

BRANDI BETHKE and **AMANDA BURTT**, eds. 2020. *Dogs: Archaeology beyond Domestication*, Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 273 pp., ISBN 978-0-8130-5746-0

Dogs: Archaeology beyond Domestication investigates a topic that has accompanied us since the late Paleolithic, for more than 15,000 years BCE (Boschin et al. 2020): relationships between dogs and humans and their diverse manifestations.

The book does not seek to offer a new explanation for how these relationships arose, instead it highlights their meaning and consequences for humans and dogs through case studies. The Introduction establishes the framework for the following nine chapters of archaeological/anthropological studies and a Conclusion that condenses general reflections and ongoing research areas. The book's approach emphasizes the association between two species, extending beyond the functional aspects of yield and material rentability. It tries to apply a perspective defined as zoontology, among other concepts (Overton and Hamilakis 2013). It puts the animal at the same ontological level as the human in order to achieve a holistic analysis. Thus, the dog in this volume is approached as an 'other-than-human person' with agency (Hill, 2011).

In Chapter 2, the first empirical chapter, Angela R. Perri conducts a comprehensive review of ethnographic studies from diverse regions worldwide, where the dog plays a key role in hunting activities. The author expands the framework of hunting by incorporating additional roles that dogs fulfill, such as serving as pack animals, scaring off competing predators, protecting humans, or guiding hunters by tracking prey. Additionally, Perri explores the dog as a commodity for trade and mate exchanges. These examples are contextualized across a wide range of ethnographic cases, spanning, to name only a few, the Amazon Basin, the highland forest of Ethiopia, Siberia, Japan, and Native Americans.

In Chapter 3, Victoria Monagle and Emily Lena Jones revisit archaeological material from an Ancestral Pueblo site in North America dating back to the 9th to 11th century CE. The authors conducted a faunal analysis while carefully considering the archaeological context. The results led to the identification of eight dogs related to foundation offerings. The location of puncture marks on bones suggests the use of dogs as eagle food, a relevant animal in Puebloan rituals. Furthermore, they identified several signs of violence and stress that match with a "street-like" life. Unfortunately, the low resolution of the images illustrating this body of taphonomy evidence undermines the analysis. The use of high-resolution pictures would have enhanced this key part of the chapter.

Masson-MacLean, McManus-Fry, and Britton study in Chapter 4 the material remains from a frozen site in Alaska that reflects the daily life of Yup'ik people from 1620 to 1675 CE. This unique context allows for a deep level of data preservation that shows the diversity of functions and aspects in which dogs were involved. This animal played a crucial role in hunting strategies as well as food intake and raw material for several artifacts. Noteworthy, canid fur was identified in clay temper exclusively used to make lamps suggesting a cultural choice (p. 84). This initial section of the chapter seems to overlook perspectives that extend beyond local boundaries. The reader interested in these chapters would certainly love to look for other contexts, such as Mesoamerica where dogs have been documented in similar conditions (e.g. Cabrero and Valadez Azúa 2009).

Chapter 5 aims to shed light on the dietary trend of two groups of dogs from late North American archaeological sites (900-1300 CE). Amanda Burt and Larisa R. G. DeSantis established a Dental Microwear Texture Analysis baseline from modern canids, which enabled them to create two analytical categories: *provisioned consumers* that were fed by humans, and *non-provisioned scavengers* that obtained their food on their own. The authors studied two assemblages from Indiana (n=9, agricultural contexts) and Wyoming (n=7, mobile hunter and gatherers). Overall, the results suggest that humans deliberately fed the dogs with less frequency in settlements, thereby amplifying the role of dogs as waste processors among sedentary populations.

In Chapter 6, Nerissa Russell conducted a thorough data analysis on the presence of dog remains across Neolithic sites in the Eastern Mediterranean, with a particular focus on *Catalhoyuk*. She observed that the relative frequency of dogs rises or remains consistent with the advent of agriculture and urbanization. Dogs not only served as dwelling protectors but also as waste management aides, which arguably highlights their growing significance compared to previous periods.

In Chapter 7, Brandi Bethke offers a traditional anthropological analysis of the Blackfoot people from the North American plains. She points to the role of dogs among them and how these roles changed after the horses' arrival. Although Blackfoot life turned to an equestrian-centered existence, the dogs were still used to carry low loads, camp guard, and as herders of horses, cattle, and sheep.

In Chapter 8 Peter W. Stahl takes us to South America, where pet caring goes beyond the limits of domestication. The Indigenous population not only kept dogs as pets but cared for tamed wild animals that were treated from an anthropocentric perspective. This directly confronts us with how we perceive and relate with other living things, which also restricts our analysis of the past (Viveiros de Castro 1998). The ultimate aim is to understand human relationships with other species on their own terms.

The dingoes of Australia were also introduced by humans as companions, but they were never domesticated, as Loukas Koungoulos and Melanie Fillios argue in Chapter 9. According to historical records, this canid was highly esteemed for kangaroo hunting until the arrival of European hounds. Then the dingoes were relegated to hunting small-medium size game, as the new breeds became preferred for larger prey. Over time, these canids interbred and some became feral, creating ongoing challenges for native wildlife.

The last chapter represents a well-structured zooarchaeological analysis with detailed information about dog findings in Rome's earliest temples, the Area Sacra di Sant'Omobono (6th BCE). Victoria Moses reveals a sacrificial context of young animals, with puppies primarily represented by cranial elements. This suggests a non-consumption practice intended as propitiatory offerings. Through the study of antique sources, the author connects this ritual to the attribute of pureness as part of birth and

fertility rituals in the archaic Roman religion at the core of what would become an empire.

In short, this book illustrates how the role of dogs in our shared history extends beyond the issue of domestication. This objective becomes clear throughout the book, with material evidence of dogs and other canids such as coyotes, dingoes, and other animals. This work perceives the animal within a theoretical framework outlined before: as an active entity that acknowledges its existence and engages with it, shaping itself through a sense of dialogue rather than monologue in its interactions with humans.

Unfortunately, the material remains of this relationship between humans and dogs are not abundant in the archaeological record, so it is imperative to maximize the utility of the available evidence. Over the last decades, the integration of archaeometry procedures (isotopes, geometric morphometrics, genetics, proteomics, etc.) has provided insights and could complement some of the topics addressed here. A broader geographical perspective that considers regions of utmost importance to the subject, such as Asia and Siberia, where evidence strongly suggests the origin of human-canid interactions, would also be useful. One of the further tasks that the book points us to is the creation of baseline data that would achieve the compilation and sharing of this kind of information (p. 258).

Lastly, this book provides nine detailed examples of our relationship with canids, illustrating a deep-rooted influence that has shaped who we are. Our mutual journey over more than 15.000 years has forged a reciprocal bond between us. Dogs have clearly changed from their wolf ancestors, yet the exact process of domestication remains unclear. Even more intangible is our actual transformation as social beings in relation with dogs. This book testifies to some of the multiple ways it could manifest. This may not be the place for an exhaustive, geographically oriented analysis, but an eager reader interested in this topic would enjoy having this work in hand. Wherever that connection to dogs comes, whether from a professional or leisurely perspective, the information would feed their curiosity.

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