



# Dogs - History and Domestication

K.Anilkumar

## History

**M**iacis, is described as a weasel sized small carnivore that lived 40 million years back in the Eocene period. This animal is believed as the oldest ancestor of present day dogs. They were forest dwellers, smaller in size with long tail and short limbs. Cynidictus was the next to evolve and the evolution of Hesperocyan is thought to be the next stage. There are two views on the development of canids from this stage. Some believe that Cynodesmus of Miocene period was followed by Tomarectus of Pliocene period and then the present day canids. But there is another view that Hesperocyan and then Leptocyan may be the ancestors of dogs or even Tomarectus.

The immediate wild ancestors of the dogs are more or less accepted as wolves (*Canis lupus*). But there are other views like the possibility of mixing of jackal and wolves, which lacks fossil evidence. The production of fertile offspring from the mating of wolf and dogs supports wolfian ancestry for dogs. Moreover the dog breed Alsatian has lot of similarities with wolf.

Dogs belong to the class Mammalia, sub class

Metatheria Order Carnivora, family Canidae, genus Canis and species familiaris.

## Domestication

There are many speculations on the events that lead to emergence of dogs from wolves. The social structure of the wolf is very much similar to that of man and hence may be one of the reasons for its domestication. Wolves might have followed hunters initially to find game. This must have followed by sharing of killing by the man with wolves and subsequent taming of the animal. Or else early man may have taken young cubs from wolf's den and hand raised it. In the process they depend on man for its food and hence subsequent domestication.

The similarity between dogs and wolves are many including developmental factors like less developed masseter and temporalis muscles, shorter muzzle, wider cranium, reduced tympanic bullae, convex mandible, smaller eyes and teeth. The differences between the two are mainly in the reproductive cycles which are twice as that of wolves in dogs. The age at sexual maturity is around one year for dogs and two years for wolves. The reduced or even absent scent gland in dorsal aspect of base of the tail and presence of first digit on the rear limbs are peculiarities of dogs.

Around 12,000 years old remnants of dog like creatures have been discovered in different sites like Palegawra cave in Iraq and Ein Mailaha in Israel. The presence of dog mummies along side those of Pharaohs in Egyptian pyramids was also noticed. A single origin in Northern Euracia or emergence in different location is still fiercely debated topic. Latest DNA evidence suggests atleast two separate domestication events.

## Present status

In the whole history of dogs there are more than 2000 breeds. Most of them had perished during the long battle with time and nature. It is estimated that currently around 400 dog breeds are available worldwide. The grouping of breeds varies according to the rules laid down by the various agencies.

The Federation of Cynologique Internationale (FCI) has grouped the dogs into 10 classes, where as American Kennel Club (AKC) and Kennel Club of Britain (KC) have grouped all breeds in to six classes. AKC has a seventh class of miscellaneous breeds. The

*Dr.K.Anilkumar,*

Assistant Professor,  
Department of Animal  
Breeding and Genetics,  
College of Veterinary and  
Animal Sciences Mannuthy





history suggests that the first competitive dog show was held at Newcastle in Britain in 1859. It was limited to pointers and setters. Later the Kennel Club of Britain was established in 1873. In India Kennel club of India

maintains studbook of various breeds and involved in conducting shows.



### CLASSIFICATION OF BREEDS AS PER KENNEL CLUB OF BRITAIN

Sl No	Name of Breed	Country of Origin	Height in inches	Weight in Pounds
<i><b>Sporting dogs (Gun dog)</b></i>				
1	American aCocker Spaniel	USA	14-15	24-28
2	Cocker Spaniel	USA	15-16	28-32
3	English Setter	England	24-25.5	55-61.5
4	Golden Retriever	USA	20-22	60-70
5	Irish Setter	Ireland	20-23.5	33-49
6	Irish water Spaniel	Ireland	21-23	55-60
7	Labrador Retriever	England& USA	21.5-22.5	55-75
8	Pointer	England	24-27	44-66
9	Weimaraner	Germany	22-25	70-85
<i><b>Hounds</b></i>				
1	Afghan Hound	Afghanistan	27-29	58-64
2	Basenji	Sudan	16-17	21-24
3	Basset Hound	France	13-15	40-51
4	Beagle	USA	13-16	18-30
5	Dachshund Long haired	England	5-9	17-18
6	Dachshund Smooth Haired	Germany	5-9	23-25
7	Dachshund Wire haired	England	5-9	15-20
8	Dachshund Wire haired Miniature	Germany	4-6	10-11
9	Grey Hound	Egypt	28-30	60-70
10	Rhodesian Ridge back	South Africa	24-26	70
11	Saluki	Arabia	23-28	66
12	Whippet	Egypt	17.5-18.5	15-20
<i><b>Terriers</b></i>				
1	Airedale Terrier	England& USA	22-24	44
2	Australian Terrier	Australia	10	10-11
3	Bull Terrier	England	21-22	52-62
4	Cavalier King Charles Spaniel	USA	12-13	12-18
5	Irish Terrier	Ireland	18	25-27
6	Miniature Pinscher	USA	10-12	10
7	Welsh Terrier	England	15.5	20-21
<i><b>Toy Breeds</b></i>				
1	Chihuahua	USA	6-9	2-6
2	English Toy Terrier	England	10-12	6-8
3	King Charles Spaniel	USA	10	8-14
4	Maltese	USA,UK&Malta	8-11	9-10
5	Pekingese China		6-9	11

Carried over to page 11

