to be able to characterize phenotypic varia-
145 tion and accession’s performances, we measured several life-history and phenological
146 traits, some of which are main fitness components. This provided us with a solid frame-
147 work to: (i) measure the responsiveness of individual accessions to different environ-
148 ments (i.e., assess their phenotypic plasticity) by comparing the performance of each ac-
149 cession across the three common gardens; (ii) estimate the genetic cluster effect associat-
150 ed to past demographic history by comparing the performances of the three genetic clus-
151 ters across the common gardens; and (iii) assess the variation in responsiveness among
152 accessions of a same cluster using Finlay-Wilkinson regressions (Finlay & Wilkinson,
153 1963). Evidence of the role of adaptation in the colonization process would be provided
154 by analyzing all the results together and notably by estimating the genotype (genetic clus-
155 ter) by environment (common garden) interactions. We will discuss these results in the
156 light of *C. bursa-pastoris* colonization history and its accumulated expansion load.

158 Materials and Methods

159 Common gardens

160 **Localization.** One common garden was located at Uppsala (59°51'N, 17°38'E,
161 Sweden), the second one at Guangzhou (23°08'N, 113°16'E, China), and the third one at
162 Toronto (43°39'N, 79°23'W, Canada). To account for the sensitivity of *C. bursa-pastoris*
163 to extreme environmental conditions and to guarantee intermediate temperatures,
164 experiments were started at different periods of the year: at Uppsala, the experiment
165 started in early May 2014 for 139 days; at Guangzhou, in early November 2014 for 193
166 days; and at Toronto, in early June 2014 for 118 days.

167 **Environmental conditions.** At Uppsala and Guangzhou, environmental conditions
168 were monitored daily at ground level using temperature and humidity sensors (TGP-
169 4017[®], Tinytag[™]). At Toronto, temperature and humidity were extracted from a public
170 database (<https://www.timeanddate.com>). For each location, day length was obtained
171 with the R package *geosphere* (function *daylength*; Hijmans, 2019).

172

173 Plant materials

174 **Sampling.** We used a collection of 267 accessions from 65 sites distributed across
175 Europe, Asia, North Africa, the Middle East and North America (for more details, see
176 Cornille *et al.*, 2016, Kryvokhyzha *et al.*, 2016, Kryvokhyzha *et al.* 2019b). In Toronto,
177 due to limited space, we had to subsample this collection down to 160 accessions, and
178 were chosen to share less than 97% of identity-by-state (for further details, see Salcedo,
179 2015), to maximize the genetic diversity.

180 **Genotypes.** Genotyping-by-sequencing (GBS) data for the 267 accessions acquired by
181 Cornille *et al.*, (2016, <https://datadryad.org/stash/dataset/doi:10.5061/dryad.71f99>) were
182 used to assign accessions to different clusters (Asia, Middle East or Europe). First, we ran
183 a Multi-Dimensional Scaling analysis (function *cmdscale* from the base R package *stats*)
184 on the GBS data that gave the five first principal components on which we ran an
185 unsupervised k-means algorithm with $K = 3$ (function *kmeans* from the base R package
186 *stats*). We then tested its robustness by using a random forest approach (function
187 *randomForest* from the R package *randomForest*; Liaw & Wiener, 2002), with a
188 bootstrap (1000 iterations) of 20% of the dataset (80% being used as a training set). Only

189 accessions that were assigned more than 95% of the iterations to the same cluster were
190 kept for further analyses (Table S1 and Figure S1).

191 **Seeds preparation.** Before the establishment of the common garden experiment, and
192 to limit maternal effects, seeds collected from the field were first sown and grown under
193 controlled conditions in growth chambers (55% moisture, 22°C, 12h:12h light:darkness
194 cycles). Their offspring (seeds) were then used to establish the common gardens. About
195 20 seeds per accession were surface-sterilized the same day and germinated in Petri
196 dishes, with MS medium and agar (see protocol in Kryvokhyzha *et al.*, 2016). Petri
197 dishes were then stratified for seven days at 4°C in the dark to promote germination.
198 After this cold treatment, Petri dishes were placed in a greenhouse with no additional
199 light or heating, in order to protect seeds from rainfall and to facilitate acclimation to
200 outdoor conditions. Petri dishes were randomized over tables and moved every day to
201 avoid micro-environmental effects, and they were left in the greenhouse until seedlings
202 reached a four-leaf stage.

203 **Transplantation.** At Uppsala and Guangzhou, once a seedling reached the four-leaf
204 stage, it was thinned to one per pot (7 cm x 7 cm) containing mud (basic soil mixed with
205 water). The pots were left seven days in the greenhouse (watered automatically twice a
206 week) and then they were pierced on the bottom and placed outside in the common
207 garden. The pots were dispatched into six blocks (1m x 3.2m, grids of 9 x 30) arranged at
208 2 m spacing and containing basic soil. Each block contained exactly one replicate per
209 accession, so that we ended up with six replicates per accession in total. An accession
210 was included in the common garden experiment even if less than six seedlings
211 germinated. In such case, and to keep the same individual density in each block,
212 seedlings from another accession from the same sampling site were planted. At Toronto,
213 after reaching the four-leaf stage, seedlings were directly transplanted from Petri dishes
214 to planting beds (13 cm x 33 cm) containing Promix soil (thoroughly wet). These beds
215 contained exactly one replicate per accession, and we used the same workaround when
216 germination failed. The beds were covered with shade cloth for two days after planting.
217 At each location, apart from the initial shading and watering, we did not provide any
218 support to the seedlings. The experiment lasted until the senescence of the last plant, *i.e.*,
219 when the last plant dried up but had not yet shed its fruits.

220 **Subdividing datasets.** We considered three approaches for studying the 267
221 accessions: for exploratory analyses, we kept the “whole dataset”, accepting potential
222 unbalance; this dataset was thereafter referred to as the whole dataset. Since the

interaction effect between common garden and genetic cluster was significant (see Supplementary materials), following the recommendation of Crawley (2012), we chose to analyze each common garden separately; this dataset was thereafter referred to as the “common garden dataset”. Finally, in order to mimic a reciprocal transplant experiment and test for signature of local adaptation, we considered a sub-dataset made only of accessions from Sweden and South China (12 accessions in total, sampled close to Uppsala or Guangzhou), and excluding their phenotype measurement in Toronto; this dataset was thereafter referred to as the “local adaptation dataset”.

231

232 **Statistical analyses**

233 Phenotypes. After senescence, we recorded for each plant the *height of the highest*
 234 *inflorescence* (in dm), the *number of basal inflorescences*, and the *number of fruits along*
 235 *a section of 1 dm* in the middle of the main inflorescence. In order to compare the overall
 236 performances, we considered the total number of fruits per individual as a proxy of
 237 fitness (denoted w), that were measured differently in the common gardens: at Uppsala
 238 and Guangzhou, we considered a composite index of fitness, computed as the product of
 239 the aforementioned three traits (*number of basal inflorescences*, *height* and *number of*
 240 *fruits along a section of 1 dm*). At Toronto, the total number of fruits was directly
 241 measured for each individual.

242 Three phenological traits were also measured, *bolting time* (i.e., time until
 243 differentiation of the bud from vegetative parts indicating the initiation of the
 244 reproductive period), *flowering time* (i.e., time until the appearance of the first opened
 245 flower) and *senescence time* (i.e., time until the drying state of the plant). In addition,
 246 *flowering time span* was computed as being the inter-event time between *flowering time*
 247 and *senescence time*. At flowering time, we also recorded the rosette leaf number and the
 248 maximum diameter of the rosette. Finally, at Uppsala and Guangzhou, germination time
 249 was also measured.

250 **Statistical modeling.** For the statistical analyses, we fitted the following generalized
 251 linear mixed model to the data:

$$252 \quad \text{Fitness}_{ijkl} \sim \mu + \text{cluster}_i + \text{block}_j + \text{accession}_k + \text{e}_{ijkl} \quad [1]$$

253 where μ is the overall mean, ‘cluster’ is the fixed effects of the genetic cluster, ‘block’
 254 and ‘accession’ are uncorrelated random effects (‘accession’ being nested into ‘cluster’),
 255 and ‘e’ is the residual. We used a log link function and the residual distribution was fitted

to a Negative Binomial distribution (function *glmer.nb* of R package *lme4*; see Bates *et al.*, 2015). This model was thereafter referred to as the “GLMM model”. For phenological traits, we fitted the GLMM model to the four inter-event durations (between sowing, germination, bolting, flowering, and senescence), square-rooted, with the starting date of each time span as an additional explaining variable, and with the residual fitted to a normal distribution (function *lmer* of R package *lme4*). Statistical significance of the cluster effect was assessed with a type II Wald chi-square test, and the difference between genetic clusters was assessed with Tukey’s HSD test.

Finlay-Wilkinson regression (FWR). We further investigated the specificity of each genetic cluster by performing a Finlay-Wilkinson regression (Finlay & Wilkinson, 1963), enabling us to characterize individual genotype responses for a trait across different environments. Following the formulation of Lynch & Walsh (1998), a FWR for one accession can be expressed as follows:

$$\text{Trait}_{ij} \sim \mu + (1 + b_j) \mu_j + e_{ij} \quad [2]$$

where ‘Trait’ is the focal trait (fitness or phenological traits), i is the block, j is the common garden, μ_j is the average value of the trait at the common garden j , b_j is the regression factor of μ_j and e_{ij} is the residual which is assumed to be normally distributed. We performed as many regressions as the number of accessions. This model was thereafter referred to as the FWR model.

The intercept (μ) can be interpreted as the accession’s performance in a poor environment, and the slope (b_j) can be viewed as the accession’s relative responsiveness to environmental changes (the steeper the slope, the more responsive the accession; Lynch & Walsh, 1998). By definition, across the whole dataset, we expect a null average intercept ($\mu = 0$) and a unit average slope ($b_j = 0$). Each genetic cluster can, however, have its own specificity and deviate from the global trend. We used FWR to assess whether a genetic cluster was homogeneous, *i.e.*, with a trend followed by every individual belonging to this cluster, or heterogeneous and actually driven by some “outliers”. For intercept (μ) and slope (b), the statistical significance of difference in average or variance between genetic clusters was assessed with a pairwise Welch’s t -test or a Fisher’s F -test, respectively.

286 Results

287 Statistical interaction between “common garden” and “genetic cluster” was significant
 288 for most traits (Table 1 and Supplementary materials), therefore we focused our analyses
 289 on the common garden dataset with the GLMM model; the use of the whole dataset was
 290 restricted to the description of phenotypic variation (Table 1 and Figures 1 to 3). Due to
 291 experimental issues (*e.g.*, failed germination, climatic events), common garden
 292 experiments ended up with an unbalanced block design: the whole dataset was left as is,
 293 but we shrank the common garden dataset to balance it, ending up with 186 accessions in
 294 Uppsala, 86 in Guangzhou and 116 in Toronto (Table S1). Also, due to these issues, the
 295 number of accessions common to all three common gardens in the common garden
 296 dataset was reduced to a total of 34 accessions (12 Asian, 9 European and 13 Middle
 297 Eastern): we therefore fitted the FWR model on the (unbalanced) whole dataset filtered
 298 for accessions for which a fitness score was available in all three common gardens,
 299 ending up with a total of 114 accessions (46 Asian, 46 European and 22 Middle Eastern).

300 At the time of the experiment (2014), environmental conditions (in terms of
 301 temperature, humidity and day length) strongly differed among the common gardens
 302 (Figure 1). In Uppsala, accessions grew in rather cold and wet climatic conditions ($15.2 \pm$
 303 5.1°C , $76.8 \pm 14.1\%$); in Toronto they grew under a relatively warm and dry climate
 304 ($20.7 \pm 3.1^\circ\text{C}$, $71.2 \pm 8.9\%$); finally, in Guangzhou they grew in a warm and humid
 305 weather ($19.3 \pm 5.0^\circ\text{C}$, $81.1 \pm 11.4\%$). The photoperiod and the magnitude of its variation
 306 during the experiment also strongly differed among common gardens, day length being
 307 the longest in Uppsala ($16.9\text{h} \pm 1.7\text{h}$, ranging from 13h to 18.8h), the shortest in
 308 Guangzhou ($11.9\text{h} \pm 1.0\text{h}$, ranging from 10.7h to 13.5h), and intermediate in Toronto
 309 ($14.3 \pm 1.1\text{h}$, ranging from 12h to 15.4h). For further details, see Tables S2 to S4 and
 310 Figures S2 to S5.

311

312 Environmental variation as the main explanatory factor of the 313 phenotypic variation of *Capsella bursa-pastoris*

314 Most of the phenotypic variation was explained by the common garden, with a strong
 315 environmental effect (Figure 1, Table 1).

316 Accessions showed contrasted phenotypes among common gardens (Figures 2 and
 317 S6), highlighting their phenotypic plasticity. In Toronto, accessions tended to be more
 318 “bushy” with relatively more branches and more rosette leaves, whereas in Guangzhou,

accessions tended to be relatively taller. In Uppsala, accessions were globally smaller and performed poorly for most phenotypic traits. The common garden effect was even more pronounced on phenology than on life history traits ($\chi^2_{pheno} = 1051 \pm 557.5$; $\chi^2_{life\ history\ traits} = 293.3 \pm 111.7$; all $p < 0.001$; Table 1). In particular, *bolting time*, *flowering time* and *senescence time* were longer in Guangzhou (respectively 61.3 ± 13 days, 71.5 ± 13.1 days, 138 ± 9.5 days) than in Toronto (28.0 ± 4.8 days, 31.9 ± 7.5 days, 79.8 ± 9.5 days) and Uppsala (30.9 ± 6.1 days, 36.4 ± 5.6 days, 85.3 ± 7.6 days).

More importantly, environmental effect on fitness was significant ($\chi^2 = 128.5$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.001$, type II Wald chi-square test; Table 1): fitness was much lower on average in Uppsala ($w = 224 \pm 178$) than in Guangzhou ($w = 918 \pm 753$) and Toronto ($w = 1161 \pm 788$). Toronto presented the most favorable conditions in terms of temperature and day length, two factors *C. bursa-pastoris* is known to be particularly sensitive to.

Genetic effect associated to the past demographic history significantly explained variation within a common garden

Genetic effect comes second and explains the phenotypic variation within each common garden (Figures 1 and 2).

Phenotypes. Within each common garden, except for the number of primary branches, phenotypic variation showed a strong genetic effect (Table 2). The cluster effect for the number of primary branches was not significant in Uppsala, and strongly significant ($p < 0.01$) in Guangzhou and Toronto. Surprisingly, the cluster effect for rosette characteristics (number of leaves and diameter) was much more significant than that for height of the main inflorescence or number of primary branches (Table 2). On average, the size and the number of leaves of the European accessions were much higher (respectively 188.6 ± 55.5 mm and 40.8 ± 30.4) than those of the Middle Eastern accessions (respectively 172 ± 54.8 mm and 19.3 ± 8.4) and of the Asian accessions (121.0 ± 56.5 mm and 19.5 ± 11.7).

Phenology. Phenological variation also showed a strong and significant cluster effect (Table 2). The Asian cluster exhibited a late germination, early bolting, early flowering and late senescence, therefore a long flowering time span. In contrast, the European cluster germinated early, but bolted, flowered and withered late (Table S5). European accessions' late flowering partly explains their larger rosette, since they had more time for vegetative growth. Accessions from the Middle-East genetic cluster did not follow a

352 global trend (Table S5), deploying again a certain amount of plasticity in their
353 phenological response.

354 For *bolting time*, mean intercept in the FWR model was significantly lower for the
355 Middle Eastern than for the Asian and the European clusters (all $p < 0.05$, Welch's t -test;
356 Table S6): in an environment pushing *C. bursa-pastoris* to bolt early on average, ME
357 bolted even earlier.

358 **Fitness.** Variation in fitness also showed a strong and significant genetic effect (Figure
359 1 and Table 2). The Middle Eastern cluster globally outperformed the other clusters, with
360 an overall mean performance of $w = 946 \pm 916$, compared to the Asian ($w = 565 \pm 613$)
361 and the European ($w = 652 \pm 685$) genetic clusters. At each common garden, its
362 performance is either significantly higher than another cluster, or not significantly smaller
363 than another one (Table 3). The Middle Eastern cluster deployed a significantly higher
364 phenotypic variance during this experiment than the other clusters (all $p < 0.001$, Fisher's
365 F-test; Table S7), and also showed a significantly higher responsiveness (slope in the
366 FWR model; all $p < 0.01$, Welch's t -test; Table 4), corroborating the hypothesis of a
367 higher plasticity of the Middle Eastern cluster.

368

369 **The Middle Eastern accessions had a more homogeneous** 370 **response to environmental variation than Asian or European** 371 **accessions**

372 **Phenology.** The Middle-Eastern cluster showed, according to the FWR model, a lower
373 variance in their phenological behavior: the variance of the slope for *flowering time*,
374 *flowering time span* and *bolting time* was significantly smaller than that of the Asian and
375 the European accessions (all $p < 0.001$, Fisher F-test; Table S6), therefore suggesting that
376 the Asian and European clusters are far more diverse than the Middle Eastern one.

377 **Fitness.** Variance of the intercept in the FWR model was too large compared to its
378 mean value to be interpreted, given the coefficients of variation of 27.4 for the Asian, 6.3
379 for the European and 7.7 for the Middle Eastern (Table 4) clusters. However, the slope
380 was more discriminant: the Middle Eastern cluster had a significantly higher (all $p <$
381 0.01 , Welch's t -test; Table 4) responsiveness (1.27 ± 0.36) than the Asian (0.91 ± 0.47)
382 and the European (0.96 ± 0.44) clusters. Slope variance of the Middle-Eastern cluster was
383 smaller than for the two other clusters, although not significantly (Table S6).

384 **Linking fitness and phenology.** Surprisingly, Pearson's correlation between different
385 FWRs was weak (absolute values < 0.2 if putting ME aside; Table 5), suggesting that
386 phenology explained only a small fraction of the variance of fitness. However, for the
387 Middle-Eastern cluster, Pearson's correlation between *fitness* and *flowering time* or
388 between *fitness* and *flowering time span* was equal to $r = 0.30$ and $r = 0.50$ respectively,
389 suggesting that accessions that were plastic for part of the phenology were likely also
390 plastic for the number of fruits.

391

392 **Hints of signature of local adaptation when mimicking a** 393 **reciprocal transplant**

394 In the presence of local adaptation, we expect a higher fitness of accessions in their
395 own geographical range. In our case, we expected a higher relative fitness of the
396 European accessions in Uppsala, and a higher relative fitness of the Asian accessions in
397 Guangzhou.

398 **With the common garden dataset.** Whereas the Middle Eastern cluster globally
399 outperformed the other clusters, the European cluster ($w = 252 \pm 216$) significantly
400 outperformed the Asian cluster ($w = 203 \pm 153$) in Uppsala ($z = 2.65$, $p < 0.05$, Tukey's
401 HSD test; Table 3). However, although a trend of the Asian cluster ($w = 852 \pm 634$)
402 outperforming the European cluster ($w = 697 \pm 604$) in Guangzhou can be seen, this
403 difference was not significant ($z = -1.83$, $p = 0.16$, Tukey's HSD test; Table 3).

404 **With the local adaptation dataset.** The pattern of local adaptation was actually even
405 less clear when considering the local adaptation dataset: the performances of the South
406 Chinese and Swedish accessions did not differ significantly. Indeed, in Guangzhou,
407 though the performance of Chinese accessions ($w = 926 \pm 598$) tended to be higher than
408 that of Swedish accessions ($w = 524 \pm 533$), the difference was not significant ($z = -$
409 1.379 , $p = 0.17$, Tukey's HSD test); likewise, in Uppsala, difference in terms of
410 performance between Chinese accessions ($w = 208 \pm 130$) and Swedish accessions ($w =$
411 210 ± 193) was not significant ($z = -0.752$, $p = 0.45$, Tukey's HSD test). One accession
412 from Sweden outperformed all Chinese accessions though, suggesting that the lack of a
413 significant signature of local adaptation might be caused by the limited number of
414 accessions sampled ($N_{EUR} = 3$ and $N_{ASI} = 9$).

415

416 Discussion

417 Overall, the location of the common gardens explained a large part of the phenotypic
418 variation of *C. bursa-pastoris*, suggesting that the underlying mechanism of its success is
419 probably a high degree of phenotypic plasticity. To a lesser extent, genetic clusters
420 explained phenotypic variance within common gardens. Assuming that populations in the
421 colonization front gradually undergo a shift of their prior phenotypic plasticity to
422 adaptation to local conditions, *C. bursa-pastoris* seems to be in this very transient state.
423 As a matter of fact, the hypothesis of the presence of a transient state in invasive species
424 could explain most of the discrepancies in the literature about the prevalence of either
425 phenotypic plasticity or adaptation. Indeed, if the colonization event is recent, it is
426 possible, like in our study or in VanWallendael *et al.* (2018), that signatures of local
427 adaptation are not yet observable (but see Godoy *et al.*, 2011; Ducatez *et al.*, 2016).

428

429 The overall success of the Middle Eastern accessions might 430 obscure the scale of local adaptation

431 *C. bursa-pastoris* is a self-fertilizing species that underwent a relatively recent
432 worldwide expansion, and has a low genetic variation that could, by itself, explain the
433 lack of local adaptation signature in the present study. *C. bursa-pastoris* and its diploid
434 relatives are eminently ruderal and even a casual observation of their habitats highlights
435 the importance of very local factors for their establishment, such as soil disturbance
436 (Orsucci *et al.*, *in press*). Nonetheless *C. bursa-pastoris* is genetically structured across
437 its worldwide distribution (Cornille *et al.*, 2016), and therefore, to account for this
438 structure, we needed to implement a large-scale experiment with a large number of
439 accessions. Thus, perhaps more than in other species, geographical scale is crucial in
440 studies of adaptation in the *Capsella* genus and what is observed at a given scale may not
441 apply at another one, as exemplified by Neuffer (1996).

442 To the best of our knowledge, however, there has not been a general study of the local
443 ecological niches of the shepherd's purse. Our own observations and the few studies
444 available, in particular the study by Caullet (2011) that exhaustively studied populations
445 of *C. bursa-pastoris* and *C. rubella* across a 4 km² agricultural landscape of Central
446 France over two years, indicate that *C. bursa-pastoris* is actually restricted to highly
447 disturbed environments (hedges of fields, for instance). Within such environments it does
448 not seem to be confined to specific types of soil though (Aksoy *et al.*, 1998; Neuffer *et al.*,
449 *et al.*, 2018). The large spectrum of climatic environments covered by the accessions

450 included in our experiment also suggests that insufficient sampling is unlikely to explain
451 the lack of a strong local adaptation pattern.

452 As shown above, though the effect of either environment or genetic background seems
453 clear, the interaction between genetics and environment is complex. When considering
454 all common gardens and all clusters at once, there is no clear evidence of local
455 adaptation, mainly because the Middle Eastern cluster outperformed the other clusters
456 everywhere. The Middle Eastern cluster is less variable for the traits considered here, and
457 is consistently better and more responsive to variation in environmental conditions than
458 those from the two other clusters. One of the possible explanations of this complex
459 pattern, obscuring a potential signature of local adaptation, is that there is no or few local
460 adaptation yet: an absence of local adaptation coupled with a pronounced plasticity have
461 already been observed in other invasive species at the colonization front, such as in
462 *Reynoutria japonica* (VanWallendael *et al.*, 2018) or in clonally reproducing
463 macrophytes (*Egeria densa*, *Elodea canadensis* and *Lagarosiphon major*: Riis *et al.*,
464 2010).

465 It is also worth pointing out that the absence of evident GxE effect may be due to the
466 fact that we did not consider the whole life cycle. Recently, Orsucci *et al.* (2020)
467 emphasized that studying only one component of fitness could be insufficient and
468 potentially misleading if interpreted as fitness, since they do not account for possible
469 trade-offs between fitness components. Germination rate of the mother plant was not
470 measured here, and is the only part of the life cycle that was controlled in a growth
471 chamber. Accounting for the germination rate might change the ranking among clusters,
472 as shown in Orsucci *et al.* (2020), we can thus only say that the Middle Eastern cluster
473 outperformed others in terms of vegetative growth and fruit production, but whether it
474 also does in term of fitness remains to be tested.

475

476 **A species with a worldwide distribution might present a complex** 477 **genetic structure and local adaptation pattern**

478 The absence of local adaptation signature could also be explained by the marginality
479 of our common gardens in deference to the species distribution described by Hurka *et al.*
480 (2012). Indeed, Uppsala is close to the northern boundary of the distribution of European
481 accessions; Guangzhou, likewise, is close to the southern boundary of the distribution of
482 Asian accessions; and Toronto is even outside the natural species distribution.
483 Environmental conditions can be extreme in Uppsala and Guangzhou compared to other

484 locations of the same continent. The extreme localization of our common gardens could
 485 thus have hidden the importance of local adaptation among clusters, as discussed in Klisz
 486 *et al.* (2019). We attempted to mimic a reciprocal transplant experiment by only
 487 considering Swedish and South Chinese accessions at Uppsala and Guangzhou.
 488 However, the results were mixed, with no apparent signature of local adaptation (i.e., no
 489 apparent genetic cluster effect). To rigorously address this problem in further studies, it
 490 will be necessary to either (i) increase the amount of actual local accessions, so that the
 491 common gardens are less marginal relative to the set of accessions sampled, e.g., more
 492 Swedish and South Chinese accessions; or (ii) consider several common gardens in a
 493 smaller geographical scale, e.g., two or more common gardens in Europe.

494 The absence of evident G x E effect for all of the clusters leads to question about the
 495 geographical scale at which local adaptation occurs. Although the populations we
 496 considered are at the right genetic scale in the sense that our samples do capture the
 497 major genetic clusters in Eurasia (Cornille *et al.*, 2016; Kryvokhyzha *et al.*, 2019a), local
 498 adaptation might occur at a much more restricted geographical scale, as pointed out
 499 above. First, *C. bursa-pastoris* is a ruderal species and probably a human commensal too,
 500 as suggested by its distribution, and therefore it grows primarily, if not uniquely, in very
 501 specific, disturbed environments, that will share common characteristics under different
 502 latitudes. Second, *C. bursa-pastoris* is mainly self-fertilizing which implies that gene
 503 flow occurs through seeds rather than pollen, thus slowing down its scattering. The
 504 hypothesis of adaptation to micro-environment rather than macro-environment is also
 505 supported by the fact that phenology is mostly influenced by environmental variation,
 506 and only secondly by genetics.

507 The apparent lack of local adaptation observed in the present study at the phenotypic
 508 level can be related to the results obtained by Kryvokhyzha *et al.* (2016). Using RNA-
 509 Seq data from 24 accessions originating from the three clusters, Kryvokhyzha and co-
 510 authors showed that the genes that were significantly differentially expressed between the
 511 three clusters, were no longer so once one had corrected the data for the genetic
 512 relationship between the three clusters. The differentiation could then have been mostly
 513 neutral or both neutral and adaptive in which case demographic history and adaptive
 514 differentiation were highly correlated and correcting for the first one would remove the
 515 effect of the latter. The fitness results obtained here would support at least a significant
 516 contribution of neutral processes. As in the RNA-Seq experiment, the present data does
 517 not rule the presence of significant local adaptation at a more local scale. However, even

at that scale local adaptation does not seem to be pronounced in *C. bursa-pastoris* (Caullet, 2011; Huang *et al.*, 2018).

It is therefore likely that *C. bursa-pastoris* was able to cope with diverse environments primarily through phenotypic plasticity. Caullet (2011) also found that plasticity best explained fitness across soil niches when they planted both *C. bursa-pastoris* and *C. rubella* in four different disturbed environments where both species are naturally found: along paths, hedges of the paths, or within a transition zone between paths and fields and inside the internal hedge of the fields. The transplant environment did not significantly affect the fitness of *C. bursa-pastoris*. As a whole, as suggested by Caullet (2011), phenotypic plasticity was higher in *C. bursa-pastoris* than in *C. rubella* but there was no evidence of strong local adaptation in *C. bursa-pastoris*. Another possible explanation for the absence of signature of local adaptation is that *C. bursa-pastoris* failed to adapt locally due to its high genetic load. Indeed, *C. bursa-pastoris* is a selfer, with limited genetic diversity and it might have faced a drift barrier and lacked the initial effective population size needed to express local adaptation.

Phenological traits, between plasticity and adaptation

Controlling the timing of phenology to cope with biotic and abiotic stresses is the response adopted by many plant populations, especially those with an annual life cycle. Adaptation is one of the possible evolutionary responses, as seen in temperate crop species (e.g., wheat, barley or pea) with distinct vernalization strategies in different varieties (Roux *et al.*, 2006). As to *C. bursa-pastoris*, in agreement with previous studies (Neuffer & Hurka 1986; Neuffer, 1990), our experiment revealed that its phenological response was mainly through phenotypic plasticity, with a rather equivalent responsiveness among genetic clusters. Although Neuffer & Hurka (1986) evoked a “general purpose genotype” (a term borrowed from Baker, 1965) for germination strategy, we could not observe this pattern in our study, as germination seemed as plastic as other phenological traits.

Within each common garden, accessions from the Asian cluster flowered earlier than accessions from the other clusters, a phenological characteristic that might be an adaptation to Asia: (i) as a response to avoid biotic competition (Orsucci *et al.*, 2020), thus compensating being in the colonization front and its consequent genetic load; or (ii) as a response to a rather unpredictable environment such as Asia (e.g., typhoon, monsoon), as observed in *Arabidopsis thaliana* (Simpson & Dean, 2002; Roux *et al.*, 2006), that is a phylogenetically close species (Beilstein *et al.*, 2006). It can also be a side

consequence of a higher sensibility to photoperiod, as observed in tropical species such as rice (*Oryza sativa*) and maize (*Zea mays*) since the photoperiod is the main cue to the alternation of dry and humid seasons in these climates (Roux *et al.*, 2006). According to this last hypothesis, early flowering reflects a different sensitivity to photoperiod, not an advantage of early flowering *per se*. In addition, several studies showed that, in several species such as *Arabidopsis thaliana* (Le Corre *et al.*, 2002; Komeda, 2004) or *Triticum monococcum* (Yan *et al.*, 2003), late flowering seems to be the ancestral character: if it is also the case for *C. bursa-pastoris*, it is probable that the “early flowering” phenotype recently evolved during *C. bursa-pastoris* range expansion in Asia.

Our study also showed that the European cluster flowered later than the other clusters, causing a longer time span for vegetative growth, and partly explaining the significantly larger rosette. In the Alpine accessions of *C. bursa-pastoris*, overwintering in the rosette state is frequently observed (Neuffer, 1990): a large rosette could be an adaptation towards harsh winter conditions in Europe, though accessions with large rosette were not specifically from the Alps. In our study, correlation between the rosette size and the flowering time was of $r = 0.52$ (see also Figure 2). It is not surprising to see an association between flowering trends and rosette characteristics, as it has been shown previously that QTLs associated with these two traits are closely linked in *C. bursa-pastoris* (Linde *et al.*, 2001); likewise, in *Arabidopsis thaliana*, rosette leaf number has been shown to be sensitive to stimuli of flowering, such as shading (Cookson & Granier, 2006) or length of photoperiod (Lewandowska *et al.*, 2017).

Conclusion

Despite the large scale of the current study, involving three common gardens on as many continents and a large number of accessions representative of the natural range of the shepherd’s purse, we only detected phenotypic plasticity and adaptation signatures, but not of local adaptation. Does this indicate that local adaptation did not contribute to the rapid colonization of *C. bursa-pastoris*? It is probably too early to conclude, but the present study suggests that understanding local adaptation in *C. bursa-pastoris* and other ruderal species that went through a rapid range expansion would likely require a combination of more targeted reciprocal transfer experiments as well as more small scale experiments.

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598

599 **Author Contribution**

600 AC, SG, SW and MT planned and designed the common gardens. AC, SG, SW and
601 ML directed the work. AC, AS, HH, DK, and KH performed experiments (installing the
602 common garden and phenotyping every accessions). AC, MT, MO and PM analyzed
603 datasets. AC and MT wrote the article, with thorough help from MO and PM. AC, MT,
604 AS and HH contributed equally.

605

606

607 **Data availability**

608 The data that support the findings of this study are openly available in [repository name
609 e.g “figshare”] at [http://doi.org/\[doi\]](http://doi.org/[doi]), reference number [reference number].

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866 Tables

867 **Table 1.** Analysis of variance of model [S1] (see Supplementary materials). Statistics
 868 (χ^2), degree of freedom (df) and p-values of the type II Wald chi-square test. Only
 869 variables that were measured in all the common gardens are kept. FP: time between
 870 bolting and flowering; SP: time between flowering and senescence. The distributions of
 871 the residual are normal distributions. Significance levels are : $p^{***} < 0.001$; $p^{**} < 0.01$;
 872 $p^* < 0.05$; $p^{n.s.} > 0.05$. Since germination time was not monitored in Toronto, analysis of
 873 variance was not assessed for germination time and the inter event between bolting time
 874 and germination time.

	Genetic cluster		Common garden		Genetic cluster x common garden	
	χ^2	df	χ^2	df	χ^2	df
Fitness (Nb. fruits)	67.1***	2	128.5***	2	135.1***	4
Height	109.9***	2	248.9***	2	122.0***	4
Nb. primary branches	3.2 ^{n.s.}	2	420.8***	2	194.7***	4
Nb. rosette leaves	227.5***	2	358.7***	2	517.5***	4
Rosette diameter	88.8***	2	309.4***	2	45.4***	4
FP	66.2***	2	656.8***	2	2.2 ^{n.s.}	4
SP	10.4***	2	1445.2***	2	6.1 ^{n.s.}	4

875

876 **Table 2.** Analysis of variance of the GLMM model. Statistics (χ^2), degree of freedom (df)
 877 and p-values of the type II Wald chi-square test. GP: time between sowing and
 878 germination; BP: time between germination and bolting; FP: time between bolting and
 879 flowering; SP: time between flowering and senescence. The distributions of the residual
 880 are : negative binomial (NB), or Normal (N). Significance levels are : $p^{***} < 0.001$; p^{**}
 881 < 0.01 ; $p^* < 0.05$; $p^{n.s.} > 0.05$. Since germination time was not monitored in Toronto,
 882 analysis of variance was not assessed in Toronto for GP and BP.

Trait	Genetic cluster effect						Residual
	Uppsala		Guangzhou		Toronto		
	χ^2	df	χ^2	df	χ^2	df	
Fitness	8.30*	2	34.29***	2	8.16*	2	NB
Height	81.4***	2	38.4***	2	40.8***	2	N
Nb. primary branches	1.8 ^{n.s.}	2	11.5**	2	11.4**	2	N

Nb. rosette leaves	127.1***	2	52.0***	2	90.6***	2	N
Rosette diameter	99.3***	2	33.8***	2	24.2***	2	N
GP	123.8***	2	181.6***	2	NA	2	N
BP	60.2***	2	21.3***	2	NA	2	N
FP	14.1***	2	37.4***	2	31.5***	2	N
SP	10.1**	2	1.9 ^{n.s.}	2	0.1 ^{n.s.}	2	N

883

884 **Table 3.** Estimate of genetic cluster effect in the GLMM model, in log-scale at each
885 common garden (Uppsala, Guangzhou, Toronto). Estimates of EUR and ME effects are
886 relative to ASI effect; Tukey contrast analysis of fitness in the GLMM model: statistics
887 and p-values of the Tukey's HSD test. Significance levels are : $p^{***} < 0.001$; $p^{**} < 0.01$;
888 $p^* < 0.05$; $p^{n.s.} > 0.05$.

Cluster	Uppsala			Guangzhou			Toronto		
	Estimate	Tukey's HSD		Estimate	Tukey's HSD		Estimate	Tukey's HSD	
		EUR	ME		EUR	ME		EUR	ME
ASI	4.56	-2.6*	-1.8 ^{n.s.}	6.12	1.8 ^{n.s.}	-4.5***	6.13	-1.4 ^{n.s.}	-2.8*
EUR	+0.21	-	0.3 ^{n.s.}	-0.20	-	-5.6***	+0.14	-	-1.8 ^{n.s.}
ME	+0.18	-	-	+0.50	-	-	+0.37	-	-

889

890 **Table 4.** Mean and standard deviation of responsiveness (slope) and performance in poor
891 environment (intercept) of fitness (the FWR model), for each genetic cluster (ASI, EUR,
892 and ME); pairwise Welch's *t*-test between mean values of genetic clusters: statistics (T),
893 degree of freedom (Df) and p-values. Significance levels are : $p^{***} < 0.001$; $p^{**} < 0.01$;
894 $p^* < 0.05$; $p^{n.s.} > 0.05$.

Cluster	Intercept					Slope				
	Mean ± SD	Welch's <i>t</i> -test				Mean + SD	Welch's <i>t</i> -test			
		EUR		ME			EUR		ME	
		T	Df	T	Df		T	Df	T	Df
ASI	6.70 ± 183.5	0.94 ^{n.s.}	90.0	-0.38 ^{n.s.}	40.4	0.91 ± 0.47	-0.5 ^{n.s.}	90.0	-3.5**	53.2

EUR	-29.92 ± 189.0	-	-	-1.1 ^{n.s.}	41.5	0.96 ± 0.44	-	-	-3.1**	50.4
ME	25.47 ± 188.6	-	-	-	-	1.27 ± 0.36	-	-	-	-

895

896 **Table 5.** Correlation between different Finlay-Wilkinson regressions (slope and intercept)

897 on fitness and flowering time (FT), or flowering duration (SP).

Cluster	Intercept		Slope	
	FT	SP	FT	SP
ASI	0.15	0.03	0.06	-0.07
EUR	-0.10	0.09	-0.19	0.10
ME	-0.15	0.14	-0.50	0.30

898

899

900 **Figures**

901

902 **Figure 1.** Interaction plot of fitness in *C. bursa-pastoris* between the three common
 903 gardens (Uppsala, Guangzhou and Toronto, on the x-axis) and the genetic clusters (ASI
 904 in green, EUR in red, and ME in blue), using the whole dataset. Error bars correspond to
 905 standard errors.

906 **Figure 2.** Principal Component Analysis of the phenotypes of accessions of *C. bursa-*
 907 *pastoris*: bolting time (BT), flowering time (FT), senescence time (ST), number of rosette
 908 leaves (NRL), rosette diameter (RD), height of the main inflorescence (H), and the
 909 number of primary branches (NPB), using the whole dataset (267 accessions). The
 910 number of fruits (the fitness) was added as a supplementary variable. PC1 captured
 911 52.4% of the variance, and PC2 captured 26.3%. The box on the top right corner of (a)
 912 highlights the correlation of each variable to the corresponding axis: the darker and
 913 bigger the circle, the higher the correlation (in brackets, the percentage of contribution of
 914 each variable to the first two PCs). Both (a) and (b) are the same PCA, only the color
 915 label changes. (a) PCA labeled according to the common gardens (Uppsala in brown,
 916 Toronto in orange, and Guangzhou in beige): common gardens appeared to be clearly
 917 delimiting three groups. (b) PCA labeled according to the genetic clusters (ASI in green,
 918 EUR in red, and ME in blue): genetic clusters did not appear to be clearly separating the
 919 dataset.

920 **Figure 3.** Histograms of the phenological traits of *C. bursa-pastoris* (bolting time as BT,
 921 flowering time as FT, and senescence time as ST) according to the common garden and
 922 genetic cluster, using the whole dataset. Germination time was not plotted here for
 923 consistency with Toronto.

924 **Figure 4.** Finlay-Wilkinson regressions of fitness (the FWR model) of *C. bursa-pastoris*.
 925 On the x-axis, the mean population fitness at each common garden; on the y-axis the
 926 mean fitness of each accession. Each dot is an accession at a specific common garden,
 927 and each line is a FWR for one accession. The bold black line is the population average
 928 FWR. (A) FWR of accessions belonging to the cluster ASI (green); (B) FWR of acces-
 929 sions belonging to the cluster EUR (red); (C) FWR of accessions belonging to the cluster
 930 ME (blue).

Diameter rosette

Common garden experiment

Diameter rosette

Genetic cluster

Nb.pr..br.

Common garden experiment

Nb.pr..br.

Genetic cluster

Height

Common garden experiment

Height

Genetic cluster