

OF FRIENDS AND FOOD: DOGS IN MEDIEVAL NOVGOROD THE GREAT

ANDREI V. ZINOVIEV

Abstract

Dogs are the earliest domesticated animals, which followed man for thousands of years. Their historical diversity and interaction with men is no less interesting than the problem of their origin. The present report covers the subject of canine diversity and interaction with men in Medieval Novgorod the Great (the tenth to the 14th centuries), one of the oldest and most important trading cities in Russia.

Key words: dogs, morphometry, trauma, disease, Russia, Medieval Novgorod, pariah dog, luxury breeds, natural selection.

Although dogs have been included in extensive studies for more than a century (Smith, 1840), works on the morphometry of Medieval dogs are quite rare. Most of these works deal with dogs in Western Europe (Wijnagaarden-Bakker, Ijzereeff 1977), leaving aside the vast areas of the modern Russian Federation. Data on dogs from this area has been for a long time incorporated into larger reports, and had not contained morphometrical analysis (Tsalkin 1971; Lavrenov *et al.* 2003). The present report, based on our recent research (Zinoviev, 2012), thus fills this gap for at least one Russian city.

Since the materials and methods applied in this study have been described in detail elsewhere (Zinoviev, 2012), it is reasonable to go straight to the results and discussion. The cranii of all dogs found in two excavation sites dated to the tenth to 14th centuries AD (Fig. 1), show similar features characteristic tomesocephalic animals (Table 1). None of them can be attributed to any existing breeds. Some of the skulls show traces of periodontal diseases characteristic of older animals. Older animals have also often lost their teeth (Fig. 2). The shoulder height characterises the majority of the

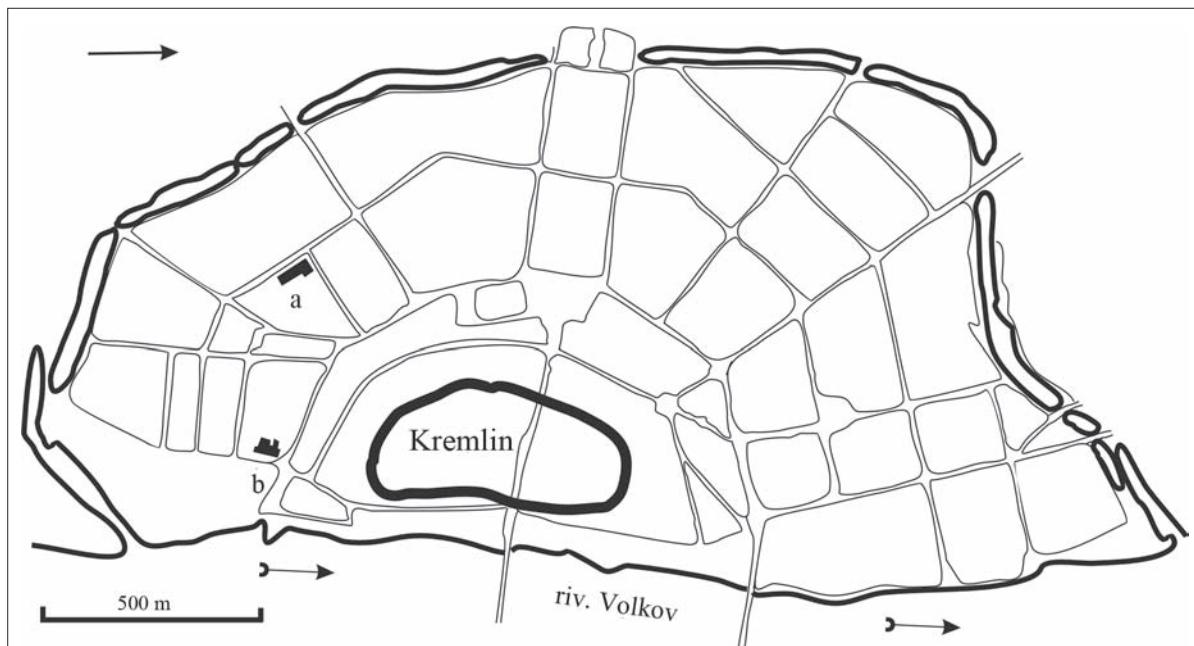
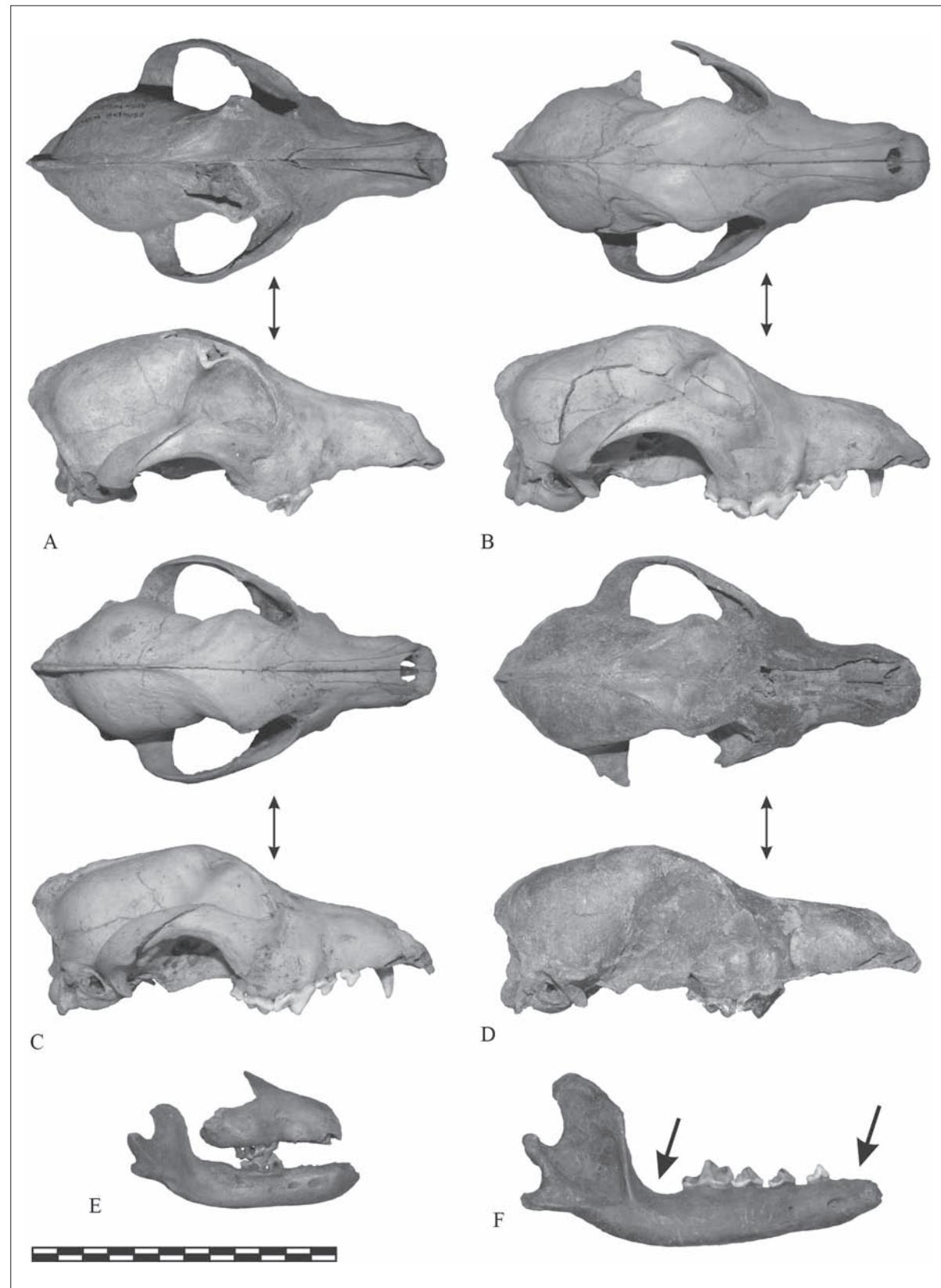


Fig. 1. The position of the Desyatinniy (a) and Troitski (b) excavation sites on a map of the western historical part of Novgorod (after Zinoviev, 2012).



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Fig. 2. Dog skulls from the Desyatinniy excavation site. Arrows show the absence of incisors, canines and the last two molars, fallen out during the life of the animal (after Zinoviev, 2012).

Table 1. Craniometric measurements of dogs from the Desyatinniy excavation site (in millimetres)

No.	SL	CBL	BL	CL	NL	UNL	VCL	FL	GLN	SnL	MPL	PL	LHP	LMR	LPR	
1	163	151	144	92	85	76	71	87	56	64	84	81	28	14	46	
2	173	163	54	99	90	85	74	88	58	65	86	83	29	15	46	
3	159	150	142	79	80	71	80	88	65	65	78	75	23	16	42	
5	169	164	155	90	94	76	79	93	70	63	84	82	25	19	45	
No.	GMW	BEAM	MWOC	GBJP	MWFM	HFM	LDN	MWN	MZW	LBS	FB	LBO	GPB	SH	SHWS	HOT
1	59	49	30	42	15	11	4	52	93	34	42	30	56	50	48	40
2	60	55	35	45	19	13	2	56	95	38	46	34	59	53	46	42
3	56	52	32	44	17	10	2	55	88	31	42	30	54	50	36	43
5	74	56	34	45	19	13	2	55	100	37	44	31	60	57	44	39

SL, skull length; GBL, condylobasal length; BL, basal length; CL, cranial length; NL, neurocranium length; UNL, upper neurocranium length; VCL, viscerocranum length; FL, facial length; GLN, greatest length of the nasals; SnL, snout length; MPL, median palatal length; PL, palatal length; LHP, length of the horizontal part of the palatine; LMR, length of the molar row; LPR, length of the premolar raw; GMW, greatest mastoid width; BEAM, breadth dorsal to the external auditory meatus; MWOC, maximum width of the occipital condyles; GBJP, greatest breadth of the bases of the jugular processes; MWFM, maximum width of the foramen magnum; HFM, height of the foramen magnum; LDN, length of the dorsal notch of the foramen magnum, MWN, maximum width of neurocranium; MZW, maximum zygomatic width; LBS, least breadth of the skull; FB, frontal breadth; LBO, least breadth between the orbits; GPB, greatest palatal breadth; LPB, least palatal breadth; SH, skull height; SHWS, skull height without the sagittal crest; HOT, height of the occipital triangle.

dogs as medium-size animals (withers height between 45 and 64 centimetres) (Table 2). This is especially true for the Desyatinniy excavation site. The Troitski excavation site produced a number of smaller dogs, with a withers height of around 43.5 centimetres. Also found were the smallest (35.3 centimetres) and the largest dog (69 centimetres) were found. The weights of the dogs ranged from that of the modern Finnish Spitz (6.8 kilograms) to that of the Harrier (23.1 kilograms), but the majority of animals belonged to light and medium-weight dogs (Table 3). Injuries were quite similar to what we observe in modern dogs, from age changes to fractures, with rib fractures being the most common.

As it is impossible to tell the breed of a dog without having external characteristics, which are rarely preserved in archaeological records, we can only speak of the similarity between historical dogs and modern breeds. The appearance of the dogs from Medieval Novgorod characterises them as animals which we would expect to see as scavenging curs (sometimes called pariah dogs), associated with any peasant community of the present day. As a result of natural rather than artificial selection, they were easier to control in comparison with larger dogs. Not requiring much of a food, they served as guards in town houses and farmsteads. Few bones of smaller and larger animals may indicate the presence in Medieval Novgorod of a number of specialised breeds, kept by rich citizens, traces of whose houses have been found in the Troitsky

and Desyatinniy excavation sites. At least one birch-bark document refers to a hound (Rybina, 2001). Dog breeds must not have been unusual for the city, which once stood as the easternmost *kontor* of the Hanseatic League. The rarity of butchery marks on canine bones shows that although the citizens occasionally resorted to eating dogs (for example, during famines), these animals were not routinely used as food, as in modern Southeast Asia.

Thus, most of the Medieval dogs of Novgorod the Great fall into the category of ‘classical’ medium-size mesocephalic animals. As a result of natural selection, they were well suited to be guard dogs. Dogs were rarely used for food, often living as guards until a considerable age. Rarer smaller and larger specimens might represent luxury breeds of the upper classes and prosperous citizens of the Hanseatic *kontor*.

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Table 2. Long bone measurements and the shoulder height of dogs from the Desyatinniy (D) and Troitski* (T) Sites, Novgorod (after Zinoviev, forthcoming)

No.	Site	Century	Humerus (mm)		Radius (mm)		Ulna (mm)		Femur (mm)		Tibia (mm)		Shoulder height (cm)
			right	left	right	left	right	left	right	left	right	left	
3	D	XII	130				154	156			142	140	42,7
15	D	2XIII-XIV		141					148	148			45,4
2	D	1XII	153	152			172	172					49,3
5	D	X			151		179						50,2
16	D	1XII							165		168		50,3
4	D	2XIII-XIV	155	155	156						168		50,7
6	D	1XII	163		160	159	186	186			183		52,9
Mean shoulder height - Desyatinniy													48,8
1	T	XI			105								35,3
2	T	XI			120								40,1
3	T	XI	127										40,9
4	T	XI								140			41,8
5	T	XI	131										42,3
6	T	XI					150						42,3
7	T	XI	132										42,6
8	T	XI							140				42,7
9	T	XI							142				43,3
10	T	XI		131									43,6
11	T	XI		132									43,9
12	T	XI		133									44,2
13	T	XI		134									44,6
14	T	XI	140										45,4
15	T	XI							151				46,1
16	T	XI	160										52,2
17	T	XI							180				55,2
18	T	XI							181				55,5
19	T	XI								190			56,4
20	T	XI		209									68,4
21	T	XI					247						69,3
Mean shoulder height - Troitski													47,4
Mean shoulder height for both sites													48,1

Table 3. The midshaft circumference of long bones and the weight of dogs from the Desyatinniy (D) and Troitski* (T) sites, Novgorod (after Zinoviev, forthcoming)

No.	Site	Century	Humerus (mm)		Femur (mm)		Body weight (kg)	Closest modern breed by withers height - weight ratio
			right	left	right	left		
15	D	2XIII-XIV			35	35	11,1	Irish Terrier
2	D	1XII	35	35			12,4	Whippet
16	D	1XII				37	13,1	Whippet
6	D	1XII	42	42			19,5	Portuguese Water Dog
4	D	2XIII-XIV	45	45			23,1	Harrier
Mean body weight - Desyatinniy						15,8		
3	T	XI	27				6,5	Finnish Spitz
8	T	XI			33		9,4	Finnish Spitz
7	T	XI	33				10,7	Finnish Spitz
5	T	XI	34				11,6	Irish Terrier
15	T	XI			40		16,4	Brittany Spaniel
18	T	XI			40		16,4	Siberian Husky
17	T	XI			42		18,8	Siberian Husky
Mean body weight - Troitski						12,8		
Mean body weight for both sites						14,3		

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IR DRAUGAI IR MAISTAS: ŠUNYS VIDURAMŽIŲ DIDŽIAJAME NOVGORODE

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Santrauka

Archeologinių tyrinėjimų metu rasti šunų kaulai intensyviai studijuojami daugiau nei šimtą metų, tačiau tyrinėjimų apie viduramžių šunų formą kiekybines charakteristikas yra labai reta. Didžioji dalis tokų tyrimų skirta Vakarų Europos šunims ir neapima didžiulio dabartinės Rusijos Federacijos arealo. Šios teritorijos duomenys apie šunis jau senokai įtraukti į duomenų bazes, bet vis dar neatlikta jų formų kiekybinių charakteristikų analizė. Šis straipsnis paremtas straipsnio autorės nauju tyrinėjimų preliminariais rezultatais ir

šunų spragą bent jau vieno miesto tyrimų medžiaga (1–2 pav.; 1–3 lentelės).

Visų tirtų šunų kaukolės rastos dvieluose X–XIV a. tyrimų plotuose. Jos pasižymi visiems mezocefaliniams gyvūnams būdingais bruožais. Nė viena negali būti priskirta dabar paplitusioms rūšims. Kai kurie žandikauliai turi seniems gyvūnams būdingų apydančių uždegimo pėdsakų. Senų gyvūnų dantys dažniausai iškritę. Dauguma šunų buvo vidutinio ūgio (jų aukštis svyravo nuo 45 iki 64 cm). Tokie gyvūnai būdingesni Desyatinnių perkasai. Troitski perkasoje rasta daug smulkesnių gyvūnų, kurių aukštis neviršijo 43,5 cm. Ten rasta mažiausio (35,3 cm) ir didžiausio (69 cm) šunų kaulų. Šunų svoris galėjo svyruoti nuo šiuolaikinio suomių špico (6,8 kg) iki Harrier veislės šuns (23,1 kg). Didžioji šunų dalis priklauso lengvų ir vidutinio svorio šunų kategorijai (3 lentelė). Jų traumas tokios pat kaip ir šiuolaikinių šunų. Lūžiai priklauso nuo amžiaus, bet dominuoja šonkaulių lūžiai.

Kadangi šunų veislių neįmanoma apibūdinti be išorinių duomenų, kurie labai retai aptinkami archeologinių tyrimų metu, galima tik pabréžti istorinių ir dabartinių šunų veislių panašumą. Viduramžių Novgorode šunis galima apibūdinti kaip mišrūnus (kartais jie dar vadinauti parijų šunimis) ir aptikti bet kuriame šiuolaikiniame kaime. Greičiau dėl natūralios nei dirbtinės selekcijos, juos buvo lengviau suvaldyti palyginti su didesnių veislių šunimis. Jie nereikalaudavo daug maisto, lojimu saugojo miesto namų kiemus ir sodybas. Mažesnių ir didesnių gyvūnų kaulai viduramžių Novgorodo turtingesnių piliečių sodybose iš Desyatinnių ir Troitski perkasų galbūt rodo, kad buvo laikomi specializuotų veislių šunys. Viename beržo tošies dokumente kalbama apie skaliką. Tokie šunys neturėjo būti retenybė mieste, kur buvo įsikūrusi labiausiai į rytus nutolusi Hanzos miestų sąjungos atstovybė. Retos šunų kaulų žymės vis dėl to patvirtina, kad kartais vietos gyventojai buvo priversti valgyti šunis (pvz., per badmetį), bet šie gyvūnai nebuvu nuolat vartojami maistui kaip šiandienos Pietryčių Azijoje.

Didžiąją dalį Didžiojo Novgorodo viduramžių šunų galima priskirti „klasikinei“ vidutinio dydžio mezocefalinų gyvūnų kategorijai. Dėl natūralios atrankos jie labiausiai tiko sargybos funkcijoms atliliki. Kartais šunys būdavo vartojami maistui, tačiau dažnai sulaukdavo senyvo amžiaus. Reti mažesni ir didesni egzemplioriai galėjo būti laikomi prabangos dalyku ir priklausyti turtingesniems miestiečiams arba Hanzos sąjungos atstovybės darbuotojams.

Vertė Audronė Bliujienė

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