

Primitive and Aboriginal Dog Society

**Dear Members of the Preservation of the Primitive Aboriginal Dog Society and
readers of our Newsletter,**

This is the 13th issue of the PADS Newsletter. It includes an article written by our new member, Mrs. Cat Urbigit, about using ship guarding dogs in the USA. This article tells us a story about the possibility of using undeveloped land for the profitable production of high quality wool while preserving wild predators. Two other articles are by Johan Gallant in which he discusses the African aboriginal ancestry of two pure breeds that are now popular, the Basenji and the Rhodesian Ridgeback.

Sincerely yours,
Curator of PADS
Vladimir Beregovoy

LIVESTOCK GUARDIAN DOGS IN THE NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAINS **Cat Urbigit**

Many domestic sheep producers in the Northern Rocky Mountains of North America have adopted the ways of their shepherd brethren around the world in the use of livestock guardian dogs (LGDs) to protect their stock.

Although LGDs have been used around the world for thousands of years in primitive methods of livestock production, it's really only been in the last 30 years or so that such dogs have been put to work in the United States in a systematic way.

The use of LGDs came about as a result of necessity. The widespread use of poisons was outlawed on public lands in the west, so sheep producers needed to find an effective method of predator control to take the place of poison. With passage of the Endangered Species Act occurring at the same time, methods of predator control also had to be environmentally friendly and not likely to cause further harm to endangered or sensitive wildlife species. LGDs were the answer.

In the 1970s, there were organized programs sponsored by several universities and the federal government to import various LGDs to ranches and farms in the United States. Decades later, the organized programs are long behind, but LGDs have become widespread and essential tools for economic survival in areas where predator populations thrive. My home in western Wyoming is a prime example.

In Sublette County, Wyoming, about 80 percent of the land is public land managed by federal agencies. The remainder of the land is held in private ownership, mostly ranches.

With the lowest elevations of this arid region being about 5,500 feet, it takes a lot of land to provide enough forage for livestock to survive and thrive. Thus, most of the ranches graze their herds at least a portion of the year on public land. Some sheep herds spend nearly all year on public land, grazing in lower elevations free of deep snows in the winter, moving to higher elevation mountain pastures as the snow melts in the summer. Shepherders live in wagons alongside the herds, with camptenders checking on them every few days and bringing supplies to the herders. Similar to nomadic cultures in other areas of the world, shepherders in the western United States also practice transhumance, moving herds with the seasons and using the dogs to protect them. Many herds are scattered over hundreds of miles of range and often go unnoticed by the public.



The dogs live with the herds full time. The sheep are highly social western white-faced sheep, mostly of the Rambouillet breed. They have a strong flocking instinct, which helps guard against predation. Each herd, usually consisting of about 1,000 ewes and their lambs, will have four or five guardian dogs.

The dogs seem to pick their job by their individual natures, with one dog serving as the lead animal, forging out just ahead of the herd as it moves, while others stay near the flanks of the herd, and another trailing along behind.



When danger is spotted, most of the dogs will join together to confront it. Sometimes this means a group of large dogs barking and charging forward aggressively, but when the danger is perceived to be higher, the dogs will attack.

Henry S. Randall's 1863 "The Practical Shepherd: A Complete Treatise on the Breeding, Management and Diseases of Sheep" describes the early sheep dogs imported to North America with Merino sheep. These dogs were fierce defenders of their herds and "after night-fall the dogs separated themselves from the sheep and formed a cordon of sentries and pickets around them – and woe to the wolf that approached too near the guarded circle! The dogs crouched silently until he was within striking distance, and then sprang forward like arrows from so many bows. Some made straight for the wolf and some took a direction to cut off his retreat to forest or chaparral. When overtaken his shrift was a short one."

Although the dogs visit each other some during the day, they are highly intelligent and independent animals that spend most of their time alone within their section of the sheep herd. The dogs must be fed every day, usually by keeping food available at the herder's camp, which the dogs visit daily as they choose.

The dogs confront a variety of predators, from small animals like fox, to bobcats and coyotes, and on the larger end, bears, wolves and mountain lions. The dogs have even learned to guard against predacious birds like ravens and eagles.

The sheep on our ranch don't migrate, which makes for perfect conditions for raising LGD pups, which are sold to migratory sheep outfits once they are four- to six-months old, big enough to take on coyotes and strong enough to travel the migratory trail.

The bitch usually gives birth to the pups in a protected space like a culvert, or under a building. We bed the pups in fleece saved from shearing, so that the pups will associate the smell and feel of the wool with the comfort of their mother's nest.

Once the pups are a few weeks old and they open their eyes, they start to venture out, and are able to have their first contact with sheep. The pups are drawn to the sheep, since the sheep smell like the wool of the birthing den. Sheep are gentle creatures and smell and greet the new babes, often laying down nearby. The pups climb on the sheep and curl up to sleep against their wool.



As young dogs grow and become playful, adult ewes will discipline them if they become too rambunctious. The pups are butted until they lay quietly and show submission to the sheep. We've noticed that it works best if young dogs are paired with adults, so they can learn appropriate behavior from the adults.

The dogs don't think that they are sheep and the sheep know that the dogs are their protectors. The sheep also understand that one guard dog isn't the same as another. Individual sheep develop individual relationships with their protectors.



We feed the dogs daily, accustomizing the dogs to come to a call or whistle for food and treats. We take time to play with and socialize the dogs daily. It's important that the dogs trust the shepherders so that they can be handled and treated for veterinary needs. We perform routine veterinary care at the ranch, but every few years, load the dogs into trucks for a wellness check at the vet's office in town to get their rabies shots.

The dogs consume the birthing material during lambing, and know the difference between a newborn lamb and afterbirth. The dogs will understand when a ewe begins the labor of birthing, often laying down nearby to watch over the ewe, and cleaning up the birth matter once the lamb has been born. The lambs are in no danger from the dogs.

The sheep will also acknowledge that the LGD is different from the herding dogs. Some LGDs will let herding dogs work their herd, but others will not and have to be restrained in order to work the herd. Younger dogs tend to be less trustworthy of allowing herding dogs to work.

We don't allow LGDs near while butchering of sheep is being conducted, since this can make the dogs very distrustful of the person doing the work. These dogs have long memories and are independent thinkers, so any sin is not forgotten. As one Massachusetts author wrote in the early 1800s about his Spanish sheep dog, "He never forgave an injury or an insult; offend him and it was for life."

The breeds we use vary, from well-recognized breeds like Great Pyrenees, to other landraces that show a variety of color and haircoats, and physical and temperament differences. We also cross these breeds on the ranch (sometimes on purpose, but sometimes accidental). The best working dogs remain. Generally, most of our dogs are Anatolian and Akbash, breeds from Turkey.



Colors vary from white to yellow, tan, and brown with black masks. Hair coats are either short and slick, or longhaired. Some landraces have thick conformation, while others tend to be more "cut up in the flank" for running after predators. Most of our LGDs weigh about 100 pounds as adults, and continue growing until they are about two years old. Most of these LGDs can be sexed simply by overall appearance. Females have a smaller, more feminine look compared to the larger, more masculine males.

There are trade-offs to using these dogs. Using LGDs means a conscious decision not to allow the use of snares, traps or poisons within the dog's range. Every dog is different. Some dogs will range too far for farm flock owners to be able to control. These dogs are best turned over to range operators who can use the dogs in their migratory operations.

Some dogs are too aggressive. We had a Kangal female that would kill any pup that wasn't hers. Some dogs will chase big game animals such as deer, or will prey on their fawns in the spring. Some dogs will fight to the death over breeding rights to females.

Aggressive LGDs pose another dilemma. Range sheep use lands also enjoyed by recreationists – hikers and backpackers. When those recreationists get too close to the sheep herds, the dogs will confront them, not attacking, but behaving aggressively enough that people are intimidated to the point of avoiding the flock. This sometimes leads to bad public relations.

Other dogs may not be aggressive enough. We had a Great Pyrenees male that would confront coyotes and hold them back from the herd, but wouldn't bite or kill them. Some of our dogs have been so friendly that they approach strangers, only to be stolen or "rescued" by someone wanting a big beautiful housedog. But these dogs haven't been bred to be indoor pets, so they often end up in shelters because of behavior problems. The usual problem is that the dog simply needs to be returned to a flock of sheep.

We've found that LGDs are exceptionally perceptive and sensitive, although they may not have outwards signs of such. These dogs notice changes in their environment and will physically place their own bodies between their sheep herd and danger, be it a truck barreling down a road about to hit the sheep, or a black bear attacking the herd.

We've also witnessed a little of the high intelligence of our LGDs, such as when white dogs hide their noses and eyes from us in the snow, so they can't be seen. I've watched dogs hide, laying in wait for an approaching predator, as well as stalk a predator like a lioness on the kill. It's fascinating.

Overall, LGDs have allowed many western sheep producers to stay in business by substantially reducing the amount of predation on domestic sheep herds. That's an impressive undertaking when it's realized that predator populations have expanded their ranges and increased in numbers at the same time.

Ironically, although large sheep ranches keep dozens of LGDs working, most members of the public are unaware of this working partnership, as these operations are migratory and encompass hundreds of square miles with little environmental impact. But for those of us who are blessed by the pleasure of living and working with LGDs, we can't imagine our part of the world without them.

THE BASENJI - IN RETROSPECT

Johan Gallant

Most reports on the Basenji refer to these dogs as 'primitive' and as an 'ancient breed'.. Such statement is motivated by the similarity of the Basenji's phenotype with the conformation of certain dogs reproduced in Ancient Egyptian artwork. With one stroke of the pen one covers a five thousand years link from the days of the early Egyptian dynasties to the epoch of 20th century dog breeding.



Two questions arise. How does one make the link from the Neolithic Nile delta to the Central African equatorial forest? What is understood by ancient 'breed'?

When researching the material for my book *The Story of the African Dog* I collected as much information as possible on fossils of domestic dogs found in various archaeological sites on the African continent. By keeping the earliest dates for each region and by putting them on the map I could formulate an overview of how *Canis familiaris* (the domestic dog), after its arrival on the dog-virgin continent of Africa, progressively made its way to finally occupy the entire continent and become part of all African population groups.

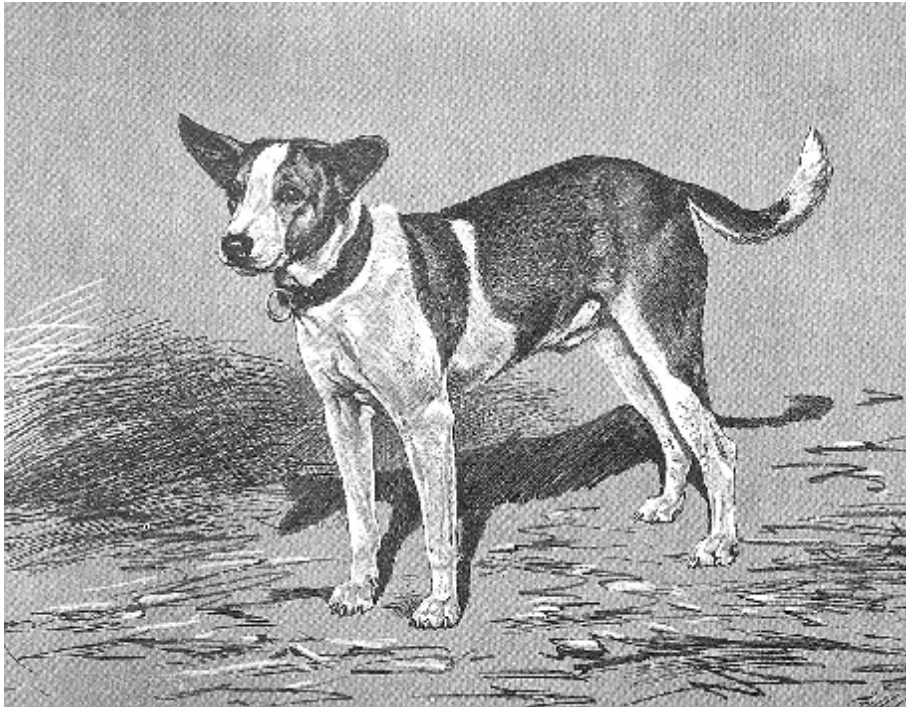
The earliest evidence for the presence of the dog on the African continent was found in three sites along the lower Nile and dated 4,700 - 4,500 BCE.. It is suggested that the dog came with migrating herdsman who - from the Middle East - drove their flocks across the Isthmus of Suez. This happened in pre-dynastic Egypt roughly 1,500 years prior to the first Pharaoh coming to rule in 3,250 BCE.

I made this picture in 1958 while traveling through the equatorial forest in the then Belgian Congo. This woman carries her Umbwa wa ki shenzi under the arm.

The dog's African journey took it first to occupy the Sahara and the Sahel. Then its moving frontier stopped for about one thousand years. It seems that the Equatorial forest formed a natural barrier for the southern expansion of herding communities. The event of the Early Iron Age would eventually facilitate the Early Iron Age Bantu migration which started from the grasslands of northern Cameroon. The migrants discovered tsetse free corridors along the Great Rift Valley. Freed from the feared trypanosome infection they steadily drove their cattle in the company of their dogs into the savannah of southern Africa.

The arrival and expansion of the dog in South Africa can be illustrated by the following dates and sites: farm Diamant near Ellisras (570 CE), Lower Thukela river in KwaZulu-Natal (650 CE), Cape St. Francis and Kasteelberg in the Western Cape (800 CE). These last sites are Khoisan sites suggesting that the dog had spread from the Bantu speakers to the local Khoisan people.

The earliest evidence for the presence of the dog in the Congo basin has been dated at ca. 1,000 CE.. This suggests that the dog had arrived in Southern Africa well before it penetrated the Equatorial forest and expanded to the aboriginal forest dwellers. All native African dogs (including those depicted in Ancient Egyptian artwork) - most likely - trace their roots back to the arrivals as from the 5th millennium BCE. Does that qualify the modern Basenji as an ancient breed?



A breed can be defined as a stock of animals within a species, having a similar appearance and usually developed by deliberate selection. In our particular case the species is *Canis familiaris*. After its arrival in the African equatorial forest the dog adapted to this new ecological niche and to the cultural requirement of the Pygmy and local Bantu people. In the process it obtained some form of 'utilitarian' uniformity. It also kept its genetic variation because it was never submitted to deliberate selection as it is commonly understood by modern dogdom. It turned into an aboriginal dog population.

Elements of the Central African forest dog were streamlined into a breed when in 1937 western fanciers took a small foundation stock to the United Kingdom and later to the USA to start a tight selective breeding program in respect of a prescriptive breed standard. I would agree that the aboriginal forest dog is an 'ancient' land race which evolved in this particular geographical niche. In Swahili the locals refer to it as 'Umbwa' (dog), or pejoratively as 'Umbwa wa ki shensi' (dog of the [primitive] bush people). The adjective 'shensi' probably inspired the African sounding name 'Basenji' which was given to the modern creation. Selective (in)breeding started from a restricted foundation stock which can not represent the genetic variability of the equatorial forest dog as a whole. Over the years a few efforts were made to bring in new 'forest bred' stock.



Priority was given to specimen which conformation wise approached the already existing breed standard.

In all objectivity one can conclude that the Basenji - as a breed - is a modern selected homogeneous offshoot of an old aboriginal heterogeneous dog population which came into existence through adaptation to a harsh life in

the forest. The 'Umbwa wa ki shenzi' has ancient roots and became 'aboriginal' to the equatorial forest. The Basenji is a breed and a school example of modern cynotechny.

This picture comes from the 1904 edition of the Count van Bylandt encyclopedia. It is the oldest representation of the Congolese dog which I could find. At the time this dog was owned by the zoological gardens in Paris. Depending on the local African dialects the word for 'dog' is phonetically pronounced as Mpoa, Mpwa, Umbwa. The native populations do not refer to their dogs as Basenji.

This very attractive Basenji, Champion Jethard Sidevant, was chosen 'Best in Show' at the prestigious 2001 Crufts show. (Photo: David Dalton, WOEf, July 2001)

Comment:

The 1904 picture shows the aboriginal Congolese dog whereas the Crufts winner displays what modern cynotechny - or the technical breeding of dogs - has achieved over a few decades.

Johan Gallant, author
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RIDGED DOGS Johan Gallant

The Rhodesian and Thai Ridgebacks are modern breeds. They were obtained through selective breeding from foundation stock extracted from aboriginal dog populations among which ridged specimen sporadically occurred. The founder dogs obviously carried all a ridge. In my opinion the occasional prevailing ridge within aboriginal dog populations in the Far East and Africa are the result of parallel mutations. Actually the ridge is a freak of nature which, while giving the impression that the dog has continuously its hackles raised, is also associated with the sporadic appearance of a dermoïd sinus. This hereditary anomaly which, unless surgically removed, is painful and mostly fatal, prevails in Rhodesian and Thai Ridgebacks as well as in the ridged dogs in the present day aboriginal African dog populations. Indeed, the statement in the Wikipedia article that the aboriginal (so called) Hottentot or Ari Ridgeback is extinct is false. I can testify and show photographs of ridged African Native Dogs (Africanis) which I encountered during my numerous field trips throughout southern Africa. The history of the Rhodesian Ridgeback - like so many items in modern cynology - is full of riddles and romance. It must be interpreted and understood in the colonial atmosphere of the time.



Kwa Zulu – Natal



Northern Botswana

Major T.C. Hawley in his book «The Rhodesian Ridgeback. The Origin, History and Standard» (1957) explains how in 1922 Mr. Barnes, the secretary of the Bulawayo Kennel Club in the then Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), called for the owners of (ridged) Lion Dogs, as they were called at the time, to bring their dogs to a meeting in association with the Bulawayo dog show. (It is obvious that it were white farmers and hunters who were invited and not the local Ndebele with their aboriginal ridged dogs). Neither was it considered that the ridged dogs belonging to white owners were descendants from aboriginal ridged Bantu dogs or crosses of such dogs with European breeds).

The following quotations come from pages 28 and 29 in major Hawley's book.

"The response must have been gratifying to the convenor. A large number of owners attended and well over 20 dogs were paraded. These dogs were of all types and sizes, from what would be regarded as an oversized Great Dane to a small Bull Terrier; all colours were represented - Reds and Brindles predominating."

"The convenor addressed the gathering and there was general agreement that a club to further the interests of the breed be formed. Mr. Barnes then asked for suggestions as to the standard to be adopted. Owners were reluctant to come forward, each naturally thinking his the correct type".

"Finally a spectator with some knowledge of the breed took a dog and suggested that that size and configuration be adopted, then chose another specimen for its head and neck, a third for legs and feet, and, making use of some five different dogs, built up what he considered to be aimed at."

These quotations are self explanatory and similar stories could enlighten us on the beginning of many a modern breed of dogs.

The present state of affairs in the Rhodesian Ridgeback world-wide proves what a few decades of selective breeding can achieve. They are an impressive breed. They display a ridge as a unique feature. Although the problem of the dermoid sinus has virtually been bred out, nobody knows how many or what percentage of affected or ridgeless born pups have been destroyed over the years. Neither do we know if they would still be able to survive in the African bush and to stalk lions.

The riddle and the romance around (so-called) Hottentot dogs stems from the account that Rev. Helm on an ox-wagon voyage from Swellendam in the Cape Colony to Bulawayo acquired 2 ridged dogs from Hottentot owners in Noupoort and that these dogs or offspring thereof joined Cornelius Van Rooyen's big game hunting pack. These dogs were considered as the progenitors of the ridged farm dogs. Within the colonial culture and spirit of the time it was inconceivable that 'credit' could be given to the aboriginal dogs of the Bantu population.

It must also be noted that for tens of thousands of years the original San (or Bushman) population of southern Africa lived a hunter-gatherer existence without dogs.

Archaeological records do not allow for evidence that the Khoikhoi (pejoratively called Hottentot) people introduced the domestic dog when - just over two thousand years ago - they migrated along western routes into south Africa. All indicates that it were the Early Iron Age migrating Bantu speakers who - four to five centuries later migrated along eastern routes - brought the Iron Age tradition with dogs and cattle. They consequently bartered with the local Khoisan and their domestic animals spread over the entire country.

Today various forms of ridged dogs are sporadically still to be found within aboriginal dog populations in the tribal lands of southern Africa. The most obvious explanation is that the mutation which caused the ridge occurred before the dispersal of the Early Iron Age dogs and that the genes which cause the ridge are still present in a latent form in some of these dogs.

Major Hawley - in 1957 - was also of the opinion that it was Nature which in a few decades gave the beautiful doubled crowned ridge to the breed. In fact it was Nature which caused the mutation with the uniform ridge being the result of selective breeding.

LITERATURE

Hawley, T.C. (1957) *The Rhodesian Ridgeback The Origin, History and Standard of the Breed*. N.G.Sendingers, Bloemfontein.

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- ✓ Article, more than 12-14 thousands of characters plus 4-5 photographs formatted JPG or TIFF, resolution 300 dpi.
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