

Village-dog DNA hints at origins

Nature 526 (22 October 2015)



DNA from free-roaming 'village dogs' shows greater genetic diversity than that of pure-bred dogs, and could help to settle debates about where dogs were domesticated.

Humans domesticated dogs from wolves more than 15,000 years ago, but researchers disagree about whether that happened in Europe, East Asia, the Middle East or elsewhere. A team led by Adam Boyko at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, analysed the genomes of 549 free-breeding village dogs from around the world, as well as 4,676 pure-bred dogs belonging to 161 breeds. Genome-wide patterns of ancestry in the village dogs hint at a central Asian origin for domestic dogs, followed by population expansions in East Asia.

The researchers say, however, that more-extensive studies of DNA from diverse dogs are needed to pinpoint the origins of man's best friend.

Proc. Natl Acad. Sci. USA <http://dx.doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1516215112> (2015)

<http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v526/n7574/full/526479d.html>