

Owner-reported behavioural characteristics of dingoes (*Canis dingo*) living as companion animals: A comparison to 'modern' and 'ancient' dog breeds.

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Owner-reported behavioural characteristics of dingoes (*Canis dingo*) living as companion animals: A comparison to 'modern' and 'ancient' dog breeds

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Highlights

- We compared dingoes to 'ancient' and 'modern' breeds of dogs using the C-BARQ.
- A number of differences were discovered between the three groups.
- Dingoes were less trainable and displayed more stranger and non-social fear than dogs.

â€¢ Dingoes were a significant outlier from the range of typical between-breed variation.

â€¢ This suggests selective processes took place during domestication that affected behaviour.

Abstract

During the domestication of canids, humans have selected for particular traits and selected against others. Wild canids and phylogenetically primitive breeds might then be expected to show less â€˜desirableâ€™ traits than more recently derived European breeds of dog. In order to examine this, we divided domestic dog breeds according to their apparent genetic relatedness to the wolf, and compared them to a wild canid, the dingo, using a validated behavioural assessment tool (C-BARQ). Our sample included 49 dingoes, 6935 modern dogs, and 673 ancient dogs. Overall, a number of differences were discovered between the breed groups, after accounting for demographic effects and variability between breeds. Dingoes were significantly less trainable than both ancient and modern dogs, and displayed greater stranger-directed fear and non-social fear than modern dogs. Dingoes were also more prone to escaping/roaming and urinating against objects than modern dogs, and tended to exhibit compulsive â€˜staringâ€™ and rolling in animal droppings more than both ancient and modern dogs. Using a multivariate test, we found that dingoes represented a significant outlier from the range of typical between-breed variation of domesticated dogs. Taken together, these results provide some evidence that (1) selective processes during domestication are reflected in the behaviour of dog breeds, and (2) primitive breed behaviour tends to reflect earlier and different selection pressures (natural rather than artificial selection).



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Keywords

Dingo; Dog; Behaviour; Domestication; C-BARQ

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