

THE WOLF

Comprensivo 1 Taormina



GREEK WOLF MYTHOLOGY



Wolf-Mythology

In Greek mythology, Charon, the ferryman, wore wolf ears. In the Epic of Gilgamesh, the goddess Ishtar had the power to turn enemies into wolves. Hecate, the goddess of Death, was shown as wearing three wolf heads. In another Greek myth, a king named Lycaon was turned into a wolf by the god Zeus. (the name Lycaon survives today, in the gray wolf subspecies *Canis Lupus Lycaon*, the eastern timber wolf.) The Athenians had great respect for the wolf and decreed that any man who killed one had to pay for the funeral for the animal.

WOLF CHARACTERISTICS

First name

Apennine Wolf (*Canis lupus italicus*).

Age

In nature it can live about 10 years.

Habitat

Tireless walker. It takes refuge in the immense beech forests of the Park. It has recolonized all the mountains of Abruzzo extending along the Apennine ridge, until reaching the western Alps.

Dimensions

The weight of wolves varies from 25 to 40 kg. The length of the body can reach even 1 m and 50 cm, including the tail. The height at the withers is about 60-70 cm.

Supply

The wolf is at the top of the food chain. It is considered a pure carnivore, even if in some cases it does not disdain some wild berry. In the Park it mainly feeds on wild boar, but also on deer, roe deer, chamois, hares and small rodents. It is also a scavenger animal because it does not disdain the meat of carcasses and also, fall in its diet, even pets: sheep, foals, calves, etc.

THE CAPITOLINE WOLF

The **Capitoline Wolf** (Italian: *Lupa Capitolina*) is a bronze sculpture depicting a scene from the legend of the founding of Rome. The sculpture shows a she-wolf suckling the mythical twin founders of Rome, Romulus and Remus. According to the legend, when Numitor, grandfather of the twins, was overthrown by his brother Amulius, the usurper ordered them to be cast into the Tiber River. They were rescued by a she-wolf who cared for them until a herdsman, Faustulus, found and raised them.

The age and origin of the **Capitoline Wolf** is controversial. The statue was long thought to be an Etruscan work of the 5th century BC, with the twins added in the late 15th century AD, probably by the sculptor Antonio Pollaiolo. However, radiocarbon and thermoluminescence dating has found that the wolf portion of the statue is likely to have been cast between 1021 and 1153.

The image of the she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus is a symbol of Rome since ancient times and one of the most recognizable icons of ancient mythology. The sculpture has been housed since 1471 in the Palazzo dei Conservatori on the Campidoglio (the ancient Capitoline Hill), Rome, Italy, and there are many replicas in various places around the world.

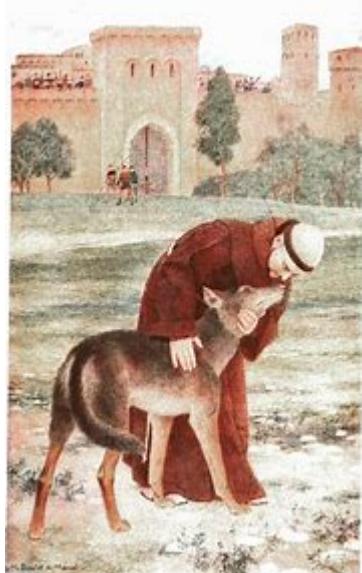


SHE-WOLF BY GIOVANNI VERGA



La Lupa is a novella by Sicilian writer Giovanni Verga. It was published as part of a collection of short stories, *Vita dei Campi* (*Rural Life*) in 1880. *La Lupa* means *she-wolf* and describes a woman. **La Lupa** is a novella by Sicilian writer Giovanni Verga. It was published as part of a collection of short stories, *Vita dei Campi* (*Rural Life*) in 1880. *La Lupa* means *she-wolf* and describes a woman.

SAINT FRANCIS AND THE WOLF



AT THE TIME when Saint Francis was living in the city of Gubbio, a large wolf appeared in the neighbourhood, so terrible and so fierce, that he not only devoured other animals, but made a prey of men also; and since he often approached the town, all the people were in great alarm, and used to go about armed, as if going to battle.

Notwithstanding these precautions, if any of the inhabitants ever met him alone, he was sure to be devoured, as all defence was useless: and, through fear of the wolf, they dared not go beyond the city walls.

Saint Francis, feeling great compassion for the people of Gubbio, resolved to go and meet the wolf, though all advised him not to do so. Making the sign of the holy cross, and putting all his confidence in God, he went forth from the city, taking his brethren with him; but these fearing to go any further, Saint Francis bent his steps alone toward the spot where the wolf was known to be, while many people followed at a distance, and witnessed the miracle.

The wolf, seeing all this multitude, ran towards Saint Francis with his jaws wide open.

As he approached, the saint, making the sign of the cross, cried out: "Come hither, brother wolf; I command thee, in the name of Christ, neither to harm me nor anybody else."

Marvellous to tell, no sooner had Saint Francis made the sign of the cross, than the terrible wolf, closing his jaws, stopped running, and coming up to Saint Francis, lay down at his feet as meekly as a lamb.

And the saint thus addressed him: "Brother wolf, thou hast done much evil in this land, destroying and killing the creatures of God without His permission; yea, not animals only hast thou destroyed, but thou hast even dared to devour men, made after the image of God; for which thing thou art worthy of being hanged like a robber and a murderer. All men cry out against thee, the dogs pursue thee, and all the inhabitants of this city are thy enemies; but I will make peace between them and thee, O brother wolf, if so be thou no more offend them, and they shall forgive thee all thy past offences, and neither men nor dogs shall pursue thee any more."

Having listened to these words, the wolf bowed his head, and, by the movements of his body, his tail, and his eyes, made signs that he agreed to what Saint Francis said.

WEREWOLF



In folklore, a **werewolf** (Old English: *werwulf*, "man-wolf") or occasionally **lycanthrope** /'laɪkənθroʊp/ (Greek: λυκάνθρωπος *lukánthrōpos*, "wolf-person") is a human with the ability to shapeshift into a wolf (or, especially in modern film, a therianthropic hybrid wolf-like creature), either purposely or after being placed under a curse or affliction (often a bite or scratch from another werewolf) and especially on the night of a full moon. Early sources for belief in this ability or affliction, called **lycanthropy** /laɪ'kænθrəpi/, are Petronius (27–66) and Gervase of Tilbury (1150–1228).

The **werewolf** is a widespread concept in European folklore, existing in many variants, which are related by a common development of a Christian interpretation of underlying European folklore developed during the medieval period. From the early modern period, werewolf beliefs also spread to the New World with colonialism. Belief in werewolves developed in parallel to the belief in witches, in the course of the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern period. Like the witchcraft trials as a whole, the trial of supposed werewolves emerged in what is now Switzerland (especially the Valais and Vaud) in the early 15th century and spread throughout Europe in the 16th, peaking in the 17th and subsiding by the 18th century.

SICILIAN WOLF



The Sicilian wolf (*Canis lupus cristaldii*) is an extinct subspecies of the gray wolf that was once endemic to Sicily. It was paler than the mainland Italian wolf and comparable in size to the extant Arabian wolf and extinct Japanese wolf. The subspecies reportedly went extinct due to human persecution in the 1920s, though there were several possible sightings up to the 1970s. It was identified as a distinct subspecies in 2018 through morphological examinations of the few remaining mounted specimens and skulls, as well as mtDNA analyses.

Description

The Sicilian wolf was a slender, short-legged subspecies with light, tawny coloured fur. The dark band present on the forelimbs of the mainland Italian wolf are absent or poorly defined in the Sicilian wolf. Measurements taken from mounted museum specimens show that adults had a mean head to body length of 105.4 cm and a shoulder height of 54.6 cm, thus making them slightly smaller than the mainland Italian wolf, which measures 105.8-

109.1 cm long and 65-66.9 cm high at the shoulder.

History

The Sicilian wolf likely entered Sicily via a land bridge that formed 21,500-20,000 years ago. Its decline likely began during the late Norman period, when its ungulate prey went extinct. The subspecies went extinct during the 20th century, but the exact date is unknown. It is generally thought that the last wolf was killed in 1924 near Bellolampo, though there are reports of further kills between 1935 and 1938, all in the vicinity of Palermo. Several sightings are also reported from 1960 and 1970. In 2018, an examination of the holotype (a mounted specimen and its skull stored at the Museo di Storia Naturale di Firenze) and three others confirmed the morphological distinctiveness of the Sicilian wolf, and an examination of the mtDNA extracted from the teeth of several skulls showed that the subspecies possessed a unique haplotype, distinct from that of the Italian wolf.

ITALIAN WOLF



The Italian wolf is a subspecies of gray wolf, additionally called the Apennine wolf. it was first represented in 1921 and recognised as a definite subspecies in 1999. As of 2005, the Italian wolf population is calculable to contains 500 people. The population is increasing in range, though illegal looking and persecution still represent a threat. They found within the mountainous regions of the Apennines and western Alps.

Distribution and habitat

The Italian wolf is found mainly in the Apennine Mountains in Italy. they have implanted themselves in Southern France, and areas of Switzerland. The wolf has expanded its range at the west of the Rhône, within the massif Central, the eastern Pyrenees, Pyrenees Jura and Vosges Mountains. till the middle 1800s, the Apennine wolf was found across the total of the Italian earth, as well as Sicily, however in depth looking and poisoning virtually brought the species to extinction.

Italian wolf characteristics

Their fur color is commonly gray or brown. The belly and cheeks are more gently coloured, and dark bands are present on the back and tail tip, and occasionally on the fore limbs. Its face and belly are lighter in color with

darker strips on its back, forelimbs and the tip of its tail. The Apennine wolf typically weighs 25 $\square\square$ kg. It measures 110 $\square\square\square$ cm in body length and 50-70 cm in shoulder height.

THE VALUE OF THE WOLF

Before its persecution by humans, the wolf (*Canis lupus*) had the greatest distribution of any land mammal in the world except man. Its immense range included most of North America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia. Wolves were exterminated from much of this vast area, however they have now returned to many localities where they formerly lived. Nevertheless, intense and violent persecution of wolves continues to this day.

Ironically, many of the people who passionately exterminate wolves and act as though the wolf is "humanity's greatest enemy," are at the same time loving dog owners who regard the dog, a descendent of the wolf, to be "man's best friend." Their attitudes seem especially contradictory when one considers the fact that pet dogs, like wolves, sometimes kill livestock and other pets (see below).

In addition, each year, dogs kill or injure many more people than wolves. In 2012, the World Health Organization reported that, worldwide, over 55,000 people die annually of rabies, 99% of them infected by dog bites. Children are especially at risk, since they are bitten by dogs 3-5 times more frequently than adults (Overall & Love 2001).

Although wolves too can be infected by the rabies virus and spread it, they almost never bite humans because they do not live in close association with humans (Yalcin et al. 2012). Transmission of rabies from wolves to humans is consequently rare compared to dogs. Thus, it could be legitimately argued that dogs are a much greater hazard to humans than wolves.

