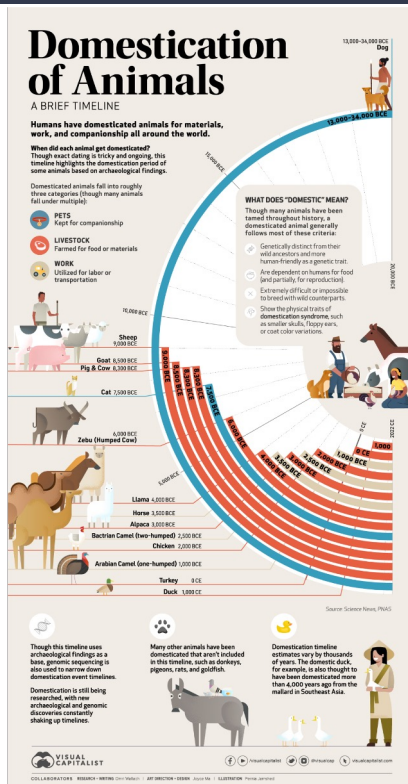


A Brief History of Pet Domestication

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Timeline



From Wolves to Dogs

- One study suggests that most/all domestic dogs have a central European origin^[1]
 - Signs of domestication in Europe >30,000 years ago
 - About 15,000 years ago in East Asia
 - For context, the agricultural revolution was about 10,000 years ago
- And some wolves have some features from domesticated dogs?
 - The black fur on North American wolves is a genetic mutation that seems to have been passed on by domesticated dogs some 10,000-15,000 years ago^[2]
- Domesticated dogs and modern humans experienced similar genetic changes for digestion and metabolism as well as cognitive processes^[3]
 - Things like cholesterol, starch digestion, anxiety and depression
- Initial thinking was that humans spent time and effort to raise wolf pups
 - But do hunter-gatherers really have the time and patience for this?
- Current thinking is that domestication was more of an accident
 - Perhaps wolves scavenged the remains from hunting
 - Pup selection possibly based on dogs with more infantile features (wide eyes, shortened faces)
 - One study shows some evidence that affiliation with women improves human perception of dogs^[4]

The House Cat



- The common ancestor of all house cats is the Near Eastern wildcat (*Felis silvestris lybica*)
- Cats chose domestication around 9,500-10,000 years ago^[5]
 - Not long (relatively speaking) after the Agricultural Revolution in the Middle East
 - Hunted rodents that were attracted to grain storage
- A second domestication event in Egypt some 3,500 years ago
 - Cats become revered in ancient Egypt^[6]
 - The punishment for killing a cat was execution
 - The Egyptian goddess of love, Bastet, had the head of a cat
 - Ancient Rome had a similar and more moderate reverence for cats
 - Cats had value in East Asia because they protected manuscripts from rodents
- However, the aloofness associated with house cats is considered to be a sign that the domestication process is not complete^[7]

Sources

1. [How Dogs Have Uniquely Co-Evolved With Humans Like No Other Species | Discover Magazine](#)
2. [Black Wolves the Result of Interbreeding With Dogs | WIRED](#)
3. [Dogs and Humans Evolved Together, Study Suggests](#)
4. [Dog-Human Coevolution: Cross-Cultural Analysis of Multiple Hypotheses](#)
5. [Were Egyptians Really the First to Domesticate Cats? Try Cave Men](#)
6. [A Brief History of House Cats | Smithsonian](#)
7. [Evidence suggesting preadaptation to domestication throughout the small Felidae - CAMERON-BEAUMONT - 2002 - Biological Journal of the Linnean Society - Wiley Online Library](#)