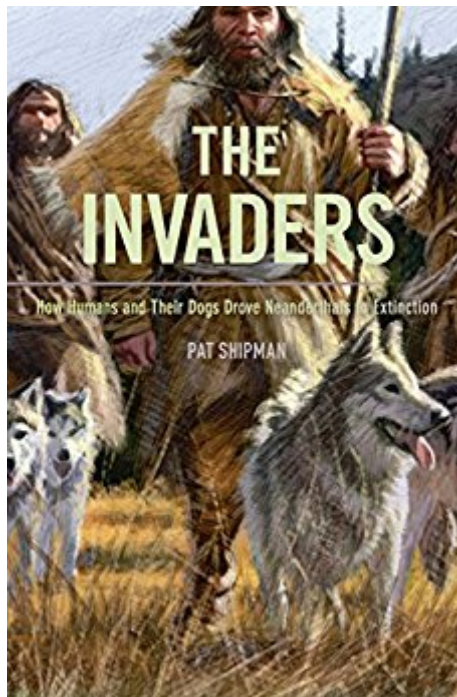


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# The Invaders



## Synopsis

Humans domesticated dogs soon after Neanderthals began to disappear. This alliance between two predator species, Pat Shipman hypothesizes, made possible unprecedented success in hunting large Ice Age mammals—a distinct and ultimately decisive advantage for human invaders at a time when climate change made both humans and Neanderthals vulnerable.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The Invaders: How Humans and Their Dogs Drove Neanderthals to Extinction" by anthropologist Pat Shipman is an enjoyable book. It is well-written and surprisingly entertaining. If I was rating by enjoyment alone I'd probably give it 4 stars. So why am I only giving it 2 stars? Because it's the work of a scholar, published by an academic publisher, defending a controversial hypothesis, and on that front it fails completely. It does not convincingly back up the assertion presented in the title. Shipman begins the book by referring to a paper by Germonpre et al. (2009) that claimed to have identified a new method of distinguishing dogs from wolves through cranial remains alone. The oldest specimen

identified as a dog in the study was a 32,000 year old "proto-dog" from Goyet, Belgium. Shipman says that this paper was important in formulating her hypothesis that dogs played a role in the extinction of Neanderthals, as it pushed back the date for dog domestication by "about 18,000 years". Recently, Drake et al. (2015) reexamined the Goyet cranium using 3D morphometric analysis and instead argue that it is a wolf, and not a dog at all. This is a particularly fitting beginning for this book, and acts as a microcosm of the work as whole. Shipman extrapolates wildly from limited and controversial data to make her case. Shipman further relies heavily on the Goyet "dog" in her Chapter 12 discussion of the origins of dog domestication. Other than the controversial work of Germonpre et al., there is almost nothing to support the origins of dog domestication occurring so deep in the past.

. The theme of this book is that modern humans were an invasive species when they entered Europe, profoundly disrupting the ecosystem and forcing the extinction (cave bears and lions) or radical behavioral changes (brown bears) of other top tier carnivores. Neanderthals presented as a specialized human form with a static culture based on close encounters with big game. Their populations were stable with some fluctuation and climate deterioration may have affected them at times. But I think MIS 3 climate instability is over-blown here and Neanderthals had been around for more than one 100k cycle. Modern humans may have actually been more cold-hardy by virtue of better clothing and more adaptable life style. Better dates for some sites suggesting that there was relatively little overlap and that Neanderthals may have disappeared after 40 kya rather than existing beyond 30 kya. An illustration of the effect of an invading carnivore is given by the return of wolves to Yellowstone and their effect on limiting browse damage by a burgeoning elk population, along with a sharp decrease in coyotes and regrowth of aspen and willows. The invasive nature of humans demonstrated by their rapid population expansion to densities never achieved by their predecessors, and by the advent of "super sites" with remains of hundreds of mammoth individuals. This is taken as evidence of a great revolution in hunting methods, along with the ability to defend kill sites as they consume entire mammoths. Dogs are proposed as the major difference in both defending kills and in driving game to kill sites. Some genetic work and a few early Belgian dog fossils used to date domestication before 20 kya. No actual proof there were dogs earlier than that.

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