

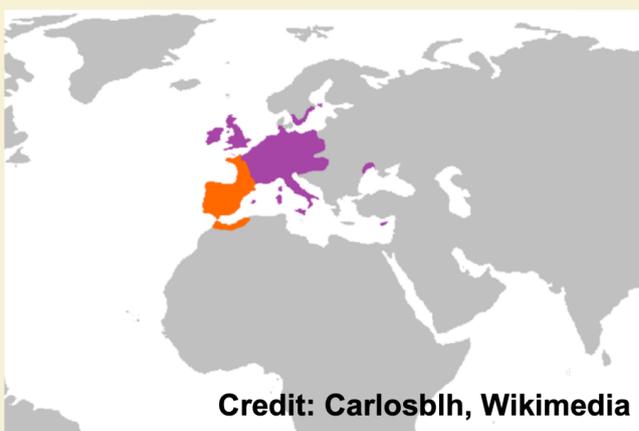
Domestication of Rabbits

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A RABBIT'S TALE

Roaming rabbits were found by the Romans wandering around the Iberian Peninsula.

- The native species under went a split given rise to *O.c algirus* located in southwestern Iberian and *O.c cuniculus* native to northeastern Iberia.



- Rabbits were kept in captivity by the Romans in hutches to fatten them up for livestock and fur.



- Romans practiced hunting rabbits and raising them leading to underground breeding, but this does not tell us exactly when domestication started.

If the Romans Didn't Do It, Who Did?

- Early written findings state domestication evolved around ~AD600 by French monks.
- Applying genetic methods along with archaeological evidence, lead to the finding that there is no exact date to when rabbits became domesticated.



What Do We Really Know?

Though we do not know the exact timing of rabbit domestication, we do know its common ancestor.

- All modern domesticated rabbits come from a common ancestor, the European Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*).
- Domestication happened with small continual changes over time rather than one big event.
- Genomic data results show us that between 12,200 years to 17,700 years ago a split happened resulting in the wild rabbit and domesticated rabbit.



Why then domesticated rabbits?

Physical appearance is why we have domesticated rabbits also because their tamed behavior compared to the wild rabbit.

- Today we have more than 200 rabbit breeds worldwide. Breeds varying in size, weight, fur type, and color.
- Rabbit have great genetic structure bringing about much genetic diversity in their expression of phenotypes.

Sources:

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