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A favorite bitch owned by Mr. Matthews. Compare it with his terra cotta dog found in Cyprus

THE PRIDE OF ANTIOCH

Mr. Matthews contends this little image proves the bulldog is the most ancient breed in the world

The Oldest Dog in the World

Pride of Antioch Proves Bulldogs Lived Before Phoenicia Conquered Cyprus

By JOHN H. MATTHEWS

AS we wander along the highways and byways of life, in search of pleasure, pursued by duty, our attention will, in the course of time, be arrested by some singular fact or fancy. We view whatever has attracted us, at first carelessly, then with ever-growing interest; until, before we realize it, we find ourselves gaily bestriding a hobby.

A hobby should be ridden deliberately, with discretion and intelligence, else we fall, suffering bruises and sore disappointment. It should, as well, be guided at a pace that permits of leisurely introspection. The rider should have not only time to examine the lovely little flowers that may grow by the wayside, but also time to glance forward to see where he is going, to glance backward to contemplate the path over which he has traveled.

And so it is with our love for dogs. At first we view them carelessly, then with ever-growing interest; until, before we realize it, we have become the slaves of the one living creature that loves us blindly, disinterestedly, unceasingly—loves us with a love that "passeth the understanding of man." We have mounted our hobby and are riding it as we have never ridden a hobby before.

In the "dog game," there are two

kinds of men—the Faddist and the Hobbyist. The Faddist is the man with the passing fancy. He flashes suddenly into prominence, placing before the uninformed public a creature new, striking, attractive; but, from the dog man's point of view, a creature "impossible." He advertises the novelty in glowing terms. The dear public "bites." The Faddist feathers his nest. In a short time, however, both he and his fad have disappeared from the history of dogdom, never to return.

The Faddist is far from being

serious in his work. His aim is not to better the breed, even should he know how, but to better his pocket. Ignorant, mercenary, selfish, such a man destroys, rather than improves, whatever variety of dog he touches. He is a disgrace to the Fancy.

THE Hobbyist is the man who is unselfishly engrossed in his favorite pursuit. He rides his hobby consistently, with patience, diligence, and great joy. He devotes himself wisely and with care to some definite end, and keeps that end ever in view. He looks backward to see whence he has come, forward to see where he is going. His judgment is sound because it is based on facts and on knowledge. His purpose is substantial good; his aim, perfection. His soul is in his work, not because he gets money from it, but because he loves it. Such a man betters the breed to which he has attached himself, making of it a thing of beauty and of permanence. He is an honor to the Fancy.

Besides the Faddist and the Hobbyist, and all the questions relating to them, certain other questions inevitably suggest themselves in any discussion of dogs. Where did these remarkable animals come from? Where do they go?

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REALLY A MODERN PLAQUE

This bronze plaque of the Dogue de Burgos is dated 1625. It also is another bit of evidence of the age of the bulldog

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Why is one so different from another kind? Why do some persons adore St. Bernards; other persons, bull pups? And why do many persons love dogs that are just dogs?

These questions have never been answered satisfactorily, and probably never will be; none the less, it is interesting to speculate on them.

But to the other question that perennially agitates the Fancy, "Which is the oldest breed of dog?" there have been many answers given. Indeed, there have been as many answers as there are varieties of dogs; for each dog lover firmly believes and positively asserts that his particular breed is the most ancient.

Buffon declared that all dogs are descended from the shepherd, and that therefore he is the oldest breed. From historical evidence, we know that the shepherd has had a vogue ever since Abraham fed his flocks on the Mesopotamian plains. Even prior to the time of Abraham, man was acquainted with the shepherd, for the Iranian invaders of Persia kept him to guard their cattle and sang his praises in the "Avesta" long before the Hebrew Patriarch was born. How much older he is than that we do not know.

Other authorities maintain that the greyhound is the oldest breed of dog, because, as far back as the Pyramid days, he was known and sculptured upon the monuments of Egypt.

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Still other authorities hold that the mastiff-like Assyrian hunting-dog is the oldest, for he, too, was known and sculptured at a very remote period.

The lovers of the Maltese will tell you that their beautiful little animal is the oldest, and they prove it, to their own satisfaction at least, by showing you that, centuries before the Christian era, he was described and commented on by the classic authors, and was the pet of the noble ladies of Greece and of Rome.

Those who worship the Dachshunde, sweetest of doggies, swear by bell, book and candle that he is the oldest, because he can boast of a line of ancestors so long that there is no end to it.

The admirers of the Chow of China contend that he is the oldest, for, so they inform you, at the time Confucius was setting forth his golden rule, "What you do not like when done to yourself, do not do to others," the Chow was highly esteemed by the philosopher's compatriots as a table delicacy.

Those to whom the Great Dane is the last word in dogs insist that he is the oldest, because they can trace him back until his origin is lost in the mists of antiquity.

And recently some person with a bold and lusty imagination has put forth the claim that the newly-discovered Alsatian is the oldest, for, according to this person's statements, the progenitors of the Alsatian have been found in the Age of Bronze!

Of course, each of these assertions has been made by a Hobbyist, with a particular breed of dog for his hobby. Now I, too, am a Hobbyist, with a particular breed of dog for my hobby; and I wish to say that, in my humble

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opinion, all the other Hobbyists are wrong in their claims about the most ancient variety of dog. The "Bulldog of Terra Cotta" is the oldest breed, and I am going to try to prove it. What shall see in a moment.

It is a matter of history that the bulldog is a very ancient animal. When Julius Cæsar landed on the shores of Britain (50 B. C.), he found the Celtic inhabitants of the island possessed of a large, powerful, and ferocious broad-mouthed dog, which, from the descriptions we have of it, was undoubtedly a kind of gigantic bulldog, not dissimilar to the great Spanish bulldog of to-day. Thus we see that the bulldog is at least 2,000 years old. I, however, can show that it is much older—at any rate, I can show that the "Bulldog of Terra Cotta" is.

Terra Cotta was the medium in which the ancients wrought to perpetuate their ideals. It was a favorite material of art long before the porcelain of China were known. Some persons think it was used in the form of bricks to build the Tower of Babel. It is of terra cotta that the oldest bulldog in the world is made.

To prove my contention that the "Bulldog of Terra Cotta" is the most ancient canine breed, I herewith submit a photographic view of a prehistoric image of terra cotta, which, according to the most trustworthy information obtainable, was dug up by scientific excavators in the Island of Cyprus. This precious object found its way into a small museum of curiosities collected by my uncle years ago. It is now in my possession. That it is a veritable antique, of incalculable age, there is no doubt.

This delightful Cyprian Bull, "The Pride of Antioch," has what is called a "domed skull," for its dear little head is as round as an apple of the Hesperides; in every dimension, in every curvature of outline, it suggests the beauty and the strength of the Roman Arch. The ears of the dog are not "tulip" or "rose," but true "gladiatorial-cauliflower." Its tail is orthodox; the graceful draping of this important member about the left hock must be looked upon as due to "poetic license." The underjaw has been cruelly riven by the pick or shovel of some careless digger, and the nose has a Numidian or Senegambian scoop. But, say what you will, this pup, "The Pride of Antioch," more nearly approached the "standard" than do "Crib and Rose," as shown by the illustrations of one hundred years ago, or the "Champions"

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and "Bulldogs" of reputation, about 1860.

Now, in this terra cotta image we are confronted, not by a theory, but by a fact. That it is made of terra cotta proves its great antiquity; for, as I have already noted, terra cotta is one of the oldest materials of art. The Cyprian sculptor who designed the image in the distant past must have been acquainted with the bulldog; hence, it follows that the bulldog must have existed at a very remote period, probably ages before the Phœnicians conquered Cyprus in 2000 B. C.

These facts go to prove my contention that the "Bulldog of Terra Cotta" is the oldest canine breed. If you can prove I'm wrong, go to it.

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