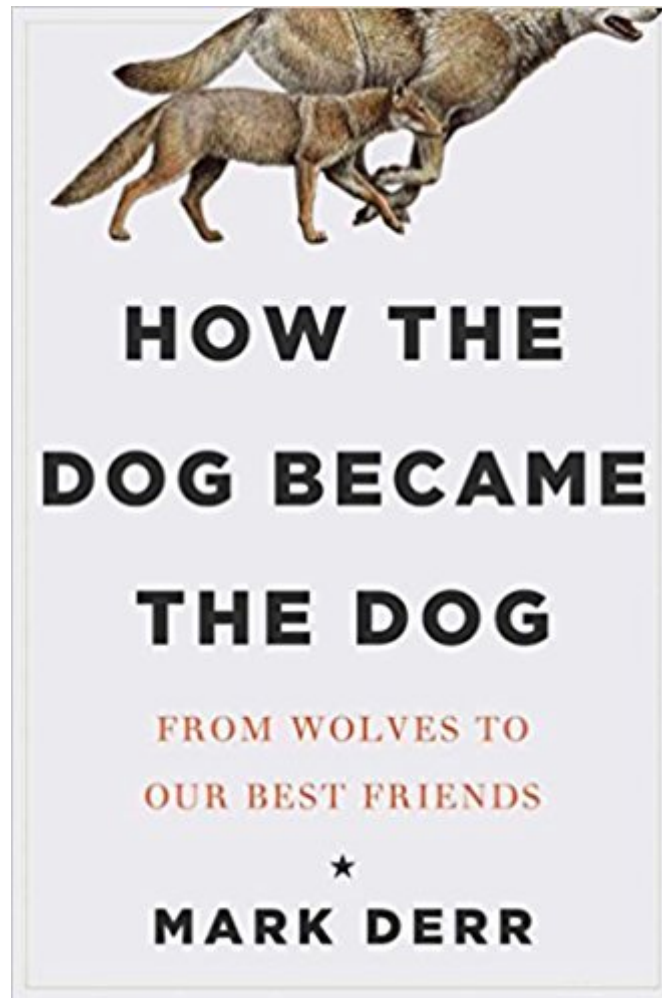




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# How The Dog Became The Dog: From Wolves To Our Best Friends



## Synopsis

That the dog evolved from the wolf is an accepted fact of evolution and history, but the question of how wolf became dog has remained a mystery, obscured by myth and legend. *How the Dog Became the Dog* posits that dog was an evolutionary inevitability in the nature of the wolf and its human soul mate. The natural temperament and social structure of humans and wolves are so similar that as soon as they met on the trail they recognized themselves in each other. Both are highly social, accomplished generalists, and creatures of habit capable of adapting? homebodies who like to wander. *How the Dog Became the Dog* presents domestication of the dog as a biological and cultural process that began in mutual cooperation and has taken a number of radical turns. At the end of the last Ice Age the first dogs emerged with their humans from refuges against the cold. In the eighteenth century, humans began the drive to exercise full control of dog reproduction, life, and death to complete the domestication of the wolf begun so long ago.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"In his latest book, renowned author and dog expert, Mark Derr, shows that one can be scientifically rigorous and still write a highly engaging and accessible account of how the dog became the dog. Derr shows how shared sociability and curiosity drew wolves and humans together resulting in a close and enduring relationship of mutual utility. If you have to decide which dog book to read among the many that are available, this clearly is the one to choose because of its scientific accuracy and easy-to-read style." — Marc Bekoff, author of *The Emotional Lives of Animals* "Mark Derr has produced a remarkable narrative on the origin of the domestic dog. Using the latest

findings from such varied fields as genomic research, archaeology, comparative anatomy, and paleontology, Derr is able to piece together what is the most likely narrative for the story of how the dog became the first domesticated animal. His findings clearly show that widely held assumptions about the supposed integral role of neoteny in the domestication process are likely erroneous. Such findings are likely to be controversial, but Derr has compiled so much evidence that one will think twice before repeating the line that dogs are nothing more than juvenilized wolves. Because of this book looks at domestic dog origins from so many different perspectives, it may be the most important book written on the subject since Konrad Lorenz wrote *Man Meets Dog* in 1949. This book will fascinate anyone who has ever loved a dog." â " Scottie Westfall, author of the Retrieverman blog "Derr's research spans the globe and considers mythology and literature alongside more scientific evidence as he explores the stories of Romulus and Remus and of Odysseus and his dog, Argus." â " Sacramento News and Reviews "Derr's richly detailed, well-sourced research, however, offers a full plate of choices and razor-sharp analysis to help you connect the dots while not undermining the authenticity of the big picture." â " Seattle Kennel Club

Mark Derr is the author of five books, including *How the Dog Became the Dog*, published by Overlook in 2011. His articles and commentary have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Natural History*, *Smithsonian*. and many other publications. He lives in Miami Beach.

As a geologist, 'dog guy' and occasional K9 trainer, I greatly enjoyed this book. Mr. Derr has summarized current scientific literature on dog-human evolution (including genome research) and presented it in layman's terms and in a very readable way. He includes relevant archeological history, particularly canine/ human migration routes and settlement patterns. Derr's work is well researched and grounded in peer reviewed anthropological and archeological writings that most lay persons would not otherwise be aware of. It would be a good read as an ebook; less scientifically inclined readers and non-archeologists could easily look up or 'wiki' unfamiliar terms. This book may be overly challenging for readers seeking a simple story of canine evolution. From negative reviews, it's clear some readers were not looking for such an in depth work and were obviously frustrated. Derr targets readers with a deep curiosity about canine development, willing to read an academic level book. Derr's central thesis, that canines first partnered with humans during our ice age hunter-gatherer days (Paleolithic) instead of our early agrarian period (Neolithic or Mesolithic) makes great sense. We are both hunting species and natural wanderers. By cooperating, we improved our mutual odds of survival. Also enjoyed life more. His description of the ancient Russian

burial site, with the human child's hand resting on the dog or wolf's skeleton, moved me deeply. Derr contrasts 'domestication' of wolves against livestock such as cattle and sheep. Wolves largely self-domesticated, training humans to value them as much as we trained canines to value us. This keyholes with observations of anthropologists that affinity for canines is a positive attribute in the human gene pool; aversion to canines a negative, often associated with sociopaths. As a German Shepherd Dog owner, I have no difficulty seeing the close association of dogs with wolves, especially northern working breeds. I especially liked Derr's point that only two species on this planet are highly social both within their species and toward another species: *Canis lupus* and *Homo sapiens*. Wolves, dogs and humans form packs or clans greater than extended families and also bond closely with a completely different species. As Derr says, "this is not typical primate behavior." Derr strongly rebuts coercive training methods. He makes the case that had early humans treated dogs in the manner some aggressive trainers suggest, wolves never would have associated with us. Dogs do things that make them feel good, and thus respond far better to positive training methods. Wolves surely are the same. Much of what Derr wrote on dog evolution is consistent with writings (1923) of Max von Stephanitz, 'father' of the German Shepherd Dog (GSD). Von Stephanitz was a soldier, not a scientist, but he applied what was then known of paleontology and anthropology to the evolution of dogs and arrived at very similar conclusions to Derr's. Von Stephanitz's "dog of the Bronze Age" (direct ancestor to the GSD) fits in a general way with Derr's observations on European dogs. I would like to know Derr's opinion on the closeness of early GSD and wolves, and how far back he sees the GSD and Belgian Shepherd-Malinois line originating. Derr and von Stephanitz have different opinions on selective dog breeding (line breeding) and I find value in each of their observations. Both advocate humane treatment, minimal kenneling and lots of love for our dogs. Note: von Stephanitz's *The German Shepherd Dog In Word And Picture* is now available as an ebook (epub format) or for kindle; affordable and well worth reading for an early 20th century view on GSD and working dogs in general. But don't buy it if you are looking for tight editing ;-). I am not a high literati, just a simple guy who enjoys well reasoned applied science. So the negative reviews seemed a bit off target to me, especially the complaints about editing. Yes, the editing could have been tighter. But today we see typos and sloppy editing even in *The New York Times*. Young readers, growing up in the age of blogs and texting, really don't care. Perhaps this is a good thing; one no longer need be an artful writer to be published. Just have something useful to say. Content is king, not style. We older readers have to grip it up and live with it. Overall this is a wonderful, readable and thoughtful book that any dog lover should enjoy. And learn a lot from.

A wonderfully fascinating and scientifically accurate rambling... like a dog sniffing down a trail... journey through the possibilities of how wild wolves and early humans realized an interaction could benefit both species. Science and prehistory done fun.

I agree with one of the previous reviews, this book should have been subjected to much better editing. Also the book would greatly benefit from some illustrations of all the prehistoric types of Canids being mentioned throughout the text. Much is left to imagination and throwing all the Latin names of different species and sub-species at the reader without informing him of their major characteristics is in my opinion pointless.

As I am a pet lover, I like to read anything about dogs so as to make my pets life better and I enjoy his company so it is a good read this book as I always learn something

Very interesting study on the canid family, goes great with the book Dogs; Their fossil and evolutionary history

Essential reading for anyone interested in canine, especially those of dogs, origins, and numerous other dog and canine issues.

It had the information I was interested in and I was looking for. I am completely satisfied with this purchase. thanks

This is a great book for the dog lover whose interest goes beyond the dog we have today and more to how it became this way. What this book mainly lacks is visual concepts and drawings of what Mark is saying to the reader. He brings up a lot of interesting points about the evolution of the domestic dog; however I have to keep a computer nearby so that I can look up the geologic time and Canis ancestor terms that he liberally throws at the reader. Also I want visual references of the dog's ancestors that he mentions and I have to look those up as well. There is a lot of Mark's opinion in this book, but there is also a lot of fact. Piecing together the history we have on dogs is an art of speculation based on artifacts and logic. I tend to agree with his thoughts. The hardest part of reading this book is coming to the understanding that the Dog we have today is no accident of nature. Dogs are the result of thousands of years of controlled breeding and smiting of the species Canis Lupus. But do not think about that too much.

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