

The Oldest Dog in America?

Archaeologists claim that they have discovered evidence of what is believed to be the oldest domesticated dog in the Americas. A University of Maine graduate student, Samuel Belknap III reported finding a bone shard and skull fragment from a dried out sample of human excrement that has been carbon dated to 9400 years ago. The bone was orange in color – which is viewed as evidence that it passed through a human digestive tract. It seems that the human being who lived 9400 years ago was eating dog. However, let's not jump to conclusions!

It is believed that the dog whose remnants have been discovered and carbon-dated was also man's companions, protection, and hunting assistant and then, if the need arose, used as a food source.

While far older fossils of dogs have been found in Europe, the Middle East and Asia, this is believed to be the oldest known evidence of domesticated dogs rather than wolves in the Americas. Actually, the graduate student was doing a study of diet and nutrition of the peoples of the Lower Pecos Region of what is now Texas. DNA analysis at the University of Oklahoma revealed it to be the oldest known dog fossil from where the dog's spine connects with his skull.

The bone was approximately 1.5 centimeters long and 1 centimeter wide. Scientists believe the dog weighed 25-30 pounds and was similar to a species of Peruvian dogs still living today. Interestingly enough, evidence strongly suggests that the dog was cared for before being butchered, cooked and incorporated into a stew.

Humans and canines share a long and close history together. Some of the breeds identified throughout the world as most ancient are: the Afghan Hound, Akita, Alaskan Malamute, Siberian Husky, Saluki, Samoyed, Shar-pei and Shih-Tzu.