

J.P. Scott. The Effects of Selection and Domestication Upon the Behavior of the Dog. J. of the Nat. Cancer Inst., 15, No. 3, 1954. p. 739-757. p.755

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For example, the Shetland sheep dog has a tendency to form fixed and lasting habits, apparently because of great emotional sensitivity. The beagle has the opposite tendency so that it rarely takes the same path twice, which is of great advantage in investigating and hunting. Sheep dogs show a considerable degree of aggressiveness which results in their tending to chase sheep, while beagles tend to be non-aggressive so that dog fights are infrequent while they are living in packs. Sheep dogs tend to be indifferent to food rewards while beagles are highly motivated by them. Such instances could be multiplied indefinitely. On the other hand, there is little evidence that complicated patterns of behavior will appear spontaneously without previous learning.

Certain traits which make it easy for an animal to learn one type of problem may limit its learning ability elsewhere. The sheep dogs which are highly adapted to learn commands under close personal supervision do comparatively poorly under kennel conditions and in situations where they are required to solve problems independently. The aggressiveness of the fox terriers makes them easy to teach to attack small game, but when they are raised in litters it is impossible to keep more than two or three animals together because of physical injuries inflicted on each other. The conclusion may be reached that the exaggeration of a behavioral trait by selection may make a particular learning process easier, but it may also limit the power of adaptation under other situations.

1. Muller.

dogs

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According to the paleontological evidence the dog was domesticated from a single species of wolf in northern Eurasia.

Archeological evidence indicates that domestication took place possibly 8,000 years ago and that the use of dogs spread rapidly among primitive peoples.

The possession of dogs by semi-isolated human tribes provided a favorable condition for genetic change, and each geographical region tended to have a different type of dog associated with it.

The social organization of wolves is one which permits easy domestication, and there are authentic reports of wolf cubs tamed by rearing apart from the mothers.



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