

## Puppy love: When did the ‘unique and deeply ancient role of dogs as human companions’ begin?

Some recent research has pushed the date of [the domestication of wolves in Europe as far back as 40,000 years ago](#), based on the presence of [dog-like anatomical features, such as shorter skulls and wider snouts, in several ancient canid remains](#). Other studies, which combined genetic and archaeological data, describe [a separate domestication event in Siberia, around 23,000 years ago](#); the dogs from this lineage likely crossed the land bridge of Beringia and entered the Americas with humans at least 15,000 years ago. Still other teams have concluded that domestication occurred in Central Asia, China, and other locations.

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The first dogs probably had utilitarian roles: hauling goods, hunting, and guarding.

And at some point in this early chapter of our shared story, an ancient dog became something more to someone.

The current top contender for the first best friend is a puppy that lived, for a few months, more than 14,000 years ago in Central Europe. Known as [the Bonn-Oberkassel dog](#), the animal was buried with two adults and various grave goods. The partial remains were found more than 100 years ago in a quarry, and initially thought to belong to a wolf.

[\*\*This is an excerpt. Read the full article here\*\*](#)